

US Tightens H-1 B Guidelines Warns Against Discrimination



Haley Eclipses Tillerson

The U.N. ambassador's performance is stoking speculation about her political future.

(Agencies) In Donald Trump's first meeting with Nikki Haley, on Nov. 17, he asked her to serve as his secretary of state. Haley turned him down, according to two sources familiar with the conversation, telling the president-elect that she lacked the requisite foreign policy experience for the job. The



former South Carolina governor ended up instead as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations (Contd on page 18)

We Need An Urgent Lesson In Identifying Our Racism At Home.
 Are we in reality just wilfully blind to our racism?



(Agencies) For too many Indians racism is a one-way street. We can be its victims but we are never the perpetrators. We are quick to recognize it when it happens to us. For example, when Indian students were attacked in Australia, then prime minister Manmohan Singh said he was (Contd on page 20)

Whaling Season Begins

Minke quota raised to 999 as activists condemn 'brutal, bloody slaughter'

(Agencies) Norway's sixth-month whaling season began on Saturday (1 April), with a quota raised from 880 last year to 999. The season begins shortly after a documentary was aired revealing that the vast majority of minke whales hunted along the Norwegian coast are pregnant females. An estimated 90% of the minke whales that will be hunted in the coming months are pregnant females, according to a recent documentary by Norway's public broadcaster NRK. (Contd on page 19)





Grand Opening New Office

For Low Cost Auto, Home & Business Insurance

NOTARY PUBLIC

Buying/Selling a Home? Looking for Short Sale, Bank Foreclosure Properties? Give us a call.

Call : Max 516 474 7573 or Chris: 516 462 1107
Tel: 516 414 4238 Fax: 516 414 4239
Whitestone Real Estate & Insurance
 1900 Hempstead Tpke. Suite 306 East Meadow NY 11554

See our full page advertisement on Page 17 *Watch our Advertisement on YouTube/ Facebook Channel *Josh India TV****

Santino, Hempstead Town Host Pakistan Flag Raising on Steps of Town Hall



(Insider Bureau) In celebration of Pakistan Republic Day and the Lahore Resolution in Pakistan, Supervisor Anthony J. Santino, Town Clerk Nasrin Ahmad, Consul General to Pakistan in New York Raja Ali Ejaz, and members of the Pakistani American Society of NY raised the Pakistani Flag in a ceremony on the steps of Town Hall. This year marks the 77 th anniversary of the resolution and the third flag raising by the town. "America's largest township is proud

of its diverse family, and we are happy to celebrate the myriad of cultures and traditions that make Hempstead Town a great place to live and raise a family," said Santino. "Flying the Pakistani Flag alongside the American Flag is a wonderful symbol of unity and inclusion."

March 23 rd is a national holiday in Pakistan which celebrates both the Lahore Resolution of 1940 and Republic Day (1956). The Lahore Resolution called for the creation of an independent state. This led to the creation of Pakistan.

Hempstead Town Clerk Nasrin Ahmad presents a citation to members of the Pakistani American Society of NY during the Flag raising ceremony celebrating Pakistan Republic Day and the Lahore Resolution. Seen in Picture (From left to right) Rafi Fazli, Mohammad Bin Moghni, Dr. Safdar H. Chadda, Clerk Nasrin Ahmad, Magbool Malik and Fazluz Haq Syed.

Diwali At Times Square Date Announced



(Press Release) New York – EventGuru Inc. is delighted to announce Saturday, October 7, 2017 as the date for this year's DIWALI AT TIMES SQUARE celebration. Mark your calendars! Diwali is the Festival of Lights is the one holiday that unifies the diversity of Indian regional cultures. This annual celebration is the largest celebration of Diwali outside of India, and it brings the South Asian community together for a fun-filled day showcasing cultural dance and musical performances, a Diwali bazaar, and mouth-watering Indian cuisine.

The celebration lights up Times Square with interactive, traditional Diya (lamp) lighting ceremonies, and the world's best digital fireworks display. There will be a Bollywood celebrity filled evening concert ,and opportunities to interact with your favorite stars. The fun

will begin at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 7, 2017 in Times Square! Diwali at Times Square was established in 2013 by Neeta Bhasin - a nationally recognized business leader specializing in multicultural marketing . She wanted to bring the most vibrant, national festival of India to the "Center of Universe" – New York's Times Square - to showcase India's rich culture, heritage, and arts to the world, while invoking a sense of pride among South Asians. This historic event is managed by ASB Communications, a New York-based multicultural marketing agency now celebrating its 20th anniversary which was founded by Ms. Bhasin. Advertising and sponsorship opportunities for Diwali at Times Square are available for businesses and organizations looking to deepen relationships with the South Asian community.



SAPAC ANNUAL SPRING BRUNCH 2017

SUNDAY, MAY 7th, 2017

10:00 AM

THE LONG ISLAND MARRIOTT HOTEL

101 James Doolittle Blvd. Uniondale, NY 11553

TICKETS

- ★ Individual VIP Ticket \$200 Or Table For Ten \$2000
- ★ Individual Ticket \$100 Or Table For Ten \$800

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Diamond Sponsorship \$5000
(Includes VIP table of ten, standing banner and on-stage recognition)

Gold Sponsorship \$2500
(Includes VIP table of ten and recognition as a Gold sponsor)

Silver Sponsorship \$1000
(Includes 5 regular tickets and recognition as a Silver Sponsor)

Bronze Sponsorship \$500
(Includes 2 tickets and recognition as a Bronze Sponsor)

All sponsorships must be purchased before April 24th

HOST COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Anusha Syed, Dr. Bhavani Srinivasan, Jaya Bahadkar, Jasbir Singh, Kawaljit Chandi, Pinky Jaggi, Sara Pervez, Sharanjit Thind, Shikha Sehgal, Dr. Usman Khan, Zahid Syed

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Cell: 516-832-6151 SAPACLI@AOL.COM

Please make checks payable to SAPAC

Mail to 69 Lloyd Ct., East Meadow, NY 11554
Political Contributions are not tax deductible for income tax purposes

Designed by www.GoDesignny.com

Sixth Outstanding Women's Achievement Awards Gala Held



(Insider Bureau) As Nassau County District Attorney Madeline Singas, Town of Hempstead Councilwoman Dorothy Goosby, Town of Hempstead Clerk Nasreen Ahmed (Among many other VIP's) walked into Antun's of Hicksville on Friday March 24, they all very well felt the pride and achievement in the air.

The Grand ball room was full of so many accomplished and elite, who's who of the society gathered for one singular purpose, to be the part of and celebrate 6th Outstanding Women's Achievements Gala, part of Women's History Month and International Women's Day Celebrations IAF (Indian American Forum) led by Indu Jaiswal, known for her strong commitment and dedication to the community cause was the organizing force behind the gala.

This year well known business woman Vandana Govil was the Chairperson of the Gala. And of course the hall was beautifully decorated with Peacocks, and spring flowers theme courtesy Sunita Sadhnani of Glamorous Event Planners. Evening started with lighting of the lamp. Indu Jaiswal Chairperson of IAF in her remarks welcomed all the guests congratulated all the hon-

orees and praised their efforts in achieving such success. American National Anthem sung by Inesha Singh and Indian National Anthem sung by Roopam Maini... Master of Ceremonies Mr Anuj Rihal and Chanbir Kaur Sethi made the evening enjoyable. Chanbir Kaur, Roopam Maini and Inesha Singh coordinated a brief. A session with the honorees discussing and emphasizing their accomplishments.

In addition to Madeline Singas who was also Chief Guest and Keynote speaker was presented with an award, 4 other distinguished women who had excelled in their profession and community services were presented with Outstanding Women's achievements Awards.

Kalpna Patel is President and Chief Executive officer of Unique Comp Inc(UCI) an award winning information technology services company providing IT Solutions and services to Federal, NY State and NY City agencies.

Ranju Batra is a woman driven to success and serving public good by working harder and always paying attention to details. Her successful and historic 7 years journey towards Diwali Stamp is a matter of Pride for generations to

come.

Dr Binita R Shah has bestowed upon the highest academic rank of distinguished Teaching Professor of Emergency Medicine and Pediatrician.

Mrs. Vandana Sharma, Air

India Regional Manager- Americas, has been with Air India for more than 22 years. She hails from Allahabad, and most recently from Mumbai. She came to New York as Regional manager- Americas 2015.

Jiya Singh, is a senior at

Jericho high School. Jiya is very active in community projects such as Project Dignity aims to building bathrooms in India, Jiya was placed third in the Nassau County for Tennis and qualified to the New

York State tournament.

Setu Mehta is a fun loving, caring and kind with a talent for making others around her smile, She is a senior at Herricks High Scholl and is the Valedictorian of her class.

India rejects US offer to mediate with Pakistan on Kashmir issue

(Agencies) New Delhi : India rejected the comments by US ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley suggesting a proactive role for America in India-Pakistan ties, saying the outstanding issues between the sub-continental neighbours should be sorted out bilaterally.

"The government's position for bilateral redressal of all India-Pakistan issues in an environment free of terror and violence hasn't changed," the Indian government said.

India sought to underline that international mediation, if at all, must concentrate on getting Pakistan to act against terrorism and enforce the rule of law in keeping with international norms. "We of course expect the international community and organisations to enforce international mechanisms and mandates concerning terrorism emanating from Pakistan, which continues to be the single biggest threat to peace and stability in our region and beyond," said MEA



spokesperson Gopal Baglay.

Haley's remarks caused India to iterate that a third party role in resolving India-Pakistan issues is not acceptable. "...We are seeing tensions rise and conflicts start to bubble up and so we want to see if we can be a part of that...", she had said.

Interestingly, the early days of US administrations have often seen some friction on issues like India-Pakistan and J&K before things settle down. At the start of his first term, President Barack Obama named Richard Holbrooke as a pointsman for

Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kashmir before dropping the "K word". Earlier, Bill Clinton called Kashmir one of the most dangerous places on earth before correcting what had been a long standing pro-Pakistan tilt by asking Islamabad to respect the line of control in the Kargil war. On the whole, Democratic administrations have tended to be more preachy on India, Pakistan and J&K as compared to Republicans. India could hope that its firm rebuff to Haley's statement will result in more caution on the part of the Trump administration.

Political funding: Voters have the right to know how parties earn, spend



Rajesh Mahapatra

Finance minister Arun Jaitley's decision to introduce electoral bonds through this year's budget, as a move to help weed

out black money, has once again put the spotlight on transparency in political funding. While, over the past week, Parliament and the media have extensively

debated the efficacy and implications of the proposed electoral bonds, both have conveniently glossed over a key concern: Do voters have a right to know about the finances of political parties? Or how does the world's largest democracy empower its voters with information that they ought to have on the vote seekers?

In 2013, the Central Information Commission (CIC) ruled that political parties are "public

authorities" as defined in the Right to Information (RTI) Act and are, therefore, liable to information that the public might seek from them. This quasi-judicial order was hailed by as a victory for RTI activists, who saw it as an important step toward bringing transparency in political funding and strengthening the nation's democratic fabric. Four years on, however, political parties have refused to comply with the CIC order and the government has told the Supreme Court – where a petition on this subject is being heard – that political parties should be kept out of the purview of the RTI.

The resistance on the part of the political parties, or the stand taken by the government, is not entirely unjustifiable. To begin with, the CIC equated a political party with a "public authority" because the former performs public duties, enjoys constitutional and legal rights and receives substantial government funding. The RTI Act, however, provides for only one of these three conditions to deem a non-government organisation

as a public authority – "substantially financed, directly or indirectly, by funds provided by the appropriate government". Also, neither the Act nor the CIC ruling offers any measurement of what qualifies as "substantially financed". Hence, the CIC's argument for bringing political parties under the RTI Act becomes legally untenable, unless the law is amended to make way for a wider definition of public authorities.

Political parties also have a genuine concern when they say they might not have the resources to cater to RTI queries, which will likely flood them if they were to accept the CIC ruling. It is also not clear what is the nature of information the public can seek if parties are brought under the RTI purview. Unless there is clarity, the provision is more likely to be misused by political parties against each other and trigger a political war that does no good to democracy.

Notwithstanding all that, the political class must reckon with the growing distrust and disillusionment among

voters over lack of accountability and transparency in the actions of what they perceive as public institutions. Political parties may not be bound by constitutional obligations, but, as one analyst commented, they are "important instrumentalities that enable democratic participation in the governance process."

Voters do have a right to know how the political parties are financed and governed.

Many democracies in the world have found a way to empower their voters with that right. While some have taken the RTI route, others have brought laws to ensure that political organisations make adequate disclosures to the public. India would do well to learn from their experiences. Whether through amendments to the RTI Act, or through other laws applicable to organisations engaged in public activities, it is time the government and the political parties stopped stonewalling on the issue and found a resolution that has been long overdue.

Heat waves will singe India soon

But most cities clueless about tackling it



'March is the new May: Northern and western India reel due to scorching summer'. This headline, which appeared in Hindustan Times on Thursday, sums up the coming challenge: Searing heat waves are going to singe India. The indications are already there:

Vast swathes of northern and western India are reeling under near heat-wave conditions with experts expressing concerns over the sweltering temperatures that have shot past 40 degree Celsius in the first few weeks of summer. The searing temperatures comes on the back of the hottest summer in a century last year that killed 550 people and left not enough food to eat or water to drink in parts of an area that holds about 25% of India's 1.2 billion people. Officials were forced to transport water in trains to towns and villages in the west earlier this month amid reports of children collapsing in the heat while fetching water, and of armed men guarding wells and ponds to stop farmers from stealing water. Expecting

the worse, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has already directed states in the country to brace for a hot summer and has said that the 'Heat Wave Action Plan' must be implemented.

Data shows that there has been an increasing trend of heat waves in India over the past several years. Heat wave killed about 3,000 people in 1998 and more than 2,000 in 2002. It caused over 2,000 deaths in 1998 in Odisha and more than 1,200 deaths in 2002 in southern India. More than 2,400 people died in the heat wave of 2015. Heat wave also caused death of cattle and wildlife besides affecting animals in various zoos in India.

Yet most Indian cities are yet to implement the NDMA's heat wave guidelines that can help them prepare a management plan by providing insight, help in coordinating various departments, individuals and communities to aid and protect their neighbours, friends, relatives, and themselves against avoidable health problems during spells of

very hot weather. Doing this important because a heat wave directly affects communities, undermining their livelihoods through gradual, insidious changes in temperature and rainfall patterns, and resulting in increased frequency and intensity of hazards such as floods, cyclones, droughts, unseasonal rains and hailstorms, causing extensive damage to crops and the agro-rural economy.

The mob's bias: attack on Nigerian in Noida reflects our racial prejudices

The attack on a small group of Africans in Greater Noida, a suburb of the national capital located in Uttar Pradesh, has once again thrown a spotlight on a disturbing trend in the country: mob violence, and specifically the targeting of persons of African origin in many of these instances. What is particularly disturbing and shameful is that the attack took place in a busy shopping mall without a single bystander, shopkeeper or security guard intervening. This has, understandably, touched an anxious chord about their personal safety among the thousands of African nationals who live, work and study in and around Delhi. While the police have made some initial arrests and opened cases against several hundred unnamed persons

on charges of rioting in the wake of video footage of the attack going viral, such incidents of racial violence need a stronger response from the administration and civil society. That the attack was ostensibly triggered by accusations that some African students were linked to drug-dealing and were somehow responsible for the death of a local student is no justification for taking the law into one's hands, leave alone indulge in such violence. That the law enforcement machinery and the courts are the only places for seeking redress for any breaches of law cannot be overemphasised. That a mere rumour can trigger such violence is truly alarming. It is difficult to see this incident in isolation from other instances of discrimination against

African nationals who have taken up residence in cities around the country. Last year, the murder of a Congolese student in Delhi compelled African Heads of Mission to threaten a boycott of Africa Day. The message was not lost on anyone that the envoys had been moved to consider such an extreme step just months after New Delhi hosted the Third India-Africa Forum Summit, in October 2015, where they had announced their resolve to "enhance Africa-India relations... based on the principles of mutuality, complementarity and true sense of solidarity as well as the promotion of people to people interactions." In the end, Africa Day went as planned, but the point had been made, that even as India makes abundant

effort to deepen ties with the 54 countries of the African Union, this cannot be achieved without understanding and acting upon the aspirations of nationals of these countries. In modern diplomacy, the quality of people-to-people contact is a factor in determining the overall strength of a bilateral relationship. But even as Indian diplomats move to assure African students in Greater Noida about their safety, with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj discussing the matter with U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, this issue is not about foreign affairs. It is a reminder of the latent racism in India, of the terrible prejudices too many of us harbour, and of the need for a political and social effort to overcome it.

The Crisis of Trumpism *Perverted privileges*

Trumpism is in crisis. This isn't a function of poll numbers, or the Russia controversy, or any other melodrama of the past three months, but something more fundamental: No officeholder in Washington seems to understand President Donald Trump's populism or have a cogent theory of how to effect it in practice, including the president himself. House Speaker Paul Ryan isn't a populist and doesn't want to be a populist. He has spent his adult life committed to a traditional limited-government agenda. He crafted his own platform during the campaign, the so-called Better Way agenda, to differentiate congressional Republicans from Trump.

Trump, for his part, has lacked the knowledge, focus or interest to translate his populism into legislative form. He deferred to others on legislative priorities and strategies at the outset of his administration, and his abiding passion in the health-care debate was, by all accounts, simply getting to a signing ceremony.

In light of all this, the product of the Ryan-Trump partnership on health care was a bill bizarrely at odds with a national election Republicans had just won on the strength of working-class voters. Under the GOP replacement, fewer people would have had coverage, and workers further down the income scale would have been particularly hard hit. For whatever reason, neither of these facts seemed to exercise the White House, at least not enough to try to do anything to fix them.

Maybe Ryan doesn't "get" the new political reality created by Trump's victory, as the president's boosters like to say. But what excuse does the president himself have for evidently not "getting" it, either?

His energies were taken up trying to placate the conservative House Freedom Caucus. The supposed affinity between Trump and the Freedom Caucus is one of the great ideological misunderstandings of our time. Just because Trump and the conservative caucus are both "anti-establishment" doesn't mean they have anything else in common. Trump is more naturally an ally of the moderate Tuesday Group, except with a flame-throwing Twitter feed.

A President Trump acting more in keeping with his free-floating reflex to take care of people, as expressed in speeches and interviews, would have pushed the health bill to the left. But Trump so far hasn't followed the logic of his own politics in dealing with Congress. His path not taken in January would have been to give an eye-opening unifying Inaugural Address with less carnage and more kumbaya. Immediately invite Chuck Schumer to the White House and tell him, "Chuck, you're not leaving this building until we agree on an infrastructure package." Take the resulting big-spending proposal and dare the GOP leadership to defy him. Pass it with a bipartisan coalition. And invite as many Democratic public works-supporting mayors as possible to the White House signing ceremony.

Then, having staked his flag firmly in the center, he could have tried to mix-and-match his way to congressional coalitions for a heterodox agenda.

Of course, there's no guarantee this would have worked. Schumer and Democrats might have balked at cooperating with Trump on anything. Even if Trump pulled off an infrastructure gambit, it would have been a high-risk strategy, involving a true declaration of independence from his own party.

Now that the initial health-care bill has gone down, there's loose talk from the White House of wooing Democrats, but a lot has transpired in the course of the past few months that makes this much harder. Most importantly, the left-wing "resistance" to Trump is fully activated and prepared to exact punishment on any quislings. Trump's style of politics is not well-suited to bipartisanship, regardless. Democrats tend to be fond of Republicans like John Kasich or Jon Huntsman, who are determinedly inoffensive and loath to touch hot-button issues. Trump is neither. He could propose a \$2 trillion infrastructure bill funded by forced requisitions from Wall Street bankers and Democrats would probably say, "Hell, no."

In any case, the White House is moving on to tax reform. This, too, may end up running in well-worn GOP ruts. Trump executed a hostile takeover of a Republican Party that was obsessed with the 1980s and cutting marginal tax rates. Now, the Republican Plan B is revisiting the tax reform of 1986 with ample cuts in marginal tax rates. New boss, same as the old boss — but with much livelier speeches at political rallies. None of this is to suggest that Trump is completely empty-handed. The Gorsuch nomination was a home run. Deregulation, especially on energy, is a natural point of overlap for populists and traditional Republicans. Trump has tightened up immigration enforcement considerably. But there are limits to how much he can do on his own authority; a fizzle on tax reform would render the first year a legislative nullity. If things continue to go badly, it's easy to see Trump turning to the New York Democrats in his White House. This would entail less emphasis on trade and immigration and fights with the mainstream media, and more emphasis on a nonideological economic boosterism. The loose antecedent for this scenario is Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who swept into office in California as a drain-the-swamp reformer after winning a populist crusade, and then recalibrated to accommodate the system after suffering politically damaging setbacks.

The range of possible outcomes of the Trump presidency is still wide. Unexpectedly, one of them is that his most die-hard populist supporters will eventually be able to say that Trumpism, like socialism, hasn't failed, it's just never been tried.

By **RICH LOWRY**

At social gatherings, our honorable MPs behave like best friends and not political opponents.

Why did it not shock me that instead of being appalled by the violent behaviour of the slipper-wielding Shiv Sena MP, his Lok Sabha colleagues came to his defence? Perhaps because it is part of my job to lurk about the edges of political circles in Delhi, and so I know that no matter how venomous the exchanges in Parliament there is much bonhomie outside, and it crosses party lines. At social gatherings, our honorable MPs behave like best friends and not political opponents. So it did not surprise me at all to hear Congress MPs declare on national television support for a man who belongs to a party they supposedly despise for 'secular' reasons. Shiv Sena MPs were of course fiercest in their defence of Ravindra Gaikwad. They went so far as to say that he was within his rights to take off his slipper and use it to attack a senior Air India official because airline companies behave like 'mafia and goons'. They demanded that the Speaker of the Lok Sabha intervene on behalf of the MP from Osmanabad to enable him to fly again. It is not just Air India but every airline that has banned him, so he is forced to travel by train. And it serves him right. Had he been an ordinary citizen and not an 'honourable' member of the Lok Sabha he would have been jailed for what he did. It did not seem possible that the image of the ugly Indian politician could be made uglier, but Gaikwad has managed.

The upside is that it gives the Prime Minister a chance to re-examine the perks and privileges that our elected representatives enjoy, and put an end to some of them. Free air and rail travel, free telephone calls, free domestic and garden services and almost free everything else come with the perks of representing the poorest, most wretched people who ever got the right to vote. But, for me personally, the most undeserved perk of all is the right to live in Lutyens Delhi, in flats whose commercial rent today is a minimum of Rs 2 lakh a month. Those MPs who live in bungalows in this most exclusive enclave cost taxpayers a minimum of Rs 30 lakh a month just in rent. The reason why this column has campaigned tirelessly against the 'socialist' practice of allowing our elected representatives to live like billionaires, is because I believe it deforms democracy. It is wrong for many reasons. Of these the most important is that the lure of a house in Lutyens Delhi is so great that too many people I know enter politics only to be able to keep Daddy or Mummy's house. When beloved parent passes on or loses an election, an heir automatically appears just to hang on to the house. If the Lok Sabha becomes hard to get into, the adoring parent ensures that he keeps the family home through the Rajya Sabha. MPs who become chief ministers try to send a relative to Parliament to keep the house.

Tavleen Singh



ISSN No. 1554 06X

Chairman: Karam Singh Thind (Honorary)

Editor in Chief: Sharanjit Singh Thind

Editor (Political Affairs-India) : Aruna Singh

President : Bhupinder K. Thind

Special Correspondent :

Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah

Gagandeep Singh (INDIA)

Editorial Intern: Amann Thind

Web Coordinator : Jatinder Kumar

A Publication of NuWay Media Group LLC

REGD & MAILING OFFICE :

P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

Tel/Fax : 516 342 1076 Cell : 917 612 3158

editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Disclaimer The South Asian Insider is a weekly newspaper published every week by The South Asian Insider. It's available in community & religious centers, ethnic grocery stores and also available by mail, email & online to subscribers. The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various writers, authors and forum participants in The South Asian Insider do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Editor. All advertisers advertising in The South Asian Insider assume responsibility for accuracy of their advertisements. The South Asian Insider and/or people associated with it are not responsible for any claims made by the advertisers and don't endorse any product or services advertised in The South Asian Insider. We strongly urge consulting your lawyer before buying/contracting /hiring through the ads published in the newspaper. We are in the business of selling space and claims made by the advertisers are not authenticated or confirmed by an independent source

Trump's Muslim Ban And The 'Padmavati' Attack Show How Tough It Is To Hold On To Liberal Principles In A Crisis

Sandip Roy

Desperate times call for desperate measures. It's perfectly understandable that those facing the Donald Trump executive order juggernaut would try and slow it down by whatever means possible. Thus one of the early responses to his travel ban from seven predominantly Muslim countries was to tell the story of Steve Jobs. Jobs' father, Abdul Fattah Jandali, was born in Hons, Syria, now a hot-spot in the civil war. Twitter was awash with pictures reminding Donald Trump that if his executive order had been in place there would be no Apple today. David Galbraith posted a photograph of Jobs over the caption "A Syrian migrant's child". Walied Shater tweeted "@POTUS as U ban people, remember if U banned Syrian immigrants 50 years ago, there would be no Steve Jobs, no Apple." The sentiment is understandable. At a time when Trump wants to scare the bejesus out of his countrymen by raising the spectre of the "Islamic terrorist" knocking at its doors, this is a reminder of how much poorer America would be without the likes of Jobs.

But it is a double-edged sword. America has to figure out how it wants to respond to the desperation of the Syrian refugee because it is the humanitarian thing to do, not because there might be a potential Steve Jobs in its midst. The famous inscription on the Statue of Liberty reads "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore." It does not say give me your Steve Jobs and Paula Abdul and F Murray Abraham and keep the rest. One should not need to be the father of the founder of a mega successful corporation or a Nobel laureate to find shelter from a civil war or just be allowed to travel to the USA. The example of Jobs packs a punch but it can also backfire by whittling away at the core principle behind it all. While no one is entitled to enter any country, and every country can vet those wishing to come into it, a blanket ban (and even Trump is using that word now) on the basis of nationality or religion is egregious. The ban is worth protesting against because it's a blanket ban, not just because the father of a Steve Jobs would be blocked by it. It would not become more humane if there was a Jobs exception.

Of course, the ban stings more

for certain people. The translators who worked with American troops in Iraq, often at great risk to their own lives, now suddenly find the door to the US slammed shut in their faces even as Trump professes sympathy for Christian refugees from the region. That's Washington treating its own allies as entirely disposable. Permanent residents were incensed when initial statements from the White House suggested that even green-card holders from those countries and dual-nationality citizens could be blocked. But we have to always keep in mind that this is a ban targeting entire countries. Carving out a Jobs exception or a green-card exception or an Iraqi-translator exception only creates the illusion of mitigating something utterly reprehensible. Nor would it be more palatable or fair if the ban included countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt and Pakistan. That's not the point. But in a time of crisis it's hard to hold onto the liberal principle at

stake. That's clear if we look closer to home at a different kind of cultural brouhaha that's been occupying our news space — the Padmavati controversy.

After activists from a fringe Rajput group vandalised the sets of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's film, it did not take long for the protests against it to lose sight of the principle at stake — artistic freedom. Deepika Padukone tweeted, "As Padmavati I can assure you there is absolutely no distortion of history", even as others claimed there is scant historical record of Padmavati herself. The real outrage is the violence and how in the name of Rajput pride a fringe group catapulted itself into the headlines by disrupting a film that had all the necessary clearances. It was a flashback to what happened to Deepa Mehta many years ago while shooting *Water* in Varanasi. At that time too, the script had been cleared by the Information and Broadcasting ministry and Mehta had all the

permissions needed. That did not stop hooligans from vandalising the sets on suspicion that Mehta's script was anti-Hindu. The shooting stopped and *Water* was filmed years later in secret in Sri Lanka. But it remains a shameful reminder of how might can be right and even the law is no protection against a mob. It worked then and it works now as Padmavati demonstrates. The CEO of Bhansali Productions has issued a letter saying there was "no romantic dream sequence" or any "objectionable scenes" between the lead stars and it stressed that it would not hurt the sentiments of the people of Mewar. But the protesters want the film to be shown to Rajput organisations before release for their version of extreme vetting. If that is allowed we are paving the

way for the creation, by sheer muscle power, of mini-censor boards all around the country. Now we do not even have to wait for a film to be made to figure out if it offends us, we can be offended in advance. Those who stand up for Padmavati should stand up for the right of a filmmaker to make his film once he has obtained the necessary clearances. If you do not like the film, boycott it by all means, but vandalism should not be rewarded by giving thugs credibility. Was it not Narendra Modi who tweeted "Art can't have any restrictions or limits"? These are tough times for liberal principles. That's why it's all the more important to do our best to not cede ground on them. That principle remains bigger than a Steve Jobs or a Padmavati dream sequence.



Why Are Our Urban Aspirations So Captive To Our Colonial Past?

In the list of tall political promises made to the Indian public those involving first-world cities, especially London, occupy a station of eminence. "Give me your votes," thunders a leader in the course of an inspired speech, "and I'll transform your [pathetic excuse for a city] into [a glittering first-world metropolis]." Insert suitable names.

Of course, the phrases in parenthesis are never spoken aloud, but you get the drift of the sentiment. In 2011, fresh on the heels of her outstanding victory over the decades-old Left regime, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee made such a pledge to the citizens of Kolkata. The Hooghly riverfront, she said, will be "beautified" after the Thames riverbank in Britain to draw investors to the city. The seriousness of her vision was quickly sealed by her desire to have a Ferris Wheel installed in imitation of the London Eye.

Banerjee's statement, though noble in its intent — who wouldn't want to live in a city as gloriously beautiful and efficiently run as London? — is ironic, even if you ignore the implausibility and practical impediments of her grand vision. The city that was once called Calcutta by the British rechristened itself in its pristine Bengali name to shed its colonial baggage, only for its chief minister to promise to make it look like the former colonisers' capital. In the end, Kolkata's London dreams have come as close to reality as giving its public spaces a lick of fresh paint, in a combination of blue and white that is Banerjee's

favourite, and erecting more street lights. Now Arvind Kejriwal, CM of Delhi, has followed Didi's example by expressing a similar wish to turn the national capital into London, if the electorate gives his Aam



Aadmi Party (AAP) its mandate in the municipal polls that may be held in April. At least, he has more credibility than Banerjee to make such a claim. Delhi has, like London, one of the best public transport systems in the country in its metro railway network. Although Kolkata was the first Indian city to have introduced the subway, the current state of its underground railway brings to mind the dilapidation of Stalinist Russia. Apart from frequent glitches in the running of the trains, security check at most stations is abysmal, if at all. There are more reasons for Delhi to feel closer to London. The former even surpasses the latter in at least one regard. In the winter of 2016, the pollution levels in Delhi went higher than London's in 1952, caused by the Great Smog, as a report pointed out. The Kejriwal government called emergency meetings to discuss steps to control the situation, but the fact remained that air quality in the city and national capi-

tal region had hit such levels of toxicity in the first place. Such occurrences are not the result of one season's traffic congestion but are decades in the making.

The aspiration to give Delhi the London makeover seems the most hollow when one compares the state of public safety in the two cities, especially for women. The AAP government may bring the world's fanciest high-street retailers to Delhi, but until its citizens, especially its women, can walk on the road without the fear of being attacked, harassed, intimidated or threatened, Delhi can never join the league of

world-class cities. Practical considerations aside, there is a certain oddity about the repeated invocation of London as the apotheosis of a modern metropolis, especially when one of our own politicians never wastes a moment to reprimand our colonial masters. It's true, only a fool can grudge London its status of being one of the best cities in the world to live in, though for urban planners and administrators in India there are examples to draw from far closer home. Why not look East — to Hong Kong, Singapore or Bangkok — to imbibe their lessons of planning, executing and managing civic projects and infrastructure that ensure the smooth running of a city? Or is it much too humiliating to learn from the examples of our immediate neighbours who have surpassed us and far easier to pay homage to our colonial past from which, presumably, we still haven't recovered?

Somak Ghoshal

Indian-Americans Must Realize that their complacency will not save them from hate in America any more

Sandip Roy

It is not fair to lay the blame for the death of Srinivas Kuchibhotla at Donald Trump's door. The Indian American engineer in Kansas city was enjoying his Jameson whisky with his colleague Alok Madasani when alleged attacker Adam Purinton fired at them yelling "get out of my country". Ian Grillot, also a white American, was injured trying to protect them. Purinton was nabbed later having a drink at another bar to unwind from the shooting. He is a navy veteran with an inactive pilot license and an air traffic controller certificate. He lives alone and had once worked for the Federal Aviation Administration.

It might emerge that the man had mental problems. There are reports that he was alcoholic. There's no direct line connecting him with the ascension of Trump or his rhetoric. But there is a dotted line.

In the name of making America great again, Trump has enabled the bullies. The fulminations about terrorists, rapists, murderers, all brown, all the other, leave no one in doubt that this election was about white America taking back the country, taking a stand against the browning of America. Thankfully not everyone subscribed to this as Grillot's courage showed.

Kuchibhotla paid with his life but there have been many incidents of garden variety bullying and "go back to your country"-type harassment. And Trump's response has been tepid, delayed and deliberately measured. He takes his time to condemn anti-Semitic hate crime threats and bristles when asked about it at a press conference. Trump will no doubt condemn Kuchibhotla's death. Republican senator from Kansas, Jerry Moran, has already said "I strongly condemn violence of any kind especially if it is motivated by prejudice and xenophobia." Trump will surely echo him as well.

There are reports that Purinton thought Kuchibhotla and Madasani were Middle Eastern. Indian Americans would do well not to think that this was a freak case of mistaken identity. After 9/11 the first casualty was Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh gas station owner "mistaken" as an Arab because of his beard and turban. In 2012 a peaceful gurdwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, became the scene of a bloodbath when Wade Michael Page opened his semiautomatic on its congregation.

This violence was not freak or unprecedented. Page was involved with a white supremacist group and was an active member of a skinhead group called the Northern Hammerskins.

As Deepa Iyer writes in her timely book *We Too Sing America*: South Asian, Arab, Muslim and Sikh Immigrants Shape our Multiracial Future, "America is a racial state. We are the inheritors of systems and institutions that enable the denial of basic human rights to indigenous and Black and Brown communities, from colonization to slavery, from Jim Crow segregation to the Japanese American internment. The post-9/11 treatment of South Asian, Arab and Muslim communities by the US government continues this shameful legacy."

This violence is not isolated, no matter how much authorities will try to "lone wolf" it. It exists in a continuum. It exists within the racial anxiety of the US which is projected to become a "majority-minority" nation by 2043 which means that no one ethnic group will be the majority any more.

Many of those who voted for Trump did so believing that Trump would reverse or at least slow the demographic march towards that date. The wall, the extreme vetting, the employment visa rules are all part of that project even if they are presented as measures against crime and terrorism.

Iyer writes that it's more accurate to think of America transforming into a multiracial nation with no single racial group occupying a majority, but conservative forces will see more potency in the term "majority-minority" which carries with it a sense of an old white majority under siege in their own homeland. As Iyer writes, majority-minority does not mean minority populations "will gain power and influence due to their numbers", that sheer numbers will "drive racial equality, economic equity, or political power."

The vulnerability of the minority will only increase as it is perceived as a threat to some people's idea of America, as we found in Kansas City.

What will happen now is predict-

able. There will be condemnation. There will be an attempt to frame this story as a lone wolf story. There will be promises of strict action. The Indian government will rush to render all assistance to the affected families. There might be a marked slowness, even reluctance to call this a hate crime in sharp contrast to the alacrity with which an attack that never happened in Sweden will be described as terror. All of that is utterly predictable.

What Indian-Americans will do well to take away from the Kansas city attack is that their complacency about being the model minority will not save them from the hate. Trump may personally bear no ill-will against them, he may have even made ads saying "Ab ki baar, Trump sarkar" and his daughter-in-law might wear a bindi and go to a temple, but for many of his angry buzzing supporters, Indian-Americans are just part of the browning of America that they resent.

All the money that the Republican Hindu Coalition raised for Trump will not be able to protect

the likes of Kuchibhotla from that hate when it spills over onto Main Street America. The hate graffiti on the wall does not check visa status. Indian Americans would do well to realise that they occupy no special place despite their median income. In fact Trump's campaign against "illegal immigrants" will also singe South Asian Americans though no one thinks of desis when they think about immigrants slipping across the US-Mexico border. But the fact is, thanks to visa overstay, South Asian Americans are one of the fastest growing "illegal" groups in the US.

The Times of India reports that some 300,000 Indians could be affected by the administration's plans to deport first and ask questions later. A Pew Center report says there were nearly half a million unauthorised Indian immigrants in the US in 2014, a 43% spike since 2009.

It just goes to show that Indian Americans do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of the immigrant story, and when the backlash happens, they will be part of that story too, as the Kansas incident tragically illustrates. Indian-Americans must be a part of the movement to resist the forces unleashed in America today, they cannot set themselves apart from it.

How Modi's 'Kabristaan-Shamshan' Statement Ended Up Bringing Dalits Into BJP's Fold In Uttar Pradesh

Jitendra Kumar

A lot has happened since BJP's unexpected rise to power in Uttar Pradesh. But in between reports of unabashed saffronisation in the state, closure of slaughter houses, anti-Romeo squads (read moral policing) and accusations of EVM tampering, lies an issue that needs to be addressed --- an issue that is an inherent part of the basic fabric of democracy and individual freedom. The third phase of UP elections saw Prime Minister Modi giving a communal twist to his election strategy when he declared at a public rally, 'if there is a Kabristaan (graveyard) for Muslims, then there should be a Shamshaan (cremation ground) for Hindus as well'. History seemed to have been repeating itself. BJP leaders in Bihar had resorted to a similar tactic during the second phase of the Bihar Assembly elections when they talked about 'sending Muslims to Pakistan' --- this resulted in BJP's failure.

After the debacle in Bihar, all of us believed that giving communal hues to their poll strategy will not work for the BJP. Alas we were wrong, BJP's mothership, RSS has an expertise in raking up old wounds as per their convenience. The modus operandi of the 'cultural organisation' is simple: rake up old issues and keep parroting them until you achieve your goal. BJP's win in UP, despite its failure in Bihar, is a burning example of the success of this kind of strategy.

Modi's 'kabristaan-shamshan' statement ended up bringing Dalits into BJP's fold. A majority of Hindus cremate their dead either

on their own land or on the banks of a river. The caste system prevalent in India, has made cremation a huge problem for the lower-caste OBCs and Dalits, who usually do not have their own land holdings. Modi found an opportunity here, and gave it such a twist that made people believe that the 'sickular' governments had provided burial grounds for Muslims but had ignored Hindus (especially the landless Hindus and Dalits). In reality, no government has ever 'built' a burial ground for Muslims. However, they might have built a wall around it to keep away squatters. But in the post-truth era, people believed what Modi said --- Akhilesh is pro-Muslim and Mayawati is no good either. And facts? They didn't matter. One may speculate, that it was an irresponsible statement from a Prime Minister.

A man in public life must act appropriately, such risks can murder his public image. The Prime Minister's statement might be factually incorrect, but it fits the RSS narrative, which has helped garner support from a majority of Hindus over the past century. Hindu supporters of BJP have been made to believe that successive governments have been biased to-

wards Muslims. Sample the following statements. "There's no water supply on Holi, while during Ramzan, there is no dearth of water". Similarly, "there is no electricity supply on Diwali, whereas on Eid, chances of a power cut are one in a million." BJP's baseless rhetoric's can be traced back to three decades. In the early 80s, BJP leaders in Bihar had parroted these statements over and over again to brainwash villagers, who had neither electricity connection nor had access to tap water. As a child growing up in one such village in Bihar, to me and my fellow villagers, they were distant tales of horror from towns like Darbhanga. Nothing whatsoever has changed since the early 80s, as far as accessibility of electricity and water is concerned. (Contd on page 19)

UK-USA-Australia Specialist

100% Guaranteed Solution
All India Research Organisation of Astrology
7 Time Gold Medalist

Famous astrologer in India
Acharya Sandeep Shastri

+91 97142-12628

Do You Want to Control Anybody or Enemy

We Will Remove & Destroy your all Bad Luck & Negativity

Specialist : Vasikaran, Love Marriage, Intercast,
Love Marriage, Divorce Case, Business Problem Getting
Bulk Your Ex Lover, Lottery Number, Abroad Settlement

Listen truth of life on Phone, Free Advise & Meeting
Head Office Gujrat Branch office Numbai India

Why Yogi Adityanath needs to focus on the mandate



Given his track record, it would have been naive of the BJP not to expect a degree of criticism when the party picked Yogi Adityanath as the chief minister for Uttar Pradesh.

Make no mistake though. The BJP won, and it is entirely within its rights to pick anyone it wishes as the leader of the legislative party and thus as the chief minister. The Opposition will have to live with the decision. But critics too are entitled to express their views on this choice, point to his record and ask uncomfortable questions. And the BJP will have to live with that also.

It would however be far more useful now to judge Yogi Adityanath and the BJP government on their performance and policies. UP threw up a historic mandate, confounding pundits and politicians alike. The mandate was a result of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's overwhelming popularity. It was a result of astute social engineering, where the party stitched together an alliance of the most dominant castes with the most marginalised of castes. It was a vindication of the BJP's "pro poor" turn, which is how demonetisation was portrayed. It was a result of a degree of religious polarisation. It stemmed from the failures of both the BSP and SP-Congress alliance to project their achievements.

But distilled to its core, the mandate reflected the desire of the UP voter to live a better life. UP remains one of India's most deprived states. Its infrastructure is in a shambles. It fares poorly on education and health indicators. And it seriously lacks jobs. Across

the campaign trail, when I asked voters what they wanted most, the answer was resounding, "naukri".

This promise of a better future was central to the election of "Modiji ki sarkar" in Lucknow. And it is on this yardstick that the Yogi government must be judged.

If the first two weeks are any indication, the signs are not particularly encouraging though it is really too early to make any definitive pronouncement.

Yogi Adityanath began by deploying "anti-Romeo" squads in various towns in UP. It is important to

recognise that when the BJP promised women security and such squads in its election manifesto, it was responding to a real problem of harassment of women in society. HT has reported the disturbing, and rather disgusting, practice of mobile recharge "bhaiyas" selling phone numbers of women, based on their "looks", to men who would then call and hound women. The poor law and order situation under the previous government was a major reason for the SP's loss. Women must be protected by the law, but it is doubtful that anti-Romeo squads can provide a solution to this structural problem. Instead, it runs the risk of descending into vigilantism — with mobs targeting young adults. Individual freedom is sacrosanct, and consenting couples must be allowed to pursue their lives. There is also a subtle

communal subtext to this campaign. In west UP in particular, it ties in with the narrative of "love jihad". Yogi Adityanath's government must find other ways of addressing the real problem of harassment instead of encouraging prejudice-laced vigilantism. Look at the other big priority of the government — the closure of illegal slaughterhouses.

Once again, the law has to be implemented and if any enterprises are working outside its ambit, the government is fully within its rights to crack down on such units. But if this is indiscriminate, there will be a direct effect on the dietary needs and preferences of a substantial section of the population. It has also happened in a way that has drastically affected the livelihoods, of both Hindus and Muslims. Cattle mar-

kets across the state are reeling under a crisis. What do these two big priorities of the Yogi government over the last two weeks tell us?

While there is nothing wrong in addressing the issue of illegal slaughterhouses and harassment of women, he should also look at the many other problems which beset the state. If not, the Yogi sarkar might seem to be overlooking crucial issues that need to be addressed without delay.

UP is a state desperately in need for administrative reform. It is a state that needs to improve its public school system and health facilities: Visit any primary government school or district hospital and you will realise the extent of deprivation. It is a state where the university system is collapsing: Colleges in smaller towns are producing unemployable

young men by the thousands every year. It is a state that needs to focus on imparting skills and creating economic opportunities for its young. That is what the mandate demands. That is what the new government must focus on. Yogi Adityanath has a historic majority and a full five-year term to change UP for the better. If he decides to stick to a narrow cultural agenda, it may thrill his base — but will alienate the substantial incremental vote that veered towards the BJP in this election due to the hopes for a better future. Alternatively, if he makes a distinction between majority consolidation — and the governance strategy, which should be sabka saath, sabka vikaas — Yogi Adityanath can still make a difference. I will be watching closely.

Brexit is utter folly: Britain had the best of both worlds with EU



Had British businesses been consulted, British business--small medium or large--unanimously would have said we appreciate and benefit from the single market, the free movement of goods and services, the movement of people, the three million people from the EU that work in the UK, who we need.

Let alone getting our country back, we could be losing our country. Not only have we always had our country by being part of the European Union, but we have had the best of both worlds.

We are not in Schengen, we are not in the euro and we make the laws that affect our daily lives in Westminster--not in Eu-

rope --be it our taxes, be it our planning laws, be it business rates, be it tax credits, be it benefits or welfare, be it healthcare. We measure our roads in miles because we choose to, and I pour my beer in pints because I choose to. The triggering of Article 50 is a self-imposed deadline by the Prime Minister for purely political reasons. She wants to fix the two-year process by 2019 well in time to go into the election in 2020 with the negotiations completed. There is nothing more or less to this timing. People need to wake up to this. Why else would she trigger Article 50 before the French and German elections, when we know Europe's attention will

be elsewhere? We are going to waste six months of those two years, all because Prime Minister Theresa May hopes the negotiations are complete before her term comes to an end. I can guarantee that the British people will soon become aware of this scheme. The emperor has no clothes.

Reading through the letter that has been delivered to the European Union and listening to the Prime Minister's statement in Parliament today amounted to reading and listening to pure platitudes and, quite frankly, hot air. This goes back to the hot air of 'Brexit means Brexit'. What the letter and the statement very clearly outlined is how complex the negotiations are going to be over the next two years. In fact, they admit that it is unlikely that they are going to be able to conclude negotiations within the two-year period set aside.

That is not the only way in which the British people have been misled. The Con-

servative party manifesto clearly stated that staying in the single market was a priority. Now the Prime Minister has very clearly stated in her Lancaster House speech, and in Parliament today, that we are not going to be staying in the single market. Had the British people been told this by the Leave and Remain campaigns, I can guarantee many people would not have voted to leave.

Had they been consulted, British business--small, medium or large--unanimously would have said we appreciate and benefit from the single market, the free movement of goods and services, the movement of people, the three million people from the EU that work in the UK, who we need. We have an unemployment rate of under 5%--what would we do without these 3 million people?

This country is one of the leaders in the world in financial services, which benefits from being able to operate freely in the European Union and our businesses

benefit from that as a result. That is now in jeopardy as well. We at Cobra Beer manufacture in Britain and Belgium, as well as in India, and export to virtually every EU country.

The Prime Minister's letter to the EU talks with bravado that we're actually demanding a fair negotiation, when we in Britain are in the very weakest position. We are up against 27 countries, which are against just one. We are up against the European Commission and the European Parliament. On top of that, the whole world does not want us to leave the European Union. Britain is one of the three largest recipients of inward investment in the world. Our economy depends on inward investment. Since the referendum, the pound has fallen 20%. That is a clear signal from the world, saying, 'We do not like this uncertainty.' The bravado talk of the Brexiteers is heaped with irony and short-sightedness.

(Contd on page 19)

Nassau County Executive **ED MANGANO**
in conjunction with The Nassau County Commission on Human Rights,
invites you to

VAISAKHI CELEBRATION



Wednesday, April 12th
6:00pm to 9:00pm



**Theodore Roosevelt
Executive & Legislative
Building**

Ceremonial Chamber, 2nd Floor,
1550 Franklin Ave, Mineola

Dinner will be Served.

For More Information Please Call

Jasbir Singh
(516) 857-5297

Pinky Jaggi
(516) 330-7323

Sharanjit Singh
(917) 612-3158

Zahid Syed
(516) 832-6151

Host Committee:

Kawaljit Chandi, Herman Singh, Jaya Bahadkar, Shikha Sehgal, Ajay Vir Sondhi, Vishal Sharma,
Satnam S. Parhar, Harpreet S. Toor, Sanjeev Jindal, Veena Lamba, Jyoti Gupta, Jaspal Arora (Tony)



NASSAU COUNTY EXECUTIVE

ED MANGANO

www.nassaucountyny.gov





**Most Trusted
News Media Company
Serving South Asian Americans**

*The Only South
Asian American
Media Group that
Gives you Maximum Cost
Effective Reach*



*3 Million + Views on
YouTube & Half Million
fan like on Facebook*



Email: sst@nuwaygroup.com

www.nuwaygroup.com

Phone: 917 612 3158

Let's Be Clear, Those chain status messages we're asked to paste on our facebook wall are just emotional blackmail

(Agencies) There's a peculiar phenomenon much in vogue these days – solidarity via Facebook. Every day, somewhere on my timeline I see something like this. "I'm going to say goodbye to some of you..... now I'm watching the ones who will have the time to read this post until the end. This is a little test, just to see who reads and who shares without reading! If you have read everything, select 'like' so I can put a thank you on your profile! Cancer is very invasive and destructive to your body. After you have finished your treatment, then, your body wants to go to war with yourself trying to reconstruct all the damage caused by radiation. It's a very long process. Please, in honour of someone who died, or is fighting cancer, or even had cancer, copy and paste. They all say: 'if you need anything, do not hesitate, I'm gonna be there for you'... so I'm going to make a bet that less than 1/2 of my friends will put this on their walls. You just have to copy (not share)!!! I want to know who I can count on.... Write 'done' in the comment when you do. To all those who are fighting... I am with you always!" The cause varies — cancer, depression, mental health, forgotten army veterans — but the pressure is the same. At one time it was just a request for solidarity and support. Now it's morphed into what feels like emotional blackmail rather than just tugging at the heart. "I'm going to make a bet that less than half my friends will put this on my wall."

"This is a test to see who reads and who shares without reading."

It might be for a good cause and I do not in any way doubt the sincerity of those who post it, but it's passive aggressive nonetheless. It has also fuelled a whole new field of conspiracy theories and paranoia. Some think that all this copy and paste renders a user more vulnerable to hacking, that it's a sneaky way for web

crawlers to add you to lists that can then be sold off. Whether that's true or not, what it effectively does is make each post a fresh new post that's not dependent on the original poster's privacy settings. There's no "mother post" it can all be traced to which is wonderful for someone trying to spread a hoax and remain undetected. If the original is deleted, all its shared spawn will not vanish as well. But the real problem is with the motivation, not the modus operandi. Facebook has always been prone to faux activism. We have all seen pictures of a cancer-stricken child and been told that our likes and shares will help him get some life-saving surgery. Or that Mark Zuckerberg is giving away \$45 billion of Facebook stock, 10% of it to ordinary people as long as you copy and paste that message. By the way,

copy-pasting that viral Facebook copyright notice "under articles L.111, 112 and 113 of the code of intellectual property" is not going to do anything extra to protect your data either. The problem is not solidarity. It is that we are being pressured into thinking of solidarity as a copy and paste job. It is that we are being made to think of a status update as a litmus test of friendship, a word that has been stretched thin by Facebook anyway. Facebook has already wrought havoc with the idea of activism, fooling many of us into thinking that "liking" and sharing is the same as marching and organizing. Now it's doing the same to the word "solidarity", robbing it of all genuine meaning and worth. An obviously copied-and-pasted message really does nothing to bolster the

strength of a cancer survivor. When someone I know was going through the ravages of chemo, a friend's suggestion of books with recipes to stimulate the taste buds was helpful. The friend who brought a special kind of dried kombu seaweed from the US to add to chicken soup was a godsend. Even the friend who sent a simple "You'll beat this" private message mattered. Copy and paste statuses about cancer solidarity popping up like dandelions all over Facebook were meaningless. "But it does not hurt," protest those who do it and encourage others to do it. "And it does not take much time." Exactly. It does not take much time. Just like other kinds of faux activism, this seduces us into thinking that it's worthwhile because it asks so little of us — not time, not money, not sweat, not



even too much typing. It's even easier than writing "Thinking of you. Hugs" on someone's wall. Why have we been fooled into thinking that this is a way we can show the world that we are good persons, that we care? Who have we become that we think our friendships are so flimsy that unless they can copy and paste for us, friends will not be there for a real emergency in our lives? If someone on our friend list does not copy and paste, will we not pick up the phone to call them if some day we need their help? Or will we not answer their call if they need us and we can help? What does it say about us that we are using social media not just to share stuff about our

lives but to make judgements about people based on what they do NOT share?

Ultimately it boils down to something quite simple. If I need to copy and paste something to prove that I am paying attention, maybe our friendship was not worth that much to begin with. I would rather see a picture of your new puppy. And if you are feeling down, I will send you a hug emoji. In the end that's personal. A copy-and-paste message, however well-intentioned, is not. Also just because someone did it does not mean they did not do it grudgingly. It's a waste of time and honestly a waste of empathy.

Watering holes along highways go high and dry following SC order



(Agencies) New Delhi: Thousands of watering holes, iconic clubs and swanky pubs went high and dry as authorities went full steam to enforce a Supreme Court order banning liquor sale along highways while states gauged revenue losses.

In Delhi, 100 restaurants, liquor vends and bars, including those in five star hotels, along the six national highways passing through the state stopped serving alcohol.

The state's excise department is planning more action but is already flooded with representations from licence holders, who claim their outlets do

not fall within the 500 metres range laid down by the apex court.

In neighbouring Noida, the number of vends no longer serving drinks was 42 while out of total 292 bars in Gurugram, the Supreme Court order would impact 106, officials said.

In Maharashtra, the liquor ban on highways has affected at least 1,000 star hotels, the Indian Hotel And Restaurant Association (AHAR) president Adarsh Shetty said.

These include the VIP Lounge in the city's domestic airport, he claimed.

Maharashtra government expects it would lose an annual Rs 7,000 crore,

because of the ban. The state's Excise Minister Chandra Shekhar Bawankule has said that alternative ways to increase the revenue would be explored.

The visitors to three Trivandrum Club, Trivandrum Tennis Club and Sri Mulam Club in Thiruvanthapuram would miss their drinks as the bars in these places have been shut.

Overall in Kerala, one of the highest liquor consuming states, 1,956 liquor bars and toddy shops have been affected.

These include outlets run by the Beverages Corporation and Consumerfed, 11 bars in five star hotels, bars in 18 clubs, 586 beer wine parlours and 1,132 toddy shops which have been told to stop serving liquor.

Kerala is looking at revenue losses as well as the tourism industry being affected. State Excise Minister G Sudhakaran however has made it clear that the apex court directions would be followed.

In Chennai, over 35 star

category hotels serving liquor in and around the city and around 250 elsewhere in Tamil Nadu would be affected, it is estimated.

Business has taken a blow in Mahe enclave in Puducherry where liquor is cheaper than Kerala attracting tipplers from neighbouring districts. At least 32 shops come within the 500 meters range in in Mahe.

Puducherry PWD Minister A Namassivayam said that the overall revenue loss

to the Union Territory is expected to be around Rs 60 crores.

In Karnataka, the state's Wine Merchants Association is considering meeting Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah with a representation to denotify state highways.

"The Supreme Court order would impact about 60 to 70 per cent liquor licences issued in the state," the Association's General Secretary Honnagiri Gowda said.

Introspect punjab polls result, unfair to blame EVMs: EC to AAP

(Agencies) New Delhi : The Aam Admi Party (AAP)+ is free to file an election petition in the state high court if it wants to verify votes cast in Punjab polls with data of paper trail, the Election Commission said today. In a strongly-worded letter, the EC also said it is for the AAP "to introspect as to why your party could not perform as per your expectations and it is unfair on your part to attribute unsatisfactory poll performance of your party to the alleged tamperability of EVMS+ ." The poll watchdog said after declaration of results only alternative available to verify the data of votes cast is to file an Election Petition before the high court concerned. The AAP alleged that poll authorities in Punjab had refused to accept its demand to tally results with paper trail audit.

'Muslims have realised terrorism is attempt to defame Islam': Rajnath Singh



(Agencies) Home minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday that the country is united against any kind of violence and Muslims have realised that terrorism is an attempt to defame Islam. "The whole country is united against terrorism. The Muslims have realised that terrorism is an attempt to defame Islam," he told reporters when asked about the violence perpetrated by militants in Jammu and Kashmir. He said the security forces were giving a befitting reply to militants who are creating trouble in Kashmir Valley. The home minister had on Friday said that Pakistan was using social media to incite youths in Kashmir to storm encounter sites and help holed-up militants. The strife-torn region had seen a "new trend" of late in which youths from nearby villages gather at the sites of encounter between security forces and terrorists and pelt stones to help the militants escape, he had said.

Man arrested for luring Uzbek woman to India, raping her over six months



(Agencies) A Mehrauli resident was arrested on Sunday for allegedly raping a 22-year-old woman from Uzbekistan for nearly six months. Police said the woman filed a complaint on Friday, accusing one Sonu alias Sumit of duping her into coming to India for employment. He had allegedly contacted her through Facebook by posing as a senior executive at a Gurgaon-based IT company. He received the woman at the airport, and offered her a place to stay at Mehrauli.

"Sonu took her passport and money, claiming that he needed to keep them as security deposit. He then moved in with the woman and raped her for nearly half a year," a police officer said. The accused was arrested after a medical examination of the woman confirmed rape. Police have registered a case against him, and are investigating if he is part of a larger human trafficking racket.

Government will help judiciary reduce pendency of cases: Narendra Modi

(Agencies) Allahabad : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday assured Chief Justice JS Khehar that his government will make all efforts to back his resolve to reduce burden on the judiciary and pendency of cases. "I assure the chief justice that government will back his 'sankalp' (resolve) to bring down the burden on the judiciary and reduce pendency of cases," he said in his address at the sesquicentennial cel-

ebrations marking 150 years of the Allahabad High Court. Noting that he felt that there was an element of "pain" in the speech of Justice Khehar, Modi said the government had done away with 1,200 old laws to find a way out of the maze of the statutes and also help the judiciary in modernising the system. He asked the people working on startups to bring about innovations to strengthen the judicial system. The Prime Min-

ister lauded the steps being taken by the chief justice to make use of technology in simplifying the working in the courts and bring about qualitative change. Modi also said video-conferencing should be used for deposition made in courts by those facing trial, the witnesses and officials to prevent wastage of time and money. He appealed to the judiciary, the government and the people to make 2022, the 75th year of In-

dependence, a target year to take the country to greater heights. Earlier addressing the gathering, Justice Khehar raised the issue of pendency of cases+ in courts, including the Supreme Court, and said he was taking steps to reduce the burden on the judiciary. He asked the judges to consider sitting in courts for five days during vacation to clear at least 10 cases each day and bring down the pendency.

Media owners being controlled by Modi govt, stories getting killed: Chidambaram

(Agencies) Congress leader P Chidambaram on Saturday alleged that there was a "pervasive, systematic and infringed control" over the owners of media by the Narendra Modi government.

"Today, believe me, there is all pervasive, systematic infringed control over the owners of the media. You talk to any journalist in Delhi, they will tell you that. Stories are simply killed. This is a



serious problem," he said in an interaction after the launch of his book 'Fearless in opposition - Power and Accountability' in Bengaluru. The former Union minister said there may have been control over media during Emergency, but that was an "aberration". "The control over media today is unparalleled.

Maybe the control was there during Emergency, but that was an aberration. We have admitted that aberration and also apologised," he said. He claimed that it would be a straight fight between Congress and BJP in the next round of elections as there were no major regional parties in some states including Gujarat and Rajasthan. "In the next round of elections, there will be a straight fight between BJP and Congress in at least seven or eight states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh among others, as there are no major regional parties in these states. "All regional parties were defeated in the last state elections including Uttar Pradesh," he said. Chidambaram, however, said he did not mean it was the end of regional parties.

Yogi Adityanath has saved UP from becoming another Pakistan, says Sadhvi Prachi



(Agencies) With Yogi Adityanath becoming the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, the state has been "prevented" from turning into "another Pakistan", controversial Hindutva leader Sadhvi Prachi said on Sunday.

"By becoming the chief minister of UP, Yogi Adityanath has not only ushered in a feeling of happiness and enthusiasm among the public, but also

prevented it from becoming another Pakistan," Sadhvi Prachi told reporters in UP's Sambhal. Showering praises on Adityanath, she said the way UP government is probing the works of the previous regime, their reality will be exposed soon. "This is probably giving them (Samajwadi Party) sleepless nights," she said. To a question, she said the UP government should also ban liquor in the state.

Mehbooba thanks PM Modi for supporting her govt during 'difficult time'

(Agencies) Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday for supporting her government during the "difficult time" last year. Mufti -- apparently referring to the law and order situation in the Kashmir Valley after the July 8 killing of Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Burhan Wani -- said Modi ensured that the state government survived the situation. Mufti was addressing a rally in Udhampur after Modi inaugurated the state-of-the-art Chenani-Nashri tunnel, the longest in



the country at nearly 11 km.

My government would not have been able to handle it alone," she said, and added that Modi provided central assistance through Union home minister Rajnath Singh, who was always there to help the

Jammu and Kashmir government. She also praised Modi for his "determination", saying he delivers whatever he aims at. Mufti invited Modi to the state, saying he must visit Kashmir and give a message to the entire world that it is safe for tourists.

GADVASU doctors treat PM's dog

(Agencies) Ludhiana: From the team of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's security, a sniffer dog, black in colour, landed at Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University here on Friday to get treatment for intra oral tumor. Black coloured Labrador (9), who has been well trained to detect various items such as explosives, and is generally taken to search the places before PM's visit, underwent a surgery of mouth at the hospital of Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. It took one and a half hour to remove the tumor that had developed along a tooth as per sources in the university, by the team led by Dr. Arun Anand, Associate Professor at GADVASU. The doctors informed that the tooth has also been removed. A defense team comprising of four officers brought the dog from Patiala in a gypsy. After the surgery ended, the dog was immediately taken to Patiala.

SHREENATH ENTERPRISE INC & OMKAR PRODUCTION PRESENTS

AFTER RECORDS BREAKING COMEDY PLAY "MUMMY MARI YAMUNA AME ENA NAMUNA" IN 2016 COMEDY KING NIMESH SHAH IS COMING BACK WITH MUMBAI - INDIA'S NO.1 AWARD WINNING FAMILY COMEDY PLAY

મુંબઈનું એકમાત્ર 7★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ રેટિંગ નાટક



Comedy King **NIMESH SHAH**
Patni nachave bhagwan bachave,
Patni singham pati chingam
& Mummy Mari Yamuna Ame Ena Namuna Fame

Television star **RUPA DIVETIA**
Kusum, Kasauti,
Matka bhare Manjula
& Mummy Mari Yamuna Ame Ena Namuna Fame

Queen of comedy **MALLIKA SHAH**
Patni nachave bhagwan bachave,
Patni singham pati chingam
& Mummy Mari Yamuna Ame Ena Namuna Fame

Writer: Nimesh Shah
Director: Arvind Vaidya

Star Studded Comedy play for Full Family.

પટેલ ન રોકે એને ભગવાન તોકે
(Patel Ne Roke Ene Bhagwan Toke)

લોકો એટલા હસે છે કે ૨ કલાક નું નાટક ૩ કલાક ચાલે છે

ON FRIDAY MARCH 31ST 2017, TIME: 8:00PM (Sharp!)
At HINDU AUDITORIUM COMMUNITY CENTER
143-09 HOLY AVE, FLUSHING, NY 11355

TICKET:
\$50 (VIP)
\$35, \$25 & \$20

CONTACT
Suhag Mehta=347-513-8526
Manikant Patel=646-220-1915
Usha Ajit Vora=516-857-8400
Vipul Sanghvi=516-776-3991
Ela Butala=347-453-9083

SPONSOR
INSIDER
For our Company details
Download **SNEPI** App
(For iPhone or Android Phone)

WWW.Sulekha.com
Email: Suhagmehta@aol.com

SHREENATH ENTERPRISE INC WORLD CINEMA PARTNERS

OMKAR PRODUCTION SUPER ENTERTAINMENT Presents

MUSIC, MUSTI DESI DHAMAAL

SENSATIONAL AND VERSATILE SINGERS
WINNER OF SA RE GA MA PA 2016 LIVE

KUSHAL PAUL RUPALI JAGGA
JYOTICA TANGRI



APRIL 7, 2017 FRIDAY 8 PM
HINDU AUDITORIUM COMMUNITY CENTER
143-09 HOLY AVE, FLUSHING, NY 11355
For tickets: VVIP, \$100, \$75, \$50 \$35

Contact: Suhag Mehta (347) 513-8526, Raaj Rahni (917) 295-3262, Manikant Patel (646) 220-1915, Balwinder Bajwa (516) 852-2222, Vipul Sanghvi (516) 776-3991

TICKET ON - Sulekha.com TICKET HUNGAMA ticketmaster

sponsors
568 MEDIA GROUP Hum Hindustani nuway group IB LIMESKY.COM South Asian Women's Action Organization Inc

REAL ESTATE * INSURANCE * COMMERCIAL LOANS

Real Estate Services Offered :
Brokerage, Investment Advisory, Asset Management

We specialize in Investment & Income producing properties.

Insurance Services Offered :
Business, Liability, Disability, Workers Comp, E&O, Auto, Home, Personal & Commercial



Sharnjit Singh Thind
Licensed Real Estate/
Insurance Broker NYS
Notary Public

WHITESTONE
Real Estate & Asset Management Corp.

HONESTY * INTEGRITY * EXPERIENCE * KNOWLEDGE

Email : sst@WhitestonecorpUSA.com WWW.WhitestonecorpUSA.com

Whitestone Real Estate & Asset Mangment Corp is a Licensed New York State Real Estate Broker

All Commercial Loans are arranged through excellent third Party Lenders



No weekend party at Gurgaon's CyberHub as curtains come down on pubs, bars

(Agencies) The Supreme Court order banning sale of 500 metres from highways has dealt a heavy blow to Gurgaon's Cyber Hub, leaving revellers high and dry on a weekend.

Local residents expressed shock on hearing the news on Friday night, even as some loyal customers were surprised by hefty discounts offered by some pubs—for "the last Friday night party". "I thought someone was playing an April fool prank on me but then we visited and were shocked to know," Jatin

Chachra, a regular to Cyber Hub, said. "How can it be possible? Where will we go now?"

Being within 500 metres from the Delhi-Gurgaon expressway, a national highway—a claim refuted by restaurant owners—Cyber Hub, which houses 34 pubs and bars, went dry from Saturday.

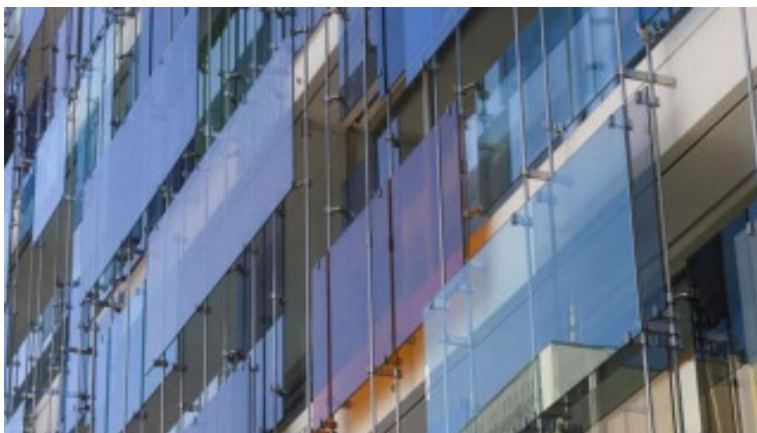
"This is not fair as there are not much decent places to party in Gurgaon. After the SC order, there is not much left in the city," Mandeep Singh, an entrepreneur and a resident of

Sushant Lok 1, said, adding that he will now party at home or head to Delhi. "Why only Cyber Hub or Sector 29? Accidents can happen anywhere," argued Teena Modi, a resident of DLF city phase 1. "Now people will start drinking in car. This was the only organised place in Gurgaon and the order is unfair. We are really sad and disheartened," said Vinita Johar, an entrepreneur residing in Gurgaon. People also took to social media to vent their ire. "This is less logic more opinion. Doesnt address drinking at home and driving on highways, or carrying booze with you in car / lorry," Sajith Pai reasoned. The excise department officials said that liquor sale

would not be allowed within 500 meters starting Saturday and the licences of 143 pubs and bars, including the 34 in Cyber Hub, will not be renewed. "We have not received the Supreme Court order yet, but we will comply with its orders," said Aruna Singh, deputy excise and taxation commissioner, Gurgaon. Pub and bar owners want the distance to be measured by the city municipal corporation, not the excise department, whose measurement they do not trust. "Cyber Hub was always accessible by an underpass near the building 9. Motorists have to take that U-turn to come towards Cyber Hub. This is part of the approved master plan of signal

free Golf course road", said Rahul Singh, head of National Restaurant Association of India's Haryana chapter, adding that Cyber Hub was not within 500 metres. The Supreme Court ruling is also likely to hurt pubs and bars in Gurgaon's several five-star hotels located along the national highway and on Sohna road. "This was a perfect place to party with friends and family. Everything was so organised: from parking to different cuisines. It was the only destination in Gurgaon," said Vinni Madan, a Gurgaon businessman, frequenting Cyber Hub for last three years, adding that he too would go to Delhi for drinks.

India steps up black money hunt; seeks Swiss bank details of 10 suspects



(Agencies) Stepping up its hunt for black money stashed abroad, India has approached Switzerland for banking details of at least ten persons and entities suspected to have kept untaxed money in Swiss banks.

These include two listed textile companies, while others are associated with an art curator and his carpet export business.

Switzerland's tax department issued notices to them last week to reply within 30 days to appeal the decision about providing 'administrative assistance' in information requests from India.

Under its local rules, Switzerland provides a final chance to the concerned persons and entities before sharing the information about suspected cases of tax crimes with any foreign jurisdiction. These notices are made public through gazette notifications if they are not reachable directly by the concerned banks or the tax department. At least ten such

notices concerning individuals and companies with Indian links were issued last week -- which could be the highest for a country within a week.

The notices name two listed textile firms -- Neo Corporation International and SEL Manufacturing Company Ltd.

There are also some companies incorporated in tax havens like Panama and British Virgin Islands. Most of the companies and individuals are associated with a carpet export business and an art curator with operations across several countries.

These are Abdul Rashid Mir, Amir Mir, Sabeha Mir, Mujeeb Mir and Tabassum Mir. The companies named in these notices include Cottage Industries Exposition, Modale SA and Progress Ventures Group. Some of these names had figured in the leaked Panama Papers too, but several of them including the two listed firms have denied any wrongdoing.

Govt plans word limit for RTI, make information expensive

(Agencies) The Modi government's plan to change information law norms, including a 500-word limit for an application and higher fee, has activists worried who see it as an attempt to dilute the RTI.

The changes proposed will make information expensive and take online the process of complaint for denying information, shutting out thousands of citizens who do not have access to the internet or are not Net-savvy. "The intention is clear. The government wants to make getting information difficult as the draft rules empower public authorities more than citizens," right to information (RTI) activist Lokesh Batra said.

One of the new rules says an RTI application should not be more than 500 words but exceeding the limit cannot be a ground for rejecting the request.

The department of personnel and training has set April 15 deadline for comments on the proposed changes -- the first by the Modi government -- that have been put up on its website.

The proposed norms ask the applicant to bear the postal charge for sending the information sought. As of now, the government foots the



bill.

Enacted in 2005, the RTI is the only law that empowers citizens to question the government, with over 10 million applications filed with the Centre in 2015-16.

The government has come out with a new format for non-compliance of a citizen's request that bars hand-written appeals.

Appeals will have to be filed online, a move that will make the process difficult for hundreds of Indians, who are poor and barely literate.

Officials will be allowed to file documents to counter claims of false information, which will lengthen the process. At present a citizen can file an appeal within 30 days if denied information. The period is 60 days for incomplete data.

New norms put on the applicant the onus of sending a copy of the appeal to the

information officer, a job which is the responsibility of the official or the department concerned.

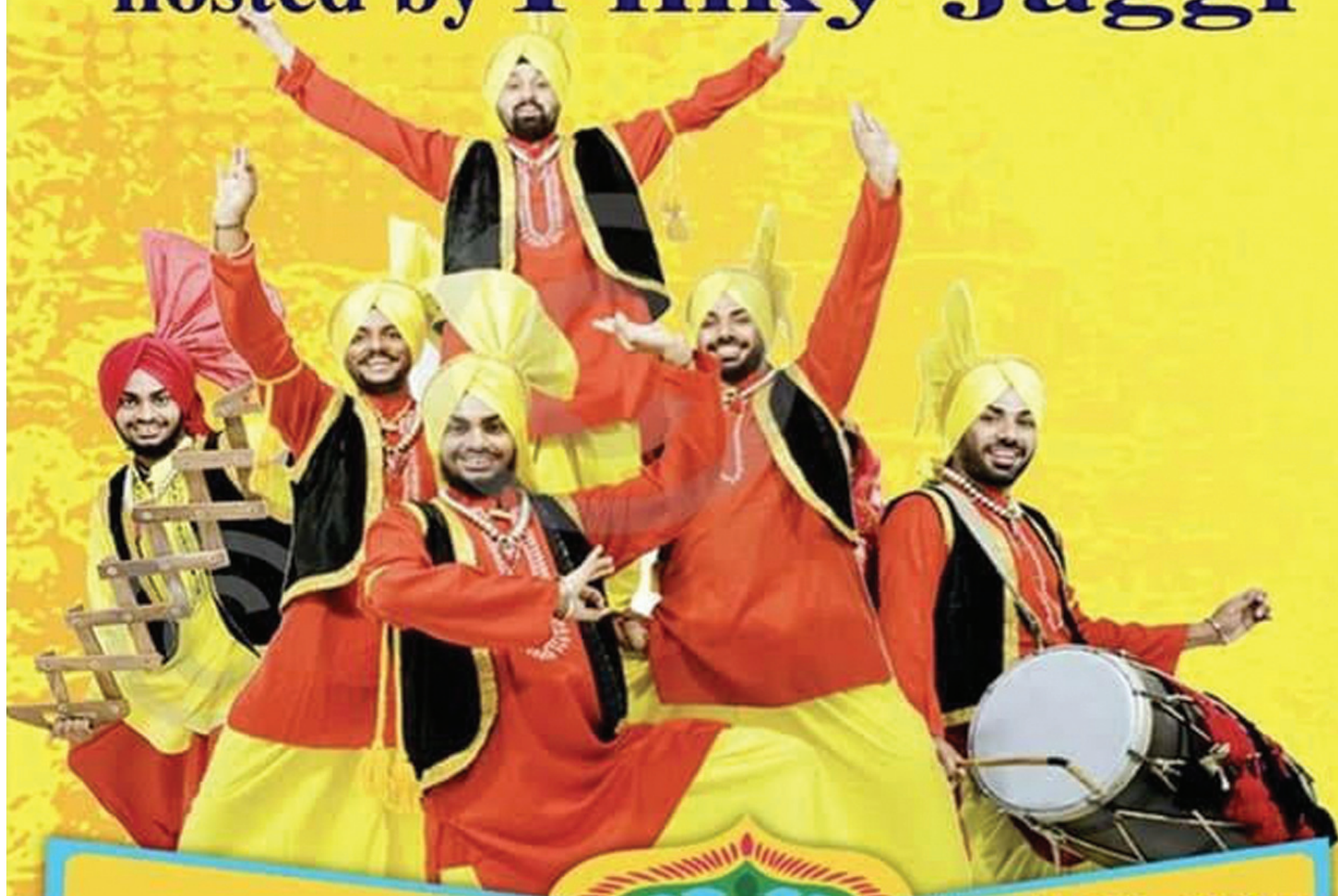
If not done, the appeal can be rejected.

First appeal is filed within the department and second is with the central information commission.

Information will also get pricier. Government publications such as the economic survey and National Sample Survey Office data will no longer be available for the RTI fee of Rs 10.

Info seeker will either have to pay the market price of the publication or Rs 2 for photocopy of each page, double the present rate. The previous UPA government, too, had tried to weaken the RTI but dropped the idea in face of stiff opposition from civil society and Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

Veer Entertainment Presents **Vaisakhi** hosted by **Pinky Jaggi**



Saturday

**April 15, 2017
7:30 PM**

to be celebrated at The Cotillion Jericho, 440 Jericho Turnpike, Jericho, NY 11753

PTC Punjabi

Diamonds-R-Must

The South Asian Insider

Sarashiva

T-Mobile

Josh TV

Sona Chandi Jewelers

Kitchen Concepts

TV Asia

Omni Realty & Mortgage

AZA Studio

Hum Hindustani

Admission: \$50 PP inclusive of Dinner with Open Bar.
Contact : Pinky Jaggi, (516)330-7323, DJ Tony (516) 852-4310

**Lots of Fun & Entertainment, Raffles to win,
Bhangra Giddha with best DJ in House.**

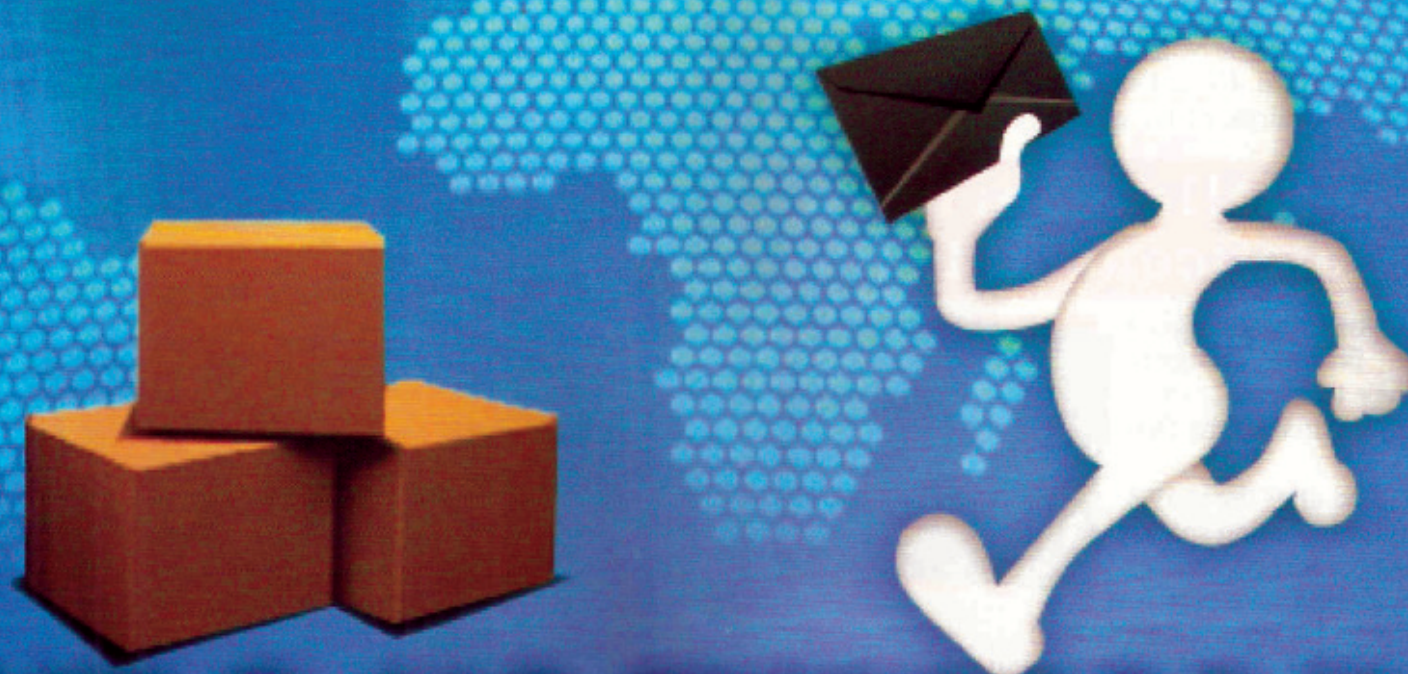
**We Thank Our Customers for Their Trust & Loyalty
22 Years of Excellent Customer Service**

FOR COMPETITIVE RATES CALL

1-800-870-5845

PICK-UP & DELIVERY

ANYWHERE IN USA



INDO US EXPRESS, INC.

World wide Couriers*Freight Forwards

Domestic & Local Delivery

43-50, 11th St., Suite No, 109, LIC, New York, N.Y. 11101

Tel: 212-447-5720. Fax: 516 932 3750

www.indousexpress.com

Email : gsingh9070@aol.com (or) indousexpress@gmail.com

7Days A Week

**CALL ABOUT OUR SPECIAL RATES TO
INDIA**

Real Estate & Insurance

Thinking of Buying/Selling Home?



**We Specialize in
Income Producing
& Investment
Properties**



Whitestone

REAL ESTATE

Honesty * Integrity * Experience * Knowledge

Phone : 516 280 0576, 917 612 3158
Email : sst@whitestonecorp.com
www.whitestonecorp.com

Sharnjit Singh Thind, Licensed Insurance Broker (Property & Casualty)
Navjot Kaur Licensed Insurance Broker (Life, Accident & Health)

Whitestone Real Estate & Asset Management Corp is a Licensed New York State Real Estate Broker
All Commercial Loan are arranged through excellent third Party Lenders

Insurance Services

Business,
Liability,
Disability,
Workers Comp,
E & O, Auto,
Home,
Personal &
Commercial
Accident, Life,
Health, Visitor
& Travel

US tightens H-1B guidelines for computer programmers, warns against discrimination

The United States has raised the specialisation bar for H-1B visas for hiring computer programmers and, on Monday, just around the time it began accepting petitions for 2018, warned employers against using the visa programme to discriminate against American workers.

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), which runs the H-1B programme, changed guidelines over the weekend to prevent US firms or US-based units of multinationals from using these visas to hire computer programmers.

In a March 31 policy memorandum, the USCIS said a computer programmer with an ability to use IT skill will not be sufficient. A petitioner "must provide other evidence to establish that the particular position is one in a specialty occupation".

The intention was to push companies to hire only high-skilled workers from abroad and leave low or medium level jobs for Americans, as has been the stated position of some in the Trump administration, who have been critical of

this programme. And on Monday, day one of the opening of the 2018 cycle, the justice department issued a stern warning to employers on using the high-skilled visa programme to discriminate against local workers. "The Justice Department will not tolerate employers misusing the H-1B visa process to discriminate against US workers," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Tom Wheeler of the Civil Rights Division in a statement. "US workers should not be placed in a disfavored status, and the department is wholeheartedly committed to investigating and vigorously prosecuting these claims," he added. While the justice department is known to have investigated and prosecuted allegations of discrimination before, it could not be immediately confirmed if such a warning was ever issued around the time employers began filing H-1B petitions. The justice department said in a statement that anti-discrimination provision of the Immigration and

Nationality Act (INA) "prohibits employers from discriminating against US workers because of their citizenship or national origin in hiring, firing and recruiting", and added, "Employers violate the INA if they have a discriminatory hiring preference that favors H-1B visa holders over US workers". The DoJ threat came at around the same time Monday as the USCIS threw open the process for accepting petitions for H-1B visas 2018, which will likely be over in just a few days given the high demand. The United States grants 85,000 H-1B visas under an congressionally mandate cap every year — 65,000 to foreigners hired outside the US and 20,000 to international students enrolled in American colleges and universities. The programme has come heightened scrutiny in recent years, with critics arguing it is being used by companies to hire temporary foreigners workers on low salaries to displace local American

workers on higher salaries. The same critics have targeted Indian IT companies such as Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro accusing them of "gaming the system" by cornering a large portion of the annual disbursement of H-1Bs with a large number of applications. Many of these critics are now in the administration of President Trump, who has said the H-1B programme, which he used earlier in his businesses, is broken. There was even a draft of an executive order that circulated briefly but was never issued. One of the H-1B visa programme's chief critics is Attorney General Jeff Sessions, whose department issued the Monday warning with the threat of "investigating and vigorously prosecuting these claims" of Americans being displaced. Indian IT companies, who admit to using this visa programme heavily, have, however, vigorously contested allegations of using this programme to discriminate against local workers, and have ramped up local hirings in recent years. (Hindustan Times)

Haley Eclipses Tillerson

the first to enjoy Cabinet rank in a Republican administration since Jeane Kirkpatrick during Ronald Reagan's first term. And with Rex Tillerson conducting his job almost entirely out of public view, Haley has improbably eclipsed the secretary of state as the country's leading voice on foreign affairs.

Indeed, Haley has essentially had free rein in the job, cutting an unusually conspicuous media profile and avoiding the tense dealings that U.N. ambassadors often have with State.

"I think in her mind, the key issue that would normally exist — her relationship with the secretary of state — does not exist. She thinks she's operating completely independently of him," said a George W. Bush-era State Department official.

Haley, 45, was seen as a rising star in the Republican Party before Trump's election, which was widely considered a rejection of the more diverse and inclusive version of the GOP she has championed. She was critical of Trump during the Republican primary, when she stumped for Marco Rubio. She also has been out front when it comes to distancing her own views, particularly on Russia, from those of the president.

Her ability to navigate the treacherous waters of the Trump administration has renewed speculation about her political future, generating buzz among Republican operatives that she may be Tillerson's heir apparent and a future presidential candidate. The White House, through a spokeswoman, denied that Haley was initially offered the secretary of state job.

"She's perfectly positioned to inherit the State Department," said a second Bush-era foreign policy hand. "She needs a year or two at the U.N., and then she will get the State Department."

She's been more public in her first two months on the job than any of her immediate predecessors, representing the administration on major news shows, including ABC's "This

Week" and CBS' "Face the Nation," as well as on Fox News. She sat down last month with NBC's Matt Lauer.

Haley has seemingly gone out of her way to make a splash. She has a knack for made-for-TV one-liners, like the one she delivered to a rapturous audience last week at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's annual policy conference last week, when she announced there was a "new sheriff in town" at the U.N.

"I wear heels, and it's not for a fashion statement," she said. "It's because if I see something wrong, we're gonna kick 'em every time."

That said, Haley's tenure is otherwise noteworthy for how utterly quotidian her pronouncements would be in the course of any other Republican administration. She has made a point of reassuring traditional American allies like Britain and France, sitting down with their representatives in her first day on the job, and of putting the nation's adversaries on warning.

"For those that don't have our backs, we're taking names," she said in her first public appearance in the job, which her aides have come to refer to as the "Taking Names" speech.

Haley was an unlikely selection for the role, and not only because of her scant foreign policy credentials.

As governor of South Carolina, she was openly critical of Trump. She used her response to President Barack Obama's final State of the Union address in February 2016 to rebuke Trump, who was then the GOP front-runner. When Haley warned her fellow Republicans against the temptation to follow the "siren call of the angriest voices," Trump responded in kind, tweeting, "The people of South Carolina are embarrassed by Nikki Haley!"

If she has not been openly critical of Trump in her new job, she has not hesitated to distinguish her views from his, either.

Based at the United Nations headquarters

in New York, Haley has used her physical distance from the president and his aides, and the vacuum created by Tillerson's absence on the public stage, to sound hardheaded notes on Russia even as a Kremlin-related scandal has dogged the Trump presidency.

"She's fortunate to be away from Washington so that the fights between the Republican regulars and the Trump White House don't damage her," said the former Bush administration foreign policy aide.

"The president has not once called me and said, 'Don't beat up on Russia,' has not once called me and told me what to say," she told ABC's Martha Raddatz in an interview that aired Sunday. "I am beating up on Russia."

Haley's ability to walk the tightrope between mainstream Republican foreign policy and the topsy-turvy world of the president has proved mutually beneficial, giving the White House a safety valve, on the one hand, and allowing her to win over Trump skeptics, on the other. In her first speech at the U.N. Security Council, she blasted Russia's incursion into Ukraine and made clear that sanctions imposed after its annexation of Crimea would remain in place. The White House pointed to those remarks as it struggled to combat the fallout from the resignation of short-lived national security adviser Michael Flynn and defend the president against charges that his aides were soft on Russia.

"His ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, stood before the U.N. Security Council on her first day and strongly denounced the Russian occupation of Crimea," press secretary Sean Spicer told the White House press corps.

"She has handled herself with decorum and dignity and maintained her credibility over the first 65 days of the administration. Such is the state of the first 100 days that that is an achievement worthy of a gold medal," said Steve Schmidt, who served

as John McCain's campaign manager in 2008.

Haley's newfound visibility has GOP operatives sizing up her political prospects, with some musing she may become the next secretary of state and others speculating she'll challenge Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) in a Republican primary in 2020.

Yet some say she has made her political ambitions too obvious. One former State Department official went so far as to call her current post a "box-checking exercise" designed to bolster her résumé for a future presidential bid.

Some of the most important members of her political team joined her at the U.N., despite warnings from some longtime advisers that bringing them along would send the wrong message to her fellow diplomats. Her longtime pollster and strategist, Jon Lerner, who had no formal experience in foreign policy but had long maintained an interest in the subject, serves as her deputy ambassador.

How her relationship evolves with Tillerson, especially if he decides to take on a more public role, remains to be seen. Kirkpatrick, for example, repeatedly clashed with Secretary of State Alexander Haig and his assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs, Elliott Abrams. "Speaking from my own experience at the U.N., there can only be one secretary of state at a time," said John Bolton, a longtime State Department official who served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations during the George W. Bush administration. "Otherwise, you end up with an Alexander Haig-Jeane Kirkpatrick relationship, which was, to be anodyne, stressful."

For now, Haley is taking obvious delight in having a national profile, and with the Republican Party in chaos despite widespread victories in 2016, she may be one of the few long-term winners of the cycle. "She's one of the few political leaders," Schmidt said, "who's had consistently good moments on the political stage over the past few years."

(Politico.com)

How the Sanctions Are Helping Putin

Restrictions on borrowing could not hurt a country that was already reducing its levels of foreign debt for several years before 2014. From 2015 to 2016, Russian oil and gas production was increasing faster than any of the Gulf countries or even the U.S., regardless of the technology ban. And Russia still exports \$14 billion in weapons per year, making it the third-biggest arms exporter in the world after the United

States and China.

Ultimately, one major factor determines the health of the Russian economy: the price of oil. As oil prices have stabilized, the Russian economy has mostly recovered and switched into slow recession mode. It's no surprise then, that the World Bank currently estimates that sanctions are shaving off no more than half a percentage point of Russian GDP. Even that estimate is prob-

ably way too high.

A much tougher Western sanctions regime could have inflicted pain on Russia and made it change course. The Russian elite is heavily dependent on the West, as its chief purchaser of oil and gas, holder of its assets and educator of its children. Targeted measures, such as a ban on the sale and service of passenger or cargo aircraft, could have brought Russia to its knees in months. If gold and currency reserves had been frozen, then Russia would have been in deep trouble in about three to five years' time.

Sanctions do make a big impact in one area—Russian domestic politics. The government-controlled media—which is most of it—blames Russia's current economic decline on the United States and European Union. President Putin declared on Oct. 12, 2016, speaking at the VTB investment forum in Moscow: "We often repeat that so-called sanctions do not have a significant influence on us. They do, and the major threat is the ban on technology transfer." For Putin, the sanctions are useful in helping him alienate the public from any Western-backed opposition leaders or from those who still proclaim that the West is a model for Russia's future development. Sanctions have also raised the implied risks of holding assets offshore and limited the capacity

for Putin and other members of the Russian elite to invest (or hide their money) abroad. That, in turn, has given the president tremendous leverage in controlling his team.

Meanwhile, a handful of Russian oligarchs and Kremlin-connected businessmen—chiefly those who run state-owned firms—have successfully exploited sanctions to get sweetheart deals and control over new monopolies for domestic products that are unfailingly inferior, over-priced and unreliable. Billions of rubles started to flee from the budget into pockets of closest Putin's cronies, who promised to quickly develop Russian facsimiles of Windows software, iPhones, GPS, computers, civil aircraft, and so on. The Ministry of Defense has already placed a sizable order for "Russian iPads," costing \$6,000 each. Gennadiy Timchenko, another old Putin friend, has monopolized the salmon trade, raising prices by over 200 percent and turning his chronically loss-making fish company into a super-lucrative business.

Ultimately sanctions have become a trap for the West. Keeping them in place gives Putin an additional source of popular support and a ready-made excuse for all his economic mistakes. Yet lifting them would be a clear sign to the Russian regime that it has prevailed in a battle-to-the-

death with the West. And for President Trump, any hint at this point of pro-Russian sentiment would add more ammunition to Democrats who say he's suspiciously close to Moscow.

Having found itself in a lose-lose situation, the West will most probably do nothing—keeping sanctions in place and freezing the situation. The Kremlin will be happy. Russia won't stop meddling in Ukraine or give up Crimea. Die-hard supporters of the president will keep walking the streets of Moscow carrying banners saying, "Putin outplayed everybody again"—and they will probably be right.

*Brexit is utter folly:
Britain had the best of
both worlds with EU*

They say: "Look at this past nine months, our economy has not tanked." There is a time in these situations; it takes usually a minimum of one-and-a-half years before cause leads to effect in a recession.

The letter already talks of transitional deals beyond the three years. No country, no business and no economy likes uncertainty for such a prolonged period. This letter not just prolongs but accentuates the uncertainty that the UK is going to face in the coming years.

It is Philip Hammond who said, "We cannot cherry pick, we cannot have our cake and eat it too". The irony is that we have had our cake and ate it. We have had the best of both worlds. We have not been part of an EU super-state, let alone the EU army. The fact is, since the formation of the EU, Britain has had the highest cumulative GDP growth rate in the EU, of 62% versus Germany at 35%. We have done well out of being part of the EU.

What we have embarked on is utter folly. Though the Prime Minister said there is no turning back, if we come to our senses we will not leave the EU. Article 50 is revocable. At any time from today we can decide we want to stay on. That is for the benefit of the British economy, for keeping the United Kingdom 'United', and for Europe as a whole—let alone the global economy. (Karan Bilimoria is a member of the House of Lords. The views expressed are personal.)

Norway whaling begins

These minke whales are thought to be part of a population that also lives in UK waters, according to the Humane Society International. When the minke whales leave UK waters, they could be hunted by Norwegian whalers.

Claire Bass, director of HSI UK, said in a statement: "It is shocking to think that these magnificent whales who swim safely in British waters, could fall victim to a brutal and bloody death simply to have their meat shrink-wrapped and sold for profit in Norwegian and Japanese supermarkets."

The group called on the UK's minister for food and rural affairs George Eustice to condemn Norway's whaling activity.

"The EU's position on Norway's commercial whaling has been lamentably weak, so now that the

UK prepares to divorce itself from the EU, we'd like to see our government taking a much firmer line to condemn this slaughter," Bass said.

'Dying industry'

Despite the raised quota, the number of whales Norway has actually killed has not reached the previous lower quota due to low demand for whale meat. Greenpeace has called whaling a "dying industry", as consumers move away from using the meat. The Norwegian government argues that whale is a traditional part of the diet in the country.

The International Whaling Commission banned commercial whaling in 1986. Norway is able to continue commercial whaling because it raised an objection to the moratorium at the time.

How Modi's 'Kabristaan-Shamshan' Statement Ended Up Bringing Dalits Into BJP's Fold In Uttar Pradesh

But people believed, even though everyone knew that the consumption of water on Holi is much more than what is required on Ramzan. This was probably the beginning of the post-truth campaign of the BJP. In politics of hatred it is easy to influence perception, using religious sentiments as a tool. Unfortunately, in India, people are guided by these overwhelming religious sentiments.

Time and again Hindus are reminded of the 'historical injustices' meted out to them by the rulers. It began with the Muslim rulers, over 500 years ago, followed by the British and then continued by the secular governments since India's Independence. For instance, during the Bihar Assembly elections, Prime Minister Modi said that reservation for backward classes are provided to people belonging to a 'special religion'. It was taken for granted that the special religion, he was talking about here was Muslims. A subtle hint is enough to mobilise Hindus against Muslims according to the RSS. However, it failed in case of Bihar, because of Lalu Prasad Yadav. Only

he has the potential among opposition leaders to oppose BJP and RSS on their own. And he took them on reservation issue.

The 'Jumlanomics' of 'sabka saath sabka vikas' and 'sushasan' made us believe that BJP will never rake the issues of Ram Janmabhoomi, uniform civil code or Article 370. But the RSS has never hesitated to take up these issues again and again. So during elections, these issues are always omnipresent in the BJP's agenda.

'Love Jihad' is one such lie that the RSS has perpetuated among Hindus. In the villages of North India, its a mixed populace of Hindus and Muslims and any inter-religious marriage or romantic relationship (between a Hindu girl and Muslim boy) is looked down upon as 'love jihad'. The thought has been ingrained so deeply in the minds of Hindus that the ruling Samajwadi Party could not oppose it either. This, despite the fact that socialist scion Ram Manohar Lohia had once preached that inter-faith marriages were the best way to promote communal harmony

and abolish casteism.

Right before the UP elections, when Prime Minister Modi started creating a brouhaha over triple talaq and four marriages, none of the prominent parties opposed it. Even the Left parties, which have a very clear perspective on these issues decided to keep mum. The Hindu populace, once again was made to believe that BJP is the lone party that capable of implementing some population control measures. But the fact is that the BJP was successful in tagging all other parties as 'biased' towards Muslims. Similarly, the rumours about Muslims storing weapons and bombs in mosques, have been featuring regularly in the propaganda against Muslims. I have heard these stories since childhood, but true to the nature of these rumours, I never quite knew where they originated from. But Hindus love to believe it.

We live in extraordinary times. Our society has taken to a saffron hue. There's unfortunately, very little space for individual freedom. What's even more saddening is the fact that this space is shrinking rapidly, and in future, there maybe no space at all.

Why Indians Need An Urgent Lesson In Identifying Their Racism At Home As They Come Under Attack Abroad

"appalled by the senseless violence and crime, some of which are racist in nature."

When two Indian techies enjoying a drink in a bar in Kansas City in the USA were shot at by a man telling them to go back to their country we understood the xenophobia in that attack. If it was not investigated as a hate crime we would have been upset and justifiably so. But when an India mob viciously sets upon a group of Nigerians in a mall in Greater Noida, right near our own capital, when lurid accusations of cannibalism are flung at Africans, we refuse to see a "hate crime", we refuse to smell "racism". Four Nigerians ended up in hospital after a mob held Nigerians responsible for the tragic death of a young student. They suspected he had been drugged by African nationals. Some Nigerians were picked up by the police but released due to lack of evidence. A march by local residents turned violent as they started assaulting anyone who looked Nigerian with chairs, metal dustbins, sticks and tools.

"They were kicking at us and shouting at us," Precious Amalawa, one of the victims tells Scoopwhoop News. "We kept asking what had we done. Even dogs are treated better." Sushma Swaraj has said Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath has promised a "fair and impartial investigation". Uttar Pradesh health minister Siddharth Nath Singh has said "Attack on Nigerian students is a serious issue". But the district magistrate Nagendra Prasad Singh says "It is absolutely not a hate crime, nor is it some kind of anger against a race."

Let's pause here. When Adam Purinton shows up with a gun in that bar in Kansas City and says "Get out of my country" to two Indian men who he thinks might be Iranian, he is racist. When a mob in Noida says the same to

every dark skinned African it can find, it's a culture clash? Nagendra Prasad Singh's protestations feel like déjà vu. When a Tanzanian student was attacked in Bengaluru in 2016, the state's home minister G Parameshwara said "It was not a racial attack but just a violent response to the accident (where a Sudanese student allegedly mowed down a pedestrian)."

In that incident an irate mob pulled every African it could find out of cars and beat them up. For being Africans. It cannot get more racist than that.

When a mob attacked African residents of Rajpur Khurd village in Chhatarpur with cricket bats, rods and bricks, shouting "Go back to Africa", Delhi police chief Alok Verma re-

fused to see a racist angle anywhere. The ministry of external affairs said all criminal acts should not be seen as racially motivated.

Are law enforcement officials, civil service officers and ministers unable to see the blatant racism or just unwilling to do so?

Even if hypothetically some local Nigerians were involved in the young student's death, to punish every African in the area for the crimes of some is racism. Even if there is a drugs and crime problem with some African residents, to tar all of them with the same brush?

That's racism. After the boy first went missing and a rumour went around that his Nigerian neighbours

had eaten him. A mob burst into their house and in a chilling echo of Dadri rummaged through their refrigerator. The Telegraph reports these rumours are still rife at every paan shop and bus stand. "Our classmates are saying that we should keep a distance from these Africans because they eat human flesh," Phil, a northeasterner tells the newspaper. To assume Africans are cannibalistic savages - that's racism.

Posters and banners have appeared at busy crossings calling for "Nigerian-Free Greater Noida" Wanting to drive a group of people, by race or ethnicity, out of the neighbourhood? That is racism just as it was racism when Dotbuster gangs attacked Indians

in Jersey City in the 1980s because it wanted to drive them out of town.

District Magistrate Singh thinks foreigners need to be "initiated to the Indian culture" to avoid such incidents. Perhaps our district magistrates, police officers and honourable ministers need to be initiated in a course of Racism 101 first. That needs to happen before the flag march that is happening now can be effective. After the attack in Bengaluru, then foreign ministry spokesperson Vikas Swarup assured "stringent punishment" but insisted it was an "isolated incident." If we still see these as isolated incidents, if we still keep seeing one as only an emotional reaction to an accident, another as only a heated reaction to a boy's tragic death or a gross over-

reaction from mob misled by rumours, these "unfortunate incidents" will keep happening, proving that in our anxiety to project ourselves as a race-blind society, we are in reality just wilfully blind to our racism. Just a few days ago Indian Americans raised \$100,000 for Ian Grillot, the American who was wounded coming to the aid of those two Indian engineers at that Kansas City bar. "Ian Grillot is a man who reminds us of the promise of America and its greatness," said Jiten Agarwal at the event in Houston. What does what happened in Greater Noida tell us about the promise of India and its greatness? That night in Noida, in that baying mob of hundreds, how many homegrown Ian Grillots could we claim?

(www.huffingtonpost.in)

Rumble Of A Scary Trundle

The ominous footprints are no longer distant. We see them in Jharkhand's paddy slopes, Andaman's coral reefs, Bangalore's garment units, Punjab's wheat fields...

Indian scientists who engage in climate research and are grappling with possible solutions say the footprints of changing climate conditions in the country are now visible—not just in copious amounts of data, but to the naked eye. This was pointed out to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over two years ago, when he first chaired the recast PM's Council on Climate Change. The evidence lies strewn across the length and breadth of India. While droughts and unseasonal rains are seen as the more familiar markers, the deeper trails have led to remote corners upcountry, in the high seas and even on factory floors. Here's a snapshot of the not-so-hidden footprints of a changing climate. The Indian Ocean, without which the country cannot get its summer monsoon, is "significantly" warmer now than 50 years earlier. Maltos, an indigenous community in the forests of Jharkhand,

one of India's poorest states, are now left battling strange intruders into their bucolic life: swarms of unknown pests. Cities have been brought to a halt by catastrophic rains. Apple orchards of Himachal Pradesh are shifting higher up in search of cooler temperatures. Rainfall in the Western Ghats is declining, compared to India's eastern coast.

In the climate meeting Modi chaired in January 2015, the PM had said, according to a person who attended it, India's traditions of prakriti prem (love of nature) means it had a unique advantage in dealing with climate. India, which is one of the world's largest greenhouse gas emitters, has ratified the Paris global climate agreement. This means the country will have to ensure that 40 per cent of India's electricity will, by 2030, come from non-fossil renewable sources.

However, it will take more for

India to walk the climate talk, for any positive impact of mitigation measures can take years to implement, scientists say.

"It's been good so far," says farmer Satyapal Singh. The wheat crop on his five-acre farm near Haryana's Kuru-kshetra University is gradually turning brown now—from an iridescent green a month ago. This means the grains are ripening. Rising temperatures over the Indo-Gangetic plains, however, worry Singh. The mercury has quickened to 37 degree Celsius, an alarming four-degree clip in just over a week. Singh's farm is one among several across states that scientists are continuously tracking as part of a high-tech climate study. Wheat is now clearly India's most vulnerable crop when it comes to climate effects. In 2010, a sudden spike in temperature had cut wheat yields by 26 per cent in Punjab, according to the Borlaug Institute



for South Asia, which works closely with the agriculture ministry. The national wheat output wasn't affected much because the loss in yields was made up for by a larger crop area. Farmers didn't anticipate the loss as the weather had been glitch-free right up until harvest time, recalls Singh. Farmers like Singh may have been caught unawares, but scientists had already predicted such a possibility. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research had concluded—six years earlier—that grain yields could fall between 3 per cent and 4 per cent with every 1 degree Celsius rise in tem-

perature during grain filling—a stage that is like the adolescent years—of the wheat crop. Indian scientists have identified this increasingly common weather pattern—of sudden heat spells between March and April—as evidence of a changing climate. Nearly two-thirds people of India's 122-crore population rely on livelihoods that are climate-dependent. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that climate changes will be felt more acutely by the poor simply because they are less likely to have the financial resources to adapt.

Trump Couple, Now White House Employees, Can't Escape Conflict Laws

(Agencies) The husband-and-wife team of Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, now both senior federal government officials, has been alongside President Trump as the White House has hosted dozens of chief executives and a handful of world leaders in recent weeks. It is a rarefied crowd, one that has included the top executives of some of the world's largest automobile, airline, chemical, pharmaceutical and tech companies. Mr. Kushner will continue to keep such select company now that he has helped create a new office that Mr. Trump is calling the White House Office of American Innovation.

But the financial disclosure report released late Friday for Mr. Kushner, which shows that he and his wife still benefit financially from a real estate and investment empire worth as much as \$740 million, makes clear that this most powerful Washington couple is walking on perilous legal and ethical ground, according to several prominent experts on the subject.

Unlike Mr. Trump, who is exempt from conflict of interest laws, both Mr. Kushner and Ms. Trump — who took a formal White House position this past week — are forbidden under federal criminal and civil law to take any action that might benefit their particular financial holdings. "Donald Trump can evade legal responsibility even if the conflicts of interest remain," said Noah Bookbinder, executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a liberal nonprofit group. "His daughter and son-in-law don't have that escape hatch."

Mr. Kushner did resign from more than 200 positions in the partnerships and limited liability companies that make up the family-run multibillion-dollar real estate business. But the financial disclosure report shows that Mr. Kushner will remain a beneficiary of most of those same entities.

Jamie Gorelick, who served as deputy attorney general at the Justice Department during the Clinton administration and is now advising Mr. Kushner and Ms. Trump on government ethics issues, said that the couple could continue to hold on to so many of their assets because most of the value is tied up in buildings.

"The real estate assets that Kushner is holding on to are unlikely to pose the kinds of conflicts that would trigger the need to divest," Ms. Gorelick, a partner at WilmerHale, the law firm, said in a statement on Friday. "The remaining conflicts, from a practical perspective, are pretty



narrow and very manageable."

But real estate projects like the Kushner Companies' deals have become a magnet for opaque foreign money — often from parts of the world that present thorny policy questions, such as China, where Mr. Kushner's company has actively sought investors, as well as the Middle East and Russia. As part of his exceptionally broad portfolio in the White House, Mr. Kushner has been a crucial figure in arranging the visit of the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, on Thursday in Florida.

The mystery behind many real estate investments involving foreigners prompted the Treasury Department last year to push for additional disclosures as a way to combat money laundering.

While Mr. Kushner may face a potential ethical minefield, the disclosure form makes it difficult to determine exactly where those mines might be situated. The form, which runs 54 pages and lists hundreds of entities, reveals few details about the underlying investments that make up the Kushner empire, such as the addresses of buildings, sources of financing and names of partners. John Pudner, a conservative who has helped elect Tea Party candidates to Congress and now runs a nonprofit group called Take Back Our Republic, said that Mr. Kushner and Ms. Trump, if they wanted to serve in the White House, would have been better off if they had taken the difficult step of liquidating their holdings.

"A win-win for the president's family and everyone else is if there were no question anytime a decision is made that it's being done for the good of the country," he said. The actions by Mr. Kushner stand in contrast to the

moves by some other top aides to Mr. Trump, such as Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson, the former chief executive of Exxon Mobil, who before he was sworn in agreed to liquidate all of his stock holdings and his ownership stake in Exxon, putting his assets mostly into Treasury bonds and other permitted investments, such as diversified mutual funds, which make formal financial conflicts unlikely.

Mr. Kushner, by contrast, continues to hold multimillion-dollar lines of credit from institutions such as Citigroup and Deutsche Bank, while companies he is still a beneficiary of have billions of dollars in additional loans from heavily regulated institutions.

Richard W. Painter, who served as a White House ethics lawyer in the Bush administration, said that Mr. Kushner's financial holdings would complicate any interactions he might have with such banks. "The one thing Jared really ought to stay completely away from is anything having to do with Dodd-Frank," Mr. Painter said, referring to the 2010 law that increased capital reserve requirements and instituted many other regulatory changes that affected the nation's banks. Mr. Trump has already said he hopes to roll back the law, with the help of Congress and his top aides. Several of the companies that are in business with Kushner Companies have faced scrutiny by federal law enforcement. Deutsche Bank, for example, reached a \$7.2 billion settlement last year with the Justice Department over its sale of toxic mortgage securities.

Mr. Kushner, who frequently speaks with world leaders and is tasked with overseeing Middle East peace negotiations, also has an unsecured line of credit worth as much as \$5 million from

Israel Discount Bank. Kushner Companies has also taken out at least four loans from Bank Hapoalim, Israel's largest bank, though they are not disclosed in the filing. That firm is the subject of a Justice Department investigation into whether it helped wealthy Americans evade taxes with undeclared accounts. Another potential conflict rests in Ms. Trump's continued stake in the Trump International Hotel in Washington, a project that has drawn protests from ethics experts who worry that people representing special interests could stay there or host events there to gain influence with the White House, which is just a few blocks away.

Ms. Trump has rolled her fashion brand into the Ivanka M. Trump Business Trust, which is overseen by her brother-in-law, Josh Kushner, and sister-in-law, Nicole Meyer. The documents released on Friday valued the trust at more than \$50 million. Discussions about changes in federal tax law — a major agenda item for Mr. Trump that could affect issues such as depreciation on Mr. Kushner's buildings and clothing imported for Ms. Trump's brand — could also pose problems, or force them to recuse themselves from participating. "They are going to have to walk a fine line between matters they are involved with financially and the policies they are helping create and legislation they may be advocating," said Scott H. Amey, general counsel at the Project on Government Oversight, a nonprofit group.

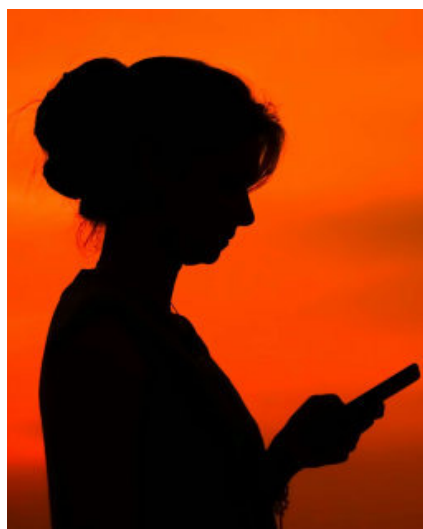
The federal ethics regulations formally prohibit federal employees from being involved in any "particular matter that will have a direct effect on a financial interest, if there is a close causal link

between any decision or action to be taken in the matter and any expected effect of the matter on the financial interest." But Mr. Painter said that most administrations had interpreted the law more broadly, so that officials who own stakes in individual industries do not participate in even broad policy decisions affecting that sector, unless they seek a formal ethics waiver, as certain officials did during the first George Bush administration, given that they owned energy industry stocks and were participating in the decision to enter the war against Iraq over its invasion of Kuwait.

Federal employees, under ethics rules that Mr. Trump imposed, are also prohibited, for at least two years after they arrive in the government, from working on particular matters that involve former employers or clients, even if these actions do not directly financially benefit the federal employee. The disclosures by Mr. Kushner and other White House officials released on Friday demonstrate just how complicated it is going to be to police these rules, given the vast and extremely complex financial assets not only within the Trump family but also among dozens of aides they have selected.

The National Economic Council director, Gary Cohn, as well as the top White House aides Christopher P. Liddell and Reed Cordish, collectively reported assets with a maximum value of more than \$1 billion. Stephen K. Bannon, Mr. Trump's chief strategist, reported assets worth as much as \$53.9 million. Even Mr. Bannon's aide Julia Hahn, who is 25, reported investments worth between \$1 million and \$2.1 million, according to a tally by The New York Times, while Kellyanne Conway, counselor to the president, had assets worth between \$11 million and \$44 million.

Some of those financial holdings are already creating questions. Mr. Liddell, an assistant to the president and the director of strategic initiatives, has participated in White House meetings since January that involved several companies in which he continued at least through February to own stock in, including International Paper and General Motors. Mr. Bannon disclosed more than \$500,000 in income from entities linked to the hedge fund manager Robert Mercer and his daughter, Rebekah Mercer, major Republican donors who were crucial figures in Mr. Bannon's appointment as the Trump campaign's chief executive last year.



I Was A Career Woman To The World, And A Battered Wife At Home

(Agencies) Relations don't go sour overnight. I didn't wake up one morning and decide that I couldn't live with a monster of a husband for whom I was just a maid to take care of his physical needs and suffer beatings without a whimper. He expected me to do all chores single-handedly. No servant would work in our house for long because of his bad temper. My day would start at 4.30am—clean the house, lay everything ready for him neatly on the bed including his socks, wallet and clothes, make breakfast and lunch for three of us (those days his younger brother lived with us) and then rush to office by 8.15. In the evening, it was the same routine. And if I frowned, I was a bad wife. Once when I asked my brother-in-law to wash dishes after dinner, the complaint reached my mother-in-law the very next day. "How can you ask your brother-in-law to wash dishes?" she shouted over the phone.

Now when I look back at my nine years of relationship with my ex-husband (seven years of marriage and two years of courtship) I realise financial independence is not the deciding factor to call it quits, it is actually what gives courage to do so.

I worked as an HR executive in a company, am more educated than him, earned more than him, but I stayed in an abusive marriage believing one day it would all be fine, the way it happens in Hindi movies. It took me seven years to gather the courage to say enough is enough, I won't take it anymore.

This relationship was doomed even before it began, but I failed to see the signs because I was madly in love with him. I believed that my love for him would transform him. Once before marriage when I was cooking for him, we had an argument and he got so angry with me that he grabbed the tava and threw it at me. It just missed my foot. My parents were not happy with the alliance due

to our age difference (he is seven years older than me) and his small-town background, but they gave in for my sake.

We were two different personalities, with neither of us willing to change. The main issue was his temper. He needed no provocation to start abusing and hitting me. It could start with something as trivial as no salt in the dal. He wouldn't control his temper and I wasn't ready to shed tears in silence. I would shout back whenever I thought he was unreasonable. I couldn't hit him, because he was physically stronger. He hated that I didn't want to succumb. "Shut up, don't open

your mouth in front of me," he would shout every time there was a squabble. But I was not brought up to be subservient to a husband. I was raised to be an independent girl with opinions. Thinking he would mend his ways, I decided to start a family, but after our daughter was born, he was back to his old ways. His nasty temper was the deal breaker. How much is too much in a marriage? How much can a woman take? While I was still wondering how much longer I could continue in such a relationship, I learnt that he was having an affair.

Fortunately, the only big issue in the divorce proceedings was

to make him agree to the terms, as he didn't mind living separately without a divorce, but I wasn't ready for that. I wanted a legal end to my torture. Initially, the counsellor tried to convince us to rethink for the sake of our two-year-old daughter, but when he started shouting at the counsellor, he gave up. He understood how difficult it must be for me to live with such a man.

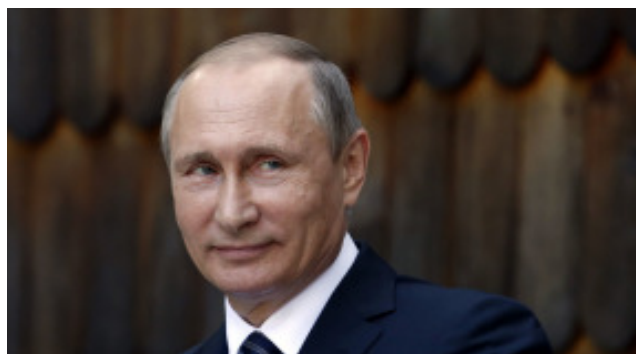
Now I live above my parents' house, so I'm independent but have family support. It's been a year since the divorce. I'm beginning to live my life the way I always wanted. Before marriage, I loved baking but couldn't follow

my passion because of marital discord. Now, along with my full-time job, I am also taking orders for baked goods. Life is peaceful and there is hope. I feel like a complete person. *Sujata Rajpal is a corporate communications and PR professional turned full-time author. Her debut novel *The Other End of the Corridor* is her first work of fiction. She also writes columns and articles for online and print publications. She stumbled upon her passion for writing when her cushy job stopped challenging her. When not writing, she indulges in long walks, yoga, Toastmasters and playing chess with her two sons.

How the Sanctions Are Helping Putin

(Agencies) Donald Trump just can't seem to make up his mind about Russia. After hinting repeatedly during the campaign and transition that he might lift the international sanctions that were imposed after Moscow annexed Crimea and invaded eastern Ukraine, as president, he's started to show signs of doubt.

"It just simply all depends on whether or not we see the kind of changes in posture by Russia," Vice President Pence told ABC News last month, saying the administration wanted to work with Moscow "on common interests" such as the destruction of ISIS. Other officials, such as U.N. ambassador Nikki Haley, have taken a notably harder line, declaring that "The United States stands with the people of Ukraine, who have suffered for nearly three years under Russian occupation and military. Proponents of the sanctions insist that they must stay in place until Russian President Vladimir Putin relinquishes his claim to Crimea and stops meddling in Ukraine, the demands for the latter laid out in the Minsk Agreement signed in Belarus in September 2014, and updated in February 2015. They worry that Trump's eagerness for a deal may allow Putin to get the sanctions lifted in exchange for some other concession, possibly a new arms-control treaty, as the U.S. president has hinted—and that therefore Moscow will evade accountability for violating a clear norm of international behaviour. Russia, for



its part, does not show any eagerness to make progress on the issue and leaves the West alone in deciding how to proceed. Western observers and Kremlin spokesmen do agree on one thing, however—that the sanctions are the major cause of Russia's deepening economic woes. But this over-

looks one salient fact: The sanctions might not actually be hurting Russia all that much if at all. The economic data is certainly sobering. Russian per capita GDP has shrunk to 2007 levels. By the fall of 2016, Russia's dollar-equivalent GDP was 40 percent below the 2013 level—a 15-percent decline in real ruble prices. The trouble is that this decline has had very little to do with Western sanctions, whose impact has been primarily political, rather than economic.

The truth is that Western sanctions focus on a limited number of Russian businesses such as construction giant Sroytransgaz and Bank SMP, which belong to Putin's judo trainer Arkady Rotenberg; the state-owned energy firm Rosneft, which is controlled by former

Putin's longtime aide Igor Sechin; and well-known defense behemoths. These businesses are no longer able to borrow on international markets and are prohibited from owning assets in Western countries. Western sanctions also prevent a small group of Russians from traveling to those countries or doing business with them, and forbid the transfer to Russia of dual-use military technology and advanced oil exploration equipment. We are talking about not more than 10 percent of the Russian economy; but more importantly, as the Russian banking system has excess liquidity, all sanctioned companies can easily borrow as much as they need from Russian banks. Russia responded to the Western

sanctions by launching sanctions of its own, mainly banning food imports. This has deprived the Russian middle class of delicacies such as parmesan, prosciutto, Norwegian salmon and Greek oranges. Yet sanctions do not stop Russia from being an active global economic actor. It is still a member of the WTO and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. Russia keeps its reserves in the most liquid financial instruments and currencies. There are no restrictions on its currency and foreign trade transactions. Its sovereign debt yields are low, with no sign of potential rise in the near future. Russia and Russian companies are not singled out for hostile economic measures such as protectionism or anti-dumping tariffs. **(Contd on page 19)**

A grim search for the missing resumed at dawn Sunday in southern Colombia after surging rivers sent an avalanche of floodwaters, mud and debris through a small city, killing at least 200 people and leaving many more wounded and homeless.

People pried through piles of rocks and wooden planks that entombed homes. Streets were covered in thick sand, mud and tree limbs from the rivers and rainforest that surround the city. There was little drinking water and no power, which forced authorities to suspend the search and rescue effort during the night.



'There were bodies everywhere'

Colombia mudslide, flooding kill more than 200



According to the Red Cross, 234 people were injured and more than 100 believed missing. President Juan Manuel Santos declared a state of emergency and said the death toll will likely rise but warned against speculating about how many are dead.

"We don't know how many there are going to be," he said of the fatalities when he arrived at the disaster zone to oversee rescue efforts. "We're still looking." Authorities and residents in the city tucked between mountains along Colombia's southern border spent Saturday tending to victims, trying to find homes on streets reduced to masses of rubble and engaged in a desperate search to locate loved ones who disappeared in the dark of night. Authorities expect the death toll to rise.

Eduardo Vargas, 29, was asleep with his wife and 7-month-old baby when he was awoken by the sound of neighbours banging on his door. He quickly grabbed his family and fled up a small mountain amid the cries of people in panic.

"There was no time for anything," he said.

Vargas and his family huddled with about two dozen other residents as rocks, trees and wooden planks ripped through their neighbourhood below. They waited there until daylight, when members of the military helped them down.

When he reached the site of his home Saturday, nothing his family left behind remained.

"Thank God we have our lives," he said. President Santos travelled to Mocoa and declared the city a disaster zone Saturday. The Air Force transported 19 patients to a city farther north and said 20 more would be evacuated soon. Medicine and surgical supplies were being sent to the city as the area's regional hospital struggled to cope with the magnitude of the crisis.

Herman Granados, an anesthesiologist, said he worked throughout the night on victims. He said the hospital didn't have a blood bank large enough to deal with the number of patients and was quickly running out of its supply.

Some of the hospital workers came to help even though their own relatives remained missing.

"Under the mud," Granados said, "I am sure there are many more." Santos blamed climate change for triggering the avalanche, saying that the accumulated rainfall in one night was almost half the amount Mocoa normally receives in the entire month of March. With the rainy season in much of Colombia just beginning, he said local and national authorities need to redouble their efforts to prevent a similar tragedy.

The crisis is likely to be remembered as one of the worst natural disasters in recent Colombian history, though the Andean nation has experienced even more destructive environmental catastrophes. Nearly 25,000 people were killed in 1985 after the Nevado del Ruiz volcano erupted and triggered a deluge of mud and debris that buried the town of Armero.

The tragedy drew international attention, with even Pope Francis

mentioning the catastrophe during his Angelus blessing Sunday on a visit to the northern Italian region of Emilia Romagna, which was struck by a pair of deadly earthquakes five years ago. As rescuers in Mocoa shifted through debris, many residents were conducting their own searches for lost loved ones.

Oscar Londono tried in vain throughout the night to reach his wife's parents, whose home is right along one of the flooded rivers. He decided it was too dangerous to try to reach them in the dark. So he called over and over by phone but got no answer.

Once the sun began to rise he started walking toward their house but found all the streets he usually takes missing. As he tried to orient himself he came across the body of a young woman dressed in a mini-skirt and black blouse. He checked her pulse but could not find one. "There were bodies all over," he said. When he finally reached the neighborhood where his in-laws live he found "just mud and rocks." Rescue workers with the military oriented him toward the mountain, where he found his relatives camped with other survivors.

"To know they were alive," he said, "it was a reunion of tears."

Palestinian President to visit India a month before Modi's Israel trip

Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas is likely to visit India in May, a month ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed visit to Israel in June, sources have told HT.

Modi's will be the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Israel and he is set to skip Palestine in a break from the tradition of senior Indian leaders clubbing two countries in the same trip.

"We are looking at May for the visit of President Abbas to India. Discussions are underway to finalise the dates, most probably for the second half of the month," a source told HT. Though the Modi government is trying to put an end to hyphenating Israel with Palestine, historical legacy and India's close ties with the Arab world makes this a delicate process. India has been steadily increasing its defence and security ties with Israel since mid 1990s, but the successive governments have kept the ties low profile in

public. However, the Modi government hasn't been coy about scaling up its ties with Israel. President Pranab Mukherjee became the first Indian head of state to visit Israel. The President visited Palestine on October 12, 2015 before making a three-day trip to



Israel from the next day-- something Modi is unlikely to repeat.

But government official insists that there is no change in India's commitment to the Palestine cause

and pointed out it was the Modi government which has done the "first ever India-Palestine joint commission". The commission was co-chaired by minister of state for external affairs M J Akbar. "The visit of Palestine Authority President will be another opportunity for India to step up the ties between the two countries", said another source. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Israel.

China Learns How to Get Trump's Ear: Through Jared Kushner



(Agencies) Washington — When President Trump welcomes President Xi Jinping of China to his palm-fringed Florida club for two days of meetings on Thursday, the studied informality of the gathering will bear the handiwork of two people: China's ambassador to Washington and Mr. Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

The Chinese ambassador, Cui Tiankai, has established a busy back channel to Mr. Kushner, according to several officials briefed on the relationship. The two men agreed on the club, Mar-a-Lago, as the site for the meeting, and the ambassador even sent Mr. Kushner drafts of a joint statement that China and the United States could issue afterward.

Mr. Kushner's central role reflects not only the peculiar nature of this first meeting between Mr. Trump and Mr. Xi, but also of the broader relationship between the United States and China in the early days of the Trump administration. It is at once highly personal and bluntly transactional — a strategy that carries significant risks, experts said, given the economic and security issues that already divide the countries.

While Chinese officials have found Mr. Trump a bewildering figure with a penchant for inflammatory statements, they have come to at least one clear judgment: In Mr. Trump's Washington, his son-in-law is the man to know. Mr. Kushner first made his influence felt in early February when he and Mr. Cui orchestrated a fence-mending phone call between Mr. Trump and Mr. Xi. During that exchange, Mr. Trump pledged to abide by the four-decade-old "One China" policy on Taiwan, despite his earlier suggestion that it was up for negotiation.

Now Mr. Trump wants some-

thing in return: He plans to press Mr. Xi to intensify economic sanctions against North Korea to pressure the country to shut down its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. He has also vowed to protest the chronic trade imbalance between the United States and China, which he railed against during his presidential campaign.

China's courtship of Mr. Kushner, which has coincided with the marginalization of the State Department in the Trump administration, reflects a Chinese comfort with dynastic links. Mr. Xi is himself a "princeling": His father was Xi Zhongxun, a major figure in the Communist revolution who was later purged by Mao Zedong.

Not only is Mr. Kushner married to the president's daughter Ivanka, but he is also one of his most influential advisers — a 36-year-old with no previous government experience but an exceptionally broad portfolio under his father-in-law.

"Since Kissinger, the Chinese have been infatuated with gaining and maintaining access to the White House," said Evan S. Medeiros, a senior director for Asia in the Obama administration. "Having access to the president's family and somebody they see as a princeling is even better."

Former American officials and China experts warned that the Chinese had prepared more carefully for this visit than the White House, which is still debating how harshly to confront Beijing, and which has yet to fill many important posts in the State Department. Several said that if Mr. Trump presented China with an ultimatum on North Korea, it could backfire.

"China will either decide to help us with North Korea, or they won't," Mr. Trump said in an interview with The Financial Times

that was published on Sunday. "And if they do, that will be very good for China, and if they don't, it won't be good for anyone."

The president said that he had "great respect" for the Chinese leader, but that he would warn him that "we cannot continue to trade if we are going to have an unfair deal like we have right now."

Shortly after winning the election, Mr. Trump said he might use the "One China" policy, under which the United States recognizes a single Chinese government in Beijing and has severed its diplomatic ties with Taiwan, as a bargaining chip for greater Chinese cooperation on trade or North Korea.

Mr. Trump had thrown that policy into doubt after taking a congratulatory phone call from the president of Taiwan. That caused consternation in Beijing, and Mr. Xi refused to get on the phone with Mr. Trump until he reaffirmed the policy.

After the two leaders finally spoke, the White House said in a statement that the men had "discussed numerous topics, and President Trump agreed, at the request of President Xi, to honor our One China policy." Mr. Trump insisted on that wording, according to a person briefed on the process, because he wanted to make clear that he had made a concession to Mr. Xi. Since that call, Mr. Cui has continued to cultivate the Kushner family. Later in February, he invited Ivanka and the couple's daughter, Arabella, to a reception at the Chinese Embassy to celebrate the Lunar New Year.

Inside the White House, the most visible sign of Mr. Kushner's influence on China policy came in March at the beginning of a meeting of the National Security Council's "principals committee" to discuss North Korea.

He was seated at the table in the Situation Room when Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, walked in. Seeing no chairs open, General Dunford headed for the backbenches, according to two people who were there. Mr. Kushner, they said, quickly offered his chair to General Dunford and took a seat along the wall. While administration officials confirm that Mr. Kushner is deeply involved in China relations, they insist that

Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson has taken the lead on policy and made many of the decisions on the choreography and agenda of the meeting at Mar-a-Lago.

In March, Mr. Tillerson made his first trip to Beijing as secretary of state, during which he and Mr. Xi discussed the planning in a 30-minute meeting. He was criticized afterward for repeating the phrases "mutual respect" and "win-win solutions," which are drawn from the Chinese diplomatic lexicon and have been interpreted to assert a Chinese sphere of influence over the South China Sea and other disputed areas.

A senior American official said that Mr. Tillerson applied his own meaning to those phrases — "win-win," he said, was originally an American expression — and was not accepting China's definition. He said the secretary had adopted a significantly tougher tone in private, particularly about China's role in curbing North Korea's provocations.

Mr. Kushner has passed on proposals he got from Mr. Cui to Mr. Tillerson, who in turn has circulated them among his staff in the State Department, officials said. But the department's influence has been reduced as many positions remain unfilled, including that of assistant secretary for East Asian affairs. Though Mr. Tillerson has kept a low profile, officials said he was trying to develop his own relationship with Mr. Trump at regular lunches and dinners.

Mr. Kushner's involvement in China policy prompted questions after reports that his company was negotiating with a politically connected Chinese firm to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in his family's flagship property, 666 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.

On Wednesday, amid the glare of negative publicity, Mr. Kushner's company ended negotiations with the firm, the Anbang Insurance Group.

Another question hanging over the meeting is whether the hard-liners in the White House will wield their influence. Mr. Trump ran for the presidency on a stridently anti-China platform, accusing the Chinese, wrongly, of continuing to depress the value of their currency, and threatening to impose a 45 percent tariff on Chinese imports.

The architects of that policy — Stephen K. Bannon, the chief strategist, and Peter Navarro, the director of the National Trade Council — have said little publicly about China since entering the White House. But on Thursday, Mr. Trump predicted that the meeting would be "very difficult" because, as he said on Twitter, the United States would no longer tolerate "massive trade deficits."

By inviting Mr. Xi to Mar-a-Lago, Mr. Trump's "Southern White House," the president is conferring on him the same status as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, who spent two days in Florida, playing golf with the president and responding to a crisis after North Korea tested a ballistic missile. Such a gesture is particularly valuable, experts said, given that China is not an ally like Japan.

Mr. Xi does not play golf — as part of his anti-corruption campaign, he cracked down on Communist Party officials' playing the sport — so he and Mr. Trump will have to find other ways to fill the 25 hours that the Chinese president will be at the club. On Thursday evening, Mr. Trump and his wife, Melania, will host Mr. Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, for dinner.

There are obvious parallels between the Mar-a-Lago meeting and the 2013 summit meeting at Sunnylands in California, Walter Annenberg's 200-acre estate, where President Barack Obama and Mr. Xi got acquainted over long walks in the desert landscape and a dinner of grilled porterhouse steaks and cherry pie. But there are important differences, too.

By the time Mr. Obama met with Mr. Xi in California, they had already met once before, when Mr. Xi was vice president. Mr. Xi held extensive meetings with Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr., traveling with him around the United States. Some former officials said the Mar-a-Lago meeting might reveal the disparity in experience between the two leaders and their teams.

"Sunnylands was difficult because Xi was new, while Obama had his sea legs," said Mr. Medeiros, the former Obama administration official. "What's interesting is that the polarity here is reversed. Xi has his sea legs; Trump does not."

Ivanka Trump Keeping Stake In D.C. Hotel Despite White House Role, Filings Show

Financial entanglements of the new senior White House aide heightens conflicts of interest concerns.

(Agencies) Ivanka Trump is keeping her stake in Trump International Hotel Washington, D.C., while she serves as an assistant to her father in the White House, financial filings show, according to The New York Times.

Financial documents filed by her husband, Jared Kushner, who serves as senior adviser to President Donald Trump, reveal that she earned between \$1 million and \$5 million from January 2016 to March from the hotel, the Times reports. The couple's combined business assets are valued at \$741 million, according to Kushner's 54-page document filed on Friday. Kushner earned close to \$180 million last year,

while Ivanka Trump earned \$10 million, NBC reported Saturday.

The Trump International Hotel leases from the government a refurbished public building — the old post office in Washington, D.C. According to government rules concerning the property, no federal official is allowed to profit from property. However, Donald Trump is now not only a tenant but also the landlord.

The General Services Administration ruled this month that the hotel isn't violating its lease with the government because the president is not managing the property and it's now owned by a revocable trust — which Donald Trump controls. The

Trump family's continued business holdings have raised serious ethical concerns about how the president, his elder daughter and son-in-law can fairly serve the interests of the public as they remain private business owners looking out for their own vast operations.

Analysts believe the Trump International Hotel is of particular concern because large amounts of money and time that lobbyists or foreign countries could spend there as a way to curry favor with its owners in regards to government business. The government of Kuwait, for example, held a single-night fete at the hotel in February that was

estimated to cost \$60,000.

The information about Ivanka Trump's holdings were part of a large release Friday of documents about the holdings of some 180 senior Trump administration officials. Ivanka Trump was named assistant to the president this week.

As for Kushner, the documents also provide details about his extensive real estate holdings. In addition, the filings reveal Kushner's personal lenders — but not investors or lenders in his business projects. His businesses have borrowed money from international banks, including the Israeli Bank Hapoalim, which the Justice Department is

investigating over allegations that it helped Americans evade taxes, the Times reports. Being in debt to an Israeli bank could also be seen to compromise Kushner's objectivity when negotiating peace between Israel and Palestinians, which is one of his many roles in the Trump administration.

Trump's administration is considered the wealthiest in American history, with members of the president's senior staff and cabinet worth some \$12 billion, according to Bloomberg. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said Friday that a "lot of people" in Trump's administration are "very blessed."

Trump Earns Majority Of Americans' Disapproval In Record Time



(Agencies) President Donald Trump's job approval ratings are low in any context, but they look even worse through a historical lens. Gallup's latest poll, issued Friday, shows 38 percent of American adults approve of the job Trump is doing as president, and 56 percent disapprove.

That's comparable to some of the ratings his predecessors saw. But what's different is the timing. It took far more than a year before presidents from Ronald Reagan through Barack Obama earned the disapproval of a majority of the public, according to Gallup. It took Trump just over a week.

Trump, barely two months into his presidency, is well within the "honeymoon period" that other presidents have enjoyed. Despite a wave of high-profile controversies and setbacks, including the failure of the Obamacare repeal bill, his White House has yet to face a recession, a major international incident or any sort of crisis beyond the self-inflicted.

Several challenges that plagued Trump when he was president-elect may have swayed public opinion of him once he got into office. He faced sexual-assault allegations and conflict-of-interest questions over his ties to the Trump foundation. Multiple women accused him of sexual assault. Now, several investigations are looking into possible links between the Trump campaign and Russia during the 2016 election. At this point in George W. Bush's presidency, his approval rating was around 53 percent in Gallup's average. It didn't sink to 40 percent until after Bush's response to Hurricane Katrina. Obama had a 61 percent approval rating on day 68 of his presidency. The first time he reached 40 percent was on day 950 of his presidency, in August of 2011. At no point did Obama receive a rating of below 40 percent. President Bill Clinton entered his third month in office with a 52 percent approval rating. By the time he slipped to 39 percent, he'd faced a sexual harassment lawsuit, signed

controversial trade bills and seen his party cede Congress to the Republicans.

President George H.W. Bush hit a low point in his presidency ? lower than Trump so far ? at 29 percent in August 1992. But he very quickly recovered up to 56 percent approval in his last month as president in 1993. As Gallup Editor-in-Chief Frank Newport notes, while historical comparisons do Trump no favors, there's also historical precedent for a possible recovery. "An encouraging sign for Trump, perhaps, is that all presidents whose ratings fell below 36 [percent] ? with the exception of Nixon ? saw their ratings improve thereafter," Newport writes. "Clinton provides a particularly relevant example. His approval rating dropped to 37 [percent] in June 1993 but recovered to 56 [percent] by September of that year." Gallup is just one data point. Still, HuffPost Pollster, which aggregates all publicly available polls, also puts Trump's current disapproval rating at 54.7 percent.

Community rallies to free elephant herd trapped in muddy bomb crater



(Agencies) Eleven elephants have been saved from ghastly deaths in Cambodia thanks to the collaboration of local villagers and wildlife conservation groups.

People living near the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary in the province of Monduliri saw that the pachyderms were trapped in a large pit that a U.S. B52 bomb had originally created, the Cambodia Daily reported on Monday. In more recent years, the local community has been using the crater to store water.

The herd had apparently become stuck in the muddy pit, unable to scale the steep sides, when they wandered in to drink and bathe, according to LiveScience. By the time the local farmers spotted them on Sunday, it was clear they had been there for some time. They obviously had been in there at least a couple of days ... because the little baby was very exhausted and the

mud was so sticky," Jemma Bullock of Elephant Livelihood Initiative Environment told Cambodia Daily. She added that the elephants would likely have soon died from exhaustion had people not intervened.

The people who saw the elephants contacted the provincial environmental department, which brought in representatives from ELIE, the World Wildlife Fund, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and Wildlife Alliance Cambodia to help. Staff from those groups teamed up numerous people from the local community to dig into the side of the crater and construct a makeshift ramp for the herd. Video footage of the rescue (above) shows the elephants making their way up the ramp and walking free. While 10 of them escaped this way, the final elephant — a young one weakened by the ordeal, had to be lifted out using ropes.

Why concerns about an India-Pakistan nuclear war are highly exaggerated



(Agencies) The latest edition of the Carnegie Nuclear Policy Conference in Washington that just ended featured American and foreign nuclear specialists chasing, as usual, the elusive nuclear catastrophe they are convinced is round the corner. There was also the obligatory alarm raised about South Asia. This year, the India-Pakistan “nuclear flashpoint” thesis was tweaked to claim that India has abandoned its No First Use (NFU) commitment and adopted a strategy, in case of an “imminent” launch, of a pre-emptive “comprehensive strike” against Pakistan. Such a course is being contemplated, it was argued, to spare the country the “iterative tit-for-tat exchanges” and prevent the “destruction” of Indian cities. This hair-raising conclusion was not supported by

other than extremely flimsy evidence — three unrelated statements by separate persons. Let’s examine and contextualise these statements in turn. The erstwhile defence minister Manohar Parrikar stated not long after taking office that India would “not declare one way or another” if it would use or not use nuclear weapons first. This was said expressly to inject ambiguity of response that is crucial for the credibility of the Indian nuclear posture. This credibility was lost in 1999 when the previous BJP government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee mindlessly made the draft-nuclear doctrine public, and later compounded the problem by replacing “proportional response” in the draft with “massive retaliation”. Incidentally, Parrikar’s avowal was in light of Prime Minister Narendra

Modi’s political decision to not initiate a formal revision of the doctrine promised by the ruling party in its 2014 election manifesto.

The second reference is to the former national security adviser (NSA) Shivshankar Menon’s observation in his recent book that the Indian nuclear strategy has “far greater flexibility than it gets credit for”. The doctrine drafters in the first National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) intended and so shaped the doctrine, especially Section 4, to make it “elastic”, to enable escaping the limitations of “minimum” deterrence imposed by the prime minister in his suo moto statement to Parliament on May 28, 1998, before the constitution of the NSAB. The NFU declaration makes for fine rhetoric, distancing India from the hair-trigger situation Pakistan strives for the world to believe exists in the subcontinent. It is in Pakistan’s interest to talk up Hindu animus and predatory India, because it justifies not just its nuclear arsenal but its emphasis on first use of tactical nuclear weapons. In the event, treating NFU as a conditional constraint is what Menon hints at.

The third piece of proof trotted out is the views of retired Lieutenant General BS Nagal, a

former strategic forces command (SFC) commander, particularly his view that a democratically-elected government cannot morally risk the decimation of the Indian people by sticking literally to the NFU pledge. It was during Nagal’s tenure at the SFC, it may be recalled, when the then NSA MK Narayanan publicly revealed that the military was not in the know of nuclear arsenal details and, by implication, that the SFC was not in the nuclear loop. It may therefore be safely deduced that the views Nagal has developed was outside the SFC ambit. However, certain developments in the nuclear weapons sphere do indeed make possible an Indian first strike. Such as the ongoing process of canisterising Agni missiles, including presumably the 700-km range Agni I meant for the Pakistan and Tibet-Chengdu contingencies. It, in fact, provides the country not only with a capability for launch-on-warning but also for striking pre-emptively should reliable intelligence reveal an adversary’s decision to mount a surprise attack.

Nuclear missiles in hermetically sealed canisters are ready-to-fire weapons and signal an instantaneous retaliatory punch to strongly deter nuclear

adventurism. Thus, all nuclear weapon states keep a part of their strategic forces in ready state, there being no guarantees that a confrontation or conflict with another nuclear power will keep to a sub-nuclear script. Having the wherewithal for pre-emptive action and launch-on-warning then is only a reasonable precaution.

Whatever their capabilities to fight nuclear wars, the chances of either India or Pakistan initiating a nuclear exchange for any reason are remote for the very good reason that western governments and analysts rarely acknowledge, because most of them are unaware or willfully ignore the social context of India-Pakistan tensions, namely, the fact, whether anybody likes it or not, of these South Asian countries being organically linked.

Divided communities, continuing kith and kinship relations, shared religion and culture, mean that the so-called India-Pakistan “wars” are less wars, more “riots” — short periods of hostilities in geographically constrained spaces, hence the famously apt description of these by the late Major General DK Palit, originally of the Baloch Regiment, as “communal riots with tanks”.



WINZONE REALTY INC.

Baldev Singh

146-20 34 av. Flushing NY 11354

Cell: 917 224 7395

Email: josanbaldev@yahoo.com



Associate Broker/Notary Public

World Autism Day

How to spot, and treat signs of autism

Parents of young children with autism often go into denial, refusing to believe the diagnosis, leading to delays in therapy to help the child integrate into mainstream schooling.

(Agencies) As the world observes Autism Day on April 2, the awareness about the disorder (autism spectrum disorder – ASD) and measures to battle it are quite low, especially in India.

According to a study by a top child neurologist at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), at least one in 89 children aged between two and nine years have been diagnosed with autism in India.

An extrapolation of the data on 2011 census would mean that as many as 2.2 million children and 13 million people in the country live with the condition.

But, what is ASD? It is an umbrella term for persons living with developmental disorders that impair communication—speaking, gesturing and listening—and make them have limited interests or repetitive behaviour.

Diagnosis is still misunderstood very much, doctors say, and most parents in India do not have the resources or the support to bring up autistic children.

“There is a stigma attached to the disorder. What people need to understand is that if it is diagnosed early and children receive adequate help, then they can contribute to the society in some way or the other, they do not have to be dependent on others,” says Dr Shefali Gulati, chief of child neurology department at AIIMS, who did the study.

Suspect autism?

The easiest way to identify symptoms is to notice if a child “does not look at playthings being shown, if they do not give social smile, if they do not respond to their name, she says, adding that “Parents must consult their paediatrician and get a proper diagnosis done.”

Noting that parents are usually dismissive of such symptoms, Dr Gulati warned them against waiting.

“Sometimes parents bring their child when they are five years old.”

Early intervention can help autistic children lead normal lives.

“Early diagnosis is the key. That way, the children can learn age-appropriate activities with help from specialists and psychologists. The children might not be able to learn these activities properly at an older age,” says Dr Krishan Chugh, director of paediatrics at Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurgaon.

Is it in the family?

The cause for autism spectrum disorders is still unknown, but it has been observed that boys are 4.5 times more likely to get autism than girls.

The risk also rises if there is an autistic child in the family. “The risk of a second child being autistic increases by 7% if a couple has an autistic daughter, and 4% if they have had an autistic son. The chances of having an autistic child increases by 25-30% if two children are born with autism,” said Dr Gulati.

“This, however, does not mean that there has to be a history of

autism in the family in previous generations. But it has been established that in 10–15% of families with autistic children, there is history of behavioural problems,” she said.

A higher age of the father at the time of conception has also been co-related to autism, doctors say.

“It is a double whammy for the women. Mostly, they are blamed for having an autistic child and then they are designated as the sole caregiver,” Dr Gulati says.

“A very high percentage of the mothers of autistic children suffer from depression because they have to give up their career, they are tied to their home and do not get to go out, they do not get enough support in caring for the child,” she notes.

Awareness, acceptance of diagnosis and receiving proper care at the right time can help ensure proper treatment of children with autism spectrum disorder.

“Awareness, even among physicians, was very less 20 years ago. Also, there were several nomenclatures for the various conditions. This has changed over time. Also, there is no objective blood test or scan to determine whether a child is autistic. A specialist has to just observe the child and put two and two together,” said Dr Chugh.

That parents refuse to believe

diagnoses also leads to delays in therapy.

“The problem is now there is ‘Dr Google’. Many parents google symptoms and say that their child is not autistic. However, every autistic child shows different symptoms and parents are not willing to accept the diagnosis,” he said.

And even after children have been diagnosed, integrating them into the mainstream education system can be a challenge.

“Special educators are needed and various resources are required to train the children in areas they face difficulty. However, there is a dearth of it in India,” said Dr Mukta Vasal, chief child and adolescent psychologist and co-founder of ‘Mom’s Belief’.

Mom’s Belief, through calls and video chats, help parents help their children.

“Usually, therapy for autistic children is one on one. But, we have way too many autistic children and very few therapists. Also, there are many who would not have access to the therapist. Here, it can be done virtually and we have found results are just as good. Involving parents is the best way to ensure that whatever is taught in the therapy is practiced in day to day life,” said Dr Vasal.

Annoying habits that deserve a whack ! Which ones are you guilty of ?

(Agencies) Yaar, it's getting hotter by the day. Yeah, I wish it was my life that I was referring to, but it's the good 'ol weather. Don't know which part of the world are you sitting and reading this in, but unless it's North Pole, you have my sympathy. And what is more torturous than hot weather? Stinking people coming too close to you. I'm sure it's not just me who feels dizzy and claustrophobic when some people come just too close to say something. What is with the annoying habit that makes some people forget that they have a voice, which shall duly convey their message through sound waves, even from a bearable distance. It's specially bad when you are standing in a queue at the supermarket or something.

The next time I feel someone breathing down my neck, I'll ask them to share the bill with me. You know, even Chaddha ji has more manners. The only problem is that he miscalculates the distance and stands so far while talking that I'm reminded of the news bulletin for deaf and mute that comes on Doordarshan.

1. Shaking the leg while sitting

Haha...you do it, right? Trust me, it's worse if your boyfriend or girlfriend does it. Also called the restless leg syndrome, it is a recognised medical disorder and hence we shall behave sensibly and not going to poke fun at it. But please yaar, give me a string and I want to tie some peoples' feet

to the chair. With all due respect. Shake it if you can't help it but not so much that you become a human trigger for an earthquake. There's a guy in my office who moves his legs with so much speed and force during official meetings that people are actually ready to sacrifice tea and sandwiches and attend it over video conferencing. Now Indians sacrificing free food is not minor, my friend. So you can imagine the discomfort that Mr Ready-to-shake-a-leg-anytime brings to those around him. Vaise jokes apart, it is indeed a medical condition and there are several lifestyle changes that can help prevent it. They include giving up alcohol, so I refuse to read about them, but you can find them all over the net.

2. Cracking the knuckles

Wah kya muskurahat aayi hai aapke chehre pe! Popping your finger knuckles one by one to make that 'tuck' sound is so satisfying, right? And it's also such a nice time pass. You can do it in various permutation combinations. Like alternate fingers. Or both index fingers together. How does it matter that it is bugging the hell out of those looking at you playing with your limbs with so much passion? But just to enhance your knowledge and take revenge on behalf of all those who can't stand it, let me inform you that even though it doesn't harm you in anyway, the pop sound comes from your finger knuckles because of the release of gas from the joints. Achha laga nah sun kar? You

have more gas emanating from your body that you'd care to admit. Ha.

3. Licking fingers while eating

Mummy ke haath ka khana hai? Too tasty nah? Kisi aur tarah se dikha lo khushi, why do you insist of dipping your fingers into the food, and licking it, especially when you are sharing the tiffin with someone. I've seen this happen in schools, colleges, offices...friends share frood from each others' plates. Which is great, by the way. Mujhe toh jhoothe vagarah ka bhi koi veham nahi hai, so even that bit is fine and fun. What's not is when someone digs into the food, licks the fingers and digs in it again. Now that exchange of bodily fluid via edible stuff is not exactly my favourite. Is there anyone who feels the same way? Please don't blame me for questioning your love and friendship. I'm just questioning etiquettes. Pretty, please.

4. Breaking wind in the lift

You know, even the World War II torture chambers had more compassion. Seriously, what? Yes I know that 94% of living human beings fart that it is a natural bodily function. But, Oh My God. Can you not wait for a few seconds or not take a lift when you know your rectum is going to explode into a ball of gases that are not particularly ...ummm..BREATHABLE? Smelly farts are a reality of life, but if I was interested in knowing what you ate last night, I'd much rather have your mouth tell me, than your precious behind.

'Remix fad will go away'

Talking music trends with the nation's hottest rapper

INTERVIEW

BADSHAH

by Vinayak Chakravorty

YOU don't normally seek to do much else if you are at the top of your game — ask Badshah. The country's numero uno rapper wants to stay just that. "I don't plan to turn a singer," he declares. "We have so many amazing singers doing a fantastic job, anyway. I'll continue rapping, this has made me who I am."

He has been on an experimental trip lately, though. A recent recording for *MTV Unplugged* saw the rapper superstar improvise with hot faves as *Kaala chashma* and *DJ waley babu* without plugged instruments. "Hip hop minus plugged sounds can be a very different experience. At the end of the day, of course, live shows are about the vibes you generate."

His other newfound passion is for folk music. On *Unplugged*, Badshah also recorded a Garhwali folk hit, *Chitthi patri*. "Folk is always a beauty to work with. The advantage is these songs are eternal. You only try and give them a new interpretation. The focus has to be on maintaining the natural essence of the song."

Badshah who hit the charts with two remixed Bollywood hits recently, surprises you by seeming not too excited about the trend. "I have a feeling the remix fad will go away in a while. Bollywood goes through these phases. Whatever makes money is quickly lapped up by all. They all want to play safe," says the rapper, who remixed *The Humma Song* for *OK Jaanu* and pitched in with his brand of rap in *Tamma tamma loge*, which was remixed by Tanishq Bagchi for *Badrinath Ki Dulhan*.

He releases his new single *Mercy* on April 1. "My debut album, titled *One*, is due to be out in June," he adds.

He laughs when you point out there have been rumours of him getting serious about an acting career. "Strictly, there is no such ambition, but then who wouldn't want to be a filmstar?" he quips. "I would love to act in films if people think I am right for a particular role. I feel an acting stint would help me widen my reach as a singer. Being an actor would let me reach out to people who may not have heard my kind of songs," he reasons.

Strictly, there is no ambition, but then who wouldn't want to be a filmstar? I would love to act in films if people think I am right for a role. Acting would help me widen my reach as a singer. Being an actor would let me reach out to people who may not have heard my kind of songs.

PHOTOS: YOGEN SHAH



Purple pose



Emily Ratajkowski turned up the heat on Instagram when she shared a throwback shot of herself posing in lacy shorts and wearing a purple wig.

SHE can currently be seen turning up the heat as she walks her dog while wearing nothing but lingerie in a racy new commercial for esteemed fashion brand DKNY.

And on Thursday night, Emily Ratajkowski showed that she's long been in the habit of keeping things sizzling, as she shared a raunchy throwback shot on Instagram.

In the image, originally unveiled by LOVE magazine in February 2016, the London-born beauty is seen wearing a red top—which is cropped to above her bosom—as she poses in lacy white shorts and a purple wig.

Covering her her boobs in an effort to protect her modesty,

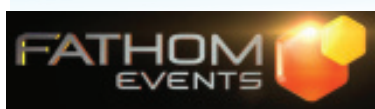
the 25-year-old stunner stares provocatively at the camera while showing off her enviably taut abs. And the snapshot proved to be particularly popular with her more than 12 million Instagram followers, as it garnered more than 400,000 likes in just a few hours.

In her new ad for DKNY, Emily is seen taking her Jack Russell terrier for a stroll through the streets of—while wearing only skimpy black lace lingerie.

With Dean Martin and Helen O'Connell's easy listening classic How D'Ya Like Your Eggs In The Morning playing in the background, she is seen waking up in her city apartment, wearing just her bra and panties.

The London-born model flaunts her enviably taut abs and figure while staring at the camera in the image

Fathom Events is bringing the “Best of Bollywood” to U.S. movie theaters beginning in July



(Insider Bureau) Fathom announced Monday — the opening day of CinemaCon — that it plans to screen at least two Bollywood films this year and as many as six next year as part of what it's touting as the first-ever Bollywood classic film series presented in North American cinemas. The event will kick off with the 2002 romantic drama “Devdas,” and include titles from prominent Indian film studios Eros International and Yash Raj Films. Fathom, which specializes in presenting live events for theatrical chains, is co-owned by AMC Entertainment, Cinemark Holdings, and Regal Entertainment Group. “Batman: The Killing Joke,” “TCM Big Screen Classics,” and “Met Live” are among its more prominent titles. It's also booked more than 700 locations for the April 25 screenings of “Enough” from Christian



comedian Chonda Pierce. The Bollywood series will be shown at several hundred sites for one night and include exclusive bonus content.

“Devdas,” from Eros International, stars Shah Rukh Khan, Madhuri Dixit, and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan. Khan plays the title character, a wealthy law graduate who returns from his studies in London to marry his childhood sweetheart, played by Rai. However, his family rejects the marriage, leading him to seek refuge

from a prostitute, portrayed by Preity Zinta, and Rani Mukerji, as a part of this year's series. The 2004 movie, directed by Yash Chopra and set against the India-Pakistan conflict, focuses on a wrongly imprisoned Indian Air Force pilot and a Pakistani woman, who are separated for 22 years.

Tickets and participating theater locations will be available online later this spring. “For years Fathom has successfully created a series of classic movie events, while simultaneously monitoring

the growth of Indian feature films here in the U.S.,” said Fathom Events Vice President of Studio Relations Tom Lucas. “We are thrilled to be partnering with two of the most prestigious studios in this space to introduce a new and exciting ‘Best of Bollywood Event Series’ to the world of event cinema.” Lucas told Variety that the initiative will target U.S. residents of Indian descent — about 3 million people. “Eros International is very proud to partner with Fathom Events to bring the ‘Best of Bollywood Event Series’ to the silver screen,” said Ken Naz, Eros International's president of Americas operations. “We look forward to showcasing some of the 3,000+ great Bollywood classics in our library, starting with ‘Devdas,’ throughout the country on the big screen — the way they were meant to be seen.” Vaibhav Rajput, Yash Raj Films' head of operations in the Americas, said, “We feel immense pride having



achieved this special place in the hearts of the people that really matter — the fans. Consequently, it's always been our endeavor to reach out to as many fans of Indian cinema as possible and reciprocate the love through our films. This partnership with Fathom Events is yet another step in this direction by bringing one of Mr. Chopra's personal favorites, ‘Veer-Zaara’ to the ‘Best of Bollywood Event Series’ in North America and say ‘thank you’ to the fans.”

8 Short Films That Are Perfect For Binge-Watching After A Long Day's Work



(Agencies) The worst thing about Mondays is that the next weekend just seems so darn far away. Suddenly, five days feels like a lifetime, and no matter how much you hope and pray, you know time isn't going to hurry up for you. However, that doesn't mean your countdown to the weekend has to be dry and boring! So this evening, wrap up your work, head home, cuddle in bed and start binge-watching these awesome short films!

Piper

This Academy Award-winning film revolves around the story of a baby sandpiper (a shore bird) learning to overcome her fear of water. Writer and director Alan Barillaro was out

for a run on the beach when he noticed birds fleeing from the water, but returning between waves to eat. That's what inspired him to make Piper. And here's a fun fact—even though the film is only 6 minutes long, it took him three years to create it!

Half Ticket

Love is complicated, but sometimes all you need to do is take a leap of faith! Half Ticket is a refreshing story of two strangers from Mumbai falling in love. The whole story is centred around a blind date at the derby, which is a break-away from the regular date ideas. Rekindle your faith in love with this beautiful short film.



The Most Beautiful Thing

It's amazing how this 10-minute film can take you through a myriad of emotions. From happiness to sadness, from hope to despair, you will feel every human emotion possible. Not big on dialogues, the film is about how a boy finds love in the most unexpected way.

Interior Café Night

Watch how Naseeruddin Shah brings the human emotions of love, loss and reunion to the fore in this emotionally captivating 12-minute short film. A movie that everyone can relate to, this short film deals with love in a very realistic way.

Mama

If you like supernatural movies, then this is one short film you can't miss! This short film was later made into a full-length feature film which is considered one of the scariest horror movies ever made, but that doesn't take away from the fact that this short film will send chills down your spine just as well.

Positive

Directed by Farhan Akhtar, Positive features Boman Iran and Shabana Azmi in the lead roles. The movie revolves around the strained relationship between a father and his son and how the family deals with the father's life-threatening illness.

Dug's Special Mission

If you have seen Up and fallen instantly in love with Dug,

then this is one movie you cannot miss. According to Jonas Rivera, the producer of this Pixar film, Dug's Special Mission "is a little bit of the backstory of what Dug was actually doing out there on this mysterious mission when we meet him in Up".

El'ayichi

Featuring Nimrat Kaur, El'ayichi is a story about a wife whose husband is dead but lives on in her house as a ghost. She's the only one who can see and talk to him. Barely 5 minutes long, this short film portrays how Nimrat's character is fed up of her clingy husband, and how the ghost wants to leave her, but can't.



Kapil Sharma gets one month's time to put up his act together on The Kapil Sharma Show or face the axe

(Agencies) Not even in his dreams ace comedian Kapil Sharma must have imagined that his mid-air brawl with co-actor+ from The Kapil Sharma Show could cost him dearly. His show, The Kapil Sharma Show, which was up for renewal this month and involved a whopping Rs 106-crore deal, will apparently not be renewed is the latest buzz. And now, the Timesofindia.com has learnt that The Kapil Sharma Show has got one month extension from the channel. Says a source, the channel has given Kapil Sharma one month time to put up everything together, if he manages to do so the channel will think about continuing with the show. However, looking at the current situation and dwindling TRPs+ this seems highly impossible for Kapil as Sunil Grover, Chandan Prabhakar, Ali Asgar and Sugandha Mishra are not in any mood to return.



Sunil Grover told me he will never return on Kapil Sharma's show: Raju Srivastava

Actor Raju Srivastava, who has become a regular on The Kapil Sharma Show, says that actor Sunil Grover won't return on it even if Kapil mends his ways.



(Agencies) Looks like one should give up all expectations of a patch-up between comedians Kapil Sharma and

Idol right next to where we were shooting for our show. He told me, 'Raju Bhai, you know me since so long. It's

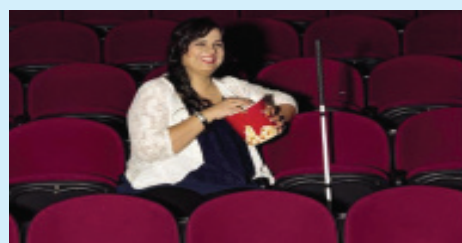
Sunil Grover. Comedian Raju Srivastava, who was trying to mediate between the two, says Sunil is determined he will not collaborate with Kapil again. "I met Sunil recently. He was shooting for Indian

not like I'm arrogant ya mujhe koi popularity ka nasha hua hai. But mere saath bahut galat hua hai (I've been wronged). I'll not come back on the show. Agar Kapil sudhar jaye, phir bhi main vapis nai aaunga (Even if Kapil mends his ways, I won't return)," shares Raju, who now features on Kapil's comedy show on television, The Kapil Sharma Show. Kapil and Sunil had a spat on their return flight from Australia, mid-March. Kapil had allegedly slapped Sunil, who then ended ties with The Kapil Sharma Show. Although Kapil and Sunil were shooting in nearby locations for their respective shows, they didn't meet. "I don't think they met each other. At least, this did not happen in front of me," adds Raju. Meanwhile, there are also reports of Kapil cancelling the shoot of his show in 10 minutes on Friday night because he was not happy with the content and the comic timing. "We were shooting, but we felt that we could write the content better and that is why we decided to shoot the next day. This happens on all shows. In fact, the stand-up comedy portion of the show was shot on Friday itself," says Raju. While there are rumours of the show shutting shop, Raju refutes these claims. "We were shooting all night and in fact, I came home at five in the morning. So obviously, the shooting is still on," he says.

Meet Nidhi Goyal, India's first blind stand up comedienne

Mining her personal life for anecdotes, Nidhi Goyal, India's first blind comedienne, is breaking stereotypes — one joke at a time

(Agencies) Nidhi Goyal lost her eyesight when she was 15 years old. Don't be sad. Now, 16 years later, at 31, Nidhi is one of the happiest, most positive people you'll ever meet, which explains the latest addition to her already-impressive list of titles — that of being India's first visually challenged stand-up comedienne. An activist working on disability rights and



gender justice at both the national and international levels, Nidhi never planned to be a comedian. But the jokes were always there, inspired by her personal experiences, and meant for her friends' ears only. "My friends loved how I narrated my personal adventures and

experiences," says Nidhi. "After one such catching-up session, my friend and fellow activist, Pramada Menon, gave me a six-month deadline to get a performance ready. So, I sat and wrote incidents that were on the top of my mind and got a script together. Everything you hear and laugh about is based on a personal incident, a slice of my life or that of my friends. As an activist, I interact with a lot of people with disabilities. So the set is a collage of my story and theirs, stories that'll make you see the hilarity in the myths and assumptions surrounding disability and just how far they are from the truth."

2017 Could Be The Year That Exposes Bollywood To Global Entertainment

The year ahead, in particular, appears to be one with the largest number of such international collaborations to date, with a whole host of examples of talent from the Hindi film fraternity taking the west by storm. The year ahead, in particular, appears to be one with the largest number of such international collaborations to date, with a whole host of examples of talent from the Hindi film fraternity taking the west by storm.



(Agencies) In an interview with journalist Rajeev Masand in late 2016, Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor admitted to being approached to audition for a lead role in JJ Abrams' Star Wars: The Force Awakens. This is as powerful a statement as any to indicate that talent arising from the Hindi film industry is slowly but surely demanding the world's attention, especially in terms of actors originating from Bollywood making their mark overseas.

The year ahead, in particular, appears to be one with the largest number of such international collaborations to date, with a whole host of examples of talent from the Hindi film fraternity taking the west by storm. 2017 could well be the year that blows the proverbial lid off uncovering the potential of Indian talent in western cinema, with a noticeable increase in the number of Bollywood actors to be seen in overseas projects, many in leading roles. Historically, this has been a charge led by actors such as the late Om Puri who – in a defining moment – was even honoured at The Academy Awards In Memoriam tribute earlier this year. Moreover, actors such as Anupam Kher (Silver Linings Playbook), Tabu (Life Of Pi), Shabana Azmi (The Reluctant Fundamentalist) and Naseeruddin Shah (The League Of Extraordinary Gentlemen) have also had their fair share of roles abroad. Even Amitabh Bachchan's famed cameo in Baz Luhrmann's The Great Gatsby is not one

that'll be soon forgotten. However, despite these reputable performers paving the way for future generations, they have been largely limited to supporting roles or smaller films for the most part. However, the last few years has certainly seen a shift toward Bollywood actors being viewed more substantively, with the potential to be leading stars in larger mainstream films in the West. Looking at the present day, Irrfan Khan is considered nothing short of a major international star, with many inspiring notches to his belt such as Ang Lee's Life Of Pi, Jurassic World and most recently across Tom Hanks in Inferno, with some of the most prominent Hollywood filmmakers writing roles specifically with Khan in mind. Khan certainly isn't showing any signs of slowing down and is next to be seen in Bangladeshi drama Doob: No Bed Of Roses which he is also producing, as well as Salim Khassa's The Wicked Path.

Priyanka Chopra has taken this to new heights entirely by becoming a household name and talk-show regular in the US, through her hit ABC show Quantico. She is also due to be make her debut in a major Hollywood blockbuster in the upcoming Baywatch – the cinematic adaptation of the popular 90s TV show – starring across the likes of Dwayne Johnson and Zac Efron. Chopra's pioneering trajectory and achievements in the last two years have been set new standards altogether of

what a Bollywood actor can achieve globally.

What is especially encouraging about the global achievements of both of these actors is that for the most part they have avoided being confined to the typecast of playing 'Indian roles' but are instead playing characters who's cultural background has little or no bearing on their role in the narrative - Chopra's Alex Parrish in Quantico being the best example of this.

Perhaps as a result of the success and reception enjoyed by actors like Khan and Chopra, the year ahead appears to indicate that Hollywood is embracing actors and talent originating from Bollywood like never before. Subsequently, the question of the hour for Hindi-film actors and entertainment journalists alike seems to be: who will be next to turn their gaze westward and jump on the Hollywood bandwagon?

Chopra's success

seems to have got the ball rolling and started a movement of sorts, of actors looking to foray abroad, which is no doubt now seen as a far more attainable feat than it was some years ago. This recent movement is in every way one that has been championed by the female actors of the Hindi film fraternity who are setting an example for the entire industry. Earlier, actors such as Aishwarya Rai proved that a Bollywood actor could hold their own in Hollywood films, having featured in titles such as Provoked, Bride And Prejudice and The Pink Panther 2.

Deepika Padukone, who earlier turned down a role in Fast And Furious 7, already had her Hollywood debut earlier this year across Vin Diesel in XXX: Return Of Xander Cage and although the film was painfully forgettable, few would disagree that Padukone was one of the best things about it. Next

in the Hollywood launch line looks to be Sonam Kapoor, who has been doing the press rounds of late talking about being signed by the Los Angeles based-United Talent Agency, the same agency which represents stars like Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp.

Moreover, Huma Qureshi was recently seen in Gurinder Chaddha's much discussed colonial drama Viceroy's House about India's last Viceroy during British-rule. Also still to come from the year is Richa Chaddha's international debut in David Womark's Love Sonia - an Indo-American production which sheds light on the harsh realities of human trafficking. The cast also boasts of the likes of Demi Moore, Frieda Pinto and Anupam Kher as well as Lion's young breakout star Sunny Parwar.

What's certainly heartening is that the majority of these roles are



sizeable and significant, indicative of the fact that these actors are being recognised for their talent and global appeal, rather than being confined to 'eye-candy-focused' roles as has been seen time and again in the past.

Hindi cinema's male actors are equally looking to dip their feet in international waters with a number of examples from the year ahead. The critically adored Rajkumar Rao will be seen in Namrata Singh Gujral's Indo-American project 5 Weddings, about an American journalist who travels across India to write a story on Bollywood weddings. The film also features Bo Derek and Nargis Fakhri - who herself has been trying to make the leap over to the West for some time now, so far only managing to bag a brief role in the 2015 Melissa McCarthy-led action comedy Spy.

Badshah Breaks Silence, Says Honey Singh is 'Away From The Scene'

(Agencies) Rapper Badshah is keeping very busy these days - he just rapped for the new party anthem Move Your Lakk from Sonakshi Sinha's Noor and also helped revamp Tamma Tamma from 1990's action film Thanedar for Alia Bhatt and Varun Dhawan's Badrinath Ki Dulhania. He has recently sung a rendition of a pahadi song with Jubin Nautiyal, which went viral. Meanwhile, warring rapper Honey Singh's last Bollywood composition was for a song in 2015's Bhaag Johnny. In a recent interview with Mid-Day, Badshah was asked about Honey Singh's "Rolls-Royce and Nano" comment and he said he's unperturbed by what the Birthday Bash singer says as he is not as prominent a star as he

was before. "He is away from the scene; I do not want to say anything now. I am only doing

reached a high. At the side-lines of the event in Dubai, Honey Singh was asked if he considers Badshah

as a probable competition and he said: "Rolls-Royce aur Nano main farq hota hai."

Honey Singh and Badshah were part of the rap group titled Mafia Mundeer till they parted ways in 2012. Honey Singh also made headlines because of his fallout with Raftaar, another ex-member of Mafia Mundeer. In June last year, Raftaar "vouched" to never collaborate with Badshah after an exchange of oblique and rude comments.

Earlier last year, Honey Singh opened up about battling bipolar disorder and told news agency IANS: "As an artiste, I believe that I am not my own property. I am the property of my fans. So I thought that they deserve to know about what exactly happened to me."



what I enjoy," Mid-Day quoted Badshah as saying.

For the uninitiated, Honey Singh made a comeback after a gap of 18 months with a performance in Dubai last year due to his struggle with bipolar disorder and alcoholism. This was the time when Badshah's career as a rapper



PRESENTS

DANCE USA DANCE

Powered By 

THE NATIONAL COMPETITION
APRIL 15, 2017

Legendary Choreographer

SAROJ KHAN

Is back to Judge the best dance teams
across the USA, and now it's your chance
to apply to the Final Competiton
at the **RITZ THEATRE IN ELIZABETH, NJ**

WIN UP TO
\$6,000
- \$5,000-
in cash
prizes.



Application and tickets are available at
www.danceusadance.us
908-977-9515

