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Women do prefer men with beards



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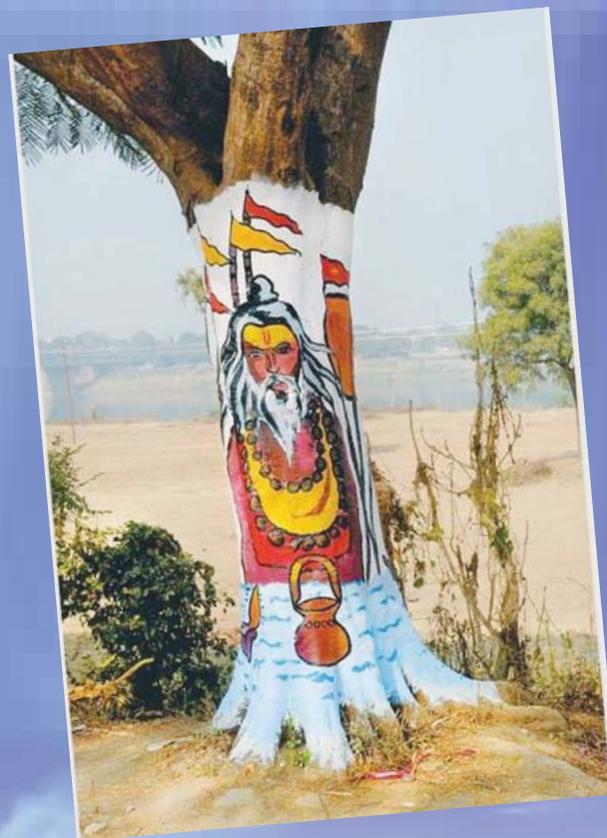
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How Faith And Devotion Unite India Despite Its Diversity

USSR disintegrated, Bangladesh split from Pakistan and UK is under pressure from Scotland and Ireland, but India has remained despite its enormous diversity. Dr Krishna Gopal, the joint-secretary of the RSS, explains the reasons



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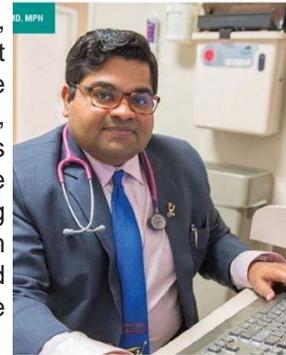
Celebration of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2020



(GOPIO); Mr. Mohan (Member of Indian Community, Nannapaneni (TeamAid); Friends of MP NYNJ (Community organization); Mr. Harinder Singh Panaser (President, US South Asian Association For Regional Cooperation (SAARK) Business Forum); Mr. Minesh C. Patel (Former President of Gujarati Samaj of NY); Mr. Vivek Patel (Member of Indian Community, Founder Member of the Indian American Political Action Committee of Lehigh Valley); Mr. Jagdish Sewhani (American India Public Affairs Committee, NY); Mr. Nikhil Shah, (India Association of Rhode Island); Dr. Prasad Srinivasan (MILAN); Mr. Ankur Vaidya (FIA, NYNJCT); Mr. Nitin Vyas (World Vegan Vision).

Physician's Corner- A Debilitating Disease A Life-Changing Treatment

Press Release (New York) : Dr. Jain Established Inland Empire's First Sickle Cell Treatment Program In 2017 From working as a lead on the team that recently performed Loma Linda University Children's Hospital's first stem cell transplant in a sickle cell disease patient, to helping mold a program that can absorb hundreds of sickle cell and hemophilia patients, Akshat Jain, MD, MPH, is striving to provide comprehensive, life-Changing care for children suffering from sickle cell disease and hemophilia in the Inland Empire and beyond.



Dr. Jain is originally from Jaipur, India he trained in India the African island nation of Manritius, and completed his specialty training in New York. Dr. Jain was invited to Children's Hospital in 2017 to create a program to help with hemophilia in the inland empire where no programs existed to treat the disease across.

25% of California's land mass. Since launching the program. Dr. Jain says the team has established care with more than 300 sickle cell families and more than 120 hemophilia

patients more patients than in some of the largest programs on the west coast. Dr. Jain cares immensely for his patients and their families, understanding the struggles families face when their child is suffering from these diseases - including lengthy travel juggling of finances, difficulty with schooling, extreme physical exhaustion and mental discouragement from the long term battle. If a sickle cell or hemophilia patient in distress, their lives can end in matter of minutes," Dr. Jain says, "we provide this road map so precious seconds are not wasted." Dr. Jain and his team are now working with a new group of sickle cell patients who are eligible for seem cell transplant.

The program is even aiming to offer curative gene therapy fro sickle cell and hemophilia patients with support from Children 's Hospital. While there are challenges in any comprehensive program, I know when doctors and their teams have a passion form what they're doing and when there is intent and resources to provide quality services for all patients, things fall in line," Dr. Jain says, " Children Hospital is thrilled to be providing these incredible services for current and future patients.

Press Release (New York) : New York was one of the eight stations selected by the Ministry of External Affairs for celebration of Global Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) on Thursday, January 09, 2020.

On this occasion, Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister (EAM) addressed the Indian diaspora and interacted with the Indian community through video conferencing located in Consulate General of India, New York, selected for the interaction with EAM. The interaction began with the EAM paying tribute to the late Smt. Sushma Swaraj by recognizing her unique contribution and tireless work for the Indian diaspora and those working and traveling abroad. EAM also emphasized the role of the 30 million Indians living in various countries around the world and how their contributions have enhanced India's standing in the

world. Followed by interaction with EAM, CGI, New York has organized a PBD celebration in which twenty one individuals from various organizations/fields were recognized for their outstanding service to the community. They are - Mr. Niraj Antani (State Representative Columbus Ohio); Mr. Sanjay Chaubey (Lawyer, President of the Indo-American Lawyers Association); Mr. Avinash Gupta (Shree Siddhivinayak Temple of USA/ Indian Cultural & Community Center); Mr. Manish Ingle (Council of Indian Organizations in Greater Philadelphia); Dr. Neeta Jain (Member of Indian Community, Democratic District Leader, New York Assembly District 25 Part B, Queens); Mr. Ramakrishna Kasarla (FIA, Central Ohio); Ms. Sushma Kotahwala (AIA); Dr. Renee Mehrra (Media personality); Mr. Lal Motwani

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At UNSC closed door meet tonight, China pushes for consultations on Kashmir

(News Agencies)- China, acting on behalf of Pakistan, is pushing for a discussion on Kashmir at the United Nations Security Council's closed door meet later this evening, the third such attempt over the last six months. A similar effort by China had been thwarted just a month ago when France and other permanent members of the Security Council had then persuaded Beijing to withdraw its note to seek a meeting on Kashmir on the grounds that the body was not the best forum to discuss the issue. French diplomatic sources confirmed that a UNSC

member had proposed to raise the issue of Kashmir again. "France's position has not changed and is very clear: the Kashmir issue must be settled bilaterally - as we have stated on several occasions and will continue to reiterate to our partners on the United Nations Security Council," a French diplomatic source said. China, which claims the Ladakh region, has opposed the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union territories after the Centre last year abrogated Article 370 that gave special status to the former state. India maintains that the change in Jammu and Kashmir is an

At UN Security Council's closed door meet tonight, China pushes for consultations on Kashmir.



internal matter that don't affect external boundaries. Last week, French president

Emmanuel Macron discussed the Kashmir issue with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying Paris continues to track developments in the region closely.

Beijing will be territorially assertive this year. Be prepared

After a few years of stasis, Beijing has begun escalating its intrusions over the Senkaku Islands, the heart of a Sino-Japanese sovereignty dispute. Arguably, the hardline it took on Indian requests for import safeguards was ultimately an attempt to force India out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

(News Agencies)-The year has begun with the maritime equivalent of a Doklam, a stand-off near the Natuna islands of Indonesia. Over the past few weeks, Chinese coast guard vessels have escorted dozens of their fishing boats into the exclusive economic zone around the Natunas. Natuna represents the southern edge of the South China Sea dispute between China and a number of Southeast Asian nations. Indonesia deployed warships, submarines and fighters until the intruding vessels pulled back. Beijing blandly noted Jakarta should keep in mind the bilateral

relationship, underlining Beijing's importance. China has sent a clear message for the new year and one of which India would do well to take note. Namely, that its economy may be slowing and its relations with the United States fragile, but there will be no let up in Beijing's assertion of its territorial claims, whether on land or sea. Implicit is that kowtowing on territory means an acceptance of China's pre-eminence in Asia. The sense is that China will push the envelope with most of its neighbours this year. It has not provoked Indonesia to such an extent since 2016. After a few years of

stasis, Beijing has begun escalating its intrusions over the Senkaku Islands, the heart of a Sino-Japanese sovereignty dispute. Arguably, the hardline it took on Indian requests for import safeguards was ultimately an attempt to force India out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Beijing is starkly unconcerned whether such actions affect its international image or spur anti-Chinese sentiment. Malaysia, last month, filed new maritime territorial claims with the United Nations (UN), immediately triggering a response from Beijing. Indonesia has similarly



invoked the UN Law of the Seas as part of a concerted use of lawfare to hem in China. However, given the hard-nosed nature of Chinese statecraft, there continues to be a need for India, Indonesia and Japan to keep their powder dry. New Delhi has rightfully prioritised the scaling up of relations with Indonesia and Australia, two mid-level Indian Ocean players. Such

countries should also consider being more vocal in stating their concerns and declaring their support for each other when China pokes one or the other. Jakarta had nothing to say when the Doklam crisis happened. New Delhi was silent over the Natuna standoff. States should publicly express their concerns about these inter-related, international incidents.

'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor impinge India's sovereignty': Navy chief Admiral Karambir Singh at Raisina Dialogue



(News Agencies)- Indian Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh on Wednesday flagged China's Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor saying they impinge on India's sovereignty. Admiral Singh was speaking at a panel discussion in the fifth edition of the Raisina Dialogue in Delhi. "China's Belt and Road Initiative and the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor impinge on our sovereignty," PTI quoted him as saying at the flagship conference backed by the external affairs ministry. The navy chief also voiced concern about the increasing Chinese involvement in Indian Ocean that included PLA navy ships entering India's exclusive economic zones. "There have been instances when PLA ships entered our

exclusive economic zones; we told them that it impinges on our interests. There has been increasing Chinese involvement in Indian Ocean," Admiral Singh said at the three-day conclave. He cautioned China saying, "The Indian Navy is watching carefully." More than 100 countries are taking part in the conclave which began Tuesday with a focus on geopolitics and geo-politics.

Pelosi's impeachment hoax will soon end with Trump's acquittal, followed by his reelection

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's partisan impeachment circus is finally headed to the Senate to meet its rightful doom. Pelosi, D-Calif., compared her unpopular impeachment hoax Wednesday to Paul Revere's famous ride in 1775. Senators have now been warned: The radicals are coming! As Pelosi announced her intention to transmit the two pitifully weak articles of impeachment adopted by the House and appoint managers for the Senate trial of President Trump after a suspicious 28-day delay, you could tell by the looks on the faces of the unhinged House Democrats that their political ruse has run out of runway and things are about to get real.

Curiously, Pelosi appeared to tip her hand when she said that "voters in America should decide who our president is." This was an odd statement given that it was made at a press conference about impeachment proceedings. Regardless, she's right. President Trump will crush his Democratic opponent - whoever it is - less than 10 months from now. Pelosi said of her decision-making process regarding which House Democrats to choose as impeachment managers that her "emphasis is on litigators." Actually, House managers Reps.

Adam Schiff and Zoe Lofgren of California, Jerrold Nadler and Hakeem Jeffries of New York, Val Demings of Florida, Jason Crow of Colorado, and Sylvia Garcia of Texas have something else in common. They are all extremely partisan actors who know the Democrats can't beat President Trump in the election in November. So they're using impeachment as a political weapon in an attempt to weaken him. As the impeachment-crazed House speaker carried on about the Trump-haters who will prosecute her political smear campaign against the duly elected president of the United States, Pelosi said that "everything is about time." Pelosi is correct - her time is up. Thankfully, adults in the Senate now get to take hold of this sham of a process. Senators must hold a fair trial and afford President Trump due process - finally.

The process for President Trump's impeachment trial will mimic the one that guided the impeachment of President Bill Clinton - a procedure that was approved unanimously by the Senate in 1999. Democrats will present their scant evidence under the leadership of House Intelligence Committee Chairman Schiff - a person who has only proven one thing to date: he can't tell the truth. Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., understands that the Democrats are showing signs of desperation as they now beg for more witnesses. The truth is that Democrats decided to rush the nation into this position despite having the most partisan and weakest

articles of impeachment in history. If they wanted to try to build a stronger case, they could have pursued more testimony before voting to impeach the president. A recent tweet by McConnell said it all: "We've reached a simple contradiction. The House case cannot be so robust that it was enough to rush into impeachment, and enough for Senate Democrats to start pre-judging guilt, but also so weak that they need the Senate to go fishing. These two stories cannot both be true." The facts will ultimately show that President Trump did nothing that rises to the level of an impeachable offense and will leave senators with only one viable option: a swift acquittal. Pelosi went on and on trying to explain away her decision to delay the impeachment trial that she and her caucus of radical Democrats once described as an urgent matter of national security. The House speaker disingenuously claimed her politically calculated delay enabled her political inquisitors to accumulate more evidence against the president, thus admitting that the evidence used to impeach him was horribly lacking at best. It has become quite clear that Pelosi's delay was nothing more than an in-kind campaign contribution to former Vice President Joe Biden. By holding the articles of impeachment back from the Senate for nearly a month, Pelosi has succeeded in taking Sens. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota off the political battlefield in Iowa on the eve of the nation's first nominating contest.

With Sanders, Warren and Klobuchar locked in Washington for a Senate impeachment trial, Swampy Joe Biden has the ability to barnstorm Iowa to make his case in person down the stretch before the Feb. 3 caucuses. It's quite possible the trial could drag on past Iowa and also impact the New Hampshire primary Feb. 11.

One thing's for sure: Pelosi and scores of other establishment Democrats have no interest in Bernie Sanders becoming the Democratic Party's nominee for president. It appears that the drive to stick it to the socialist from Vermont is in full swing once again. Sanders supporters still haven't forgotten how Democrats rigged their nominating process against him in favor of Hillary Clinton in 2016. Thankfully, this impeachment nightmare will be over in a matter of weeks. Democrats will then have to face the reality of getting behind an extraordinarily flawed nominee for president who supports raising job-killing taxes, an open-borders immigration policy, and some version of a "Medicare-for-all" farce that will bankrupt our nation and throw upward of 150 million people off their private health insurance plans.

By David Bossie.

Will Iran's government fall?

It's fine for astrologers and bookmakers to make predications, but there's no absolute certainty about what the future holds. That's true regarding matters of national security - and there the stakes are truly high. Consider Iran. There is no more risky business than predicting when an authoritarian regime will collapse under the weight of its own putrefaction.

Natan Sharansky has an excellent explanation of this phenomenon in his book, "The Case for Democracy" (2004). By their nature, he notes, these regimes are opaque. Their leaders hide the truth from the outside world, their own people - even from each other. At the same time, they control every element of governance, civil society, the economy, the military and the media. This makes it really hard to see the cracks that eventually lead to failure and collapse.

Moreover, there are no relief mechanisms that allow for accommodation, dissent, and change. When under assault from without and within, these regimes can roil with a furious boil until the pressure cooker explodes - a catastrophic failure that takes many by surprise. How close the Tehran regime is to condition red is anybody's guess. Today it faces the authoritarian's worst nightmare: intense pressure from the outside and the inside. Thuggish regimes excel at handling one or the other. When pressed from without, they rally the people and even use the external threat as a pretext for clamping down on dissent even more harshly. When threatened from within, they ruthlessly suppress opposition

voices. But when these regimes are hammered from both directions simultaneously, they struggle. Today, Tehran is being jackhammered - and not just by the Trump administration. The foreign ministries of Germany, the United Kingdom and France have joined in calling out the regime for non-compliance with the Iran nuclear deal and denouncing the regime's actions as unacceptable. Iran is on its way to more crippling "snap-back" sanctions. Meanwhile, inside Iran, the natives are more than restless. Perhaps, the most stunning clue of how times have changed from the revolution of 1979 is the stunning video of Iranian students streaming down the street, deliberately refusing to walk over images of the American and Israeli flags on the sidewalk. Who would have thought we would have seen such a thing in our lifetimes? It may not be quite as startling as taking a sledgehammer to the Berlin Wall, but it is nonetheless stunning. The protesters aren't the only challenges the regime faces. Iran's economy is bottoming out. Its surrogate military forces - bringing death and instability from Syria to Yemen, Iraq and more - are now under assault themselves throughout the greater Middle East. And its Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, is no spring chicken. No one expects the octogenarian ayatollah to hang on that much longer - and the smart money says a leadership struggle will follow his passing. But this is not to say that freedom is just around the corner in Iran. This is a tough bunch of mullahs. They have sustained the revolution for nearly a half-century and show no signs of letting up or losing control. **By James Carafano**



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The cost of the protests - for the BJP, and the State

They have crossed a threshold and acquired a mass character. This will have an economic impact

On January 5, a mob entered Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) purportedly wielding rocks, lathis, and acid, carrying out a brutal attack on a section of students and faculty members - while the Delhi Police, which reports directly to the central government, allegedly stood down and refused to act.

After the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) was passed, protests at Jamia Millia University and Aligarh Muslim University were crushed as police forces entered hostels and libraries. Dalit activist Chandrasekhar Azad has been under arrest since December 21, despite a serious health condition, ever since he led a protest near Jama Masjid in Delhi. In Uttar Pradesh, there have been, allegedly, mass arrests of activists and police-administered beatings, primarily in Muslim homes, after its chief minister vowed "revenge" on the protesters. The pattern is clear. When people protest, the State will repress it. For the government and its



supporters, this is more than mere stifling of dissent. It also simultaneously allows the current dispensation to polarise the electorate by demonising protesters - as Marxists, jihadist Muslims, or anti-nationals - without giving the protesters any chance to defend themselves. Yet, the protests continue to grow and spread across India. At first blush, the sudden proliferation of public protest, without any genuine opposition party or leader coordination, may seem surprising. But this is often how it happens. The great sociologist, Mark Granovetter, posited a

theory of "thresholds" where frustration gets converted into mass protest. The logic is simple. There may be many people who are upset with the government, but there is a coordination problem. People don't want to protest alone or with a small number of people; so, they only hit the streets when see sufficiently many others on the streets. When more people hit the streets, the "threshold" for many citizens is met to join protests, but as more people join, even more "thresholds" are met and the protests get bigger. This spiraling logic explains why protests

beget bigger protests and eventually mass protest. We have seen exactly this logic at play recently. The protests after the nullification of Article 370 were relatively small, and they grew only marginally after the Ayodhya verdict, before the eruption of protest we saw as CAA was enacted. Many have said that the protests require political coordination by leaders and parties to survive, but that would kill the diverse character of these protests and give the current dispensation what it wants - an opportunity to paint the protests as the handiwork of a few political agents.

In fact, the opposite is true. Commerce estimates that the shutdown has cost \$2.4 billion in Kashmir since it commenced on August 5 in Jammu and Kashmir. Second, the costs of stationing police, paramilitary and military forces are very high. There is, of course, the direct costs associated with a security lockdown. But the indirect costs are arguably more severe. Those who would otherwise invest in India are likely to be spooked by attenuated economic activities. This is to say nothing of the opportunity cost. Government spending on repression is fundamentally inefficient, as it pays a cost that further retards growth and stifles its citizens, unlike investing in public goods like roads and schools which develops the future of its citizens. This is a scenario that has played out many times across the world - protests that are genuinely mass-level in character challenge a ruling dispensation and the State, then, expends huge resources in trying to repress them.

Our Institutions, Especially The Police, Are Too Politicised

In India, officials are not empowered to brief the media, breeding suspicion among the public that the government is hiding the truth.

Recent events connected with protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) have led to an unmistakable public impression that our police are influenced by the ruling party. Their harsh measures in Uttar Pradesh and in Jamia Millia and their conspicuous abdication of responsibility at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on January 5 are quoted as evidence.

The cascading country wide student protests after the JNU violence have been linked by the foreign media to the Home Minister's lack of interest in "reconciliation with student protesters". The Lt. Governor and

the Commissioner of Police of New Delhi who are in charge of the capital city's law and order chose to avoid the media instead of briefing them on the developing situation, when unprecedented violence was unleashed by masked goons on the campus of JNU, an internationally recognized university. It looked as though they were waiting for a cue from higher political circles on the line they have to take.

Compared to this, we see even junior officials in foreign countries briefing the public through the media on law and order and natural calamity incidents in their jurisdiction. They do it on terrorist incidents,

school attacks, floods, earthquakes and forest fire. They do not wait till their presser is approved at higher levels. Information is released as gathered and supplemented with further details when full facts are revealed.

Our system of administration has not thought of introducing this type of transparency. We do not empower local officials, even if they are legally charged with the concerned portfolio, to interact with the media. This breeds suspicion among the public that government is hiding truth. That also generates rumours. Stopping internet or social media, as we do now, without revealing facts also contributes



to a lack of faith in administration.

In 2010, I could witness in New York the way the local police (NYPD) briefed the media on a terrorist attack. Pakistani national Faisal Shahzad attempted to car bomb New York's Times Square at about 7 pm on May 1 through a timed device. He fled when it failed. The CCTV was deciphered incorrectly, leading to a late night press attribution to an unknown "white male", meaning White

American. On morning of May 2, NYPD had a tough time in reconciling this with an overnight Pakistani Taliban claim on the attack. Yet they persisted in telling the media what was known to them. That it was Faisal was known only on May 3, with a forensic check in Connecticut as he had bought the vehicle from the registered owner. Faisal was nabbed from Kennedy Airport on May 3 at 11pm while trying to flee to Pakistan.



Why is Shivaji so very important for every party in Maharashtra?

Earlier this week, a book written by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader from New Delhi triggered a controversy as it compared Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the Maratha warrior-king, Chhatrapati Shivaji. As the controversy raged, almost every political party in Maharashtra lapped it up to draw political mileage. This wasn't the first controversy involving the 17th century king, nor is it going to be the last. The significance of Shivaji and many things associated with his name makes him the most exploited icon in Maharashtra's politics for more than five

decades. For political parties, Shivaji is not just a political constituency, but his name is a currency that allows politicians to reach out to Marathas who account for 33% of Maharashtra's overall population. It's for the same reason that most political parties including Shiv Sena, BJP, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress have on occasions tried to appropriate Shivaji's legacy, something that the warrior king's own descendants are not indifferent to as they too dabble in politics. If the Shivaji cult was first built by Brahmins, beginning with

Lokmanya Tilak in the early 20th century, the Shiv Sena jumped into the fray and exploited Shivaji for its own political ends by projecting him as an Hindu icon. This was then copied by the BJP. Not to be left behind, the NCP and Maratha offshoots like Sambhaji Brigade exploited the historic figure through the caste prism while targeting Brahmins to consolidate the bahunjan vote bank. It was for the same reasons that the library of the Pune-based Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute was vandalized in 2004 in the wake of the controversy over the publication of a book on

Shivaji by scholar James Laine. Although the Sambhaji Brigade activists had been booked by the police, the Pune court later acquitted all of them in absence of evidence. Like political establishments, historians and the bodies they are affiliated with have also behaved opportunistically by selectively projecting Shivaji's history. This was evident when the Maharashtra government conferred the Maharashtra Bhooshan award on Babasaheb Purandare, a Brahmin author who created a larger than life image of Shivaji, as he faced

For political parties in Maharashtra, the warrior-king Chhatrapati Shivaji is not just a political constituency, but his name is a currency that allows politicians to reach out to Marathas who account for 33% of Maharashtra's population.

opposition from Brigade and other Maratha historians like Srimant Kokate.

Thus, if the NCP-Congress exploited Shivaji's name in the 2004 and 2009 assembly polls, BJP used the icon in 2014. For the Sena, Shivaji has been the central plank of its politics ever since it was formed in the 1960s. The ultimate result of this race to appropriate Shivaji's legacy has trapped the state trapped between two socially regressive political formations, with one wanting to whip up caste sentiments and the other, ride on the Hindutva bandwagon.

"Shivaji's name is being used by everyone to pursue their own goals," says the warrior's 13th descendant Udayanraje Bhosale, conveniently accusing various political parties without sharing the blame as he also fought elections on the same plank for years together before tasting defeat when he switched sides - from NCP to BJP - within days of getting elected.

Don't jeopardise forests for mining

India needs a new policy framework to protect forests



The Union ministry of environment, forest, and climate change, whose mandate is to preserve India's stressed natural wealth, has sought a reassessment of the sustainable mining plan for Saranda and Chaibasa forests in Jharkhand's Singhum district. Critics suspect this is to facilitate mining. The Saranda forests are India's largest, contiguous Sal forests

spread over 82,000 hectares (ha). The current plan, which was prepared by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education in 2018, said mining should not be allowed in the

dense forest. It also said marked out a certain area in the periphery of the forests for mining, but recommended that very dense forests with canopy density above 70% be left untouched. Other than being a rich biodiverse forest and a huge carbon sink, Saranda is home to a large number of animal, bird and reptile species. While the forest is famous for sal trees, it is also rich in minor forest products. Marginalised tribal communities are also dependent on these forests. However, due to indiscriminate mining, Saranda has lost several plant and animal species. One key reason why forests areas of the country, which are also mineral-rich, face such threats of destruction is

because India, while it pursues its goal of having 33% of its land under forest cover, is yet to have a new national forest policy. This policy can define a "forest", mark out the inviolate areas, and chart out a proper forest management system. The current National Forest Policy dates back to 1988, and cannot meet current challenges, where the trade-off between economic growth and infrastructure on the one hand, and safeguarding critical natural resources on the other, has only intensified. Additionally, along with assessing the value of minerals in Saranda-type forest areas, the Indian State must also measure the financial worth of the ecosystem services that a forest provides.



Disentangling the threads of a broken criminal justice system

Every actor - the police, the accused, lawyers, judges, prosecutors - wants to go to trial. Change the incentives

After not publishing the annual Crime in India Reports for almost two years, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) recently cleared its backlog, by sharing reports for both 2017 and 2018 in the past month. Considering how voluminous and complex these documents are, it is encouraging to find newspapers - including this publication - take the effort of presenting the information in a digestible manner, spurring debate and discussion. To a large extent, these efforts end up spurring criticisms and laments about

one thing - that the Indian criminal justice system is being crushed under its own weight, with delays now plaguing all the units that make up this system. The conversations following this output of data have been largely predictable - get more judges, more courts, and stricter timelines in place, and things will get better. These investments in the system's infrastructure will surely help. However, it is foolhardy to think that a pendency level of almost 25 million cases at the trial court level is being caused only because of poor infrastructure.

In a new paper (written and published before the NCRB released its data for 2017 and 2018), I argue that a fair share of the blame for India's long-standing crisis of pendency in the criminal justice system lies in how our system is being operated. Or, put another way, we have millions of cases pending in trial courts not because we have a perfect system which is broken, but because the system itself is being worked in ways that are bound to cause delays. As it stands, the Criminal Procedure Code 1973 has many funnels in place. These

kick-in from the investigation stage itself, to test whether a given case really deserves to go to trial or not. The funnels vest discretion in the individual officers, be it police officers or the magistrates, who decide whether or not there is sufficient basis to proceed further with a case at each stage. This makes sense. Trials are long-drawn procedures, which come at significant costs for taxpayers, and also cause great hardship to persons who are accused without credible material. Under this mindset, it does not make

sense to send every case for trial, and it is accepted as a bitter truth that some guilty people are bound to escape the law, for there is no perfect system. A close look at the NCRB data suggests that the manner in which the criminal justice system is being run is almost entirely contrary to the manner in which the statute is designed. The funnels have been rendered redundant, with the police filing chargesheets in almost every case, and the judges treating trials as the default procedure.

A movement to save the Idea of India

Like demonetisation, the government's CAA-NPR-NRC plan will affect the poor the most

If you asked my father Neil O'Brien, the pioneer who brought quizzing to India in 1967, what his favourite subjects were, what would come the reply: heavyweights boxing and World War II. Our bedtime stories, oddly enough, were not about Hansel and Gretel. Now you know why my speech in Parliament last month on behalf of the All India Trinamool Congress drew a comparison between Hitler's Old Germany and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s "New India". Were the drafters of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), and the National Register of Citizens-National Population Register (NRC-NPR), which are inextricably linked to it, drawing from the Nazi copybook? The

similarities are ominous. One, in 1933, the first Nazi concentration camp for Jews was set up in Germany. In 2018, the Union home ministry sanctioned a detention camp in Assam for non-Indians. Two, in 1935 Germany, one needed an "ancestor pass" to prove their Aryan lineage. In 2019 India, a piece of paper proves your Indian citizenship. Three, the Germans called it Große Lüge or the Big Lie, which convinced them how the Jews are a threat to their race. Today's lie: India is under 24x7 threat. Four, Germany had the Lügenpresse or the lying press to push propaganda. Today's Indian equivalent of the Lügenpresse is fake news and the pressure on the owners of

mainstream newspapers and television networks to push the BJP's divisive agenda. The Narendra Modi-Amit Shah, or the Mo-Sh (copyright on the coinage!), government is good at making promises. They are even better at breaking promises. How easily we forget. Didn't the prime minister publicly plead for just 50 days to fix the disaster created by demonetisation? "Hang me in public after that! 50 days is all I ask for." The failure was so monumental that the PM has barely used the term demonetisation in the last two years. In April last year, the PM said "Chowkidar ki paanchvarsh ki chowkidari mein koi bada dhamaka hua kya? (Has there been a big attack in the five years

that I have been a guard?)" Another broken promise. A total of 388 "major" terrorist incidents were recorded in India between 2014 and 2018. In 2018, Kashmir saw the highest fatalities in terror-related violence in a decade with 451 deaths in a single year. If one was generous you would call Mo-Sh breakers of promises. But using a more blunt characterisation about the licenses they take with truth will not be out of place either. Last month, the home minister had the gumption to tell Parliament that the government would implement NRC across India. At least two Union ministers said the same on the floor of both the Houses. There is also more evidence in the

public domain linking CAA-NRC-NPR. As a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) that examined the CAA for three years, one doesn't know whether to be angry or just plain amused when the Mo-Sh duo are now doing damage control and saying there is no link. It is simply not true. Even greenhorn marketing managers would laugh at the idea of scaling up a failed "pilot project". The pilot was a big disaster. In Assam, 7% of the residents of the state were left out of the final NRC list. Extrapolating 7% to the national level, over 100 million Indians will become stateless. How will the government ever make up for the human cost of this exercise?

By Derek O'Brien

The Indian State's flawed use of force

It has a monopoly over force. But Kashmir, UP, Jamia, JNU throw up disturbing questions



On Monday, two Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders, separately, made controversial and provocative statements. In Uttar Pradesh (UP), a party leader, addressing a rally to spread awareness about the Citizenship (Amendment) Act said that those who raised slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Yogi Adityanath would be buried alive. In West Bengal, the party's state unit president said that BJP governments in UP, Assam and Karnataka had shot protesters "like dogs, dragged them away,

and even slapped cases". The BJP, to its credit, was quick to distance itself from both remarks. This is important. But the comments, in the wake of recent protests and the government crackdown on them, throw up a larger question about State authority and violence. Let us go back to two principles which govern any civilised society based on rule of law. In a democracy, the right to express one's views, the right to protest, the right to organise demonstrations, and the right to critique policies and legislations, is fundamental. But there is one

caveat - the expression of dissent must be peaceful. While, for most part, the protests against the CAA and a possible National Register of Citizens (which the government has now said is not on the table) have been peaceful, the vandalism of public property in UP and West Bengal and parts of Delhi, and the stone-pelting against police in pockets of the Capital such as Seelampur, crossed this red line. The State, then, is within its rights to respond responsibly. The second inter-related principle is that the State has a monopoly of force. It is the only legitimate

authority which has a coercive apparatus under its control, and the right to use these coercive instruments. But this too has a caveat - the State's use of force must be proportionate to the violation; it must be within the framework of law; and it must be carefully exercised with the clear aim of restoring order, protecting and securing citizens, enabling citizens to fully exercise their rights, and ensuring justice. It is this principle which has been violated in a substantial measure in recent times.

Take three examples.

The first is Kashmir. There is no doubt that India has faced terrorism, often instigated and sponsored by Pakistan from across the border. The State's authority and its monopoly over force has been consistently challenged in the Valley. It is, thus, within its rights to bring in any change which can help establish this authority as well as restore peace and order, and provide citizens the room to live freely. The government argued that the nullification of Article 370 and the reorganisation of Jammu

and Kashmir will do precisely this.

But while the region has seen relative peace over the past five months, and the State appears all-powerful at the moment, this has happened at the cost of curtailing citizen rights. The restrictions on connectivity and communication (now partially eased), the detention of leaders and activists, and the clampdown on political protests, including peaceful ones, have marked the new normal in the Valley.

In this case, it is clear that the State, in the process of establishing its authority, has taken rather arbitrary and arguably undemocratic measures, which, instead of enabling citizens to exercise their rights, restricts them, and instead of ensuring more individual freedom, curtails it. The second example is how the State has responded to protests in UP and Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia. Once again, the fact that public property was vandalised in UP - and a mob turned violent around the Jamia area on December 15 - warranted the State to step in.

The value of the SC's Kashmir order

The judgment offers a constitutional framework to evaluate rampant Internet shutdowns

The Supreme Court (SC)'s judgment on the communications lockdown in the Kashmir Valley, delivered on Friday, has elicited mixed responses. It has been pointed out that even after five long months, the court returned no finding on the legality of the shutdown itself, but set out some abstract legal principles that it did not apply in the case before it. Thus, the whole raison d'etre of the case - the plight of Kashmiris deprived of essential access to the Internet for many months on end - remained unaddressed, with the court refusing to comment on it at all, and instead leaving the matter to be "reviewed" by a government committee under the 2017 Telecom Suspension Rules. There is no doubt that the court's statement of principles will offer cold comfort to Kashmiris, who continue to labour under the longest Internet shutdown in the history of any democratic

country, and as was recently shown, have had to travel hundreds of kilometres just to access the Internet, and at exorbitant rates. At the same time, however, Internet shutdowns are not unique to Kashmir. India is the world leader in Internet shutdowns (in sheer number, it exceeds those ranked 2 to 10 put together; these include countries such as Chad and China). Until the SC's judgment, there had been no definitive verdict from the apex court on the constitutionality of such shutdowns. In this context, the SC's judgment sets out two crucial legal principles. First, the court notes that freedom of speech and access to information on the Internet on the one hand, and the freedom of trade and commerce through the Internet on the other, are both "constitutionally protected". There has been some debate on

the fact that the SC did not expressly hold that access to the Internet is a fundamental right. That, however, is a distinction without a difference. If free speech and freedom of trade on the Internet are fundamental rights (protected by Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g) of the Constitution), then the deprivation of these rights, by shutting down the Internet, automatically attracts constitutional scrutiny. To all effects and purposes, thus, depriving a person of their access to the Internet amounts to depriving them of their fundamental rights. Secondly, the court makes clear that the constitutional validity of an Internet shutdown has to be adjudicated in accordance with the doctrine of "proportionality". As the name suggests, the doctrine of proportionality requires the court to ask whether a violation of rights is "proportionate" to the goal or the purpose that the State wants to



achieve. The test has a number of factors. The State must demonstrate that the means it has implied (for example, shutting down the Internet) are rationally related to its goal (preserving public peace). Most importantly, however, the State must demonstrate that the method it has chosen is the "least intrusive" one. For instance, if you are pursuing a thief who has run into a neighbourhood, you do not burn down every house of the neighbourhood to smoke him out. Similarly, in order to tackle cross-border terrorism and online radicalisation, one does not place

an entire people under a communications lockdown. The doctrine of proportionality ensures that it is not enough for the State to simply cite law and order concerns, and say that "anything goes". Rather, in a constitutional democracy, even when there are law and order concerns, the State must demonstrate that it has respected rights to the maximum possible extent. The value of the SC's observations lies in the fact that it sets the ground for future - and indeed, present - challenges to the epidemic of Internet shutdowns that is taking place all over India.

'Jallikattu' kicks off amid fanfare in Tamil Nadu, over 35 injured

Some participants found to be under the influence of alcohol and restless animals were disallowed.

(News Agencies)- 'Jallikattu,' the annual bull taming event that is slated to be held in several parts of Tamil Nadu took off to a colourful start here on Wednesday on the occasion of Pongal, in which over 700 bulls and about 750 participants took part.

As the feisty bulls, one after the other started racing towards the lengthy sporting arena from the entrance, known as 'vadivasal,' young men waiting with bated breath strained every nerve to latch on to the hump of the animals.

"Don't touch the horns," "many men don't chase one animal," "allow the bull to go; it has won," were among the instructions that reverberated in the arena for the participants.

The Jallikattu at Avaniapuram held here today marks the start of the once a year bull taming sport in many rural and semi-urban regions of Tamil Nadu.

Similar events will be held at Palamedu tomorrow and in Alanganallur on January 17 and these are among the hugely popular bull taming contests in the State.

If the participant manage to hang on over the hump of the bull for a determined distance, he is declared a winner and if not, the animal emerges the victor.

In each round, about 60 to 70 participants with colour coded T-shirts and shorts took part.

Festivity marked the event and scores of spectators from the gallery craned their necks to have

a glimpse of determined men trying to get the better of the animals in a matter of seconds as soon as they were released into the arena.

A huge number of spectators, including many foreign tourists with cameras, were glued to the event.

Keenly watching the game, organisers quickly declared -over the public address system- if the animal or the man was the winner and the prize.

The sporting arena was barricaded from the galleries and enclosures marked for spectators.

Speaking to PTI, an official said medical examination of both the men and animals decided their participation.

Some participants found to be



under the influence of alcohol and restless animals were disallowed, he said.

The official said over 35 men were injured, including participants, spectators, and some bull owners and a section of them were sent to a government hospital for treatment.

However, no bull was injured, he added.

Elaborate security arrangements were made and access to

medical facilities were on standby.

The event was held under the supervision of a panel, led by a retired judge.

Three men who successfully held on to a high number of animals - between 10 and 15 bulls- were awarded the first three prizes. Also, others who dominated fewer or a single animal successfully were given a variety of prizes including vessels and silver coins.

In Centre's big outreach, group of ministers to travel to Jammu-Kashmir next week

The J-K visit, the first one of its kind, since August 5, when the J&K Reorganisation Bill was passed in Parliament, will be conducted between January 19 and 24, according to a person aware of the developments.

Reorganisation Bill was passed in Parliament, will be conducted between January 19 and 24.

"There is a proposal that a group of ministers will visit the UT and interact with people. They will seek feedback on the ground situation and also reach out to the people on how the move has brought changes that will benefit people at large," said an official, requesting anonymity.

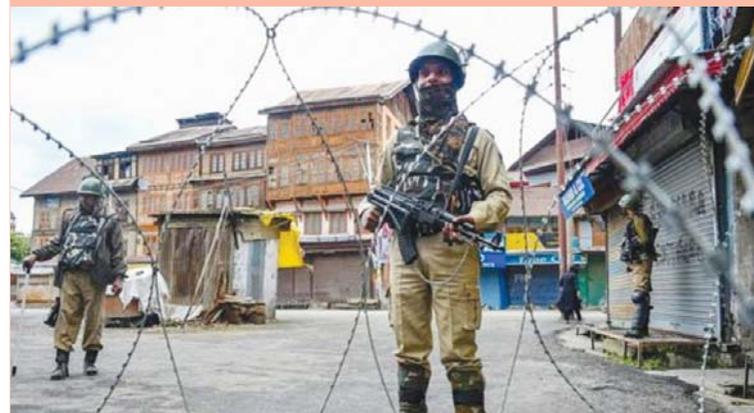
The group of ministers is expected to visit different

districts in both Kashmir as well as Jammu.

According to people aware of the developments, minister of state for home, G Kishen Reddy, law and justice minister, Ravi Shankar Prasad, minister for women and child development Smriti Irani, minister for sports and youth affairs Kiren Rijiju, Mos Finance, Anurag Thakur, culture minister Prahlad Joshi and HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal are among the

ministers who are expected to be part of this outreach.

Last week, a group of at least 15 foreign envoys were taken to Jammu and Kashmir on a two-day visit to see the government's efforts to restore normalcy in the region. It was the first visit by diplomats since the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status in August last year. Envoys from the European Union (EU) were not a part of the group.



A little over five months after the Union government bifurcated Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories and abrogated Article 370, a group of central ministers is expected to visit the UT of J&K to review the ground

situation and talk about the central schemes that are now benefitting people.

According to a person aware of the developments, the visit, the first one of its kind, since August 5, 2019 when the J&K

'Those who maligned country's image...': Kumar Vishwas' dig at Arvind Kejriwal

Vishwas' comment on Twitter draws attention to the controversy around Kejriwal's comments on the 2016 surgical strikes.

(News Agencies)- Kumar Vishwas on Wednesday targeted Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for his tweet on Army Day. Vishwas said Kejriwal is saluting the Indian Army because elections are round the corner.

"Elections are cruel. Those who questioned the bravery of our soldiers and maligned our country's image in the eyes of the international community, are today congratulating the Indian

army," Vishwas said in Hindi while attaching Kejriwal's tweet. "My salute to the courage and determination of every jawan and officer of the Indian Army. The country is eternally grateful to you for your service," Kejriwal had said in his tweet on Wednesday morning.

Vishwas' comment on Twitter draws attention to the controversy around Kejriwal's comments on the 2016 surgical strikes by the Indian Army. The AAP chief had asked Prime Minister Narendra

Modi to "expose" Pakistan by releasing proof of the "surgical strikes".

A number of Pakistani newspapers had reported Kejriwal's comments.

The BJP had attacked the Aam Aadmi Party, accusing it of lowering the army's morale by raising doubts about strikes against militant bases across the Line of Control - India's de facto border with Pakistan.

The comment by poet-politician also comes less than a month

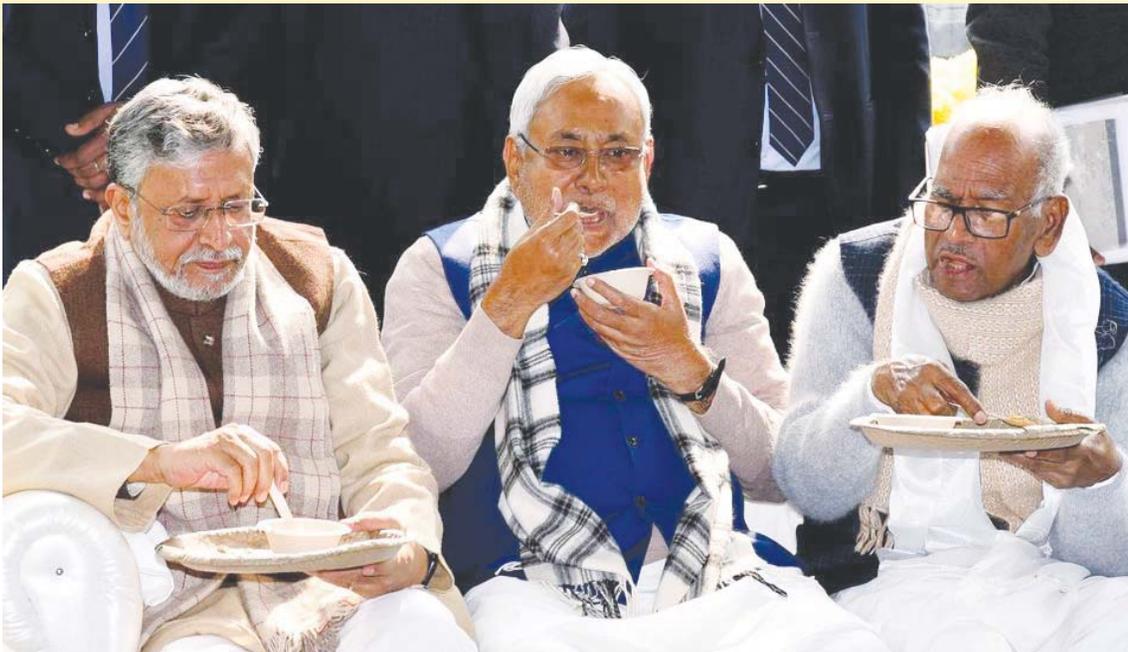


before the elections in Delhi. Kejriwal-led AAP, which will complete its full five-year term, is looking to come back to power and is highlighting the good work done during its tenure.

Vishwas was one of the co-founders of AAP but due to differences with the party's top leadership, especially Kejriwal, had distanced himself from the affairs of the party.

With folded hands and smiling face, Nitish refuses to comment on CAA-NRC

They were at the residence of state JD(U) president and Rajya Sabha member Vashishtha Narayan Singh, whose annual 'dahi-chura' feast has become a much-anticipated event.



(News Agencies)-Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday refused to comment on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act urging journalists not to ask him questions on the auspicious Makar Sankranti day on issues about which people may have different opinions that may lead to squabbles. Kumar, who also heads the Janata Dal (United), made this comment with a broad smile playing on his lips and both his

hands joined together in response to frantic queries from scribes at a feast organised to mark the Makar Sankranti festival.

"Do not rake up the issues on an auspicious day, about which people may have different opinions and expression which may lead to squabbles", the chief minister said while he was treating himself to curd, flattened rice, jaggery and 'tilkut' (a sweetmeat made of sesame).

Requesting the journalists to enjoy the feast and write about the state-wide human chain scheduled on January 19 instead, he said, "I urge you to take part in it as well".

The chief minister was flanked by top leaders of the NDA and seated next to him was his deputy and senior BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi.

They were at the residence of state JD(U) president and Rajya Sabha member Vashishtha

Narayan Singh, whose annual 'dahi-chura' feast has become a much-anticipated event since it had provided clues in the past few years about dissidents from other political groups willing to join the ruling party.

All eyes were, therefore, on RJD MLA Faraz Fatami when he arrived at Singh's residence.

Fatami said, "I have come here upon invitation as a matter of courtesy and no political meaning should be attached to it." On the CAA-NRC controversy, he said the Bihar chief minister has already made things very clear on the floor of the Assembly and after that there is no need for stretching things further.

Kumar on Monday had said a country-wide implementation of National Register of Citizens was "needless" and had "no justification".

Asked about RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav's state-wide tour against the contentious measures from Thursday, Fatami said, "I think the honourable leader of the opposition should do a rethink".

Fatami's father Mohd Ashraf Fatami, a former Union minister, had snapped his ties with the RJD ahead of the Lok Sabha

polls last year when he took exception to Tejashwi Yadav ordering his suspension from the party after he filed his nomination papers from Madhubani after being denied ticket on his home turf of Darbhanga.

As per the seat-sharing arrangements in the five-party Grand Alliance, Madhubani fell in the kitty of fledgeling Vikasheel Insaan Party, which lost the seat by a staggering margin of 4.5 lakh votes.

Fatami withdrew his nomination papers after quitting the party saying he did not want to benefit the BJP by splitting the votes of rebel Congress candidate Shakil Ahmad.

A few months after the elections in which the NDA won 39 out of 40 seats and the RJD drew a blank, Fatami joined the JD(U).

In 2018, former state Congress chief and MLC Ashok Choudhary had similarly turned up at the JD(U) leader's dahi-chura feast and he ended up splitting the party and merging the splinter group comprising two fellow legislators - with the ruling party.

Last year, another former Congress leader Ram Jatan Sinha was seen at the feast and he too joined the JD(U) a few months later.

In Dhingra report on anti-Sikh riots, a judge who acquitted all accused

(News Agencies)- The government will implement the recommendations of the Justice SN Dhingra-led special team that re-examined nearly 190 criminal cases connected to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots that followed the assassination of prime minister Indira Gandhi, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

Justice Dhingra, a retired high court judge, had handed over the special investigation team, or SIT's findings to the Supreme Court in November last year. The special team had been set up in January 2018 by a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court on a petition filed by a riot victim. The special team's report, which has not been made public, is reported to have criticised the state machinery for its handling of the riots and the criminal cases that had been filed by victims.

Justice Dhingra has shortlisted 10 FIRs where he felt the government should file an appeal

against the trial court's verdict. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the Supreme Court that the government had accepted the recommendations and would take action. But it would not be an easy task.

After the Centre conveyed its decision to the Supreme Court, Justice Dhingra told news channel Times Now that it would also depend on the court of appeal whether it would condone the long delay in filing appeals. Justice Dhingra's report is also reported to be sharply critical of the police who didn't do their job. In one case, he told the news channel, the Station House Officer or police station incharge had aided the rioters. He disarmed Sikhs and encouraged the other side to attack, he said. Justice Dhingra also named SS Bal, the judge who was exclusively mandated to try all riots cases in Delhi from 1989 to 1995. "He acquitted all accused in all the riots cases that he decided," he told the news

The special team's report, which has not been made public, is reported to have criticised the state machinery for its handling of the riots and the criminal cases that had been filed by victims.



channel. "You can understand how many cases he must have tried," he said. Large-scale riots had broken out in the

national capital in the aftermath of the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by

two Sikh security guards on the morning of October 31, 1984. The violence had claimed 2,733 lives in Delhi alone.

Month after Delhi Police stormed Jamia, university to move court for FIR



On Monday, students gheraoed Vice-Chancellor Najma Akhtar's office demanding the registration of an FIR against the Delhi Police for unleashing violence on the campus.

(News Agencies)- Jamia Millia Islamia will move court for registration of FIR against Delhi Police for storming the library and beating students last month during a protest against the Citizenship (Amendment Act) (CAA), varsity officials said on Wednesday.

"An application will be filed very soon in the lower court under section 156(3) of CRPC seeking direction to police to register FIR," the university administration said in a statement. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Executive Council (EC) - the

highest decision making body of Jamia Millia Islamia.

On Monday, students gheraoed Vice-Chancellor Najma Akhtar's office demanding the registration of an FIR against the Delhi Police for unleashing violence on the campus. Akhtar had assured students that the process of registering the FIR would start soon. The administration also cancelled semester examinations until further notice.

The anti-CAA protests on December 15, took a violent

turn after protesters clashed with Delhi Police in the university. Officials of the university later said around 200 students were injured as police stormed the library, damaged university property and beat students and guards. The police claimed they had entered campus "while chasing violent protesters", but denied allegations of entering the library or vandalism.

Students have also demanded a probe by a Special Investigation

Team (SIT) into the alleged police excesses on the campus. Akhtar also said that safety measures on campus were increased following the violence and efforts are being made to ensure students feel safe on campus.

A team from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) visited the university on Tuesday to record statements of the students who were injured during the police action on the campus last month.

Final hearing on petition against clean chit to Ajit Pawar in irrigation scam on Feb 13

Pawar filed an affidavit before the court on Tuesday in which he denied any wrongdoing.



(News Agencies)-The Nagpur bench of Bombay High Court on Wednesday adjourned the hearing in the irrigation scam case in which Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar was given a clean chit by the anti-corruption bureau last

month. The division bench comprising Justice Sunil Shukre and Justice Madhav Jagtap has said that final hearing will be done on February 13. Pawar had on Tuesday filed an affidavit before the high court seeking dismissal of 'meritless' Public Interest

Litigations (PILs) filed against him for his alleged role in multi-crore scam.

Challenging the clean chit given to Pawar by the ACB in December 2019, two PILs were filed before the high court stating that they had no faith in the ACB and hence the inquiry should be handed over either to Enforcement Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or an enquiry commission to be headed by a retired Supreme Court or high court judge. However, in his first detailed affidavit in the irrigation scam, Pawar charged petitioner Atul Jagtap of having a personal vendetta and an attempt to malign his image while

asserting his constitutional right to remain silent in not answering all questions put forth by ACB. "I have not indulged in any corrupt, malafide or motivated act while discharging my duties as minister," Pawar claimed while denying all charges of wrongdoings and presiding over a regime favouring a handful of pliant officials. "Every decision has been taken as per law and in line with procedures and I have not favoured anyone. All contracts were awarded by the department in accordance with rules and did not warrant my interference," Pawar claimed while denying repeated violation of rules of business. I am not accused in any of the cases, nor is there any

evidence against me, Pawar claimed in his affidavit while slamming the petitioner for trying to portray him as the mastermind of irrigation scam. Describing Jagtap as a contractor, Pawar questioned his locus standi in filing the PIL and trying to level serious allegations of corruption against him.

Strongly opposing the prayer made by Jan Manch (the other petitioner) and Jagtap to appoint a judicial inquiry commission and to hand over the probe to ED or CBI, Pawar claimed that the investigation was going in the right direction and extensively quoted from the successive affidavits of the ACB to prove progress in the matter.

Aaditya Thackeray meets Rahul Gandhi days after Shiv Sena skipped anti-CAA meeting

This was the first meeting between the two scions after their parties joined hands to form a government in Maharashtra.

(News Agencies)-Shiv Sena leader and Maharashtra minister Aaditya Thackeray met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Wednesday morning. The meeting was seen as the Sena's attempt to pacify ally Congress after it skipped the meeting of Opposition parties against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) earlier this week.

Thackeray met Gandhi at his residence in the capital. This was the first meeting between

the two scions after their parties joined hands to form a government in Maharashtra.

It is learnt that Thackeray apprised Gandhi about the state government's welfare programme including loan waiver. The two leaders also discussed the current political scenario in the country.

Interestingly, Thackeray had flown to Delhi a day before swearing-in of Uddhav Thackeray in November to personally invite Congress interim president Sonia

Gandhi and former prime minister Manmohan Singh. He did not meet Rahul Gandhi at the time. On the swearing-in on November 28, no one from the Gandhi family was present.

The Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) - the new allies of the Sena - were unhappy with the absence of Sena leaders in the anti-CAA meeting called by Sonia Gandhi. Sena leader Sanjay Raut said that there was 'miscommunication' over the



meeting.

The Sena is now expected to attend an event to oppose CAA

and National Population Register (NPR) in New Delhi later this month.

Goa CM blames Nehru for 'delaying' Goa's liberation, causes uproar

Pramod Sawant was chosen to succeed Manohar Parrikar as chief minister in March last year despite being among the youngest BJP legislators in the Goa Legislative Assembly.



(News Agencies)- Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has sparked a controversy after he blamed India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru for having delayed Goa's liberation which resulted in the state being freed from the Portuguese rule 14 years after the rest of the country. Sawant's comments which were

made at the 'Know Your Army' mela held in the state capital on Tuesday evening, came even as he praised and thanked the Army for liberating Goa in 1961. "Truth be told, India got Independence in 1947, the people of the entire country got the fruits of Independence. But unfortunately for Goans, we had

to wait 14 years to taste freedom. The Prime Minister at the time Jawaharlal Nehru was responsible for this. And because of him we got liberation 14 years later. If he had the political will, if he was really concerned about Goans then, and really felt that Goa should have been liberated from the

Portuguese then we would have got liberation 14 years earlier. Never mind in 1947. He should have thought about us at least in 1950," Sawant said.

"Why did we have to live under Portuguese rule for another 14 years, they have now to answer. Thanks to the military services. Goa's freedom fighters and freedom fighters from around the country, they forced them to send military forces to Goa," Sawant said.

Goa was liberated by the Indian Army on December 19, 1961, through a bloodless operation Vijay which saw the Portuguese surrender without offering a fight. However, Sawant's comments denigrating Nehru caused an uproar.

"Jawaharlal Nehru spent around nine years in jail (aggregate of 3259 days); (is an) acclaimed internationally as statesman, gave us Discovery of India, History of World Civilisations, laid the foundations of modern India (and was a) strong crusader of science, technology and scientific temper, committed

to democratic and secular values, the architect of NAM (Non Aligned Movement), Chacha Nehru for children, thinker, giant intellectual, unified India," Prabhakar Timble, a former State Election Commissioner said.

Others pointed out that with several people pointing out that an armed annexation of Goa was contemplated only after all diplomatic efforts failed.

"Portugal is a founding member of NATO (which considers an attack on a single member state as an attack on all of them). The moment India became independent, Goa's issue was raised in NATO and thereafter in security council. Nehru's fight was convincing the international community that Goa should belong to India," Dr Mukul Pai Raiturkar explained.

"What complicated this further was Portuguese never considered Goa as their colony - always as their [integral] part and therefore necessary component of their sovereignty.

Centre postpones deadline to notify digital media rules



(News Agencies)- The Union government has pushed its deadline to notify the Intermediary Guidelines (Amendment) Rules, which will define liabilities for digital companies such as Facebook and Google, according to an official who said the rules will now be disclosed around January 27-28. In September last year, the Supreme Court directed the government to give a deadline for the notification. In an affidavit filed in October, the ministry of electronics and information technology said it will complete the notification by January 15. "The case comes up for hearing on January 28; we will notify the Rules just around that time," an

official told HT.HT had last week reported that it is likely that tweaks in the draft could include changes in intermediary culpability and a redefinition of unlawful content to include terrorism and child sexual abuse imagery. The focus on the liabilities of such companies intensified in 2017 following a spate of lynching incidents that are seen to have triggered by rumours spread through services such as WhatsApp. However, several intermediaries have expressed their reservations due to the Indian government's insistence on traceability. WhatsApp, which has an estimated 400 million users in India, has said that the changes could interfere with users' privacy.

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How Faith And Devotion Unite India Despite Its Diversity

USSR disintegrated, Bangladesh split from Pakistan and UK is under pressure from Scotland and Ireland, but India has remained despite its enormous diversity. Dr Krishna Gopal, the joint-secretary of the RSS, explains the reasons

A few years ago, in 1991, the USSR disintegrated. It had come into being in 1917 but it went on to split into many nations. Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia were divided too. Bangladesh seceded from Pakistan as well. The Scottish and Irish people have been fighting against Britain for long and, in a few years from now, they will definitely become independent entities. The only reason behind this is that in these countries, there is an absence of respectful feelings that could hold together in a thread of unity the diversities among their people.

The constitution or a large army or a proper administrative system could not serve as a unifying factor in these countries. They could not stay united as intolerance over diversity kept rising there. It is Europe's tragedy that it could not find any formula for unity in diversity. Its nations failed to instill in their citizens any sense of patriotism towards their motherlands. Bharat, in this respect, has been successful for centuries and remains united despite its multiple diversities. At the time of Independence, former British PM Winston Churchill had predicted that Bharat was headed for disintegration soon, but it did not happen.

Some people are actually amazed to see the unity of India, but it is a natural phenomenon for its citizens. It is a matter of great surprise for many scholars and political thinkers to observe how Bharat has seamlessly managed to keep itself united by effortlessly nurturing its diversity. Bharat is a spiritual country. It is due to their spiritual bent of mind that her people consider god to be omnipresent. This devotion has made them accept their entire country as the land of the gods. Each and every particle of its vast expanse of land spread right from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari, and from the banks of the Indus to Parshuram Kund in Arunachal Pradesh is considered pious by its people. A Vedic hymn, Mata bhumi putroham prithivya (Hey, motherland, you are our mother and we are your children), chanted by ancient sages as a prayer, inculcated a profound

sense of faith and devotion in its populace over the centuries. In fact, deep faith for the motherland took the form of devotion. The banks of each of its rivers turned into pilgrimage sites and all its mountain peaks began to appear sacred to them. The initiation of its people as children of the soil led this faith to become deeper. The entire motherland turned into a temple of sorts for them.

This devotion had such a profound impact on the thousands of people that they became eager to go on pilgrimages in large numbers to different holy places across their motherland. Bharatiya society gave a concrete shape to spiritualism through its alluring imagination for religious expeditions. It led to the recognition of places of pilgrimages by the Shaiva, Vaishnava, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh, Nath and many other sects and religions.

Compared to an omnipresent but formless god, the living form of the divinity became more appealing to them. Scores of devout people began to trek to places such as Kedarnath and Badrinath located thousands of metres above on the mountains and also march on foot to distant pilgrimages such as Rameshwaram and Kanyakumari by the sea. Even though they had to endure unmitigated hardships through these pilgrimages, they experienced indescribable joy because of their devotion to their motherland. Pilgrimages are nothing but a manifestation of our devotion to the motherland.

While on a pilgrimage, the pilgrims are overcome by their profound faith and devotion towards the motherland. Also, they become liberal towards people who speak different languages in different parts of the country. They inculcate a sense of fellow feeling for all the states in the country. They don't mind any diversity and inconvenience over food, dialect or language that they experience along their way. Such arduous pilgrimages have been going on for thousands of years. Even when Muslim rulers sought to impose an inhuman jaziya or pilgrimage tax, it did not deter devotees. They chose to

pay the taxes kept it going uninterrupted.

Pilgrimages help people get acquainted with different regions of the country. It makes them develop a natural affinity with the flora and fauna, ecology as well as traditions of different places. This is why idli-dosa from southern Bharat have found its way to the plates of people all over in northern Bharat, while paranthe-puri-samosa of the North are being relished across the South. Even though languages of different regions are not understood, it does not cause any sense of alienation or friction. Pilgrimages make us familiar with each and every aspect of our motherland, and also remove fear of the unknown from our hearts. Just think of it. When a devotee of Lord Shiva treks hundreds of kilometres, carrying the holy Gangajal along the way to offer it at the temple of his village, Gangajal in his mind is not merely the water from a river. For him, it is the water that has emanated from the locks of Lord Shiva, living somewhere in the Himalayas, before reaching his village through Ganga to enable him to offer it at his temple. The purity of Ganga water starts to flow from Lord Shiva, the supreme deity of his native place. It fills his heart with indescribable happiness. The peaks of the Himalayas, the Ganga, his village and Bharat all become one. Kanwariyas, who march in groups to sacred places carrying holy water on their shoulders, have effortlessly united village after village with the Ganga. The people from Manipur, Assam and southern Bharat consider nearby rivers to be their Ganga and they carry their waters to their villages. These pilgrims have bestowed the Ganga-like purity on their rivers. Their devotion has turned the water from these rivers into Gangajal, to be offered to Lord Shiva at their temples.

The sight of the Kumbh in Prayag overwhelms everyone in this country. Millions of people from different states, languages, dialects, cuisines and sects march to take a dip in the holy Ganga while retaining their diversity. Whether the Ganga washes their sins or not is not known but it certainly fills their hearts with immense joy and

satisfaction. Who will not be overjoyed at the sight of millions of people taking a dip in the holy river? An all-pervasive sense of faith and devotion makes us feel an unmistakable sense of unity in diversity in the face of innumerable diversities in the country. It bridges the gaps between rich and poor, literates and illiterates to make everyone equal. It also purges the hearts of all caste-related inequalities. This devotion underlines great uniformity. The entire country looks united on the banks of Ganga after sinking all differences in society. Is it not the foundation of Bharat's eternal unity? A Prayag-like sight is witnessed every three years in places such as Haridwar, Nashik and Ujjain. Nobody calls these millions of people to the Kumbh, nor does anyone pay their fare. There is not even a permanent arrangement for their stay. And yet, devotees have been following this tradition for thousands of years. It is nothing but a great example of unification based on faith and devotion.

Take Krishna Janmashtami, for instance. Millions of people march to Mathura-Vrindavan to see the birthplace of Lord Krishna. Chanting Radhe-Radhe, they move around Govardhan hill, believing that Lord Krishna had saved the Braj region, their motherland, by lifting this mountain. It is not merely the sea of Krishna devotees who converge there, but is a manifestation of a pious flow of devotion.

Intolerant invaders had razed the Mathura temple to the ground many times but they could never crush the sentiments of the devotees who waited for the construction of a new temple on the ruins of the demolished one and built one whenever they got an opportunity. In countries of Roman and Greek civilisations, nobody ever came forward to rebuild a temple lying in ruins. They did not have the faith and devotion towards their motherland. Bhakti or devotion is the hallmark of Bharat alone. It is because of their devotion to Lord Krishna that people of Bengal christen their sons as Kanu and those from Kerala call them Kannan. It is just an example of how bhakti binds people from

different regions!

On Ram Navami, lakhs of people march to Ayodhya for a glimpse of Lord Ram at his birthplace. Many of them are economically poor, but there is a palpable sense of happiness in their hearts. Women devotees sing bhajans while circumambulating the holy town. They also chant Ram Mandir ba kab bani (when will a new Ram temple be built). Women living in and around Ayodhya provide food accommodation to thousands of pilgrims in their homes even though they cannot converse with each other because of language barriers. Many karsewaks or volunteers to build a Ram temple had come here from Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka, but the locals were always too happy to welcome them. It is the love flowing from the bhakti ras that binds people together irrespective of unfamiliarity and language hurdles.

One can find Ram in the name of former Tamil Nadu chief ministers M.G. Ramachandran and Jayaram Jayalalitha, or their Andhra Pradesh counterpart N.T. Ramarao. The popularity of this name indicates that the devotion to Ram has united the nation right up to Rameshwaram. There is Parshuram Kund in Arunachal Pradesh. The cursed battle axe of Parshuram had been left behind in the Lohit river. Every year, lakhs of people go there to take a dip in its water. Kerala is also considered to be Parshuram's region. Kerala and Arunachal are so far away from each other, but they appear as unifying jewels of national integration.

It is imperative for every Lord Shiva devotee to undertake a pilgrimage to the 12 jyotirlingas across the country. Lord Ram had himself consecrated it at R a m e s h w a r a m . Shankaracharya had breathed his last at Kedarnath. Mahmud of Ghazni had come to plunder Somnath temple, which was demolished many times but it could not shake the faith of the people.

(Dr Krishna Gopal, 64, is joint general secretary of the RSS. He has a PhD in botany and joined the Sangh in the 1970s. Views are personal.)

Why a \$453 billion bond manager is shifting bets from India to China

Angry protests have erupted in many Indian states, forcing the government to send in hundreds of soldiers to aid local police. Modi ended seven decades of autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir in 2019. The changes were part of the election promises made by the BJP. Despite five interest-rate cuts last year to shore up growth, yields on 10-year India bonds remain some of the highest in

Asia at 6.64%. A recent rally in the market, spurred by bond purchases from the Reserve Bank of India, has stalled as inflation surges to a five-year high. Stagflation looms as the economy grinds toward its slowest expansion in more than a decade. The central bank will probably refrain from cutting interest rates in the coming months, and that along with the

deteriorating macro environment, is probably why global funds are turning away from Indian bonds, said Ek Pon Tay, a portfolio manager for emerging-market fixed-income at BNP Paribas Asset Management. "An expected increase in the fiscal deficit and economic growth not yet rebounding from below-trend levels mean bond yields will be under further upward pressure," Tay said. Malaysia Switch

Western Asset is buying Malaysian debt as the oil exporter will benefit from higher energy prices, Soon said. Global investors may also pour another \$150 billion to \$200 billion into Chinese bonds as the debt is gradually included in global benchmarks, he said.

Arrested Cop's Role In Parliament Attack? J&K Police May Investigate

It is being investigated if Singh's visit to Delhi was linked to the January 26 Republic Day celebration. Singh had been awarded the Sher-e-Kashmir Police Gallantry Medal

for his role in countering the August 2017 terror attack in Pulwama in which four policemen were killed. The police are investigating if he had any role in the attack. The Jammu and Kashmir

administration on Wednesday announced "forfeiture" of the award to Singh. He is being questioned by a joint team of J&K and Central intelligence agencies.

BJP's foreign cell, the unofficial ambassadors of the party

decisions such as the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into union territories and revoking its special status guaranteed under Article 370 or the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, a similar exercise was carried out by the BJP's foreign affairs cell or the overseas cell. Led by Vijay Chauthaiwale, the BJP's overseas cell has come to be recognised as a key outreach arm of the party that works firmly and without delay in shoring up support for the government's policies. These foreign cells, which are present in a host of countries across the world, were instrumental in leading campaigns with the Indian diaspora taking out marches and celebratory rallies to welcome decisions such as abrogation of Article 370. While the government's explanation for a communication lockdown in the three regions of the erstwhile state was to avert violence, the diaspora took to social media and to the streets with posters and placards of how the provision was discriminatory to a section of the people, including the LGBT community. These cells act as the government's unofficial ambassadors, trying to breakdown the rationale of policy decisions to the man on the street.

Now, as the anti-CAA protests intensify in the country, the foreign cells are back at work. Pro-CAA rallies have already been taken out in places such as California, where participants with placards 'NRIs support CAA', 'CAA is all about human rights' chose to exhibit support for the legislation that seeks to fast-track citizenship for persecuted minorities from the neighbourhood who arrived in Indian before 2014. To counter the charge that the law is discriminatory, because it explicitly states that the provision of fast-tracking applications is limited to Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, the foreign cell has begun circulating literature on the provisions of the law. "The Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation has drafted a white paper on the CAA, which has been circulated through email and social media to over 50,000 members. A second booklet including the testimonies of persecuted Hindus will also be circulated soon... all these are efforts to engage with people and clear the misconceptions," said Chauthaiwale. He said the cells are also upfront about protests against CAA in India being a democratic right of the people. "There is a small

section that is protesting and it is their democratic right, but we are engaging constructively with people outside to give the other side of the story," he said. Citing the role played by the foreign cell soon after the abrogation of Article 370, he said, "...There is a generation of people abroad who are not conversant with the historical background of Partition, their opposition stems more from the lack of knowledge that creates confusion. So, we went out and explained how Article 370 was discriminatory and not an issue that can be viewed from the binary of Hindu-Muslim." In the coming days, the foreign cell, which was instrumental in organising big-ticket events of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from his Madison Square reception to the more recent Howdy Modi event in Houston, will focus more on party-to-party interactions. In 2019, the cell had organised visits of party delegates to South Korea and China. Chauthaiwale, who has a doctorate in microbiology and comes from a family moored in the ideology of the RSS, was picked for his current role by BJP president Amit Shah. While Chauthaiwale sees his role as an outreach mode for staying connected with diaspora,

his critics complain that his role has the potential to overlap if not circumvent the diplomatic process. He was in the news recently when a British high commission team met him to express concern that the overseas friends of BJP were seen to support the

Conservative party. "The Labour Party openly supported a resolution against India; the diaspora there tried to do a few things, but the party had nothing to do with it. We are clear that some people who were involved in campaigns there were

doing so in their capacity as British nationals. We are only interested in the outcome (of the elections)," he said. Will there be changes in store for the cell as the party heads into a new phase, with a new party president taking over the reigns?

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Indian-Born Twitter Head Who Decides On Blocking Tweets, Even Trump's

Twitter's top lawyer, Vijaya Gadde.

As Twitter's head of legal and policy issues, Gadde has one of the most difficult jobs in technology: Her teams write and enforce the rules for hundreds of millions of internet users. If people break the rules, the offending tweets can be removed, users can be suspended, or in extreme cases booted off Twitter altogether. Dorsey may have to answer for Twitter's decisions, but he's taken a hands-off approach to creating and enforcing its content policies.

"He rarely weighs in on an individual enforcement decision," Gadde said in a recent interview. "I can't even think of a time. I usually go to him and say, 'this is what's going to happen.'"

That leaves Gadde, 45, as the end of the line when it comes to account enforcement -- a delicate position in a world where Twitter's rules are both an affront to free speech and an invitation to racists and bigots, depending on who's tweeting at you. "No matter what we do we've been accused of bias," Gadde said. "Leaving content up, taking content down -- that's become pretty much background noise." Like most corporate lawyers, Gadde generally operates in the background herself, though her

influence has helped shape Twitter for most of the past decade. A graduate of Cornell University and New York University Law School, Gadde spent almost a decade at a Bay Area-based law firm working with tech startups before she joined the social-media company in 2011. Her eight-plus years at Twitter are about equal to the amount of time Dorsey has worked there over the years. But as Twitter's role in global politics has increased, so has Gadde's visibility. She was in the Oval Office when Dorsey met with U.S. President Donald Trump last year, and joined the CEO when he met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2018. When Dorsey posted a photo with the Dalai Lama from that trip, Gadde stood between the two men, holding the Dalai Lama's hand. InStyle just put her on "The Badass 50," an annual list of women changing the world. "Vijaya defines the word," tweeted Twitter Chief Marketing Officer Leslie Berland.

When Gadde first joined Twitter, the internet was a different place. At the time, a lot of politicians were just getting familiar with the platform. Trump primarily used his Twitter to share announcements about his TV

appearances (though this would quickly change). The official presidential account, @POTUS, wouldn't even come into existence until 2015, under then-President Barack Obama.

When Gadde took over as general counsel in 2013, the social-media service had an "everything goes" mentality. A year prior, one of Twitter's product managers in the U.K. famously said that Twitter viewed itself as "the free speech wing of the free speech party," a label later repeated by then-CEO Dick Costolo. The company simply "let the tweets flow," said one former employee.

That freedom is part of what drew Gadde to Twitter in the first place. An immigrant from India, Gadde moved to the U.S. as a child and grew up in east Texas, where her dad worked as a chemical engineer on oil refineries in the Gulf of Mexico, before moving to New Jersey in middle school. "I was the only Indian child most of my education until I went to college," she says now. "You feel voiceless. And I think that that's kind of what drew me to Twitter -- this platform that gives you a voice, and gives you a community and gives you power."

Twitter's commitment to giving everyone a voice, though, has also come with a general reluctance to take it away. Twitter's decisions

in recent years to ban certain users, including conspiracy theorist Alex Jones and far-right media troll Milo Yiannopoulos, were news in part because Twitter's decisions to act were so uncharacteristic. Gadde acknowledges the change, saying that the company has come to realize in recent years the responsibility it has to protect the safety of its users, including when they're not using the product. "I would say that the company has shifted its approach dramatically [since I started]," she said.

Perhaps no user presents a bigger quagmire for Gadde and her team than Trump, the platform's most famous user, whose tweets often push the boundaries of Twitter's rules. The president's habit of blasting messages to his 70.9 million followers has taken on a new vigor thanks to a looming impeachment trial and re-election bid. Following the U.S. drone strike in early January that killed a top Iranian general, Trump threatened Iran with military force in a number of tweets, including the targeting of cultural sites. That prompted many observers, including some former Twitter employees, to ask why he hadn't been suspended - a cycle that has played out

several times following other Trump tirades.

Last month, Trump attacked his Democratic rivals, blasted Congress over impeachment proceedings, and even mocked teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg from his @realDonaldTrump Twitter account. According to a USA Today analysis, his tweets contain more negative language than ever. The study looked at whether Trump tweeted words with positive or negative connotations, and found he "is posting fewer tweets with words that convey joy, anticipation and trust, and more that convey anger." Trump sent or retweeted more than 1,050 messages in December, according to Hootsuite -- more than any other month since taking office.

"The way he uses social media is a reflection of just how unusual a candidate, and now a president, Trump is. A big part of that is that he breaks all the rules," said Patrick Egan, a professor of politics and public policy at New York University. "Something that a lot of people really like about him is that he says the kind of things he's not supposed to say, and of course that's exactly the kind of thing that can get you into trouble on social media."

The women in our films want a Hook Up today. Who has time for Sau Saal Ka Pyaar?

Kya karna hai umron ke waade: War, 2019.

It is 2020. We have no time to stop and look at a beautiful sunset. Our women are always on the move. They are kicking ass in the workplace and killing it at home. We are hustling, every minute. There's no time for a janam-janam-ka-saath-type love story anymore. Our kasma-vaade have all been thrown out of the window (well, are promises even promises if they are fulfilled?). Our films embraced our changing lifestyles and adapted to our fast relationships. We no longer have an Asha Parekh claiming kal bhi tumse pyaar rahega and there's no Aishwarya Rai saying she has never wanted anything but her Devdas.

We have a Vaani Kapoor asking for ek raat ki yaari. An Alia Bhatt saying hook up tu karle. A Jacqueline Fernandez singing kal subha sochenge jo aaj raat kia. Our lyrics have changed. They

are more reflective of our times. Our actors just don't stare at each other while pledging to spend an eternity with each other. Instead, they immediately step into the pool like Vaani and Hrithik Roshan singing, "Kya karne hai umron ke waade / Ye jo rehte hai rehne de aadhe."

We clearly hate to wait, especially if it is for a man to ask us out. After thumping keyboards for most part of the day and dealing with angry clients, evenings call for fun and a good time. Weekends, better. So, rather than shying away, we express our desires and head out for a quick date. Exactly what Alia did with Tiger in SOTY 2, "Le le le lele number mera Baad mein message mujhko kar dena Khudko samajh ke lucky Mujhse hook up tu kar le na."

Swipe right, leave. Confident with our sexuality and aware of it, we go by our own

rules. We would take charge and sing "subah hone na de, saath khone na de / ek doosre ko hum sone na de", as long as it doesn't have a janam-janam clause attached.

We don't restrict ourselves within the morally set definitions of right and wrong; we are fine with giving in into carnal desires because even though "ye dil toh dhundhta hai inkar ke bahane", "ye jism koi pabandiyan na maane".

Nora Fatehi gyrates to Pyaar Do Pyaar Lo (originally from 1986 film Janbaaz) as if telling us that there's no oonch-neechee in this kind of love. We are equals. Even the run-of-the-mill remixes today seem to have identified women as beings with agency.

Karan Johar's Kalank, which was released in 2019 but set in the 1945 pre-independence British era, too didn't throttle a woman's desires. In one of the scenes in the film, which also

made it to trailer, we see Alia trying to dissuade Varun Dhawan by saying, "Main shaadi-shuda hoon." To which Varun replies, "Mujhe kaunsa nikaah padhna tha aap se." In the next scene, we see Varun asking Alia, "Himmat hai meri duniya mein kadam rakhne ki?" Pat comes her reply, "Mere paas khone ko kuch hai hi nahi."

These are the lines of a Karan Johar film, who in the past has made a film that made a hero out of a brat called Rahul (Shah Rukh Khan), who humiliated Anjali (Kajol) and managed to marry her in the end because, hello, long hair and saree. Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, anyone?

But then Karan made up for his flaws by giving us The Break-up Song, which he famously termed his 'modern-day ode to feminism'. Anushka Sharma doesn't cry for her pyaar or burn herself while

running with a diya in her hand. Instead, she puts on fancy clothes, goes to the parlour to get her make-up on and dances her heart out, "kuchh din to rona dhona bumper kiya / aur phir delete uska number kiya / aansoo jo sookhe seedha parlour gayi / parlour mein jaake shampoo jamkar kiya." In a simple, entertaining way, she taught us to let go of toxic relationships and celebrate ourselves.

Bollywood has been selling this idea of eternal love for a long time, but, unlike Pradeep Kumar and Bina Rai, Wada Nibhana is thoda mushkil for us.

Today's Anarkalis don't want to be buried inside a wall for a guy they love. We would rather deck up and step out to a party with another man. So when he breaks our desi dil for an 'angrezi chidiya', we move on. Thank you, next.

Iraqi refugee launches GOP challenge to Ilhan Omar: 'She needs to be stopped'

(News Agencies)- Dalia al-Aqidi is a Muslim Iraqi refugee who says she's tired of hearing Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., play identity politics while using language she believes is "dividing" America. So she is launching a campaign to unseat her in November. Al-Aqidi, who discussed her newly launched campaign in an interview with Fox News, joins a growing field of Republicans looking to take on Omar. "She needs to be stopped," al-Aqidi told Fox News in a phone interview. "I truly believe that I'm strong enough to beat her at her own game." She explained that in a race between the two of them, Omar would be limited in using her background as a Muslim woman who came to the U.S. as a refugee from Somalia to distinguish them - because they are "basically the same" in that backstory, she

said. Al-Aqidi decried the use of identity politics on the campaign trail. "Muslims, Christians, Jews are all Americans," she said, while going on to blast Omar's past comments that have been labeled anti-Semitic. Every time she opens her mouth she says something either anti-U.S. or anti-Semitic," al-Aqidi said. Omar has apologized for past tweets about Israel that played on anti-Semitic tropes. Al-Aqidi also alleged that Omar is more interested in raising her own political profile than helping her constituents. "I am loyal to the country that gave me a chance, gave me a brighter future," she said, claiming that Omar "continually tries to weaken the country and divide us." Omar's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on al-Aqidi's candidacy and accusations.

Al-Aqidi, who has 31 years of experience as a journalist, including as a White House correspondent for Alhurra, a U.S.-based Arabic channel that airs in the Middle East, says that one thing she has learned is that regularly attacking your opponents is not an effective strategy in politics.

"Conflict resolution is an art. You cannot do anything without a conversation. You talk to the other side and try to figure out something that will be acceptable," she said. "Trashing the other side will get you nowhere." As for her own platform, al-Aqidi says her main concerns are security at home and abroad, the economy - where she says President Trump is "doing great" - and education. "I'm ready to fight and I believe that I could win," she said. There is a fairly long line of candidates



hoping to take on Omar and the other members of the group of freshman congresswomen known as the "Squad." Omar is facing primary challenges from Democratic community organizer John Mason and attorney Antone Melton-Meaux. On the GOP side, al-Aqidi joins businessman Lacy Johnson, special-education professional Danielle Stella, minister and missionary Lucia Vogel, activist Alley Waterbury,

and former auto sales manager Brent Whaley. Squad member Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., also has a cadre of opponents from both parties hoping to unseat her, and Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., is facing a GOP challenge from David Dudenhofer, the chairman of his district's Republican party. Of the Squad, only Rep. Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., remains unopposed.

Why does Meghan get all the blame?



(News Agencies)- Prince Harry and Meghan, The Duchess of Sussex, have announced they're stepping back from - and essentially quitting - their roles as senior members of the royal family. As part of that move, they'll spend some of their time in North America and "work to

become financially independent." Who knew that was even an option? Queen Elizabeth has yet to give the couple her blessing, CNN understands. Still, in a statement that the couple released on their Instagram, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex assured the world they would

continue "to honor our duty to The Queen, the Commonwealth, and our patronages."

Nothing to see here but a modern, young couple looking to build a life together on their own terms. Right?

Not according to the popular British media, which has put the "blame" for the exit - disdainfully dubbed by some as "Megxit" - squarely on Meghan, just as it's blamed her for everything else that they grouse has gone royally wrong since she came into the picture.

According to the tabloids, it's Meghan who helped foster the alleged rift between Harry and his brother William. They've blamed Meghan for allegedly failing to get

on with her sister-in-law Kate Middleton. And, the tabloids would have us believe, Harry has reportedly deserted all his old friends and become "more private and withdrawn" to spend more time with Meghan's "Hollywood friends."

Now it's widely speculated that Meghan is the one who hates it in England, who wants to move back to California or Canada. The press has described the move - Meghan's move - as selfish.

Is it any surprise? Whenever men don't behave as we'd like, who better to blame than the wives? Just consider the popular comparisons on social media likening Meghan to Yoko Ono, whose romance with John Lennon

was widely blamed for breaking up The Beatles. Just look at Angelina Jolie, who bore the brunt of the blame for Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt's divorce. Quoting "a source," Page Six reports that Meghan has "taken total control" of Prince Harry's life, as if he weren't a grown man and former captain of the British army.

"People say I'm too critical of Meghan Markle," tweeted commentator Piers Morgan. "But she ditched her family, ditched her Dad, ditched most of her old friends, split Harry from William (and) has now split him from the Royal Family. I rest my case." And we asked for your opinion ... why?

Lev Parnas has taken the impeachment stakes even higher

(News Agencies)- President Donald Trump "knew exactly what was going," asserted Lev Parnas, describing a plot that he said was "all about 2020": helping Trump win reelection, not fighting corruption in Ukraine. That is just some of what Parnas, an associate of Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, said in a couple of television interviews Wednesday night, one with CNN's Anderson Cooper, another with MSNBC's Rachel Maddow.

Parnas, who is under indictment for alleged campaign finance-

related crimes, sent shrapnel flying across Washington just as the impeachment trial of the President is set to get underway. And despite denials from the many powerful people implicated in his allegations, and notwithstanding warnings by a top Ukrainian official to CNN's Christiane Amanpour that Parnas is not credible, some of the claims made by the Soviet-born US citizen, who played a key role in Trump's Ukraine strategy, are backed by physical evidence. These are in the form of documents and text messages

that have been released to the House of Representatives.

Parnas said Trump "is lying," when he claims he withheld aid to Ukraine in order to fight corruption. Parnas said Vice President Mike Pence was in the loop, and described Attorney General William Barr as being, "a member of the team," that was working to secure an announcement from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky that would smear Joe Biden, Trump's leading 2020 rival.

All those now implicated by Parnas, including Pence and

Barr, adamantly deny the accusations.

The contrast between all of this and the events underway in Washington DC this week could not be more jarring. On one side, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Wednesday launched the solemn process that will trigger the trial of President Donald Trump in the Senate, naming the managers who will lay out the case against him, just ahead of the House vote to formally approve the ceremonial delivery of the articles of impeachment.

On the other side, solemnity and decorum could not have been more distant.

Despite Trump's determined effort to block the release of any of the documents requested by investigators, Americans were slapped with a new batch of material showing Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani, Lev Parnas and another Trump supporter at work on the Ukraine scheme, evidence of a ploy more worthy of a mob family than one conducted for the benefit of the leader of a decent nation.

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Israel will initially export 200 million cubic feet of gas per day to Egypt.

Israel starts exporting natural gas to Egypt under landmark deal

(News Agencies)-Israel began exporting natural gas to Egypt on Wednesday under one of the most important deals to have been signed by the neighbors since they made peace decades ago. A private firm in Egypt, Dolphinus Holdings, will purchase 85 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas, worth an

estimated \$19.5 billion, from Israel's Leviathan and Tamar offshore fields over 15 years. Yossi Abu, CEO of Israel's Delek Drilling, one of the partners in Leviathan and Tamar, said the landmark arrangement "marks a new era in the Middle East energy sector".

Israel will initially export 200 million cubic feet of gas per day

to Egypt, two Egyptian industry sources said. Gas from Leviathan will be supplied to Dolphinus at a rate of 2.1 bcm per year, rising to 4.7 bcm per year by the second half of 2022, according to Delek.

The gas is being supplied via a subsea pipeline connecting Israel and Egypt's Sinai peninsula. Exports of Tamar gas to

Dolphinus are expected to start later this year.

Israeli officials have called the export of gas to Egypt the most significant deal to emerge since the countries signed a historic peace treaty in 1979.

Egypt is hoping the deal will help it become a regional energy hub, with some of the gas expected to be re-exported to Europe

through liquefied natural gas (LNG) plants.

The North African country is currently exporting one billion cubic feet of gas to Europe every month via 10 shipments, the country's petroleum minister said in remarks published on Wednesday.

Tarek El Molla also told El Watan newspaper that Egypt wanted to boost gas shipments to Europe to 20 a month after restarting the Damietta LNG plant.

Damietta has been idled for years due to a lack of gas supply during a dispute with Union Fenosa Gas (UFG), a joint venture between Spain's Gas Natural and Italy's Eni.

Damietta is 80% owned by UFG, with the remaining 20% split evenly between the state-owned Egyptian Natural Gas Holding Company and the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation.

Molla also said Egypt was planning a bidding round for oil drilling in the western Mediterranean Sea and was in talks with Chevron, Exxon Mobile and Total.

Russian Government Resigns As Putin Pitches Constitution Changes: Report



(News Agencies)- Russia's government resigned in a shock announcement on Wednesday after President Vladimir Putin proposed a series of constitutional reforms. In a televised meeting with the Russian president, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said the proposals would make significant changes to the country's balance of power and so "the government in its current form has resigned". "We should provide the president of our country with the possibility to take all the necessary measures" to carry out the changes, Medvedev said. "All further decisions will be

taken by the president."

Putin asked Medvedev, his longtime ally, to continue as head of government until a new government has been appointed. "I want to thank you for everything that has been done, to express satisfaction with the results that have been achieved," Putin said.

Not everything worked out, but everything never works out." He also proposed creating the post of deputy head of the Security Council, suggesting that Medvedev take on the position.

Earlier Wednesday Putin proposed a referendum on a package of reforms to Russia's constitution that would strengthen the role of parliament.

Beijing's 'chicken feet' diplomacy

China imports 100 tons of the farm goods worth \$170K from the U.S. after banning American poultry meat for five years as the two nations prepare to sign historic trade deal

(News Agencies)- The tense trade relation between the United States and China may be facing a new start thanks to 100 tons of chicken feet.

Customs officials in Shanghai yesterday allowed in a container of the animal parts worth \$170,000 from America five years after Beijing banned U.S. poultry meat because of avian influenza concerns.

The lifting of the sanction, likely to be Beijing's 'chicken feet' diplomacy, came as the world's two dominant economic powers are poised to sign a 'phase one' trade deal today in a bid to end years of tariff dispute.

The batch of chicken feet cleared customs at an inspection centre in the Qingpu District of Shanghai, reported Chinese state broadcaster CCTV.

They are expected to be sold in cities and towns in the Yangtze River Delta Region in eastern China from today, the report said, as families prepare for their Lunar New Year meals.

Chicken feet (??), locally known as phoenix claws, are a popular snack in China. They are often



cooked with herbs and spices and eaten hot or cold along with alcohol. Diners enjoy them by eating the skin and cartilage.

The Chinese firm that imported the chicken feet is planning to buy more poultry products from the United States because the Chinese market is 'huge'.

Feng Shiting, director of Shanghai Chenrui International Trading Company, told a reporter from CCTV that he and an unspecified American company had signed a contract to import up to 500 tons of products every month in the first quarter of the year.

China prohibited the import of all

U.S. poultry products on January 9, 2015, following an flu outbreak in America. Beijing officially lifted the ban on November 14 last year after carrying out a series of risk assessments, according to Chinese state newspaper Guangming Daily. Before the ban, China imported \$222.6 million worth of this goods from the United States in 2014, said Stefan Legge, a trade expert at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland, citing figures from the UN Comtrade Database.

The senior researcher considers China's lifting of the import ban 'a symbolic move'.

Revealed, the BEST countries in the world to raise a child

Britain ranks 11th while the US comes 18th as Denmark, Sweden and Norway clinch the top spots

(News Agencies)-The best countries in the world for raising a child have been revealed - and the UK does not feature in the top ten. Britain ranked 11th in the annual Best Countries report, despite its economy dwarfing every nation above it, while the US came 18th.

Scandinavian countries dominated the top of the rankings, with Denmark, Sweden and Norway clinching the first, second and third spots. Denmark was hailed as the best

place to start a family because of its 'generous maternity and paternity leave policies', as well as free healthcare and education.

Sweden and Denmark were praised as being family friendly for similar reasons, as well as their robust social care programmes and low crime rates. Canada and the Netherlands rounded out the top five, followed by Switzerland, New Zealand, Australia and Austria.

The UK got high marks for its public education (9.6) and healthcare system (9.4), only



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slightly behind Denmark's 9.9 scores in both categories.

But Britain scored poorly in income equality, earning just 2.6 compared to Denmark's 9.2. It means many children are still born into poverty, unlike in the Scandinavian nations.

The UK's ranking was also dragged down by its 5.4 score for political stability, with the authors citing Brexit as the main cause.

Writing in the report, done every year since 2016 by the University of Pennsylvania, they said: 'The country's role on the global stage

faces new questions as the government is planning to approve this year its withdrawal from the EU.

'The Brexit process, which will require months, if not years, of negotiations for new trade pacts and other treaties, also raises new questions about the future of the EU.'

The US was ranked 18th in the world for bringing up a child, scoring poorly in categories like safety (1.5), affordability (0.6), political stability (4.2) and income equality (1.1).

Racial tensions and an



'increasingly polarised electorate' were cited as reasons for it ranking so poorly, as well as gun deaths, which includes school shootings.

The Best Countries report evaluated 73 nations across 65 different categories. It surveyed more than 20,000 people in the Americas, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Respondents were split evenly into different groups to get an accurate representation of views in each nation.

The groups included leaders in business, university-educated

people who consider themselves middle class or higher and read the news four times a week, and the general public, who were all over the age of 18.

For the fourth year in a row, Switzerland was ranked the overall best country, while Canada moved up to number two. Japan, Germany, Australia and the UK rounded out the top five, with the US coming in at seventh.

The report was carried out by the US News & World Report, the BAV Group and the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Around 250 residents are urged to evacuate as Mississippi dam is in 'imminent danger' of collapsing and flooding more than 17,000 acres after heavy rains



(News Agencies)-A Mississippi dam is on the verge of imminent collapse, officials said Tuesday, urging hundreds of residents to evacuate as the region is bombarded with heavy rains and flash floods.

On Tuesday the Oktibbeha County Lake Dam swelled due to pounding rains that raised water levels in the area near Starkville.

Water got between the dam and the ground beneath it, compromising the structure's integrity, engineer Clyde Pritchard said to the Starkville

Daily News. Officials are now urging residents to evacuated the area, although the order is not yet mandatory. If it does break, the dam will flood 17,400 acres of nearby land to some extent. About 250 people would have to evacuate at least 112 households, the Commercial Dispatch reported in September. 'There is a high probability of failure,' the National Weather Service in Jackson said. 'Those in this area should evacuate and seek higher ground!'

'After inspection, the County Engineer believe failure of the

dam is imminent,' The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency said.

On Tuesday county officials were seen trying to relieve pressure from the dam using tubes to pipe out water from the levee.

The Oktibbeha County Board of Supervisors has issued a warning and activated the emergency action plan.

Locals living long Riviera Road and Walter Bell Road should evacuate immediately, officials said.

As of Monday evening only one

person had evacuated.

Oktibbeha County is expecting to see half an inch or more of rain on Tuesday and possibly Wednesday. The weather service in Jackson issued a flash flood emergency warning for northern Oktibbeha County and south central Clay County.

Flash flooding is also forecast to affect northeast Louisiana, southeast Arkansas, and north portions of central Mississippi due to a cluster of showers and thunderstorms.

Floods were so bad on Tuesday that the Warren County Fire

service and Warren County Sheriff's Department in Mississippi rescued a driver who got trapped in a car in water. Later on Tuesday Clay County also warned residents, located downstream of the dam, to be on alert warning that they may need to evacuate if the dam breaks.

In September the county sought federal funds to replace the Oktibbeha dam.

The dam, built in the 1960s, has been in need of repairs for years. In 2016 state inspection confirmed the levee needed updates, but the county has struggled to get the funds to do so. Nearly 8 inches of rain has fallen this month at the Mississippi State University campus in Starkville. At least 1.37 inches of rain fell Tuesday morning in Starkville. This has been the wettest start to January since 1989, according to Weather.com.

Winter storms in the South have claimed the lives of at least nine people so far.

SARAH VINE

Damaged Prince Harry saw Meghan as his way out

There is no question that, in the manner of their departure from full-time royal life, Harry and Meghan have behaved in the most appallingly childish fashion.

They really couldn't have made more of a hash of it if they had tried.

But for all that, there is one area in which, despite everything, they have been unfairly vilified. And that is the way the finger of blame for the couple's decision has been pointed almost exclusively at Meghan.

The reasons for this have nothing to do with racism - that's a red herring pursued by individuals with a wider agenda. If anything, it's just straightforward sexism. The notion of any woman with half an opinion being wicked and manipulative is a cliché as old as humanity itself.

But the truth is that however pushy, precious or princessy Meghan may or may not be, however infuriating her realisation that, having cost us

all a fortune in a big white wedding and the refurbishment of Frogmore Cottage, she'd rather spend her days hobnobbing with Elton John and Beyonce than holed up in the Home Counties, ultimately it's Prince Harry who must take responsibility for this move, not her. After all, it's he who's the Prince; she's just the showgirl. She may have lit the touchpaper for the firecracker that's just exploded in all our faces, but she's not the root cause. That, I'm afraid, can be traced all the way back to 1997, to that sad day in September when a small boy was made to walk behind his mother's coffin in full view of the entire world.

I love the Queen and I am a huge supporter of the Royal Family, but that was a big mistake; a cruel and selfish act of self-preservation on their behalf, done purely to dampen the public's anger at the way the Palace had reacted to Diana's death.

It was also emblematic of the way the Royal Family has, over



the years, put protocol before people.

The truth is, Harry has been very damaged by his upbringing.

Even before Meghan came on the scene, it was clear there was a part of him that was very angry about what happened to his mother.

When he and William released an HBO documentary about

Diana back in 2017, on the 20th anniversary of her death, he in particular expressed very mixed emotions, not only towards his father but towards the institution of monarchy itself. Indeed, in an interview later that year, he admitted that during his 20s he had seriously considered turning his back on the privilege he was born into, to live an 'ordinary life'.

'I felt I wanted out, but then decided to stay in and work out a role for myself,' he said.

Tellingly, he recalled that during his happy years in the Army: 'I wasn't a Prince, I was just Harry.'

The timing of all this is important, because it was in July the year before that Harry had first met Meghan.

Hunger Games

India's social security system needs strengthening



Chronic poverty is not a new phenomenon in India and many people are on the margin of subsistence even today. The message to learn is that we need a better system of social security. Some social security schemes are already in place. For instance, there are pension schemes for widows and the elderly, nutrition programmes for children, and public health services. But all these schemes

could do much better to ensure that no one suffers from hunger and starvation.

Take, for example, the National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS). The Centre's contribution has stagnated at a paltry Rs 200 per month for more than 12 years. NOAPS is a good scheme, with low leakages and administrative costs. But the Centre is deliberately undermining

NOAPS in favour of contributory pension schemes that are of little use to the poorest. In the mid-day meal scheme, serving eggs is the best thing that has happened in a long time. Indian children are among the most malnourished in the world. And eggs are nutritious, affordable and safe; they also help to boost school attendance. Yet, there

are just a dozen states in the country which serve eggs on some days under MDM.

If you look at maternity benefits, Rs 6,000 per child is the legal entitlement of all women (except those already covered in the formal sector) under the National Food Security Act 2013. For many years, the Centre did not act on this. In 2017, the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana was finally rolled out - a stingy programme restricted to one child per woman, with the benefit cut down to Rs 5,000. The formalities have also been made unnecessarily complicated. Women have to produce a series of documents, including their Aadhaar card, husband's Aadhaar card, and Aadhaar-linked bank account passbook, and also ensure that the different documents are consistent with each other. Many are unable to complete the formalities or struggle with technical queries after they apply. The public distribution system (PDS), no doubt, protects a lot of people from hunger. But a large

number of people are still excluded from it. There are ways of reducing exclusion errors, but that requires a willingness to accommodate more ration cards where necessary, instead of imposing rigid caps on PDS coverage. In the poorer states, there is a strong case for a universal PDS, at least in rural areas.

Some cash transfer schemes can also help. But it is time the government accepts there is a problem with the payment systems, and puts in place grievance redressal mechanisms. In Jharkhand, many of the recent starvation deaths are related to Aadhaar. Unfortunately, the government has consistently denied this and failed to act. Quite often activists are harassed, whenever they try to bring the situation to light or support the victims. A lot can be done to improve the social security system. Instead, the government seems to believe in self-reliance for the poor and the nanny state for business.

Ports, trains and trade: Xi to offer Myanmar billion-dollar bounty



A high-speed rail line to the east, a deep-sea port to the west, and a makeover for commercial heart Yangon -- Chinese leader Xi Jinping arrives in Myanmar on Friday laden with investment pledges worth billions which could reshape the country. Here are five of the main projects -- and some of the issues plaguing them:

The big deal
The crown jewel of Xi's two-day visit will be a \$1.3 billion deep-sea port off Myanmar's troubled western Rakhine state. The Kyaukphyu port will serve as Beijing's gateway to the Indian Ocean. Myanmar has successfully hammered down the price from \$7.2 billion to swerve fears of a

Chinese debt-trap, but will still pick up 30 percent of the bill. Alongside the port, swathes of paddy fields and teak forests are poised to be transformed into a vast industrial zone of garment and food processing factories. Officials insist ethnic Rakhine will be the first in line for some of the 400,000 jobs the zone is slated to bring -- but many suspect the benefits will mainly be siphoned off outside the state. The port is the centrepiece of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) project -- a key thread in China's global Belt and Road vision. The \$8.9 bn train The first segment of the proposed \$8.9 billion high-speed rail link from China's landlocked Yunnan province to Myanmar's

west coast will cut through the border town of Muse to former capital Mandalay.

But engineering challenges through Myanmar's hilly Shan State would likely be dwarfed by security concerns.

The region is awash with weapons and a centre for meth production as armed rebels and militias jostle for a share of any potential windfall. They will first need to be appeased and reassured the rail link will not jeopardise their income or security. Border disorder - Also in discussion would be overhauling the border zone in Shan state with three special economic zones.

This could raise the stakes for the two countries' traders -- both above board and clandestine.

The vast majority of pre-cursor chemicals used to fuel

Myanmar's multi-billion-dollar illicit meth industry flood across the porous border.

Expect trade barriers to be removed and factories to mushroom -- but also an uptick in violence as militias and armed groups try to cash in on the spoils. Yangon makeover- Yangon authorities hope to revolutionise the sprawling, gridlocked commercial hub by creating a whole new town on the west bank of the city's river.

They say the satellite city will help solve problems of congestion, overpopulation and the lack of electricity and water.

But environmental concerns, a lack of transparency and corruption allegations are already dogging the planned \$1.7 billion scheme.

In rivalry with Toyota, Volkswagen may emerge as the biggest auto giant



Volkswagen has announced record annual sales that could determine whether it keeps its crown as the world's largest automaker. The company based in Wolfsburg, Germany, said Tuesday that it delivered 10.97 million vehicles in 2019. That compares with 10.83 million

in 2018, when Volkswagen edged out the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance and Toyota, although the alliance was slightly ahead when trucks are removed from the totals. The alliance and Toyota will report their figures in coming weeks. Toyota in December estimated its 2019 total would be 10.72 million, which would leave it behind Volkswagen. General Motors held the title for more than seven decades before losing it to Toyota in 2008 and no longer has a shot at the top spot after selling its European business and closing other money-losing operations. Volkswagen underlines that it does not set being the sales leader as a business goal but focuses

instead on its financial results. The company's diesel scandal, in which it rigged cars to cheat on pollution emissions tests, came amid a push under former CEO Martin Winterkorn to dethrone Toyota as No. 1 in sales. The company has since pivoted in the wake of the 2015 scandal toward electric cars as the industry seeks to meet tougher limits on greenhouse gases. Volkswagen was able to increase sales despite shrinking global auto markets. That means its market share increased against the competition. Sales were boosted by strong results in its home market in Germany, the U.S. and in Brazil, while sales slipped in the Asia-Pacific region.

Edelweiss Group chairman Rashesh Shah appears before ED in forex scam case

The ED is probing a firm named Capstone for forex violations. Edelweiss has denied any link to Capstone.

Edelweiss Group chairman Rashesh Shah on Wednesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) which had summoned him in their ongoing probe in a multi-crore forex scam.

The agency is scanning finances of a firm named Capstone Forex for alleged violations of foreign exchange norms. The firm is under scanner for Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) violations. "Capstone is being

probed for sending forex abroad without following Know Your Customer (KYC) norms," said a source privy to the development. "The forex worth Rs 740 crore is involved which is being probed." Edelweiss has denied any links with Capstone. In an earlier statement issued when Shah was recently summoned, Edelweiss stated, "We have received a communication from the ED to appear and provide information about Edelweiss group companies' dealings with

a company called Capstone forex Pvt LTD. We would like to state that none of our companies have any transactions with this company - Capstone Forex Pvt Ltd." It added, "We further deny wild and baseless allegations contained in the news items which are apparently attributed to unidentified sources. We are in fact shocked at the spread of unauthenticated allegations and the inference being drawn from it."



Women DO prefer men with beards

But those who don't may be put off by an evolutionary fear they harbour LICE or fleas, study claims



Women are more attracted to men with beards because they make them seem more physically and socially dominant, a study has found. But they may not be a sign of cleanliness - women who didn't like hairy faces could have been put off by an evolutionary fear that they might contain lice or fleas. The same women who preferred clean-shaven faces were also the ones most afraid of parasites and pests like ticks or public lice. Researchers quizzed almost 1,000 women in the US on their attitudes towards facial hair in potential long or short-term partners. Generally, fully-bearded men with

strong masculine faces - solid jawlines and wide cheekbones - were rated as the most attractive. Researchers at the University of Queensland in Australia presented a total of 919 American women aged between 18 and 70 with 30 images of three different men. Each man's face had been photographed with a full beard or clean shaven and later doctored to look both feminine and masculine. A man is generally considered masculine if he has a protruding brow ridge, widened cheek bones, a thick jawline and deeply set narrow eyes. As faces appeared, participants

were asked to rate how attractive they thought the men were for long-term and short-term relationships on a scale of zero to 100. The hairier the face, the better than man seemed to fare. The findings showed men with a masculine, bearded face, were rated as the most attractive by the women both for short term and long-term relationships. Facial masculinity was also rated as more attractive than a feminine face for most scenarios. The researchers, led by PhD student Tessa Clarkson, suggested there are a number of possible reasons why.

Masculine faces signal a physically stronger and more socially dominant male, the team said. They added that facial hair can emphasise masculine traits, such as a large jaw, while masking unattractive parts of the face. However, women who are disgusted by or were afraid of hair-borne or skin parasites, did not like beards. As part of the study, women were also shown images of parasites, such as ticks and pubic lice, and were asked to rate how much they feared, avoided, and disliked them.

This could be because the women think beards are a sign of poor grooming habits, the researchers said.

From an evolutionary perspective, humans have evolved to have less body hair because it can harbour disease-carrying parasites.

Women in the study also rated their 'disgust of pathogens' which judged their feelings on body odour, stepping on dog faeces or mould on left over food.

And they rated their 'disgust of immoral behaviour' such as disloyalty, cheating in exams or shoplifting, and their 'disgust of sex', including oral sex, anal sex or hearing two strangers having sex.

Women who had a higher 'disgust of pathogens' were more likely to prefer beards, suggesting they were a marker of good health.

And women who were more disgusted by 'immoral behaviour' were also more in favour of a hairy chin. This, the researchers said, could be because those women had more traditional relationship views and felt beards helped men to fulfill their male role.

The study was published in the scientific journal Royal Society Open Science.

The 'world's best CV' revealed

Recruitment expert who spent five years crafting her template reveals the tricks to securing a six-figure role - from ditching clichés to using bullet points to highlight core skills

A recruitment expert who spent five years crafting what is being hailed the 'world's best CV' promises it's the ticket to land jobseekers a six-figure salary role.

The template is based on the findings of a study by Oxshott-based corporate coach and psychometric trainer Rita Chowdhry, founder of award-winning London-based career consultancy Savran.

The single-sided, 450-word document combines the most effective elements of more than 1,500 professional CVs, with the 'perfect' content to catch an employer's eye.

It reveals the key words and phrases, core skills and numerical data that potential

recruiters 'crave' but rarely see in standard CVs.

The résumé is designed for senior management positions in retail, finance and healthcare, where average starting salaries range from between £50,000 and £100,000.

But it can be used to apply for any job in almost any sector by making just a few small tweaks, and Rita insists the template will work for anyone looking to land a dream job or promotion in 2020. 'Writing a good CV is notoriously difficult, with hundreds of experts each suggesting conflicting ways to go about it,' she said. 'This template is by no means perfect - no CV ever can be. But it encompasses the very best bits

from more than 1,500 examples and includes what all employers everywhere crave: cold, hard facts and figures.'

More than half of Brits are considering finding a new job in 2020 - up eight per cent from last year, research shows.

The number of people feeling unhappy in their jobs is also on the rise, increasing by 10 per cent year on year. But standing out in a fiercely competitive crowd can be difficult.

Studies suggest that the average candidate's CV has just seven seconds to make an impression before it is binned.

Chowdhry's résumé incorporates the common 'best bits' from 1,510 CVs that were used



successfully for interviews. It also draws on the views of HR departments, CEOs, managing directors and business owners from the UK who offered their feedback.

The resulting template features

easy-to-digest information that can be skim-read within just a few seconds.

This includes a short introduction, simple contact details, and bulleted core skills, interests and qualifications.

Pongal style 2020

Temple jewellery, traditional silk sarees, dhoti sarees and more



Happy Pongal 2020: Wear saris and half saris in pure silks for the festival, which is also synonymous with some visually-sumptuous ethnic finery woven with traditional silk and other indigenous textiles.



Pongal is a four-day-long harvest festival celebrated in Tamil Nadu, similar to Makar Sankranti which is celebrated in the Northern states of India. The festival is also synonymous with some visually-sumptuous ethnic finery woven with traditional silk and other indigenous textiles. Picture an array of women looking chic and cheerful in vibrant saris or half saris and you've pretty much summed up the sartorial mood. "Men wear

dhotis and Angavastram- cloth draped around the shoulders. Whereas women don the traditional silks and gold temple jewellery," says Priya Suresh, an entrepreneur from Tamil Nadu. Adding on designer Rehane Yavar says, "Upada and Kanjipuram silk is what we usually wear. Now, fashion in Tamil Nadu is deeply influenced by northern parts of India and so many wear Kalidars and churidars or salwar kurtas in silk.

There was a time when hand embroidery was more important, however, now people have moved towards weaves and hand weaves have taken the centre-stage." Here are some cues for you to look your best this festive season: Decorating your bun with flowers is a traditional ritual in the south of India. Instead of conventional gajras, go in for a variety of colourful flowers to wrap around your bun.

Many consider green as an auspicious colour. This pista green outfit works well for Alia Bhatt, and will go great for Pongal festivities. Modern sari: Wear a white silk sari with a twist by ditching the petticoat and wearing palazzo pants instead. A satin shirt in emerald green can play the blouse. The dhoti style sari: Wear a silk sari in coral teamed with a belt! Team your look with gold temple jewellery and minimal makeup.

The traditional weave: Nothing better than wearing a sari in the traditional drape. Gigantic temple jewellery stands out in this look - be it the choker, a long neckpiece or earrings. Actor Deepika Padukone dons a Sabyasachi sari in silk teamed with a printed blouse. A multi-hued jewelled stone necklace adds gravitas to her look. Opt for this look by going all out with the makeup - add bold kohl to the eyes.

Sara Ali Khan, Alia Bhatt, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Ananya Panday show how to wear polka dots

Polka dots are one of the more classically timeless prints, and designers nowadays have been giving this staple print a makeover so that it is contemporary and modern, and not old-fashioned. In fact, polka dots date back to the mid-1990s, and we're pretty sure you know the first famous person to sport it, it was Disney's Minnie Mouse in 1928.

The simple print made sporadic appearances in the past few years, but it was during the showcase of the spring and summer 2020 collections of luxury brands like Tory Burch, Kate Spade New York, Carolina Herrera, Michael Kors, to name a few, that we realised that 2020 is the year that the polka print makes a huge comeback. Polka dots instantly remind of casual, breezy summer dresses and



ooze of girl-next-door vibes. However, 2020 is the year polka dots go big, pun intended, and break the mould. Don't be afraid to mix prints with polka dots, wear a polka-dotted gown or

saree, the world is your oyster. From Zoe Kravitz's sleek polka dot look at the 77th Golden Globes to Sara Ali Khan's recent outing with co-star Kartik Aryan in a cute ruffled polka dot

crop top, here are some of the best celebrity looks in polka dot prints. Take a cue from the likes of Sara Ali Khan, Alia Bhatt, Ananya Panday, Kareena Kapoor Khan,

Priyanka Chopra, and others, and find out the many ways in which you can style the polka dot print to match your personal style. Read on:

Sara Ali Khan

Ever since Sara Ali Khan has come back from her New Year vacation with brother Ibrahim and mother Amrita Singh, she has only been busy with promotions for her upcoming sequel to Imtiaz Ali's Love Aaj Kal.

On Tuesday night, Sara and Kartik made an appearance together where Sara wore the most adorable white ruffled crop top with red polka dots by Bambah, she paired this with denim hot shorts by Manish Arora. While sneakers would have looked better than the heels Sara chose, we still like the look.

Tanhaji The Unsung Warrior movie review

Ajay Devgn's classic century, Saif Ali Khan goes bad in style

Ajay Devgn and Saif Ali Khan's film is a complete package. It's magnificent, high on visual effects and has powerful action backed by rock solid performances.

Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior
Director - Om Raut
Cast - Ajay Devgn, Saif Ali Khan, Kajol
Hindi cinema loves revisiting India's glorious past and telling the stories of heroism and bravery. After last year's Panipat paid tribute to Maratha pride, 2020 has begun on a high note with the story of yet another unsung Maratha hero, Tanhaji. With Tanhaji The Unsung Warrior, Ajay Devgn hits his century - this is the actor's 100th film. A visual spectacle from the word go, the film boasts of a stellar cast including Saif Ali Khan and Kajol besides Ajay, elaborate sets, larger-than-life characters, quality special effects and edge-of-the-seat war scenes. Everything has been put together so beautifully that

it belongs to the category India prizes -- a complete paisa vasool. The basic premise is known: Tanhaji Malusare (Devgn) a trusted Subedar of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (Sharad Kelkar) is determined to reclaim the Kondhana Fort (now called Sinhagad), which Shivaji had to cede to the shrewd Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (Luke Kenny) under the treaty of Purandhar. Tanhaji, with brave Maratha soldiers backing him, succeeds in capturing the fort that is being guarded by the emperor's trusted aide and Rajput commander, Udaybhan (Saif Ali Khan) and a massive canon called 'naagin'. A fierce battle ensues that leads to the ultimate yet known climax.

Makers here played rather smart by clearly stating in the

disclaimer that they don't vouch for the historic accuracy of events shown in the film, thus safely evading any possibility of flak from historians.

Tanhaji is mounted on a grand scale and its visuals do make you sit up and take notice. It is evident in Tanhaji's introduction shot itself where he is standing on top of a cliff with ropes tied to his waist, waiting for his enemies to arrive. The excessive use of CGI (Computer Generated Images) is evident but it seamlessly blends in the narrative that you don't find it awkward. The film fully relies on CGI and VFX and it could have fallen flat if it failed to create this impact.

The picturesque locations are a sight to behold as are the sword fights performed with finesse and perfection. In fact, these battles

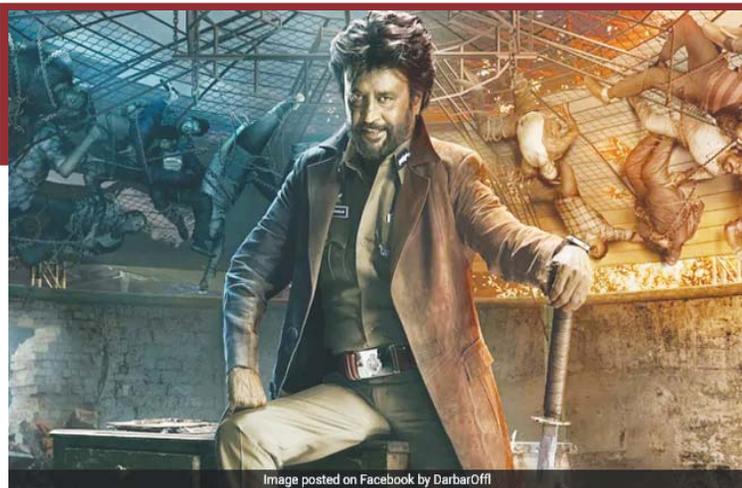


are as beautifully and fictional yet his make-choreographed and believe approach keeps you synchronized as dance invested. Raut's direction gets sequences. And here, full full marks for he lets his credit goes to action director characters do what they're Ramazan Bulut. Even the best at. Tanhaji is loaded with rousing background score by ace performances but it lets Sandeep Shirodkar is the the special effect overshadow film's strength and amps up the characters at times. You the mood during war scenes. want to focus on what the For a debut attempt in a Hindi- actor is doing but the in-your- language film, director Om- face VFX and 3D effects are Raut has hit the ball out of the distracting. In fact, with actors that you can fully trust, the film liberty to an extent that you would have had an impact even know some parts are unreal if it was not made in 3D.

Darbar Movie Review

The Film Is Disappointing, Rajinikanth Isn't

Rajinikanth's charisma is intact and on full display in virtually every frame of the film.



Cast: Rajinikanth, Suniel Shetty, Nayanthara
Director: AR Murugadoss
Rating: 2.5 star (our of 5 stars)
Dirty Harry seeps into Rajinikanth in A.R. Murugadoss' Darbar, a messy, massy, mediocre movie masquerading as a megastar vehicle. The 69-year-old superstar takes on the role of a 40-something super cop who is not averse to bending the rules in his pursuit of criminals. The make-up, the outfits and the lighting by seasoned cinematographer Santosh Sivan do a sterling job of persuading us that Rajinikanth is ageless. But no matter what, no movie

that features the superstar these days can sidestep the issue of age. Darbar doesn't. But more on that latter.

Rajinikanth's charisma is intact and on full display in virtually every frame of the film. Sadly, there is little else in this potboiler that stirs up a broth completely dependent on the lead actor to provide the heft that could compensate for its glaring lack of substance. Darbar is targeted fair and square at Rajinikanth fans, but it does nothing to give masala cinema a fresh shot of energy.

Rajinikanth is cast as Aditya Arunachalam, a dreaded cop

who is appointed the Mumbai police chief and tasked with a very specific mission: elimination of the city's drug mafia. Even before the hero's introduction scene, which is a huge letdown, the audience is treated to news footage about an encounter specialist who shoots before he talks. The first 15 minutes of Darbar puts on the table much of what it has to offer by way of entertainment. For Rajini fans, that is a pretty good deal. The film leaves no room for confusion in their minds. They know exactly what to expect from Darbar and the superstar they can never have enough of.

Arunachalam's advent in Mumbai sends shivers down the spine of the gangsters active in the megapolis, but the cinematic payload that the swaggering protagonist delivers is way below the mark. There is no adrenaline rush nor any emotional tug that can hold the thin narrative

together. Darbar lacks the bite that one expects from a Rajinikanth film.

This despite the fact that the actor, needless to say, does not spare any effort to make the character work.

Arunachalam's record of extrajudicial killings riles the human rights commission. When the members protest too much, he not only gives them a piece of his mind, he manhandles them and gets away with it. The film suggests that Arunachalam is a psychologically disturbed man and hence given to ways that might be difficult to comprehend if one went by the rulebook. That is a rather problematic position whether you see it from the standpoint of acceptable policing methods or through the prism of mental health. Arunachalam quickly figures out that Ajay Malhotra (Prateik Babbar), the son of a wealthy industrialist Vijay Malhotra (Nawab Shah), is

the key figure in the drug peddling ring that he has to bust. He brings the culprit to book. But Ajay gets a proxy to serve time in jail. The police commissioner is livid at the subterfuge and takes no time to make Ajay pay for his transgression.

Hari Chopra (Suniel Shetty), the drug network mastermind, returns to India 27 years after a daring action of his left the Mumbai Police red-faced. He is out to settle scores with Arunachalam and his daughter Valli (Nivetha Thomas). The rest of the film is devoted to the hero's daring deeds aimed at smashing Chopra's crime empire.

The father-daughter relationship, which could have been a principal component of the storyline, remains only a cursory concern, which robs the film of emotive depth. That apart, the hero's romantic interest, played by Nayanthara, is given a short shrift by the script.

Malang Song Chal Ghar Chalen: Disha Patani And Aditya Roy Kapur's Dreamy Love Story Has A Tragic End

Chal Ghar Chalen, the first song from the film Malang released on Friday and it went viral in no time. The song showcases the tragic love story of Aditya Roy Kapur and Disha Patani. The video begins with Aditya recalling all the beautiful moments spent with his lover Disha. The video is replete with some bittersweet scenes. The one that we loved the most is when Aditya pairs a blazer with shorts and Disha Patani bursts out laughing. Aditya, who seems to have lost the love of his life, is seen reminiscing over the past days and thinking about his love incessantly.

Chal Ghar Chalen is romantic track that has been composed by Mithoon and it has been sung by Arijit Singh. The lyrics are by Sayeed Quadri.

Sharing the song on her Instagram profile, film's lead actress Disha Patani wrote: "They took away his love,



now he will destroy their world." Malang is an action-thriller which has been directed by Mohit Suri, who has earlier helmed films like Ek Villain, Kalyug, Murder 2 and Aashiqui 2. Other than Aditya and Disha, the film also stars Anil Kapoor and Kunal Kemmu in pivotal roles. The film showcases the story of three compulsive killers, each with drastically different motives and methods.

The film has been co-produced by Luv Ranjan, Ankur Garg, Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar and Jay Shewakramani. Malang is slated to hit the screens on February 7, this year.

Chal Ghar Chale gives us a sneak peek into Disha Patani and Aditya Roy Kapur's grey love story

Ishaan Khatter On Why It Was 'Easy' Romancing Tabu In A Suitable Boy

Ishaan Khatter, who will be seen playing Maan Kapoor, who is infatuated with a courtesan named Saeeda Bai (played by Tabu) in Mira Nair's A Suitable Boy, says that was "easy" for him to romance Tabu on screen. During an episode of Neha Dhupia's talk show No Filter Neha, Ishaan was asked if it was

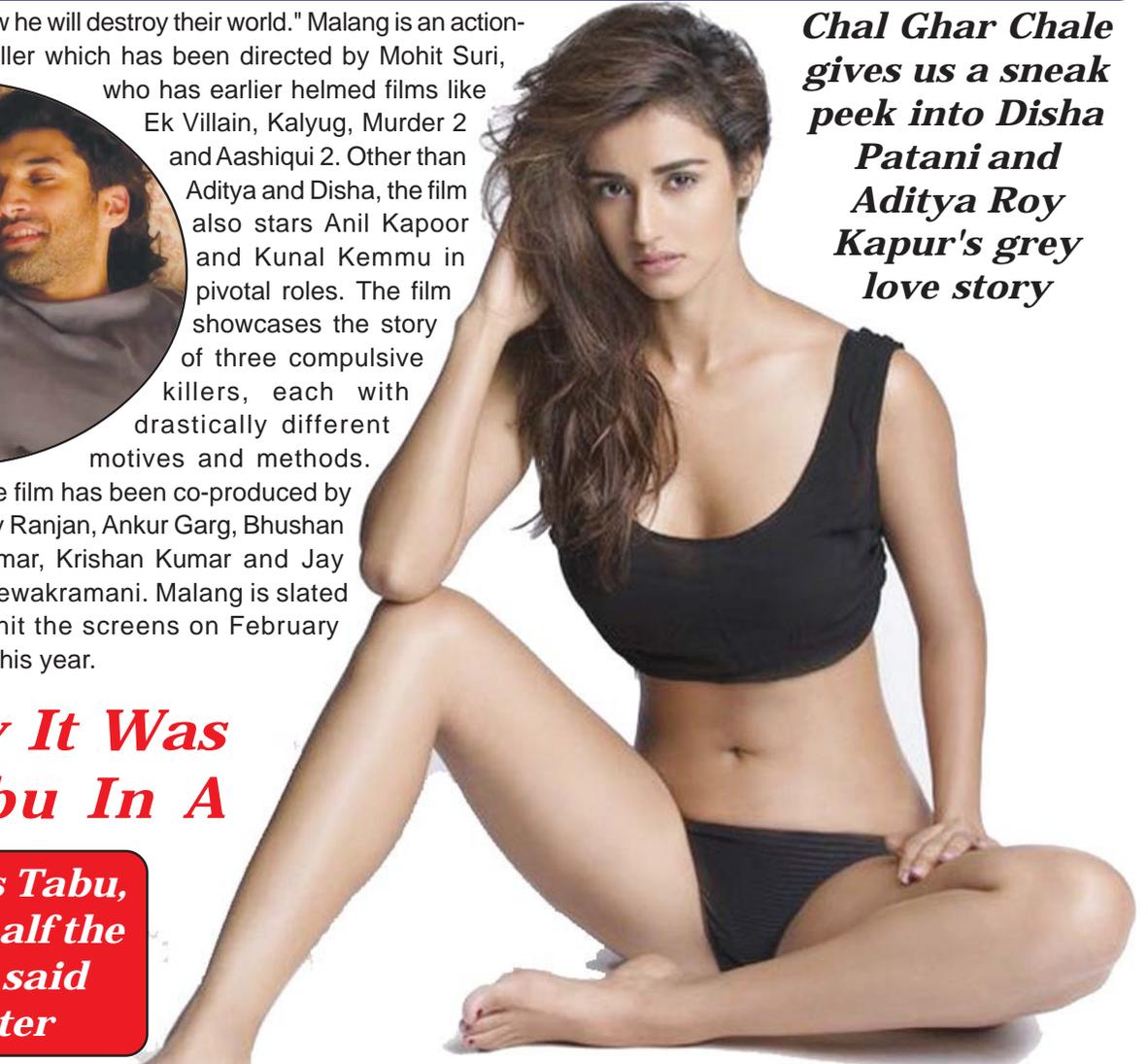
"That person is Tabu, it really does half the job for you," said Ishaan Khatter

Tabasco. Tabasco for Tabassum. I came up with it. She's mirchi," said Ishaan. When asked what he would like to gift her, Ishaan said, "My



easy romancing the veteran actress on screen, to which he replied by saying, "Because that person is Tabu, it really does half the job for you. The 24-year-old actor added, "I have said this before and I have said this in Dhadak as well, it is always easy for me to play the besotted lover. Because she's mesmerising, she is and especially in this character. I am really excited for people to see Saeeda Bai," news agency IANS stated. The Beyond the Clouds actor added that he has a nickname for the AndhaDhun actress. "It is

heart! I would like to gift her. I think I am very much in possession of my heart. I would gift her a book of Ghalib's poetry," IANS quoted Ishaan as saying. The series will be shot across a variety of locations in India, including Lucknow and Maheshwar. The series also features accomplished actors like Randeep Hooda, Shefali Shah, Rasika Dugal, Namit Das, Gagan Dev Riar, Danesh Razvi, Mikhail Sen, Mahira Kakkar, Vijay Varma and Vijay Raaz. Tanya Maniktala will play Lata in the series. The web-series will be distributed by BBC Studios.



Chal Ghar Chalen is romantic track

Varun Dhawan Reveals That He Once Had A Crush On His Street Dancer 3D Co-Star Shraddha Kapoor

Did you know that Varun Dhawan once had a crush on his Street Dancer 3D co-star Shraddha Kapoor? Well, the actor, who was recently on the sets of the TV reality show Dance Plus, to promote his forthcoming film along with Shraddha, during the episode, revealed that he had a crush on the Half Girlfriend actress. In a viral video, Varun can be heard saying: "Inko dekh kar mujhe bhi yaad aaya, bahot saal pehle, mujhe bhi crush hua tha Shraddha pe, actually yeh bahot logon ke liye Aarohi hai, bahot logon ke liye Vini hai, bahot logon ke liye Inaayat hai, lekin mere liye meri Shraddha hai." The video has been curated by several fan clubs dedicated to the actors on Instagram and it has been spreading like wildfire on social



media. Street Dancer 3D went on floors earlier this year. The film is the third installment of the popular dance based ABCD series, directed by Remo D'Souza. The film is slated to release on January 24 next year. Earlier, Katrina Kaif was supposed to play Inaayat's role in the film. However, the actress walked out of the film and Shraddha, who also featured in the second part of the series, was roped in. Varun Dhawan and Shraddha have previously co-starred in ABCD 2. On the work front, Varun will next be seen in Coolie No 1, opposite Sara Ali Khan. Shraddha Kapoor, who was last seen in Saaho, co-starring Prabhas, will next be seen in Baaghi 3,

alongside Tiger Shroff.

Katie Price puts on a very busty display in a plunging yellow bikini



She arrived back in the UK on Monday after welcoming in 2020 with a sun-soaked break in Thailand. And Katie Price made sure to make the most of her relaxing time away as she flaunted her toned figure in a yellow plunging bikini during a stroll along the beach on Tuesday January 7. The mother-of-five, 41, put on a busty display in the brightly coloured two-piece and carried a refreshing coconut drink as she showed off her curves.

Katie, who was declared bankrupt last November, appeared to be relaxed as she worked on her tan and enjoyed the warm weather, ensuring to dip her toes in the water and show off her long limbs. During her trip the brunette beauty also made sure to take rest stops where she sipped on her drink and checked on her phone messages.

The TV star wore half of her long locks down for the stroll, letting them cascade over her shoulders, with the other part of her tresses tied into a high ponytail.

She appeared to be makeup free and accessorised with a pair of aviator sunglasses tucked into her side of her yellow swimwear.

Katie's Thailand trip saw only her eldest child, Harvey, 17, joining her for the break. It was claimed that she had planned to take Bunny, five, Jett, six, and Princess, 12, but their fathers Peter Andre and Kieran Hayler, were worried their kids

would miss the start of the school term. According to The Sun, Peter and Kieran were said to be concerned 'disorganised' Katie would not arrange return flights for the long haul trip that would enable the youngsters to get back to school next week. The source said: 'It's not like they've had a huge row, they've just asked

Katie to consider going on holiday alone and leaving the children to prepare for their first day back.' Sharing a clip of the view from her villa pool, Katie penned: 'New day, new start, new year, wait and see my comeback independent women side [sic]. Before it all begins I've come away with just me and my Harvey bear!'

Kim Kardashian rocks black leather pants and cleavage-baring hoodie

She shared some sexy and glamorous snaps of herself lounging near the beach decked out in a tiger-print dress on Friday morning.

By the afternoon, the Keeping Up With The Kardashians star was spotted going makeup free after taking care of some female manicuring at SEV Laser hair removal in her hometown of Calabasas.

Despite taking her glamour-level down a notch for the visit, the 39-year-old still showed off some of her major assets that have helped make her one of the most visible celebrities in the world. The SKIMS and KKW Beauty CEO emerged outside the establishment rocking tight black leather pants with an

orange hoodie that was zipped down just enough to flaunt her cleavage. The reality star also carried a tan purse and pulled her long raven tresses into a top ponytail. I lasered my baby hairs off years ago, because my forehead had all these little baby hairs, and I would always break out because of them,' Kim K once shared on her KKW Beauty website, as reported by People.

She also added that she 'lasered her neck because I had such a hairy neck.' 'Every photographer would photoshop them out anyway, and I thought I looked better without the baby hairs, but now I miss them. I think they look youthful.'



Panga Title Track Is Kangana Ranaut's Shout Out To The Inner Champion



The makers of Panga released the first song from the film. The power-packed title track has been sung by Harshdeep Kaur, Divya Kumar and Siddharth Mahadevan. The hard-hitting lyrics are by veteran lyricist Javed Akhtar. The song has been composed by Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy. Sharing the song on social media, the film's director Ashwini Iyer Tiwari wrote: "Apne sapno ke liye zor se bolo le panga."

Jaya during her pursuit of becoming a kabaddi champion. The title track has been sung by Harshdeep Kaur, Divya Kumar and Siddharth Mahadevan. The hard-hitting lyrics are by veteran lyricist Javed Akhtar. The song has been composed by Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy. Sharing the song on social media, the film's director Ashwini Iyer Tiwari wrote: "Apne sapno ke liye zor se bolo le panga."

Alia Bhatt's look in Gangubai Kathiawadi: How Mahesh and Soni Razdan reacted

Wednesday turned out to be a special one for Alia Bhatt, all thanks to her Mafia Queen look in the upcoming film Gangubai Kathiawadi. And just like her colleagues from the film fraternity, Alia as Gangubai has also

bowled over her parents Mahesh Bhatt and Soni Razdan. Mahesh Bhatt took to Twitter and acknowledged his daughter's intriguing look from Sanjay Leela Bhansali's directorial venture. He wrote, "I admire people who choose to shine even after all the



for the release of Malang, called Alia's look "lovely." Before them, Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Shraddha Kapoor, Jacqueline Fernandez and Dia Mirza reacted to Alia's first-look posters from Gangubai Kathiawadi. Alia Bhatt, who was last seen in Gully Boy (2019), is working with Sanjay

Leela Bhansali for the first time in Gangubai Kathiawadi. Before her, Deepika was Bhansali's heroine in three films such as Goliyon Ki Rasleela: Ram Leela, Bajirao Mastani and Padmaavat. Gangubai Kathiawadi, based on a chapter of a book Mafia Queens of Mumbai, will hit the screens on September 11 this year.

Mahesh Bhatt and Soni Razdan took to Twitter to react to their daughter Alia's look as Mafia Queen in Gangubai Kathiawadi.

storms they have been through."Alia's mom Soni Razdan's appreciation post wasn't far behind either. "Beautiful and fascinating A N D mysterious all at once @aliaa08 can't wait to see this!" she tweeted. Celebrities like Genelia D'Souza and Mohit Suri have also tweeted praising Alia. "This girl is something else .. You just shine in every role that you take up @aliaa08.. Inspiring and fabulous you are .. This looks really amazingggggg (sic)," Genelia reacted. Mohit, who is gearing up



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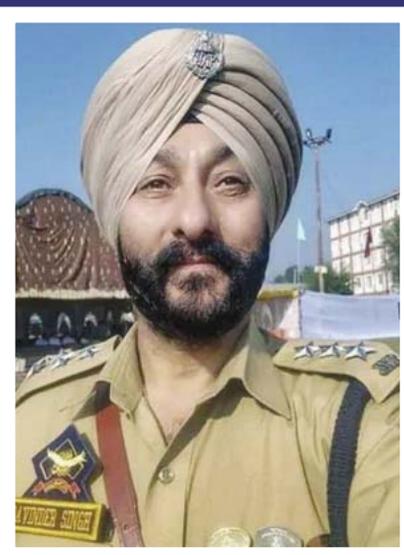
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Arrested Cop's Role In Parliament Attack ?

(News Agencies)- Whether arrested Jammu and Kashmir police officer Davinder Singh had any role in the 2001 parliament attack could be a part of the investigations against him, a top officer said on Wednesday. The case has been handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).



Davinder Singh, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, was arrested on Saturday in a car with three Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists on the Jammu-Srinagar highway.

Asked about whether Davinder Singh's possible role in the parliament attack was being investigated, Jammu and Kashmir police chief Dilbagh Singh said: "Aspects can be looked into if anything comes to light. There's no bar to any aspect being looked into. Like the adviser to the Governor said,

black sheep can be found anywhere. Be it anybody, we don't spare anyone involved in unlawful acts." Singh had faced allegations in the past that it was he who sent parliament attack convict Afzal Guru

to Delhi and arranged logistics for the terrorists who attacked parliament on December 13, 2001.

Before his execution in 2013, Afzal Guru had claimed in a letter that the police officer had asked him to accompany a parliament attack accused to Delhi and arrange his stay there.

Soon after Davinder Singh's arrest, raids at his home revealed an AK rifle and two pistols. He was posted at Srinagar international airport when 15 foreign diplomats including the US envoy came for a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir last week.

Investigations revealed that Singh had sheltered the terrorists at his official home next to the Army's 15 Corps Headquarters. They set out on Saturday morning for Jammu, from where they were planning to go to Delhi.

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Indian-Born Twitter Head Who Decides On Blocking Tweets, Even Trump's



(News Agencies)- Whenever somebody on Twitter takes issue with the network's rules or content policies, they almost always resort to the same strategy: They send a tweet to @jack. A quick scan of Chief Executive Officer Jack Dorsey's mentions show just how often he's called upon to lay down the law for the service he helped create. But what users don't know is that they're imploring the wrong Twitter Inc. executive. While Dorsey is the company's public face, and the final word on all things product and strategy, the taxing job of creating and enforcing Twitter's rules don't actually land on the CEO's shoulders. Instead, that falls to

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The women in our films want a Hook Up today. Who has time for Sau Saal Ka Pyaar?



(News Agencies)-Saau sal pehle mujhe tumse pyaar tha, aaj bhi hai, aur kal bhi rahega: Jab Pyaar Kisise Hota Hai, 1961.

Humesha tumko chaha, aur chaha kuch bhi nahi: Devdas, 2004.

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Why a \$453 billion bond manager is shifting bets from India to China

(News Agencies)- Western Asset Management Co. is reducing its Indian government bond holdings as tensions around a new citizenship law and the Kashmir region cloud the



economic outlook. The \$453 billion investor, an affiliate of Legg Mason Inc., is diverting some of its funds into longer-dated Malaysian and Chinese debt, according to Desmond Soon, head of investment management for Asia ex-

Japan. It has an overweight position in India bonds.

The initial market euphoria from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's re-election last year is wearing thin as economic growth stutters and a policy making it harder for Muslim

migrants to get citizenship stirs protests. Foreign holdings of Indian sovereign debt have dropped to near a three-month low. "It certainly distracts Prime Minister Modi's government from making the necessary economic policy and reform to focus on the economy," Soon, a 30-year investment veteran, said in Singapore. "We are in the process of reducing India somewhat."

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BJP's foreign cell, the unofficial ambassadors of the party



(News Agencies)-As India's diplomatic corps set out to address questions and concerns from their international counterparts on controversial

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