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Sixth Mass Extinction

The era of 'biological annihilation'



(sai Bureau) Many scientists say it's abundantly clear that Earth is entering its sixth mass-extinction event, meaning three-quarters of all species could disappear in the coming centuries. That's terrifying, especially since humans are contributing to this shift. But that's not

even the full picture of the "biological annihilation" people are inflicting on the natural world, according to a study published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Gerardo Ceballos, an ecology professor at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma

de México, and his co-authors, including well-known Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich, cite striking new evidence that populations of species we thought were common are suffering in unseen ways.

(Contd on page 21)

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12-year waiting period for Indians applying for Green Card ?



(sai Bureau) In 2015, about 36,318 Indians adjusted their status to permanent residency while 27,798 Indians are new arrivals who received lawful permanent residency in the form of a Green Card, Pew Research said. There is a lengthy 12-year waiting period for Indians

applying for permanent residency also known as Green Card in the US as skilled employees, according to a new report. However, India is also among the top countries whose residents get Green Cards every year. In 2015, about 36,318 Indians adjusted their

status to permanent residency while 27,798 Indians are new arrivals who received lawful permanent residency in the form of a Green Card, Pew Research said. "In one employment-related category, people from India applying for permanent residence as skilled employees currently have a 12-year waiting list. In other words, the government currently is processing applications filed in May of 2005," the report said. Pew said from fiscal 2010 to 2014, about 36% of employment-related Green cards more than 222,000 were granted

to H-1B visa holders. Green Card, is the immigration status of a person authorised to live and work in the US permanently. A Green Card holder can apply for US citizenship after five years of residency. This period is shortened to three years if married to a US citizen. Green Card holders who adjusted their status are more likely than new arrivals to be in their prime working years of 25 to 64. Among those who adjusted their status, 72 per cent were of ages 25 to 64, compared with 55 per cent of new arrivals, the

research report said. According to the study, in every fiscal year since 2004, the US has issued more Green Cards to immigrants living in the country on another visa who adjust their legal status than to new arrivals. In 2015, there were 508,716 new arrivals who received lawful permanent residency in the form of a Green Card and 542,315 people adjusted their status, it said. In every fiscal year since 2004, the US has issued more Green Cards to immigrants living in the country on another visa who adjusted their legal

status than to new arrivals. Since 2004, a total of 7.4 million people who adjusted their status and 5.5 million new arrivals have received lawful permanent residency in the form of a Green Card, the study said. Employment-related categories (including workers' family members) accounted for 14 per cent of 2015 Green Cards. Refugees (11 per cent) and people granted asylum (3 per cent) together made up a similar share, it said. There is also a "diversity" category for people from countries with historically low rates of US immigration (5 per cent).

Indian-origin man arrested for lying on US army applications



(sai Bureau) NEW YORK: An Indian-origin Muslim convert, who had voiced support for ISIS and

had searched online for ways to join the terror group, has been arrested for making false

statements on his applications to join the US military.

Shivam Patel, 27, of Norfolk was charged for not disclosing on his application to join the Army that he had travelled to China or Jordan.

He claimed he had not gone anywhere outside the US in the past seven years, except for a family trip to India in 2011-'12, a report in The Virginian Pilot said, quoting a court affidavit.

The charge carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison.

According to the affidavit, Patel - who converted to Islam several years ago - had travelled to China in July 2016 to teach English. While there, he had expressed displeasure to his father about how that country treated Muslims, it said.

Patel was sent back to the US by his employer but he travelled to Jordan instead where he was

arrested and eventually deported.

His parents spoke with the FBI about their son after learning he was in Jordanian custody and said he had become "obsessed with Islam."

An investigation of Patel's room and computers disclosed evidence that he had downloaded three copies of an online magazine produced by the Islamic State and searched for how to join the group.

On one occasion, he had talked about wanting to become a martyr but suggested his "jihad" might not be violent. He had also praised the terrorist attacks in Paris, Nice and Orlando and expressed an admiration for Anwar al-Awlaki, a slain leader of the al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula.

On another occasion, speaking to an undercover agent, Patel expressed desire to do something "bigger, better and more purposeful," like dying for Allah, the report added.

He told the agent about his desire to see a holy war between Muslims and non-Muslims.

"He sang an Islamic State fight song to the source and recalled making a replica of the group's flag, which he wanted to replace his neighbour's American flag with," the report said. Patel then applied for jobs with local police and fire departments, correctional facilities and even the US Army and Air Force.

"He wanted to blend into society and do something 'glorious'," FBI Special Agent Thomas Pembroke wrote in an affidavit unsealed on Thursday in US District Court.

Indian-origin fugitive arrested after being on run for 26 years

(sai Bureau) New York: A 63-year-old Indian-origin fugitive has been arrested and jailed in the US more than 26 years after he was sentenced for driving in an inebriated state and causing an accident that severely injured a woman. Jaipaul Maharaj of New Jersey was arrested on Friday and brought before the court where he was remanded to the state Department of Corrections to begin his sentence, Queens district attorney Richard Brown said. Maharaj, who also went by the name of Abdool Persaud, was sentenced in absentia in 1990 to four to 12 years in

prison after warranting on his guilty plea to first-degree assault. He had been on the lam for 26 years.

He had been arrested in December 1989 and pleaded guilty to first degree assault. When Maharaj, then 36, failed to appear at sentencing, a bench warrant was issued for his arrest. He was sentenced in absentia to a term of 4 to 12 years in prison.

"It took 26 years but the victim's family finally has achieved justice in knowing that the individual responsible for causing serious physical injury to their loved one is now being held accountable for

his actions."

If not for a casual inquiry made by a family member of the victim fortuitously making its way to the Queens District Attorney's Office, the defendant might very well have escaped punishment for his crime," Brown said. Maharaj, who as Abdool Persaud is on five years' probation for an October 2015 conviction, appeared on Friday for a scheduled meeting with the Sullivan County Department of Probation and was promptly arrested. He was returned on the warrant and appeared before Queens Supreme Court Justice



Robert Kohm, who executed the long-overdue sentence. According to the criminal charges, Maharaj was driving without a driver's license and in an intoxicated state when he went through a red light on a December

1989 morning and struck another car in which Grace Schachnu was a passenger. As a result of the collision, Schachnu suffered fractured ribs, a fractured cervical, collapsed lungs and hemorrhaging of the brain. Schachnu passed away in 1994.

Two Indian-Americans plead guilty in US call centre scam



(Agencies) Washington : fraud and money laundering scheme in the US perpetrated by India-based call centres. Two Indian-Americans on Saturday pleaded guilty to the charges of their involvement in a massive telephone impersonation

Patel, 34, from Illinois pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit fraud and money laundering offenses, the Department of Justice said.

Sentencing dates are pending.

A total of eleven defendants have pleaded guilty thus far in this case.

C o - d e f e n d a n t s Bharatkumar Patel, Ashvinbhai Chaudhari, Harsh Patel, Nilam Parikh, Hardik Patel,

Rajubhai Patel, Viraj Patel, Dilipkumar A Patel and Fahad Ali previously pleaded guilty on various dates between April and June. According to admissions made in connection with their respective pleas, Bhavesh, Asmitaben and their co-conspirators perpetrated a complex scheme in which individuals from call centres located in threatened with arrest, imprisonment, fines or deportation if they did not

from the IRS and US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and engaged in other telephone call scams, in a ruse designed to defraud victims located throughout the US. Using information obtained from data brokers and other sources, call centre operators targeted US victims who were threatened with arrest, imprisonment, fines or deportation if they did not

pay alleged monies owed to the government. Victims who agreed to pay the scammers were instructed how to provide payment, including by purchasing stored value cards or wiring money. Upon payment, the call centres would immediately turn to a network of "runners" based in the US to liquidate and launder the fraudulently-obtained funds, federal investigators alleged.

Ria Money Transfer adds Tens of Thousands of Locations to Indian Network to Serve World's Largest Diaspora Group

•Ria launches partnerships with three of India's leading cash remittance payout agents

•Customers in India gain access to tens of thousands of new locations to receive remittances from friends and family in the United States

•Partnerships provide Ria's customers with a high-quality cash payout network in the top remittance receiving country in the world

(Press Release) New York : Ria Money Transfer ("Ria") the third largest money transfer company in the world and subsidiary of Euronet Worldwide, Inc. (NASDAQ: EFTT) has signed direct partnership agreements with three of India's leading cash remittance payout agents, Paul Merchants Limited, Weizmann Forex Limited and Transcorp International Limited. Ria's new principal agents are well-recognized in India and each have more than 15 years' experience in the money transfer sector. With the addition of these agents, Ria will upgrade its cash payout network during the next 12 months by adding tens of thousands of high-quality retail and non-banking financial company (NBFC) locations across India. The robust and ubiquitous payout network will provide Ria with increased brand recognition, while providing tremendous convenience and accessibility for beneficiaries to easily receive cash remittances.

Speaking at a press event in New York, Juan Bianchi, CEO & President of Ria Money Transfer,

said: "Indians make up the largest diaspora group globally and India is still the top receiving market for family remittances, receiving \$62.7 billion¹ in 2016. "Today, Ria has one

of the best services in the United States to send money to India. Millions of households are largely dependent on these transfers for family maintenance, savings and



investment. We are proud to be the link that connects our customers in the US to their loved ones in rural and urban centers across India. We welcome our new partners to the Ria family." Ria already has a strong network worldwide, including in top remittance

sending countries such as the United States, where many Indians reside. In 2015, the United States was named the second top remittance sending country to India, responsible for facilitating \$11.7 billion in transfers². In addition to cash pick-up, Ria also offers bank deposit services which offers customers the option to transfer money to any bank account in India online at www.riamoney

transfer.com or via an agent location. In a recent report from the World Bank's Remittance Prices Worldwide³, Ria ranked first for sending \$200 and \$500 to India using the online service and in the top 10 for cash to account transfers through an agent location. These results reflect the company's commitment to offering the most competitive rates and best service possible to the customers it serves.

Gas station owner convicted in sales tax theft scheme

Kulbir Singh Pleads Guilty To Three Counts Grand Larceny In The Third Degree For Failing To Remit Over \$1 Million In Sales Tax Collected At His Three Gas Stations; Will Be Sentenced To Up To 1 1/3 To 4 Years In Prison

(By our staff reporter) - Long Island : Nassau County gas station owner Kulbir Singh on Tuesday pleaded guilty to three counts of third-degree grand larceny for failing to report more than \$1 million in sales taxes collected at three of his properties, Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman has announced.

Singh, 53, faces up to four years in prison as a result of the conviction on the Class D felonies, officials said. He was ordered to pay \$150,000 in restitution and sign a confession of judgment for the remaining \$850,000 that was stolen from the

state, officials said. "Our investigation uncovered a deliberate scheme by Kulbir Singh to cheat New York State out of vital tax revenue," Schneiderman said in a statement. "Stealing from taxpayers undercuts the funding of important programs that support all New Yorkers."

Singh's corporations, the three BP gas stations in Nassau County — Dashmesh Petroleum Inc., Gobind Petroleum Inc. and Karam Mart Inc. — each pleaded guilty to one count of second-degree grand larceny, a class C felony and were fined \$50,000 each, state officials said.

Gobin is on Hempstead

Avenue in West Hempstead; Dashmesh is on Merrick Road in Valley Stream and Karam is on Hempstead Avenue in Elmont.

The gas stations collected but failed to report more than \$1 million in sales taxes from September 2011 through December 2014, prosecutors said.

The case was investigated by the state Department of Taxation and Finance's Criminal Investigations Division and was later referred to Schneiderman's office.

Singh's gas stations were previously convicted of felony charges for failing



to pay sales tax, \$500,000 of the money prosecutors said.

In October 2012, Singh admitted to controlling four gas stations that had stolen more than \$500,000 in sales taxes.

The corporations pleaded guilty to felony tax fraud charges and agreed to pay more than \$1 million in restitution, interest and penalties, state officials said.

But the corporations ultimately paid only

It was during the investigation of that failure to pay the remaining money that the Department of Taxation and Finance uncovered evidence that Singh continued to steal sales tax proceeds at gasoline stations he controlled, prosecutors said. That investigation resulted in the current indictment, state officials said.

G20 Summit: US stand on Paris climate deal unbecoming of its superpower status

The need to tackle climate change was one of the bedrock international understandings of recent times. US President Donald Trump has regressed on that

The Group of Twenty (G20) major economies of the world failed, for the first time, to have a full consensus on their joint statement. The United States put in a note of dissent regarding support

for the Paris agreement on climate change. This was pathbreaking in a negative sense for two reasons. One, the G20 was created by Washington and the US' willingness to undermine the credibility of

this multilateral forum does not bode well for the body's future. Two, the need to tackle climate change was one of the bedrock international understandings of recent times. Fortunately, the

Trump administration's scepticism has at least led the other member-states to strengthen their commitment to Paris.

It is not the first time the US or some other major power has decided to set

itself apart from the rest. But it is rare for them to do so on something as fundamentally important as climate change. More worrying is that US President Donald Trump seems willing to sacrifice his country's long-term credibility influence in return for the most symbolic of actions to keep his voter base back home pleased. This almost the opposite of what strategy means and how a superpower is supposed to act. However, it also says something that the Paris agreement is likely to go ahead without US involvement and if local governments in the US put up enough resistance, Mr Trump's defiance may not make much difference.

The future of

multilateralism itself is now unclear. Talk of a German-Chinese axis or some other combination of middle powers taking a global leadership role proved overblown. Instead, temporary coalitions around specific issues were formed but often the same countries found themselves on opposite sides in regard to some other global problem. India, for example, supported Paris but was happy at the US-inspired clause in support of clean fossil fuel technology. Germany, Japan and China were on the same side on free trade but not much else. If the US continues to regress in multilateral diplomacy, this may be the future of international cooperation and governments like India should adjust accordingly.

Are our beliefs so fragile that we would kill over Facebook posts?

The recent cases of violent clashes as a result of Facebook posts should make us introspect about how tolerant we Indians are as a society.



Facebook was launched in 2006 with the aim to help people connect with friends and family.

Fast forward a few years where Facebook posts are now causing riots. In a recent incident in West Bengal's Basirhat, a Facebook post about Prophet Mohammad has led to violent clashes in the area and a man being stabbed. A post that Muslims in the area considered blasphemous, a post that was made by a 17-year-old boy. In another incident in Uttarakhand, a mob vandalized the shop of a young boy who posted what they considered a 'offensive'



because of their Facebook posts. Here, sample a few:

In March 2017, a man was arrested in Greater Noida for posting a status criticizing UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Cartoonist Aseem Trivedi was booked with charges of sedition in 2012 over cartoons he shared on his website and Facebook, cartoons some thought were 'offensive' towards Mother India.

A Class 11 student was arrested and sent to jail for posting "objectionable" comments pertaining to UP minister Azam Khan. Yes, the same

of expression doesn't come with tolerance.

Is it a crime to disagree to some content posted over Facebook or any other social media platform?

Is it a crime to voice that disagreement? If you nodded your head in disagreement for both these questions, here is question you would answer with a loud YES.

Is it not a crime to when someone else's point of view is used as an excuse to vandalise, kill, loot and disrupt the public harmony?

Much hue and cry

was caused in 2012 when, after the death of Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray, a girl posted a status questioning the need for a shut down in Mumbai on the funeral day. She was arrested, and another girl was arrested merely for 'liking' the status.

The girls were booked for "hurting religious sentiments" and under Section

66(a) of the IT Act which has since faced lot of flak. The section was later quashed down by the apex court of India in 2015 stating it as "unconstitutional".

Social media has become a staple in our everyday life. Every day we see posts that we do not agree with and yes, we understand how difficult it is to deal with some people on social media when they would just not acknowledge your point of view but violence can never be the solution.

With increasing number of smartphone users, the social media penetration in the country will also increase and it is quite obvious that not everyone will agree with each other's point of view. If the country continues to deal with disagreement the way it is doing at the moment, we may certainly have to fear for our safety in the coming days.

A misstep on N Korea may lead to first use of nuclear weapons after World War II

Pyongyang's threats with ICBM's and nuclear tech need to be handled carefully because a diplomatic misstep in the Korean peninsula could result in the first use of nuclear weapons since World War II



A bad boy has got himself a big gun and the neighbours don't know what to do. That crudely sums up the predicament that the US and, to some degree, China find themselves with North Korea's first successful testing of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

Whether the missile could make it all the way to North America is uncertain. But that is almost certainly just a matter of time. There will be a longer lag before Pyongyang can prove it has developed a miniaturised nuclear warhead for use on the missile. Again, this is also a matter of time.

What is clear is that North Korea has fast forwarded closer to the day it can credibly say it can strike continental US with a nuclear weapon. This, in turn, raises the question as to the nature of Washington's response, especially if it concludes it cannot accept the threat of nuclear blackmail by the most renegade government on earth.

New Delhi will feel a sense of déjà vu at Washington's predicament. India, after all, has been under the nuclear shadow of another rogue state, Pakistan, for years. And Islamabad's illicit nuclear weapons programme greatly benefited from North Korea's sister programme. Unlike India, however, the US does have the ability to militarily stop North Korea at any time, but only if it is prepared to absorb the collateral damage that this would have on South Korea, Japan and its relations with China.

US President Donald Trump has not helped matters by blowing hot and cold on North Korea. While his administration seems to accept that North Korea is their thorniest foreign policy issue, its messaging to Pyongyang has been all over the place. One of the reasons for North Korea's nuclear-cum-missile brinkmanship has been dictator Kim Jong-un's demand that the US agree to negotiate directly with him as an equal partner. The US has refused, saying this would be succumbing to blackmail while undermining the regional six-party structure. But Mr Trump initially declared he would be "honoured" to meet the North Korean dictator directly. This was eventually rolled back by his staff but not before encouraging Pyongyang to continue down a path of provocation.

China's unwillingness nor inability to control North Korea will at least allow US-Chinese relations to shift to a more natural and thus more belligerent status. Washington however needs to provide much more clarity on what exactly its red lines and responses will be to Pyongyang's actions. This is doubly important given the incoherence that has marked the Trump administration. More than anywhere else in the world, a diplomatic misstep in the Korean peninsula could result in the first use of nuclear weapons since World War II.

Amarnath killings: Hardliners must desist from communalising terror attacks

The terrorist bullets that killed the pilgrims in Amarnath Yatra 2017 also took aim at a government, which has two unlikely parties as allies: The soft-separatist People's Democratic Party and the right-wing BJP

The terror attack that killed seven Amarnath shrine pilgrims is a deadly reminder of how fragile peace is in Kashmir. The attack is also a blow to the state's syncretic traditions that bind Hindus and Muslims. The cave-shrine was discovered by a Muslim shepherd in 1850 and his family and Hindu priests together were its custodians for decades till the state government set up a board to regulate the yatra in 2000. The yatra, in fact, is incomplete without both communities and local logistics are all provided for by the Muslims. The pilgrimage has come under threat on several occasions since terrorism reared its head in the Valley in 1989 but even through the 1990s — when violence was at an all-time high and Kashmiri Pandits were forced to flee their homes — the pilgrimage has not once been suspended. To the contrary, villages worst affected by militancy have opened their homes and gone out of their way to make the yatris comfortable.

The killing of seven pilgrims on Monday has cast a deep shadow over the Valley. The timing couldn't have been worse: The attack has taken place at a time when the state is already reeling under the impact of an unprecedented uprising that followed the death of militant commander Burhan Wani. The security establishment is stretched and has to now ensure that there is no communal flare-up in the ideologically opposed regions of Jammu and the Valley. The terrorist bullets that killed the pilgrims also took aim at a government, which has two unlikely parties as allies: The soft-separatist People's Democratic Party and the right-wing BJP. It is imperative for the alliance partners to behave maturely and hold the peace that is already tentative.

The most-heartening signals of Kashmiriyat not taking a beating in the face of extreme provocation are coming from the state's common citizens. In an important signalling, a fresh batch of 3,000 yatris left Jammu a day after the terror attack. Kashmiris, too, are deeply disturbed by the killing of the pilgrims. The separatists from the Hurriyat Conference were quick to condemn the attack. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said that the pilgrims will always be respected guests. It is important to remember that the same separatists were silent when militants killed policemen and government employees.

As the state braces for testing times ahead and as the bodies of the pilgrims reach their homes in Gujarat and Maharashtra, political hardliners must desist from communalising the killings.



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BJP Has Given Bengal "Supari" To These 8 Stalwarts

Derek O'Brien

In Bengal, the BJP is a strange party. It lacks leaders, grassroots politicians and even effective spokespersons. It has outsourced its wicked and ghoulish pursuit of power to guns for hire. On the streets, such as in Baduria and Basirhat, the party used stormtroopers from the BJP-RSS combine to spread rumours and fuel riots. In the media, it is using a select band that claims to understand Bengal and attempts to shape the narrative, but manages only to make a fool of itself.

In particular, there is a gang of eight who have been given the Bengal supari by the BJP HQ. Let us call them the BJP Octette, singing together in disharmony. Who are

these people?

Exhibit One: A former Rajya Sabha member from Uttarakhand, and former editor of the RSS mouthpiece Panchajanya. Now looking for his next sinecure and shopping wildly for it. One day, he speaks about China and Tibet. The next day about the writings of Thiruvalluvar. The third day about dark-skinned and fair-skinned Indians. His latest bandwagon is Bengal, where he styles himself as an expert. He even wrote a column for NDTV.

Exhibit Two: Another editor, also a former Rajya Sabha member, now looking to confirm his nomination for a BJP ticket in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. (He will lose, of course, but in the BJP,

even getting a losing ticket is worth it. I wonder why!). This person used to study in Kolkata as a schoolboy. He showed up 40 years later for the Lok Sabha election in 2014. As soon as he lost, he very sweetly vanished. Now he's back. As Led Zeppelin sang: "In through the 'out' door". He too wrote a column for media.

Exhibit Three: A columnist-turned-Rajya Sabha MP (nominated) - the Burra Sa'ab among the Sanghis and the epitome of the Lutyens' Zone Parivar. He recently addressed a small-scale public meeting in Delhi's Jantar Mantar. Behind him was an image of violence, with captions reading "Save Bengal" and "save Hindus". Guess what? The image was from the

Gujarat pogrom in 2002. What's more - a BJP spokesperson tweeted that image and tried to pass it off as being from Bengal. (She now has an unailable warrant against her)

Exhibit Four: A tabloid editor, again of possible origins from Kolkata. He now hangs around the ruling party in Delhi hoping for some crumbs. He is the print equivalent of the TV Studio Pracharaks and is vituperative and nasty in his comments. The boy needs to learn some ambiguity and deniability. That's the route to success in BJP circles.

Exhibit Five: The BJP IT head, now also a Bengal expert. His job is to spread disinformation and manage troll armies. He does this very well, so much so that

his own tweets are riddled with factual inaccuracies. His Bengal propaganda is so uninformed that we can't even refute it. How can you refute uneducated garbage?

Exhibit Six: Another "former journalist", now a columnist and think-tank fellow. Pretends to be sober but slips in disinformation and the party line in the midst of his pieces. He may as well become an official BJP spokesperson. Last lived in Kolkata maybe 25 years ago. Claims he still understands it. It's like me saying I understand lacrosse.

Exhibit Seven: The Health Minister of Uttar Pradesh, earlier in charge of Bengal for the BJP. He was so successful the party won three seats out

of 294 in the 2016 assembly election! The BJP rewarded him with a job in the Uttar Pradesh government. His obsession with Bengal remains. As his government unleashes vigilantes and as law and order collapses in his state, he prefers focusing on Bengal.

Exhibit Eight: The BJP General Secretary for whom Bengal is a short stop while he tries to oust and replace Shivraj Singh as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. Scores of farmer suicides in his home state don't move him. But fictional accounts of violence in Bengal have driven him to a frenzy. All he wants is the big job in Bhopal. Once that happens, bye-bye Bengal.

Reading Modi's Many, Fervent Hugs For Netanyahu

Mani Shankar Aiyar

Can Israel be de-hyphenated from Palestine any more than Modi 2002 can be de-hyphenated from Modi 2017? The question is germane because even as Modi and his apologists try to distance Modi in domestic policy from the pogrom over which he loomed in Gujarat, so do Modi and his cohort try in foreign policy to project an Israel that is unrelated to the atrocities that have been inflicted, and continue to be inflicted, on Palestine and its people - documented most recently in a 2017 report for the UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia by Prof Richard Falk, renowned emeritus professor of Princeton University, and his colleague, Virginia Tilley. Their report follows the 2009 Richard Goldstone fact-finding report to the UN on the atrocities committed by Israel in the war it unleashed on the Gaza Strip from December 28, 2008 to January 17, 2009 that took almost the same number of Palestinian lives as did the Gujarat pogrom of February-March 2002 take of Indian Muslim lives. We are not talking history. We

are talking of contemporary times in the run-up to the first-ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Israel, a state indicted in both these reports.

De-hyphenation cannot be done - for the Indian Prime Minister of today arose from the Chief Minister of the horrors of fifteen years ago, even as all the achievements of Israel are grounded in their hounding out 750,000 Palestinians from the Palestinian homeland seventy years ago and imprisoning in Israel's backyard - the Occupied Territories - millions rendered exiles in their own homes and another 1.7 million reduced to second-class citizenship in a nation explicitly reserved for one race and one religion to the exclusion of all others.

The Palestinians are a people who would be free if Israel had not been conjured up as a balm to appease the conscience of the European Christians who had caused the Holocaust by systematically inflicting for two millennia dreadful deeds on the Jews who took refuge amongst them. (Read Shylock in Shakespeare's

Merchant of Venice for a poignant rendering of the awful treatment meted out to them). Ironically, the only time the Jews were safe and secure in Europe was in the Arab empire of Andalus that ruled over the Iberian Peninsula (what is now Spain and Portugal) for 781 years between AD 711 and 1492.

When Modi embraced Netanyahu, it was Savarkar embracing Theodore Herzl, displacing Gandhi who had famously written in the Harijan in 1938: "Palestine belongs to the Arabs as France belongs to the French and England to the English". Modi was bent on replacing the Mahatma with Savarkar who, on December 19, 1947, celebrated the vivisection of Palestine by proclaiming: "The creation of a strong and independent Jewish state must serve to checkmate the aggressive tendencies of Moslem fanaticism in general".

That, not a few shekels worth of defence equipment, is why Modi so fervently and repeatedly embraced Netanyahu.

Netanyahu and his extreme Zionist Likud party have repeatedly been returned to power in Israel. He was PM when I visited

Gaza at the invitation of Yasser Arafat for the doleful commemoration in 1998 by the Palestine National Authority of the 50th anniversary of Al-Naqba, the "Catastrophe" that massacred tens of thousands of Palestinians and drove three-quarters of a million Palestinians out of their burnt homes as Israel proclaimed its establishment as a state at the expiry of the League of Nations' British mandate on May 14, 1948. The Oslo agreement had allowed Arafat to return to Gaza. At my long meeting with him on May 16, 1998, Arafat sadly shook his head and said the "peace process" had been "frozen". I intervened with a question, "Frozen, because of the Israelis or because of Netanyahu?" "Netanyahu," he immediately and firmly replied, "it is Netanyahu who is refusing to accurately and honestly implement what has been signed" and recalled that even Israel's President had said that "what Netanyahu is doing is wrong and against Israel itself". "The problem," Arafat added, "is that Netanyahu does not believe in peace, he is against the peace

process." (I wrote up my visit for Encounter, volume 1, no.4, July-August 1998, from which I have retrieved these quotes).

In Modi, Netanyahu has discovered his soul-mate. Both are economical with the truth. A few weeks before embarking for Tel Aviv, Modi received the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, in New Delhi. At their press conference, Modi affirmed, "India has been unwavering in its support for the Palestinian cause." (True, at least till Modi arrived on the scene: Modi's India has twice in succession, and in complete violation of past precedent, abstained on UN resolutions, carried by huge majorities of our erstwhile partners and several shocked Europeans, relating to Israeli atrocities in Palestine, and the Indian delegation to the last non-aligned summit in Venezuela - not attended by the otherwise endlessly peripatetic Modi - was instructed to not say anything on Palestine). Having uttered this half-truth in Abbas' presence, Modi added, "We hope to see the realization of a sovereign, independent, united and

viable Palestine, co-existing peacefully with Israel (through) an early negotiated solution."

However, there was no mention of any of this when Modi met Netanyahu. In an anodyne, throwaway penultimate paragraph of their Joint Statement, it was baldly stated that they "discussed" the (dead in the water) "Israeli-Palestinian peace process" (sabotaged by Netanyahu when Hamas joined the Palestinian delegation), sought the establishment of a "just and durable peace in the region" (how can there be justice in the region if justice is denied to the Palestinians? How can there be peace without justice?), and "reaffirmed" their support for "an early negotiated settlement" (repeatedly undermined by Netanyahu after Oslo, Camp David and the Wye River accords). No mention, as with Abbas, of the "long and-standing solidarity and friendship" between India and Palestine "since the days of our freedom struggle", and no talk of a "sovereign, independent" or, indeed, of a "united and viable Palestine" - to all of which Netanyahu is firmly opposed.

Why weakening of National Green Tribunal is bad news for India

By tweaking the appointment rules to National Green Tribunal, the NGT could become a parking lot for retired bureaucrats

In 2010, Parliament enacted the National Green Tribunal (NGT) Act, which said that a judge of the Supreme Court or a chief justice of high court will be eligible to be chairperson or judicial member of the Tribunal. In six years since its formation in 2011, the NGT has emerged as an independent voice when it came to protecting the environment. It has pulled up the Centre for fast-tracking approvals and corporate groups for violating green approval conditions. But in the first week

of June, the Centre modified the process of appointments to the NGT: Instead of a senior judge, its chairperson will now be recommended by a five-member panel, which will be led by the chief justice of India (CJI) or a nominee of the CJI, but a majority of the other members in the panel will be recommended by the environment ministry.

The NDA has been trying to curtail the NGT's powers for some time. It set up the TSR Subramanian committee to

review the country's environment laws in 2014, which recommended dilution of the tribunal's powers. The NDA, however, could not act as it would have lead to a political backlash. But it later merged eight autonomous tribunals with other tribunals, and also gave itself the power to appoint and remove the members in another 17 such bodies. The new uniform appointment rules for 19 tribunals were notified on June 1. They have taken away powers of the CJI to appoint and remove



chairperson and judicial members to the tribunal; now it will be the environment ministry's call. Giving power to the executive to sack a retired judge is unprecedented. All this would ensure that judges may not join the tribunal and it could become a parking lot for retired bureaucrats, rendering the NGT ineffective for protecting the citizens' rights to a clean, healthy and pollution-free environment.

Chinese Army Itching For Escalation With India. Beware

The India-China standoff at the Northern tri-junction in Doklam (Donglang) area bordering Bhutan has brought divisions of the armies of the two countries face to face in one of the world's highest-altitude theatres.

The standoff began when the Chinese started construction of a road up to Yadong town in the Chumbi Valley. The narrow stretch of land touches India and Bhutan where China has a very small strip of land in what is actually Tibet, not enough to build even a footpath. The Chinese attempt seems to be to take the entire land between India and Bhutan and become an entity in the border. The lower portion of the Chumbi Valley points south towards India touching the Chicken Neck, highly sensitive to India and Bhutan. Considering the narrow approach road, China has been claiming 269 sq kms in the border as belonging to them.

In 1996, China offered to swap this area with Bhutan for 495 sq kms of land in the Pasamlung and Jakarlung Valleys in the north-central area of Bumthang during one of the many border talks between Beijing and Thimpu. Bhutan refused to fall for the deal as the land in question was also legitimately claimed by Bhutan as their own land, forcibly taken over by China when they occupied Tibet.

In fact there is a history to the area and China's desperation in getting a foothold in Doklam.

The frequent references to the infamous 1962 war by both sides and in the social media will serve very little purpose unless the

strategic planners in New Delhi absorb the enormity of the situation, and also its relevance today. The 1962 war was thrust upon India as part of a larger Chinese strategy. China had started moving into the Aksai Chin area before 1961. There was still a large area which was unoccupied and Indian posts were sparsely present. According to reports prepared after the 1962 debacle, the Indian army reclaimed a big chunk of territory. Subsequently, the Chinese army's withdrawal was a strategic move and soon, the retaliation took place that turned into a major conflict.

China has travelled a long way in history since 1962. Both India and China made serious efforts to mend fences and re-establish diplomatic and economic ties. Years later, by 1980, the two countries came much closer diplomatically and by 2008, China had become India's largest trading partner.

Yet, trade, commerce and industry notwithstanding, Beijing is not just a political establishment. This is the first time since the reign of Chairman Mao that the political boss of China has assumed two more important posts. The present President Xi Jinping is also the chief of army and secretary general of the party, the highest in power, position, decision-making processes and execution.

Another important factor in China's internal governance process and matters of external affairs is the close proximity of People's Liberation Army (PLA) to the day-to-day running of the country, which was earlier the



exclusive prerogative of the Chinese Communist Party. This brings into focus the thinking, writings and also the relationship between the secretary general of the party and the PLA.

The PLA since 2008 has been seriously engaged in working out policy parameters for Beijing especially in areas of flashpoints, conflict and crisis management and non-conventional warfare such as cyber and physiological warfare. Interestingly, according to the PLA, strategic and political objectives must always be prioritized over military objectives in planning, executing and controlling conflicts.

Unlike accidental or inadvertent conflicts, China strongly believes in deliberate escalation where certain measures initiated by the state or non-state actors are intended to cause a geo-political and advantageous change through a crisis or conflict. This includes

escalatory measures that political decision-makers believes are certain to reach the intended result, such as the occupation of Tibet, or the social and demographic change in Xinjiang where the Islamic separatists are waging a freedom struggle to free China-occupied Uyghuristan (now renamed as Xinjiang).

Strangely, the political establishment in Beijing appears to be endorsing the PLA's view that in a conflict, it is necessary to seize the initiative, but it is also critical to preserve strategic and political stability and operational flexibility, in order to respond to an adversary's actions without unnecessarily escalating the conflict.

Going by the huge volumes of strategic thinking with the secret confines of Beijing, it is important for New Delhi to study the present border standoff in detail. China is eager to settle the border dispute with Bhutan and

also probably with other countries except India. India's commitment to protect the security and strategic interests of Bhutan and centuries-old Buddhist connections are certainly major irritants for Beijing.

It will be in the best interest of India if New Delhi adopts a policy of wait-and-watch rather than enter into a jingoistic diatribe thereby aiding the "conflict escalation theory" of the PLA, which, according to China watchers, is itching for a showdown with the political establishment to retain its supremacy in the decision-making process. Needless to say, New Delhi should do everything in its command to strengthen the army at the border and be prepared to thwart attempts by Chinese army to usurp territory or create strategic disadvantage to India and Bhutan.

Bhutan cannot be allowed to become another Tibet.

When TV Anchors Become BJP Spokespersons To Spread Fake News

Mahua Moitra

The Goebbels doctrine - "Repeat a lie often enough and it becomes the truth" - is also known to psychologists as "the illusion of truth". Under test conditions, people were more likely to rate statements as true when these statements were more familiar. Welcome to the BJP's nation-wide test lab, where the illusion of truth is crafted by swayamsevakas and amplified by eager bhakts aided by a veritable army of highly paid cyber propaganda warriors and rabidly biased news anchors who comprise the newest breed of BJP spokespersons. They are uniformly ill-informed, under-qualified, and disgustingly loud in their fervour to win the race for that much-coveted Rajya Sabha seat. Their latest "alternative fact" is that "minority appeasement by the Trinamool government is to blame for the breakdown of law and order in Bengal". This may seem ridiculous, but it is still necessary to once and for all disprove the inherent falsehood of both the blatant lies in this statement. First, "minority

appeasement". What does this even mean? This is actually the question that the agitators for Gorkhaland are finally asking the BJP. Three years ago, a crafty last-minute addendum to the BJP's 2014 manifesto promised to "sympathetically examine and appropriately consider the long-standing demand of the Gorkhas". What does it mean? Gorkhaland - yes or no? The Trinamool government has unequivocally opposed the division of Bengal to create Gorkhaland. Their stand is crystal clear. The BJP, however, cannot define what they really stand for. Prevarication and subterfuge rule the day. Can this shibboleth of minority appeasement be quantified? Does the Bengal government, perhaps, spend disproportionately more on Minority Affairs? The answer is no. The numbers to prove it: Bengal, with a 27.5% Muslim population of 2.5 crores, has a total budget in 2017-18 of Rs. 2,815 crores for its Minority Affairs department - a per capita allocation of Rs. 11,433. Karnataka, with 13.2% Muslim

population of 78 lakhs, has a Minority Affairs budget of Rs. 2,750 crores - a per capita allocation of Rs. 35,256. Telengana, with 14.2% Muslim population of 44.6 lakhs, has a budgetary allocation of Rs. 1,279 crores or Rs. 28,677 per head. Telengana spends twice as much and Karnataka three times what Bengal spends on its minorities. So why is Bengal accused of "appeasement"? "Mamata only gives cycles to Muslim girls." "Only Muslim clerics get free houses." "Muslims from Bangladesh enter freely and Mamata does nothing." "Fake currency cross-border racket in Malda run by TMC." Words we hear being passed off as gospel truth every single day on television and on social media. No. No. No. And No. Providing cycles free of cost to girl students of classes 9-12 was started as a scheme to promote education among backward sections of society in schools in the Sunderbans through the Sunderban Affairs department. It was later extended to SC/ST students via the Backward Classes Department

and Madrasa Students via the Minority Affairs arm in 2011-12. It was extended to all government schools in Bengal in 2015. It is patently untrue that it was started for or limited to Muslim girls. But alas, the truth is irrelevant to our friends in the BJP. Homes for imams also exist only in the twisted minds of pracharaks. The Bengal government's Gitanjali housing scheme was started in 2011-12 for construction of houses for the Economically Weaker Sections. Initially, the scheme was implemented in rural areas by six departments including Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education, Backward Classes Welfare, Fisheries, Forests, Sundarban Affairs and Paschimanchal Unnayan and in urban areas by the Department of Municipal Affairs and urban bodies. The scheme was extended to all parts of the state in early 2014, and the nodal department today is the Housing Department. The RSS lying machine stands exposed. The Gitanjali scheme was not started just for Muslims and Imams do not get free houses constructed

under it. Bangladeshi infiltration?! The Trinamool is in its sixth year of power after an uninterrupted 34-year stint by the Left. Bangladesh and India share a 4,096 km long international border of which 2,217 kms lies in Bengal. Border security is solely controlled by the BSF, one of the five Central Armed Police Forces of the Union of India. It is not within the purview of the state government. The central government as recently as February, 2017 was reprimanded by the Supreme Court over its response to an order to fence the India-Bangladesh border to keep out illegal immigrants. The centre's affidavit sought more time to complete the task, citing lack of data on the riverine stretches to explain why it had so far failed to carry out the court order and stated that work on the entire stretch could take till 2020 to complete. Again, the pre-election rhetoric of the BJP stands exposed - the centre is supposed to control the border, but, by its own admission, cannot even get data on its responsibilities. Counterfeit currency from Bangladesh? The central government controls this border too, but more importantly, how do you explain counterfeit currency in a post-demonetisation world, Mr. Modi? Didn't your midnight dhamaka promise to end fake currency once and for all? Pray, do tell us, Sir, why this contradiction exists eight months into your experiment? The Nation Needs to Know. Second, the apparent breakdown in law and order. Tarun Vijay, ex-Rajya Sabha MP and ex-editor of the RSS's mouthpiece, in his column here a few days ago lamented the purported lack of security for Hindus in Bengal. Mr. Vijay, Bengal comprises 70% Hindus. Mamata Banerjee's government was re-elected with an overwhelming mandate in 2016, winning 211 of a total of 293 seats. Clearly Bengal's Hindus don't seem to view the RSS's dangerously divisive and parochial usurping of their faith in quite the same shining light as Mr. Vijay. Tarun-ji, you might try to actually win a people's election to truly understand ground realities. To guard against the pernicious "illusion of truth", we must stop repeating falsehoods. Facts matter. They must matter. We must stand guard to protect them. Every re-post, re-tweet, story, datum passed on, without checking if it is true, is another step towards a world where lies and truth are confused.

The Difficulty Of Covering PM Modi At G-20

I woke up on Sunday morning in Hamburg with sore muscles, relishing the thought that I didn't have to start rushing out of my hotel at dawn to follow Prime Minister Narendra Modi's hectic schedule. He'd left the night before on Air India One and I was hoping that before I headed to my Cattle Class ride, I'd get out for a walk to see the stunning lake close by. I had no illusion about making it to a ferry ride on the harbour, or a boat tour of the Elbe, but I did hope that I could go back seeing at least one other thing than just Hotel Atlantic, where PM Modi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel stayed, or the media room of the Messe, where the Indian press pack sat and waited futilely for news, any news for more than 50 hours. Apparently, right where we were at the G20 centre, PM Modi shook hands, got waved at and then held forth on some enthralling subject while POTUS Donald Trump just listened. Apparently, it was very interesting because not just POTUS, but other leaders gathered to listen to him too. If you're wondering why I say

"apparently", it's because five other reporters and me who came all the way to the port city to report on India at the G20, learnt of it from Twitter. I saw that Arvind Panagariya, the Sherpa - a term used for an adviser to the heads of state and government - had tweeted about it the day before! Now here's what's strange about it. Arvind Panagariya and the Ministry of External Affairs did have a briefing at the end of the summit, but they did not mention either the POTUS Face-Time or any details of the Modi-Xi meeting. In fact, I can tell you that the information on the China meeting doesn't go beyond 140 characters. "A range of issues," said Foreign Ministry spokesperson Gopal Baglay when I pressed him for more, "means a range of issues." Maybe it is my fault that I wasn't following the very eminent economist and NITI Aayog Vice-Chair on social media. It's a wrong that I have corrected immediately, and I have set alarms for every tweet now. But doesn't the government lose out if those disseminating information like me lose track

of the dozen-odd government handles, or get cross-eyed from tracking all of them, and miss something? I know the government's rallying cry is Digital India but how are we to interpret things if all that we have is 140 characters on the Xi meeting and a day later, China pushes up the hostility with an advisory to its citizens living in India? We then rely on common sense, put two and two together and figure out - despite the tweeted pictures of our PM smiling with Xi, the meeting didn't resolve the border standoff. It's simplistic, but that's the ball park. That's the problem with 140-character communication with the media: you have to simplify things. If you refuse to do background briefings to explain the nuances of an obviously complex situation, how can you then attack the media for "sensationalizing" the China situation? One of the reporters seemed very upset. She'd asked an officer specifically whether Xi and Modi talked and he clearly said no. Just a few minutes later, those who had their twitter alarms on, learnt that our PM had warmly greeted

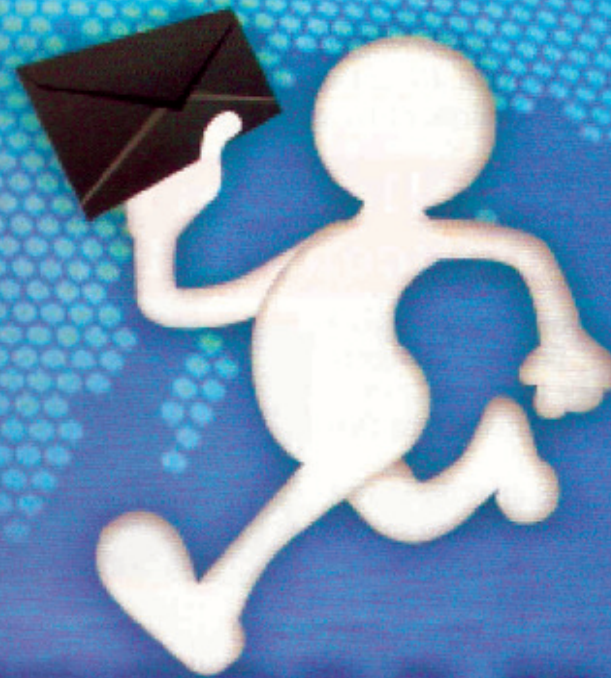
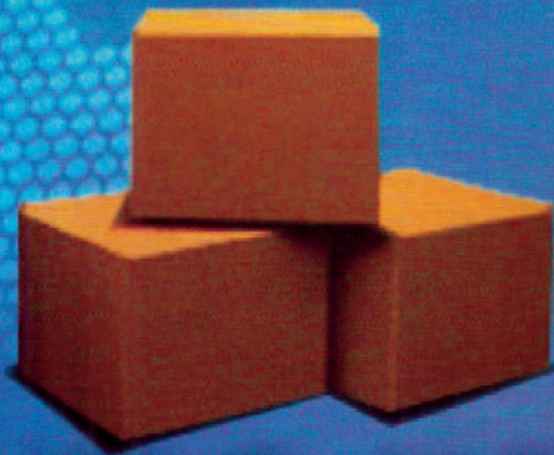
and discussed a range of issues with Xi. "Don't lie to us, at least," the reporter complained. The poor officer maybe didn't know himself but he certainly won't speak to any reporter now before checking with his boss or the PM's tweeted position first. I recently heard a long, radio analysis of the media's problems in reporting on Trump. There was some good advice there - the traditional method political reporters have followed is to get information from the inside and then spread it outside. Now, we have to follow the Outside-In mode. Get it from the big, wide, world outside and then use it to try and understand what's happening inside the establishment. But for those well-wishers we have inside the establishment who keep telling us to understand their point of view, to see things from their perspective. I just have one thing to say - we want to understand, we want to listen, but talk to us beyond 140 characters. Hey, even POTUS's top aide Rex Tillerson spoke to reporters at length on the Trump-Putin meeting.

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Expel Lalu's son Tejashwi, will support your government from outside: BJP to Nitish Kumar

Bihar BJP president Nitayanand Rai said they are ready to support Nitish Kumar government from outside.

(Agencies) As speculations are rife that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar may ask his deputy and Lalu Yadav's younger son Tejashwi Yadav to resign after CBI raids against him, Bihar BJP today said they will support the JD-U government from outside.

"I appeal Nitish Kumar to expel Tejashwi Yadav. After that if they need it we are ready to support them," said.

However, he said, it is the central leadership that will take the final decision.

"In RJD there is no meaning of a meeting. Today's meeting was a drama and whatever

happens in the party is what Lalu Yadav wants," he said.

The BJP leader said Nitish Kumar will have to leave the Congress as Sonia Gandhi has already said that she is with Lalu Yadav in the corruption case.

"And BJP's dream is to make India Congress-free," he said adding that Nitish Kumar's image which was that of good governance has also been affected.

"But if Nitish Kumar will need to save his government then BJP will not be behind. We will support his government from outside but will not join it," Bihar

BJP president Nitayanand Rai said.

Even after the CBI filed a case against him and his family members, the Rashtriya Janata Dal has decided that Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav will not resign.

Nitish Kumar, who is heading the Grand Alliance government of Janata Dal-United, Rashtriya Janata Dal and Congress in Bihar, is yet to comment on the matter but he spoke with Lalu last night on the phone.

There has been speculation of cracks in the alliance government after the CBI



crackdown against the Yadav family and Nitish's increasing closeness with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Nitish, who was in an alliance with the BJP for 17 years, has been giving political signals of getting closer to the BJP.

Surgical strikes on Pakistan and demonetisation have been a few instances where Nitish has been the lone opposition face to

come out and openly extend his support to PM Modi, much to the discomfort of the Opposition, especially RJD chief Lalu Prasad with whose support he is running a coalition government in Bihar.

Even in the presidential election, Nitish has decided to support NDA nominee Ram Nath Kovind and not the opposition's candidate Meira Kumar.

(Agencies) The controversial anti-Romeo squads, which drew widespread criticism for moral policing and harassing young couples in the name of women safety, will soon be back to patrol Uttar Pradesh streets. However, the state police chief claims, the new teams will comprise a polite, observant and trained set of personnel who will act as a deterrent only to eve-teasers and stalkers.

A pre-poll promise of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the drive was aimed at punishing molesters and harassers in public places. However, vigilante groups took over the exercise, often targeting young couples and handing out embarrassing punishments.



The move invited criticism from several quarters following allegations that the police were invading private space of citizens. The opposition even sought Central intervention into what they alleged "violation of the Constitution" by allowing anti-Romeo squads to "ridicule democracy and the freedom of youngsters".

'IMPARTIAL POLICE'

Singh said the biggest achievement of the Yogi government on the law and order front was its "impartial policing". "Now people can say that similar action is being taken in similar cases and there is no distinction on the basis of his or her political affiliation or status. Whoever breaks the law will be dealt with an iron fist," the DGP said.

Without naming any party or organisation, Singh said the police are not hesitating to take strong action against the "newly emboldened constituents for their over-enthusiasm" and cited strict action against cow vigilantes and the dealing of Saharanpur riots. Contrary to the view of opposition parties who referred to several incidents of rape, caste violence and 'gau rakshaks' as worsening law and order situation in the state, Singh said the situation had "in fact improved". "After stern action was taken against cow vigilantes who indulged in violence in the name of cow protection, such incidents are no longer taking place in UP now," the DGP said. Regarding the Saharanpur riots, where Thakurs and Dalits were locked in violent clashes and tension persisted for weeks, Singh said: "Some people tried to create a volatile situation but police took prompt action."

No shaving heads, blackening faces: UP's Anti-Romeo squad to return in gentler, 2.0 avatar

Uttar Pradesh police is set to bring in new anti-Romeo teams that will have trained, sensitised personnel to keep a check on eve-teasing and stalkers.

"Earlier, these squads were not trained. They were often over-enthusiastic and took foolish actions like chasing young people and grilling them," said state DGP Sulkhan Singh in an exclusive interview to Mail Today. "This brought bad name to a well-meaning exercise."

According to Singh, the new teams underwent a curriculum designed by the Women Power Line, a unit for prevention and detection of crime against women, with three areas of focus: behavioural, legal and practical.

"They only have to be vigilant and observant about situations and see if a man or a group of

men are harassing women. They are being taught that. Training is over in 30 of the 75 districts," said the IPS officer who was DG (training) before being elevated by chief minister Yogi Adityanath.

'NO MURGA PUNISHMENTS'

The top cop assured that there will be no more arrests, shaving of heads, blackening of faces or murga punishments (a stress position of holding ears) or chasing of couples at public parks, college campuses, railway stations and shopping malls in the name of curbing eve-teasing or protecting women.

Singh said the squad will also be asked to use body cameras

to protect themselves from charges of human rights violations or other wild allegations. These teams will not be given the power to investigate but only detain the stalkers, rowdy elements and issue warnings after "careful observation of a situation".

The curriculum also conducted sensitisation classes of policemen where they were taught to how to behave with young couples and spot a suspicious character.

"The squad is being given training in distinguishing a molester from a friend through keen observation and by being vigilant. Earlier these squads were trained only as a police

officer. They will see a group of boys and they will go and threaten them... a girl and boy will be walking together and they will question them. These things should not happen," the DGP said.

Supporting the need for such a squad, Singh said it was necessary to prevent teasing, molestation or harassment of women at public place and instill a sense of security among people.

The Allahabad high court in March had upheld Yogi Adityanath government's move to set up these squads but cautioned that the police must act only as per law and not "outside its purview".

Zakir Naik's passport could be revoked soon

(News Agencies) New Delhi: Fugitive televangelist Zakir Naik could soon become a stateless person, with the Regional Passport Office, Mumbai, serving him a 10-day ultimatum to submit his passport in person or face its revocation.

The proceedings were initiated on a request from the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which is probing Naik's speeches that allegedly incited youth to commit terror acts, after he failed to respond to its multiple notices asking him to join the investigation. The assistant

passport officer (policy) at RPO Mumbai wrote to Naik on July 3, directing that he meet him on any working day between 10 am and 12.30 pm within 10 days from the issue of the letter, along with his passport dated January 20, 2016. "Failure to submit the passport will force us to initiate necessary action under the Passport Act, 1967 against you," he warned.

The NIA had written to the RPO, Mumbai, on June 29 seeking revocation of Naik's passport on the ground that he was "not cooperating

with them in the investigation pending against him". Citing its June 23 communication to the home ministry, the NIA said Zakir Naik had thrice been issued notices under Section 160 of CrPC on February 28, March 15 and March 31 but was yet to join the proceedings against him. It added that a non-bailable warrant had been issued against him on April 21.

Naik had left India on May 13 last year and has not come back. NIA sources said he has been travelling to different countries, Malaysia being his last known location.



Head of every Kashmiri hangs in shame over Amarnath attack, Mehbooba says



(Agencies) New Delhi: Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti said the terror attack on Amarnath pilgrims in Anantnag is a "blot on all Muslims and Kashmiris".

While visiting the injured in a hospital in Anantnag, she said the head of every Kashmiri hangs in shame over today's incident. "Pilgrims come to Kashmir every year for the yatra despite all the difficulties. And seven people died today. I have no words to condemn it. I hope the security forces and the Jammu and Kashmir police arrest the perpetrators forthwith and take stern action against them," the chief minister said. "This incident is a blot on all Kashmiris and Muslims. We will not keep quiet till we bring the culprits to book," Mehbooba said. She said efforts will be aimed at ensuring that quick action is taken against the culprits and justice is done. The chief minister said seven people, including six women, were killed in the dastardly attack that took place around 8:20 pm. Those killed and injured in the attack were on a bus carrying pilgrims from Valsad district of Gujarat. The bus came under terrorists' fire near Khanabal in Anantnag district around 8.20 pm, over one hour after the patrolling by the security forces on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway wound up.

Congress in a spot after Rahul meets Chinese envoy

(News Agencies) New Delhi: Congress found itself tied in knots after first vehemently denying and then acknowledging that party vice-president Rahul Gandhi had met Chinese ambassador Luo Zhaohui amid the continuing stand-off between Indian and Chinese troops near the Sikkim-Tibet-Bhutan tri-junction. The controversy gained traction on social media over reports that the Chinese embassy first reported the meeting, saying it was to "exchange views on the current bilateral relations", but deleting the post.

The post seemed to have embarrassed Congress which denounced it as fake news. But with the controversy refusing to die down and reports of the meeting and the deletion by the Chinese embassy gaining traction, Congress finally confirmed the meeting. The party then struck a defiant stance in the face of sharp criticism by BJP with Rahul



tweeting "it is my job to be informed on critical issues" and "the government must explain why three ministers are availing Chinese hospitality". The reference was to the visit of three ministers to China for BRICS-related engagements.

In a series of tweets, Rahul said, "It is my job to be informed on critical issues. I met the Chinese ambassador, ex-NSA (Shivshankar Menon), Congress leaders from north-east and the Bhutanese ambassador." The expanded reference seemed aimed at countering the

impression that he met only the Chinese ambassador during the ongoing crisis over China's attempt to build a road and take control of a part of Bhutanese territory. Rahul added, "If government is so concerned about me meeting an ambassador, they should explain why three ministers are availing Chinese hospitality while the border issue is on." As the controversy grew, Congress confirmed the engagement, arguing 'there's no need to sensationalise the meeting'.

Mallya defies SC, doesn't appear in contempt case



(News Agencies) New Delhi: Fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya, who fled to the UK to escape criminal proceedings against him for not refunding bank loans of nearly Rs 9,000 crore, failed to appear before the Supreme Court on Monday in defiance of the order of the apex court which was to decide on quantum of punishment for contempt. A bench of Justices A K Goel and UU Lalit had on May 9 held him guilty of contempt of court for not honestly disclosing all his assets

and diverting \$40 million to overseas accounts of his family members in violation of the court's order. It had directed Mallya to personally appear before the court on July 10 to decide the punishment to be awarded to him. As neither Mallya nor his lawyer appeared before the court, the bench adjourned the case for July 14 to decide the further course of action to be taken against the former chief of the now-grounded Kingfisher Airlines (KFA). The court was

told that notice to the businessman was duly served after he was convicted for contempt of court. The court was hearing contempt proceedings against Mallya filed by a consortium of 17 banks, led by SBI, which contended that he had not made truthful disclosure of his assets before the court and he had intentionally kept the court in dark on payment of \$40 million, which he received in February last year from British liquor major Diageo for stepping down as Chairman and of United Spirits Limited. SBI has the highest exposure of Rs 1,600 crore to KFA. Other banks that have exposure to KFA include Punjab National Bank and IDBI Bank (Rs 800 crore each), Bank of India (Rs 650 crore), Bank of Baroda (Rs 550 crore), Central Bank of India (Rs 410 crore). Among other banks, UCO Bank has to recover Rs 320 crore and Corporation Bank Rs 310 crore. The SC had started contempt proceedings against Mallya and had issued notice to him on March 8, 2016, on the plea by banks for recovery of about Rs 9,000 crore which Mallya and his companies owed to them. Mallya, however, managed to flee the country days before the SC took up the case against him.

RJD downplays differences with Nitish Kumar, but mum on Tejashwi



(News Agencies) New Delhi: The attention of political circles in Delhi and Bihar is focussed on a meeting of JD(U) legislators and organisation scheduled for Tuesday with Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar likely to break his silence on corruption cases dogging his ally and RJD boss Lalu Prasad and his family. Tensions have been running high in the alliance since CBI registered an FIR against Lalu, his wife Rabri Devi and son Tejashwi Yadav who is deputy CM in the Bihar government. Opposition BJP has mounted pressure on Kumar to sack Tejashwi and the CM's comments can have a bearing on the alliance with RJD and Congress. With RJD on Monday categorically ruling out Tejashwi Yadav's resignation, the ball is in Kumar's court. The CM could outline a strong line upholding probity in public life and signal his views on the controversy kicked up by the CBI case that relates to manipulation of railway hotel contracts and a land deal in Patna when Lalu was railway minister in the UPA government. JD(U)

national general secretary Sanjay Jha told TOI, "There can be no compromise on principles the party represents and its image in public. The chief minister's views on issues of financial probity are well known. He has stood for transparency and accountability in governance." The rising friction between JD(U) and RJD could

also cast a shadow over the meeting of opposition leaders called by Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday. Though JD(U) is likely to be represented, the CBI case as well as recent allegations about transfer of properties to Lalu's kin threatens to weaken opposition unity already hit by Kumar's support to NDA presidential nominee Ram Nath Kovind. The BJP state chief Nityanand Rai meanwhile said the party could offer support to Nitish Kumar from the outside. "The final decision of course will be that of the central leadership," said Rai. He has offered such support earlier, but the timing of the remarks ahead of the JD(U) meet is significant. Though RJD leaders chose to downplay differences with Kumar and claimed that Lalu had

spoken to the CM, the party's position that there is no case against Tejashwi makes it clear that the deputy CM is not quitting just yet. JD(U) leaders feel that without Tejashwi stepping down, a middle ground will prove elusive. The alliance may not, however, snap overnight. If Kumar spells out his stance clearly, the differences will widen and further developments in either the CBI case or enforcement directorate probe into shell companies and properties acquired by Lalu's daughter Misha Bharti and her husband Shailesh could provide a further trigger. JD(U) sources, in fact, feel that Tejashwi's continuance in the ministry is becoming increasingly untenable. In the light in which the current situation is developing, the alliance might remain in turmoil if RJD doesn't

respond to signals from Kumar who had removed three ministers in the past after cases were registered against them. Jitan Ram Manjhi, Ramdhar Singh and RN Singh had been removed. Manjhi has now attacked Kumar alleging that action against him was taken as he was a Dalit but the Bihar chief minister did not have the gumption to act against Lalu Prasad's sons. "Message to the RJD is loud and clear that Nitishji can't run the government if people facing corruption allegations are there in the ministry," said a senior JD(U) functionary as he claimed that RJD should have tried a way out but the party rallies behind the Lalu Prasad family and they have refused to accept removal of Tejashwi and Tej Pratap.

India boosts troop presence near face-off site with China

(News Agencies) New Delhi: The Indian Army has moved another 2,500 soldiers from their peace-time deployments in Sikkim to further reinforce its proactive stance in the ongoing troop face-off with China on the Doklam plateau, even as it maintains high alert along the entire 4,057-km Line of Actual Control from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

China has apparently also sent some troop reinforcements to Khamba Dzong and other areas near its Chumbi Valley, which juts in between Sikkim and Bhutan, in the backdrop of both armies being clearly unwilling to budge from their positions in the month-long stand-off now.

"Flag meetings between local

commanders have lost their relevance. There is total stalemate. The decision to de-escalate has to come from the politico-diplomatic level. The Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs, set up in January 2012, or talks between the two designated Special Representatives, is the only way to diffuse the situation now," a source said.

There are just about 300-400 troops each from India and China in the eyeball-to-eyeball but "non-aggressive" confrontation at the exact stand-off site on the Doklam plateau - which is actually Bhutanese territory but coveted by Beijing to add strategic depth to its narrow Chumbi Valley - near the Sikkim-Bhutan-Tibet tri-

junction.

But all Indian Army formations in the region, ranging from the 17 Division (headquarters at Gangtok) to 27 Division (Kalimpong) and 20 Division (Binnaguri), all infantry mountain warfare units with over 10,000 soldiers each, are maintaining "high operational readiness for any contingency", sources said. Apart from the already-deployed 63 and 112 Brigades in east and north Sikkim, with 3,000 troops each, sources said two battalions under the 164 Brigade have also been "activated and moved up" to the Zuluk and Nathang Valley in the state. Similarly, "some elements" under the 20 Mountain Division have also been moved to their exercise area.



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Malabar exercise is a signal to China we are one: US commander

(Insider Bureau) Chennai : Amid vociferous protests and far from subtle bluster by China, the navies of India and the US and the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force on Monday opened the 21st edition of maritime exercise Malabar with the US unequivocally standing by the country in its efforts to check Beijing's growing footprint in the Indian Ocean.

Commander US Strike Group 11 Rear Admiral William D Byrne said the only strategic message that Malabar 2017 is sending to "all navies is that we are better together", adding that the drill should "eliminate possibilities of miscalculations". Another US commander, who asked not to be named, said the exercise would have a significant impact on the Chinese. "They will know that we are standing together and that it

is better to stand together," he said. Flag Officer Commanding in Chief, Eastern Naval Command, Vice Admiral H C S Bisht declared the exercise open, describing it as a joint attempt to address common challenges and address shared threats. He refused, however, to acknowledge outright that the choice of ships and the venue of the exercise had anything to do with presence of Chinese ships or Indian threat perception in the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean. Three aircraft carriers—the USS Nimitz of the US Navy, the INS Vikramaditya of the Indian Navy and the JS Izumo of the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force — will take part in Malabar 2017. In addition, 16 ships, 95 aircraft including a large number of fighter jets, and two

submarines will take part in the war games in international waters off the coast of Chennai from July 14 to 17. The joint fleet deployed by the three navies is significant in its size and timing, given that China is flexing its muscle in the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean, to the vexation of India, and that North Korea is growing increasingly hostile to its neighbours and America with successive tests of nuclear missile-capable ballistic rocket, to the consternation of the US. Vice Admiral Bisht denied that Malabar 2017 would have any implication for India's current standoff with China but said the exercise is aimed at a long-term strategic relationship between the three countries. "Each exercise helps advance the level of understanding of the



personnel," he noted. "The process of planning the exercise began a year ago." "There is a large number of extra-regional ships in the region," Bisht said. "The Indian Navy has the wherewithal to monitor these. The exercise will focus on submarine tracking." The thrust of exercise

— to be held till July 17 — will be on carrier operations, air defence, anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare, visit board search and seizure, search and rescue, joint manoeuvres and tactical procedures. A 'harbour phase' will be held at Chennai Port till July 13.

US 'redrawing' ties with world, not withdrawing: Foreign secretary S Jaishankar

The US, since Trump assumed office in January, has changed its policies on several issues, most importantly on climate change by withdrawing from the historic Paris accord.



(Insider Bureau) The US is "redrawing" its policy of engagement with others but not withdrawing from the world, and

this change matters to India and Southeast Asia, foreign secretary S Jaishankar said on Tuesday.

His comments came as several countries around the world fear the US, under President Donald Trump's "transactional" policy, may not be willing to engage with regional issues in absence of a meaningful return for the American interests.

The remarks assume significance in terms of India's 'Act East' policy as China becomes more assertive in the ASEAN region, which is made

up of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Speaking on 'India, ASEAN and the Changing Geopolitics' at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore, Jaishankar said the "big question" before the world today is the global strategic approach of the US.

"This matters to India as much as it does to ASEAN nations, and indeed to the entire world. There seem to be a number of parallel processes at work," he said at the lecture marking 25 years of India-ASEAN relations.

"The United States is, generally speaking, reframing its terms of engagement with the world. In some arenas, there may be a

redefinition of its objectives," Jaishankar said.

"In others, we may be looking at a redrawing of its posture. At the same time, let us be clear what is not happening: the US is not withdrawing from the world," he said.

On the contrary, he said, the US was seeking to get what it hopes to be a better deal from the rest of the world.

The US, since Trump assumed office in January, has changed its policies on several issues, most importantly on climate change by withdrawing from the historic Paris accord. The new administration has shown keenness for bilateral deals over multilateral agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal. Twelve countries, that

included ASEAN members Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Singapore, signed up to the TPP in February 2016, representing roughly 40 per cent of the world's economic output.

Jaishankar, who was the ambassador of India to China from 2009-2013, and then to the US before becoming the foreign secretary in January 2015, said, "These are still early days. It is important not to jump to conclusions."

The continued presence of the US in the Asia-Pacific is an important factor in the calculations of all nations. Developing a nuanced understanding of the unfolding situation is a must for policymakers, as well as analysts, he said.

Now, Supreme Court too stays Centre's cattle slaughter ban, court order to be in place for 3 months

(Insider Bureau) New Delhi : Following the Madras high court's similar action in May, the Supreme Court (SC) too on Tuesday ordered a three-month stay on the Centre's rules banning the sale and purchase of cattle for slaughter+. The SC forced the Centre to undertake before it that it would not implement these rules, which the Madras high court put on hold on May 30. These orders staying the new 'no slaughter' regulations give some reprieve to butchers' business across the country. Meat suppliers had already planned to petition the Supreme Court about the huge setback to their businesses with the new Central rules. On May 23, the Centre had issued new rules banning the sales of cattle for slaughter. A week later, the Madurai bench of the Madras high court stayed this 'slaughter ban' for four weeks and asked the Union environment ministry and the Tamil Nadu government to respond to a petition filed by a Madurai-based activist-lawyer and vegetarian S Selvagomathy.

On Tuesday, the Centre, arguing against the 'stay', said that since the Madurai bench of the Madras high court stayed the new rules they were unlikely to be implemented immediately. It added that the government is listening to various organisations that are against these new rules and that it plans to bring changes in the rules by August end.

(Insider Bureau) New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday night strongly condemned the dastardly terror attack+ on Amarnath pilgrims in Kashmir and asserted that India will never get bogged down by such cowardly attacks and evil designs of hate.

PM Modi said he spoke to Governor NN Vohra and Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and assured all possible assistance required.

At least seven pilgrims were killed

and a number of others injured in the terror attack in Anantnag district+ of south Kashmir tonight.

"Pained beyond words on the dastardly attack on peaceful Amarnath Yatris in J&K. The attack deserves strongest condemnation from everyone," PM Modi tweeted.

Pained beyond words on the dastardly attack on peaceful Amarnath Yatris in J&K. The attack deserves strongest condemnation from

everyone. India will never get bogged down by such cowardly attacks & the evil designs of hate. Terming the terror attack on Amarnath pilgrims in Kashmir as the most reprehensible act, Defence Minister Arun Jaitley on Monday said the incident should add to India's determination to eliminate terrorism. The defence minister also conveyed his condolences to the families of those killed in the attack in Anantnag district of south Kashmir tonight.

Anantnag terror attack

PM Modi says India will never be bogged down by evil designs of hate

Allowing felons to vote could change American politics

(Agencies) An estimated 6.1 million American adults were not allowed to vote in the 2016 election because they had a felony conviction on their record. Most had already served their sentences and returned to their communities. The majority of US states take away felons' voting rights, occasionally for life.

This disenfranchisement affects an estimated one in 40 adult Americans, or 2.5% of the total US voting-age population, according to The Sentencing Project, a group that advocates criminal-justice reform.

That number is greater than the

entire population of Missouri, and it's the largest single group of American citizens who are barred by law from participating in elections.

So many people are barred from the polls that some worry their absence could change election results. One study even suggested that allowing felons to vote in Florida could have tipped the 2000 presidential election to Democrat Al Gore.

About half of US states have loosened restrictions in recent years. But how this might affect the country's fractured politics is more complicated. Would ex-felons turn out to vote? And if

they would, can we predict who'd benefit? The US has the highest incarceration rate in the world, with about 670 inmates per 100,000 residents, according to figures from the International Center for Prison Studies. Some estimates put the figure higher. That rate is about five times the average of other developed economies in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The next-closest OECD state is Israel, which has an incarceration rate of about 250 inmates per 100,000. the number of Americans incarcerated has increased over



the past 25 years. The rate for US residents ages 18 and up rose from about 310 per 100,000 in 1980 to about 870 per 100,000 in 2015, a spike correlated with the "war on drugs" era tough-on-crime policies. The rate peaked in the mid-2000s at around 1,000 per 100,000. Few major economies around the world allow inmates to vote. Politicians and voters generally argue that if a person does not follow the law, then that person should not get to choose lawmakers.

Tobacco use jumps 80% in top-grossing movies

(Agencies) In 2016, 41% of top-grossing US movies showed people using tobacco, according to a recent report from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a decrease from the year before. However, there was an 80% increase in incidents of tobacco use in those movies from 2015 to 2016.

The numbers are prompting concern from public health researchers and advocates over the effects these scenes have on young people's behavior.

"We've known for a while that the more you see smoking on screen, the more likely you are to see youth smoking cigarettes in real life," said Michael Tynan, lead author of the report and a public health analyst at the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health. "There's a causal relationship between the two."

The data from the new report were taken from Thumbs Up! Thumbs Down!, a project of the nonprofit Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant Trails.

Since 1991, the organization has collected data on tobacco use by counting the number of times a tobacco product is used or implied to be used in a movie scene.

The new report crunched the numbers from 2010 to 2016. The use of cigarettes, cigars, pipes, hookahs, smokeless tobacco and e-cigarettes was recorded in each of the top 10 highest-grossing movies at the US box office for each week of each year.

There was a steady decline in the amount of tobacco use shown in movies from 2005 to 2010. But in the next six years, the incidence fluctuated. It reached a peak in 2016, with 3,145 tobacco incidents in 143 movies.

Of 2016's youth-rated movies — including G, PG and PG-13 ratings — 26% featured tobacco incidents. Sixty-seven percent of R-rated movies in 2016 had tobacco incidents. Compared with 2010, the percentage of

movies depicting the use of tobacco decreased slightly; the 2010 rates were 31% for youth-rated movies and 71% for R-rated.

Tobacco use was featured in 41% of the surveyed movies in 2016, down from 50% in 2015.

However, the number of tobacco incidents within movies actually increased by 72% from 2010 to 2016. And from 2015 to 2016, there was an 80% increase, from 1,743 incidents to 3,145.

Texas parents say their 15-year-old son livestreamed his own suicide as part of deadly 'Blue Whale'

(Agencies) The parents of a San Antonio, Texas teen who livestreamed his suicide this weekend say he killed himself as part of a deadly internet craze. Jorge Gonzalez walked into his son Isaiah's room Saturday morning, and found him hanging dead inside his closet. Nearby, the 15-year-old's cellphone was propped up, livestreaming the event. Now, Gonzales and his wife Angela believe that their son killed himself as part of the 'Blue Whale Challenge' - a game that involves victims completing increasingly dangerous tasks.

Mr Gonzales says he read a report about the challenge recently and asked his kids if they knew about it. 'It talks about satanic stuff and stuff like that and my son was never into that,' Mr Gonzales told News 4 San Antonio. Isaiah told his father that he had heard of it, but would never participate.

Mr Gonzales says he read a

report about the challenge recently and asked his kids if they knew about it. 'It talks about satanic stuff and stuff like that and my son was never into that,' Mr Gonzales told News 4 San Antonio. Isaiah told his father that he had heard of it, but would never participate.

In the wake of his death however, they found that he had been sending pictures of him completing Blue Whale tasks to his friends, telling them that the final task would be suicide.

'They blew it off like it was a joke and if one of them would have said something, one of them would have called us, he would have been alive,' Isaiah's sister, Scarlett Cantu-Gonzales, told KSAT.

The family is now speaking out in order to raise awareness of the deadly game.



'I want [parents] to go through their phones, look at their social media,' Mr Gonzales said. 'If they're on that challenge already, they can catch that from happening.'

According to reports on the challenge, victims seek out so-called curators on social media, who then give them daily dares to complete over a 50-day period.

China's richest man gives up on plans to beat Disney

(Agencies) China's richest man is selling hotels and theme parks worth more than \$9 billion as he steps back from plans to beat Disney.

Dalian Wanda Group announced plans Monday to sell a 91% stake in more than a dozen tourist attractions to Sunac China Holdings. The \$9.3 billion deal also includes 76 Wanda hotels.

Wanda and Sunac said in a joint statement that the deal will be finalized by the end of July.

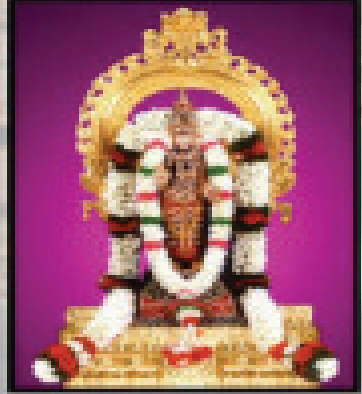
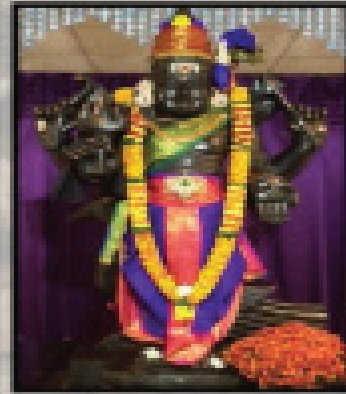
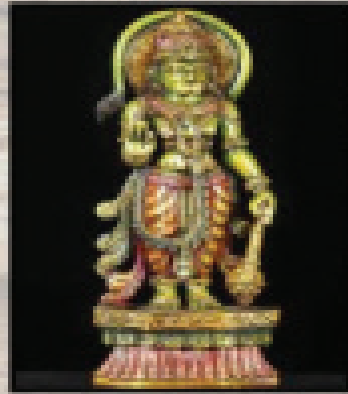
The move comes a year after Wanda founder Wang Jianlin vowed to crush Disney's (DIS) business in China, comparing his theme parks to "a pack of wolves." "Disney really shouldn't have come to China," he said in May 2016. "Its financial prospects don't look so good to me." Theme parks were a key part of Wang's plans to turn his firm into a major player in real entertainment, tourism and sports. In its 2016 annual report, Wanda said that the success of two new parks -- in Nanchang and Hefei -- had inspired it to export the model abroad. While Wanda is giving up its controlling stake in the parks, they will continue to use the firm's branding. Wanda will also operate the parks. Wang said Monday that the sale should help improve Wanda's balance sheet, which has been weighed down by debts after years of aggressive expansion. "The group's debt-asset ratio will drop dramatically," Wang told Chinese business magazine Caixin.



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'Third country's' Army could enter Kashmir on behalf of Pak: Chinese media

controlled Kashmir," the article said.

The Chinese state media have carried a barrage of critical articles on the Doklam standoff criticising India, but this was the first time Pakistan and Kashmir have been brought into the narrative.

"Indian troops invaded China's Doklam area in the name of helping Bhutan, but in fact the invasion was intended to help India by making use of Bhutan," it said, referring to the June 30 statement issued by India's External Affairs Ministry.

China and India have been engaged in a standoff in the Doklam area near the Bhutan tri-junction for the past three weeks

after a Chinese Army's construction party attempted to build a road. Doka La is the Indian name for the region which Bhutan recognises as Doklam, while China claims it as part of its Donglang region.

Of the 3,488-km-long India-China border from Jammu and Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh, a 220-km section falls in Sikkim.

"For a long time, India has been talking about international equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of others, but it has pursued hegemonic diplomacy in South Asia, seriously violating the UN Charter and undermining the basic norms of international relations," it said.

"Through mass immigration to Sikkim, ultimately leading to control of the Sikkim parliament, India annexed Sikkim as one of its states," it alleged. "This incursion reflects that India fears China can quickly separate mainland India from northeast India through military means, dividing India into two pieces," it said. "In this case, northeast India might take the opportunity to become independent. India has interpreted China's infrastructure construction in Tibet as having a geopolitical intention against India. India itself is unable to do the same for its northeastern part, so it is trying to stop China's road construction," it said.

(Agencies) A "third country's" established territory, not the disputed area," Long Xingchun, Director at the Centre for Indian Studies at China West Normal University, said in the article he wrote in the Global Times. "Otherwise, under India's logic, if the Pakistani government requests, a third country's Army can enter the area disputed by India and Pakistan, including India-

"Even if India were requested to defend Bhutan's territory, this could only be limited to its

Panamagate: Pakistan PM, family face corruption case

(Agencies) ISLAMABAD: In a setback to Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif, a Supreme Court-ordered probe panel in its final report on the Panamagate on Monday recommended filing of a



corruption case against him and his children after finding "significant"

disparities in their income and actual wealth.

The six-member Joint Investigation Team (JIT) that probed the Sharif family's business dealings in its report submitted to the apex court recommended that a corruption case should be filed against Sharif and his sons Hassan Nawaz and Hussain Nawaz, as well as daughter Maryam Nawaz, under the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) ordinance 1999. The report, however, was slammed by the Nawaz Sharif government as "trash" with PM's close aide and minister for development Ahsan Iqbal in press conference with other ministers, saying they will challenge the report in the Supreme Court and will "completely expose and unveil its contradictions and falsifications." Sharif's daughter Maryam also rejected the report, saying, "JIT report REJECTED. Every contradiction will not only be contested but decimated in SC. NOT a penny of public exchequer

How a Microsoft font may bring down Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif govt

(Agencies) NEW DELHI: The undoing of Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif government might be a Microsoft Word font the PM's daughter Maryam used while allegedly forging documents she submitted to a team investigating illegal offshore properties flagged in the Panama Papers, the country's media reported.

Pakistan's Twitterati is having a field day with that bit of information, calling it #Fontgate. On page-55 of the

investigative team's final report submitted on Monday, it says Maryam's documents had on them sentences typed in the "Calibri" font which was not available before January 31, 2007, said The Express Tribune report. The documents themselves, though, were from 2006. Still, the report noted that Wikipedia says the Calibri font was made much before 2007, in 2004. However, it was made available for public use in 2007.



Many terror organizations banned in Pakistan thrive online

(Agencies) ISLAMABAD: It's dusk. The shadows of three men brandishing assault rifles welcome the reader to the Facebook page of Lashkar-e-Islam, one

money and demand a rigid Islamic system. It is also where they incite the Sunni faithful against the country's minority Shias and extoll jihad, or holy war, in Kashmir and in Afghanistan.

"It's like a party of the banned groups online. They are all on social media," the FIA official told the Associated Press. He spoke on condition his name not be used because agency officials are not allowed to be quoted by name.



of 65 organizations that are banned in Pakistan, either because of terrorist links or as purveyors of sectarian hate. Still more than 40 of these groups operate and flourish on social media sites, communicating on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Telegram, according to a senior official with Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency, or FIA, who is tasked with shutting down the sites. They use them to recruit, raise

Meanwhile, Pakistan is waging a cyber crackdown on activists and journalists who use social media to criticize the government, the military or the intelligence agencies. The interior ministry even ordered the FIA, Pakistan's equivalent of the American FBI, to move against "those ridiculing the Pakistan Army on social media."

The FIA official said the agency has interrogated more than 70 activists for

postings considered critical. All but two have been released and a third is still under investigation, he said.

Activists, journalists and rights groups who monitor Pakistan's cyberspace say the banned groups active on social media operate unencumbered because several are patronized by the military, its intelligence agencies, radical religious groups and politicians looking for votes. Even the FIA official concedes state support for some of the banned groups but said it is a global phenomenon engaged in by all intelligence agencies.

"Everyone is protecting their own terrorists. Your good guy is my bad guy and vice versa," he said, adding that some sites belonging to banned groups are intentionally ignored to gain intelligence. On one Facebook page, the Afghan Taliban flag welcomes viewers, its masthead emblazoned with Arabic script identifying the page as belonging to the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Still another Facebook site features one of India's most wanted, Hafiz Saeed, the founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba, another banned organization and a US declared terrorist group.

Trump puts Chelsea in Ivanka's seat now

PRESIDENT Donald Trump says his daughter did not overstep when she filled in for him at the G20 in Germany while he held private talks with his foreign counterparts.

"I asked Ivanka to hold seat. Very standard. Angela M agrees!" he said, referring to comments that the host country's leader made in Ivanka's defense.

The president offered a counterfactual scenario where Hillary Clinton had become president and her daughter had taken her place at the same summit.

The tweet set off a war of words with the only child of former President Bill Clinton and wife Hillary, the 2016 Democratic nominee for the nation's highest office. "If Chelsea Clinton were asked to hold the seat for her mother, as her mother gave our country away, the Fake News would say CHELSEA FOR PRES!" Trump said.

Twitter battle between Trump and Clinton Jr

Chelsea shot back, "It would never have occurred to my mother or my father to ask me. Were you giving our country away? Hoping not."

Ivanka Trump had turned heads on Saturday at the G20 summit by temporarily taking a seat at the big-kids' table when her father, President Donald Trump, stepped out for a bilateral meeting with Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

A White House official told DailyMail.com that the younger Trump's fill-in role was nothing out of the ordinary.

UK Prime Minister Theresa May was seen leaving the G20 meeting room at one point, a source with knowledge of the summit's goings-on said, and her place was briefly taken by an aide. The president's eldest daughter is a senior advisor at the White House. The session she sat at the head table for dealt with a women's entrepreneurship fund that she'd helped develop.

But when a photo emerged of the 35-year-old former fashion executive sat at the table with China's Xi Jinping, Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Germany's Angela Merkel and Britain's Theresa May, Trump's enemies pounced.

"I'm sure Republicans would



Ivanka filled in for her father at the G20 summit (above) when he went for a meet with Indonesian Prez Joko Widodo (top).

have taken it in stride if Chelsea was deputized to perform head of state duties," Brian Fallon, a former spokesman for Hillary's presidential campaign said in a tweet that served as bait for Trump.

Kellyanne Conway, counselor to the President, said on Mon-

day, "Ivanka just spearheaded this amazing roundtable about women's empowerment and led the US, inspired the US to contribute \$50 million (£320 crore) to a fund for women's empowerment across the globe."

Daily Mail



If Chelsea Clinton were asked to hold the seat for her mother, as her mother gave our country away, the Fake News would say CHELSEA FOR PRES!

— DONALD TRUMP, US President



It would never have occurred to my mother or my father to ask me.

— CHELSEA CLINTON, Daughter of Hillary

Man raped by 'sperm bandits' for good luck

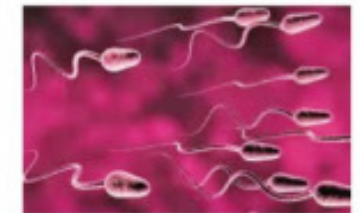
A 39-year-old teacher was hospitalised in Zimbabwe after a gang of three women kidnapped, drugged and sexually assaulted him before leaving him for dead on the side of the road, local reports say.

The man from Makoni in Zimbabwe was left with severely bruised genitals and doctors at Waza Hospital found other signs of sexual abuse.

Police are trying to find the three women, who are allegedly part of a 'sperm bandit' gang, which preys on hitchhikers and travelers, sexually assaults them and sells their semen for 'good luck'.

The 39-year-old man told officials that he was offered a lift in a dark blue BMW with South African registration numbers, driven by a man, as he waited at a bus stop on July 2, according to The Standard.

There were three women in the car when he was picked



up, the man told police. The man said that he was offered a soft drink while in the car, and after taking a drink he felt dizzy and fell asleep.

He said that he woke up the next day in a small, dark room with cash missing and with bruising on his genitals.

Two women then came in and demanded intercourse, but he refused. The women then pulled out a pistol, threatened to kill him and tied the man's hands.

They forced him to take another drink before one woman removed his clothes and had intercourse with him, the man told police. Another woman then had unprotected sex with him, despite pleas from her colleagues to stop, the man told police.

On July 4, the suspects covered the man's face with a hat and forced him to enter a vehicle before dumping him on the side of a road at Maruta village. Police arrived on scene after passersby found the man, and he was taken to hospital in stable condition.

Daily Mail



Italian law forbids glorification of the fascist leader.

Pro-Mussolini beach club raided in Italy

THE Italian government has ordered removal of pro-fascist posters at a beach near Venice. The order was issued on Tuesday after photos of Benito Mussolini were seen displayed at Punta Cana resort in Chioggia. Italian law forbids glorification of fascism.

According to Italian news agency Ansa, there was concern that public order could be disturbed by the signs and photos. One of the signs said the area was in an 'anti-democratic' zone while photos of former dictator Mussolini were also on display.

While Rome daily La Repubblica said pro-Mussolini speeches were blasted over the beach's loudspeaker by a self-proclaimed private fascist beach club. According to The Telegraph, officers from Italy's anti-terrorist unit raided the beach club on Sunday. The owner of the club, Gianni Scarpa, may be prosecuted for 'apologia of fascism'. He was quoted as



saying, "Here, my rules count."

Every 30 minutes, the beach club broadcasts anti-democracy messages. While one cabin door had a sign reading: 'Gas chamber. Entry forbidden'. Police have now launched an enquiry into the posters and broadcasts. Mussolini is still celebrated by some far-right political parties in Italy.

Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini was born in Predappio, northern central Italy, in July 1883. The son of a blacksmith, he moved to Switzerland in 1902 because jobs were scarce in his home region and became involved with socialist politics. He moved back to Italy two years later and began work as a journalist on socialist papers.

Mussolini later broke from socialist ideologies when Italy decided to enter WWI and he was enlisted in the army in 1915. He formed the Fascist Party following the war in 1919 and capitalised on the support of unemployed veterans organising supporters into squads known as Black Shirts who terrorised anyone who disagreed with their politics. As Italy fell into political chaos in the autumn of 1922, Mussolini's Black Shirts marched on Rome and he was invited to form a government.

Daily Mail

Firebrand Hindu Cleric Ascends India's Political Ladder

When the Bharatiya Janata Party won a landslide electoral victory in Uttar Pradesh, political prognosticators expected Mr. Modi to make a safe choice — Manoj Sinha, a cabinet minister known for his diligence and loyalty to the party. On the morning of the announcement, an honor guard had been arranged outside his village.

But by midmorning, it was clear that something unusual was going on. A chartered flight had been sent to pick up Adityanath and take him to Delhi for a meeting with Amit Shah, the party president. At 6 p.m. the party announced it had appointed him as minister, sending a ripple of shock through India's political class. They were shocked because Adityanath is a radical, but also because he is ambitious, even rebellious. As recently as January, he walked out of the party's executive meeting, reportedly because he was not allowed to speak. Mr. Modi is not known to have much tolerance for rivals.

The appointment

"invests a certain amount of power in Yogi Adityanath that cannot be easily taken away," said Ashutosh Varshney, a professor of political science and international studies at Brown University.

"Modi has been either unwilling to stop his rise, or unable to stop his rise," he said.

As a young man, Adityanath's passion was politics, not religion. One of seven children born to a forest ranger, Adityanath, born Ajay Singh Bisht, found his vocation in college as an activist in the student wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a right-wing Hindu organization.

He was so engrossed in the group's work that the first two or three times he was summoned by a distant relative, the head priest of the Gorakhnath Temple, he "could not find the time," he has said.

But religion and politics were fast converging. Gorakhnath Temple had a tradition of militancy: Digvijay Nath, the head priest until 1969, was arrested for exhorting

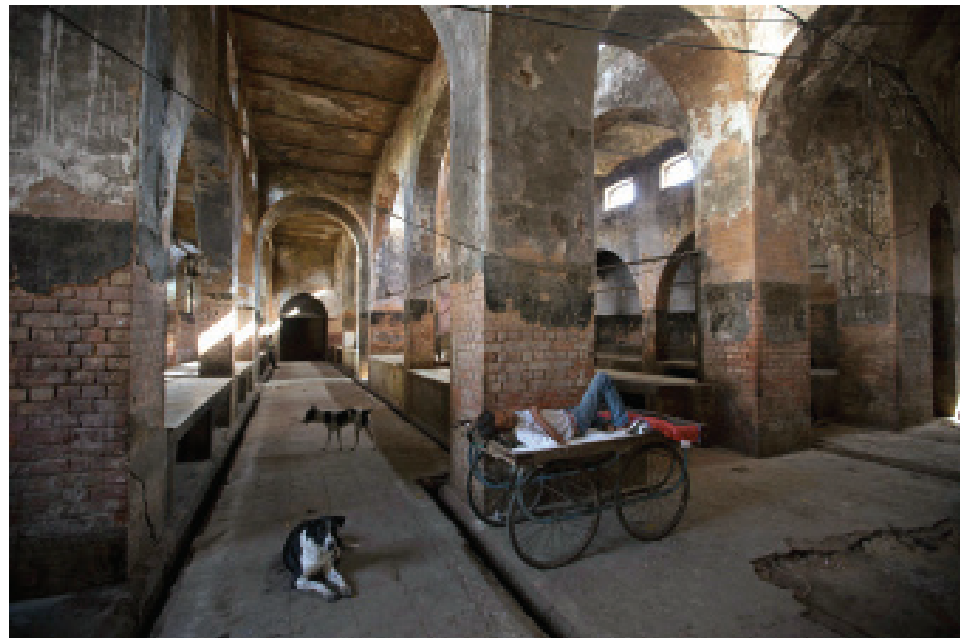
Hindu militants to kill Mahatma Gandhi days before he was shot. His successor, Mahant Avaidyanath, urged Hindu mobs in 1992 to tear down a 16th-century mosque and build a temple there, setting off some of the bloodiest religious riots in India's recent history.

When Adityanath announced his intention to join the temple, his father, Anand Singh Bisht, forbade it, he said in an interview. But Adityanath left anyway. Years later, Mr. Bisht burst into tears at the memory.

Mr. Bisht did not learn that his son had become a monk until four months after the fact, he said. Mr. Bisht rushed to see his son at the temple, and found him transformed, his head shaven and his ear pierced in a painful ceremony.

"I said, 'Son, what have you done?' I was shocked," he said. "That was my child's desire and so he was there. Then I gave my permission to go ahead. I had no choice."

Adityanath won a seat in Parliament, the first of five consecutive terms. Among his advantages was



a new group he had formed: the Hindu Yuva Vahini, or Hindu Youth Brigade, a vigilante organization. The volunteers, now organized to the village level and said by leaders to number 250,000, show up in force where Muslims are rumored to be bothering Hindus.

Vijay Yadav, 21, a volunteer lounging at Gorakhnath Temple in Gorakhpur on a recent day, said he had recently mobilized 60 or 70 young men to beat a Muslim accused of cow slaughter.

They stopped, he said, only because the police intervened.

"All the Hindus got together and the first slap was given by me," he said proudly. "If they do something wrong, fear is what works best. If you do something wrong, we will stop you. If you talk too much, we will kill you. This is our saying for Muslims."

During the first five years after the vigilante group was formed, 22 religious clashes broke out in the districts surrounding Gorakhpur, a city in Uttar

Pradesh, in many cases with Adityanath's encouragement, said Manoj Singh, a journalist. In 2007, Adityanath was arrested as he led a procession toward neighborhoods seething with religious tension.

Even then, Mr. Singh recalled, the officer who arrested Adityanath stopped first to touch his feet as a gesture of reverence.

Adityanath was released after 11 days, but the arrest seemed to jolt him. He became more

The 18th Edition of IIFA Weekend and Awards Rings in The Nasdaq Stock Exchange Bell

New York, 12th July 2017: As the highly anticipated 18TH edition of IIFA, to be held from 13th – 15th July 2017 descends on the captivating city of New York, the International Indian Film Academy commences its festivities by ringing in the Nasdaq stock exchange bell at Times Square, thus marking the globalization of Indian cinema.

Seen at the prestigious event were members of Nasdaq along with IIFA's founders Mr. Andre Timmins and Mr. Sabbas Joseph, Directors of Wizcraft International, the producers and creators of the IIFA movement, along with Bollywood diva Sonakshi Sinha.

International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) especially rang the bell to announce its support for the Nand Ghar Project, a unique Public-Private-Partnership (PPP), led by Vedanta Resources, which is listed on the NYSE stock exchange, along with the Government of India to



transform Early Childhood Care and Education Centers.

Designed in line with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a view to eradicating malnutrition, providing education and skill development, Vedanta has adopted 4,000 villages in India. Taking the benefits of development of healthcare, children's education and skill development for women, Project Nand Ghar is a meeting point of the social initiatives by the government such as Swaach Bharat, Startup India, Skill India, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Digital India campaigns all under one roof. With a strong focus

on health, safety and environment and on enhancing the lives of local communities, Vedanta founders have pledged 75% of their wealth for social development. Commenting on the occasion, Sabbas Joseph, Director- Wizcraft International, the producers and creators of the IIFA movement says, "Given IIFA's multi-faceted nature, we are pleased to ring in the 18th Edition of IIFA Weekend And Awards at the Nasdaq Stock Market Bell ringing ceremony. We are thrilled to bring in India's biggest and most spectacular global celebration of cinema and we can't wait

for IIFA to take over the City of New York and America."

The 18th Edition of the IIFA Festival New York is presented by Lycamobile in association with McDonalds. The highlight of the Eros Now IIFA Weekend is the NEXA IIFA AWARDS powered by VIVO.

The 18th Edition of IIFA Awards and Weekend is set to be one of the biggest, most extravagant 72 hours extravaganza with a myriad of events and unique associations in its premiere edition in New York: Myntra presents IIFA Stomp, "Shuruaat" Gala Dinner in

association with tGELF, The FICCI-IIFA Global Business Forum 2017, the spectacular EROS NOW IIFA Rocks and the one and only- NEXA IIFA Awards Powered by VIVO.

IIFA is the most coveted and highly anticipated award celebrations that honors the very best of Indian Cinema, a brand that is not only recognized as a major international event but also an institution in its own right. Synonymous With Indian Cinema, IIFA is dedicated to building bridges across cinemas,

businesses, communities and nations as it welcomes its first ever IIFA in the City of New York.

Lycamobile – Presenting Sponsor, McDonalds - Associate Sponsor, NYC (Mayors office) - Host Destination, NewYorkBannerStands & Print Early – Printing Partner, Pierre Précieuse – Gifting Partner and Arya Dance Academy – Dance Company Partner.



Sixth mass extinction: The era of 'biological annihilation'

"What is at stake is really the state of humanity," Ceballos told Media. Their key findings: Nearly one-third of the 27,600 land-based mammal, bird, amphibian and reptile species studied are shrinking in terms of their numbers and territorial range. The researchers called that an "extremely high degree of population decay."

The scientists also looked at a well-studied group of 177 mammal species and found that all of them had lost at least 30% of their territory between 1900 and 2015; more than 40% of those species "experienced severe population declines," meaning they lost at least 80% of their geographic range during that time.

Looking at the extinction crisis not only in terms of species that are on the brink but also those whose populations and ranges are shrinking helps show that "Earth's sixth mass extinction is more severe" than previously thought, the authors write. They say a major extinction event is "ongoing."

"It's the most comprehensive study of this sort to date that I'm aware of," said Anthony Barnosky, executive director of the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve at Stanford University, who was not involved in the study. Its value, Barnosky said, is that it makes visible a phenomenon typically unseen by scientists and the public: that even populations of relatively common species are crashing. "We've got this stuff going on that we can't really see because we're not constantly counting numbers of individuals," he said. "But when you realize that we've wiped out 50% of the Earth's wildlife in the last 40 years, it doesn't take complicated math to figure out that, if we keep cutting by half every 40 years, pretty soon there's going to be nothing left." Stuart Pimm, chair of conservation ecology at Duke University in North Carolina, summed up the the concept this way: "When I look out over the woods that

constitute my view from my window here, I know we no longer have wolves or panthers or black bears wandering around. We have eliminated a lot of species from a lot of areas. So we no longer have a functional set of species across large parts of the planet."

This is an important point to emphasize, Pimm said. But the new paper's analysis risks overstating the degree to which extinction events already are occurring, he said, and the research methodology does not have the level of granularity needed to be particularly useful for conservationists.

"What good mapping does is to tell you where you need to act," Pimm said. "The value of the Ceballos paper is a sense of the problem. But given there's a problem, what the bloody hell are we going to do about it?"

Often, scientists who study crisis in the natural world focus on species that are at high and short-term risk for extinction. These plants and animals tend to be

odd and unfamiliar, often restricted to one island or forest. You probably didn't notice, for example, that the Catarina pupfish, native to Mexico, went extinct in 2014, according to the paper. Or that a bat called the Christmas Island pipistrelle is thought to have vanished in 2009.

Meanwhile, as this research shows, entire populations of other plants and animals are crashing, even if they're not yet on the brink of extinction. Some of these are well-known.

Consider the African elephant. "On the one hand, you can say, 'All right, we still have around 400,000 elephants in Africa, and that seems like a really big number,'" Barnosky said. "But then, if you step back, that's cut by more than half of what their populations were in the early part of last century. There were well over 1 million elephants (then).

"And if you look at what's happened in the last decade, we have been culling their numbers so fast that if we

kept up with that pace, there would be no more wild elephants in Africa in 20 years."

Twenty years. No more African elephants. Think about that.

Barn swallows and jaguars are two other examples, according to Ceballos, the lead author of the paper. Both are somewhat common in terms of their total numbers, he said, but their decline is troubling in some places.

Such population crashes can, of course, lead to inevitable extinctions. And currently, scientists say that species are going extinct at roughly 100 times what would be considered normal — perhaps considerably more.

There has been some dispute lately about whether the Earth's sixth mass extinction event already has begun or is simply on the horizon, but there is little disagreement among scientists that humans are driving an unprecedented ecological crisis. And the

causes are well-known. People are burning fossil fuels, contributing to climate change. They're chopping down forests and other habitat for agriculture, to the point 37% of Earth's land surface now is farmland or pasture, according to the World Bank. The global population of people continues to rise, along with our thirst for land and consumption. And finally, but not exclusively, poachers are driving numbers of elephants, pangolins, rhinos, giraffes and other creatures with body parts valuable on the black market to worryingly low levels.

All of this is contributing to a rapid decline in wild creatures, both on land and in the ocean.

Ceballos' paper highlights the urgency of this crisis — and the need for change.

"The good news is, we still have time," he said. "These results show it is time to act. The window of opportunity is small, but we can still do something to save species and populations."

US firm paid \$1.18m bribe to National Highway Authority of India officials to get contracts

Between 2011 and 2015, employees of CDM Smith's division responsible for India operations and CDM India illegally paid bribes to NHAI officials in order to receive contracts from them, the Justice Department said in the letter to CDM Smith.

"The bribes generally were two-four per cent of the contract price and paid through fraudulent subcontractors, who provided no actual services and understood that payments were meant to solely benefit the officials," it said.

In addition, CDM Smith's division responsible for India and CDM India paid USD 25,000 to local officials in Goa in relation to a water project contract, the Justice Department said.

"All senior management at CDM India (who also acted as employees and agents of CDM Smith and signed contracts on behalf of CDM Smith, including CDM India's

country manager) were aware of the bribes for CDM Smith and CDM India contracts, and approved or participated in the misconduct," it said.

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has taken a serious note of the allegations and asked the NHAI Chairman to hold an inquiry into the matter, a senior Ministry official said in New Delhi.

The investigations into the bribery allegations by the Fraud Section of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice has now been closed after CDM Smith agreed to disgorge USD 4 million, which the Boston-company earned as profit due to the bribery.

The Justice Department said it has decided to close the investigation in this regard.

The final fourth instalment of the disgorged money

would be paid by CDM Smith by October 1, 2017.

As per the agreement, CDM Smith agreed that it would not seek a tax deduction for the USD 4 million it was required to disgorge.

"CDM Smith has a clear Code of Ethics and core values that drive our behaviour every day," CDM Smith CEO Stephen J Hickox said in a statement.

"Any breach of these values or improper business activities is counter to our culture and will not be tolerated," Hickox said.

Meanwhile, CDM Smith has also been sanctioned by the World Bank for failing to disclose a subcontract on a project in Vietnam. The company and its affiliates have been conditionally non-debarred for one and half years. "When executing a consulting contract financed by the Da Nang Priority

Infrastructure Investment Project in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, CDM Smith failed to disclose a sub-consulting agreement with a local Vietnamese company, and did not seek a contractually-required written approval of the agreement from the Project implementing agency," the bank said.

CDM Smith said it has expanded its Ethics and Compliance programme, including appointing its first Chief Compliance Officer, to ensure all employees fully understand their role in compliance, and has established channels for reporting any compliance-related concerns. "The employees associated with these improper business activities were separated from the company following the early findings of CDM Smith's internal investigations," the company said.

Andrew Cuomo Could Beat Trump ... If He Can Win Over the Left First

Think about it. All the pundits on TV say, 'We don't understand why there is such anger and anxiety.' Standing before a crowd of unionized hotel workers several hundred strong, the governor of New York rails against Republicans for feeding workers like them a lie all these years. He speaks to them like he alone understands what they have been going through, watching wages disappear while the rest of the country gets richer. 'It's the labor movement that built the middle class and it's the labor movement that's going to have to rebuild the middle class in this country,' he thunders. He has the room, completely.

Cuomo is a big-name politician who has long seemed an extremely unlikely national candidate until now, when suddenly he's seeming like a very likely one. In theory, he is here to ceremonially sign a bill that would allow union members to deduct their union dues from their state taxes, but it's clear what he is really doing today is waging a bigger argument against President Donald Trump.

"You want to deport immigrants? I say to them, start with me, Andrew Cuomo, the grandson of Andrea and Immacolata Cuomo, Italian poor immigrants," he tells a roomful of people who are mostly immigrants.

The hotel workers stand up. They cheer. "Andrew Cuomo for president!" Someone yells. And then all at once. "2020! 2020!"

Cuomo stops. He wags a finger in mock annoyance, a broad smile across his face. "Don't start trouble for me today. You are supposed to be my friends. This is not helpful."

New Yorkers love to assume that their politicians are national figures by default, even as one by one they flame out on the big stage. For much of his career, Cuomo has looked like another in this long line: someone too nakedly ambitious, too pushy, with too messy of a personal life—too, well, New Yorky—to play much beyond Buffalo and the Battery. But suddenly it seems that Americans are willing to pull the lever for a muscular, messy, rough-edged leader shouting for the common man, and suddenly the governor is starting to show up on a lot of people's lists.

"Look at his career, look at his work in New York," said Jonathan Cowan, president and founder of Third Way, a centrist think tank, and a former Cuomo adviser. "He is laying out a model for what it means to be a 21st-

century Democrat. Our party is in a deep hole. You have to look around and say, 'Who is succeeding? Who is doing it differently?'"

It's not just Democrats who see Cuomo showing up on the radar. "I would say Cuomo is the one I am most nervous about," said Michael Caputo, a longtime adviser to Trump who helped put together an aborted Trump gubernatorial run against Cuomo in 2014, and helped lead the campaign for Carl Paladino, Cuomo's 2010 Republican opponent. "Hillary Clinton wouldn't take the gloves off. There isn't a counterpunch Andrew Cuomo won't throw."

So far, Cuomo's forays onto the national stage have been far more muted than some of the other talked-about potential 2020



Democratic nominees. There has been no book tour, no earnest Facebook videos or airport protest bullhorn photo-ops, no whispers that he is even thinking about it—although longtime friends and advisers have gingerly begun to bring it up to him. (They say Cuomo seems intrigued, but noncommittal.) In the world of political betting, most oddsmakers have him in the top 10, but barely.

Subtly, however, Cuomo looks very much like someone doing the spadework to run for president. His speeches, like the one at the Hotel Trades Council headquarters, are increasingly laced with the kind of big themes that become the rhetorical cornerstones of presidential campaigns. He rails against Washington, contrasting the gridlock of Congress against his own relatively smooth management of the previously dysfunctional Statehouse, the misplaced priorities of national Republicans against the steady progress he has made in Albany. Over the past several months, Cuomo has hired Chris Christie's former chief of staff, a move

widely seen as further burnishing his own bipartisan credentials; his aides have reached out to out-of-state donors about a possible fundraising swing later this year.

But if he runs, he's got one big roadblock in his way first: The energy in the Democratic Party right now comes from a newly energized left. And the energized left, not to put too fine a point on it, hates Cuomo.

"The worst of the worst," said Nomiki Konst, a Bernie Sanders delegate to the Democratic National Convention and frequent cable TV defender of the candidate who now serves on the Democratic National Committee's Unity Commission. "Andrew Cuomo is somehow the only politician in America who still thinks

neoliberalism and triangulation work, who opens up the Blue Dog playbook and says, 'How can I use this to run for president?'"

Cuomo has in many ways solved New York, a state whose government routinely ranked among the most dysfunctional and corrupt in America. But if he hopes to be taken seriously as a standard-bearer, he has to solve something far more complicated: The Democratic Party, an institution that can make Albany seem like Sweden in its functionality. There are signs he's already trying to work that puzzle: The state Democratic Party has run ads out-of-state featuring Cuomo alongside Sanders, trumpeting the Sanders-esque free college proposal that he pushed through. After six years of straddling the center line, can Cuomo convince his party's progressive wing that he is actually one of them? For most of Cuomo's first six years in office, this was the kind of thing that couldn't be talked about. Cuomo's aides were on strict lockdown to never



discuss it—not with the boss, and certainly not with reporters trying to catch him thinking about anything beyond the day-to-day running of New York. For years, Cuomo wouldn't leave the state, even on vacation, as if just crossing the state line would trigger a cascade of "Is He or Isn't He?" headlines. He even once declining to go to Washington to lobby for disaster relief funds after Hurricane Sandy. "If I went to Washington now," Cuomo asked reporters at the time, "what story would you write?"

It's a vintage Cuomo comment, one that speaks not only to his ruthlessness and ambition, but his awareness of how that ruthlessness and ambition are viewed. (Needless to say, he declined to be interviewed for this article about his presidential prospects.) Cuomo was a top political aide to a father who famously dithered in his own presidential exploratory foray, and the son was determined to not get sidetracked by similar whispers. He was aware of his reputation; if Mario was the American Cicero, Andrew was the Dark Knight, his father's relentless political enforcer. Mario wanted to appeal to the better angels of our nature; Andrew would spear all the bad angels and step over the bodies on the way to higher office.

Cuomo is a kind of Northeastern political royalty—the son of a governor, once married to Bobby Kennedy's daughter. But his ascent to the Statehouse did not come without a fight. After a stint as Bill Clinton's secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and with his marriage to Kerry Kennedy collapsing, Cuomo cut the line and embarked on an ill-fated run for governor of New York, even as the state's Democratic establishment was firmly behind state comptroller Carl McCall, who would have been New York's first African-American governor. Cuomo compounded the problem

by dropping out just before the primary, denying McCall the chance to fully trounce him. Single, alone in the political wilderness, Cuomo assiduously worked his way back, working on homelessness and rallying with the likes of Russell Simmons and other hip-hop stars to reform the state's punitive Rockefeller Drug Laws. He won election as attorney general despite resistance from the New York Times editorial board and other left-leaning institutions, and then ran the only two people ahead of him in line—Gov. Eliot Spitzer (with an assist from Client 9 on that one) and Lt. Gov. David Paterson—out of town on a rail.

But he had a perception problem: To New Yorkers who knew anything about him, which was most New Yorkers, Cuomo was political ambition personified. Would he stay governor, or just step over the bodies once more on his way to something else? So he made it his mission to neutralize that attack. He made it known that serving as governor of New York was the highest pinnacle a Cuomo could ever hope to achieve. Former aides say that any mention of higher office during planning meetings in the first years of his administration would have brought quizzical looks, as if they had interrupted a strategy session to talk about your favorite TV shows.

"Everyone thought he was running for president," said one former aide. "So he decided he would relentlessly communicate that he was focused on running the state."

When he at last became the second Cuomo to serve as governor of New York, by the standards of the state, he was barely a Democrat. It was in the depths of the Tea Party's counter-revolt against Barack Obama's presidency; the state's economic outlook was disastrous and Cuomo positioned himself firmly as a man of the center. He capped property taxes and let a tax on millionaires expire.

Chink In The Checker's Board

The Doklam plateau is an area of vulnerability for China and India. The Chinese action is the usual creeping barrage of aggression and presenting faits accomplis.

India has had a long history of standoffs with China, given their long and unsettled border. On one occasion it has led to war, on others, skirmishes and artillery duels. But in the past 40 years, the confrontations have been carefully choreographed through a series of Confidence Building Measures to ensure that the two countries do not end up shooting at each other.

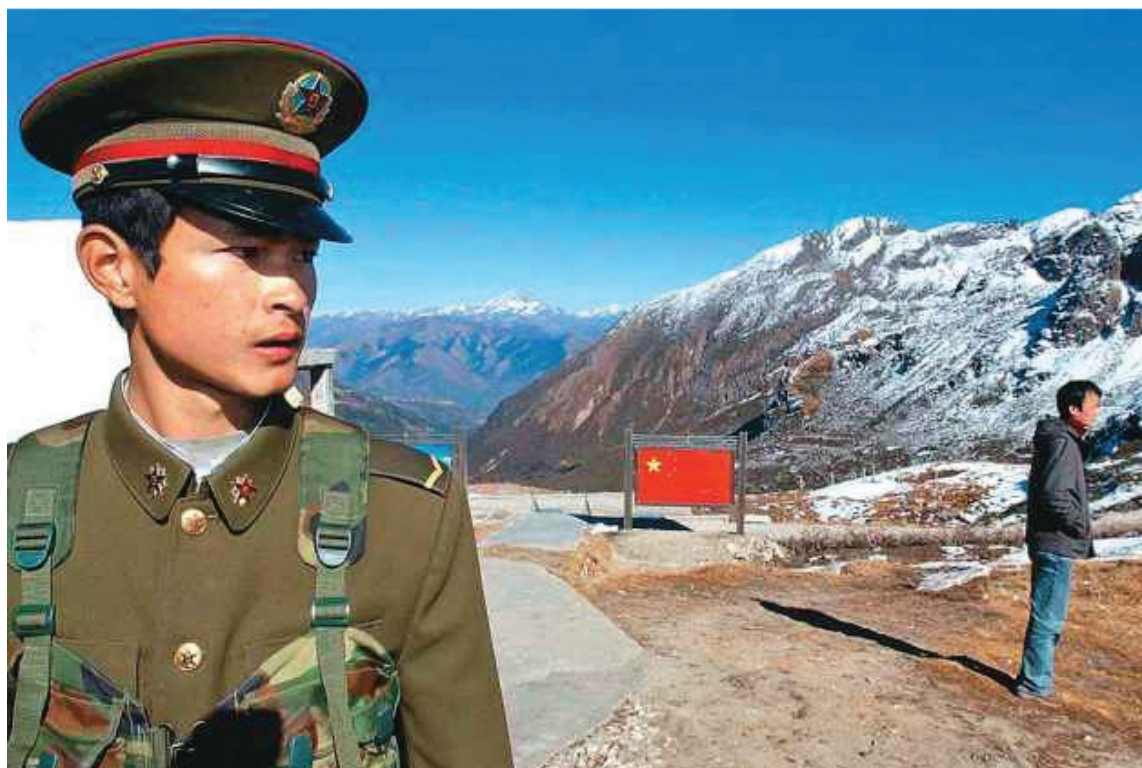
What makes the current clash in Doklam plateau serious is its location, and the fact that it is entangled with the issues of a third country, Bhutan. The location is near the Siliguri Corridor, a narrow neck of land, just about 25 km at places, bound by Nepal and Bangladesh and proximate to Bhutan and China.

As distances go, Siliguri, the principal rail, air and road hub that connects Northeast India to the rest of India, is just 8 km from Bangladesh, 40 km from Nepal, 60 km from Bhutan and 150 km from China. With China seeking to expand control over the Doklam plateau, it shortens the distance by 20 kms or so.

Chinese proximity comes through the Chumbi Valley, a sliver of land between Bhutan and India (Sikkim)—the main route of ingress and egress from Tibet to India. What the present face-off is all about is the Chinese effort to add an area of some 40 sq kms or so to the south of the existing trijunction, which India and Bhutan place near Batang La.

From the point of view of treaty, the Chinese have a point. The Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 explicitly lays down the start point of the border, and the trijunction, at a place called Mount Gipmochi. But, while India has to accept this as part of the agreement that defines the Sikkim-Tibet border, the Bhutanese don't, as they were not party to it. So, they have been contesting this and have extended their claim, belatedly though, to the Doklam plateau, a rough area between Gipmochi, a place called Gye-mochen which is south of Doka La, and northwards on the ridge to Doka La itself and Batang La.

The issue emerged when the Royal Bhutan Army spotted the Chinese building a road towards



their post in the Doklam area. They probably approached the Indians for help and the Indian Army moved across the border at Doka La to block the construction. According to an MEA statement, India and Bhutan had been in close contact on the issue, and in coordination with the Bhutanese, "Indian personnel who were present at the general area Doklam approached the Chinese construction party and urged them to desist from changing the status quo."

Bhutan has been taking up the issue for years and had been reminding China of the 1998 agreement not to alter the status quo of the China-Bhutan boundary, pending its final resolution. But as is their wont, the Chinese are relentless and follow the tactic which they practice elsewhere—of creating facts on the ground and leaving you with a fait accompli.

The Chinese are hopping mad, because they say that India has violated an accepted border, which is true. But the Indians have done so to prevent the Chinese from bullying the Bhutanese, who lack the capacity to deal with the Chinese. But the Indians have also done it because a deepening of the Chumbi Valley can aid in undermining their otherwise strong defences in Sikkim and the Siliguri corridor.

International treaties are pieces of paper whose value is only set if both the parties have an interest in upholding them. The Chinese have not hesitated

to blatantly violate the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas in reclaiming and fortifying rocks and reefs in the South China Sea. So if India perceives that its security is being dangerously undermined, it will act, treaty or no treaty. Even so, New Delhi needs to carefully think if it wants to question the 1890 treaty and reopen the Sikkim-Tibet boundary for negotiation. Beyond that, it must remain prepared to confront the always active PLA.

Given its location, the Siliguri Corridor has long been the focus of military planners and arm-chair strategists. When Bangladesh was East Pakistan, there were concerns about possible consequences of Sino-Pak collusion. To pressure India to ease off on Pakistan in the 1965 war, China built up its forces in the Chumbi Valley and tried to coerce Indian troops deployed on the Sikkim border. In 1967, there were more serious clashes at Nathu La and Cho La, both in Sikkim. With the creation of Bangladesh, the worries have lessened, but not entirely gone.

The job of military men is to construct scenarios and plan to deal with them. Many alternatives can be constructed for military operations in the region. Writing in 2013, Lt Gen (retd) Prakash Katoch said that the Doklam plateau, if occupied by the Chinese, will turn the flanks of Indian defences in Sikkim and endanger the Siliguri corridor. The late Capt. Bharat

Verma hypothesised a Chinese special forces attack to seize the Corridor. John Garver cites Ind---ian planners worrying about the Siliguri Corridor being the 'anvil' for a PLA hammer coming once again through Bomdi La in Arunachal Pradesh. There are concerns, too, that in the event of hostilities, Chinese forces may just bypass Indian defences overlooking the Chumbi Valley and come through Bhutan.

But Indian vulnerability is much larger. The Siliguri Corridor does not have to worry about just the putative Chinese attack. It is in itself a cauldron of tension, with agitating Gorkhas, Kamtapuri and Bodo separatists, smugglers and transiting militants using it.

For their part, the PLA, too, must be looking at alternate scenarios, especially after their experience with Gen Sundarji and Operation Falcon/Cheque-board. India can use its flanking positions in Sikkim to "pinch out" the Chumbi Valley and emerge astride a Chinese highway going to Lhasa. The Chinese know the Chumbi Valley was the route that Sir Francis Younghusband took in his expedition to Tibet. This attack could well come from northern Sikkim, which is a relatively flat plateau, where Sundarji had once emplaced tanks and Infantry Combat Vehicles in the 1986-87 standoff with China.

The Chinese worry about the history of the region too. Kalimpong and the erstwhile

East Pakistan are where the CIA and Tibetan exiles once planned operations against their forces in Tibet.

Indian and Chinese perceptions of vulnerability are common—the Chinese worry about the Chumbi Valley and Indians are concerned about the Siliguri Corridor. But both have larger calculations and concerns. The Chinese are neurotic about Tibetan separatism and see India as the principal villain, so they adopt a forward policy wherever they can to keep us off balance on this issue.

The Northeast is, of course, intrinsically important to us. But it also has a practical and important military role beyond just the defence of the area. It is where we locate our strategic deterrent viz. long-range nuclear armed missiles, which otherwise lack the range as of now to hit principal Chinese cities.

This is one area with dense military deployments on both sides, the only part of the 4,000 km Sino-Indian border where the armies are close to each other—some 40-50 ft apart in Nathu La and Cho La. In the past decade, India has steadily enhanced its defence capabilities in the East, raising new formations, acquiring heavy-lift helicopters, mountain artillery, as well as forward basing fighter jets. With a new Mountain Strike Corps, headquartered in North Bengal, India has also enhanced the ability of its Army to intervene along the border. But in many ways, it has been playing catch up with the Chinese.

We need to enter a caveat about the chances of all-out war. Of course, it benefits none. The nuclear factor is not something you can ignore. So, the likelihood is that the Chinese will continue their strategy of hybrid warfare, using "Tibetan grazers" to encroach on territory, or building roads without a by-your-leave, creating facts on the ground that become difficult to question. Moreover, Bhutan is vulnerable, because it lacks the ability to challenge the PLA. The main lesson of the present confrontation is the need for a new strategy of dealing with the challenge.

The Hard Trek To Mount Of Olives

It has taken 25 years for India to break out of its moral duplicity regarding Israel.

West Asia has changed, so have Indian priorities that demand realpolitik.

K.C. SINGH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel from July 4-6 is a first by an Indian head of government. Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu flew down from Jerusalem, breaking protocol, to warmly receive Modi. It culminates a process that began 25 years ago, when P.V. Narasimha Rao recalibrated Indian foreign policy to the post-Cold War world. It would be useful to capture the evolution of bilateral relations.

In 1991, when Rao assumed office, he faced an empty treasury, a limping economy and India's all-weather friend, the Soviet Union, imploding. Post the fall of the Berlin Wall, the world moved from a bipolar balance to US hegemony. Francis Fukuyama declared the end of history, implying victory of the Western liberal order. The US' 1991 intervention in the Gulf, to successfully eject Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, confirmed the new unipolar global order. It then turned to settle the lingering Israel-Palestine dispute. The Madrid Peace Conference was jointly convened by the US and Russia on October 30-November 1, 1991. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine were invited to participate and engage with Israel. For the first time, Palestinians sat face-to-face with Israelis, albeit as part of the Jordanian delegation.

PM Narasimha Rao began reshaping not only the Indian economy but India's foreign policy too. Improving relations with the US was a precondition to his success. The US conveyed that post the Madrid Conference, invitees to the political sub-group meeting, to be chaired by US, needed diplomatic ties with all participants. India, historical cheerleader for Palestinian rights, could not attend even as an observer without full diplomatic ties with Israel. Sometime in October-November, when I was director (West Asia and North Africa), Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit's office sought drafting of a cabinet note to facilitate this.

The Patiala House library of the ministry of external affairs houses books on international affairs. However, it did not



even have a book with basic data on Israel, despite it being the principal antagonist of the Arabs and shaper of geopolitics of West Asia. The approval of the cabinet was received over the weekend. Indian policy in West Asia began to breathlessly adjust to geopolitical changes.

PM Rao now had to finesse the public part. He invited Yasser Arafat, the unchallenged leader of the Palestinians, to Delhi in January 1992 to convey personally the Indian decision. Arafat could hardly object when his own delegation had been engaging with Israelis after Madrid. Similarly, Narendra Modi invited Mahmoud Abbas on a state visit before his own Israel trip. P.K. Singh, earlier the head of Americas division at headquarters, was named the first ambassador.

Palestine no longer dominates the age-NDA of Arab and Islamic countries. Since 9/11 and US intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, followed by the Arab Spring from 2010, the spread of Sunni radical Islam occupies strategic space. To counter it, Obama accepted a nuclear deal with Iran, to unshackle the Shia regional power to lead a Shia alliance against ISIS. Iran, with Russia, shored up the tottering Syrian regime, which the US did not anticipate.

Donald Trump as president upturned the Obama approach

by picking on Iran or even threatening to renege on the nuclear deal. By his participation in the Riyadh Summit he unleashed new and dangerous fissures in the Islamic world between Shia and Sunni and Arab and non-Arab, i.e. Iranians and Turks. Modi-Netanyahu hugs are hardly noticed, with the Arab world focussed on the outcome of Saudi-UAE ultimatum to Qatar, expiring on July 4.

The BJP alleges that votebank politics of the Congress and non-BJP parties had stymied India diplomatically for decades, when Israel was only engaged surreptitiously. But commitment to the Palestinian cause dates from the Indian freedom struggle and the Khilafat movement, when the Congress espoused Islamic issues to co-opt Indian Muslims. Mahatma Gandhi emphasised in 1938 that "Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same way that England belongs to the English and France belongs to the French". He was declaring a global anti-British campaign, which besides consolidating Hindus and Muslims had an objective that went beyond paying lip service to the Palestinian cause. Thus, the Palestinian issue played both ways after independence. Domestically, it built a consensus against Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian lands. Abroad, it kept Indian stock amongst Islamic nations high in the

hope, often belied, that they would not rally behind Pakistan on Kashmir.

David Ben-Gurion, first premier of Israel, urged Albert Einstein to write to Nehru in 1947 to push for a sympathetic hearing on Zionism. "I trust," wrote Einstein, "that you, who so badly have struggled for freedom and justice, will place your great influence on behalf of the claim for justice made by the people who for so long and so dreadfully have suffered from its denial". India voted against the UN partition plan of the Mandate of Palestine in 1947. India saw the Israeli case tainted by the collusion of its exponents with colonial powers against Palestinians.

The journey to full normalisation, symbolised by Modi's visit, has been gradual. Israeli PM Ariel Sharon visited India in 2003, invited by PM Atal Behari Vajpayee. The UPA government for ten years kept the door open, with calibrated ministerial visits, but Defence Minister A.K. Anthony dithered, neither visiting Israel nor hosting his Israeli counterpart. In fact, he blacklisted some Israeli defence suppliers for alleged corruption. Modi used his first three years in office for engaging Gulf and West Asian countries. He sent President Pranab Mukherjee to Israel in 2015, including the traditional detour to Ramallah, the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority.

PM Modi's visit by de-hyphenating Pal-estine from

Israel banishes the guilt-laden trepidation in engaging Israel. It also acknowledges that the Palestinian issue is complex. Possible solutions, like the Quartet Plan or the Arab Plan, are beyond India's capacity to shape. Indian foreign policy towards West Asia thus shifts from sloganeering to pragmatism. Interestingly, till President Mukherjee's visit, India was demanding a Palestinian state ruled out of East Jerusalem. Now, India is calling for a two-state solution.

India-Israel ties are diversified. Israel is the second biggest defence supplier to India. India and Israel have been in conversation for years on low water use cultivation of crops, arid zone cultivation techniques, hybrid crops etc. A new \$40 million research and development fund has been created for joint research. There are hints of major defence purchases, but such sales are normally not finalised during high-level visits. Whether some cutting-edge weapons systems are sold by Israel, including armed drones, would indicate the additional heft of Modi's visit.

During PM Netanyahu's March visit to China and talks with Chinese PM Li Keqiang, cooperation was discussed in areas of basic science, modern agriculture, clean energy and biomedicine. China also pointedly advised adherence to the two-state solution and early resumption of peace talks. China has also been investing in Israeli companies. Like with India, interest was expressed in 'innovation cooperation'. Thus, despite the bonhomie, Israel will tango with both the Asian giants without taking sides.

PM Netanyahu took PM Modi on a visit to the grave of Theodor Herzl—the father of Zionism. He would be the counterpart of Savarkar, who coined the phrase 'Hindutva'. The philosophical guides of the two PMs show ideological convergences between the core beliefs of the two PMs that leaders of a theocratic and secular state should normally not have. Perhaps Modi's journey is not a new bridge between India and Israel. It is a happy reunion between kindred souls.

15 years after Godhra riots, Congress tries soft Hindutva, BJP eyes Muslim votes

Communal polarisation is a defining feature of Gujarat politics, and Godhra is its prime example. Godhra, a town of 150,000 people, has never been known for Hindu-Muslim harmony. In Part 1 of our series on the Gujarat polls, we look at how political parties in Gujarat are playing the communal card.

The line dividing Hindus and Muslims in Godhra has never run deeper. Darshan Soni can't remember the last time he stepped into the Muslim territory as himself.

An active member of Godhra's leading cow vigilante group, Soni only ever crosses into the Muslim area posing as a Muslim — skullcap placed firmly on his big, bald head — to pick up leads on the movement of cows.

Soni has never willingly spoken to a Muslim in 24 years. "We don't talk to each other in Godhra; we never have."

Godhra, a town of 150,000 people, has never been known for Hindu-Muslim harmony. "Since before 1947, every year an incident drove the communities apart," said a Muslim trader who didn't want to be named.

And 2002 sealed it forever, when on February 28, 59 Hindu pilgrims travelling in the Sabarmati Express were killed in a fire that engulfed their coach near Godhra station; nearly 2,000 people, a majority of them Muslims, were killed in the subsequent riots that singled 20 of Gujarat's 25 districts. Communal polarisation is a defining feature of Gujarat politics, and Godhra is its prime example. In the assembly constituency of Godhra, where Muslims make up about 22% of the electorate, the Congress has defeated the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in six of the 12 assembly elections held so far. The coming elections in

November will be a test for both parties as they struggle to hold on to their constituencies in the city as well as the state. Muslims, 9% percent of the state's population according to Census 2011, see the BJP's renewed focus on cow protection as a bid to consolidate the Hindu vote bank. However, the electoral dynamics are more complicated this time. A section of Gujarat's Muslims feels disillusioned with the Congress' perfunctory patronage. The party hasn't made any significant moves to rebuild the community's trust. In March, Gujarat Congress president Bharatsinh Solanki, said, "I will be most happy if Lord Ram's temple is rebuilt in his birthplace." In June, the party's youth wing demanded the central government declare the cow as national animal.

If Congress is toying with soft Hindutva to win the Hindus back, the BJP too is trying to woo the Muslims. In May, the party's minority cell kicked off a series of Muslim meets with an event in rural Gandhinagar where, it claims, around 2,000 members of the Congress' minority cell joined the BJP. But as the fight for votes kicks off, issues related to safety and security continue to weigh heavily on Muslims of Gujarat.

In Godhra, local meat shops shut down for a week after the BJP government's announcement of life term for cow slaughter, to avoid trouble.

"Nearly 70% of the community lives in fear that they will be implicated by police if trouble happens," says Sophia Jamal, vice-president at the town municipality.

"Nothing has changed in

the 15 years. When our kids are picked up over suspicion and sent to jail, they keep rotting there until a court decides in their favour. No investigation happens," she adds.

Compared to the Hindus, Muslims in Godhra are cautious on the subject of Hindu-Muslim ties. Says Haneef Haji. "Hindu-Muslim relations are perfectly fine. We freely go into each other's neighbourhoods. We get together at every wedding." They find it easier to blame police and politicians for their troubles. "All this drama is to provoke riots," says Haji. "BJP people are running maximum butcher shops in India. You tell us that your religion doesn't allow the killing of animals — then what are bulls, buffaloes and goats?"

There is only one exception to Godhra's Hindu-Muslim segregation. Harin Patel and Sajid Khan Pathan have been business partners since 2007. They run their motor company from an office space burnt down in the 2002 riots, even though they live across the line of separation.

"There should be tuning between two people. That's the important thing in business," says Patel. "Ek dum close relation hai. Family relation hai. Har cheez mein (We are very close, like family)," says Pathan.

It seems like the perfect story. Business beats religion. There is one catch, though. Pathan happens to be a vegetarian: "Why eat beef at all? Not like it's a good thing. Some people are just being stubborn—that's all."

India ahead of China for a decade: Harvard University



According to the Harvard University's Centre for International Development (CID) growth projections, "India has made inroads in diversifying its export base to include more complex sectors, such as

chemicals, vehicles, and certain electronics."

China's economic expansion rate dropped from 6.7 per cent (2016) to 4.4 per cent and will continue for the coming decade making India

the fastest growing economy till 2025 with an average annual growth of 7.7 per cent, says a new study by Harvard University.

Factors affecting the growth rate of China The growth rate of China which was rapid earlier has now decreased because of the decline in its exports. According to the Harvard University's Center for International Development (CID), China's rapid growth rate over the past decade has narrowed the gap between its complexity and its income. China's economic complexity ranking also falls four spots for the first time since the global financial crisis.

India on the rise Elaborating further, Ricardo Hausmann, Director of Centre for International Development (CID) and Professor at the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), said, "The major oil economies are experiencing the pitfalls of their reliance on one resource. India, Indonesia, and Vietnam have accumulated new capabilities that allow for more diverse and more complex production that predicts faster growth in the coming years."

The CID is a university-wide centre that works to advance the understanding of development challenges and offer viable solutions to problems of global poverty.

Presidential election 2017

How will India elect its president? An in-depth guide

Next month, India will get its 14th President. Electing the President of India, a process that has already begun, is not quite as simple as voting in a Lok Sabha. Here's a complete guide and answers to common questions about the Indian presidential election.

On July 17, 4,896 electors will cast a total of 10,98,903 votes (more on that later) to elect the next President of India.

The electors will include all elected Members of Legislative Assemblies and Members of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha). People nominated to a state's legislative assembly (for example, Peter Fantome from Uttar Pradesh) or to the Rajya Sabha (such as Sachin Tendulkar or Subramanian Swamy), like the rest of us, cannot vote in the Presidential election 2017.

Counting of votes for the Presidential election will take place on July 20 and on July 25, a day after incumbent Pranab Mukherjee demits office, India will get its 14th President.

This will be the 15th time an election is held for the office of the President of India - there have been only 13 Presidents as Dr Rajendra Prasad won the first two elections, in 1952 and 1957.

The process for electing the President of India is quite unlike elections to the Lok Sabha or a state Legislative Assembly.

For example, each elector's vote is valued in hundreds - a vote cast by one Uttar Pradesh MLA, for example, will be valued at 208. The vote of a Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha) will be valued at 708. (A complete, state-wise list of the value of each MLA can be found at the end of this article.)

But, it ensures that each state gets a fair say in the election, in proportion to its population, and that the



candidate who is elected President is one who has the support of the majority of electors.

Each candidate considering a run for the President of India's office must file his/her nomination by June 28. The candidates will also need to fork over Rs 15,000 as deposit and submit a signed list of 50 proposers and 50 seconders. The proposers and seconders can be any of the 4,896 electors eligible to vote in the Presidential election 2017.

An elector can only propose or second one candidate's name. This rule of getting electors to propose and second a person's candidature was adopted in 1974 after the Election Commission realised that in the 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967 and 1969 (an early election after 3rd President of India Zakir Husain's death in office) polls, several candidates submitted their names even though they did not have "even a remote chance of getting

elected."

This part of the process of electing the next President of India is over - both Ram Nath Kovind and Meira Kumar have filed their respective nominations.

Only July 17, all elected MLAs, in their respective state and union territory capitals, and all elected MPs, at Parliament, will be given ballot papers (green coloured for MPs and pink coloured for MLAs) to cast their vote. They will also be given special pens, which is the only instrument they can use to record their votes.

Each ballot paper will contain the name of all candidates who are contesting the Presidential election. The electors will proceed to indicate their preference for each candidate - marking '1' for the candidate they most prefer as President, '2' for the candidate who is their second preference, and so on.

An elector isn't required to mark

preferences for all in which a particular Presidential candidate receives a first preference.

Remember, the value of each ballot paper depends on who cast the votes. The ballot paper of a UP

Returning Office Anoop Mishra will verify all ballots and begin the counting process using the ballots that are valid.

On July 20, the value of votes of MLAs from each state is

be taken up state-wise and allotted to each candidate's tray depending on whose name appears as the first preference. For example, if an MLA from Uttar Pradesh marks Ram Nath Kovind as his/her first preference that MLA's ballot paper will go to Kovind's tray.

The winner of the Presidential election is not the person who gets the most number of votes, but the person who gets more votes than a certain quota. The quota is decided by adding up the votes polled for each candidate, dividing the sum by 2 and adding '1' to the quotient. The candidate who polls more votes than the quote is the winner. In case, no one gets more

votes than the quota, then the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated.

Then, the eliminated candidates' ballot papers are distributed between the remaining hopefuls based on those ballot papers' second preference choice. The process of counting the total votes for each candidate is then repeated to see if any one polls above the quota.

The process continues until someone's votes tally up to more than the quota, or until just one candidate is left after the constant eliminations, at which point that person is declared as the winner of the President of India.

On July 25, a day after President Pranab Mukherjee demits office, the President-elect will take oath. Note that Mukherjee can only leave office if another person is ready to take his place. For an unforeseen reason, if there is nobody to assume the office of President of India on July 25, Mukherjee will continue to remain in office. The oath for President is usually administered by the Chief Justice of India, which in this election cycle will be Justice JS Khehar. The President-elect will be admitted the following oath in order to be sworn in: "I, A.B., do swear in the name of God/solemnly affirm that I will faithfully execute the office of President (or discharge the functions of the President) of India and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law and that I will devote myself to the service and well-being of the people of India."

Govt approves Amazon's proposal for FDI in food



(Agencies) The government has approved American e-commerce major Amazon's proposed USD 500 million investment in retailing of food products in India, an official said.

The proposal was pending before the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) which has been abolished now.

Hence, the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) gives the green signal to the proposal.

As per the proposal, the company will open a wholly-owned subsidiary in India to carry out the business. It will stock food products and sell online.

Currently, the government permits 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in the food processing sector. As per norms, a foreign company can open a wholly-owned subsidiary in India to retail food products produced and or manufactured in the country by way of

opening stores or online.

The government had received investment proposals from three companies - Amazon, Grofers and Big Basket - worth USD 695 million for retail of food products. While US-based retail giant Amazon is one of the major e-commerce players in India, Grofers and Big Basket are into online grocery space. Amazon has proposed to invest around USD 500 million in retail of food products. The government last year allowed 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) through approval route for trading,

including through e-commerce, in respect of food products manufactured and produced in India.

In 2016-17 (April-December), the food processing sector in the country received FDI of USD 663.23 million. The Union Cabinet last month decided to wind up the 25-year-old FIPB, which had been vetting FDI proposals requiring government approval, to expedite the clearance process. Under the new mechanism, proposals related to retail sector is being approved by the commerce and industry ministry.

Tata-Mistry row: Bombay High Court refuses to hear minor shareholders' suit

(Agencies) In a reprieve for the Tata group, the Bombay High Court today overturned its order and ruled it cannot hear a suit filed by minority shareholders of the group seeking Rs 41,000 crore in damages as a representative suit on behalf of all non-promoter shareholders.

The suit, filed by shareholders Pramod Shah and five others, challenged Cyrus Mistry's removal as chairman of the Tata group, terming it "illegal, motivated and malafide".

The shareholders demanded over Rs 41,000 crore in damages for themselves and all similarly placed non-promoter shareholders of the listed group companies for "losses suffered

as a result".

The damages sought are for losses due to a drop in the share prices of eight Tata group companies since the market closing on October 24 last year, when Mistry was ousted, to December 6, 2016.

Shah and the other appellants filed an application along with the suit seeking permission under order 1, rule 8 of the Civil Procedure Code, a provision that says that one or more persons may, with the permission of court, sue or defend on behalf of all interested individuals.

In December last year, Justice S J Kathawalla had passed an order permitting the suit to be filed in a representative capacity.



The permission was today revoked by Justice S C Gupte, who said a suit filed by few minority shareholders cannot be treated as a representative suit on behalf of all the non-promoter shareholders.

Trump sued after blocking Twitter followers

(Agencies) Twitter users blocked from following President Trump went to court Tuesday, charging the action violates their First Amendment rights. Lawyers for seven Twitter users charged in federal court papers that by seeking to "suppress dissent," Trump's action was unconstitutional.

The president has more than 33 million followers on his @realDonaldTrump Twitter feed and has tweeted more than 35,000 times since first starting the account in 2009. The account has become a method for Americans to keep up with public policy issues, as well as monitor Trump's mood swings over media coverage of his administration. The lawsuit, filed in the Southern District of New York by the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, comes a month after the group sent a letter to the president and several aides, asking that two of their clients be unblocked. The group said the White House did not respond.

Wells Fargo victims get closer to payback in \$142 million settlement

Wells Fargo customers who had fake accounts created in their names are a step closer to some payback.

(Agencies) A federal judge granted preliminary approval over the weekend for Wells Fargo's \$142 million national class action settlement. The court ruled that the settlement, which covers fake accounts back to 2002, "fair, reasonable and adequate."

Victims may still have to wait before they get paid. The bank and lawyers for the plaintiffs plan to reach out to customers in the next three months, but the settlement may not be final until early 2018.

Still, Wells Fargo CEO Tim Sloan called the court ruling a "major milestone in our efforts to make things right for our customers."

Wells Fargo admitted last September that 2 million potentially unauthorized checking and credit card accounts were opened between 2011 and 2015. The bank blamed

unrealistic sales goals. The outrage forced the ouster of longtime CEO John Stumpf and the restructuring of Wells Fargo's sales targets, and it spawned federal and local investigations.

Under an original settlement with regulators in September, Wells Fargo repaid \$3.26 million in fees to wronged customers. Since then, the bank has paid \$1.8 million more to cover complaints from customers about fake accounts.

The \$142 million national settlement is open to customers who claim that Wells Fargo improperly opened checking or savings accounts, credit cards, lines of credit or identity theft services in their names between 2002 and April 2017.

Wells Fargo has also offered to compensate some customers whose credit scores suffered

because credit card accounts were secretly opened in their names.

Derek Loeser, a partner at the law firm Keller Rohrbach and lead attorney for the plaintiffs, hailed this feature of the settlement as "groundbreaking" and "first-of-its kind."

The settlement is an important step toward "holding Wells Fargo accountable for its abuse of customers' trust," Loeser said in a statement.

The amount that each wronged Wells Fargo customer will receive will vary based on how many fake accounts were opened in their name, how big a financial hit they took and how much money is left in the settlement pool.

The \$142 million will first go to lawyer fees and administrative costs. Then Wells Fargo customers will be paid for out-



of-pocket losses, such as fees from fake accounts. What's left will be split among all customers, based on how many and what kind of accounts they say were opened.

Wells Fargo has agreed to strengthen the deal: The initial settlement, announced in late

March, was worth \$110 million. That amount was raised to \$142 million in April to expand the settlement to 2002. Wells Fargo's board recently released a report that found evidence of fake accounts going back to "at least" that year.



Feel like you're a big fish in a small pond?

It could be bad for your health: Study finds overqualified employees experience more stress in the office

work can have negative implications for employees and employers alike, said study lead author Professor Michael Harari.

A feeling of being overqualified occurs when an employee is expecting a job that uses their qualifications, but does not find themselves in such a position, leaving them feeling deprived, the researchers said.

Professor Harari said: 'That deprivation is what is theorised to result in these negative job attitudes. 'There's a discrepancy between expectation and reality.

'Because of this, you're angry, you're frustrated and as a result you don't much care for the job that you have and feel unsatisfied.' Psychological strain can stem from employees who do not feel they are rewarded for their efforts because there is an imbalance between their efforts and the reward structure of work. Professor Harari said: 'We invest effort at work and we expect rewards in return, such as esteem and career

Dangers of Being OverQualified

Psychological strain can stem from employees who do not feel they are rewarded for their efforts because there is an imbalance between their efforts and the reward structure of work. Professor Harari said: 'We invest effort at work and we expect rewards in return, such as esteem and career opportunities. 'For an overqualified employee, that expectation has been violated. 'This is a stressful experience for employees, which leads to poor psychological wellbeing, such as negative emotions and psychological strain.' The study found workers who feel overqualified are also more likely to engage in deviant behaviour. This might include coming in late or leaving early, theft and bullying fellow workers.

opportunities. 'For an overqualified employee, that expectation has been violated. 'This is a stressful experience for employees, which leads to poor psychological wellbeing, such as negative emotions and psychological strain.' The study found workers who feel overqualified are also more likely to engage in deviant behaviour, including coming in late or leaving early, theft and bullying fellow workers. Professor Harari said the more over-qualified a worker feels, the more likely they

are to engage in counterproductive behaviours that hinder the workplace. He said workers who were younger, over-educated and narcissistic tended to report higher levels of perceived over-qualification. He said: 'It seems to suggest that there is a need to take jobs below one's skill level in order to gain entrance into the workforce. We do see that as people get older they are less likely to report being overqualified.'

(Agencies) Being a big fish in a small pond can be bad for your career and your health, new research has revealed.

Scientists claim that over-qualified employees suffer high levels of stress and are also likely to damage a company with bad behaviour such as bullying or theft.

Workers who are younger, over-educated and narcissistic are most likely to feel they are over-qualified for a role, the research found.

The researchers, from

Florida Atlantic University's College of Business, said employees who believe they are over-qualified are unsatisfied with their job, uncommitted to their company and suffer psychological strain.

This causes them to be angry, frustrated and unlikely to care for the job.

The study team looked at 25 years of research into 'perceived over-qualification' - the belief that someone has surplus skills compared to job requirements. This attitude to

Slouching ISN'T bad for you and should be recommended - it's sitting upright that's wreaking havoc on your body, claims expert



(Agencies) Slouching on your sofa or in front of your computer at work isn't as bad for you as you have been told, an expert has claimed.

Years of slating bad postures as being detrimental to our health is 'wrong', Jack Chew, of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy says.

In fact, slouching could be recommended - as forcing yourself to adhere to sitting upright at all times may be wreaking havoc on your body.

But due to the financial opportunity it provides firms

based around trendy wellness techniques, slouching is dubbed as awful.

Such fears have sparked an entire industry to arise, promising to kick people into shape by realigning them, taking hundreds of their pounds simultaneously.

Mr Chew told The Times: 'The assumption that we all need to be perfectly aligned is just wrong... nothing about our bodies is entirely symmetrical.

'Our organs aren't positioned symmetrically; we each have a dominant side.'

Mr Chew's claims challenge a body of evidence that states the opposite, suggesting that slouching is the root cause of many ailments.

We need to get away from this idea that bad posture is the single cause of so many complaints because that is never the case.'

Scores of businesses have popped up on the back of such research, desperate to tap into a goldmine of adults worried about their bad postures.

Substantial links to bad backs, which affects four in five

people at some point in their lifetime, have also been reported.

Often adults are desperate to avoid the middle-aged burden of a bad back and seek innovative ways to prevent such.

Due to the growing demand, wellness firms have responded in their hundreds with the invention of gadgets promoting better postures.

One includes 'Tru-Align', a series of five cushions designed to realign the backs of users. It costs £384 (\$495), The Independent reports.

Another, called CoreAlign, offers a balance body course and the equipment needed to

partake for just under £2,800 (\$3,600).

Depression links

Mr Chew's claims just after New Zealand-based researchers earlier this year said that good posture could be used to treat depression.

In January they discovered sitting upright can make people feel more proud after a success and more confident in their thoughts.

Research in 2012 made a link between people who walk with a bad posture and the risk of being depressed.

A study from San Francisco State University found slouching can lead to decreased energy and feelings of depression.

Good Posture to Treat Depression

Good posture could help treat depression, a study published in January claimed.

Previous research has showed that slouching can crush one's mood, and sitting straight does the opposite.

But University of Auckland researchers wanted to examine if something as simple as posture could work for people diagnosed with depression.

'Compared to sitting in a slumped position, sitting upright can make you feel more proud after a success, increase your persistence at an unsolvable task, and make you feel more confident in your thoughts,' lead researcher Dr Elizabeth Broadbent explained.

Mom movie review

Mom

Cast: Sridevi, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Akshaye Khanna

Director: Ravi Udyawar

Rating: 3/5

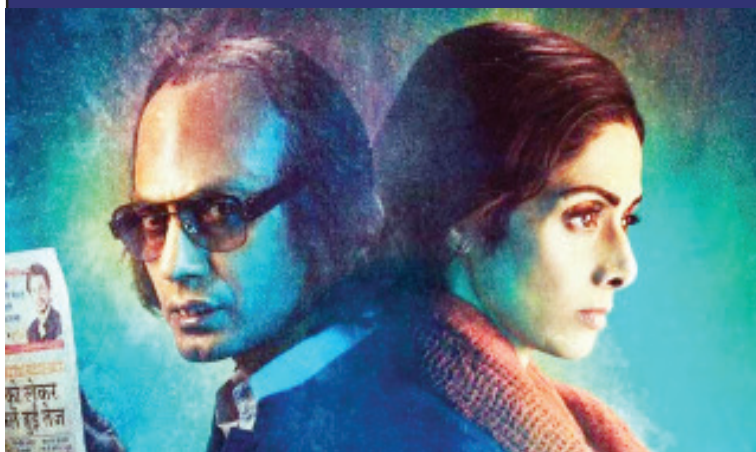
A black car speeds its way through a deserted Delhi road on a pitch dark night. An aerial shot shows it halting at a lonely crossroad. Two doors open, and the driver swaps his seat with a person in the rear. The car starts moving again, and sometime before daybreak, its occupants throw a teenage girl into a roadside drain.

We haven't been shown the inside of the car, but we all know what could have happened there. Hundreds of media reports scream of such crimes against women every year, but people simply pick up the pieces and move on with their lives. This movie is not about them. It is about a mother who decides to avenge the rape of her daughter because the law couldn't get her the justice she deserves.

A likeable-yet-strict biology teacher Devaki (Sridevi) is your average parent who wants to

Nawazuddin Siddiqui steals Sridevi's thunder in this revenge drama

What stops Sridevi's Mom from getting closer to Pink is its inability to get inside the criminals' minds. Nawazuddin Siddiqui is in top form in Mom. Here's our movie review.



keep tabs on the social life and friends of an adolescent Arya (Sajal Ali). She is Arya's stepmother, and is probably why Arya doesn't seem to trust her. The child's rape threatens to further tear them apart, but Devaki is determined to not let that happen.

Now, all this may sound like the recently released Maatr, where Raveena Tandon played a mother who moves mountains to

punish her daughter's rapists. Though Mom is similar in tone, the previous film didn't have actors like Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Akshaye Khanna and Adnan Siddiqui. The supporting cast turns out to be a great asset for director Ravi Udyawar's film, which brings out the mental trauma experienced by the rape victim just as much as it celebrates Sridevi's valour.

Dayashankar Kapoor aka DK

(Nawazuddin Siddiqui) is the real charmer in Mom. He knows exactly when to switch gears and how to look timid despite being in the spotlight. The actor's understanding of his reel-life character comes to the fore in an interrogation scene with crime branch cop Mathew Francis (Akshaye Khanna). DK is scared like any other law-fearing citizen, but he still summons the courage to retain his composure in the circumstances.

And, of course, there are his one-liners. When told that a certain piece of modern art costs Rs 50 lakh, he murmurs: "Isse toh achcha main paan thuk ke bana deta (I could have made a better painting by spitting betel juice on canvas)." Overlook Akshaye Khanna's twitched eyebrows for a few seconds and you'll start appreciating his sarcastic tone. He remains

underutilised, though, probably to give Sridevi more screen time. The movie seems to be headed in the right direction, complete with an excellent emotional outburst by Devaki inside a hospital in the first half, but the story soon begins to waver.

What stops Mom from becoming more like Pink is its inability to enter the minds of the criminals. Abhimanyu Singh is definitely menacing, but his accent is nowhere close to what his character should have. Other typically Bollywood liberties have also been taken to reduce the stature of the movie from a gut-wrenching film to a slightly above-average revenge drama. Verbal duals between Sridevi and Akshaye Khanna appear staged, as if subtlety was the last thing on the filmmaker's mind. They fail to achieve what Nawazuddin Siddiqui does with a single glance.

Guest In London movie review: Don't make silly films like Paresh Rawal

Nothing can save this Paresh Rawal, Kartik Aryan film when it features songs on farts.



Mumbai to London. You won't find actors like Ajay Devgn and Konkona Sensharma in the new film, but Paresh Rawal, as the nerve-wrecking guest, tries to fill for the missing big names. One more thing, what seemed like a fine balance of comedy and slice of life in the original is completely absent here. In fact, it's so lame that you would find the tobacco ads more entertaining than watching Paresh Rawal farting for at least hundred times.

That's not all. He sings an entire song on farting in the film. Now that's taking things a bit too far. Yes, Guest In London is painful. Or who knows, you might be the Superman.

Even if fart and potty jokes are your thing, you need nerves of steel to sit through Paresh Rawal's weird Pakistan bashing. All those 'baap baap hota hai, beta beta hota hai' sort of attempted puns will make you wonder what could have forced director Ashwni Dhir to come up with such a film!

Rawal, who is also an MP in the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, doesn't spare China either. So brace yourself for all those 'China ka maal' gags. At one point, he also resorts to 'hor-whore' wisecracks. Hor dasso! Guess who is the other actor giving company to Rawal? Sanjay Mishra.

Guest In London
Cast: Kartik Aryan, Paresh Rawal, Kirti Kharbada
Director: Ashwni Dhir
Rating: 1/5

More than the sequel, Guest In London is a copy of 2010 film Atithi Tum Kab Jaoge? by the same director. Just that this time the action has shifted from



Shraddha Kapoor and Athiya Shetty show us how to wear metallic without going overboard

(Agencies) Shraddha Kapoor Athiya Shetty show wear metallic without going overboard. From Deepika Padukone to Alia Bhatt, almost everyone has tried it and the latest ones to nail metallics are Shraddha Kapoor and Athiya Shetty. Image result for Shraddha Kapoor Athiya Shetty show wear metallic without going overboard The actress who was seen at an event rocked colourful holographic separates from Nor Black Nor White. Halfgirlfreind

actress who picked up the statement-making pieces from their latest collection styled the bomber jacket and the pleated skirt well with a grey T-shirt. Her accessory game was strong too with a pair of powder blue Christian Louboutin heels and earrings from Valliyan. Image result for Shraddha Kapoor Athiya Shetty The look was absolutely spot on and we aren't surprised since it was curated by celebrity stylist Shaleena

Nathani. She has in the past put up stellar looks for Deepika Padukone and Anushka Sharma in metallics. Even celebrity hairstylist Franco Vallelonga did a good job with voluminous curls and celebrity make-up artist Shraddha Naik complemented it with a dewy-faced make-up and a pink pout. We love this look! Athiya Shetty, on the other hand, was seen promoting her upcoming film Mubarakan in a mix and match look.



Katrina's throwback with Muammar Gaddafi goes viral!

(Agencies) Katrina kaifs throwback Muammar Gaddafi goes viral. Seems like a moment from Katrina Kaif's past has created a storm on the social media. Katrina has hogged the spotlight with a throwback picture, where she is seen seated along with Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. It has been 15 years since the photograph featuring a slew of models along with the 'Ek Tha Tiger' star, Aditi Govitrikar, Aanchal Kumar and Neha Dhupia, was taken. Model Shamita Singha shared the picture on her Instagram handle and wrote, "Almost 15 years ago when we all were in Libya for a fashion show and had the privilege of meeting the man Mr. Gaddafi himself! Girls! Remember this trip??" Katrina kaifs throwback Muammar Gaddafi goes viral During the time this picture was taken, Gaddafi was the feared dictator, who was also known for keeping a strong group of female bodyguards, named



Soha Ali Khan flaunts her baby bump



(Agencies) Bollywood actress Soha Ali Khan is about to become a mother. Recently some pictures of Soha have been revealed.

Soha Ali Khan flaunts her baby bump Soha looks very keen with baby bump in light dress. Apart from being an actress, she has been trying her hand in writing. Soha Ali Khan flaunts her baby bump Talking about this, Soha said that my first book, 'The Paris of Being Moderately Famous', is being launched in December 2017. Soha Ali Khan flaunts her baby bump Soha is spending time with reading books and being happy while pregnancy. Kareena Kapoor has already given her advice on how to live during pregnancy. Soha Ali Khan flaunts her baby bump After enjoying a vacation with husband Kunal Kemu in London, Soha has returned to her city in Mumbai.

Deepika wears her million-dollar smile for new ad

(Agencies) Deepika wears million-dollar smile new ad bollywood news. Simplicity has its own charm, proves Deepika Padukone in a new commercial. All in black and white and minimal makeup, the Mastani of Bollywood gets filmed for Axis Bank, where she is seen experiencing 'shopping' and 'dining' to its fullest. Deepika wears million-dollar smile new ad bollywood news Clicked here by New York based director and photographer Dean Freeman, the shoot sees Deepika wearing her gorgeous smile throughout, making her look ethereal. On the work front, after making a strong debut in the Hollywood with 'xXx Return of Xander Cage', the 31-year-old actress will next be seen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Padmavati,' alongside Ranveer Singh and Shahid Kapoor.



Sridevi and Sanjay Dutt may come together after 25 years

(Agencies) The superstars of 90's are still intact, so that director Abhishek Varman has chosen Sanjay Dutt and Sridevi for his next film. Sanjay Dutt and Sridevi both are busy in new up coming movie "BHOOOM!". Sridevi and Sanjay Dutt may come together after 25 years The first time in the 1993 both of them were seen together in thriller 'Gumrah' and now after 25 years later the duo may be seen again, from the director to Actor all are kept maintain silence on this topic. Sridevi and Sanjay Dutt may come together after 25 years A source reveal that Abhishek Varman is all set to roll out another film post '2 States' in collaboration with Karan Johar and Sajid Nadiawala that will star Sridevi and Sanjay.

Indira Gandhi's 'secret granddaughter' slams Madhur Bhandarkar's Indu Sarkar

Priya Singh Paul, who claims to be the secret daughter of Sanjay Gandhi, on Monday criticised the upcoming movie Indu Sarkar for portraying former prime minister Indira Gandhi in a bad light.



adoption papers were forged, told a press conference that a misrepresentation in the film prompted her to break her silence. Paul, who claimed to be aged 48, last month had said she has moved the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) against clearing the film.

Sanjay Gandhi, the younger son of Indira Gandhi, died in an air crash in 1980. The filmmakers have admitted that the film is 30 per cent facts and 70 per cent fiction.

"But these so-called facts lead to a fiction. This has been cleverly done to influence a reasonable viewer to make an obvious connect," she said.

Paul said she was not hankering for media attention and decided to come out as a wrong impression was being created about her father.

One Goswami Sushil-ji Maharaj, who claims to have been a friend of Sanjay Gandhi, has filed an affidavit in the court, claiming that he was well aware that Sanjay had a girl child, born before his marriage. Paul said she had been adopted as a baby and claimed she was told about Sanjay Gandhi being her biological father after she grew up. Indu Sarkar, which is set against the backdrop of Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975, has courted

trouble in the recent weeks, with Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam demanding that it be separately screened for him. However, its director Madhur Bhandarkar has turned down Nirupam's request, stating he will not hold separate screening for any political party. Indu Sarkar is due to be released on July 28. "You never question a journalist writing articles on 40 years of Emergency, in which he mentions names. You never question an author who has dedicated books to emergency, or the tremendous amount of documentaries made about the era," Bhandarkar lamented.

(Agencies) A woman, claiming to be the secret daughter of Sanjay Gandhi, on Monday alleged that the upcoming movie Indu Sarkar portrays the late Congress leader and his mother and former prime minister Indira Gandhi in bad light. Priya Singh Paul, who has moved the Tis Hazari Court in New Delhi alleging that her

These sizzling pictures of Vaani Kapoor might take away your mid-week blues



Vaani Kapoor does quirky and hot better than anyone else.

(Agencies) The Befikre diva, Vaani Kapoor, shot for Cosmopolitan India, and looked hotter than we could imagine. She had already won us over with her chic look in the film, and now, she's at it again.

The 28-year-old leggy lass had an air of freshness about her, thanks to her short, organic waves that looked super-chic, during this hot shoot.

Vaani looked phenomenal in the peppy, colourful outfits she donned for the shoot, and demonstrated the art of adding a pop of colour to any outfit without going overboard. Holding a coconut, and displaying those long legs, Vaani was effortlessly sensual in this one. Vaani looked uber-cool in her printed clothes, but what we really liked was that retro pair of sunnies on her face. Vaani was beyond sexy in the plunging neckline, green swimsuit that rightfully displayed her sharp-as-a-knife collarbones. The actress donned a white, floral print, bodycon skirt with a matching bikini top, and set our hearts on fire with her hotness. Needless to say, she looked exquisite in the attire. We loved the sass with which she pulled off the black dress and those big sunnies. Vaani was a total stunner in all her looks, and we couldn't be more impressed. Happy another work-week, everyone!

Actress Poonam Pandey

launches 'The Poonam Pandey App'

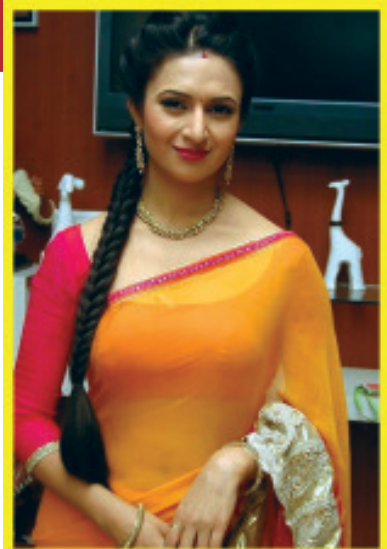
(Agencies) Actress Poonam Pandey launches The Poonam Pandey App. Apart from a new eyebrow-raising topless picture, the actress has announced the launch of her own app, The Poonam Pandey App. 25-year-old Poonam Pandey posted a nude photo of herself revealing about the upcoming app of hers. Actress Poonam Pandey launched The Poonam Pandey App No points for guessing the bold content of the app which the Nasha actress has claimed to have her 'creative inputs'. Poonam now joins the likes of Sonam Kapoor, Disha Patani, Salman Khan and Sunny Leone to have her own amazing cool app. The social media star in her own right has green signalled the launch of her app by sharing this photo where the svelte, sexy star has gone topless with her tresses barely covering her assets. Actress Poonam Pandey launched The Poonam Pandey App. She may not have had an established career in Bollywood, but that has not stopped Poonam Pandey from scaling the heights.



Divyanka Tripathi takes her style higher

(Agencies) Divyanka Tripathi Dahiya, who won the Nach Baliye 8 trophy along with husband Vivek Dahiya is getting a lot of compliments these days for her drastic weight loss. The curvy actress lost oodles of weight during the dance reality show and worked really hard on her problem area. Divyanka Tripathi Dahiya takes style higher game. Divyanka Tripathi Dahiya and Vivek Dahiya are busy romancing each other in Europe, where they are spending some quality time together as a part of their first wedding

anniversary celebration. While the duo keeps on sharing pictures on their respective Instagram accounts, there is one thing that caught our attention. We noticed that Divyanka Dahiya is very much comfortable wearing western attires unlike earlier, and she has really upped her style. Divyanka Tripathi Dahiya takes style higher game. Starting from her on-screen appearances in saree and Anarkalis to her red carpet appearances in gowns. Divyanka Tripathi is mostly seen in either Indian wear or the regular western outfits like jeans and loose tops.



US firm paid \$1.18m bribe to National Highway Authority of India officials to get contracts

A Boston-based construction engineering firm allegedly paid USD 1.18 million bribe to officials of the National Highway Authority of India between 2011 and 2015 to bag contracts



(sai Bureau) A Boston-based construction engineering firm allegedly paid USD 1.18 million bribe to officials of the National Highway Authority of India between 2011 and 2015 to bag contracts, the US Justice Department has said, prompting the Indian government to order a probe into the allegations. The Criminal Division of the Justice Department, in a letter dated June 21, said CDM Smith through its employees and agents, and those of its wholly-owned subsidiary in India (CDM India) paid approximately USD 1.18 million in bribes to government officials in India in exchange for highway construction supervision and design contracts and a water project contract resulting in approximately USD four million in net profits. **(Contd on page 21)**



Andrew Cuomo Could Beat Trump ... If He Can Win Over the Left First

The governor of New York suddenly looks like the kind of take-no-prisoners pol his party needs. With one catch.

(sai Bureau) NEW YORK — The scene is unfolding in the shabby headquarters of the Hotel Trades Council just off Times Square in the late spring of 2017, but it's not hard to imagine the speech somewhere

in the Rust Belt in 2020, with a Democratic nominee trying to reclaim the Upper Midwest for his party.

"The truth is the middle class is under attack. The working families

are under attack," Andrew Cuomo bellows, his tough-guy accent coming in a little thick. "Middle-class wages are behind where they were 20 years ago.

(Contd on page 20)

Firebrand Yogi Ascends India's Political Ladder



(sai Bureau) Lucknow — A Hindu warrior-priest has been chosen to rule India's most populous state, and the cable news channels cannot get enough of him. Yogi, as everyone calls him, is so ascetic and incorruptible that he doesn't use air-conditioners, they say. Yogi sleeps on a hard mattress on the floor. Yogi sometimes eats only an apple for dinner. But the taproot of Yogi Adityanath's popularity is in a more ominous place. As leader of a temple known for its militant Hindu supremacist tradition, he built an army of youths intent on avenging historic wrongs by Muslims, whom he has called "a crop of two-legged

animals that has to be stopped."

At one rally he cried out, "We are all preparing for religious war!" Adityanath (pronounced Ah-DIT-ya-nath) was an astonishing choice by Narendra Modi, India's prime minister, who came into office three years ago promising to usher India into a new age of development and economic growth, and playing down any far-right Hindu agenda. But a populist drive to transform India into a "Hindu nation" has drowned out Mr. Modi's development agenda, shrinking the economic and social space for the country's 170 million Muslims. Few decisions in Indian politics matter more than the selection of the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, because the post is seen as a springboard for future prime ministers. At the age of 45,



the diminutive, baby-faced Adityanath is receiving the kind of career-making attention that projects an Indian politician toward higher office. "He is automatically on anybody's list as a potential contender to succeed Modi," said Sadanand Dhume, an India specialist at the American Enterprise Institute.

"They have normalized someone who, three years ago, was considered too extreme to be minister of state for textiles. Everything has been normalized so quickly." Adityanath did not respond to repeated requests for comment for this article. In March,

(Contd on page 20)

