



Trump Expected To Rescind DACA

Immigrants are covered by the Obama-era rule



WASHINGTON - U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to rescind an Obama-era policy that protects nearly 600,000 immigrants who entered the country illegally as children, but plans to let them stay until their work permits expire, a senior administration official said on Thursday. Trump's decision could be announced as early as Friday but could also come next week, the official said. Later, White House homeland security adviser Tom Bossert told reporters the administration is still reviewing the program, Trump had pledged on the election campaign trail to scrap all of former President Barack Obama's executive orders on immigration, including the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or "Dreamers," program. What to do about the so-called Dreamers has been actively debated within the White House and Trump administration. One senior administration official described the situation as a "tug of war" between factions in favor of the move and those opposed. Officials, believing the DACA program to be ultimately unconstitutional, want Congress to impose a legislative fix for the Dreamers, two officials said.

(Contd on page 22)

5.7% GDP A Matter Of Concern, Says Jaitley

India's GDP growth slumped to a three-year low of 5.7 per cent during April-June lagging China for the second straight quarter



Finance Minister Arun Jaitley today said that the 5.7 per cent GDP growth in Q1 is a matter of concern for the government. Jaitley, while addressing the media, said that the figures certainly pose a challenge in front of the government.

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Manmohan Backed Probe Against Dera Chief

Despite Pressure From MPs, Asked Us To Go By Law : Ex-CBI Officer



The CBI officer who investigated the rape cases against Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh has said that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had gone through the statements of the two victims and backed the probe against the controversial Dera chief.

The chief investigating officer in the case, M Narayanan, a retired DIG of the CBI, revealed to a news channel that Manmohan Singh had ignored

political pressure and even summoned the then CBI chief Vijay Shanker to his office to discuss the case."

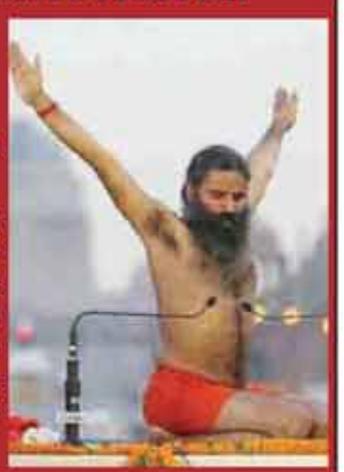
(Contd on page 22)

Allahabad HC Slams Government For Permitting Felling Of Thousands Of Trees For Ramdev's Food Park

'Environment is for the whole society. The government can compensate an individual but how will it compensate the entire society,' said the court.

The Allahabad High Court on Wednesday expressed strong dissatisfaction over the Uttar Pradesh government's offer of "adequate compensation" to a Noida resident on whose land thousands of trees are likely to be felled for a proposed food park of Ramdev's Patanjali Yog Sansthan. A division bench comprising justices Tarun Agarwala

(Contd on page 22)



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SAM PITRODA Announces Overseas Congress Expansion Worldwide



(By a Staff Reporter) The newly appointed Chairman of the Overseas Congress Dept of AICC, the legendary Sam Pitroda addressed

The Indian National Overseas Congress USA members in New York. INOC USA hosted a welcome event for its new leader at the Cottelion Banquet Hall in New York on August 26th, 2017. The event was attended by all the chapters of Overseas Congress, the executive committee and its National President Shudh Parkash Singh.

The event started with Shudh Singh intro-

ducing Sam Pitroda as a great Patriot and a man who brought revolution in Telecom and Communication in India working with the complex bureaucracy, a difficult system and obsolete resources in the 1980's. He said that Sam Pitroda was able to bring the telephone to every household in India with his initiative (CDOT) and said that he was fortunate to be working with

a legend like Sam Pitroda who is our Chairman Overseas Congress Dept AICC. Shudh also stated he will follow all directions of Sam Pitroda like he always followed earlier Chairman's directions.

"Our dynamic leader Rahul Gandhi could not have appointed a better person to lead overseas congress in my opinion", added Shudh Parkash Singh.

Janmashtami Celebrated

Sri Sankat Mochan Hanuman Mandir Janmashtami Celebrated with more than 4000 people at floral Park



(By a Staff Reporter) Sri Sankat Mochan hanuman mandir celebrated Lord Krishna's birthday with more than 4000 people, the day started with Lord Krishna's Pooja and special Annakut in front of Lord Krishan with more than 150 delicious food items offered to Lord Krishna. Janmashtami is one of the

major Hindu festivals, and it celebrates the descension of Lord Krishna to the Earth planet in the holy land of Braj, India around 5000 years ago. Festivals are always a central part of Indian culture. They are not only opportunities for families to come together to celebrate but also provide excellent opportunities



for us to learn about our traditions and culture. Last evening witnessed Janmashtami celebrations all across the United States with temples and religious centers across the country participating with great zeal and enthusiasm. This year Janmashtami celebrations saw such color and dedication that has never been

seen before. Sankat Mochan temple in Floral Park, New York, saw more than 4,000 visitors. Said the head priest, Mr Tiwari, "We served food to 4,000 patrons". George Maragos, Comptroller in Nassau County, David Wiprin, Assemblyman in Queens New York, Dilip Chauhan who has been instrumental in



helping social and cultural groups to establish in New York and now in charge as Deputy Comptroller in Nassau County visited the temple to get blessings. On this auspicious occasion more than 15 dance group performed dances on the theme of Lord Krishan and Radha. Mandir Priest Sanjeev

Mishra thanked all participants, elected officials and local govt. for their support, Event Emceed by Indu Gajwani and Vandanakumar. Nassau County Comptroller Maragos honored Pandit Sanjeev Mishra and Event Chair Indu Gajwani with Proclamation.

Janmashtami Celebrated by more than 6000 people at Radha Govind Dham



(Agencies) New York : Festivals are always a central part of Indian culture. They are not only opportunities for families to come together to celebrate but also provide excellent opportunities for us to learn about our

traditions and culture. Last evening witnessed Janmashtami celebrations all across the United States with temples and religious centers across the country participating with great zeal and enthusiasm.



Janmashtami is one of the major Hindu festivals, and it celebrates the descension of Lord Krishna to the Earth planet in the holy land of Braj, India around 5000 years ago. While New York witnessed a host of big events organized

to celebrate Janmashtami, the one at Radha Govind Dham New York (RGDNY) was one of the most anticipated ones. The day at RGDNY started with their team of volunteers work-

ing arduously to set up for the stage and stalls outside the temple and deck the temple itself for the big block party. The specially adorned deities of Radha Krishna with their heart captivating beauty, charmed one and all.

The program started with delectable varieties of Indian dishes being served to the devotees for dinner prasad following which the cultural events for the evening kick started. The opening act was a chanting of devotional kirtans by RGDNY's devotees following which Swami Nihilanand

ji, a sanyasi preacher with Jagadguru Kripalu Parishat, shared with the audience the significance of Lord Krishna's descension and the festival of Janmashtami. He also led a brief kirtan chanting session after which devotee kids from RGDNY enraptured the audience with semi classical dance routines. The event was also attended by two special guests. Ms Mahima Chaudhary, bollywood actress best known for her roles in hits like Pardes, Dhadkan, and Mr Dilip Chauhan, Deputy Comptroller Nassau County.

AIR INDIA's Womens Crew Recognized during India Day Parade.



(By a Staff Reporter) During the celebration of India Independence Day Parade in New York, Air India's all women crew get recognized with Nassau County Comptroller George Maragos Proclamation Presented by Deputy Comptroller Dilip Chauhan. History making

first ever world longest flight was helmed by Captains Kshamta Bajpayee and Shubhangi Singh. All the on-board positions on the flight — including the pilots, cabin crew, check-in staff, doctor, customer care, air traffic control and ground crew — were held by women.

Donald Trump administration introduces green card hurdle



(Agencies) WASHINGTON: US immigration authorities will soon require an in-person interview for certain applicants for green cards, a change that is likely to slow the process of obtaining one and may jam the already-backlogged visa application system, a media report said. The new requirement, which was confirmed on Friday by a spokesman for the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), will apply to anyone moving from an employment-based visa to lawful permanent residency, Politico reported. Visa holders who are family members of refugees or people who receive asylum will also be required to undergo an in-person interview when they apply for provisional status, a stage that precedes receiving a green

card, according to USCIS. The new policy will take effect from October 1, the report said. In fiscal year 2015, nearly 168,000 immigrants in these categories obtained lawful permanent residency, according to annual statistics from the Department of Homeland Security. Most (roughly 122,000) moved from an employment-based visa to a green card. The interview mandate is part of President Donald Trump's plan to apply "extreme vetting" to immigrants and visitors to the US. he travel ban executive order signed by Trump in January and revised in March called for federal departments to develop "uniform screening and vetting standards" to identify terrorists or people who "present a

risk of causing harm". The standards could include an in-person interview, the order stated. Carter Langston, a spokesperson for USCIS, told Politico that the categories of visas that require interviews will expand in the future, calling it "an incremental expansion". The policy, Langston said, is "part of a comprehensive strategy to further improve the detection and prevention of fraud and security risks to the US". The requirement for an in-person interview is not, technically, new, said the report. ut the agency currently waives the interview requirement for these visa holders "most of the time", according to William Stock, a Philadelphia-based attorney and former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. Under the new policy, such waivers won't be granted, he said.

AIA Benefit Gala held



The Association of Indians in America, NY Chapter (AIA-NY) held its Benefit Gala in support for its 30th Annual Deepavali Festival at the Hilton Hotel in Long Island on August 26, 2016. The Gala was attended by numerous respected individuals, past presidents of AIA, Community Leaders and dignitaries including members of the media and sponsors that have showcased their continued commitment and support for the Deepavali Festival. The 30th Annual Deepavali Festival will take place at the South Street Seaport on Sunday October 1st from 12 noon till 7pm, culminating with a spectacular display of fireworks. The event is one of the largest in the

tri-state area, attracting 75,000 – 100,000 people. Festival of Deepavali meaning 'A row of lamps' is also popularly known as Diwali, or 'Festival of Lights'. It signifies the triumph of 'Good over Evil'. The festival will be a full day celebration with numerous corporate booths, food & clothing vendors, performances and activities for the whole family including a live grand display of fireworks. Among the individuals honored at the Gala were Vajinath Chakote, MD, Physician/ Entrepreneur, Empire Medical Services, Aditya Mattoo, MD, Nephrologist, NYU Langone Medical Center, Mr. Chintu Patel & Falguni Patel, Co-Founder and Co- Chairman & Chief Executive Officer of Amneal Pharmaceuticals and Ashutosh Tewari, MD, Chairman of Urology, Icahn School of Medicine At Mount Sinai Hospital. The evening was blessed by the presence of Padma Vibhushan Legendary Pandit Jasraj Ji and special performances from Miss Teen Bollywood USA 2017, Manjari Parekh. This is the 30th year of Deepavali & 50th year of the Association of Indians in America.

The highlights of 30th Deepavali 2017 will include Naach Infemo returning to the stage of Deepavali with college and university teams from around the Tri-State area as they showcase dances fusing both East and West cultures. Presented by Star Plus, the competition will be showcased globally. The Association of Indians in America (AIA) is the oldest not-for-profit organization of Asian Indians in America founded on August 20, 1967. It is the grassroots national organization of Asian immigrants in the United States. With chapters and membership spread across the United States of America, AIA represents the hopes and aspirations of those immigrants who are united by their common bond of Indian Heritage and American Commitment. This year, AIA-NY's 30th Deepavali celebrations are going to be held on Sunday Oct 1, 2017 at the South Street Seaport. Please look for the announcement of a celebrity very soon. For more info, please find us on Facebook and visit our website at

www.theaiany.org

Is Pakistan Willing to Lose America ?

(Agencies) ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — For the past 16 years, whenever the United States has been faced with the reality of a failing war in Afghanistan, it has blamed Pakistan. Efforts to bring freedom to the valleys of Afghanistan, this narrative claims, have been thwarted by a double-dealing "ally" that takes American aid while supporting its enemies. The narrative inadvertently casts American presidents, generals, diplomats, spies and others who have been part of the war effort as credulous dupes and casts poor light on the American military, stuck in a quagmire despite having the world's most advanced weapons and largest financial resources. It also assumes that Pakistan has a clear



interest in harming both the United States and Afghanistan. Those assumptions are wrong. Pakistan joined President George W. Bush's war on terrorism reluctantly but proved itself an effective ally in the fight against Al Qaeda and helped decimate its ranks. That contribution was sullied by Pakistan's failure to locate Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad.

After the Sept. 11 attacks, the United States established a partnership with Pakistan over a decade

and a half — handing out substantial amounts of aid, sophisticated weapons and the status of major non-NATO ally. Pakistan continues to require American military hardware, and middle-class Pakistani children continue to dream of attending American universities and of working on Wall Street. The United States is the biggest market for Pakistani exports, and Pakistani-Americans form its seventh-largest diaspora group. (Contd on page 22)

Cults such as Ram Rahim's must not be allowed to become such a public nuisance

The authorities need to take a look at how such cults become almost uncontrollable and stop them from any unlawful activity like stockpiling arms from inception



(Agencies) The scenes were very much like those in his much hyped films. The spectacle put on by Dera Sacha Sauda leader Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh and his followers brought large parts of Punjab and Haryana to a standstill. In the run up to the conviction of Ram Rahim Singh by a CBI court in a rape case, there was such a violent frenzy from his

followers that a massive mobilisation by the state had to be undertaken, with trains, schools and telephony being disrupted. Despite appeals for calm, his supporters continued their rampage after the verdict was announced. But the larger question is how these cults are allowed to become a law unto themselves and how it is that they seem to feel a sense of

entitlement that they are above the law.

In an earlier case, when the police tried to enter the ashram of a spiritual leader in Punjab who had been long dead but stored in a deep freezer by his followers in the belief that he was in deep meditation, they found themselves facing heavily armed supporters who held them off. This sort of pile up of

weapons is not uncommon in these ashrams, and they seem to stay under the radar of the authorities until it is too late. Often, the misdemeanors of these so-called godmen are kept under wraps thanks to the enormous political clout many of them have. In the case of Ram Rahim Singh, he issued calls to his lakhs of followers to support a particular political party in the last round of assembly elections in Punjab. However, whether they enjoy popular support or not, they cannot be unaccountable to the law. The manner in which followers think that they can flout the law is seen from the fact that Dera Sacha Sauda supporters gathered in huge numbers even after expressly forbidden by the imposition of Section 144. In fact the Punjab and Haryana high court had pulled up the Haryana government for not applying the right clauses of Section 144. "Why was assembly not prohibited?" it

has asked. Many of these cults have set up establishments on encroached land and that too hardly ever attracts any opprobrium. There have been mysterious deaths in many of them and allegations of sexual misconduct as in the case of Asaram Bapu who is now behind bars. If Ram Rahim Singh was as keen as he seemed to be that his followers should not create such a public nuisance on his account, he should have reined them in. The fact that the supporters were out in full force was indication that this had at least the tacit approval of Ram Rahim Singh. The authorities need to take a look at how such cults become almost uncontrollable and stop them from any unlawful activity like stockpiling arms from inception. Deploying the resources of the state to ensure peace over one man's conviction seems not just a huge waste but inefficiency in managing law and order in the first place.

Doklam standoff ends: What it means for India, China relations

India and China should not see Doklam in terms of point-scoring but rather as a warning of the need for extending their border management framework across other borders as well.



(Agencies) The Doklam border crisis has ended as suddenly as it began. India announced both countries had agreed to mutually disengage their troops from the plateau along the Sino-Bhutan border. Beijing, in keeping with its recent tendency to speak in nationalistic hyperbole, said Indian troops were

"retreating" and that it would continue to patrol the area. The two statements are not contradictory. China does not speak of what its troops will do. Patrolling upto a country's claims area is allowed under the various Sino-Indian border management agreements and will now de facto be applied to the

Sino-Bhutanese border as well. In effect, both governments seem to have agreed to go back to a status quo that existed before crisis began.

China's original sin was the decision to extend a road up to the Doklam plateau in violation of the 2012 trilateral agreement on the border. The proof of

the pudding, however, will be in the eating. In other words, whether Beijing will seek to change the Doklam status quo in a substantial way over the coming months remains to be seen. One will expect aggressive patrolling in the immediate future by both sides. There may even be verbal brickbats from Beijing, in keeping with the unusually harsh language that has come from the Chinese foreign ministry and media over the past few months. Sound and fury signify nothing. Keeping its troops and workers indoors is what will be the real measure of China's intentions.

Doklam deserves some introspection on the part of India. Beijing seems to have assumed a passive Indian response to its initial construction efforts. Possibly New Delhi's failure to respond to the

initial Chinese action of demolishing two vacant Indian bunkers was misread. Or Beijing concluded that India would feel constrained about interceding on behalf of the territorial claims of a third country. Either way, there was a miscalculation that was potentially dangerous. The announcement of a withdrawal indicates neither side is interested in a wider conflict. But there needs to be some thought about the growing regional footprints of both countries and that their spheres of influence will brush against each other in third countries with increasing frequency. India and China should not see Doklam in terms of point-scoring but rather as a warning of the need for extending their border management framework across other borders as well.

Right to privacy: India couldn't have got a better gift in 70th year of Independence

The nine-judge Supreme Court bench, which decided on the case, had to cast away the historical burden of previous judgments that refused to recognise privacy as a fundamental right

The Supreme Court's declaration that citizens have a 'right to be left alone' is a huge milestone in the history of the Indian Republic and civil rights. The court has ruled that citizens have a right to privacy, which is intrinsic and fundamental to dignified human existence. While the court has not spelt out the full contours of privacy – it has given an illustrative example as to what privacy means. It said privacy includes at its core the preservation of personal intimacies, the sanctity of family life, marriage, procreation, the home and sexual orientation. By doing so, the court has affirmed an unwritten and ambiguous right, though recognised internationally as a fundamental human right. By stepping in – the courts have also filled a huge void left by our constitution framers.

Privacy as a right has not been given a separate legal status in any country. Across the world it has arisen out of judicial pronouncements. The nine-judge Supreme Court bench, which decided on the case, had to cast away the historical burden of previous judgments that refused to recognise privacy as a fundamental right. Interestingly, while doing so, a son, who was part of the nine-judge bench, overruled his father's previous verdict in the infamous ADM Jabalpur case. While this judgment has crystallised an amorphous idea – it has also reopened a debate on many contentious issues that have been decided in the past. For instance, in the case of rights of the LGBT community, this nine-judge bench is of the opinion that the matter was wrongly decided on the touchstone of privacy. Sexual orientation of an individual is a matter of privacy. Similarly, the cases of abortion and willful termination of one's life – are set to witness renewed deliberations. So far, the court has only decided if there is a right to privacy. Now that this is settled, it will turn its attention to the government project Aadhaar. Privacy is central to the legal challenge facing Aadhaar, the 12-digit biometric unique identity number; it is yet to be tested on its touchstone. While privacy in India is still in its infancy, following immense developments in the field of media, technology and scientific thinking, the increasing role of corporations in the lives of citizens there is an urgent need to address this. The country could not have got a better gift from the judiciary for its 70th year of independence.

Unending slowdown: Indian economy

India's economy continues to decelerate with the government's estimate for first-quarter gross domestic product pegging growth at a 13-quarter low of 5.7% in April-June. The reasons for the protracted slowdown – a slide of five straight quarters from 9.1% in March 2016 – are many and varied. But there is little doubt that the demonetisation exercise combined with the uncertainty around the July 1 adoption of the new indirect tax regime served to significantly dampen economic activity. While the GST-related "inventory deaccumulation" that Chief Statistician T.C.A. Anant referred to may well be reversed in the current quarter as companies across sectors gain comfort with the new tax regime, it is still doubtful whether demand for industrial output is going to attain any meaningful strength. The Reserve Bank of India last month said that its industrial outlook survey had "revealed a waning of optimism in Q2 about demand conditions across parameters and especially on capacity utilisation, profit margins and employment." A look at the sector-specific trends shows that manufacturing expansion in gross value added (GVA) terms has slackened to a near stall at 1.2%. This, from 5.3% in Q4 of the last fiscal and 10.7% a year earlier, is a far from heartening sign. With capacity utilisation expected to weaken this quarter, according to the RBI, and with surveys suggesting that consumer sentiment has deteriorated steadily in August, the auguries for a demand rebound are far from promising.

While expressing concern about the slower-than-expected expansion, the Finance Minister has acknowledged that the challenge before the government now is to work out both policy and investment measures to boost momentum. One option would be to suspend the fiscal road map for a limited period in order to pump prime the economy through increased capital spending by the government. The risks of fiscal loosening are of course manifold, especially at a juncture when several State governments have either announced or are contemplating large-scale farm loan waivers, which would push up interest rates and crowd out fresh lending. Still, there is a thin sliver of a silver lining in the GDP data. The services sector continues to remain buoyant. Quarterly GVA across this broad swathe that encompasses trade, hotels, transport, communication and broadcasting accelerated to 11.1%, from 6.5% in the fourth quarter, faster than the 8.9% posted in the corresponding period last year. The civil aviation sector saw passenger traffic soaring by 15.6%, and construction activity, a provider of jobs, also ticked up by 2%. The Finance Minister has his task cut out: to find ways to restore momentum before the tailwinds of low inflation and affordable energy prices start reversing direction.

Harvey, the Storm That Humans Helped Cause

Even before the devastation from Harvey, southeastern Texas was enduring a year unlike any before. The daily surface temperature of the Gulf of Mexico last winter never dropped below 73 degrees. You can probably guess how many previous times that had happened: Zero.

This sort of heat has a specific effect on storms: Warmer weather causes heavier rainfall. Why? When the seas warm, more moisture evaporates into the air, and when the air warms – which has also been happening in Texas – it can carry more moisture. The severity of Harvey, in other words, is almost certainly related to climate change.

Yes, I know the sober warning that's issued whenever an extreme weather disaster occurs: No individual storm can be definitively blamed on climate change. It's true, too. Some version of Harvey probably would have happened without climate change, and we'll never know the hypothetical truth.

But it's time to shed some of the fussy over-precision about the relationship between climate change and weather. James Hansen, the eminent climate researcher, has used the term "scientific reticence" to describe this problem. Out of an abundance of academic caution – a caution that is in many ways admirable – scientists (and journalists) have obscured climate change's true effects.

We don't display the same fussiness in other important areas. No individual case of lung cancer can be definitively linked to smoking, as Heidi Cullen, the chief scientist at Climate Central, notes. Few vehicle accidents can be definitely linked to alcohol, and few saved lives can be definitely linked to seatbelts.

Yet smoking, drunken driving and seatbeltless riding each created a public health crisis. Once the link became clear and widely understood, people changed their behavior and prevented a whole lot of suffering.

Climate change is on its way to becoming a far worse public health crisis than any of those other problems. Already, it has aggravated droughts, famines and deadly heat waves. In the United States, global warming seems to be contributing to the spread of Lyme disease. Now we have Harvey. It has brought yet another flood that's being described as unprecedented. It is terrorizing thousands of Texans and submerged large parts of the nation's fourth-largest city, Houston. The immediate priorities, of course, are protection and rescue, and many Texans are rising to the moment. Houston has a certain friendly swagger, a mix of old Texas and new, and it's evident this week. Residents are checking up on neighbors and saving people they'd never met before. The stories are inspiring.

They're inspiring because they involve people coming together to protect one another. And how can people come together to protect one another from future storms and floods? The answer starts with getting real about climate change, which is the main reason storms are doing more damage than in the past.

Obviously, some extreme weather events are unrelated to climate change. But a growing number appear to be related, including many involving torrential rain, thanks to the warmer seas and air. "The heaviest rainfall events have become heavier and more frequent, and the amount of rain falling on the heaviest rain days has also increased," as the National Climate Assessment, a federal report, found. "The mechanism driving these changes," the report explained, is hotter air stemming from "human-caused warming."



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How Kejriwal changed tack on PM Modi to end political slide with Bawana win

AAP's victory in Bawana bypoll has given the party cadre a morale boost. The victory mirrors two-fold change in party strategy — connecting with people and not getting into a confrontation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The win for the Aam Aadmi Party in Monday's bypoll in north-west Delhi's Bawana assembly segment implies that Arvind Kejriwal's change of political track — no confrontation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and reconnecting with people — has shown a positive result. This morale boosting victory came after below par performance in Punjab, a drubbing in Goa and failure to win any of the three municipal corporations in Delhi. In the six months after the series of defeats, a lot has changed in the AAP.

The party leadership shied from criticising Prime Minister Modi as it was boomeranging in polls. The ministers stopped blaming the lieutenant governor (the Centre's nominee) for blocking their proposals considering it was being termed as "negative politics". There was a realisation in the AAP that it cannot blame the Centre for its failures and had to deliver on its promises ranging from free wi-fi zones in the city to a waste-management system to safety of women and a crackdown on water mafia to a modern transport system and much more. The Modi government has already shown it will not oppose the good governance moves taken by the AAP government. The Centre supported Kejriwal's rationing plan and crackdown on public schools charging high fees.

So, the relatively new party focused on publicising its own good work, especially in the field of education and health. The AAP reconnected with its "missing" volunteers, who again got a voice in the government. Kejriwal was back on the streets of Delhi connecting with people, which he had not done after winning the

assembly polls in 2015. It worked as the party was able to retain its vote-bank especially among the deprived and poor despite the Congress eating into its vote share as compared to the 2015 polls. The AAP and Congress compete for the same vote-bank. Ved Prakash, who joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after resigning as an AAP legislator, came a poor second was the clear loser as the saffron party's vote share dipped the most. The BJP swept the municipal polls in April, winning three out of five municipal wards in

Bawana. Many wrote an obituary for the Capital's ruling party based on the outcome of the civic elections but forgot that the five-year-old party has the ability to stage a comeback. The victory in Bawana shows the strength of AAP but describing it as its revival in Delhi would be wrong.

Bawana does not represent Delhi as it does not have traditional middle-class voters, who dominate in more than half of the 70 assembly constituencies in the national capital. Majority of the voters in Bawana live

in slums and unauthorised colonies, a reason for the AAP's success, and remaining in 26 Jat-dominated villages. he AAP was routed in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, not winning one of the seven seats in the Capital. But nine months later, it created poll history by winning 67 of the 70 assembly seats in Delhi. Born out of a people's movement against corruption, the party needed to reinvent itself and reconnect with people as it did after the 2014 election. It did with Kejriwal saddled in the constituency for almost two



months. "He visited almost every by-lane in this constituency," said a party candidate Ram Chander winning in Bawana. I am sure that the turning to politics was a win will infuse a new energy in the party anti-corruption activist, representing alternate politics.

Now focus on other crimes committed by Gurmeet Ram Rahim and Dera associates

If this sentence serves to break the stranglehold of this dera and others like it on the popular imagination, not to mention on politicians across the board, then this would be a healthy precedent. His pleas for leniency, his protestations that he had been framed and other theatrics cut no ice with the CBI judge who handed down a harsh sentence to the once all-powerful Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, leader of the Dera Sacha Sauda. However, in a case of forewarned being forearmed, the authorities kept a tight lid on things with a massive deployment of forces, shoot on sight orders and unequivocal warnings to his supporters who had run riot when the guilty verdict was pronounced in a 15-year-old rape charge against him.

The CBI was pushing for the maximum possible sentence. Now that the sentencing is



over, the authorities can focus on other things connected with the dera. One is the land it has encroached upon, the other is the massive structures it has built without authorisation. The most dangerous is the stockpile of sophisticated weapons within its premises, clearly with the intention of taking on the law-enforcers if need be. Political support and popular appeal had allowed the flamboyant so-called spiritual leader to play the role of kingmaker

in elections, the latest being the last assembly elections. But certain rules have been rewritten here. The authorities are now of a mind to attach the dera's properties to pay for the damage wreaked by Singh's followers last week. The Punjab government has also refused to pay compensation for those who died in the violence on the grounds that they were in violation of the law and the state could not be responsible for them.

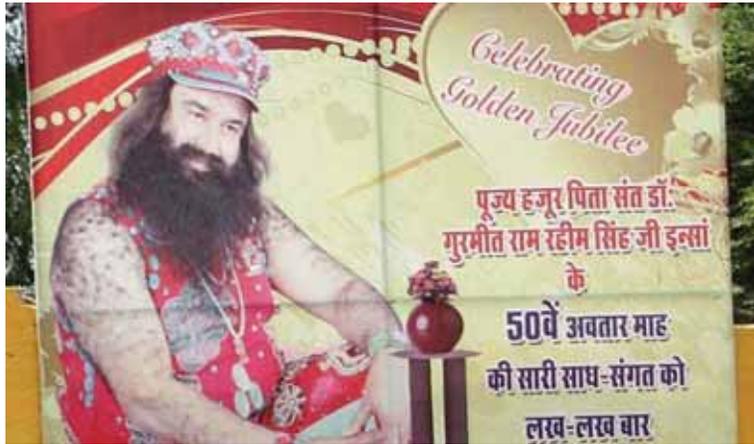
Now it would be

appropriate to come as his supporters are likely to be smarting under this blow. A strict surveillance should be kept on the many branches of the dera and on other similar institutions in the state. Singh has paid the price, even though it can be argued that it is too little too late. But the state authorities in Haryana, which failed in their duty to prevent the mayhem unleashed by his supporters, have got off far too lightly.

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The psychology of why Gurmeet Ram Rahim and similar 'godmen' are so popular

Dressed in silken robes and floral headbands, the filmic version of him flying like superman and killing imaginary enemies, what could he possibly represent to his followers? It is important to see groups as a retreat to a mass of people who are unconsciously seeking a figure who can shelter them from the devastation of being disenfranchised.



Confronted in the world mostly by our helplessness we find ourselves pining to belong somewhere we feel safer, less vulnerable. The family is the most basic group we have once imagined this comfort in. The disappointments intrinsic to living push us towards seeking affiliation with our groups which we become a part of sometimes by choice and at other times by force. Groups promise us a badge of belonging and something bigger than ourselves. There is a safety in numbers and the leader (either imaginary or real, elected or self-styled) comes to be reposed with the often unconscious wishes of the group.

In return for this, the group demands our allegiance and loyalty. The difference is between whether the group elects to be with a leader who is more or less omnipotent and hence whether the refuge is one of immunity to suffering or a strengthening of the capacity to suffer. Buddhism may offer us the serenity of surrendering to suffering, while many other cults offer omnipotent leaders who hold up an unconscious promise to combat it on our behalf; a system of religious veneration and devotion directed towards a particular figure or object.

Groups vary in these body of assumptions, but what is clear is that groups have an identity

which demands that all members subjugate themselves to the group. Freud (1920) observed that larger groups tend to regress more than smaller units. This may be because the commonality of the assumptions that bind them tend shrink with the size of the group. Unconscious fantasies seal together groups who share a body of assumptions. Basic assumptions that underlie groups vary. Wilfred Bion (1959) suggests that in small groups there are three types of leaders: caring leaders reflecting a basic need for a group to depend on somebody; ruthless leaders reflecting a basic unconscious need for the members to be protected from and led against frightening enemies (fight/flight assumption); and a messianic, omnipotent leader who could care for the group without the group having to think or work, in other words, a leader with magical skills. Leaders of large groups often exert a dramatic effect on the members who appear not to retain individual minds and throw themselves behind

leaders who, under normal conditions, would be rejected, like cult leaders; Hitler being only the most notorious. Often impulsivity and violence run high, as some kind of mass cleansing is delusionally promised.

The Dera Sacha Sauda is one such sect – a deadly combination of magic and ruthlessness – that has existed for nearly 60 years. It is believed that 400 members of this sect have been castrated inside the sect's headquarters to bring them closer to god. Its leader, Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh aka Baba Love Charger was accused of murder and has been convicted of rape and found guilty of sexually assaulting two Dera sadhvis. Leaders of such groups may seize for themselves what other group members are forced to renounce and this is a part of what is expunged from the group's consciousness. The hostility we witness today is to a judgement that threatens the fragile fabric of a group built on perversions and lies.

It is impossible to fathom the

appeal of this cartoonish figure who can incite this hysteria and violence that can bring a country to a standstill. Dressed in silken robes and floral headbands, the filmic version of him flying like superman and killing imaginary enemies, what could he possibly represent to his followers? It is important to see groups as a retreat to a mass of people who are unconsciously seeking a figure who can shelter them from the devastation of being disenfranchised.

Ram Rahim (only pseudonyms proliferate) changed his clothes frequently and was seen waving to bands of followers who were often in coordinated attire. While he seemed quite removed from anything sacred or reverential, it is perhaps a sign of the disturbing times we live in – where Superman meets Hanuman waving the national flag – is no longer a scene from a slapstick movie but a figure of a religious leader. It seems the old religions are losing out to neon lights and Bollywood gimmickry.

China Miscalculated How To Handle India, Allowed Face-Saving Exit

To the considerable relief of all parties involved, India and China agreed yesterday to end a 74-day stand-off by their security forces near the trijunction with Bhutan. India initiated the announcement with a short statement that simply said that an "expeditious disengagement of border personnel...has been agreed to and is ongoing." China confirmed that India had withdrawn border personnel. Its spokesperson added that Beijing would "continue to exercise its sovereignty and uphold its territorial integrity" and reportedly that its forces "will continue to patrol in Doklam region." Beijing acknowledged that "adjustments" would be made on the ground.

A lot was left unsaid, and deliberately so. China did not say that its own troops had fallen back or that it was calling off the road building activities in the disputed territory that had provoked the stand-off. Equally - and more importantly - Chinese officials did not confirm that road building would continue or deny a disengagement of forces. Affairs had been choreographed so that both sides could claim victory. China was satisfied with Indian forces withdrawing to their prior

positions to the west. But India accomplished its objective of ensuring that China would cease road building to its south.

The Doklam situation has provoked a host of commentary, much of it ill-informed, in part due to uncertainty and initially vague reports about its exact location, the competing legal claims made by China, Bhutan, and India, and the extraordinarily harsh rhetoric by China's officials and state media leading to concerns about escalation. But three questions remain. Why did the situation come about? Why did it end? And what might be the long-term consequences?

The exact reasons and timing for China's actions which precipitated the impasse on June 16 may never be known. Construction activities meant to strengthen China's position in disputed territory have become a common practice, including in the South China Sea. It is also now clear that China's leaders miscalculated, and did not anticipate an Indian intervention as their forces pushed forward in territory disputed with Bhutan. Speculative theories that China intended to teach a lesson to India - including pos-

sibly for its boycott of the Belt and Road Initiative - do not withstand scrutiny, given that events unfolded at a site where India had natural advantages.

The reasons for the stand-off's conclusion are easier to fathom. China had attempted to threaten and cajole India through public messages, mocking videos, and travel advisories intended to limit Chinese tourists from traveling to India. None of that worked. Indian forces were also better positioned on the ground, with more robust supply lines than their Chinese counterparts. The forthcoming BRICS Summit in the south-eastern Chinese city of Xiamen risked being overshadowed. It would have been awkward and embarrassing for China to welcome an Indian prime minister as a guest even as Indian forces were present in (what Beijing believes to be) Chinese territory. Finally, the 19th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party was looming, and an unresolved stand-off with India risked having domestic political ramifications. For these reasons, it was in Beijing's interest to ensure an early resolution to the stand-off, assuming a face-saving formula could be found.

What are the consequences? In the near future, it heralds a return to some possible normalcy in India-China relations. The two sides demonstrated that, despite the rhetoric, a peaceful and diplomatic solution could be found. But the long-term implications will be more uncertain. India has shown considerable resolve, not just in an effort to protect its own security interests but those of its neighbours. China, meanwhile, has done considerable damage to its reputation in India, less by precipitating the problem, and more by its poor handling of the situation. Whether on the border or beyond - in other domains, including regional security, multilateral affairs, or economic and trade relations - it would not be surprising if New Delhi was to approach its relations with Beijing with greater wariness. Particularly following its behaviour on the South China Sea, it would be natural for India not to trust Chinese promises on the disputed frontier, but to continue to remain vigilant.

If the Chinese state has hurt its reputation, so has the press, which did not acquit itself very well over the course of the past two months.

There will be more Gurmeet Ram Rahims, it's a question of demand and supply

Freeing India of the menace of charlatans — the likes of Ram Rahims — is a far stiffer challenge than cleaning up India through the ambitious Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

One mighty figure has fallen, but make no mistake: The jailing of Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh is not the end of the road for self-styled 'godmen' and 'godwomen' in the country. A country as large as India is a huge catchment for unscrupulous people to prey on. No matter how much we are repelled by the exploits — or rather misdeeds — of Ram Rahim and his fanatical followers who rampaged across states last week, this is definitely not the last time the unholy deeds of so-called 'holy men' will outrage us.

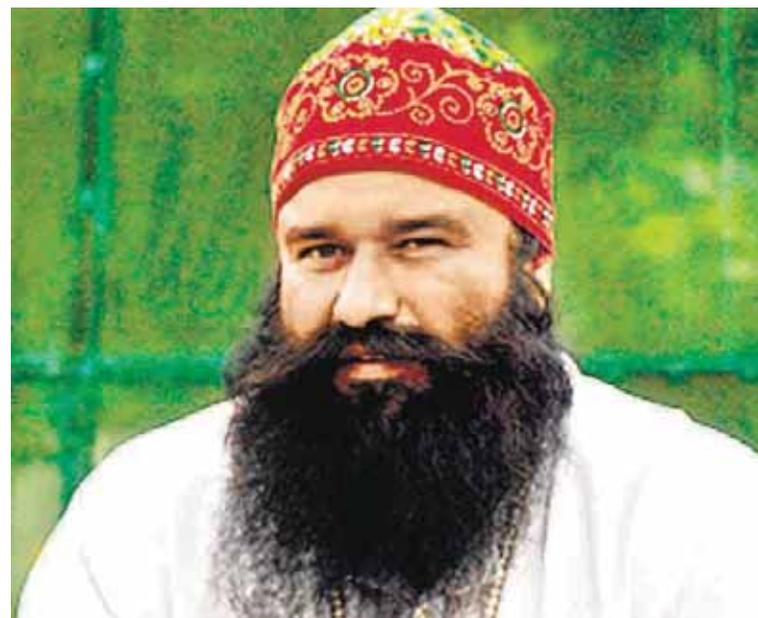
Our memory is short and we are more likely to forget the Ram Rahim episode the moment the next big news story breaks. Life will move on and it is likely to be business as usual until some other Baba or Mata somewhere in the country hits the headlines with his or her misdemeanours. There will expectedly be a replay of last

week's collective revulsion before it gets back to normal again. Freeing India of the menace of charlatans — the likes of Ram Rahims — is a far stiffer challenge than cleaning up India through the ambitious Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. There is no broom readily available to sweep them away and the cocktail of poverty, ignorance, superstition, insecurities and caste hierarchies will unmistakably continue to breed more godmen and godwomen in the times to come. Some of them are continuing to flourish in various parts of the country under the radar. Their ranks will undoubtedly swell as more join in.

It is easy to take the high moral ground and argue that Indians should stop investing in such fake holy men and women marketing synthetic spirituality. But such platitudes have little meaning where back-breaking

poverty, discrimination, inequalities and resultant frustration force millions of people to flock to such holy men and women for succor. The 'godmen' and 'godwomen' give people a false sense of identity and bonding, burnished by the charities such as free medicare and education that they run with their ill-gotten wealth. Coming under their spell gives the vulnerable masses a false sense of security and an illusion of dignity. Since the ground realities are unlikely to change, it is prudent for us to brace ourselves for more 'unholy' scandals in the future as in the past. There can be no law to ban people from reposing their blind faith in someone and there will neither be a dearth of gullible people or those ready to exploit them in this country of billion-plus people.

If the 1970s was dominated by Dhirendra



Brahmachari, the following decades threw up equally disputable characters such as Chandraswami, Balak Brahmachari, Asaram Bapu and others. It finally boils down to a business of demand and supply and as long as demand exists, fed by inequalities and ignorance, we

will never run out of supply. We may therefore cry hoarse as much as we may like over the unscrupulousness of someone like Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, but there actually is no respite from them. The Dera Sacha Sauda head was only the latest to shame us, but certainly not the last.

Doklam defused: Why it will take a lot of effort for India, China to rebuild ties

In the wider Indo-Pacific region, India will be seen as the only power to have stood up to China's aggressive policies. Recognition is Japan's, and later US endorsement, of India's stand

The announcement in Beijing and New Delhi on August 28, 2017, of a simultaneous disengagement of Indian and Chinese troops — who had faced-off on the high altitude Doklam Plateau for three months — is a welcome first step. It came after China continuously insisted for three months that the disputed 89 sq km Doklam Plateau is Chinese territory and made a variety of threats against India of the kind not seen in the past forty years. After a disingenuous initial statement implying that Indian troops alone had withdrawn, China later, in reply to a specific question, clarified that troops from both sides had pulled back. India separately announced that the bulldozers and earthmoving equipment brought by the Chinese had been removed, making it apparent that China has undertaken to cease building the road to Gyemochen through the Doklam Plateau, which was the main reason for India's objection.

While China and pro-Chinese analysts will now talk of looking ahead and continuing relations as before, the fact remains that China's unrelenting propaganda over the past three months has damaged the relationship. It has dissipated what little trust existed in the Sino-Indian relationship, rebuilding which will require a long time. More

important is the need for a change in China's attitude towards India — a point made by Prime Minister Modi in his talk at China's prestigious Peking University during his visit to Beijing in April 2015.

China's track record in abiding by agreements has, however, been dodgy. Ready recent examples are its reneging within three years in 2008 on the agreement by which it accepted Sikkim as a state of the Indian Union; backing off from the agreement on not disturbing 'settled populations' which pertained to Arunachal Pradesh; and, most recently, violating the 2012 agreement not to alter the status quo and cease building the road through the Doklam Plateau. China has not hesitated to go back on agreements with other countries either.

The Doklam stand-off has far reaching implications. It differed markedly from previous stand-offs including others that actually lasted considerably longer. During the Doklam stand-off, China's state-owned propaganda apparatus mounted an unprecedented offensive not seen in over forty years and which revealed that the Chinese Communist leadership cared little about improving Sino-Indian ties and had scant regard for Indian sensitivities. Memories of the threats are unlikely to recede for a very long while. It ensured world attention on

the stand-off at Doklam. The stand-off also triggered adverse reaction in India which, already upset at the US\$ 52 billion trade deficit, has begun scrutinising Chinese commercial activity in India.

Countries in India's immediate neighbourhood, like Pakistan and Nepal, have closely monitored developments surrounding Doklam with both, pointedly, staying silent. Both can be expected to reassess their policies towards India, while Pakistan will additionally re-evaluate China's reliability. Islamabad will have noted China's assessment that US President Trump's recent announcement on Afghanistan and terrorism increases pressure on Pakistan and heralds a realignment in geopolitics of the region.

In the wider Indo-Pacific region too India will be seen as the only power to have stood up to China's aggressive policies. Recognition is Japan's, and later US endorsement, of India's stand. In effect, India challenged China at Doklam and paused the seeming momentum Beijing had created to aggressively expand strategic space and territory, thereby denting Beijing's image.

Military and political considerations have been important. China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) was in an untenable position at Doklam. India's swift and robust response was

unexpected and caught the Chinese unprepared. In the ten days prior to Beijing going public with news of the stand-off, there were undoubtedly deliberations in the PLA and Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s top leadership echelons leading to the decision to try and browbeat India into submission and, if necessary, use military force. India's refusal to yield ground, or seek to compromise its way out as anticipated by China on the basis of past record, would have prompted the rethink to opt for de-escalation.

Finally, the important 19th Party Congress scheduled to be held in October-November 2017, makes Xi Jinping politically vulnerable. Xi Jinping has used ideology and nationalism as his main instruments to strengthen the CCP's monopoly on power and boost his personal authority. He is also in the midst of implementing the most extensive reform the PLA has seen in its 90 years of existence, and could not afford to take the chance that in case he orders the PLA to 'teach India a lesson' it is unable to secure a decisive victory or suffers a bloody nose. Smarting at the setback, the PLA and Xi Jinping will in all probability look for a way to retrieve hurt pride.

How Ram Rahim took the ladder of Punjab politics to rise in religio-business

In 1994, Ram Rahim bought 50 acres of land at Salabatpura in Punjab's Bathinda purportedly from the money collected by disciples. This centre now has more than 100 acres.

Jailed for 20 years on Tuesday in a rape case, Dera Sacha Sauda (DSS) head Gurmeet Ram Rahim's fall is as dramatic as was his rise, particularly in Punjab, the hub of his sect's activities. Up to 1994 — besides the Sirsa headquarters in Haryana — in Punjab the dera had only one naam charcha ghar (preaching centre) of five acres at Malout in Muktsar district in 1994. That too had been set up in the time of Shah Satnam — Gurmeet's predecessor and the second dera chief after its founder Shah Mastana — who had died in 1990 soon after handing over the 'gaddi' (seat).

By 2007, the DSS empire had grown to 98 centres spread over 800 acres. That was also the year that Gurmeet Ram Rahim got into crosshairs with the Sikh community after he allegedly committed blasphemy by dressing up as the tenth Sikh master, Guru Gobind Singh, at the dera's state headquarters at Salabatpura near Bathinda. That led to clashes, and the baba never came to Punjab for any activity since. The case has, though, been cancelled by the Punjab police during the previous regime of the SAD-BJP combine.

Gurmeet had shown his

talents early on, as he started expansion plans within a couple of years of taking over at the age of 23. In 1994, he bought 50 acres of land at Salabatpura purportedly from the money collected by disciples. This centre now has more than 100 acres.

"Baba disliked Malout's geographical location as it is close to the border with Rajasthan, part of the region on the tri-junction of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. He decided to shift the dera base to Salabatpura in Rampura Phul region of Bathinda as the area was more easily accessible to followers even from Moga, Barnala, Faridkot and Mansa districts," said a political leader who was once close to the dera. This forms the Malwa region of Punjab, largest of the three cultural divisions of the state.

He gathered followers during a time when Punjab had barely come out of militancy, and several dominated classes and Dalits were searching for social space. Soon, naam charcha ghars came up in Mansa, Barnala and Sangrur. The number was up to 20 by 2002 in Malwa alone. He still had a large following in Haryana.

The period between 2000 and 2007 is called "golden time" by

followers, when the dera chief used the ladder of politics to establish himself as a parallel power centre.

Already, by 1996, the dera had a sizeable vote bank in Malwa, and the dera head had decided to "secretly" extend his support to SAD's Sukhbir Singh Badal when he fought the Lok Sabha poll for Faridkot seat. Sukhbir defeated Congress candidate Jagmeet Singh Brar.

Political experts in Malwa opined that this was the time when even the affluent classes, seeing the increasing political clout, started getting attracted towards DSS.

"In 1997, the dera supported SAD-BJP in the assembly polls

18 'shahi betiyan' taken out from Dera Sacha Sauda's campus in Sirsa

Authorities in Haryana's Sirsa district on Tuesday got 18 minor girls taken out from the Dera Sacha Sauda (DSS) sect headquarters near Sirsa town to undergo a medical examination.

"Eighteen girls, aged up to 18 years, were taken out from the Dera after completing all legal formalities. At present, these girls are under the supervision of a child protection officer and, later they will be sent to child protection institutes being run at different places," Sirsa deputy



and the alliance formed the government. Then, in 2002 Capt Amarinder Singh-led Congress formed the government and also enjoyed full support of the dera, albeit secretly," said a Bathinda-based veteran journalist. "This sent the message fast and loud among political classes in villages that joining the dera

would provide them space as well as vote bank of the suppressed classes. Apart from politicians, even administrative and police officers start visiting the dera for good postings, and this period saw many landed Jat Sikhs and rich Bania community members in prime grain-market towns of Malwa got attracted too."

commissioner Prabhjot Singh said.

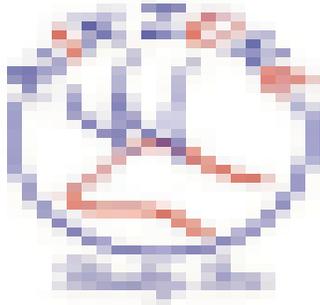
Officials said the minor girls will undergo a medical examination.

The move comes after sect chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh was convicted of rape of two of his female disciples in 1999 and sentenced to 20 years in prison by a CBI special court.

In other steps, the deputy commissioner said the district administration has also sent 650 people of the DSS to their

respective destinations. "With this, only 250 to 300 people are now left in the Dera (campus)," he said.

The officer said that peace is prevailing in Sirsa town and relaxation in curfew has been given up to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, except for the roads leading to the Dera complex, eight km from the town. "Internet services have also been restored. Educational institutions and banks have re-opened and the people are busy in their day-to-day work."



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Godman' Rampal acquitted in two criminal cases, murder case verdict awaited

The Haryana court's ruling comes three years after thousands of his followers clashed with police and paramilitary personnel that left at least six people dead.

(Agencies) A Hisar court acquitted self-styled godman Rampal on Tuesday in connection with two criminal cases registered against him, citing lack of evidence. Judicial Magistrate, Hisar, Mukesh Kumar pronounced the verdict, acquitting Rampal, head of Satlok Ashram, Barwala and his followers here. (LIVE?updates)

Rampal would remain in jail as he is facing other charges including sedition, the defence counsel said. The court is yet to announce a decision on more serious allegations of murder, attempted murder and sedition that have been filed against him "He has been acquitted in the two cases (426 and 427). It's a victory of truth," said

Rampal's lawyer AP Singh. The Indian Penal Code sections pertain to causing damage to public property and person. The 66-year-old leader, who runs a sect housed in a sprawling 12-acre ashram in Hisar's Barwala, first burst into prominence in the late 90s after touring Haryana as a bhajan singer. On August 24, the judge had deferred the date of hearing to August 29 after the police cited tension in the wake of the Dera Sacha Sauda case. On November 17, 2014, a case was registered against Rampal and his followers under sections 186 (Obstructing public servant in discharge of public function), 332 (Voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 353 (Assault or use of criminal

force to deter a public servant from discharging his duty) of the IPC. Another case was registered against Rampal and his followers Purshotam Dass, Raj Kumar, Mohinder Singh, Rajender Singh, Rahul and 30-40 other persons on November 18, 2014 on a complaint of Sukhdev Singh of Ratia (Fatehabad) for rioting, unlawful assembly, disobedience to an order lawfully promulgated by a public servant and wrongfully confining any person. Rampal was arrested after a tense standoff between some of his supporters and the police after close to 15,000 of his followers were evacuated from the sprawling ashram premises in 2014. The standoff had then turned violent, resulting into the death of five



persons. Rampal had resisted a police operation for his arrest on the Punjab and Haryana court orders. He had even refused to appear in the High court to reply to charges like contempt of court. He had holed himself up inside his ashram in Barwala, Hisar. Rampal would remain in jail as he is facing other charges including sedition, the defence counsel said.

Gurmeet Ram Rahim was revered like god...acted like beast, says judge

A CBI court on Monday sentenced self-styled godman Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh to 20 years in jail and fined him Rs 30 lakh for raping two disciples, saying he acted like a "wild beast" and didn't even spare his "pious" followers.



(Agencies) Handing out a 20-year rigorous imprisonment to Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, convicted for raping his two "sadhvis" (female followers), a special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court on Monday said the convict does not deserve leniency as he did not spare his pious disciples and acted like a wild beast.

"In other words, he's a man who neither has concern for humanity nor has any mercy in his nature," said CBI special judge Jagdeep Singh, pronouncing the quantum of sentence from the makeshift court in Rohtak's Sunaria jail.

Making scathing remarks on Ram Rahim, the judge said if the acts of convict in sexually exploiting his female disciples and threatening them with dire consequences were taken note of, then such kind of person do not deserve any sympathy of the court.

"Both the victims had put Ram Rahim on the pedestal of God and revered him like that. However, he committed breach of gravest nature by sexually assaulting such gullible and blind followers. Such criminal acts of convict, who is stated to be heading a religious organisation — Dera Sacha Sauda at Sirsa — are bound to shatter image of pious sacred spiritual, social, cultural and religious institutions existing in the country since time immemorial. This, in turn, reflects irreparable damages caused by the acts of convict to the heritage of ancient land," the judge said in his order.

Justifying the quantum of punishment, the judge referred to the Supreme Court judgments. He said the fundamental purpose of imposition of sentence is based on the principal that the convict must realise that the crime committed by him has not created only a dent on the life of victims, but a concavity in the

social fabric. The purpose of just punishment is designed so that the individuals in the society, which ultimately constitute the collective, do not suffer time and again for such crimes. It serves as a deterrent, the court said.

Quoting another apex court order of 2014, the CBI court said it is the duty of the court to impose adequate sentence, for one of the purposes of imposition of requisite sentence is protection of the society and legitimate response to the collective conscious. In a way, it is an obligation to the society, which has reposed faith in the court of law to curtail evil.

While imposing the sentence, it's the court's accountability to remind itself about its role and reverence for the rule of law. It must evince the rationalised judicial discretion and not an individual perception and moral propensity.

It has also been observed by the apex court that old saying "law can hunt ones past" cannot be allowed to be buried in an indecent manner and the rainbow of mercy, for no fathomable reason, should be allowed to rule. The conception of mercy has its own space but it cannot occupy the whole accommodation. Further, it has also been observed that though punishment is designed to protect the society by deterring

potential offenders as also by preventing the guilty party from repeating the offence, it is also designed to reform the offender and reclaim his as law abiding citizen for the good of the society, said the court

Reformatory, deterrent, and the punitive aspect of punishment thus play their due part in judicial thinking while determining the question of awarding appropriate sentence, the judge said in his order.

Earlier, the dera chief had pleaded for a lesser sentence on the grounds that he has completed 50 years and is suffering from hypertension, acute diabetes and spinal disc problem leading to severe backache for the past eight years. His long incarceration hence would adversely affect his health. He also placed on record medical treatment documents. Gurmeet also pleaded that he has an elderly mother who is suffering from various age-related diseases.

Citing his welfare works, the dera head said he has motivated thousands of people to do social works, such as plantation drives. "The convict is carrying out social works in Haryana, when the state government has failed to do so," his counsel claimed before court.

He also argued that the convict motivated people to

marry prostitutes, played commendable role in drug de-addiction and 133 welfare works were in progress under his guidance. He also brought on record a booklet of social works undertaken by the dera and made a reference to various commendation certificates received for good deeds.

Quoting yet another apex court judgment, the CBI court said that after order of conviction, it is mandatory duty of the court to consider the question of award of compensation to victim of crime. However, it is the discretion of the court to award or not to award the compensation. It has been further held that Section 357 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) confers a duty on the court to apply its mind to the question of compensation in every criminal case.

Disclosure of application of mind is best demonstrated by recording reason in support of the order or conclusion. The SC has also held that Section 357 of the CrPC does not impose any limitation on power of the court to award compensation, but such jurisdiction cannot be exercised at the whims and caprice of a judge. Before issuing a direction to pay compensation, the capacity of the accused to pay the same must be judged.

Doklam standoff ends: Why India, China must build a stable, lasting friendship now

India and China should declare a 1,000-year cessation of hostilities. Whatever the immediate differences, both must recognise and regard each other not just as nations, but as great civilisations

(Agencies) On Monday, the ministry of external affairs in a two-point statement on the "Doklam disengagement understanding" announced an "expeditious disengagement of border personnel at the face-off site." Typically, China's official Xinhua News Agency confirmed the news as India's withdrawal of troops, without mentioning if its own troops would also back off. As India prepares for the 9th BRICS summit to be held at Xiamen, China, from September 3 to 5, this could decrease tension between the two nations.

But if the Indian Army chief's comments are anything to go by, we should not be too optimistic, let alone be lulled into complacency. Delivering the General BC Joshi Memorial Lecture at Savitribai Phule Pune University on August 27, General Bipin Rawat warned that China is trying to "change the status quo" on our border and incidents like Doklam are likely to "increase" in future.

China's belligerence

towards India is nothing new. In the last few years, we have been unable to move even an inch towards resolving our disputes along the 3,488-kilometre border we share with China.

Thumbing its nose over India's concerns, China has powered ahead with its \$46 billion corridor through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). This amounts to a refusal to accept that even PoK is a disputed area, let alone Balochistan, where the Gwadar port, the terminus of its uber-ambitious One Belt, One Road project, is located.

China has not only repeatedly blocked India's membership to the Nuclear Suppliers Group or vetoed United Nations resolutions to label Masood Azhar a global terrorist, but has also cozied up considerably to Pakistan in the last few years. No wonder that when the 14th Dalai Lama visited the Tawang monastery in Arunachal Pradesh in April, China threatened to intervene in

Kashmir. Of course, there was no mention that China's claims over Arunachal Pradesh arise out of its takeover of Tibet, which the Tibetan Government in Exile views as illegitimate and illegal.

How does one make sense of China's all-round bellicosity and muscle-flexing? According to defence analyst Brahma Chellaney, the roots of China's "imperial overreach" lie in the "Chinese dream". This is the Communist Party of China's ambition to make the country the world's leading power by 2049, the centenary of communist rule in that country. Its current general secretary, Chinese President Xi Jinping, is merely carrying out this mandate. In the upcoming 19th Party Congress, Xi is expected to be cleared to lead China for another five years.

Given that the US seems to be sliding from its pre-eminent position, this may seem, on the surface, to be a logical and realisable goal. After all, China may become the world's leading economic power before 2049.



It's military ambitions, it appears, is to supplant the US over the next couple of decades. But economic and military power is not enough. China will also need cultural and political legitimacy, which it lacks now. Instead, China is becoming increasingly unpopular the world over, especially in Asia because of its intimidation of its smaller neighbours. By standing up for Bhutan at Doklam, it is India, which has behaved with surprising firmness in thwarting Chinese designs.

Given the recent appointment of the much-decorated and battle-tested 63-year-old General Li Zuocheng as head of the joint staff department, China wants to send the message that it will continue to act tough. Li

has already met Pakistani army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. With the Peoples Liberation Army primed up over the past few months for hostility, India must also prepare for any eventuality, not taking lightly China's threat to teach it a lesson. Ideally, however, India and China should declare a 1,000-year cessation of hostilities. Though, we have no idea what the world will look like 1,000 years from now, if our past record is anything to go by, our two civilisations have probably the best chance of surviving into the next millennium. Whatever the immediate differences, both India and China must recognise and regard each other not just as nations, but as great civilisations.

Did Gurmeet Ram Rahim's Dera use law to silence Honeypreet Insaan's husband?

Vishwas Gupta, son-in-law of Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh faced a case of dowry after 11 years of marriage, and an FIR in a cheque bounce case filed in Gujarat and another in Rajasthan.



(Agencies) It was Valentine's Day in 1999 when Vishwas Gupta was asked by Dera Sacha Sauda head Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh to marry Priyanka Taneja in a simple ceremony of exchanging garlands at Sirsa.

Taneja, who was later named Honeypreet and adopted by the Dera head, shares his quirky fondness for bling and movies.

On Friday, she was the only one from "family" to accompany Gurmeet to the CBI court that pronounced him guilty of rape and flew with him in a chopper

to the Rohtak jail as his "attendant". And an attendant of the Dera chief is what she was all through her marriage, says MS Joshi, a Chandigarh-based lawyer, who later got Vishwas bail in a dowry case filed in Sirsa. "Vishwas was taken to Bangkok and hill stations in India with Honeypreet, who used to stay inside the babaji's room. In May 2011, she stayed with Ram Rahim at a Kodaikanal hotel. In June, he saw them together in an objectionable position at the Dera. He was allegedly beaten up by Ram Rahim and told to

stay mum. After 11 years of marriage, Vishwas moved out of the Dera to Sector 15 in Panchkula with his parents in July, Joshi recalls. What followed was straight out of a Bollywood flick. A team of Dera strongmen, led by one Pradeep Singh, who was later arrested, started clocking his every movement. Vishwas moved the Punjab and Haryana high court for protection in October, accusing the Dera chief and Honeypreet of adultery. The Dera hit back. Honeypreet filed a case of dowry after 11 years of marriage, claiming Vishwas was demanding Rs 2 lakh from her. "The Guptas had ancestral property and his father had retirement benefits. Why would they demand Rs 2 lakh?" says Joshi. More was in the offing. Vishwas was soon facing an FIR in a cheque bounce case filed in Gujarat and another in Rajasthan. His petition to court says a sale deed of his 11 kanal ancestral land had also been forcibly executed in favour of the dera.

How Ram Rahim took the ladder of Punjab politics to rise in religio-business

In 1994, Ram Rahim bought 50 acres of land at Salabatpura in Punjab's Bathinda purportedly from the money collected by disciples. This centre now has more than 100 acres.

(Agencies) Jailed for 20 years on Tuesday in a rape case, Dera Sacha Sauda (DSS) head Gurmeet Ram Rahim's fall is as dramatic as was his rise, particularly in Punjab, the hub of his sect's activities. Up to 1994 — besides the Sirsa headquarters in Haryana — in Punjab the dera had only one naam charcha ghar (preaching centre) of five acres at Malout in Muktsar district in Punjab. That too had been set up in the time of Shah Satnam — Gurmeet's predecessor and the second dera chief after its founder Shah Mastana — who had died in 1990 soon after handing over the 'gaddi' (seat). By 2007, the DSS empire had grown to 98 centres spread over 800 acres. That was also the year that Gurmeet Ram Rahim got into crosshairs with the Sikh community after he allegedly committed blasphemy by dressing up as the tenth Sikh master, Guru Gobind Singh, at the dera's state headquarters at Salabatpura near Bathinda. That led to clashes, and the baba never came to Punjab for any activity since. The case has, though, been cancelled by the Punjab police during the previous regime of the SAD-BJP combine.

Gurmeet had shown his talents early on, as he started expansion plans within a couple of years of taking over at the age of 23. In 1994, he bought 50 acres of land at Salabatpura purportedly from the money collected by disciples. This centre now has more than 100 acres. "Baba disliked Malout's geographical location as it is close to the border with Rajasthan, part of the region on the tri-junction of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. He decided to shift the dera base to Salabatpura in Rampura Phul region of Bathinda as the area was more easily accessible to followers even from Moga, Barnala, Faridkot and Mansa districts," said a political leader who was once close to the dera. This forms the Malwa region of Punjab, largest of the three cultural divisions of the state.

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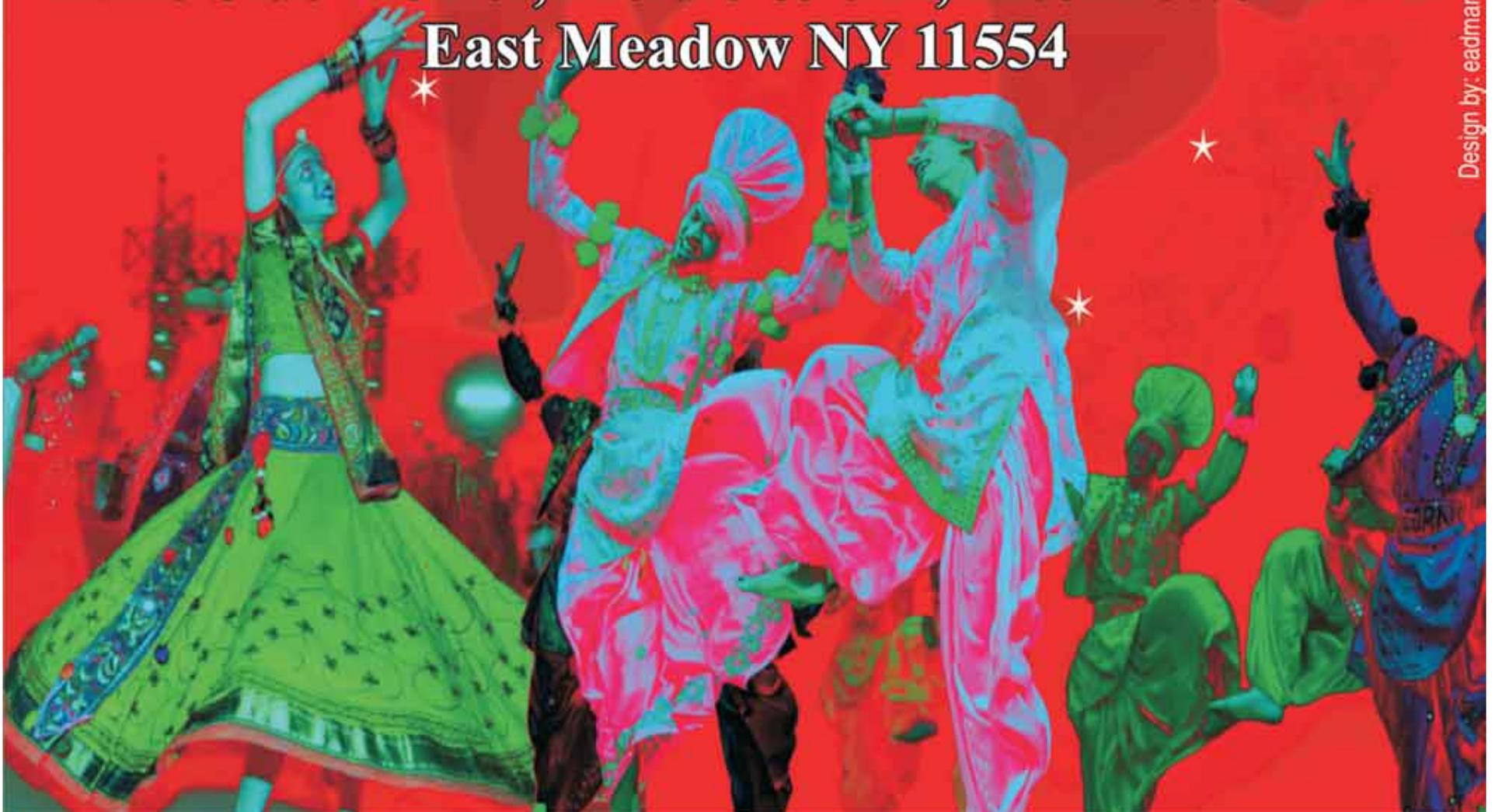
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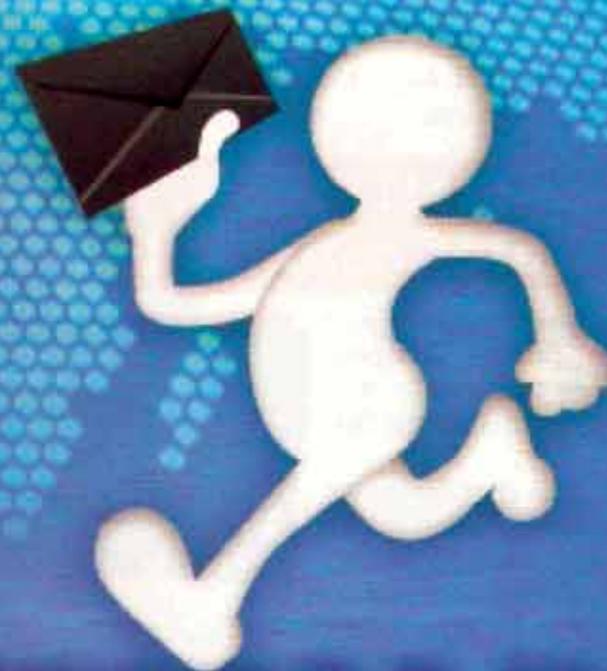
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Deluged Texas Braces for More Rain, and Years of Recovery



(Agencies) HOUSTON—As one of the most destructive storms in the nation’s history pummeled southeast Texas for a fourth day, forecasts on Tuesday morning called for still more rain, making clear that catastrophic flooding that had turned neighborhoods into lakes was just the start of a disaster that would take years to overcome.

Local, state and federal officials conceded that the scale of the crisis was so vast that they were nowhere near being able to measure it, much less fully address it.

Across a region that is home to millions of people and includes Houston, the nation’s fourth-largest city, no one has a clear idea how many people are missing, how many evacuated, how many hunkered down or were trapped in their waterlogged homes, or how many inundated houses and vehicles are beyond saving.

It is “one of the largest disasters America has ever faced,” Gov. Greg Abbott said, warning against expecting anything resembling recovery any time soon, or a return to the way things were. “We need to recognize it will be a new normal, a new and different normal for this entire region.”

Local officials reported 10 deaths possibly related to the

storm, six of them in Harris County, which includes Houston. But the painstaking and heartbreaking work of clearing streets, going door to door, assessing damage — and finding victims — has not yet begun. Scenes of people and pets being rescued from the roofs and upper floors of houses

revived memories of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when early estimates vastly understated both the material devastation and the death toll, and recovery efforts lasted years.

The administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Brock Long, said on Monday that he expected more than 450,000 people to apply for federal assistance.

“We’re going to be here for several years helping you guys recover,” he said. “The state of Texas is about to undergo one of the largest recovery housing missions the nation has ever seen.”

For the time being, efforts are focused on the most basic elements of keeping people alive — plucking stranded survivors from the flood, providing shelter,

food and water, and restoring electricity to hundreds of thousands of people who were left without power.

Mr. Long said that FEMA was shipping two million liters of water and two million meals to the region. Other government agencies, charities and corporations were also moving supplies into the region.

In Harris County alone, several thousand people stranded in vehicles and buildings by the water were rescued by law enforcement and firefighters using motorboats and helicopters, and legions of volunteers used their own boats to ferry people to safety. Governor Abbott activated the entire Texas National Guard to aid in rescue and recovery, raising the number of troops involved to 12,000 from 3,000.

And he praised Texans for rushing to rescue their neighbors.

Countless abandoned cars and trucks blocked the region’s flooded roadways, raising questions about whether and how their drivers had escaped safely. They sat at odd angles, some showing no more than a few inches peeking above the water, while others sat half-smashed in roadside ditches or alone in muddy fields.

Almost every evacuee had a dramatic story to tell.

Glenda Walton, standing in a damp gray T-shirt among five family members in an evacuation center, could think only of the day’s events. She said she watched as a woman hugging a tree lost her grip, got caught in the churning water, and drowned.

Hurricane Harvey: The Devastation and What Comes Next

(Agencies) Overwhelmed by the news since Harvey made landfall? Here is an overview of coverage by The New York Times, which sent nearly two dozen journalists to Texas.

The latest can be found in Thursday’s live storm briefing.

With rainfall topping 50 inches in some areas, Harvey devastated a swath of Texas stretching from the Houston area into Louisiana. “Our whole city is underwater,” Derrick Freeman, the mayor of Port Arthur, Tex., said on Wednesday. (Read an account from one of our reporters on his trip home to nearby Beaumont.)

Even as the rain and wind moved on, the region continued to suffer consequences of the storm. Explosions rocked a chemical plant early Thursday, and many hazards lurk beneath the floodwaters that soaked the region. The storm has also forced Houston to grapple

with the limits of its growth. Here are some of the most powerful photos of the devastation and a before-and-after look at the affected areas.

Houston police officer, a family trapped in a van beneath surging floodwater, and a mother whose shivering 3-year-old was found clinging to her unresponsive body.

Survivors face hurdles of their own, with help likely to be slow in coming. Managing the shelters that are housing tens of thousands of them remains “the biggest battle that we have right now,” Brock Long, the administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said on Thursday. Rich and poor alike have had their homes and lives upended. There were many positive stories, too. A huge volunteer effort operated with little official guidance. A businessman



If you can do so safely, please share your own photos and videos here, or leave us a voice mail message. Listen to Thursday’s episode of “The Daily” to learn about how Houston was built to flood. At least 39 people have died, including a

turned his mattress store into a safe haven. And the women and cat in a viral photo of a flooded nursing home are safe. The Houston Independent School District also said that all students will receive three free meals a day for the school year.

Trump being Trump: US President confuses two blonde journalists during press conference

(Agencies) At a joint press conference at the White House with Finnish President Sauli Niinisto, Donald Trump mistook two journalists, who both had blonde hair, to be the same person. The US President has added yet another feather in his cap. His cap of gaffes, that is. During a joint press conference at the White House with Finnish President Sauli Niinisto, Donald Trump mistook two journalists,

who both had blonde hair, to be the same person. Niinisto had called on a member of his travelling press corps during the bilateral news conference to ask a question. “Again?” Trump asked Niinisto, perhaps thinking the Finnish president had chosen the same reporter to ask a question the second time. “You’re going to give her the same one?” Clearly embarrassed, Niinisto said, “No, she is not the same

lady,” while the crowd laughed, the two blonde reporters included. “They are sitting side by side.” Maria Annala, the Finnish Boston-based journalist had the perfect repartee: “We have a lot of blonde women in Finland” she said. Twitterati responded to the incident, some apologizing to the journalist on Trump’s behalf, while others wondered why he does not get confused when dealing with male reporters.



How Does Harvey Compare With Hurricane Katrina? Here's What We Know



A late August hurricane menacing the Gulf Coast. Residents plucked from rooftops. A convention center repurposed as an emergency shelter. A test of a presidency.

(Agencies) Although it is still unfolding, Harvey, now a tropical storm, evokes comparisons to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Here's a quick rundown of what we know about similarities and differences between the two.

The Cities

Katrina: Before the storm, New Orleans — with its distinctive Creole-Acadian-French-Haitian-Vietnamese cultural mélange — was a small city of about 455,000 people that lay in large part below sea level, ostensibly protected by a system of levee walls. Its population never fully recovered from the evacuation and destruction and remains below 400,000.

Harvey: Houston is a sprawling, car-dependent, diverse city, low-lying but not below sea level. It has a population of more than two million people, with a system of bayous and waterways to manage flooding.

The Storms

Katrina: It made landfall near the Louisiana/Mississippi border on Aug. 29, 2005, as a Category 3 storm and measured 350 miles across. However, the relatively low classification, based on wind speed, was deceptive because Katrina produced the highest storm surge ever recorded in the United States.

Harvey: It made landfall in Rockport, Tex., on Friday as a Category 4 storm, measuring 200 miles across, but was quickly downgraded. But flooding and rain topped 47 inches in some areas by the time Harvey was downgraded to a tropical depression Wednesday.

Deaths and Damage

Katrina: One of the deadliest hurricanes ever to strike the United States, Katrina was responsible for 1,833 deaths, and some bodies were

untouched for days. The storm inflicted more than \$100 billion in damage, with most of it caused by wind, storm surge and the failure of the levees. Katrina also left three million people across the region without power.

Harvey: Local officials said there were at least 39 deaths in Texas so far that were related or suspected to be related to the storm. Officials said they were prepared for that number to inch higher as floodwaters began to recede.

As for the economy, the Gulf region's capacity as an oil and gas hub — Houston accounted for 2.9 percent of the nation's gross domestic product in 2015 — does not appear to have been seriously compromised. So far in Texas, there are 300,000 people without power.

Rainfall

Katrina: Rain was not the main problem with Katrina, which yielded 5 to 10 inches of rainfall in a 48-hour period.

Harvey: By contrast, Harvey brought a deluge, with up to 50 inches of rain in some areas — more than Houston receives in a year.

Evacuation

Katrina: The mandatory evacuation of New Orleans was announced a day before the storm hit. An estimated 100,000 people remained stuck in the city. A few weeks later, in another chaotic evacuation, more than 100 people died leaving the Houston area to escape Hurricane Rita.

Harvey: Houston did not call on residents to evacuate, then urged those who could to shelter in place. However, as the rain continued on Monday, a growing number of other

jurisdictions — like Bay City, which expected 10 feet of water downtown — urged residents to leave. More than 30,000 people remained in shelters in the region Thursday.

Assistance

Katrina: The storm displaced over a million people and damaged or destroyed 275,000 homes. Almost a million households received individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Harvey: Tens of thousands of homes were either damaged or destroyed. But the vast majority of homes in Harvey's path are not insured against flooding, according to figures from the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA officials estimated that 450,000 people were likely to seek federal aid. So far, 95,745 people in Texas

have been approved for emergency assistance, which includes financial help with rent, repairs and lost property. FEMA has so far disbursed about \$57 million to citizens in Texas.

The Takeaways So Far

Katrina: Evacuation chaos and mostly unfounded panic over riots and violence made issues of race, poverty and government failures impossible to ignore. The breaches of the levees compounded those problems and represented an engineering failure of grave proportions.

Harvey: Harvey will likely sharpen an ongoing debate over whether Houston, a city driven by real estate, has overbuilt at the expense of flood control. While Katrina showed a failure to build well, Harvey might come to represent a warning about climate change.



The rise, fall and redemption of Mumbai's encounter cop Pradeep Sharma

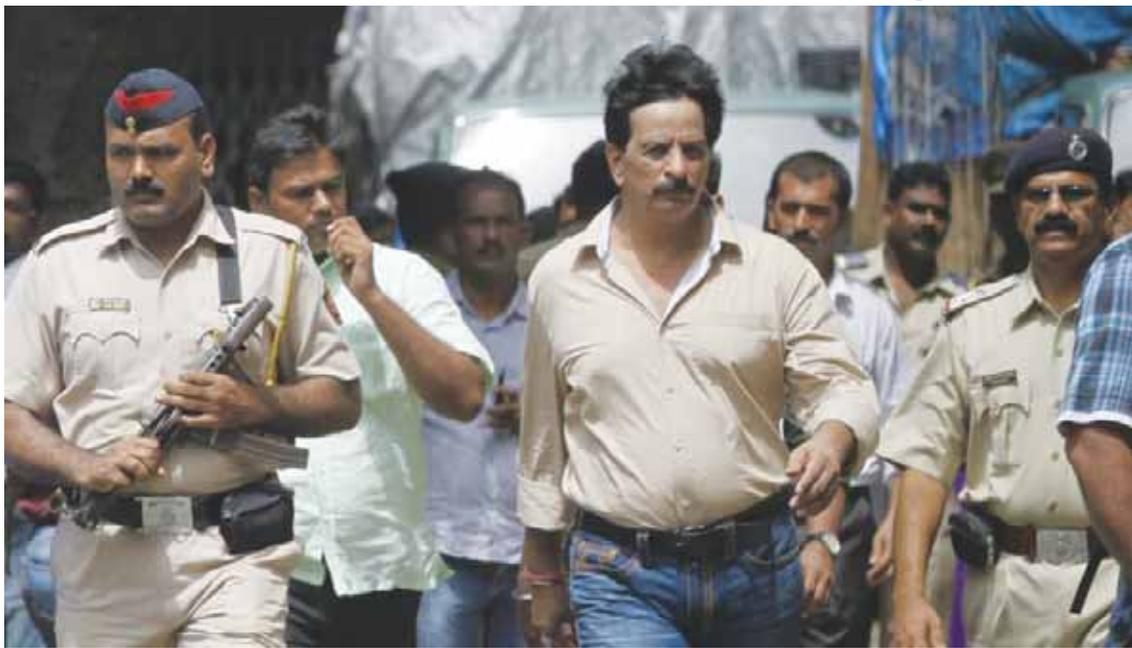
In the '80s, the cops from the famous "Batch of '83" smashed the underworld. S Hussain Zaidi connects that era with the arrest and recent reinstatement of Pradeep Sharma of the Mumbai police

(Agencies) The killer duo was branded as the Billa-Ranga of Mumbai, after the men who murdered teenaged siblings Geeta and Sanjay Chopra in 1978 in Delhi. Known as Javed-Rahim, they were noted history sheeters and had spread a reign of terror in Mumbai during the late Eighties. Javed Khan, who had escaped from Thane jail, facilitated his crony Abdul Rahim's flight from Aurangabad jail. Both of them had taken refuge in Mumbai. Tales of their cruelty include raping a wife in front of the husband and then slaughtering the husband in front of the distraught wife.

The Mumbai police had already spread a dragnet for them but were unable to catch them. In those days, the khabri or police informer would often provide false leads to the police and make a quick buck. The policemen of the Eighties had a lot of self-respect and pride in their service. They had lost hope of catching the duo but they still didn't want to have two dangerous fugitives loose in the city.

One night in August in 1989, the police control room received a tip-off that Javed and Rahim were holed up in a chawl at Maneklal Estate in Ghatkopar West in the north eastern suburbs of Mumbai. The information was relayed to the Ghatkopar police station and immediately a sub-inspector and three constables were sent to scour the shanties of Maneklal Estate.

The officer chose to check the zigzag bylanes of the chawls while the constables went door to door knocking and looking for the notorious duo. Suddenly, one constable hit pay dirt. Javed, by now aware of the police raid, came out of hiding and confronted the policeman. He whipped out a sword and struck the constable on his arm, causing a deep gash. He also managed to inflict injury on the second constable. Their screams of pain alerted the sub-inspector who rushed to the spot, only to be attacked by Javed's friend Rahim. This was an era when criminals actually peed in their pants at the sight of a khaki uniform — which is why the policemen weren't



expecting an assault. They were caught totally off guard.

Fazed and upstaged, the wounded police team was staring death in the face — they could see that Javed had a gun. In a reflex action, the sub-inspector unholstered his service revolver and fired at them. He kept firing until he finished all the six bullets in his revolver. Javed and Rahim collapsed.

Two things became history after that. Javed and Rahim became a lesson for all the other wannabe criminals who were polishing their kattas or country-made hand guns. And of course the nondescript sub-inspector, Pradeep Sharma, started his innings as an encounter specialist in the Mumbai police. To date, he has killed the maximum number of gangsters, drug peddlers, and even Pakistani nationals from the Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist group. Sharma is credited with killing over 112 gangsters in a span of 17 years between 1989 to 2006. He was suspended and subsequently dismissed three years after the controversial Lakan Bhaiyya encounter in November 2006. Ram Narayan Gupta alias Lakan Bhaiyya (considered to be mafia don Chhota Rajan's close aide)

was killed in 2006 in a fake encounter by 13 policemen of DN Nagar police station. Pradeep Sharma was in jail for almost four years between 2009 to 2013 until the trial court acquitted him of all charges in the case (though 13 other cops were convicted and given life imprisonment).

Back in the police force

Last week, Pradeep Sharma once again made headlines when he was reinstated into the police force.

"Ironically my husband was never indicted for 111 encounter killings that he was involved in and had to spent time in jail for an encounter he never did," says Swikriti Sharma, sitting in the living room of her sixth floor flat in the Andheri suburbs after her husband's reinstatement earlier this month.

However, Sharma does not want to talk about his encounters.

"Why can't you focus on my other accomplishments? I have arrested over 1,200 hardened criminals, detected several intricate cases, and reformed over two dozen hardcore convicts and rehabilitated them in the mainstream," Sharma says. Then in a candid moment he says, "Do you know, it was I who discovered and transformed a humble waiter into a famous cop like Daya Nayak?" Nayak became Sharma's most famous protégé. Nayak was the only encounter specialist who shot to fame due to his association with Sharma. Otherwise encounters were the mainstay of the officers from the famous 1983 batch of Maharashtra state police officers.

Officers like Praful Bhosale, Vijay Salaskar, Ravindra Angre, Aslam Momin and of course Pradeep Sharma belonged to this batch. After a year's training at the Nashik Police Training School, they joined the force in 1984. That was the year when Dawood made a hasty, unplanned escape from Mumbai and when Bombay was hurtling

towards a Sicily-like reputation with the mafia completely out of control.

The batch of 1983 is dubbed as the "killer batch" of the Maharashtra police.

They have all been in violent skirmishes with underworld gangsters from various gangs including Dawood Ibrahim, Chhota Rajan, Arun Gawli and Amar Naik. Between themselves they were responsible for eliminating over 500 gangsters in police encounters or extra-judicial killings.

Before the Nineties, encounters were far and few — like when police officer Ishaq Bagwan bumped off Manohar Surve in 1982 or sub-inspector Rajendra Katdhare killed Rama Naik in 1987 or sub-inspector Emmanuel Amolik killed Mehmood Kalia in 1987. There were apocryphal reports that Dawood was instrumental in all these encounters and that he officially got rid of his rivals through police action.

However, after the Nineties and especially after the serial blasts of 1993 which became the Mumbai mafia's Anno Domini, encounters became the norm. Soon after the former police commissioner, RD Tyagi took over in 1995, he instructed the crime branch and zonal deputy commissioners to make a list of 10 wanted criminals from each zone and complete their cases.

In fact, the then DCP Satyapal Singh (who became Mumbai police chief later) and DCP Param Bir Singh, the current Thane police commissioner, reportedly formed encounter squads with

officers from the 1983 batch including Bhosale, Salaskar and Sharma at the helm.

Emboldened by the official decree and empowered by their immediate bosses, the trio went all out against the Mumbai mafia. Pitched battles were fought on the streets of Mumbai.

"It is wrong to call us the killer batch. We were officers with killer instincts. Those were the times when the underworld was at its peak. Our seniors knew that only aggressive policing could rein in the mafia," explains an encounter specialist who retired as assistant commissioner of police (ACP).

However, Sharma feels that the batch had a uniform strategy of taking on the underworld because of their mentor, Arvind Inamdar, who opted for retirement in 2000 and has the distinction of having been transferred 29 times in 35 years. "Inamdar had a totally unconventional and pragmatic approach to policing which he instilled in the entire batch," explains Sharma.

The gangs were almost decimated by the encounter specialists. The score card led with the names of big hits like gangsters Sada Pawle, Amar Naik and others. Arun Gawli, the only gangster from Mumbai who had not escaped India, was so terrified that he decided to join politics. The Dawood gang actually stopped recruitment of hitmen. Abu Salem went globe-trotting and abandoned the perpetration of reckless killings in Mumbai. Ashwin Naik took refuge in an obscure hideout in New Delhi.

The encounter specialists became power centres of their own and began calling the shots. Eventually the race for getting the maximum head count, created animus within the group, each one accusing other of favouring a particular gang. But that is another story.

They got aligned with politicians and senior police officers for their vested interests. Some of the encounter specialists amassed disproportionate assets, while others parked their ill-gotten wealth in philanthropist activities.

What Is In It That People And Politicians Flock To Deras

As per an estimate there are about 10,000 deras in Punjab alone but only about a dozen of these have mass following.

(Agencies) The widespread violence by the followers of Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim following his conviction in a rape case has brought the 'Dera culture', as it is called in Punjab and Haryana, into sharp focus.

Not only some of the deras have massive following, these have become an instrument of politics. While these deras depend on politicians for various facilities and patronage, the politicians flock to them for the large vote banks they constitute. For the followers, the word of the Dera chief is final and irrevocable. No wonder political leaders cutting across party make a beeline to these deras before the elections to seek 'blessings'.

Such is the clout some of these deras enjoy that governments are ready to go the extra mile to keep them pleased. The current Haryana government led by Manohar Lal Khattar, for instance, remains highly indebted to the Dera Sacha Sauda and its head Gurmeet Ram Rahim who had openly extended support to the

BJP on the eve of Assembly elections in the state in 2014. BJP had emerged winner for the first time ever since the formation of the state.

In return the government had been patronising the Dera. Chief Minister Khattar has shared the stage with the now convicted Dera chief on several occasions. Videos of the state education minister Ram Bilas Sharma bowing down before the baba and offering a donation of Rs 51 lakh to the Dera are getting viral on social media. Many close observers believe that the free passage granted to lakhs of followers was quid pro quo.

Dera Sacha Sauda has remained engulfed in controversies over various issues like the murder of baba's driver and that of a journalist Ram Chander Chattarpati, who had been exposing activities inside the Dera headquarters at Sirsa in Haryana. The Dera chief has also accused of ordering castration of several devotees besides hurting the sentiments of the Sikhs.

But this is not the only Dera which has remained in the

headlines for all the wrong reasons. Some other controversial deras include Nirankaris, Dera Bhanearwala and Divya Jyoti Sansthan.

As per an estimate there are about 10,000 deras in Punjab alone but only about a dozen of these have mass following. The initial concept of deras was a place of gathering of followers of a particular guru who was generally on the move. Later larger deras began to have their fixed premises.

Majority of people who get attracted towards deras belong to the marginalised sections of the society, mainly Dalits and other "lower castes" who do not get respect and equality in the society. It is significant to note that the population of Dalits in Punjab is 34 per cent of the total population of the state - the highest percentage in the entire country.

While there has been discrimination on the basis of caste in the Hindu society for long, their hopes had risen during the various reformist movements. Sikhism also came into being with the promise of



abolishing caste divisions. Unfortunately the concept has got diluted now. Even Sikhs have started discrimination. There are separate gurdwaras and even separate cremation grounds for the "lower castes" Sikhs.

Though the deras had been existing since ages, the modern form of deras took shape and proliferated as an aftermath of Green Revolution. With rising prosperity and jobs, Dalits found that although many of them were doing well they were still being discriminated against. That is also the time the Dalits began to assert their identity. Evidently they began to look for places, including deras, where they found the concept of equality.

A prominent social scientist

Ronki Ram, who has done extensive studies on the rise of deras, says that these are now "in the process of becoming new religions (or forms of a new religion). The Dera Sachkhand Ballan represents this trend".

There are quite a few Sikh deras but the popularity of non-Sikh deras has mounted by leaps and bounds. While the Sikh deras rever Guru Granth Sahib, considered the eleventh guru of the Sikhs, the non-Sikh deras has a living guru. The devotees consider them as God and are ready to make any sacrifice for them. For them babas can do no wrong. This was evident in the recent mayhem unleashed by the supporters of Dera Sacha Sauda chief.

Doklam Stocktaking: Who Were India's Friends In Need And What It Gained Or Lost In The Stand-off

In the last nine weeks, India was repeatedly subjected to humiliating threats from China while India was doing its best to underplay its seriousness.

(Agencies) After more than two months of tense standoff between the Chinese and Indian troops at Doklam, a deal has been put in place on 28 August 2017 to bring an end to it. On 18 June, Indian troops had gone into Doklam to stop China's construction workers building a road on a narrow plateau at Bhutan-China-India tri-junction. The Indian army had been sent to support Bhutanese objection to road construction in an area which Bhutan claim its own but is under the China's effective jurisdiction. In spite of Indian army intervening on behalf of Bhutan, China refused to withdraw its workers from the disputed territory.

For nine weeks, nearly 300-400 soldiers from each side were present at the stand-off location. Though Indian army had moved in 2500 additional troops to the epicenter of the stand-off, China, apparently confident over its position and power, did not go for any large-scale mobilization of its troops. However, China repeatedly threatened India with terrible retribution for

'trespassing' into its territory and the war cry from its state controlled media was no less than what India's nationalist media have been giving to Pakistan day in and day out for the last two years.

China has been seething with anger after Narendra Modi's decision to sign Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) with the USA and also, to boycott Xi Jinping's pet project Belt and Road Forum (BRF)'s inaugural conference in Beijing. Doklam came in handy for China to pay back India.

The aim of India's troop moving to Doklam was to reclaim the jurisdictional control of the disputed territory for Bhutan by not allowing China to construct its road project. But, when China threatened retaliation, India came down from its aggressive position and wanted to settle the dispute through negotiation instead. In early August, while speaking in the Rajya Sabha, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj ruled out war as an option and emphasized dialogue as the only way out of the Doklam standoff.

If the Indian government wanted

dialogue and negotiation, what had stopped Narendra Modi to call Xi Jinping or even to take up the matter at the diplomatic level with China before sending Indian troops to a disputed territory between two neighbours. It seems India underestimated possible Chinese reactions before sending troops to Doklam. The way this standoff came to an end just a few days before Modi's Xiamen trip to attend the BRICS summit raises many more questions about the nature of the deal. While India claims that both the countries will withdraw their troops from Doklam, China immediately clarified saying the deal only asks for the Indian troops to withdraw, which it has immediately honored. There has been no joint statement, which adds further confusion about the actual content of the deal and its interpretations in the future for other border disputes. Chinese forces continue to patrol the disputed area, and the deal seems to have explicitly not prohibited China to undertake the road construction project and even if it has come to a halt, for the

time being, there is no guarantee that China will not restart it again.

Though there is usual chest thumping by a section of Indian media and some strategic experts about the success of India's power projection in Doklam, there is very little introspection over the futility of this long standoff, which was threatening to lead to a full-scale war between two nuclear powers anytime. Has India achieved anything from this military stand-off? In the last nine weeks, India was repeatedly subjected to humiliating threats from China while India was doing its best to underplay its seriousness. Except for a half-hearted support from Japan, which received a sharp rejoinder from China, no other country came openly in India's support. No one from the region and not even Bhutan. It seems even Bhutan has not been happy with India's military intervention. There have been several reports that even Bhutan had asked India to withdraw its troops from Doklam, and these reports have never been officially denied by Bhutanese authorities.

Is Pakistan Willing to Lose America ?

China's rising global status, and its explicit push for regional influence, has reduced Pakistan's dependence on the United States, but the rumors of the demise of America's importance in Pakistan are greatly exaggerated.

Despite these factors, neither the United States nor Pakistan has gained all that it would like from the relationship. Pakistan has not been able to convince the United States of the validity of its primary interest in Afghanistan — preventing it from becoming a “proxy for India” and stemming fears of “encirclement” in Pakistan despite India's proclamations of merely offering

economic assistance to Afghanistan. Afghanistan's leaders have recently taken to brazenly welcoming an ever-increasing Indian footprint in Kabul and beyond. Pakistani hawks used to be merely suspicious of collusion between the most anti-Pakistan Afghans and the Indian establishment. In the past two years, that suspicion has turned into conviction.

For its part, the United States has failed to convince Pakistan of the urgency of its primary interest in Afghanistan — shutting down the Haqqani network, the principal planner and executor of the most lethal terrorist attacks in Afghani-

stan over the past decade. Pakistanis have hemmed and hawed, offering up low-level Haqqani operatives and occasionally trimming the space available to them.

And the Haqqanis have evolved from a relatively minor player in the Taliban world to being the dominant operational group. The United States doesn't believe that the rise of the Haqqanis was possible without support from Pakistan.

Neither Pakistan nor the United States has been able to convince the Taliban to negotiate in good faith for a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan — the one supposed issue on which there is a complete convergence between the two countries.

The torturous United States-Pakistan relationship has seen several dramatic lows. It is only the American grievances that have been registered; the humiliations seem reserved for Pakistan. Everyone remembers the killing of Bin Laden in 2011 and the subsequent embarrassment of Pakistan. Few recall the killing of 24 Pakistani soldiers on the border with Afghanistan by

American forces later that year.

American military leaders have publicly heaped scorn on Pakistan. But American spies have killed ordinary people on the streets of Pakistani cities, while the United States government has dissembled about their status. American officials who have appealed for a more nuanced understanding of the country have been forced out of their jobs and even investigated by federal agents.

Pakistan is hardly innocent of its own failures. Terrorists facing sanctions from the United Nations freely cross borders to attack neighboring countries without any fear of being intercepted, and some even appear on television, conferred with a respect most politicians would crave. Pakistan has a damning ability to behave in ways that has often left even its friends shaking their heads in disbelief.

President Trump's threats and his unpredictability have filled Pakistan with anxiety about what may be coming despite a difficult history. American drones have already dropped tons of ordnance;

Navy SEALs have already dropped in to assassinate terrorists; American military and civilian assistance has already dropped to a trickle of what it was. And the trust between Pakistani generals and American commanders in Afghanistan is already at a historical low. President Trump's speech has only aggravated the concerns that motivate Pakistan's behavior in Afghanistan. Mr. Trump's call for greater Indian involvement in Afghanistan has stoked the fire that burns deepest in Pakistan. On this, it is not the Pakistanis who are irrational but those who attempt to minimize Pakistan's concerns. Pakistan would not risk the wrath of the United States if its concerns were imaginary. Pakistan's willingness to lose American patronage is the clearest indicator that its interests in Afghanistan are not a product of ambition, or grandeur, but of deep and existential fears about the damage an unchecked India can do to Pakistan.

5.7% GDP A Matter Of Concern, Says Jaitley

“In coming quarters we really require to work on both— in terms of policy and investment— to improve upon these figures,” he said. However, he did not rule out the immediate effects of Goods and Services Tax (GST) on the economy, especially the informal one. “Most manufacturers were de-stocking that is why trading went up as sales were taking place but stocks were being sold,” he said. Contradiction between service improving and manufacturing going down essentially is the GST impact, he added in his address. India's GDP growth slumped to a three-year low of 5.7 per cent during April-June — lagging China for the second straight quarter — as manufacturing slowed ahead of the GST launch amid demonetisation effect. China clocked a record 6.9 per cent growth in January- March as well as April-June quarters. The expansion in gross domestic product (GDP) was 6.1 per cent in the preceding quarter and 7.9 per cent in the same period last fiscal. The previous low of 4.6 per cent was recorded in January-March 2014.

Allahabad HC Slams Government For Permitting Felling Of Thousands Of Trees For Ramdev's Food Park

and Ashok Kumar remarked “the government cannot justify its act of cutting down of trees on the basis that it will give adequate compensation to an affected individual”. “Environment is for the whole society. The government can compensate an individual but how will it compensate the entire society,” the court asked while hearing a petition filed by Asaf of Gautam Buddha Nagar district who challenged the allotment of 4500 acres of land to the Sansthan. The petitioner alleged that he had been granted a 30-year lease for 200 bighas of land for plantation of trees and the state government has now allotted the same for the proposed food park which was “illegal”. The petitioner has further alleged that about 6,000 trees planted on the land leased out to him were likely to be cut down for the food park, inflicting a heavy damage to the

Despite Pressure From MPs, Manmohan Backed Probe Against Dera Chief, Asked Us To Go By Law

The then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stood by the CBI and ordered us to go by the law. He went through the statement made by two Sadhvis before a judge and did not succumb to the pressures from Punjab and Haryana MPs,” said Narayanan, a native of Kasaragod in Kerala, who was in Mysore on the day Ram Rahim was sentenced by the CBI special court to 20 years in jail. He also praised his boss Vijay Shanker for ignoring pressure from the powerful Punjab and Haryana MPs. “He (Vijay Shanker) ordered us to go ahead and complete the investigation in just 57 days as ordered by the High Court”. The CBI had started the probe into the following an anonymous letter in 2002. The rapes were reported between 1999 and 2002 and the victims came forward only after the CBI started probe in December 2012.

The whole episode of Ram Rahim's conviction and sentencing witnessed violence by his followers that left at least 38 people dead and more than 200 injured.

Trump Expected To Rescind DACA, Senior Official Says

U.S. Representative Steny Hoyer of Maryland, the No. 2 Democrat in the House of Representatives, released a statement expressing concern about reports that Trump may terminate the program, saying this would be “devastating” to many Dreamers. “In the absence of Congress enacting bipartisan immigration reform, which must remain our goal, the President ought to continue providing peace of mind to DREAMers that they need not live in fear of being sent away from the only home many of them have ever known,” Hoyer said.



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Thigh's the limit!

Barefoot Michelle Obama shows off a lot of leg in a wrap skirt as she relaxes on a yacht in Mallorca - after covering up in a dark hat and hoodie to work out in the blazing sun

(Agencies) Michelle Obama looked ever the A-lister as she stepped out for a workout and a yacht trip in Mallorca, Spain.

The former First Lady, 53, shielded herself from the sun with shades and a black hood to enjoy a hike around the island on Thursday. She was surrounded by members of her staff tagging along for the sweat session, with members



of her security team flanking her. Michelle is in Mallorca to visit American diplomat James Costos and his partner, Michael Smith.

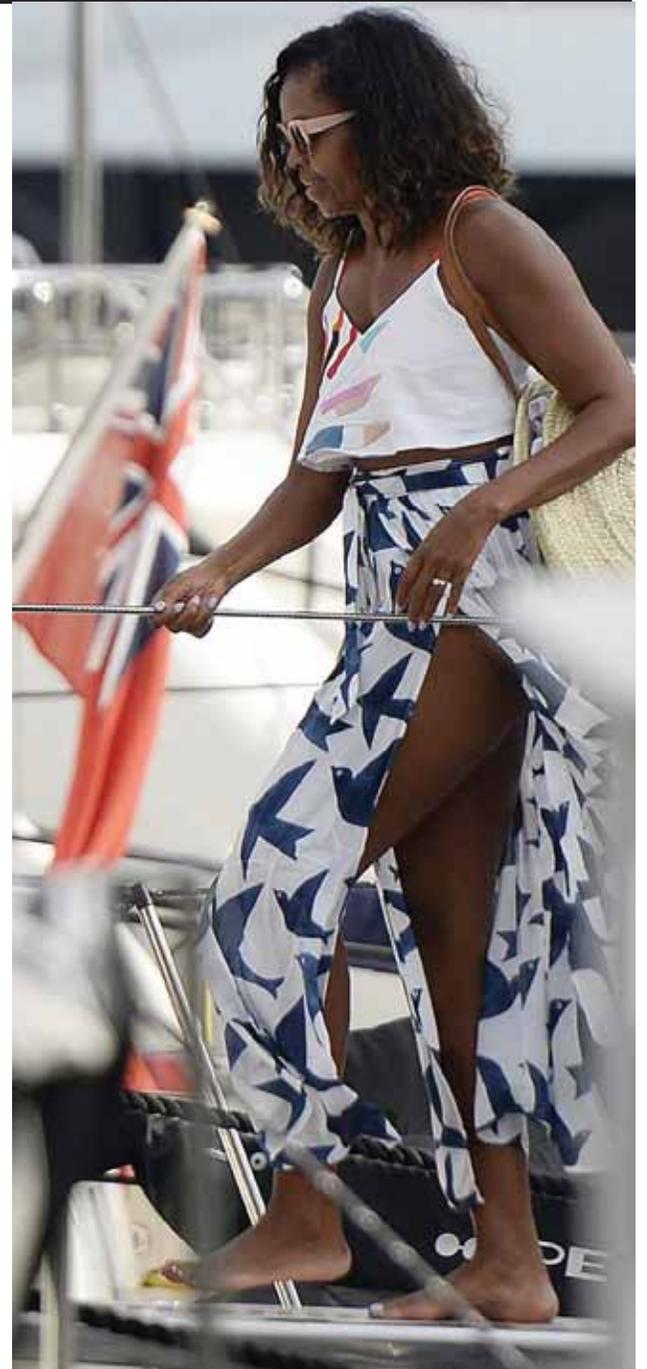
Her husband, former President Barack Obama, does not appear to have accompanied her on the international trip. The day after her hike, Michelle boarded a yacht, wearing a white crop top and a stylish wrap skirt with a bird pattern, letting the fabric flow to show her toned legs.

She accessorized her outfit with a straw bag from Madewell, giving the outfit a chic beachy vibe. Michelle the Obamas' private quarters was seen aboard the yacht later in the evening on Friday, enjoying time with a group of friends. At one point on Friday, she changed into different clothes, and was spotted wearing a black outfit and a hat while leaving a restaurant. Both she and her husband will

have a Secret Service detail for the rest of their lives, Barack having restored lifetime protection for former presidents in 2013. Costos and Smith are longtime friends of the Obamas, and have previously hosted the family several times at their residence in Palm Springs, California.

Barack and Michelle jetted off to the glamorous home during their first trip out of Washington, DC on the day of President Donald Trump's inauguration in January.

Smith, a designer, previously redecorated the Oval Office and the Obamas' private quarters during their time at the White House. Later on, he was moved to welcome the first family into his house. 'When they were here, it occurred to me that more than 50 years ago JFK had stayed just down the road at Bing Crosby's home,' Smith told Architectural Digest in 2015.



IF YOU DON'T PICK IT UP THEY WILL.



Finance ministry may provide capital support for merger of PSU banks

The government is keen that at least one merger proposal reaches a logical conclusion by next March-end.



The finance ministry is open to providing capital support for facilitating consolidation among state-owned banks, which are reeling under mounting bad loans, official sources said.

The Union cabinet has approved the setting up of an alternative mechanism, or a panel of ministers, to decide on consolidation proposals for state-run

banks. On receiving a proposal from stressed banks, if the ministerial panel finds that the merger is going to create a strong bank, it will not let it go for want of fund shortage, the sources said, adding that acquisition will come at a cost. "First, the merger proposal should come from the board," said a source, who did not want to be named. "If the Alternative Mechanism finds the match viable, the finance ministry could provide capital support to the acquiring bank if there is a shortfall," he said. Sources said the government is keen that at least one merger proposal reaches a logical conclusion by the end of the current fiscal, which is next March-end. Finance Minister Arun

Jaitley, after the Cabinet decision last week, had said that the government has not set any target for consolidation. There are now 20 public sector banks (PSBs) other than SBI. These state-owned banks are grappling with Rs 6 lakh crore worth of non-performing assets (NPAs) or bad loans, which is about 75% of the total distress. After in-principle approval for consolidation, the banks would take steps in accordance with the law and Sebi requirements. The final scheme will be approved by the Cabinet. An official source said: "It is not necessary that a larger public sector bank should overtake a small or mid-size lender. If there is synergy, two or three banks can merge

to create a bigger and stronger entity so that the dependence on public exchequer is minimised." Earlier this year, the government had approved the merger of SBI's five associate banks with itself. In March, the Cabinet also approved the merger of Bharatiya Mahila Bank (BMB) with SBI. Five associates and BMB became part of SBI on April 1, 2017, catapulting the country's largest lender to among the top 50 banks in the world. State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur (SBBJ), State Bank of Hyderabad (SBH), State Bank of Mysore (SBM), State Bank of Patiala (SBP) and State Bank of Travancore (SBT), besides BMB, were merged with SBI.

Silicon Valley outsider, Trump critic: Who is Uber's new CEO Dara Khosrowshahi

Uber chose Dara Khosrowshahi, the chief executive of travel company Expedia Inc, as its chief executive.



Uber Technologies Inc chose Dara Khosrowshahi, the chief executive of travel company Expedia Inc, as its chief executive on Sunday, handing him the challenge of leading the ride-services company out of a long crisis.

Khosrowshahi, 48, would take on the daunting task of mending Uber's image, repairing frayed relations among investors, rebuilding employee morale and creating a profitable business after seven years of losses.

He faces the difficult task of

changing Uber's culture that has included sexual harassment and allegations of deceit and corporate espionage. Uber also is losing millions every quarter as it continues to expand and invest in self-driving cars.

In Khosrowshahi, Uber's board has picked an executive with a track record of driving growth while also delivering profits - precisely what the unprofitable Uber needs to satisfy investors. He has also proven capable of making Expedia the leader in another industry full of change and competition — online travel.

Here are 10 things to know about him:

- Khosrowshahi, who ran Expedia for 12 years, was not known to the public to be among the top candidates for the job. He is not a fixture in the celebrity executive community. And since Expedia is based in Bellevue in Washington, he is a Silicon Valley outsider, offering a

contrast to the "tech bro" culture former CEO Travis Kalanick established at Uber.

- The Iranian-American businessman came to the United States as a child in 1978 with his parents following the Iranian Revolution. He received a bachelor's degree in engineering from Brown University and got his start at investment bank Allen and Co.

"We sure didn't feel like refugees, but in hindsight I guess we were — my father and mother left everything behind to come here — to be safe and give their boys a chance to re-build a life," he wrote, according to a New York Times report.

- In 2015, Khosrowshahi was the highest paid CEO in America, mainly because of a nearly \$91 million stock option grant. He is also on the board of the New York Times Company and sports merchandise company Fanatics Inc.

Don't get lured by schemes with abnormal returns: Sebi

Sebi DGM Surya Kant Sharma the students to keep details of schemes and agents for future reference, cautioning them against ponzi offerings to avert any financial loss.



Securities market regulator Sebi has cautioned the youth against falling for any scheme promising abnormal returns, especially ponzi ones. "Instead of going through allurements, investors are advised to go through terms and conditions of the scheme carefully before investing," Sebi DGM Surya Kant Sharma said on Monday while delivering his keynote address at a seminar in Amar Nath Girls Degree college in

Mathura.

At the regional seminar titled 'Investor's education', organised jointly by BSE and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) here, he stressed on proper investment and protection of investors from frauds. He advised the students to keep details of schemes and agents for future reference, cautioning them against ponzi offerings to avert any financial loss.

The official also explained various government programmes, including Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojna, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojna and Sukanya Samridhi Scheme. He asked participants of the seminar to opt for Atal Pension Scheme.

Sharma made out a case for educating the poor to avail of benefits from government schemes. Summing up the seminar, Rekha Verma, Manager IDC, Sebi, advised investors, not to keep unused funds and rather develop the habit of investing money in saving and recurring schemes.

I-T dept imposes Rs 7,900 crore penalty on Vodafone for tax dues

The Income Tax Department has imposed Rs 7,900 crore penalty on the tax demand of the same amount on a unit of billionaire Li Ka-shing's CK Hutchison Holdings Ltd

The Income Tax Department has imposed Rs 7,900 crore penalty on the tax demand of the same amount on a unit of billionaire Li Ka-shing's CK

Hutchison Holdings Ltd over its decade old sale of mobile phone business in India to Vodafone Group Plc.

In a filing to the Hong Kong stock exchange, the company said its unit Hutchison Telecommunications International Ltd had late last year received a tax demand notice of Rs 7,900 crore and on August 9 received a penalty order of a similar amount.

The CK Hutchison unit continues to dispute the validity of

those taxes, it said.

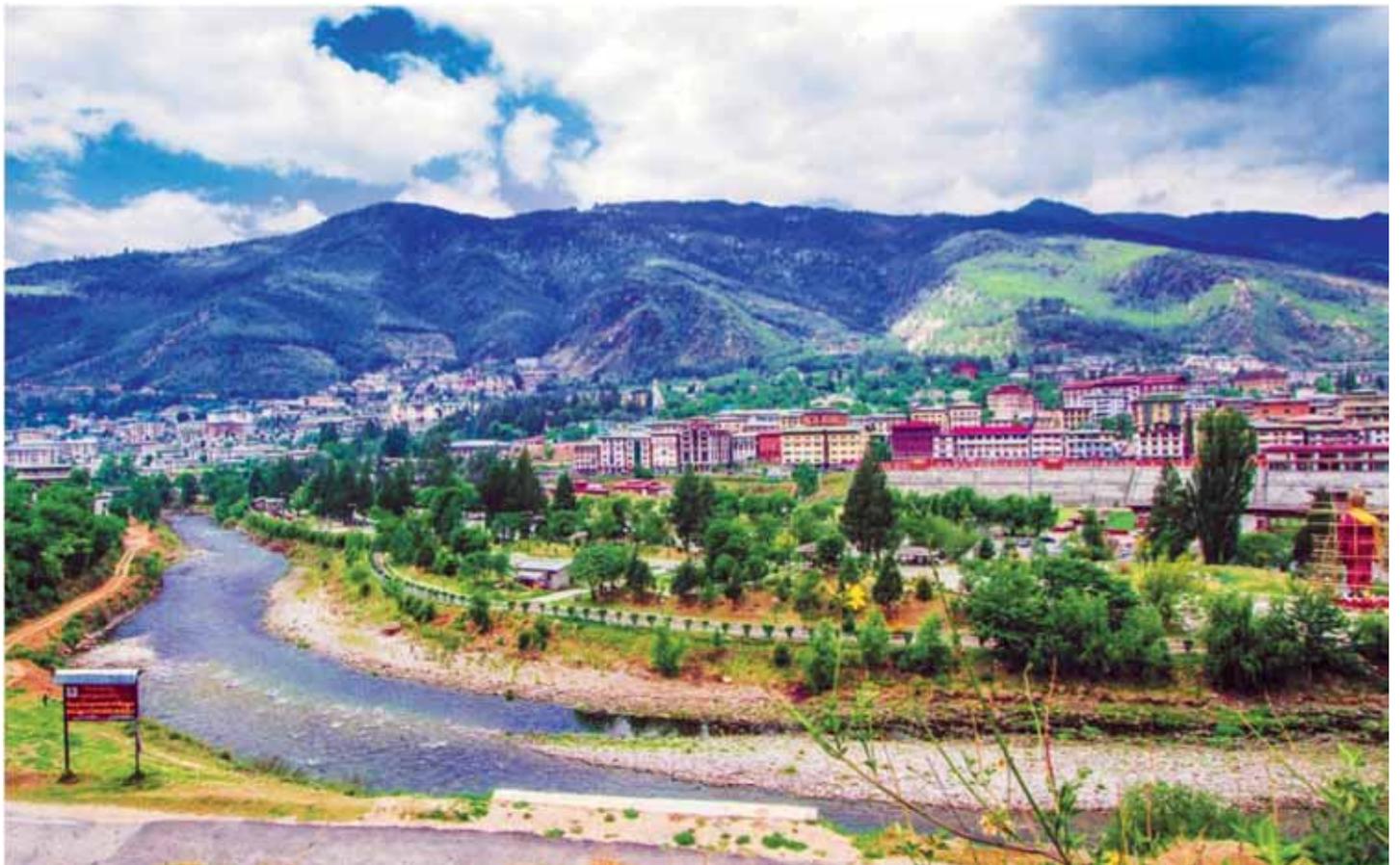
Hutchison Telecom, an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of CK Hutchison Holdings Ltd, had received a draft assessment order from the Indian Tax Authorities dated November 24, 2016 on "the alleged gains" made in the 2007 deal with Vodafone.

The tax department on January 25 this year issued the final assessment seeking Rs 7,900 crore in taxes on capital gains made in the Rs 16,430 crore

deal. Now, the tax department has by an order dated July 3 imposed "a penalty of approximately Rs 7,900 crore".

The company said "taxes cannot be validly imposed" as the tax demand order was passed on "the basis of retrospective legislation seeking to overturn the judgement of the Supreme Court of India in January 2012, which ruled that the Acquisition was not taxable in India, are in violation of the

THE SUN was at its harshest in Kolkata, the heat was melting the tarmac and sending people off the roads into the cooler comfort of their houses. But for me it was time to take out my leather. Last year I had led a group of Harley riders and members of the Harley Owners Group (H.O.G.) into Bhutan in what was the ride of a lifetime for all of us. There was great excitement among the riders who had signed up for the ride this year. This ride promised to take the riders much deeper into Bhutan than last year and an opportunity to explore the Dragon Kingdom up close. HOGs from all over the country, some from as far as Kochi, Goa and Bengaluru were heading towards Phuntsholing from where the 2nd International India HOG Ride would be flagged off. Phuntsholing is the main border town of Bhutan for travellers by road. It is about three hours ride from Siliguri and is located adjacent to Jaigaon on the Indian border. Indians do not require a visa to enter Phuntsholing but will need to



RIDING THROUGH THE LAND OF THUNDER DRAGON

Punakha Dzong, which is one of the oldest administrative capitals of Bhutan. Located on the confluence of the river Po Chhu and Mo Chhu, it welcomes the visitor through an old wooden bridge. After a quick visit to the Dzong, we headed towards the bank of the river further upstream for an impromptu picnic. After spending a couple of relaxing hours, we headed towards Hotel Zangtho Pelri where a sumptuous buffet consisting of Ema Datsi which is a fiery combination of cheese



few drinks we discussed the route and ride plan for the next few days and retired early. The bikes were saddled and refueled early in the morning and we were roaring to go. The HOGs led the convoy through the city before heading off South towards Buddha Dordenma, the Highest seating Buddha in the World. After a brief photo-op, we

towards Punakha. The three crosses Dochu La Pass (10,000ft), which offers one of the most stunning views in Bhutan apart from housing the famous 108 stupas. When we rolled into the Valley, we were greeted by the sights of the famous Rice Terraces of Punakha where the popular red rice of Bhutan is grown. Our next stop was the impressive Bumthang.

procure an entry permit for further travel. Day 1: We entered Phuntsholing late afternoon on May 19 and the first thing that hit us was what a stark difference a border can make. The roads are cleaner, the buildings with their multicoloured wooden façade give a very warm and welcoming feel to the visitor, the cars and bikes don't honk and the people although busy, have a very calm demeanour. We checked in at Hotel Druk, which is located barely a few meters off the border. Day 2: There was an air of excitement and anticipation all around when we went down for breakfast before heading to the immigration office for our permits. While we waited for their permits, we headed to Kizom Café which is very popular locally and serves some delectable cakes and savouries. After a quick riders brief we headed off for Thimphu. This stretch of road is one of the best in Bhutan for riders and after a relaxed ride, the convoy reached Riverview Hotel in Thimphu by evening. Over a



Eating seasonal fruits and veggies reduces colon cancer risk. Here's how

Seasonal diets lead to a diversity of bacteria in our gut, which boosts immunity and cuts down risk of inflammatory bowel disease and colon cancer.

Go for real fruits over juices and seasonal fruits and vegetables over canned ones. According to a study, eating seasonal fruits and vegetables may boost your gut health and reduce the risk of inflammatory bowel disease and colon cancer. According to researchers, gut bacteria of an indigenous group of people in Africa was about 30% more diverse than in Western nations. The scientists have long known that diversity of our gut bacteria has an immune system boosting effect. The team from the

Stanford University's school of medicine in California studied tribes living in the Savannah, known as The Hadza and collected stool samples from 188 individuals, aged eight to 70 years. They were then compared with samples from Italians, who ate normal Western diet.

The diet of The Hadza people varies with seasons since storage of food and its availability throughout the year is not an option in the Rift Valley. Their diet comprises of five items that include meat, berries, baobab (a

fruit), tubers and honey. The team found that the gut microbiota of the Hadza varied seasonally, in harmony with what food was available. They discovered that they do not get the common gut ailments that plague the Western world such as inflammatory bowel disease or Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis and colon cancer. Processed diets, as well as the use of antibiotics, caesarean sections and other lifestyle changes have helped reduce the variety of our gut bacteria, the authors noted. The results

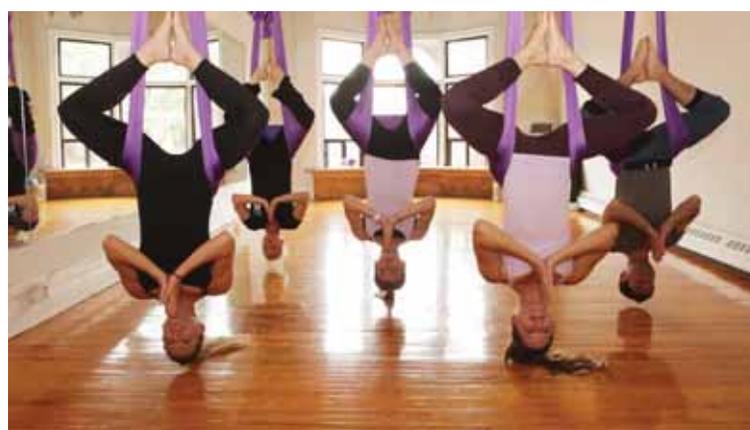


revealed that the Hadza had a more diverse gut microbial system. "Our own microbiota can change significantly from day to day, or even within hours,

in response to what we've been eating," said another researcher Justin Sonnenburg. The research was published in the Science journal.

Say goodbye to boring workouts. Try these four fun fat-burning exercises now

Falling behind on your New Year's resolutions? These four fitness activities are perfect to get you back on track.



Whether you've been sweating it out in the gym for years or have just finished your first 5K run, these fun fitness activities will help you stay healthy and motivated.

Pole exercise: Channel your inner exotic dancer with some calorie-burning pole workout. It is athletic, graceful and is the perfect whole body workout. "Poling improves mobility, helps build stamina and gives you a rock solid core," says Aarifa Bhinderwala, a Mumbai-based certified pole trainer. The gravity defying tricks and transitions help build focus, coordination, endurance and complete control over one's body. "Pole workout is getting popular as it works on the whole body in a single session," adds Bhinderwala.

Aerial yoga: Just like

poling, this new-age yoga helps build a strong core while working on flexibility. Aerial yoga is practiced with the help of a cloth hammock suspended from a ceiling. The elegant moves are also a good way to practice mindfulness, which makes this exercise a perfect stress buster.

Trampoline exercise: A popular workout internationally, Mumbai

has its first trampoline fitness center at Rush in Ballard Estate. "This is the only form of workout that lets you burn over 1000 calories in an hour," says Bhavna Harchandrai, a self-taught trainer. The workout lets you concentrate on abs without straining the back as it aligns with the spine of the practitioner. The exercises can be customised based on your

requirements.

Boot camp workout:

The best part of a boot camp session is that it can be done at home or in your backyard without investing into any equipment. It includes an intense mix of various exercises such as aerobics, high-intensity training (pushups, pullups, lunges and crunches) and military-style drills. For instance, at Cindy's Boot Camp (a popular destination with Bollywood celebs

such as Nimrat Kaur and Monica Dogra), trainer Cindy Jourdain uses training protocols from crossfit, martial arts, yoga and dance. One of the reasons her sessions are so popular is because she trains in groups. This helps people stay motivated together.

A former professional ballerina, Jourdain ensures that her students improve their stamina and become aware of their bodies. A single session can help burn up to 1000 calories. "High intensity circuit base WOD (work out of the day) will definitely keep the heart rate high throughout resulting in burning more calories and promoting fat loss," says Jourdain.



Aerial yoga: Just like



Dear women, here are 6 tests you must regularly undergo after turning 30

As you grow past 30, you may not feel or look very different from the way you did a few years ago, but your body is changing slowly.

Age is just a number. When it comes to energy and enterprise, you are as young or old as you chose to be. But it is essential to look after your health and be prepared for the physical changes that accompany ageing. As you grow past 30, you may not feel or look very different from the way you did a few years ago, but your body is changing slowly. Bone loss begins in the 30s and can lead to bone-thinning later in life. Muscles start losing their 'tone,' affecting fitness, strength and balance. To stay fit, plan out an exercise programme, eat a balanced healthy diet, rich in calcium and fresh fruits, use mild cleansers, moisturisers, avoid prolonged sun exposure and stay active with mild weight-bearing exercises.

Regular medical checkups and health screenings continue to be very important. Good health habits and preventive medical care can help you continue to enjoy wellness of mind and body and build the foundation for good health over many decades. Here are some important tests that should be taken once you've crossed into your 30s.

***Blood pressure:** It is recommended that women in their late 30s should get blood pressure checked once every year as high BP can result in serious ailments involving heart, kidney and brain. Mild change in the food habits, lifestyle and medicines can easily keep your BP in check.

***Cholesterol:** Keeping your cholesterol levels under check is a great way to keep your heart

healthy. Your total cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol, LDL (bad cholesterol) are among numerous factors your doctor can use to predict your lifetime or 10-year risk for a heart attack or stroke.

The only method to determine cholesterol levels is the blood test. If a woman has bad cholesterol i.e. above 130 mg/dL, she should get it checked every year. The American Heart Association recommends all adults aged 20 or older have their cholesterol, and other traditional risk factors, checked every five years.

***Thyroid test:** Malfunctioning thyroid gland can result in weight gain, autoimmune disease and much more. Get a thyroid test done every five years or if you experience symptoms like mood

swings, sudden weight gain or loss, irregular menstrual cycles and abnormal sleep habits etc. The thyroid hormone disorder is detected through the blood test which includes T3, T4, and TSH.

***Pap smear:** Get a pap test every two years or both a pap test and an HPV test every five years (you can get both tests at the same time). If you have risk factors such as previous abnormal screening results, HIV infection, a weakened immune system, you should be screened annually.

'Pap smear test' is used to detect the infection of the cervix, which may show the signs of cervical cancer. During the test, a sample of cells is obtained from the surface of the cervix. Talk to your health care professional about what's right for you.

*** Breast cancer test:** Due to rapidly changing lifestyles, incidence of breast cancer is growing. It is important to get a regular check-up done for breast cancer as if detected early, it's almost curable.

***Eye check-up:** In late 30s, all of us start facing problems of vision due to multiple lifestyle factors and excess use of computer, mobile screens etc. Eyestrain, blurred vision, pain, red eyes, dry eyes, etc., are common complaints women have. Eye problems can also cause headaches.

Get an eye exam twice between ages 30 to 39. If you have vision problems, a family history of eye problems, a history of eye injury or have diabetes, increase your frequency as advised by your eye care specialist.

How well do you know your condom

8 quirky never-heard-before facts about the rubber

Switzerland had their condom ambulances and the CIA used condoms during the Cold War for intimidation.



It's time for a history lesson on condoms. Yes, we know you're on top of your game, at least when it comes to condoms, from how best to use them to the mind-numbing numbers of flavours available in the market. But how much do you know about the history of condoms?

Help is at hand. Here are some lesser-known facts about condoms that you may find intriguing:

1. Not a new invention

The design of condoms has definitely improved over the last 100 years, but the condom as a product is not new. The oldest recorded use of condoms dates back to a cave painting in Grotte

Chinese men used to cover their glans with oiled silk paper. Japanese men used tortoise-shell 'caps.' Clearly, Japanese condoms have come a long way since then.

3. 16th century renaissance

Gabriele Fallopio, an anatomist and physician from France is credited with designing what the condoms look like now: He had made a linen condom which was kept wet with a chemical solution, and tied to the penis with a ribbon when dry. Fallopio tested his invention by having 1,100 men try it while they had sex with women suffering from syphilis. He claimed none of the men got any infections. We would love

to see Fallopio convince men nowadays to carry out such experiments.

4. They don't really desensitize

This might have been the case before, but not anymore. Today's condoms have different flavourings too! (achari chicken tikka anyone?)

5. The German military started it

It was in the 19th century that the German military started large scale use of condoms, which was followed by the American army in the 20th century.

6. Not knowing how to use

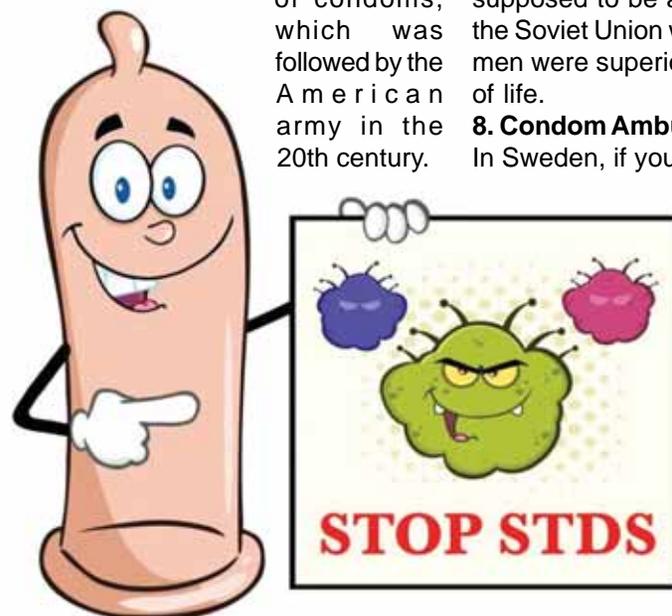
You might think using a condom is common sense, but type 'how to use a condom' on Google and you get 3,52,00,000 results.

7. Cold War Condoms

During the Cold War, one strategy considered by the CIA was parachuting big condoms into the Soviet Union, and writing 'medium' on them. This was supposed to be a method used to tell the Soviet Union women that American men were superior even in this aspect of life.

8. Condom Ambulance

In Sweden, if you were in dire need of a condom, you could call for a condom ambulance. No longer available in Sweden, we're sure this was one of the more revolutionary ideas relating to condoms that saw the light of day.





There is always something happening in the world of fashion. Here is all you need to know to keep your FQ going this week

by Radhika Bhalla



Silverware artifacts that will be showcased at the exhibition.



Silver crush

THERE'S always a good reason to invest in a beautiful piece of décor, especially when it's in silver. If you're on the hunt for a pretty piece to glam-up your bedside table, or a gift for a special friend (without breaking the bank, of course), make sure you check out the exhibition called 'The Silver Lining' curated by Kalyani Chawla, being held today, September 1 at Library Lounge, The Lodhi hotel.

The day-long exhibit is under Chawla's new silverware label Rezon, and includes a range of hand-crafted pieces, made in-house by silversmiths using eco-friendly techniques and features like anti-tarnish wash. Priced from ₹2,000 onwards, the range of silver and gold plated boxes, candlesticks, tea sets, platters, serving trays, photo frames and more come under four categories. While the 'Retro' collection is inspired by modern art and features peppy colours with enamelling and stones like

turquoise and rose quartz, the 'Lotus' collection is inspired by an antique *diya* from the 19th century. Meanwhile, the 'Tricolor' collection combines silver, rose gold and gold, and the 'Silver Garden' range features gold plated insects, flowers, branches and lily of the valley with pearls on the pieces.

Speaking with **LIFESTYLE**, Chawla shares, "Apart from the usual home accessories, I am focusing a lot on gifting. I have kept in mind the design element to make it

special, but along with it is the pricing. I feel that luxury products don't have to be out of reach because they have silver, gold plating or a beautiful stone."

The brand is offering customisations at no extra cost, and clients can return for the piece to be re-polished at any time.

The exhibition is on from 11am to 7pm. For those who miss out, you can send enquiries to aashana@rezonsilverware.com or take an appointment for a private viewing at 011-41615184.



Kalyani Chawla is curating a silverware exhibition under the new label 'Rezon'.



THE REAL SHOWSTOPPERS

THE true celebrities at the 'Infinite Opportunity' fashion show held this weekend by NGO Tamana and Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) were the differently-abled children who walked in garments by India's leading designers.

Hosted at the Hyatt Regency hotel in the Capital, the show witnessed capsule collections by designer Abraham & Thakore, Anju Modi, Gaurav Jai Gupta, Payal Jain, Amit Aggarwal, Rajesh Pratap Singh, Payal Pratap Singh and Sanjay Garg.

The evening began with a collection made by the students of Pearl Academy Fashion Laboratory in collaboration with the inmates of Jail no. 6 at Tihar Jail, who are currently enrolled in the fashion program.

The models for these ensembles were none other than the children of Tamana, who walked with utmost confidence in front of a large crowd and a pit of photographers. The music was rendered by visually impaired



Tamana Chona

singer, Diwakar Sharma who floored the audience with his remarkable rendition of popular Bollywood tracks.

Actress Kriti Sanon walked the runway in an upcycled dress by Amit Aggarwal — in keeping with the theme of sustainability in clothing — but the belle of the ball was Tamana Chona who strutted the runway in a pretty *kurta* with white pants. She danced on the stage and gave a heartwarming speech on how this should be considered an age of opportunity for differently-abled people. The crowd applauded her as she spoke of not wanting to wear make-up on the runway because she was pretty — an awareness that so many women lack today.

Meanwhile, the chief guest for the evening was Sangeeta Jaitely, while the guests of honour was H.E. Harinder Sidhu, Australian High Commissioner to India and Sunil Sethi was the Torch Bearer of Inclusion.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Shayama Chona, Founder and President of Tamana NGO said, "The reason for holding



(Above) FDCI President Sunil Sethi receiving an award from Sangeeta Jaitely; (right) actress Kriti Sanon.

the Tamana fashion show every year is to bring greater confidence and dignity into the lives of the specially-abled. I believe that these individuals are not lesser but, more than any of us."

Bhaag jao



FIRST things first, a heist film needs to be clever, engaging and as a result, entertaining. On these very counts, Baadshaho fails miserably. Set during the Emergency period in India, the film starts off with a confrontation between Rani Geetanjali (Ileana D'Cruz) and a politician, Sanjeev (Priyanshu Chatterjee), who bears an uncanny resemblance to Sanjay Gandhi. When Sanjeev orders the royal 'khazana' to be transported from Rajasthan to Delhi, Rani Geetanjali smells something fishy. Not one to be outdone, she turns to her lieutenant and lover Bhawani (Ajay Devgn) to rob the truck carrying the 'khazana'.

Enter the gang who will pull off the heist — Daliya (Emraan Hashmi) whose t-shirts have quotes like 'free love' and 'night special' just to make sure that his character's flirtatious streak is established, Guruji (Sanjay Mishra), a drunkard who is expert at picking locks and Sanjana (Esha Gupta) who works with Rani. We also have Seher (Vidyut Jammwal) who has his own reasons to join the motley group.

Director Milan Luthria doesn't waste any time in kickstarting the cat-and-mouse game. And that is where part of the problem lies. The film has very little to offer post interval, and pre-

dictable screenplay plays the biggest spoiler. The corny dialogues only add to the misery. Sample these — when Sanjana tells Bhawani how they may be outnumbered by the army protecting the treasure, he says, 'Woh army hai, toh hum harami hai.' Or while flirting with Sanjana, Daliya says, 'Sharam aur main ek sentence main nahi aate.'

Coming to the actors, Devgn has the same set of expressions — just this time around, it feels as if the intensity that is synonymous with him, has mellowed. While Hashmi and Jammwal are commendable, the surprise package is Mishra who walks away with some of the best lines in the film. D'Cruz has little to do besides looking gorgeous in her chiffon sarees. As for Gupta, wonder what made her agree to portray the inconsequential role.

In its runtime of 136 minutes, the film feels longer than it should. The ending is so simplistic, it's almost laughable. It is a case of how a good ol' masala entertainer, which otherwise could have been an enjoyable affair thanks to its action sequences and some seeti maar dialogues, has gone wrong — once again, reiterating the importance of sharp writing in a thriller.

Far from an exciting film that would have me glued to my seat, this one made me look for the nearest exit to run. Instead of Baadshaho, one could well call it 'Bhaag jao'.

BAADSHAH

U/A: Action, thriller

DIR: Milan Luthria

CAST: Ajay Devgn, Ileana D'Cruz, Emraan Hashmi, Esha Gupta



★YUCK ★★WHATEVER ★★★GOOD ★★★★SUPER ★★★★★AWESOME

Nimrat reports back to the Army



Ekta Kapoor revives web series The Test Case with actor, director Nagesh Kukunoor apparently given the boot from war drama

EKTA Kapoor's ambitious web series, The Test Case, which is based on the Indian Army, failed to enjoy a successful run, with the makers reportedly pulling the plug on the show after one episode. mid-day had earlier reported that creative differences between director Nagesh Kukunoor and Kapoor had been cited as reason to bring the show to a halt. Now, we hear, the team of The



Nagesh Kukunoor

Test Case has decided to resurrect their pet project.

A source says that Kukunoor has been shown the door, with Dangal (2016) assistant director Vinay Waikul being appointed to helm the Nimrat Kaur-starrer. A unit hand adds, "While the city was battling with the deluge on Tuesday, the actors shot for the show. Nimrat, who sustained a leg injury on the set, also continued shooting. A major chunk of the narrative is being re-written and Ekta is being much more involved this time around."

In an official statement,



Nimrat Kaur from the show

producer Deepak Dhar, MD & CEO Endemol Shine India, said, "We're happy that the production of The Test Case is on in full swing. It's a show that is close to us."

'Not doing anything that other actresses haven't done'

Defending her outings in sex comedies, Sunny Leone says she will cut down on item songs in a bid to reinvent herself as an actor

SUNNY Leone says that she has constantly been trying to change her image of an actor suited for sexual roles only, with hubby Daniel Weber helping her reinvent herself. And yet, she shot for five item songs in the past year.

In a bid to test her acting prowess, Leone, who will feature in the special number, Trippy Trippy, in Sanjay Dutt's Bhoomi, tells mid-day that now, she intends to concentrate on roles that explore her capabilities. "After my last few films, I decided to evaluate the elements that are working in my favour. I realised I should minimise the number of films that only see me in a single song. I want to concentrate on acting," she says, adding that she has also been working with a coach to hone her skills. "I can already see the difference. I have no control over the success of my films, but I am confident about my acting capabilities."

With sex comedies and dramas like the 2016 films, Mastizaade, One Night Stand and Beimaan Love, on her resume, Leone has often been criticised for giving a nod to roles that follow a defined template. But, the actor argues that her career's trajectory isn't at odds with those of others in Bollywood.

"Every film is glamorous. There were elements in both films [Mastizaade and One Night Stand] that were sexy, but, that's the case with all movies. I am not doing anything that another actress has not done. I don't know why it evokes a different reaction," says Leone, who has another romantic drama, Arbaaz Khan's Tera Intezaar, in her kitty.

Following in the footsteps of multiple industry folk exploring different careers, Leone is dabbling with television, and production too. "I am doing TV shows, and commercials. I will also turn producer along with Daniel soon."



have you heard?

**LONAVALA
FILM FEST**

The second edition of the Lonavala International Film Festival India begins today at the hill station. The fest, which runs till September 3, will be inaugurated by Mukesh Khanna. Over 30 Indian and international films are being screened

Kapil gets the boot; show pulled off air



Late last night, in a sudden, but expected move, Sony decided to pull the plug on **Kapil Sharma's** show. The channel's official spokesperson says, "Kapil has been under the weather due to which we have mutually agreed to take a short break. Once he has recovered completely, we will start shooting again. We value our relationship with Kapil and wish him a speedy recovery." For the past several months, the show had been plagued by controversies. Sharma had also been doing a no-show on the set besides keeping celebrity guests waiting for him. Industry insiders state that his return is doubtful and it amounts to getting the boot.



Bollywood's top 10 highest paid actors

After releasing a list of the 10 highest paid actors in the world (which featured Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar on number 8, 9 and 10 respectively), Forbes yesterday released a list of the 10 highest paid actors of Bollywood.

The list of the top 10 actors and their earnings from films and brand endorsements...

1
SHAH RUKH KHAN
\$38 million
₹243 crore

2
SALMAN KHAN
\$37 million
₹236 crore

3
AKSHAY KUMAR
\$35.5 million
₹224 crore

4
AAMIR KHAN
\$12.5 million
₹80 crore

5
HRITHIK ROSHAN
\$11.5 million
₹73.6 crore

7
RANVEER SINGH
\$10 million
₹64 crore

6
DEEPIKA PADUKONE
\$11 million
₹70 crore

8
PRIYANKA CHOPRA
\$10 million
₹64 crore

9
AMITABH BACHCHAN
\$9 million
₹57 crore

10
RANBIR KAPOOR
\$8.5 million
₹54 crore

Temple trek

Sara Ali Khan visited the Kedarnath temple in Uttarakhand on Wednesday. Saif Ali Khan and Amrita Singh's daughter already has a fan following. Snapshots of her visit are being shared on social media by fan clubs. The star kid begins shooting for her debut film, Kedarnath, this weekend in Dehradun.



Karan, check out Irrfan's airport style statement

Yesterday, **Irrfan Khan** was spotted at Mumbai airport wearing a surgical mask. We thought the actor was suffering from a flu and was being considerate of others. Or was perhaps trying to protect himself from picking up a virus. We were proved wrong as this was, according to the actor's rep, Irrfan's way to protect his look for an upcoming film. The critically-acclaimed actor sure made a style statement. **Karan Johar**, please take note of this new airport look. The filmmaker had recently tweeted about stars' obsession over their airport looks. Irrfan just took it a notch higher.



Education pays

Kriti Sanon has landed one more endorsement in her kitty. This is due to her educational qualifications. The actor holds a B Tech in electronics and communication engineering — the reason she has been roped in to endorse New Zealand as an education destination. Kriti will soon be taking off to the land of kiwis to check out the various courses on offer.



Venice vibes

Filmmaker **Bunty Walia** and wife **Vanessa Parmar** walked the red carpet at the Venice Film Festival 2017. They attended the premiere of the Matt Damon-starrer *Downsizing*. They also had a chance to interact with the Hollywood star. The festival runs till September 9.

have you heard?

NOT 3D, BUT 6D A 6D version of Mohanlal-starrer Pulimurugan has been released in Kochi, Kerala. The makers claim this is the first Indian film to be made using this advanced form of technology. The Malayalam action-adventure was last year's top grosser



Kangs demands public apology from Hrithik



Kangana Ranaut has struck again. Just when we thought her fight with **Hrithik Roshan** was history, she has hit out at him on Aap Ki Adalat. Yesterday, host Rajat Sharma released a teaser on Twitter. It has Kangs unleash her fury. "Usko (Hrithik) yahan bulaiye aur poochiye, because maine notice nahi bheja tha," she roars. She has also accused Hrithik of causing her mental and emotional trauma and demanded a public apology from him. The explosive episode is slated to air this weekend.



It's wrap-up time

Deepika Padukone has completed the shoot of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Padmavati. She has reserved an additional three to five days for any patchwork if required, which will be shot after co-stars **Ranveer Singh** and **Shahid Kapoor** have finished shooting their respective portions. In a recent Twitter interaction with fans, Dippy termed shooting for the historical drama as the most challenging role of her career.



Let the music play

Iulia Vantur has given up on her acting aspirations and has turned seriously to music. Yesterday, composer **Vishal Mishra** shared a picture of Iulia on Instagram and wrote, "Working on a beautiful melody with the amazing Iulia. The song will be launched soon." It is said that **Salman Khan's** rumoured special friend is keen to record with different composers. Earlier, Iulia rendered the Every Night And Day track in Himesh Reshammiya's album, Aap Se Mausiquii. The Romanian actor-anchor performed at the music launch of Mahesh Manjrekar's film, Rubik's Cube, where **Salman** was the chief guest. At this rate, Iulia will soon be doing playback for films as well.

Sanjay Dutt's manager threatens comedian



As heavy rains lashed the city on Tuesday, Mumbai opened its doors and hearts to extend a helping hand. But stand-up comedian **Daniel Fernandes** had an unpleasant experience outside **Sanjay Dutt's** office. In a series of tweets, Fernandes writes, "The manager of Sanjay Dutt's office threatened to beat me because I asked if I could park my car on the elevated platform of the building that I live in [the actor has an office on the first floor and has blocked an entry point for himself]. All I asked was to let my car stay there till the water recedes... People are helping in any way they can, this fine gentleman was on some weird power trip shouting at me like I asked him to kiss me. Ridiculous." We hope Dutt has questioned the manager.



ON THE SET



Kubra Sait has lots to say while **Kunal Roy Kapoor** does not look amused on the set of their upcoming web series, Going Viral. The show takes a funny peek into the world of social media



Here's looking at Johar's juniors

Yesterday, **Karan Johar** posted latest snapshots of his twins, **Roohi** and **Yash**, on Instagram. He captioned the picture, "My world 2.0." Earlier this month, on Raksha Bandhan, the filmmaker had given the first glimpse of the tots.



Sona not in awe of Salman



Sonakshi Sinha is not wonderstruck by **Salman Khan's** stardom. "Usually, people are in awe of him... I'm not," Sona has confessed on **Neha Dhupia's** podcast. Is this a hint of the changing equation between the two?



TELY TATTLE

Same place, nine years on

Alka Yagnik will be seen on Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai. The singer makes a special appearance during the saangeet ceremony of **Naksh** and **Keerti** (played by **Rishi Dev** and **Mohena Kumari** respectively). Yagnik rendered tracks like **Kaho Naa Pyaar Hai** and **Akhiyaan Milaau Akhiyaan Churau** besides shaking a leg with the cast. The crooner rendered the show's title track nine years ago. So it was also homecoming for her.



Bonding beyond the show

Rumoured lovebirds **Shaheer Shaikh** and **Erica Fernandes** were spotted at a multiplex in **Andheri** recently. Their show **Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise** ended last week, but this has not stopped the telly couple from spending time with each other.



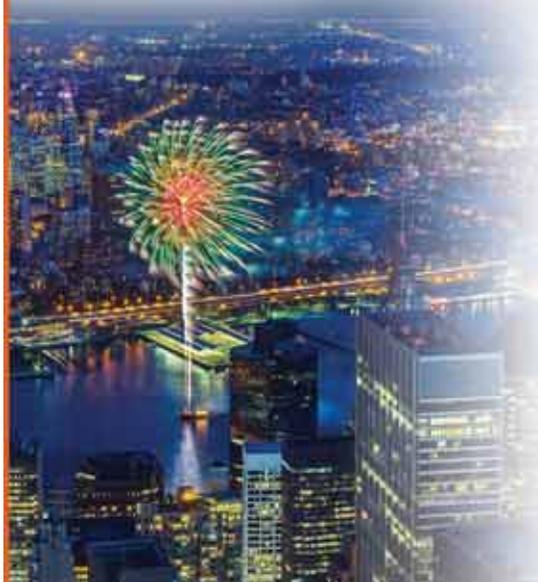


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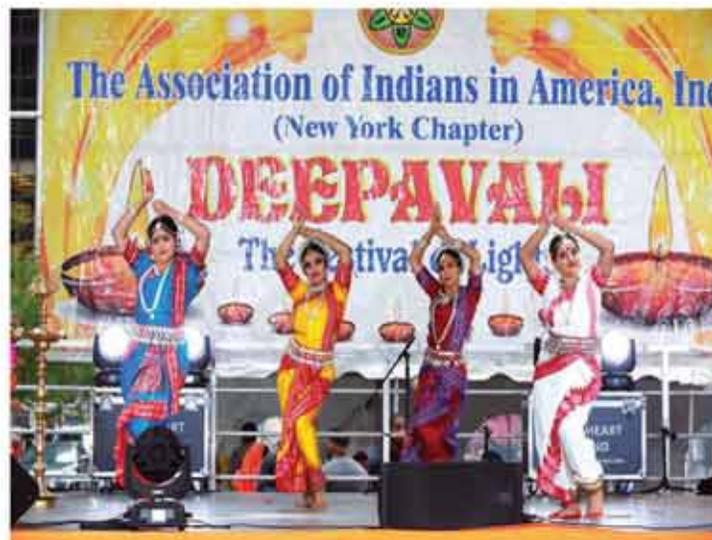


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