



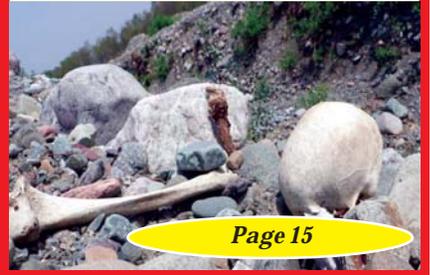
The South Asian

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'Skeleton lake' in Uttarakhand contains bones of mysterious European migrants



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Sikh community raises over \$175K for boy who lost entire family in head-on car crash



(News Agencies)- The Sikh community in Carteret, New Jersey, has rallied around an 11-year-old boy — raising more than \$175,000 for him and his future — after he lost his entire family in a head-on car crash last week. “In this immensely unfortunate moment, while we all get together to pray to almighty to rest their souls in peace, we are also praying for the speedy recovery of Yash,” a description reads on young Yashveer Singh’s GoFundMe page. “While nobody can ever fulfill the void in Yash’s life, as friends and family, the least we can do is to come

together and contribute our share for the medical expenses of Yash, funeral expenses of the family, and more importantly, contribute towards the future of Yash. No contribution is big or small.” Yashveer, whose family lived in Carteret — a borough in Middlesex County — was traveling with them in Virginia when they got into the deadly crash last Thursday. His parents, Gurmeet Singh, 44, and Jasleen Kaur, 38, were both killed, as was his 6-year-old sister. “Gurmeet Singh (of Milton Distributors) was a man of few words but many smiles,”

says Yashveer’s GoFundMe page description. “He and his family met with a tragic auto accident in Virginia on August 15th. The extremely unfortunate accident took away the lives of Gurmeet, his wife and their 6 year old daughter. Yash Singh, their son has survived, and is hospitalized with Pelvic Fracture and a few other injuries.”

H-1B visa pre-registration applications may begin from April

(News Agencies)- New Delhi: Pre-registration for the H-1B visa application for the financial year FY21 may start from April 2020. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) earlier this month completed its review of a proposed Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulation regarding a filing fee for H-1B cap registration. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has also obtained approval from the OMB for the new rules. However, the fees have not been announced yet. Typically, the USCIS opens a window for filing of the H-1B cap

Will 'Indian' in the PIO ever disappear?

The appointment of four ministers of South Asian descent in the Boris Johnson Cabinet in Great Britain stirred some excitement in India last month, as it usually happens when people of Indian or sub-continental origin do well or make a splash abroad. This has happened all too frequently in recent years, including when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau drafted several Indian-origin law makers into his cabinet. People of “desi” origin or with strong desi connection have also done well and entered the political mainstream in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland, leading some to exult over the reach of the Indian diaspora. In some others, this has occasioned exasperated eye-rolls, since

from all accounts, these immigrants or descendants of immigrants are fully integrated into their country of birth (or adopted country if they are first gen immigrants) and have little to do with India beyond their origins.

Technically, most people are immigrant descendants from some place else, so what’s the big deal, they ask. Indeed, there comes a point in time in the life of a diaspora when it ceases to be classified or marked as an outsider. This usually happens with the dropping of the hyphen that is a reminder of its foreign origin. After all, no one identifies Donald Trump as a German-American, although he is only a third-generation descendant of a Bavarian immigrant with the last name Drumpf.

applications in the first few days of April each year. The annual quota of 85,000 usually gets filled in the first few days only. Successful applicants will be able to work in the US from October 1 of 2020. For FY20, the final rules for the electronic pre-registration requirement were announced in January. But according to a report in a leading daily, its implementation was kept in abeyance for H-1B applications that were filed in April 2019. A group of 15 associations comprising the American Immigration Lawyers’ Association, thinktanks such as Fwd.US (which

has as its founding members Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Gates), US chamber of commerce and others have sought certainty on the timelines, the daily said.

A representation made by them on August 16 states: “USCIS should publicly confirm by September 15 if, and when, the electronic registration system will be rolled out for the H-1B cap filing season for fiscal 2021 (which refers to applications to be filed in April 2020).” This is essential as sponsoring employers commence preparation for the filing season as early as August.

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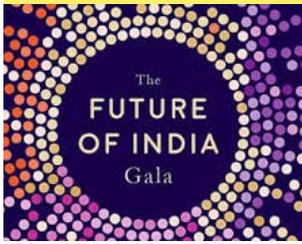
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"Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation" Rapidly Approaching 100,000 Schools Target



(By - Prakash Waghmare) - Considering Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation's ('EVF' or 'Ekal') profound impact and rapid growth at the grass-root level, Honorable Indian PM Narendra Modi in 2017 gave 'Ekal'a unique goal of establishing 100,000 schools by Yr. 2022. In India's history, Yr.2022 has a very distinctive significance. It happens to be the 75th anniversary of India's Independence. On this front, the most exciting new development is that EVF is undoubtedly going to ring the 'target-bell' by early 2020 itself. As of this moment, Ekal already has 93,000 schools in the same number of villages that are grooming 2.55 million children &

youth each year for life's major challenges. The most remarkable thing about these staggering numbers is, more than half of them are girls. Moreover, quite a few of its alumni have gone on to become high-caliber teachers, District Officers, company administrators and technocrats in their adult life. Although rooted in Education, Ekal has blossomed into healthcare, integrated village development and economic empowerment. Recently, 'United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) confirmed that, defying global trend, India is likely to meet 100% child enrolment and school completion target set by them, in 2030. This heartening affirmation is nothing but a consequential endorsement of EVF's educational mission in rural and tribal areas of India. This year, "Ekal



Abhiyan Trust' (an umbrella Orgz for various off-shoots of Ekal) was bestowed with Iconic National Honor - "Gandhi Peace Prize" - by the Govt of India, for its contribution to Education in remote areas, with gender and social equality. 'EVF' is the largest literacy movement undertaken by the Indians and NRIs in dozen countries. In last one year alone, Ekal has successfully added 20,000 schools. This meteoric rise has been partly due to high-end "Future of India" GALAS

that Ekal has started hosting in various metropolitan areas since 2017. Last year, between October 6 -13, it hosted three Galas- Houston, Washington & New York - and raised over \$5 Million. This was in addition to \$6 Million it had already raised through its annual fundraising concerts across USA in 55 cities. This year, two Galas have been planned - one in Los Angeles (LA) area and another in New York City (NYC). LA-Gala is being hosted on Saturday, September 14 at 'Hyatt

Regency' (200 South Pine Ave, Long Beach, CA), and NYC-Gala is taking place on Saturday, November 9 at the majestic 'Gotham Hall' (1356 Broadway, NYC, NY 10018). For details of ticket purchase, sponsorship or special-project enquiry, please check www.lagala.ekal.org OR www.nycgala.ekal.org for respective Galas. At LA-Gala, the keynote speaker is going to be 'Emily Church', Exec Dir of 'XPrize Foundation' with 'Vivek Oberoi' as the special guest. The entertainment at LA will be provided by Bollywood Comedian 'Omi Vaidya' which will be capped by a fusion-music Concert by 'Nauzad'. 'EVF' is a duly registered non-profit Charitable Organization 501(C) in USA and dispenses all its assistance in rural areas irrespective of recipient's religion, creed, caste

and region. Its overhead is hardly around 10%. Suresh Iyer, President of 'Ekal-USA', has confirmed that, so far this year, Ekal has raised almost \$5.5 Million. Attributing this stunning achievement to thousands of its devout Donors and dedicated volunteers, Suresh is confident that, with two Galas, Ekal, will once again cut through \$10 Million mark by the year's end. In 2017, Bajrang Bagra, CEO of 'Ekal Abhiyan Trust' initiated a special literacy project for 'troubled spots' in border region. He recently confirmed that as of now almost 6,000 Ekal schools are in operation in Jammu-Kashmir that has resulted in establishing peace, tranquility, and life-normalcy in people's lives there. The schools there are run by the locals under Ekal's guidance.

Indian student drowns in US lake, body found 90 feet under, on rock ledge

(News Agencies)- A 27-year-old Indian student drowned after jumping off from a recreation spot into the Crater Lake in the US state of Oregon, authorities said. Media reports suggested that Mannar belonged to Vizag in Andhra Pradesh and was doing MS in robotics from Oregon State University. Sumedh Mannar, dove off the "Jumping Rock", a popular recreation spot at the lake on Sunday around 4:40 pm (local time) and did not resurface, Marsha McCabe, a spokeswoman for Crater Lake National Park, was quoted as saying by the Oregonian newspaper. McCabe said the cliff Mannar, a graduate student at the Oregon State University, had jumped from was about 25 feet high. The cliff was not a prohibited area for jumping, she said, adding that officials have not yet determined exactly why he



drowned. In the summers, the surface of the lake warms up to about 15 degrees Celsius, but the average temperature of the lake is around 3 degrees. Swimming is only allowed in the area around Cleetwood Cove and along the shore of Wizard Island. Immediately after Mannar disappeared, people on scene threw a life ring into the water, and Crater Lake hospitality staff took a small boat out to the area to help search, she said. Park staff came to the area to help with the search, but choppy waters and poor visibility conditions made the search difficult. After about three hours of searching and no sign of Mannar, officials called off the search for the night and resumed it Monday morning. Divers on Monday morning dove in the last known spot Mannar had been seen and found him about 90 feet straight down in the water on a rock ledge. Beyond that point, the lake drops off dramatically to a depth of more than 1,200 feet. Mannar's body was transported to Klamath Falls.

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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

ਵਿਦੇਸ਼: ਸ਼ਬਦ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਹ ਸਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਖੋਜ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਸੰਘੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਸਾਲਾਨਾ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਰੁਪਏ ਖਰਚੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਸੰਘੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਖਰਚੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਸੰਘੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਖਰਚੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਸੰਘੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਖਰਚੇ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਹੀ ਹੈ।

ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖੇਗਾ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ

ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ: ਸਿੱਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖੇਗਾ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ। ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖੇਗਾ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ। ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖੇਗਾ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ।

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Prime Minister Modi is The strongest Leader in our Lifetime : Jagdish Sewhani



(By our staff reporter) New York: On his recent visit to US, Mr Kailash Vijayvargiya General Secretary Of BJP said that it's historic day and it was because of the Dynamic Leadership Of Prime Minister Modi this Abrogation of Article 370 was Possible. He said that previous congress governments should have done this long long ago but they didn't want to do that . hHe assured that now that the Article 370 is removed, Days are not far when a Magnificent Temple will be built in Ayodhya. He Urged NRI's to invest in Jammu and Kashmir. Talking about Global Media he said that he was shocked to see their views on India . He urged Indian Americans to play important role in this so that the Global Media rectifies its mistake .

Mr Vijayvargiya, speaking in front of a large gathering in Hicksville, New York; further said that the Mamta Government's day in West Bengal are numbered, and he was confident that The BJP will form the Government in West Bengal.He Urged all NRI's From West Bengal to come and participate in Campaign for elections in West Bengal.

In his Keynote Address Mr Jagdish Sewhani President The American India Public Affairs Committee thanked the audience For coming on a working day, in such a large number.This shows the energy and enthusiasm among we Indian Americans on recent developments in Bharat.

Friends, we have gathered here this evening in New York to celebrate the historic abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian

constitution that has ended the special status to the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Something that was meant to be a temporary feature of Indian constitution, went on for 70 years. And our "so called" leaders gave an impression to the people of India that this is something that can never be touched, its permanent.Well here we are now. Celebrating its abrogation, said Mr Sewhani.

But before I come to the topic of the day, "New India Modi 2.0 and Celebration of Abrogating Article 370", I would like to take you back six summers back. Do any of you remember the India on August 15, 2013 when Manmohan Singh addressed his 10th and final speech from Red Fort as the prime minister of India.

Mr Sewhani said there was a sense of despondency among Indians. It was an era of policy paralysis. Corruption was at its peak! The power of the office of prime minister ship was at its lowest ebb. A few blocks away from 10 Race Course Road - the official residence of the prime minister -- was the Real power center i.e, 10 Janpath. Common man had no respite from inflation.

And in national security and foreign policy, the less said the better. Our leadership, lacked the confidence to take on our adversaries. It was Pakistan, which was setting the agenda on Kashmir.

Six summers later. I would like to quote the last tweet from our late BJP leader and External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj. "Thank you Prime Minister. Thank

you very much. I was waiting to see this day in my lifetime," she said in her tweet on August 6. This sums up all, added Mr Sewhani.

Many of us all were waiting for this in our life - the complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir into India. For this several of our leaders including Shyama Prasad Mukherjee sacrificed their lives.

Mr Sewhani said that under the Leadership Of Prime Minister Modi it is New India. Modi 2.0. A new India which is confident. It's a new vibrant and energetic New India. A India that is looking forward to a bright future not only for its 1.3 billion people, but also its immediate neighborhood and the entire world as we believe in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which in English means "The world is One Family."

Friends, it has taken just six summers to transform India from one that was described as "policy paralysis" to "one of the bright spots" of the world. As you would all agree, the credit to the people of India who voted to elect a dynamic and visionary leader like Prime Minister Narendra Bhai Modi as the Prime Minister of India added Mr Sewhani

Mr Sewhani said that In the first five years of his rule, what Prime Minister Narendra Modi did was equal to if not more than what the Congress rule achieved in 60 years of their government. From 2014-2019, the prime minister laid the foundation of a strong a vibrant India, which intends to play a sheet anchor role in shaping the destiny of mankind. Be it the

"We have to see what the people of Kashmir gained and lost after Article 370 was implemented. There was a time when Kashmir was known as heaven on Earth. But terrorism led to bloodshed and killing there. Investment stopped coming to Kashmir.

Kashmir was once an attractive tourist destination, it was a source of employment for the local population but that was lost due to terrorism. It was being felt that Jammu and Kashmir was different and separate from India. terrorism grew so much that the bak started becoming separate from india After Article 370's abrogation, there will be peace, terrorism will be controlled, investment will come in. Like before there will be tourism.

People from the film industry will be able to shoot there again, there will be prosperity in the region again, infrastructure development will take place. It is estimated that 2.8 lakh crore rupee was sent to J&K there is no development to be seen. There was widespread corruption.

Now, PM Modi will be specially focused on how to win the hearts of the people in J&K. That will make a huge difference

Modi in his address to the nation has assured the people of Jammu and Kashmir that we are committed to development of J&K, there will be employment generation, investment. It will become a good tourist destination."

Kailash Vijayvargiya

Global Solar Alliance or the International Yoga Day, these are just glimpsing of his global leadership skills.

By his actions he showed that he is a MAN OF PEACE. He invited leaders of SAARC countries for his swearing in ceremony in 2014. He put his life at risk to travel to Lahore on his way back from Kabul. Towards the end of his first term, she also showed that his peaceful efforts should not be seen as a weakness. I need not say about surgical strike, and Balakot.

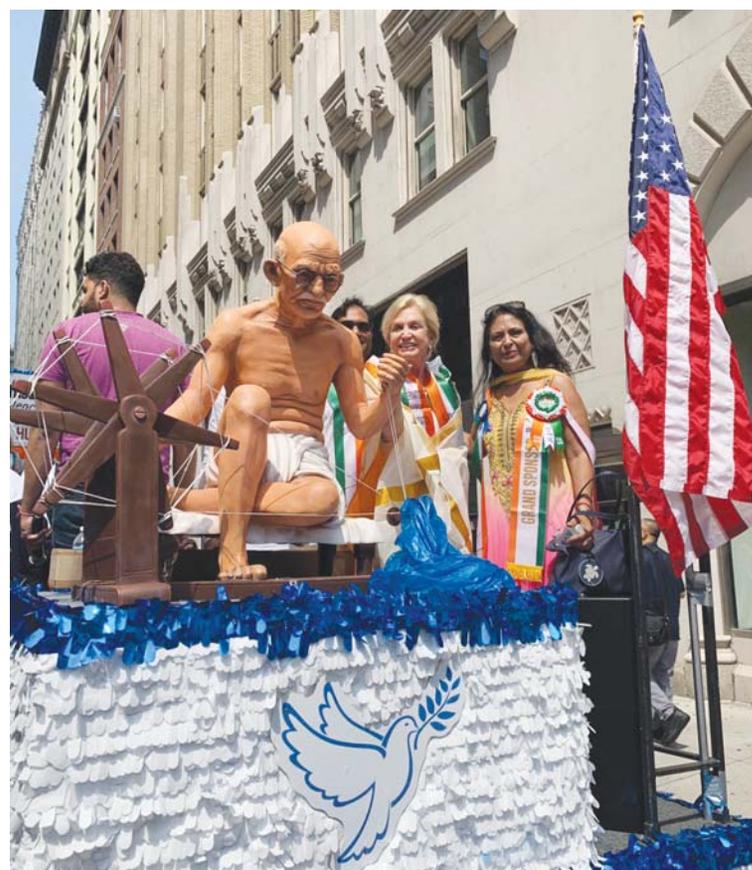
It is in this context; I would like to draw to your attention this statement from the late Republican Senator John McCain. "I'm incredibly impressed with the

new leader. Mr Modi is probably the strongest leader that I have seen emerge in India, certainly in our lifetimes."

Yes, Indeed. 100 percent said Mr Sewhani.

His masterstroke on Kashmir is the latest evidence in this regard. We were told that Articles 370 and 35 A -temporary provisions - were more permanent than any part of India's constitution. We were told that these were etched in stone. We were told any change in the special status of Jammu and Kashmir would bring blood bath. Leave the leaders from our neighboring country, we were threatened and warned by our own leaders, who had ruled the country for decades.

International Ahimsa Foundation Marches for Non Violence and Peace at India Day Parade



(By our staff reporter) NEW YORK: International Ahimsa Foundation USA marched at the Federation of Indian Associations' India Day Parade on August 18 with a strong call for Non Violence and Peace-"A Message of Lord Mahavir, Live and Let Live!" Dr. Neeta Jain, President and Founder of International Ahimsa

Foundation, welcomed the Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney on the IAF float, saying "We are honored to have Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney at our IAF Float. She is a big fan of Mahatma Gandhi and she is working tirelessly on a Congressional Gold Medal for Mahatma Gandhi. She was the

stamp. We are very thankful for your hard work." Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, NY Senator John Liu, Assemblyman David Welprin, NYS Senator Kevin Thomas, Consulate General of India in NY Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty, and Dr. Jain along with Grand Marshal Bollywood actor Suniel Shetty kicked off the

parade. Other distinguished guests on the IAF float were Consulate General of India in NY Sandeep Chakravorty, Ms. Taruna Chakravorty, AIA President Harish Thakkar, guest of honor actress and model Nargis Fakhri, Miss Glamours World Angle Tetatbe, singer Archit Aryasri, the Masala Bhangra workout dance team marched alongside the

float. Dr. Jain made welcoming remarks to the global community, reiterating the importance of Non Violence, Peace and teachings of Lord Mahavir and Mahatma Gandhi, now more than ever before, and emphasized why and what motivated her to start the IAF organization.

India Day celebrated at Nassau County legislative chambers



(By our staff reporter) Long Island, New York: Nassau County recently celebrated the 73rd anniversary of India's independence with a flag-raising ceremony in the Ceremonial Chamber of the Theodore Roosevelt Executive and Legislative Building on Aug 15. Office of County Executive Laura Curran, Nassau County Legislator Ellen W. Birnbaum (D-Great Neck), the Nassau County Office of Asian American Affairs,

Indian-American Forum ,IDPUSA, India Association of Long Island and Community Leaders were involved in organizing the event. "I recognize and honor your culture, and at these trying times in our nation, we really have to celebrate our diversity and get to know one another even better," Legislator Birnbaum said. The program included remarks by Indian American Forum Chairperson Indu Jaiswal,

IDPUSA President Jasbir Jay Singh, Asian American Affairs Director Farrah Mozawalla. Geeta Setia, , Dr. Rajpal Chopra, Jyoti Gupta, and Anjali Purohit sang patriotic Indian songs. Honorees included Dr Tarun Wasil, Champak Parikh, and Mr Davendra Kumar Verma . Members of Indian Veterans Association and , Community Leaders Led the Flag March and joined in the Celebrations. .

'Howdy, Modi' event in Houston sold out, over 50,000 people register

PM Modi is scheduled to visit the US next month to attend the United Nations General Assembly on September 27, prior to which he will travel to Houston to meet the leading businesses, political and community leaders in Houston, the fourth largest city with over 130,000 Indian-American population.

(News Agencies)- "Howdy, Modi!", foreign leader in the US other than the community event to be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here next month has been sold out with over 50,000 people registering for the programme, the organisers said. "Howdy", short for 'How do you do?', is a friendly greeting commonly used in southwestern United States.



Over 50,000 supporters have already registered for the mega community summit in September at the NRG Stadium, the host Texas India Forum (TIF), a Houston-based non-profit body, said. The live audience will be the largest ever for an Indian Prime Minister in North America and also the largest for a

Pope Francis. Potential attendees can still register for the free event. However, new registrants will be on a waiting list. Registration for the university students is open until August 29th as part of a special allotment, they said. Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to visit the US next month to attend the United Nations General Assembly on September 27, prior to which he will travel to Houston to meet the leading businesses, political and community leaders here in Houston, the fourth largest city with a population of over 130,000 Indian-Americans.

Greenland's Fast-Melting Ice Is A Warning To The Rest Of The World

This is where Earth's refrigerator door is left open, where glaciers dwindle and seas begin to rise. New York University air and ocean scientist David Holland, who is tracking what's happening in Greenland from both above and below, calls it "the end of the planet." He is referring to geography more than the future. Yet in many ways this place is where the planet's warmer and watery future is being written. It is so warm here, just inside the Arctic Circle, that on an August day, coats are left on the ground and Holland and colleagues work on the watery melting ice without gloves. In one of the closest towns, Kulusuk, the morning temperature reached a shirtsleeve 52 degrees Fahrenheit (10.7 degrees Celsius). The ice Holland is standing on is thousands of years old. It will be gone within a year or two, adding yet more water to rising seas worldwide.

Summer this year is hitting Greenland hard with record-shattering heat and extreme melt. By the end of the summer, about 440 billion tons (400 billion metric tons) of ice - maybe more - will have melted or calved off Greenland's giant ice sheet, scientists estimate. That's enough water to flood Pennsylvania or the country of Greece about a foot (35 centimeters) deep. In just the five days from July 31 to Aug. 3, more than 58 billion tons (53 billion metric tons) melted from the surface. That's over 40 billion tons more than the average for this time of year. And that 58 billion tons doesn't even count the huge calving events or the warm water eating away at the glaciers from below, which may be a huge factor. And one of the places hit hardest this hot Greenland summer is here on the southeastern edge of the giant frozen island: Helheim, one of Greenland's fastest-retreating glaciers, has shrunk about 6 miles (10 kilometers) since scientists came here in 2005. Several scientists, such as NASA oceanographer Josh Willis, who is also in Greenland, studying melting ice from above, said what's happening is a combination of man-made climate change and natural but weird weather patterns. Glaciers here do shrink in the summer and grow in the winter, but nothing like this year. Summit Station, a research camp nearly 2 miles high (3,200 meters) and far north, warmed to above freezing twice this year for a record total of 16.5 hours. Before this year, that station was above zero for only 6.5 hours in 2012, once in 1889 and also in the Middle Ages. This year is coming near but not quite passing the extreme summer of 2012 - Greenland's worst year in modern history for melting, scientists report. "If you look at climate model projections, we can expect to see larger areas of the ice sheet experiencing melt

for longer durations of the year and greater mass loss going forward," said University of Georgia ice scientist Tom Mote. "There's every reason to believe that years that look like this will become more common." A NASA satellite found that Greenland's ice sheet lost about 255 billion metric tons of ice a year between 2003 and 2016, with the loss rate generally getting worse over that period. Nearly all of the 28 Greenland glaciers that Danish climate scientist Ruth Mottram measured are retreating, especially Helheim. At Helheim, the ice, snow and water seem to go on and on, sandwiched by bare dirt mountains that now show no signs of ice but get covered in the winter. The only thing that gives a sense of scale is the helicopter carrying Holland and his team. It's dwarfed by the landscape, an almost imperceptible red speck against the ice cliffs where Helheim stops and its remnants begin. Those ice cliffs are somewhere between 225 feet (70 meters) and 328 feet (100 meters) high. Just next to them are Helheim's remnants - sea ice, snow and icebergs - forming a mostly white expanse, with a mishmash of shapes and textures. Frequently water pools amid that white, glimmering a near-fluorescent blue that resembles windshield wiper fluid or Kool-Aid. As pilot Martin Norregaard tries to land his helicopter on the broken-up part of what used to be glacier - a mush called a melange - he looks for ice specked with dirt, a sign that it's firm enough for the chopper to set down on. Pure white ice could conceal a deep crevasse that leads to a cold and deadly plunge. Holland and team climb out to install radar and GPS to track the ice movement and help explain why salty, warm, once-tropical water attacking the glacier's "underbelly" has been bubbling to the surface

"It takes a really long time to grow an ice sheet, thousands and thousands of years, but they can be broken up or destroyed quite rapidly," Holland said.

Holland, like NASA's Willis, suspects that warm, salty water that comes in part from the Gulf Stream in North America is playing a bigger role than previously thought in melting Greenland's ice. And if that's the case, that's probably bad news for the planet, because it means faster and more melting and higher sea level rise. Willis said that by the year 2100, Greenland alone could cause 3 or 4 feet (more than 1 meter) of sea level rise. So it's crucial to know how much of a role the air above and the water below play.

What Narendra Modi needs to do next in J&K

As anticipated, the legitimacy of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, and the Presidential Order that abrogated the special status of the state have been challenged in the Supreme Court (SC). The outcome of the challenge, including how it impacts the implementation of the framework of transformation envisaged in the impugned legislation, would be known only after the SC concludes its hearings. Meanwhile, the ripple effects of the decision have been felt mostly in the Valley, but more audibly in our immediate neighbourhood. At the same time, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, has, while explaining the rationale of his government's historic steps, assured the restoration of normalcy, early assembly elections and full statehood to J&K. Echoing what home minister Amit Shah said earlier, the PM too declaimed that the articles 370 & 35A had only "given terrorism, separation, nepotism and massive corruption to J&K". He added that the articles had been used as a weapon by Pakistan. He seems to have forgotten that not so long ago, with his blessings, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) not only hobnobbed with Mehbooba Mufti's Peoples Democratic Party, which is wedded to articles 370 and 35A, but happily cohabited with it. While assorted champions of the special status of J&K, ranging from its former chief ministers (CMs) to separatist leaders to stone-pelting misguided youth to self-styled liberal intellectuals, lament the murder of democracy, the Sangh parivar, the hawk-eyed real estate mafia, the chest-thumping-mustachioed retired generals, and the channel commentariat hail the decision. The hapless people in

the Valley, especially widows and children of the victims of the mindless violence and bloodshed that still ravage their land, however, live in perpetual paranoia. The overwhelming support that the National Democratic Alliance garnered in Parliament reflects the mood of the country, borne out of what was happening in J&K in the last seven decades. For many outside the state, it was a theatre of violence and bloodshed where our soldiers faced stone-pelting mobs and death, fighting the local militant-separatists, the jihadi brigades from across the border, and the Pakistan army. For them, the Instrument of Accession of J&K with the Union of India and the articles 370 and 35A do not matter much. The Modi-Shah rhetoric - that the two articles of the Constitution were the handiwork and blunder of a sentimental Jawaharlal Nehru under pressure from a dubious Sheikh Abdullah, and this was responsible for the agony in J&K and the bane of India - was persuasive. Even the house arrest of their former CMs and the curfew-like situation in the state did not evoke strong and passionate anti-government sentiments in J&K. The rudderless Opposition parties too failed to outwit the strategic moves of the Centre, and its unrelenting, well-orchestrated visual media blitz. Assuming that the SC would uphold the new framework, would J&K be on the smooth path to integration with the rest of the country, and become a normal state? Would the people, especially in the Valley, accept the change, and reconcile themselves to the new political and economic paradigm, and coalesce into the rest of India?



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Editor in Chief & Publisher :
Sharanjit Singh Thind
Editor (Political Affairs-India) :
Aruna Singh

Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah**Photographers: Hamad****Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind****Special Correspondent :****Gagandeep Singh (INDIA)****Web Coordinator : Harpreet Singh**

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REGD & MAILING OFFICE :
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Phone: 917 612 3158 TelFax : 516 342 1076
editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com
www.thesouthasianinsider.com

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India must counter the UK's negative approach

The British have always taken the Pakistani side on J&K, either explicitly or implicitly. Why is it so generous on issues that are close to them?

The British are desperately trying to downplay the virtually anti-Indian positions they took during the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) informal consultations on the India-Pakistan question on August 16 in New York. Interestingly, they are refraining from making on-the-record statements. Instead, they hope that they can create sufficient confusion through background briefings so that influential sections of Indian public opinion give them, if nothing else, the benefit of doubt.

During the consultations, the British representative's remarks amounted to saying that the legal steps taken by India in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) should be in keeping with its international obligations. Does Britain feel that the

constitutional steps undertaken by India on August 5 are not exclusively within its domestic jurisdiction, subject to Indian political and legal processes? If that is the case, let it say so on the record.

The British representative also reportedly spoke of India's need to ensure that the human rights of the people of J&K are not violated. No one in India can ever believe otherwise; all the people of J&K are Indians and the need to uphold their identity, religious traditions, customs and rights is the duty of government. However, the British representative's comments cannot be construed as innocently just endorsing that. They were made in the context of Pakistani complaints of India violating

the human rights of people in J&K, and, therefore, the remark clearly implied a negative reference to India. China wanted an outcome statement to be issued after the consultations. Initially, the British are reported to have gone along with China. It is only when they realised that not one of the 13 other UNSC members were willing to support the Chinese that they kept quiet, leaving the Chinese alone in their demand. Was the initial move indicative of a desire to maintain, as the British claim, a neutral position on J&K?

The fact is that the British have always taken the Pakistani side on J&K, either explicitly or implicitly. This has been so since 1947. It was Louis Mountbatten who persuaded Jawaharlal



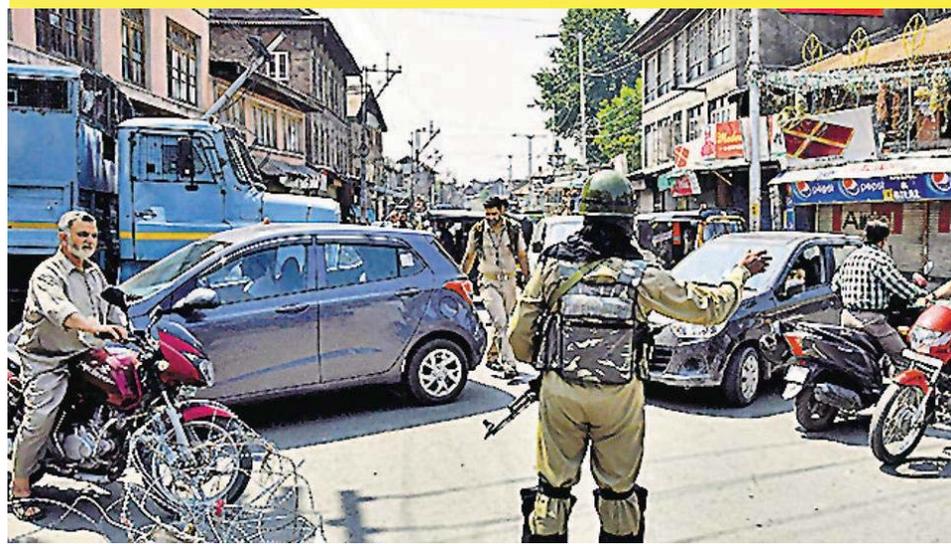
Nehru and his ministerial colleagues to agree that the people of J&K would be consulted on the accession. It was also Mountbatten who urged that India should go to the United Nations (UN), complaining about Pakistan's aggression. Nehru had initial misgivings, but later agreed to the UN move. That was a terrible mistake, and India is still paying the price. Naturally, Nehru cannot be absolved from giving in to

Mountbatten's advice on referring Kashmir to the UN.

At the UN, the British helped convert what was an issue of Pakistani invasion through the tribal raiders into a far more complex and intricate issue. It did so to ensure that it retained a foothold in the Indian subcontinent. It felt then that India could not be determined to chart its own course. On the other hand, Pakistan became a close

Western ally. This was in keeping with the close linkage between the British imperialism and Muslim separatism, from the early years of the last century to the creation of Pakistan. In 1997, important sections of British political opinion again, openly, made pro-Pakistani comments in the J&K context. Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral was particularly irked by seeming British offers of mediation.

New Delhi must explain to the world its new Kashmir policy



The world is nervous, but not yet alarmed, by developments over Kashmir. India needs to ensure these concerns do not go beyond a certain threshold. US President Donald Trump's communications with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan were about lowering the temperature between the two countries. To an extent, this is already a minor victory for New Delhi. Mr Trump's vainglorious

offers to mediate have now been banished into the fantasy world they had come from. The American leader did urge dialogue between the two, something the international community and Pakistan do converge on. India has to continue to explain to the outside world the rationale for its refusal to resume dialogue. The Modi government's position is not without merit - dialogue with Pakistan in the past have led to a dead-end, and

served only to provide cover for Pakistan to resume terrorist attacks against India. Mr Modi is within his rights to argue dialogue must be conditional on Pakistan's genuinely ending support for cross-border terrorism. An implicit addendum now is that Islamabad must also come to acquiesce to the changed ground realities in Indian Kashmir. There is zero evidence of Pakistan accepting either stance. Mr Khan's blood curdling threats against India, if

India needs to make it clear why the older Kashmir policy, built around autonomy and Pakistan, is no longer relevant, and why its new policy deserves a chance to succeed.

anything, have helped make India's case that Pakistan is not fit to be an interlocutor for any form of dialogue.

While New Delhi emerged from the informal United Nations Security Council meeting on Kashmir relatively unscathed, the real diplomatic test will come as security restrictions in the Valley are gradually lifted. If protests follow, the government must minimise violence and ensure no bloodshed during this period, even as it moves towards restoring elections and democracy in the Union Territory. This transition will be tricky enough on the domestic

front and a blowup on the international front will only complicate matters more. New Delhi has enough friends in the international system to avoid sanctions and withstand any critical resolutions. But a sense of global delegitimisation of India's actions will make it more difficult to get the Valley residents to at least wait to see if New Delhi fulfils its policy promises. Mr Trump and other world

leaders seem ready to give India some time to roll out its policy. However, New Delhi has done poorly in explaining its policy to international civil society and this is a shortcoming that needs to be addressed. India needs to make it clear why an older Kashmir policy, built around autonomy and Pakistan, is no longer relevant and why its new policy deserves a chance to succeed.



Follow the law, avoid vendetta



With the Delhi High Court rejecting former finance minister P Chidambaram's anticipatory bail on Monday, and the absence of reprieve for him from the Supreme Court till Friday, the case against him has got renewed attention. The charges involve a clearance given by the

Foreign Investment Promotion Board, back in 2007, to INX Media, when Mr Chidambaram was the finance minister. The company, the government's investigative agencies believe, managed to retrospectively get clearance for a much higher investment inflow than the rules

permitted by using Mr Chidambaram's son, Karti Chidambaram, as a conduit. The merits of the case need not detain us here. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) are pursuing the investigation. There is a legal process underway. And the courts will pronounce their verdict on the charges.

Political corruption is India's system's most widely known infirmity. Those in positions of authority have often been known to use discretionary authority or policy loopholes, or be complicit in undermining rules and the law to push decisions in favour of vested interests. In return, they have often benefited financially - with illegally gotten resources

used for both personal wealth accumulation and election funding. The Narendra Modi government has said it would crack down on corruption through both a set of policy changes as well as a free hand to investigative agencies to pursue cases against high-profile political leaders. If this ends up serving as a deterrent for future corruption, it can only help clean the system. A crackdown on corruption is laudable, but it must always be within due process. The opposition has alleged that the current government has selectively pursued corruption cases to target political rivals, and that cases against those leaders who have chosen to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

or cooperated with it have often slowed down. It also claims that the use of CBI, ED and the Income Tax Department - admittedly a legacy from past governments - does not appear to have lessened. This has given rise to accusations of political vendetta. Merit apart, the optics indicate, at least in part, a political subtext to the cases.

India needs to strongly tackle political corruption. No leader, irrespective of his power and position, past or present, is above the law. But the government would do well to ensure that its actions remain above suspicion. This can happen only if the law is followed scrupulously, both in letter and spirit.

The future lies in cities, but the transition will be tricky

A report titled India 2030 - Exploring the Future, by the Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India and global property consultant CBRE has said that India's future is urban, but the transition will not be easy. The report is in line with what the census data have been showing. According to the 1901 census, the population in urban areas was 11.4%. This increased to 28.53% (2001 census) and 31.16% (2011 census). The urbanisation process will not be without its own set of challenges in India's cities: Poverty, lack of affordable housing, traffic

congestion and overcrowding, environmental degradation, and air pollution. However, this is also an opportunity for the country to design a fresh and proactive approach to mitigate the strains that will develop as cities expand, and to maximise the potential economic opportunity that well-managed cities can offer. This is because the choices that India makes to manage the process of urbanisation will have profound consequences for its people and economic future. For starters, India must end the debate whether urbanisation is a positive or negative phenomenon, and whether the future lies in its villages and cities. This, as a

McKinsey report on urbanisation says correctly, is a false dichotomy because villages and cities are interdependent and symbiotic. While India will have its own process of development, it can learn from other cities that have faced similar challenges. Many countries, the McKinsey report adds, such as United Kingdom, South Africa and China, have turned around their cities in as little as 10 years with proper funding, governance, sectoral policies and planning. India must also be ambitious when it comes to urbanisation because cities are not just about building infrastructure, but also about the quality of life they provide. This is what the best



cities of the world are focusing on today - Rotterdam in the Netherlands is creating more public spaces for its citizens; Singapore is wrapping its numerous high rises with vertical gardens and building pocket parks; and China's

building a new green, low rise city --- Xiongan. It will be built on 1,700 square km-stretch of swampy land, including a heavy polluted lake, around 104 km southwest of Beijing, and will be a model for things to come.

Kashmir: A bold strategy isn't always wise

Will revoking articles 370 and 35A bring peace to Kashmir? The government and its supporters have outlined their theory of the case. A new economic order will bring development, transforming the political preferences of Kashmiri Muslims toward India. Law and order will be removed from electoral politics because of Delhi's control over security forces. The mainstream political parties will be tossed aside in favour of a new generation of Kashmiri loyalists who rise through local politics. As more non-Kashmiris move into the territory, its Muslim majority will fade. And by refusing to involve Pakistan, the

government will firewall the internal dynamics of Kashmir from the regional context. This is a bid to depoliticise Kashmir. The "big question" of Kashmir's status, the government decrees, is no longer a big question, but instead a settled issue. There is nothing more to discuss, so Kashmiri Muslims should occupy themselves with development. There are many ironies in this strategy. The first is that it flies in the face of decades of Delhi's line. Having insisted that normalcy was soon returning to Kashmir, that only a marginal bloc of Kashmiri malcontents was causing trouble, and that sceptics were

biased against India, the consensus has now pivoted to the position that seven decades of policy were a hopeless and obvious failure. If one isn't careful, the switch from "normalcy is around the corner" to "this is an unsustainable disaster" could cause serious whiplash. The second irony is the broad acceptance, by both proponents and opponents of Article 370, that reducing Kashmir's autonomy in the past did not end well. The outbreak of insurgency in the late 1980s had key roots in the moves made by Delhi and its favoured political allies in the state to restrict Kashmiri autonomy. Indira Gandhi's bid

for centralised political control over the states in the 1980s and the rigged election of 1987 are widely seen as triggers for the outbreak of militancy, against a backdrop of central intervention from 1953. Security forces have had extensive freedom to act in Kashmir, with little accountability for credible allegations of human rights abuses. Thus, much of the violence and political dysfunction that made Article 370 allegedly "unsustainable" were in fact results of government policy. It is not obvious that a more ambitious version of this strategy will have radically different results. If 370 was, at this point, mostly symbolic, then its

revocation is unlikely to be a game changer. The record of other Indian states makes clear that corruption, inadequate development, discrimination, demands to economically favour local populations, and dynastic politics are not unique to those with special status.

Third, the game plan outlined by Amit Shah and Narendra Modi has striking similarities to past strategies. Previous governments have repeatedly invoked "development": The

1950s and 1960s, for instance, saw huge infusions of central resources to build industry and economic growth in order to hold Sheikh Abdullah and his loyalists at bay.

Notice, consent, privacy: Why we need to do better

A user's interaction with privacy policies faces many blocks. The most basic is the barrier of accessibility.

Most people do not read privacy policies. Those who have tried would testify that these documents can be pretty hard to understand. Running into several pages that are filled with legal jargon and unexplained phrases, the main purpose seems to be to protect the company from legal liability rather than genuinely informing the consumer. We discuss this in a recent paper co-authored with Rishab Bailey, Faiza Rahman and Renuka Sane at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy. We conducted a quiz to test how well urban, English-speaking, college going students understand the policies of five popular tech companies - Flipkart, Google, Paytm, Uber and Whatsapp. The short answer? Not very well. The students scored an average of 5.3 out of 10, faring the worst in areas where the policy terms

were unclear or required the reader to make their own inferences. The right to informational privacy implies that, at the very least, every individual should be able to determine who can use her personal information and for what purpose. Moreover, these interactions must take place in an ecosystem that recognises the power and information asymmetry between the parties, and has sufficient safeguards to protect the individual's interests. One way in which most data protection frameworks, including the one currently under consideration in India, try to achieve this is by resorting to the "notice and consent" regime. This framework regards individuals as pragmatic actors, who are capable of weighing the pros and cons of the options available to them and pursuing their best interests. Entities that seek to collect and use personal

data are therefore tasked with the duty to provide adequate and meaningful "notice" to users. Armed with this information, users can then choose to grant their "informed consent", which becomes the basis for processing of their data. Each time a person clicks the "I agree" button she has presumably conducted a reasoned tradeoff between her desired level of privacy and the value being derived from the service in question. This would assume that each Uber user understands that the policy is worded broadly enough to allow the company to track her location at all times. Similarly, all Gmail users are comfortable with their emails being scanned for producing targeted advertisements. In reality, however, a user's interaction with privacy policies faces many stumbling blocks. The first, and most basic, is the



barrier of accessibility. Almost none of the privacy policies are available in languages other than English. Of the companies we studied, only Google provided its privacy policy in multiple Indian languages. This is clearly not optimum in a country where only a fraction of the population is able to read and understand English. Second, the construction of sentences and phrases in most policies is of a level that requires advanced comprehension skills. Using the Flesch-Kincaid readability score we found that all of the selected policies had scores ranging from 16 to 41,

which correspond with graduate level reading skills. To put this in perspective, only about 8.2 percent of India's above 15 population has an education level of graduate and above. The third concern arises from the sheer volume of the transactions that take place in the digital economy and the big data analytics emerging from that. As per App Annie's State of the Mobile Report, an average Indian smartphone user has about 70 apps on her phone. Spending even half an hour reading each policy would translate to about 35 hours of reading time.

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Is Prashant Kishor facing his toughest challenge in Bengal?

As Bengal's ruling party is passing through the opening sequences of the 'Didike Bolo' and 'Gramey Cholo' campaigns to reestablish contact with the masses, this anecdote reflects the challenges Prashant Kishor, the poll strategist roped in to embellish Mamata Banerjee's image and make her battle-ready before the 2021 Assembly elections, is facing.

After she stormed in power in Bengal in May 2011, Mamata Banerjee started a unique practice. She began visiting the districts, including the remotest corners of the state, and began holding meetings that were open to all. She would not go alone. The senior-most officers of the administration, including the chief secretary and home secretary, would accompany her along with the district administration and local elected representatives at all levels. "These meetings were like aam durbars. She would ask the local people to narrate whatever problems they were facing and would promise immediate redressal. Did Jyoti Basu, or Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee (former chief ministers), come to you. See, I have brought the entire Writers' Building (state secretariat) here, she would say pointing at the top officials of the state," recalled a senior bureaucrat who served in both the Left Front and the Trinamool Congress regimes.

As Bengal's ruling party is passing through the opening sequences of the 'Didike Bolo' and 'Gramey Cholo' campaigns to reestablish contact with the masses, this anecdote reflects the challenges Prashant Kishor, the poll strategist roped in to embellish Mamata Banerjee's image and make her battle-ready before the 2021 Assembly elections, is facing. Former Kolkata mayor, minister and confidant of Mamata Banerjee, Sovan Chatterjee, said that if a party with a proclaimed USP of grassroots connect needs outside help, it signals extreme danger for the party. Former principal of Presidency College and professor of political science, Amal Kumar Mukhopadhyay, has no hesitation in describing Bengal as Kishor's toughest challenge yet. "Prashant Kishor is a professional. He has clever tactics up his sleeve. But these seem to be more appropriate for developed democracies. In Bengal, where democracy has

suffered a lot in the hands of the Trinamool Congress, it does not seem very likely that these will succeed," thinks Mukhopadhyay. The twin programmes of 'Didike Bolo' and 'Gramey Cholo' reveal two realities. One, the leader whose USP was grassroots connect, seems to have lost much of her most powerful appeal. Two, she and her party thinktank has become bankrupt in terms of ideas that has compelled Mamata Banerjee to appoint a consultant to face the challenge from the BJP. Is Mamata Banerjee a fading brand in search of a compelling marketing communication? I-PAC executives think so. They think they have a political Photoshop needed for image correction on a grand scale. They also feel that two years is a long enough time to use their image correcting skills deftly. "We have done it earlier and to brilliant results. See our track record. Jaganmohan Reddy is the latest example,"



said one.

Indeed, Kishor's record is quite impressive. Apart from the 2017 Uttar Pradesh elections where the Congress turned out a pathetic show, none of his earlier clients let him down, or Kishor did not let any of his clients down. Kishor helped Narendra Modi and the BJP strike gold in 2012 Gujarat elections and 2014 Lok Sabha polls, Nitish Kumar-Lalu Yadav's mahagathbandhan in 2015, captain Amarinder Singh in 2017 and Jagan Mohan Reddy in 2019. Mamata Banerjee's experience would be no different in 2021, Kishor's men say. But then, analysts point out that comparisons trigger more questions than assurances. Suman Bhattacharya, political analyst and a keen observer of the Bharatiya Janata Party,

thinks Kishor certainly has impressive credentials, but the challenge he is up against in Bengal is formidable.

"BJP is continuously shifting the goal post in Bengal. While it began with corruption, the party is now keen to extract the gains of abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir," said Bhattacharya. His logic: I-PAC will have to continuously modify and fine tune its strategy according to what the BJP does. There are others who think that the question is fundamentally political, and cannot be tackled only by trying an image makeover. There are deep wounds in the psyche of the people of the state who have been deprived of their right to vote at the village self-governance level, the levels that deal with most of their day to day problems.

Floods in north India: A man-made disaster



Reckless infrastructure development is leading to environmental costs

The India Meteorological Department (IMD), on Sunday, said Himachal Pradesh received the highest-ever rainfall for 24 hours, since records began almost 70 years ago. The situation in neighbouring Uttarakhand is equally grave. In both states, rainfall has triggered landslides, snapped road links, shut down hydropower projects,

and forced the release of excess water from the dams in the region. Such intense and excessive rain in a short period is a clear indication that both states are bearing the brunt of climate change, a man-made phenomenon, and also paying a heavy price for unbridled development that has wrecked the ecologically fragile region.

The heavy rainfall in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh could also have a severe downstream impact. Flood alerts have been sounded in Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh. What we are seeing in the two states is also a result of successive central and state governments' wrong development policies, which have a single-

point focus: build more and more infrastructure, without taking into account a region's natural environment. Let's take two examples: The Delhi-Manali highway (Himachal Pradesh) and the Char Dham road (Uttarakhand). Both are being expanded for more vehicular traffic and tourists. In both cases, environmentalists and courts have raised red flags. In the case of the Himachal highway, they allege that the National Highway Authority of India is dumping construction debris into the river Beas, leading to floods. In the second case, the project will refurbish 900km of the damaged highways with two lanes, 12 bypass roads, 15 big flyovers, 101 small bridges, 3,596 culverts, and two tunnels. All these will be done blasting and cutting the mountains. Such

large-scale development is taking in a place that has already seen a mega-disaster in 2013. In fact, the home ministry in 2013 had blamed deforestation, the building of roads and tunnels through mountains, construction of hydropower facilities, tourism-related construction in floodplains and hill slopes, as well as sand mining for it. Yet, we are going down that road again. At a time when the central and state governments should put their minds together to assess the carrying capacity of the Himalayas vis a vis the ecosystem services (benefits that humans gain from the natural environment and properly functioning ecosystems) they provide, government planners are just doing the opposite - burdening an already fragile environment.

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CBI books NDTV promoters Prannoy Roy, Radhika Roy for FDI rules violation

Besides the Roys, the agency registered an FIR against then CEO Vikramaditya Chandra as well as unidentified government officials on charges of criminal conspiracy, cheating and corruption, officials said on Wednesday.

(News Agencies)- The CBI has booked NDTV promoters Prannoy Roy and Radhika Roy and others for allegedly violating foreign direct investment (FDI) rules in a 2007-09 investment, an allegation denied by the company.

Besides the Roys, the agency registered an FIR against then CEO Vikramaditya Chandra as well as unidentified government officials on charges of criminal conspiracy, cheating and corruption, officials said on Wednesday.

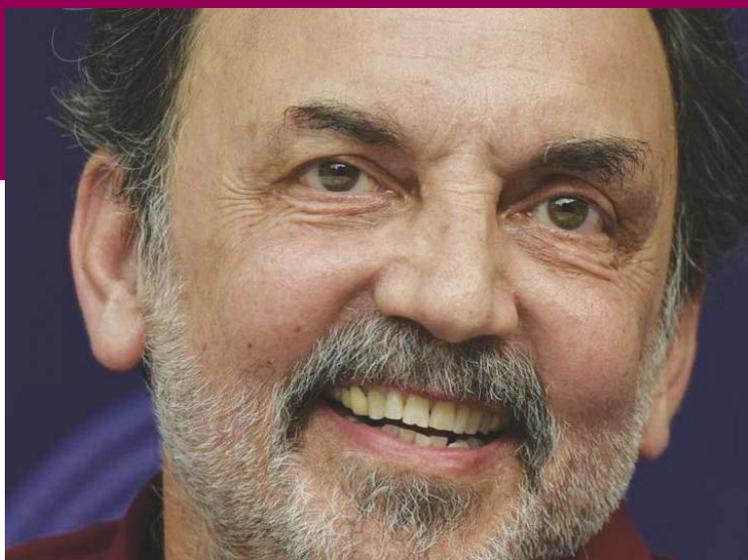
On Wednesday, a CBI team conducted searches at Chandra's residence, officials said.

Under the CBI scanner are investments made by NCBU, a General Electric company at the time, in Network PLC (NNPLC), an NDTV company incorporated in London on November 30, 2006. The CBI has alleged that NNPLC in 2009 got approval from the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) board in violation of FDI rules. It said NNPLC received total FDI worth USD 163.43 million and invested the amount in various NDTV subsidiaries through a web of complex transactions.

In a statement, NDTV strongly denied the CBI's allegations. "NDTV and its founders have full faith in India's judiciary at this

crucial time and remain committed to the integrity of the company's journalism. Attempts to silence free and fair reportage through malicious and fabricated charges will not succeed. This is not about a company or individuals but about a larger battle to maintain the freedom of the press, something which India has always been renowned for," it said.

As part of "the continued persecution of free press", it said, a new CBI case has been filed about a USD 150 million investment in NDTV's non-news business by NCBU, then owned by General Electric. "The case makes the ludicrous charge that the transaction, declared to all relevant authorities in the US and India, laundered money for unknown public servants," it said.



The FIR is an outcome of a preliminary enquiry registered by the agency in 2016, the CBI officials said.

It is alleged that during May 2004 to May 2010, NDTV floated around 32 subsidiary firms all over the world, mostly in the tax havens of Holland, the United Kingdom, Dubai, Malaysia, Mauritius etc.

The CBI said most of these companies allegedly had no business transaction and were

meant for financial transactions to bring funds from abroad.

Termining the transactions a "sham", the agency alleged that funds were invested by unidentified public servants through NDTV and laundered back to India through multiple layers of complex transactions and shell companies.

"Proceeds of corruption of unknown public servants invested through NDTV Ltd," it alleged.

'Chidambaram acting like Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi': BJP



(News Agencies)- The BJP on Wednesday accused former Union Minister P. Chidambaram of behaving like fugitive businessmen Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi by not cooperating with the central agencies probing alleged corruption in the INX Media case.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesman G.V.L. Narasimha Rao made the comment after the Supreme Court refused to grant any immediate relief to his plea for protection from arrest in the case.

"Gandhi family gave free hand to Chidambaram to go ahead in the INX Media case. Chidambaram is behaving like fugitive

businessmen Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya by not cooperating with the central agencies. No one will be spared," Rao said.

Chidambaram's lawyer has challenged the Delhi High Court's order rejecting his request for protection from arrest.

The Supreme Court said that Chidambaram's petition will be placed before the Chief Justice of India.

In the INX Media case, Chidambaram is accused of facilitating foreign investment in a media company when he was the Finance Minister at the instance of his son Karti Chidambaram, who is accused of receiving kickbacks. Both the father and son have denied any wrongdoing.



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To arrest distress migration, Odisha to provide 200 days of work under MGNREGA

A survey by NGO Tata Trusts in 30 gram panchayats of Bolangir and Nuapada last year found that around 38,000-odd people from 11,000 families unable to find work had migrated to neighbouring states.

(News Agencies)- To check distress migration in two of its most migration-prone districts, Odisha plans to give assured employment of 200 days under MGNREGS and ration for migrant families in advance for three months, besides other measures.

A meeting of several departments, including labour, panchayati raj, food supplies and consumer welfare, fisheries and animal husbandry, held last week decided to focus on two of the four districts that sees rampant migration every year. Bolangir and Nuapada, the western Odisha districts, saw almost half of the total migration of 1.28 lakh people last year. A survey by NGO Tata Trusts in 30 gram panchayats of Bolangir and Nuapada last year found that around 38,000-odd people from 11,000 families unable to find work had migrated to neighbouring states. It is now

undertaking a study in 100 gram panchayats in western Odisha to find out the families that are being forced to migrate due to lack of financial resources and work.

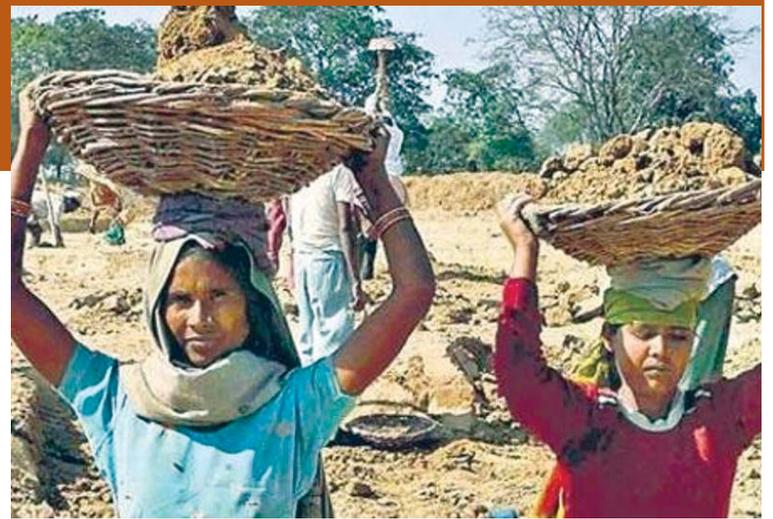
Odisha labour commissioner Niranjan Sahu said that to arrest distress migration, at least 200 days of assured employment will be given in those two districts starting from September when people start leaving for Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to work in brick kilns and construction sites there.

"Instead of assured employment of 100 days under MGNREGS, we will be giving 200 days and pay the workers at the minimum wage of Odisha, which is higher than minimum wage of MGNREGS. A corpus fund for MGNREGA for timely payment to the workers has already been started by panchayati raj department," said Sahu.

The workers in the two districts will also be registered under

Odisha Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board where they would get at least 17 benefits, including financial aid of Rs 50,000 to marry off their daughters. Mission Shakti that looks after the women self help groups of the state and Odisha Livelihood Mission will work together to provide seed money for the SHGs in which the womenfolk of the migrating families are members.

As most of the migrating families would start leaving from September, officials said ration for migrant families will be given in advance for three months beginning from next month. Special steps for ensuring pucca houses for migrant households will be expedited through central government housing scheme Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and state government housing scheme Nirman Shramik Pucca Ghar



Yojana. Other measures in the workmen. As per the Act an inter-offering are holding Army recruitment rallies in Bolangir and Nuapada to lure the youths. Also skilling the youths under Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana and sending them to various Industrial Technical Institutes is being worked out.

The migrant workers are supposed to be registered under the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979. The same applies to any contractor who employs five or more inter-state migrant

stop migration. The state government's efforts though admirable, was hardly a step in the right direction. Jyoti Prakash (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979. working in distress migration in western Odisha districts, said government would not be able to stop migration.

Karti Chidambaram has tennis club in Spain, house in UK: ED

The Enforcement Directorate believes that the money with which Karti Chidambaram purchased tennis club in Spain and cottages in Britain came from the bribe in INX Media deal.

(News Agencies)- Former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram's son Karti Chidambaram bought a tennis club in Spain and cottages in Britain, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) claims.

The land and tennis club in Spain's Barcelona is slated to be worth Rs 15 crore, the ED says, adding that Karti Chidambaram has also bought property in India and overseas worth Rs 54 crore.

The ED has reasons to believe the money with which they were purchased allegedly came from the bribe in INX Media deal, the case in which Chidambaram senior is embroiled and seeking exemption from arrest.

The ED wants to take the former



attached Chidambaram's posh Jor Bagh bungalow that is estimated to be of Rs 16 crore.

The former FM's son also has a fixed deposit with the Indian Overseas

Bank's Nungambakkam branch in Chennai which has Rs 9.23 crore. He has another FD of Rs 90 lakh of Advantage Strategic Consulting Pvt Ltd (ASCPL) with the DCB Bank in Chennai. Both of them are being attached by the ED. Another payments of Rs 3.09 crore by former media baron Peter Mukherjea, husband of Indrani Mukherjea - a co-accused in the INX Media case, to the ASCPL has been detected by ED.

minister in its custody to question him on the source of Karti Chidambaram's funds. Both are accused in the INX Media money laundering case, and are also being probed in the multi-crore Aircel-Maxis Deal. Both the cases are being probed by Central Bureau of Investigation and the ED. Both the Chidambarams are being charge sheeted right now and some of their properties too have been attached. The agencies have also

Medical students forced to shave heads, salute seniors in UP's Etawah



(News Agencies)- A batch of first-year medical students was allegedly forced to shave their heads by their seniors and "bow in reverence" to them in an alleged case of ragging at a university in Uttar Pradesh's Etawah district.

A video of the incident that has gone viral shows the students of Uttar Pradesh University of Medical Sciences in Saifai moving in a single file with backpacks and saluting their seniors as they pass by.

Uttar Pradesh University of Medical Sciences' vice-chancellor Dr Raj Kumar said strong action will be taken

against those involved in ragging the students.

"We have suspended students earlier also. I want to assure juniors that they need not worry," Kumar said.

"We keep a strict vigil on such activities and we have a separate dean social welfare for students. Further, we have an anti-ragging committee to deal with complaints. We also have a special squad which visits every place in University to keep a check over ragging. The students can complain to the anti-ragging committee or even to their wardens," he said.

Chopper scam: Court refuses to cancel NBW against Ratul Puri

Ratul Puri, arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a separate case related to a bank fraud, had approached the court saying there was no need for the Non-Bailable Warrant as he was willing to cooperate in the probe.

(News Agencies)- A Delhi court Wednesday refused to cancel a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against Ratul Puri, nephew of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, in a money laundering case related to the AgustaWestland chopper scam.

Special judge Arvind Kumar dismissed Puri's application seeking cancellation of the NBW saying there was no ground to grant the relief.

Puri, arrested by the

Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a separate case related to a bank fraud, had approached the court saying there was no need for the NBW as he was willing to cooperate in the probe.

"I do not find any ground for cancellation of NBW issued against accused Ratul Puri. The application filed by accused Ratul Puri for cancellation of NBW issued against him, is dismissed," the judge said.

The order noted that the accused had not joined the probe on

different dates despite repeated notices of the ED.

"Accused had left the ED office on July 26 without signing his statement. He has made himself unavailable and his whereabouts could not be ascertained," the court observed. It also noted from ED's submission that there was every likelihood that accused may tamper with evidence and influence the witnesses.

Delhi High Court yesterday dismissed his plea seeking anticipatory bail in the same case.

The court had issued the NBW against Puri while noting the ED's submissions that the businessman might try to tamper with evidence and influence witnesses "as he already did earlier".

The case pertains to alleged irregularities in the purchase of



12 VVIP choppers from Italy-based Finmeccanica's British subsidiary, AgustaWestland.

The deal was scrapped by the NDA government in 2014 over alleged breach of contractual obligations and charges of payment of kickbacks for securing the deal.

According to the ED, the proceeds of the crime have been

deposited in the accounts of different companies owned by Puri and he is a key link to unearth the modus operandi adopted by the other accused and to determine last-mile connectivity of the proceeds. Puri is currently in ED custody in a separate money laundering case related to a bank loan fraud.

Uddhav Thackeray's cryptic response adds to talk of Chhagan Bhujbal joining Shiv Sena

(News Agencies)- As speculation resurfaced of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Chhagan Bhujbal joining his party, Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday responded with a cryptic 'answers will come at appropriate time'. Talks of Bhujbal and his son Pankaj joining the Sena ahead of the state Assembly elections - due in October -- have been doing the rounds for some time now. Apart from Bhujbal, another senior NCP leader Sunil Tatkare is also rumored to join the Sena. Tatkare, who is a member of Parliament from Raigad, has however denied the speculation. When asked if the two senior NCP leaders are making their way into the Sena, Thackeray said, "Answers to all this will come at an appropriate time." Bhujbal started his political career with Shiv Sena but broke off after 25 years to join the

Congress in 1991 and later Sharad Pawar's NCP. Interestingly, Thackeray last month had assured party workers from Nashik district, from where Bhujbal hails, that they are not inducting him. Bhujbal, too, has denied the speculation in the past. There is a division within the Sena top ranks over the induction of Bhujbal. Several senior leaders, including Subhash Desai, Sanjay Raut and Diwakar Raote are against Bhujbal's re-entry. Some section of Sena functionaries also feel that the sentiments of common Shiv Sainiks will be "hurt" if Bhujbal comes back in the party fold. The Shiv Sena workers also put up a flex board poster opposite party headquarters, Sena Bhavan, in Dadar, opposing the re-entry of Bhujbal. The posters, which are put up at several locations, stated the people of Maharashtra will not forget what he did to Bal Thackeray and will not accept him in the party.

Uddhav supports cousin Raj Thackeray ahead of his questioning by ED in Kohinoor CTNL loan default case

(News Agencies)- Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray came out in support of estranged cousin and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray, who is scheduled to appear before the Enforcement Directorate on August 22 in connection with the IL&FS group's loan and equity investment in a real estate development company linked to Raj, called Kohinoor CTNL. Senior Sena leader and former Maharashtra CM Manohar Joshi's son Unmesh Joshi is the primary

founder of Kohinoor CTNL and was questioned by the ED on Monday, Aug. 19. Thackeray, along with Joshi, was one of the founding partners of Kohinoor CTNL, which received investments worth 860 crores from IL&FS. Raj was one of the partners in a consortium that purchased Kohinoor Mill no 3 in 2005. Kohinoor CTNL is accused of defaulting on the loan. In 2005, Unmesh Joshi along with IL&FS and Raj Thackeray-owned Matoshree Construction jointly bid for the National Textile Corporation's Kohinoor Mill, buying the 4.8-acre property for Rs 421 crore.

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'Skeleton lake' in Uttarakhand contains bones of mysterious European migrants: Study

The study, published in the journal Nature Communications, found that the skeletons of Roopkund Lake belong to genetically highly distinct groups that died in multiple periods in at least two episodes separated by one thousand years.

(News Agencies)- The mysterious skeletons of Roopkund Lake in Uttarakhand contain bones from an enigmatic group of eastern Mediterranean people that travelled to the Indian Himalayan site around 220 years ago, a large-scale study conducted by an international team of scientists has revealed. The study, published in the journal Nature Communications, found that the skeletons of Roopkund Lake belong to genetically highly distinct groups that died in multiple periods in at least two episodes separated by one thousand years. Situated at over 5000 metres above sea-level in the Indian Himalayas, Roopkund Lake has long puzzled researchers due to the presence of skeletal remains from several hundred ancient humans, scattered in and around the lake's shores, earning it the nickname Skeleton Lake or

Mystery Lake. "Roopkund Lake has long been subject to speculation about who these individuals were, what brought them to Roopkund Lake, and how they died," said Niraj Rai, of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. The research reveals that the site has an even more complex history than imagined. Ancient DNA obtained from the skeletons of Roopkund Lake -- representing the first ancient DNA ever reported from India -- reveals that they derive from at least three distinct genetic groups. "We first became aware of the presence of multiple distinct groups at Roopkund after sequencing the mitochondrial DNA of 72 skeletons," said Kumarasamy Thangaraj from the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad.

"While many of the individuals possessed mitochondrial haplogroups typical of present-day Indian populations, we also identified a large number of individuals with haplogroups that would be more typical of populations from West Eurasia," said Thangaraj, who started the project more than a decade ago. Whole genome sequencing of 38 individuals revealed that there were at least three distinct groups among the Roopkund skeletons. The first group is composed of 23 individuals with ancestries that are related to people from present-day India, who do not appear to belong to a single population, but instead derived from many different groups. Surprisingly, the second largest group is made up of 14 individuals with ancestry that is most closely related to people who live in the eastern Mediterranean,



especially present-day Crete and Greece. A third individual has ancestry that is more typical of that found in Southeast Asia. "We were extremely surprised by the genetics of the Roopkund skeletons. The presence of individuals with ancestries typically associated with the eastern Mediterranean suggests that Roopkund Lake was not just a site of local interest, but instead drew visitors from across the globe," said Eadaoin Harney of Harvard University in the US. Stable isotope dietary reconstruction of the skeletons also supports the presence of multiple distinct groups.

"Individuals belonging to the Indian-related group had highly variable diets, showing reliance on C3 and C4 derived food sources. These findings are consistent with the genetic evidence that they belonged to a variety of socioeconomic groups in South Asia," said Ayushi Nayak of the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Germany. In contrast, the individuals with eastern Mediterranean-related ancestry appear to have consumed a diet with very little millet," Nayak said. The findings also revealed a second surprise about the skeletons of Roopkund Lake, researchers said.

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Climate Change is Real. How Do We Know?

The Earth's climate has changed throughout history. Just in the last 650,000 years there have been seven cycles of glacial advance and retreat, with the abrupt end of the last ice age about 7,000 years ago marking the beginning of the modern climate era - and of human civilization. Most of these climate changes are attributed to very small variations in Earth's orbit that change the amount of solar energy our planet receives. The current warming trend is of particular significance because most of it is extremely likely (greater than 95 percent probability) to be the result of human activity since the mid-

20th century and proceeding at a rate that is unprecedented over decades to millennia.¹

Earth-orbiting satellites and other technological advances have enabled scientists to see the big picture, collecting many different types of information about our planet and its climate on a global scale. This body of data, collected over many years, reveals the signals of a changing climate.

The heat-trapping nature of carbon dioxide and other gases was demonstrated in the mid-19th century.² Their ability to affect the transfer of infrared energy through the atmosphere is the scientific basis of many

instruments flown by NASA. There is no question that increased levels of greenhouse gases must cause the Earth to warm in response.

Ice cores drawn from Greenland, Antarctica, and tropical mountain glaciers show that the Earth's climate responds to changes in greenhouse gas levels. Ancient evidence can also be found in tree rings, ocean sediments, coral reefs, and layers of sedimentary rocks. This ancient, or paleoclimate, evidence reveals that current warming is occurring roughly ten times faster than the average rate of ice-age-recovery warming.³

The evidence for rapid climate

change is compelling: The planet's average surface temperature has risen about 1.62 degrees Fahrenheit (0.9 degrees Celsius) since the late 19th century, a change driven largely by increased carbon dioxide and other human-made emissions into the atmosphere.⁴ Most of the warming occurred in the past 35 years, with the five warmest years on record taking place since 2010. Not only was 2016 the warmest year on record, but eight of the 12 months that make up the year - from January through September, with the exception of June - were the warmest on record for those respective months.

What's causing these harmful changes?

It's mainly us. We humans are the ones who burn fossil fuels and chop down forests, causing average temperatures to rise worldwide. That global warming trend is increasingly disrupting our climate - the average weather over many years.

Earth has already warmed by about 1 degree Celsius, or 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit, since the 19th century, before industry started to boom.

While we experience the effects, we're on our way toward 1.5 degrees C (2.7 F) by as early as 2030.

Blame humans for starting the Amazon fires, environmentalists say

The Amazon is burning -- and humans are likely to blame.

Environmental organizations and researchers say the wildfires blazing in the Brazilian rainforest were set by cattle ranchers and loggers who want to clear and utilize the land, emboldened by the country's pro-business president.

"The vast majority of these fires are human-lit," said Christian Poirier, the program director of non-profit organization Amazon Watch. He added that even during dry seasons, the Amazon -- a humid rainforest -- doesn't catch on fire easily, unlike the dry bushland in California or Australia.

Farmers and ranchers have long used fire to clear land, said Poirier, and are likely behind the unusually large number of fires burning in the Amazon today.

A satellite image from NASA shows the fires raging in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil in August 2019.

The country's space research center (INPE) said this week that the number of fires in Brazil are

80% higher than last year. More than half are in the Amazon region, spelling disaster for the local environment and ecology.

And 99% percent of the fires result from human actions "either on purpose or by accident," Alberto Setzer, a senior scientist at INPE, said. The burning can range from a small-scale agricultural practice, to new deforestation for a mechanized and modern agribusiness project, Setzer told CNN by email.

The Amazon forest produces about 20% of the world's oxygen, and is often called "the planet's lungs." According to the World Wildlife Fund, if it is irrevocably damaged, it could start emitting carbon instead -- the major driver of climate change.

The environmental minister, Ricardo Salles, tweeted on Wednesday that the fires were caused by dry weather, wind, and heat. But CNN meteorologist Haley Brink said the fires are "definitely human-induced," and can't be attributed to natural causes like lightning strikes.

This year's fires fit into an

established seasonal agricultural pattern, Brink said. "It's the best time to burn because the vegetation is dry. [Farmers] wait for the dry season and they start burning and clearing the areas so that their cattle can graze. And that's what we're suspecting is going on down there."

The peak of the dry season is still to come in September, she added.

Compared to previous years, the destruction this year is "unprecedented," Poirier said. In this Aug. 20, 2019 drone photo released by the Corpo de Bombeiros de Mato Grosso, brush fires burn in Guaranta do Norte municipality, Mato Grosso state, Brazil.

It's also very difficult to halt human-induced blazes, Lincoln Muniz Alves, a researcher at INPE's Earth System Science Centre, told CNN.

"Because the use of fire is a traditional part of tropical agriculture to clean agricultural land, grazing land, it is very difficult to stop it," Alves said in an email.

Environmentalists are blaming Bolsonaro

Organizations, activists, and social media users worldwide have reacted to the news with alarm. #PrayForTheAmazon and other variations of the hashtag are trending globally on Twitter, with hundreds of thousands of tweets. As images and news of the fire spread, many are demanding accountability from Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

When Bolsonaro was running for president, he made campaign promises to restore the economy by exploring the Amazon's economic potential. Now, environmental organizations say he has encouraged ranchers, farmers, and loggers to exploit and burn the rainforest like never before with a sense of impunity. In this Aug. 20, 2019 drone photo released by the Corpo de Bombeiros de Mato Grosso, brush fires burn in Guaranta do Norte municipality, Mato Grosso state, Brazil. In a statement, Amazon Watch pointed to widespread local media reports that just last week, farmers had

organized a coordinated "fire day" to burn land for agriculture, inspired by Bolsonaro's rhetoric. Fires are "just the most visible symptom" of Bolsonaro's policies, and "reflect the irresponsibility of the president," said Observatorio do Clima (Climate Observatory) in a statement on Wednesday.

The pro-business Bolsonaro has hamstrung Brazil's environmental enforcement agency with budget cuts amounting to \$23 million -- official data sent to CNN by Observatorio do Clima shows the enforcement agency's operations have gone down since Bolsonaro was sworn in.

And just weeks ago, the director of INPE was fired after a spat with the president. The director had defended satellite data that showed deforestation was 88% higher in June than a year earlier, which Bolsonaro characterized as "lies." Bolsonaro, who has previously said he is not "Captain Chainsaw" in reference to Amazon deforestation, has dismissed accusations of responsibility for the fires.

Brazil's Amazon rainforest is burning at a record rate, research center says

Fires are raging at a record rate in Brazil's Amazon rainforest, and scientists warn that it could strike a devastating blow to the fight against climate change.

The fires are burning at the highest rate since the country's space research center, the National Institute for Space Research (known by the abbreviation INPE), began tracking them in 2013, the center said Tuesday.

There have been 72,843 fires in Brazil this year, with more than half in the Amazon region, INPE said. That's more than an 80% increase compared with the same period last year.

The Amazon is often referred to as the planet's lungs, producing 20% of the oxygen in the Earth's atmosphere.

It is considered vital in slowing global warming, and it is home to uncountable species of

fauna and flora. Roughly half the size of the United States, it is the largest rainforest on the planet.

Dramatic images and videos on social media show giant plumes of smoke rising from the greenery and lines of fire leaving blackened waste in their wake.

The smoke has reached all the way to Sao Paulo, more than 1,700 miles away. Images from the city show the sky

pitch-black in the middle of the afternoon, the sun blanketed by smoke and ash.

The European Union's satellite program, Copernicus, released a map showing smoke from the fires spreading all along Brazil to the east Atlantic coast. The smoke has covered nearly half of the country and is even spilling over into neighboring Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay.

The Amazon River stretches

across several of these South American countries, but the majority -- more than two-thirds -- of the rainforest lies in Brazil.

According to INPE, more than 1½ soccer fields of Amazon rainforest are being destroyed every minute of every day.

People worldwide are sharing their horror on social media. Fans of the K-Pop band BTS, who call themselves the Army, are even rallying on Twitter to

spread word of the fires, with tens of thousands of people tweeting the hashtag #ArmyHelpThePlanet.

Activists blame Brazil's president

Environmental groups have long been campaigning to save the Amazon, blaming Brazil's far-right president, Jair Bolsonaro, for the endangerment of the vital rainforest. They accuse him of relaxing environmental controls in the country and encouraging deforestation.

Bolsonaro's environmental policies have been controversial from the start. A former army captain, he made campaign promises to restore

the economy by exploring the Amazon's economic potential. Just weeks ago, the director of INPE was fired after a spat with the president; the director had defended satellite data that showed deforestation was 88% higher in June than a year earlier, and Bolsonaro called the findings "lies."

Bolsonaro also criticized the agency's deforestation warnings as harmful for trade negotiations, according to the Agencia Brasil news agency.

Bolsonaro's pro-business stance may have emboldened loggers, farmers and miners to seize control of a growing area of Amazon land, Carlos Rittl,

executive secretary of the environmental nonprofit organization Observatorio do Clima (Climate Observatory), told CNN en Español last month.

Budget cuts and federal interference are making it even easier for people to exploit the rainforest.

Brazil's environmental enforcement agency has seen its budget cut by \$23 million, and official data sent to CNN by Observatorio do Clima shows the enforcement agency's operations have gone down since Bolsonaro was sworn in.

On Wednesday,

Bolsonaro said that the recent wave of fires in the Amazon may have been caused by n o n g o v e r n m e n t a l organizations in order to draw international criticism to his government.

"Crime exists, and we need to make sure that this type of crime does not increase. We took money away from the NGOs," he said. "They are now feeling the pinch from the lack of funding. So, maybe the NGO types are conducting these criminal acts in order to generate negative attention against me and against the Brazilian government. This is the war we are facing."

In July, Greenpeace called Bolsonaro and his government a "threat to the climate equilibrium" and warned that in the long run, his policies would bear a "heavy cost" for the Brazilian economy.

Environmental activists and organizations like the World Wildlife Fund warn that if the Amazon reaches a point of no return, the rainforest could become a dry savannah, no longer habitable for much of its wildlife. If this happens, instead of being a source of oxygen, it could start emitting carbon -- the major driver of climate change.

A new tone from some Republicans on climate change - mostly behind closed doors

Republicans are beginning to feel the heat on climate change.

Though a significant bloc of the party continues to deny the basic science of the issue, some senior Republicans are showing a willingness to consider incremental legislation to turbocharge clean energy research funding, invest in greening buildings, support electric vehicle charging infrastructure and promote energy efficiency.

And a few others are going farther, notably Rep. Francis Rooney, who supports a carbon tax - an idea that hasn't attracted Republican support since a failed cap-and-trade bill nearly a decade ago.

"I don't understand what it is about people in politics that they seem to be immune from some of these large shifts in opinion out there in the real world. I mean almost all the large-company CEOs are for taking reasonable steps to deal with climate change and sea level rise," said Rooney, who represents a coastal Florida district and served as an ambassador in the George W. Bush administration.

He credited pressure from corporate leaders as helpful for ultimately setting a price on carbon despite ongoing resistance from many in his party.

And behind closed doors, Republicans are even more candid in acknowledging that action is needed, according to their Democratic colleagues.

"I've had very constructive dinners, meetings, conversations with Republican senators who see the threat of climate change, who agree that we need to take

action," said Sen. Chris Coons, a Democrat from Delaware.

Since I first got here in 2010, virtually all the Republicans with whom I serve in the Senate have moved from denying that there is any change in our climate occurring, to questioning whether it's caused by humanity, and then continuing to question whether we have any responsibility to do something about it, and whether we can do something about it without harming our own economy," said Coons, a moderate who's seen as one of the Senate's top dealmakers.

Of course, President Donald Trump continues to fight aggressively to undo Obama-era regulations on greenhouse gas emissions. But other important GOP figures have softened their rhetoric on climate change and begun to embrace modest legislative efforts to combat the problem.

The tonal shift among some Republicans comes as a federal government report last fall warned of hundreds of billions of dollars in annual costs related to climate change by mid-century across every region of the country. And the United Nations last year warned the world must achieve net-zero emissions by mid-century to stave off the worst impacts from climate change.

Amid the overwhelming scientific consensus and growing public demands for actions, some senior Republicans, like Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, have acknowledged that human activity is driving climate change. Other senior lawmakers have voiced support for more federal funding for clean energy research

and other technologies like carbon capture and sequestration. Famed GOP pollster Frank Luntz, who famously pushed Republicans to cast doubt on the science of climate change in the 2000s, pointedly said last month: "I was wrong."

"In Florida we've got a fairly pro-environmental group - Republican and Democrat," Rooney said. "It's an existential threat both to the quality of life and to our tourist economy."

Coons said changing attitudes by corporate leaders concerned about the sustainability of their businesses is driving more climate discussion in Republican politics.

"There's been a dramatic change in tone from the fossil fuel industry and then more broadly - whether it's insurance, financial services or consumer-facing companies that are seeing the price they are facing. They are either conveying publicly or privately that their future models for their businesses include a carbon price, or that they have grave concerns about the potential housing market impacts or insurance impacts of steadily increasing storms, wildfires, and tornadoes," he added.

Those corporate concerns are making themselves heard on Capitol Hill, said Coons.

"We recently had a day where more than 70 CEOs came and lobbied - on a bipartisan basis - members of Congress, and I convened an off-the-record conversation with seven of them and invited a wide range of members. I got a number of

Republican House members and senators, and we had a terrific and constructive conversation," said Coons.

In the House, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) told the podcast, "It is a decidedly different tone than we've heard in recent years."

Blumenauer pointed to effects of climate change on vulnerable states - including melting snowpack in Alaska and disappearing glaciers. "These are things that are seeping into the public consciousness, and I think that [in light of] the sort of the full-throated denial that we heard on the part of so many of my Republican colleagues - that tone is significant, and I think it is reflecting at least in some cases the fact that their citizens that they represent are not going to abide by an approach like that."

Blumenauer, like many other progressives, has advocated for a Green New Deal to address climate change by rapidly weaning the country off of fossil fuels, which critics have bashed as unworkably expensive and unable to gain bipartisan traction. Supporters of greater federal investment in technological innovation, in contrast, argue it could garner broad support and make a meaningful contribution to reducing U.S. emissions.

Dan Byers, vice president for policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Global Energy Institute, predicted legislative action in coming months. "I will even go out on a limb and maybe predict that you could

see a nice package of climate energy innovation-focused legislation be signed by the president later this year," he told the podcast.

Byers added, "We only spend about \$2 billion a year on clean technology, and so we think that that can be dramatically increased so that we can accelerate a lot of these technologies that we see as essentially being the energy economy of tomorrow."

While Trump has given notice that the U.S. will withdraw from Paris climate agreement - a move slated to take place the day after the 2020 election - Byers said business leaders prefer that the U.S. stay in.

"We think it's absolutely important for the U.S. to remain in the Paris climate agreement and at the table in cooperating with other countries. We do think that the Obama administration's pledge was unrealistic, was going to have a negative impact on our economy. And so we'd like to see that revisited to something that can be buttressed by essentially pushing technology growth," he said.

Back in the Senate, Coons observed that some of the most robust discussions around climate have to date remained behind closed doors.

"We see relatively few Republican members of the Senate and House who are willing to step forward and say, 'We've got to do this, let's get to it,'" said Coons. "Privately, there are many more who see this as a challenge than publicly are so far saying this."

Ditch cars to meet climate change targets : UK

People will have to get out of their cars if the UK is to meet its climate change targets, MPs say.

The Science and Technology Select Committee says technology alone cannot solve the problem of greenhouse gas emissions from transport.

It says the government cannot achieve sufficient emissions cuts by swapping existing vehicles for cleaner versions.

The government said it would consider the committee's findings.

In its report, the committee said: "In the long-term, widespread personal vehicle ownership does not appear to be compatible with significant decarbonisation."

It echoes a report from an Oxford-based group of academics who warned that even electric cars produce pollution through their tyres and brakes.

The AA said the committee had underestimated the power of new technology to solve pollution in cars.

But the MPs are demanding

improvements in public transport, walking and cycling, which benefit health as well as the climate.

They also criticise the government's recent policies on the costs of transport.

They point out that most of the increase in average new car emissions in 2017 was caused by consumers choosing more polluting models because financial incentives to buy cleaner cars are insufficient. Improving public transport A government strategy should aim to reduce the overall number of vehicles required, the report says.

This would be achieved by:

" Promoting and improving public transport

" Reducing the cost of public transport relative to driving

" Encouraging vehicle usership in place of ownership (car sharing, car hire and taxis)

" And boosting walking and cycling.

Ministers have held down fuel duty increases in recent years

following lobbying from motoring groups.

But the MPs say they should ensure that the annual increase in fuel duty is never lower than the average increase in rail or bus fares.

For drivers investing in electric vehicles there should be a better network of charging points.

But there's a warning that more research is needed on the environmental impact of the batteries of electric vehicles.

The report warns: "Hydrogen technology may prove to be cheaper and less environmentally damaging than battery-powered electric vehicles. The government should not rely on a single technology."

The AA's president Edmund King told BBC News: "Stating that widespread personal vehicle ownership isn't compatible with significant decarbonisation seems to be giving up on emerging science and technology." Technology is developing at a rapid rate with great potential from more efficient

electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles." More emphasis should be going into renewable energy and greener vehicle production rather than higher fuel duty or banning hybrids, as the report recommends. "The fastest growth in traffic is by vans due to internet deliveries so more technological effort should be put into decarbonising that sector as a priority."

'Not enough being done'

The MPs' report stretches beyond transport to cover the whole economy. Its general message is that not enough is being done to ensure that the UK achieves its recently-adopted Net Zero Carbon target by 2050. The report says stamp duty should be increased for badly-insulated homes. Homebuyers should then be able to make improvements, and offset the cost with a stamp duty rebate.

Another idea in a wide-ranging document is for the UK to set a target for reducing the emissions embedded in the manufacturing process of the goods we buy

from abroad.

This would prevent Britain from achieving cuts in greenhouse gases by exporting what's left of its own polluting industries.

The MPs backed many of the recommendations of the government's official advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change. But they complained that its chair, Lord Deben, should have declared the interest of his consultancy firm in Drax power station, the largest recipient of renewable energy subsidies in the country, and Johnson Matthey, which is about to make a huge investment in electric vehicles. A government spokesman said: "From transport to heating, electricity to agriculture, we are working to put in place the right measures to help us tackle global warming. We welcome the committee's report and will consider its findings." "We are going further and faster to tackle climate change than any other major economy having legislated for net zero emissions by 2050."

Air pollution: How damaging are idling cars and buses?

Public Health England has been talking about the steps that can be taken to reduce air pollution. One of its recommendations is to stop vehicles idling close to places such as schools and hospitals.

There has been relatively little research into how common a phenomenon idling outside schools is.

It is clear, however, that when looking at the impact, the sort of vehicle involved is crucial, with considerably lower emissions generally coming from newer

vehicles.

Many modern cars and buses have stop-start systems, which automatically switch off the engine when a vehicle stops, although those may be disabled. A project commissioned by the Mayor of London's office in 2016 measured changes in pollution after a series of "action days", during which teams of volunteers patrolled the streets in four areas of London, asking drivers to turn off their engines.

They found levels of black carbon - a pollutant associated with car

exhausts, which has been linked to lung and heart disease - were 36% lower after these "action days" next to a primary school in Wandsworth.

But the results were not so conclusive in every area - in the City of London there was a 33% increase on the first test day and a 22% decrease on the second.

The researchers said the Wandsworth location was particularly well-suited to the study, whereas in the more central locations, vans and

lorries spread out along the street rather than being concentrated in one location. This made it harder to measure a strong signal.

The report said that idling at school gates was "a problem across the capital and it was pleasing to see the greatest reduction in concentrations" outside the school.

A piece of research in the US, published in 2013, looked at air quality in four schools before and after campaigns to stop vehicles idling.

It found that there had been significant reductions in air pollution at the schools with more buses - those with fewer buses did not see a significant reduction in the concentration of air pollutants.

Local authorities in the UK already have the power to issue fixed penalty notices to motorists in parked vehicles who refuse to turn off their engines when asked.

The emissions consultancy Cambustion has looked at when it is worth switching of engines to reduce emissions.

It found that for emissions of nitrogen oxide from a diesel car meeting Euro 5 requirements (that is broadly any diesel car made before late 2015) it is worth switching off the engine if you expect to be stationary for at least 30 seconds. For Euro 6 diesel cars (those manufactured after 2015) it is worth switching off if you are not going to move for three seconds. The company also told the BBC that the most emissions come from a completely cold start at the beginning of the day and for hard accelerating. Speed bumps cause particularly high emissions because of this.

How Bernie Sanders would address climate change

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders on Thursday released his plan to fight climate change, as he seeks to position himself as the most aggressive candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination on the issue.

What would the plan do?

Sanders pledged to declare climate change a national emergency and called for \$16.3 trillion over a decade to transition the U.S. to 100 percent renewable electricity and phase out traditional gasoline-powered engines.

The "Green New Deal" aims to fully decarbonize the U.S.

economy by 2050 to hit a target climate scientists have said is necessary to avoid the worst effects of global warming.

Like other Democratic climate plans, much of Sanders' proposal would require congressional action to pass - something that's unlikely given its scale. But the plan stands out for its aggressiveness in confronting climate change, as well as its cost and difficulty to enact.

The campaign said the plan would "end unemployment" by creating 20 million jobs and offering assistance to displaced fossil fuel workers. It would also

set aside more than \$400 billion to help American farmers prepare for climate change and transition to grazing and planting techniques that sequester carbon.

The plan aims to reduce U.S. carbon emissions by 71 percent by 2030. Through a \$200 billion contribution for international climate aid, the administration would also target a 31 percent emissions cut from developing nations, outside China.

Oil, gas and coal companies also would be targeted. Sanders said he would ban fracking for oil and gas as well as mountaintop

removal coal mining, and he would end federal subsidies for fossil fuels and "prosecute polluters - civilly and criminally - who knowingly put our planet in peril."

How much would it cost?

\$16.3 trillion over a decade.

The Sanders camp said the plan will pay for itself over 15 years through the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies; new taxes on the wealthy; revenue from sales of federally owned renewables; and savings from new income taxes, reduced safety net spending and less military spending on protecting overseas oil.

India working on 'priority' to divert water flowing to Pakistan, says Union Minister

Government of India's project to divert its share of water flowing to Pakistan from three Indus rivers has gained momentum after Pulwama attack in Srinagar earlier this year.

(News Agencies)-India is working on 'priority' to divert its share of water flowing to Pakistan, for domestic use, said Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat following increased tensions between the two neighbours and government's declaration to make water conservation, a national mission. "...We're working on priority to work out how our share of water that flows to Pakistan can be diverted, for use by our farmers, industries, & people," Shekhawat tweeted.

The plan to divert water from India's three eastern rivers Beas, Ravi and Sutlej gained momentum earlier this year after a terror strike on CRPF convoy in Pulwama killed 40 troopers. The attack was claimed by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-

Mohammad (JeM).

Earlier, after the Uri attack in September 2016, the government had pushed for effective use of India's water share including fast-tracking irrigation and hydro-power projects by resolving long pending inter-state disputes.

A decision to fast-track three projects—stuck in red tape and disputes—including construction of two dams had been taken then, according to a government official who had spoken to news agency PTI.

Under the Indus Waters Treaty, waters flowing in three of Indus tributaries -- the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi -- have been allotted to India; while the Chenab, Jhelum and Indus waters have been allotted to Pakistan.

Of the total 168 million acre-feet, India's share of water from the

three allotted rivers is 33 million acre-feet, which constitutes nearly 20 per cent.

The Indus Waters Treaty signed by the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan President Ayub Khan gave Pakistan the right to use water in "Eastern" rivers, namely, the Indus, the Jhelum and the Chenab.

Union minister Nitin Gadkari had tweeted on February 21 to say that the projects to divert water flowing to Pakistan had been declared national projects by Narendra Modi government.

"Under the leadership of Hon'ble PM Sri @narendramodiji, our Govt. has decided to stop our share of water which used to flow to Pakistan. We will divert water from eastern rivers and supply it to our people in Jammu and



Kashmir and Punjab," Gadkari's tweet had said. The latest statement from Jal Shakti minister follows Pakistan's bid to internationalise India's move to remove special status for Jammu and Kashmir through revocation of Article 370 of the constitution. Pakistan suspended trade and travel between the two countries in retaliation besides unsuccessfully attempting to raise the issue in United Nations

Security Council. India responded to Pakistani actions by asking Islamabad to accept "the reality" and stated that any future bilateral talk on Kashmir will only be restricted to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's statement that India's nuclear doctrine of No-First-Use could change if situation demands was also seen as a message to Pakistan.

ED to push Interpol for Red Corner Notice against Zakir Naik



(News Agencies)- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is going to push Interpol for a Red Corner Notice (RCN) against controversial preacher Zakir Naik, wanted by Indian authorities since 2016 for alleged money laundering and inciting extremism through hate speeches, sources have said. The agency is planning to approach a court in Mumbai to issue a non-bailable arrest warrant against the 53-year-old Islamic preacher, who is currently in Malaysia, they said. Naik has been in Malaysia for about three years after he was granted permanent residency in

the country. If the warrant is issued, the agency will send a petition to the Interpol seeking a red corner notice (RCN) to Malaysia, demanding he must be extradited to India as per the extradition treaty between the two nations. The Interpol has in the past rejected the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) request on the ground that no charge-sheet was filed at the time of submission. The agency had termed it as a technical ground and that Interpol had not taken cognizance of it filing a charge sheet against Naik and others before a Mumbai court in October 2017. "He will respond

as on when there is any development," a source close to Naik said. With fresh probe and evidence, ED is likely to move for the RCN soon. ED had filed its first direct charge sheet against Naik in May this year. It identifies proceeds of crime worth Rs 193.06 crore and alleges that Naik's speeches incited young Muslim men to commit terrorist acts. ED alleged that Naik's Islamic Research Foundation (IRF) had organised peace conferences in Mumbai between 2007 and 2011, in which Naik attempted to convert people and incite terrorist acts. Naik had denied the charges in a statement issued in June this year. "The Indian agencies are desperately trying to pin something on me. Some charges, any charges. Which is why when terror charges did not work with the Interpol, they've moved on to money laundering. The Interpol refused to accept the Indian government's charges against me on two different occasions in the last two years, and I don't see that stance changing," he had said.

Scrapping Article 370 India's internal matter: Bangladesh official



(News Agencies)- Bangladesh on Wednesday said that the Central government's move action in abrogating Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir is India's "internal matter". "Bangladesh maintains that Article 370's abrogation by Indian Govt is an internal issue of India," a statement by country's Foreign Ministry read. It further said that Bangladesh has always advocated, as a matter of principle, that maintaining regional peace and stability, as well as the

development should be a priority for all countries. The statement is a further blow to Pakistan, which has been making continuous efforts to internationalise the Kashmir issue, despite being snubbed at the United Nations Security Council, as well as by many countries, including US, Russia, and France. The statement by Bangladesh Foreign Ministry has come a day after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met called on the country's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Dhaka.

Trump administration to allow longer detention of migrant families

(News Agencies)- The Trump administration on Wednesday announced a proposal to detain undocumented families together indefinitely, replacing the agreement that set a 20-day limit for holding children, with President Donald Trump saying it would discourage migrants from coming to the US. The rule, unveiled by acting Homeland Security Secretary Kevin McAleenan, is part of the administration's aggressive effort to revamp immigration laws as the number of families and unaccompanied minors crossing the US-Mexico border has increased. In recent months, the administration has proposed rules that could make it more difficult for immigrants to get green cards, worked to end temporary protected status for migrants from certain countries and limit avenues to declare asylum. Trump said Wednesday that he's concerned about the number of undocumented children attempting to travel into the United States, arguing the new rule would keep families together. "I have the children on my mind. It bothers me very greatly," Trump said. Trump also reasserted his false claim that President Barack Obama was the person responsible for family separations, although it was the Trump administration's "zero-tolerance" policy which led to thousands of children being separated from their parents after crossing the border illegally. "I'm the one that kept the families

together. With what we're doing now, we'll do even more of that, but it will make it almost impossible for people to come into our country illegally," Trump said at the White House. Under what is known as the Flores settlement, the government is required to release a minor from a non-licensed facility as expeditiously as possible, which has been set at 20 days.

"By closing this key loophole in Flores, the new rule will restore integrity to our immigration system and eliminate the major pull factor fueling the crisis," McAleenan said at a news conference Wednesday. The proposal would give the government new licensing authority, allowing the use of either a state license or



Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention standards, according to a DHS official, meaning families can be kept longer than 20 days. Lawsuits and Democratic opposition The regulation is certain to face legal challenges and must also be examined by the judge who oversees the Flores settlement. It will take effect 60 days after it is formally published later this week, barring other legal delays. Attorneys for migrant children detained by the government plan to file a brief with US District Judge Dolly Gee, arguing that the regulations fail to implement the settlement and therefore should be blocked, according to Peter Schey, president of the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law.

Illegal immigrant rape suspect released from Maryland jail, violating detainer policy, ICE says



(News Agencies)- An illegal immigrant accused of rape was released from a Maryland jail three days after being arrested -- despite a request from Immigration and Customs Enforcement to keep the man in custody, according to federal officials. Rodrigo Castro-Montejo, a Salvadoran national in the country illegally, was arrested Aug. 10 on charges of second-degree rape and second-degree assault. The 25-year-old allegedly assaulted a female friend after a night of heavy drinking, according to court documents obtained by FOX5. During the investigation, police said they monitored the woman

while she was at a local hospital. At one point she conversed with Castro-Montejo via text message and he allegedly admitted to the assault. The woman reportedly asked Castro-Montejo in the messages if he stopped at touching her or went further and engaged in sexual intercourse. Castro Montejo allegedly replied "Oo a little bit of both to be honest" and "I'm sorry," according to court documents obtained by WJLA. On Aug. 12, ICE said it filed a detainer with the Montgomery County Detention Center to hold the 25-year-old for up to 48 hours so immigration officers could travel to the lockup and take him into custody. But federal officials said the jail declined to honor the detainer, and let Castro-Montejo

walk out of jail Aug. 13 after he posted bond. The Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation told FOX5 in a statement the jail notified ICE at noon on Aug. 13 to inform them Castro-Montejo was being processed for release that day. The jail said it contacted federal officials "using a number to a local ICE supervisor provided by that agency for notification purposes," but did not receive a follow-up call back from ICE. The jail said Castro-Montejo was released six hours later, and the jail has still not received a follow-up call -- "nor any other communication" -- since notifying ICE of his release. ICE told WJLA, however, that officials at the jail called one employee who was "off duty" and "outside the

area" on the day the 25-year-old was released. ICE told the television station the Maryland jail should have contacted multiple officers or followed instructions on a detainer form, which directs law enforcement agencies to contact the Law Enforcement Support Center. The LESC operates around the clock seven days a week. Montgomery County, Md., designated itself for "sanctuary" status in July, according to FOX5. The order signed by County Executive Mark Elrich says no county agency - including police departments - can cooperate with ICE. ICE agents are now barred from entering secure portions of county jails, and now have to take custody of illegal immigrants in public areas, such as jail parking lots.

Indian Visa Center



VISA / OCI / PIO / PASSPORT
Application Assistance Center
Deepak Bansal
(O) 516-218-8000 • (C): (516) 304-8808

DEEPAK BANSAL
 Office : 516-218-8000
 Cell : 516-304-8808
 Fax : 516-218-8009
 Email : deepakbansalny@gmail.com
 3498 Brodaway
 Hicksville, NY 11801

Office for National Statistics downgrades 'not fully reliable' official immigration data

(News Agencies)- The number of EU citizens moving to the UK is higher than previously thought, the Office for National Statistics said today as it revealed it had under-estimated net migration from the continent. The ONS said the error affected figures on the number of migrants coming from the so-called EU8 countries - like Poland, Estonia and Hungary - before March 2016. However, the ONS also said it had over-stated migration from countries outside the EU. The revelation has prompted experts to claim that the EU migration numbers have been 'systematically' under-estimated. The statistics body has responded to the news by downgrading the status of its

quarterly immigration figures so that they now come with an 'experimental' health warning. It means that while the ONS said net migration from the EU in March 2016 was 178,000 it was actually closer to 207,000.

In an announcement on Wednesday it said: 'In the year ending March 2016 - the latest point at which we have adjusted data available - EU net migration is around 16 per cent higher than our published estimate.'

On the issue of non-EU migration the ONS said it had adjusted its figures to better take into account the movement of foreign students.

It said: 'For non-EU migration, we have applied a preliminary adjustment up to 2018, drawing on the strengths of what Home

Office data tell us about emigration of non-EU students. 'Our adjusted non-EU net migration estimates also show a very similar trend but are consistently lower than unadjusted estimates, indicating that we may have been overestimating net migration from outside the EU.

'In the year ending March 2016, net migration is around 13 per cent lower than our published estimate.

'In the year ending December 2018, this is around eight per cent lower.' That means that while the ONS said non-EU net migration stood at 232,000 in the year ending December 2018 it was actually closer to 214,000. Immigration experts at the University of Oxford said the



latest ONS analysis showed official data has been 'systematically under-estimating net migration from EU countries'. The ONS said: 'Our research has clearly shown that no single source of data can fully reflect the complexity of migration. 'However, when we look at all

available sources together it provides a much clearer picture. 'Whilst we go through this transformation journey, we have sought to re-classify our migration statistics as "experimental statistics" in line with Office for Statistics regulation guidance.'

Greece refuses to 'facilitate' newly-released Iranian tanker's 'course to Syria' following pressure from the US



(News Agencies)- Greece has vowed not to offer assistance to the Iranian oil tanker at the centre of a standoff between Tehran and the West, as Washington pressures its allies not to help the ship.

The Adrian Darya 1, previously known as the Grace 1, is sailing through the Mediterranean with two million barrels of crude oil on board after being released from Gibraltar. The British territory seized the tanker on July 4 on

suspicion that it was carrying the oil to Syria in violation of EU sanctions, but Iran denies this. The U.S. wants the tanker detained again and has demanded that Greece and nearby Cyprus refrain from offering any assistance as the ship sails eastward.

'We have sent a clear message that we would not want to facilitate the trafficking of this oil to Syria in any instance,' Greek deputy foreign minister Miltiadis Varvitsiotis promised today.

The tanker was released on Sunday night after a five-week standoff which threatened to escalate into a Middle East conflict. It is now sailing east

with trackers giving its stated destination as the Greek port of Kalamata, with an expected arrival date of August 26.

The minister said Greece did not have the port facilities to accommodate such a large ship, but did not discount the possibility that it could drop anchor in Greek territorial waters. 'This is a VLCC, a very large crude carrier ... There is no Greek port that could accommodate a VLCC,' he said.

He said the United States had been in touch with Greece on the matter. Asked what would happen if the vessel entered Greek territorial waters and dropped anchor, he said: 'In that

case we will see what will happen.'

Varvitsiotis said the Iranian government had not been in touch with Greek authorities. He said the cargo could be offloaded at a refinery, but 'obviously not' in EU territory.

Gibraltar, which seized the ship on July 4, allowed the tanker to leave after Tehran gave assurances that the oil would not be delivered in violation of EU sanctions.

The chief minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo, said he had been assured in writing by the Iranian government that the tanker would not unload its cargo in Syria. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday called Gibraltar's decision 'very unfortunate', in an implicit rebuke to Britain. 'If that ship again heads to Syria, we will take every action we can consistent with those sanctions to prevent that,' Pompeo warned.

'We have made clear that anyone who touches it, anyone who supports it, anyone who allows a ship to dock is at risk of receiving sanctions from the United States.' Washington wants the tanker detained because it says the vessel has links to Iran's Revolutionary Guards, which it has designated a terrorist organisation.

Japan warns North Korea now has miniaturized nukes small enough to fit on its ballistic missiles and is a 'serious and imminent threat'

(News Agencies)- North Korea has miniaturised nuclear warheads and made them small enough to fit on ballistic missiles, and fears that Pyongyang's nuclear programme is 'growing unabated', experts say. The latest findings come alongside newly-released pictures which suggest a North Korean plant may be leaking hazardous waste into a nearby river. The Japanese report highlights the lack of progress on denuclearisation talks, said Vipin Narang, a nuclear affairs expert at MIT. 'It

is Japan that is most threatened, and probably the primary target of such a capability,' he said. 'So openly acknowledging it underscores Tokyo's acute fears that North Korea's nuclear program continues to grow unabated with no foreseeable plan to slow its growth, let alone eliminate them.' The report is due to be approved at a Cabinet meeting in Japan in mid-September. In last year's Defence White Paper, Japan said 'miniaturising a nuclear weapon small enough

to be mounted on a ballistic missile requires a considerably high degree of technological capacity'. However, they said 'it is possible that North Korea has achieved the miniaturisation of nuclear weapons and has developed nuclear warheads.' Japan's latest findings are similar to those of its allies, America and South Korea. The South said in a 2018 defence paper that North Korea's ability to miniaturise nuclear weapons 'appears to have reached a considerable level.'

How Greenland explains Donald Trump's entire presidency

Donald Trump won't be going to Denmark in 10 days. Because the Danes won't sell him Greenland. "Denmark is a very special country with incredible people, but based on Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen's comments, that she would have no interest in discussing the purchase of Greenland, I will be postponing our meeting scheduled in two weeks for another time," Trump tweeted Tuesday night. "The Prime Minister was able to save a great deal of expense and effort for both the United States and Denmark by being so direct. I thank her for that and look forward to rescheduling sometime in the future!"

It's easy to dismiss this episode as just another Trumpian flight of fancy that didn't work out. But take a minute and you start to realize that the whole Greenland incident, which lasted a total of five days, is broadly emblematic of the entire approach that Trump has taken to being president. The Greenland episode is the Trump presidency.

Consider how we got here:

1) The Wall Street Journal reported last Thursday that Trump has repeatedly quizzed aides on the possibility of buying Greenland. 2) On Sunday, before boarding Air Force One in New Jersey to head back to Washington, Trump addressed the story for the first time. Here's the key part of what he said (bolding is mine): "Denmark essentially owns it. We're very good allies with Denmark. We protect Denmark like we protect large portions of the world. So the concept came up and I said, 'Certainly, I'd be. Strategically, it's interesting, and we'd be interested.' But we'll talk to them a little bit. It's not number one on the burner, I can tell you that." 3) Denmark's government freaks out. "Greenland is not for sale. Greenland is not Danish. Greenland belongs to Greenland," Frederiksen, the Danish Prime Minister, told the newspaper *Sermitsiaq* on Sunday. "I strongly hope that this is not meant seriously." 4) Trump cancels the Denmark

trip, citing Frederiksen's comments that Greenland isn't for sale.

5) Trump is asked about the whole thing and tells reporters that he thought the prime minister's statement (that the idea of selling Greenland to the US was "absurd") was "nasty" and "inappropriate."

Now consider the Greenland purchase in the context of Trump's broader presidency. It meets all the criteria that have come to define his "modern-day presidential" approach to the job. *Come up with a totally off-the-wall idea, with a whiff of America-gets-its-way-no-matter-what in there

*Idea leaks -- or the White House leaks it as a trial balloon -- to the media, with the caveat that his aides aren't sure if he is serious about it

*Downplay idea, insisting the media got it wrong -- even while leaving the door open to doing the deal if the other side is open to it

*Take ball and go home when off-the-wall idea is rejected,



jeopardizing relationship with longtime strategic ally

See, the Greenland story really does have it all! It is the Trump presidency in microcosm. He says and does absolutely wild things. Even his top staffers aren't sure how serious he is about it, and, therefore, don't know whether to actually pursue it. The idea leaks to the media and immediately becomes a thing. Trump freelances, making up his views as he goes. A semi-serious conversation about whether any of this is even possible begins even as the intended target starts to freak out. Trump, either spurred or

spurned by all of the attention, leans in -- to it all. Then it all unravels because, as we later learn, he was winging it all along. There was never any "there" there -- just Trump saying stuff.

(A quick sidebar on the this-is-all-a-strategic-distraction from gun control or immigration, etc., argument: No, it isn't. Is there anything you have seen in Trump's time in office that would lead you to believe that he is capable of that sort of strategic planning and execution? It's readily apparent at this point that Trump is just saying stuff -- and then reacting to how those things land with the general public.

The Supreme Court has an immigration disaster on its hands



President Donald Trump has placed the Obama administration's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program squarely in his anti-immigration crosshairs. Ever since Trump took the oath of office, DACA has been living on borrowed time, which may soon run out -- with potentially devastating consequences for hundreds of thousands of young people. In September 2017, Trump tried to end DACA, which protects from deportation undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children with their parents. But a series of decisions from federal trial and appellate courts put Trump's

efforts on hold and allowed DACA to continue temporarily. Do not be lulled by the temporary maintenance of the status quo. The skies are darkening for DACA. The case heads to the Supreme Court in its upcoming term, and this week the Justice Department formally backed Trump's effort to end the program. The Justice Department surprised exactly nobody by siding with Trump, arguing that DACA "at best" is "legally questionable" and "at worst, it is illegal." How the Supreme Court will rule is uncertain, but watch for a 4-4 split along the Court's ideological fault lines. Expect the four conservative justices, all

appointed by Republicans (Justices Clarence Thomas, Samuel Alito, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh) to support the Trump administration's effort to end DACA, and the four liberal justices, all appointed by Democrats (Justices Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan) to vote against it.

In that case, Chief Justice John Roberts will likely cast the swing vote, as he has done in recent blockbuster rulings, including some pertaining to immigration. Roberts, a nominee of President George W. Bush, has stalwart conservative credentials, but over time he has become more unpredictable and has sided with the Court's liberal bloc in high-profile cases. He stunned many by casting a decisive vote to uphold the Affordable Care Act in 2012, and in the most recent term, Roberts sided with four liberal justices to block the Trump administration's effort to add a citizenship question to the census in the absence of a legitimate explanation of reasons from the White House.

Trump's attempt to outrun a recession might make things worse



President Donald Trump is trying to outrun a possible recession as he runs for reelection in 2020, but his efforts to keep the economy going now might make any downturn harder to fix.

Trump says he's looking at a range of proposals to keep the economy moving -- everything from giving workers a pay bump by cutting payroll taxes to cutting capital gains taxes for investors. But economists say attempts by the President to get ahead of a slowdown today would leave policymakers with far less ammunition to fend off further calamities down the road.

"We're shooting all the arrows before we even need to start shooting," said Steven Rosenthal, a senior fellow at the

nonpartisan Tax Policy Center. "If things turn out badly, our conventional tools will have been exhausted to a great degree." During past downturns, both Democrats and Republicans -- including former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama -- have leaned on tools like one-time tax rebates or extended unemployment benefits to spur consumer spending, a major driver of economic growth. The US economy appears -- at least for now -- to be chugging along, with growth at 2.1%. Wages for workers have grown. Unemployment remains at a historic 50-year low. And consumers are still spending at a clip at their favorite retailers. Concerns about a slowdown and an eventual general recession has increased since the beginning of August as the chances of a trade deal with China have receded. Several major countries have reported poor growth, with Germany's economy contracting slightly. Classic market indicators are blinking red, with the yield curve on US bonds (briefly) inverting last week for the first time since the pre-recession year of 2007.

Parle, India's leading biscuit maker, may cut up to 10,000 jobs as slowdown bites



Once known as Parle Gluco, the Mumbai-headquartered company's flagship biscuit brand was renamed as Parle-G, and became a household name in India through the 1980s and 1990s. In 2003, Parle-G was considered the world's largest selling biscuit brand.

Parle Products Pvt Ltd, a leading Indian biscuit maker, might lay off up to 10,000 workers as slowing economic growth and falling demand in the rural heartland could cause production cuts, a company executive said on Wednesday. A downturn in Asia's third-largest economy is denting sales of everything from cars to clothing,

forcing companies to curtail production and raising hopes that the India government will unveil an economic stimulus to revive growth. A sharp drop in Parle's biscuit sales means the company may have to slash production, which may result in layoffs of 8,000-10,000 people, Mayank Shah, category head at Parle, said in

forcing companies to curtail production and raising hopes that the India government will unveil an economic stimulus to revive growth. A sharp drop in Parle's biscuit sales means the company may have to slash production, which may result in layoffs of 8,000-10,000 people, Mayank Shah, category head at Parle, said in

a telephone interview from Mumbai. "The situation is so bad, that if the government doesn't intervene immediately ... we may be forced to eliminate these positions," he said. Parle, founded in 1929, employs about 100,000 people, including direct and contract workers across 10 company-owned facilities and 125 contract manufacturing plants. Shah said demand for popular Parle biscuit brands such as Parle-G had been worsening since India rolled out a nationwide goods and services tax (GST) in 2017, which imposed a higher levy on

biscuits costing as low as 5 rupees, or 7 cents a pack. The higher taxes have forced Parle to offer fewer biscuits in each pack, hitting demand from lower-income consumers in rural India, which contributes more than half of Parle's revenue and where two-thirds of Indians live. "Consumers here are extremely price-sensitive. They're extremely conscious of how many biscuits they are getting for a particular price," Shah said. Parle, which has an annual revenue of above \$1.4 billion, held talks over the past year with the government's GST council as

well as former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, asking them to review tax rates, Shah added. Once known as Parle Gluco, the Mumbai-headquartered company's flagship biscuit brand was renamed as Parle-G, and became a household name in India through the 1980s and 1990s. In 2003, Parle-G was considered the world's largest selling biscuit brand.

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Rs 14,000 crore PNB fraud case: Man accused of aiding Mehul Choksi refuses to take lie-detector tests

One of the key accused in the Rs 14,000 crore PNB fraud case, former bank deputy manager Gokulnath Shetty refused to undergo lie detector tests claiming that CBI's allegation that he had made pecuniary gains was nothing but an "assumption". CBI had sought his consent for polygraph and narco-analysis tests on Wednesday to find out more about the alleged pecuniary benefits received by the accused.

Shetty is suspected of receiving illegal gratification for favouring diamantaire Mehul Choksi and his companies while posted in the forex department of the PNB's

mid corporate branch at Brady House, Mumbai, between April 2010 and May 2017.

According to the CBI, Shetty fraudulently issued 143 Letters of Undertaking (LOU) and enhanced the value of Foreign Letters of Credit (FLC) without following the prescribed procedure. The funds raised for payment of import bills were not utilised for the same in many cases, the CBI had claimed in its plea. In his reply, Shetty said the prosecution was not seeking these tests for investigating Letters of Understanding (LOU) which, according to him, were the crux of the matter. He cited

records to claim that the CBI had only probed about six LOUs so far and the probe in the remaining 136 LOU's was still work in progress. In such circumstances, Shetty claimed, no investigation in alleged pecuniary gain made by him, was required. He further alleged that the allegations of pecuniary gains to him were just assumptions. Besides, Shetty also cited his health as one of the reasons to refuse consent. He said his 18-month-long jail had worsened his physical and mental health. He said he had always cooperated with the investigation in the past and



therefore the court should reject CBI's plea for conducting tests on him. Gokulnath and his wife Ashalata Shetty, a clerk with Indian Bank have also been booked for allegedly acquiring

disproportionate assets to the tune of Rs 2.63 crore - approximately 238.44% more than their income from known sources between April 1, 2011 and May 31, 2017.

Is India headed for its worst growth recession in a decade?



Much of the debate in recent months has been focused on the sharp loss of economic momentum in India. The big question is whether the ongoing slowdown is structural or cyclical.

The usual thumb rule is that the policy response to a structural slowdown is through economic reforms that ease supply constraints. And a cyclical slowdown has to be tackled with measures to stimulate demand.

Rathin Roy of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy argues that India is currently facing a structural demand problem, which further complicates policy choices. Another way to look at the situation now is through the prism of a growth recession. Economists define a recession as three consecutive quarters of contraction. Economic growth slips into negative territory during a recession. A growth recession is different. The economy does not contract. It continues to expand, but at a sequentially slower pace.

India has had three such growth recessions in the past 10 years. The first episode was in the immediate aftermath of the financial crisis that originated in the US. Economic growth fell sequentially in the three quarters from June 2008, or the second quarter of fiscal year 2009. The downturn was sharp, but short. The second episode was after the effects of the 2009 stimulus wore off. Economic growth peaked in the three months ended March 2011, but slowed for five consecutive quarters after that. The policy paralysis during the last years of the Manmohan Singh government also pinched.

India is now in the third growth recession since 2008. Economic growth has already slowed

sequentially for four consecutive quarters. It is very likely that economic growth in the quarter ended 30 June will be slower than in the quarter ended 31 March, at least going by the latest high frequency data, as well as various forecasts by private sector economists. The most recent goods and services tax (GST) collections data is also an indication of weak domestic demand, though the fact that indirect tax collection is growing slower than nominal GDP growth could also mean that demand that shifted to the formal sector after demonetization is again moving back to the informal sector.

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Lack of self control in teenage not unique to humans

According to the study published in the journal Trends in Neurosciences, taking risks and having thrilling adventures during this period isn't necessarily a bad thing.



Impulsiveness during adolescence is not unique to us, which suggests that the brains of human and other primates go through very similar changes, particularly in the areas that affect self-control. "As is widely known, adolescence is a time of heightened impulsivity and sensation seeking, leading to questionable choices," said Beatriz Luna of the University of Pittsburgh in the US. "However, this behavioral

tendency is based on an adaptive neurobiological process that is crucial for molding the brain based on gaining new experiences," Luna said. Structural, functional, and neurophysiological comparisons between us and macaque monkeys show that this difficulty in stopping reactive responses is similar in our primate counterparts -- who during puberty, also show limitations in tests where they have to stop a

reactive response.

"The monkey is really the most powerful animal model that comes closest to the human condition," said Christos Constantinidis of Wake Forest School of Medicine in the US. "They have a developed prefrontal cortex and follow a similar trajectory with the same patterns of maturation between adolescence and adulthood," Constantinidis said. Taking risks and having thrilling

adventures during this period isn't necessarily a bad thing, published in the journal Trends in Neurosciences.

"You don't have this perfect inhibitory control system in adolescence, but that's happening for a reason," Luna said.

"It has survived evolution because it's actually allowing for new experiences to provide information about the environment that is critical for optimal specialisation of the brain to occur," she said.

Understanding the neural mechanisms that underlie this transitional period in our primate counterparts is critical to informing us about this period of brain and cognitive maturation, said Luna.

Researchers said that human neurological development during this time is characterised by changes in structural anatomy.

There is an active pruning of redundant and unused neural connections and a strengthening of white matter tracts throughout the brain that will determine the template for how the adult brain will operate.

Specifically, by adolescence all foundational aspects of brain organisation are in place and

during this time they undergo refinements that will enable the most optimal way to operate to deal with the demands of their specific environment, researchers said.

The development of neural activity patterns that allow for the preparation of a response seems to be a key element of this phase of development -- and essential to successful performance on self-control tasks.

This all suggests that self-control isn't just about the ability, in the moment, to inhibit a behaviour.

"Executive function involves not only reflexive responses but actually being prepared ahead of time to create an appropriate plan.

"This is the change between the adolescent and adult brain and it is strikingly clear both in the human data and in the animal data," said Constantinidis.

The researchers believe that this phase of development is essential to shaping the adult brain.

"It is important for there to be a period where the animal or the human is actively encouraged to explore because gaining these new experiences will help mold what the adult trajectories are going to be," said Luna.

Gen Next designers believe these style trends will make a comeback

LFW Winter/Festive 2019: The new-age designers feel that certain trends like frayed jeans to flannel shirts, big bright prints to dramatic sleeves and traditional silhouettes will be big this season.

Day one of Lakme Fashion Week Winter/Festive 2019 was kick-started by six budding couturiers Gaurav, Stanzin Palmo, Akanksha Aggarwal, Sahib Bhatia, Manjushree Saikia and Ankit Srivastava who made their fashion predictions.

Voluminous sleeves and colourful prints are some of the trends that will return with a rage, believe Gen Next designers.

Gaurav said it turns out that fashion works in a two-decade cycle and frayed jeans to flannel shirts are coming back in full circle. "You can wear these shirts either as a layer over a tank or just as a regular shirt, or maybe just tie it around the waist. They are so versatile," the Ghazipur-based designer told PTI.

He presented his clothing line inspired by 'Kadali-Patram',

Sanskrit name for banana leaf which is considered as the sacred evergreen for many generations. "The collection will acknowledge the architectural dynamic curves, soft bold flowy edges of the banana leaves with an innovative element in tailoring and unexpected drape," Gaurav added.

Stanzin, who hails from Ladakh, said two trends that are bound to resurface are animal prints and coloured pants.

"People are adding more experimental clothes and colours in their wardrobe. I can already see many people wear bright coloured bottoms. With time, people are abandoning the monochromes and adding more print and colour in their lives," she told PTI.

The designer launched 'Zilzom' at LFW on Wednesday and she

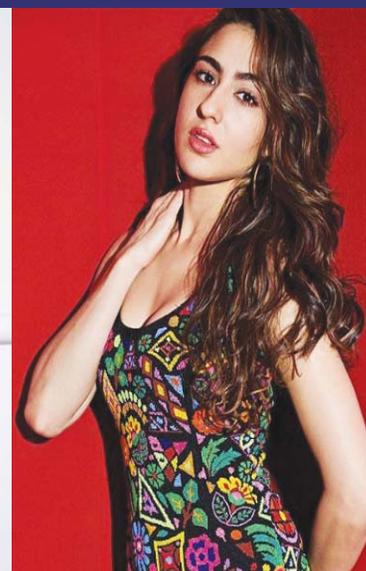
is paying homage to the flora, fauna and beauty of her home.

"The inspiration for the silhouette comes from a traditional Ladakhi dress 'Goncha' where the gathers are the centre of attention. The silhouettes are flowy and buoyant made with the most comfortable blend of natural fabrics like Pashmina, silk, rayon and brocade," Stanzin said.

"The Marvelous Mrs Maisel" has reintroduced the world to the 1950s and Akanksha believes the era is also knocking on the doors of fashion houses.

"I think 1950s fashion would come back with glamorous shapes, colourful prints and always exaggerated with voluminous sleeves, skirts and tiny waists," the Delhi-based designer.

Her range 'Noie Noie' made a



debut at the five-day fashion gala and Akanksha said the collection draws inspiration from the thoughts of an empowered modern-day woman. "It comprises young silhouettes which reflect the transition from a magical world to a structured context. They are constrained and subdued at the same - with bold shoulders and dreamy hem lines. The appearance of the garments

moderate femininity with its own unique identity," she said.

"Oversized men's shirts with exaggerated collars" are set to return, believes Delhi's Sahib Bhatia. He showcased 'Rule Breaker' Winter/Festive 19 which is inspired from different forms of aboriginal Australian art. "We have been using different kinds of fabric texturing techniques like pleating, tucks and embroideries.

Watch what you eat at work

A new study has indicated that employees who made unhealthy purchases at workplace tend to replicate the same unhealthy purchase outside work as well that can increase the risk of diabetes and heart ailments.



has shown that obesity contributes to higher absenteeism, lower productivity, and higher healthcare expenses for employers.

“Workplace wellness programs have the potential to promote lifestyle changes among large populations of employees, yet to date, there have been challenges to developing effective programs. We hope our findings will help to inform the development of accessible, scalable, and affordable interventions,”

noted Jessica L. McCurley, one of the study’s investigators. The study included 602 employees from Massachusetts General Hospital who regularly used the hospital’s cafeterias and were enrolled in a health promotion study. As part of the hospital’s “Choose Well, Eat Well” program, foods and beverages in the hospital cafeterias have “traffic light” labels to indicate their healthfulness: green is healthy, yellow is less healthy, and red is unhealthy.

wellness programs that both improve long-term health outcomes and reduce costs. “Employer-sponsored programs to promote healthy eating could reach millions of Americans and help to curb obesity, a worsening epidemic that too often leads to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer,” said Dr Anne N. Thorndike, the lead investigator of the study. Most Americans spend about half their waking hours at work and consume food acquired at work. Nearly a third of all US workers are obese, which has an impact beyond the individual’s health risks. Previous research

If you think those quick snacks during office won’t have much effect on your health then you need to take note! A new study has indicated that employees who made unhealthy purchases at workplace tend to replicate the same unhealthy purchase outside work as well that can increase the risk of diabetes and heart ailments as compared to the employees who made healthy purchases.

The study published in the journal American Journal of Preventive Medicine, contributes to a better understanding of the relationship of with overall diet and health that can help to shape worksite

wellness programs that both improve long-term health outcomes and reduce costs. “Employer-sponsored programs to promote healthy eating could reach millions of Americans and help to curb obesity, a worsening epidemic that too often leads to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer,” said Dr Anne N. Thorndike, the lead investigator of the study.

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Flower pesticides linked to high BP in kids: Study



Exposure to flower pesticide may increase blood pressure in children and put them at the risk of hypertension, a study has found. Researchers at University of California San Diego in the US found a link between and pesticide exposures in children -- especially heightened pesticide spraying period around the Mother’s Day flower harvest, a holiday with one of the highest sales of flowers. The study, published in the journal Environmental Research, involved boys and girls living near flower crops in Ecuador. According to the researchers, Ecuador is among the largest commercial flower growers in the world, with significant rose exports to North America, Europe and Asia.

Commercial rose production relies on the use of insecticides, fungicides and other pest controls, but little is known about their human . “These findings are noteworthy in that this is the first study to describe that pesticide spray seasons not only can increase the exposure to pesticides of children living near agriculture, but can increase their blood pressures and overall risk for hypertension,” said Jose R Suarez, an assistant professor at UC San Diego. The team assessed 313 boys and girls, ages four to nine, residing in floricultural communities in Ecuador. The children were examined up to 100 days after the Mother’s Day harvest.

Researchers find hormonal link between diet and obesity

Obesity is a growing public health crisis, bringing with it many serious risk factors, including cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

In a new study researchers have found that low levels of a circulating hormone called adropin predict increased weight gain and metabolic dysregulation during consumption of a high-sugar diet in a nonhuman primate model.

According to the study published in the ‘Journal of Biological Chemistry,’ these findings will help set the stage to develop new therapies for managing metabolic diseases. Obesity is a growing public health crisis, bringing with it many serious risk factors, including cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. As the number of people who are either overweight or obese now outnumbers those with a healthy body weight by a ratio of two to one, researchers face an urgent need to better

understand how the body burns fuel. Several years ago, Andrew Butler, professor of pharmacology and physiology discovered the peptide hormone adropin. Research by Butler’s lab suggested that adropin regulates whether the body burns glucose or fat. They also found that young men with high adropin levels had lower body mass index (BMI) levels. Moreover, some studies indicated low adropin is associated with biomarkers of insulin resistance.

In the current study, Butler and his colleagues have conducted studies at California National Primate Research Center in order to explore adropin’s role in metabolic health.

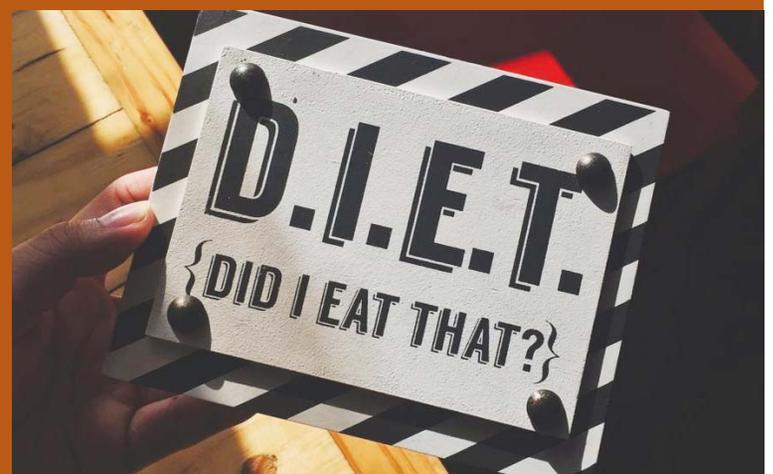
They examined the plasma of 59 adult male rhesus macaques that were fed a high sugar diet. Overall, consumption of the fructose diet produced a 10 per

cent gain in body weight and increases of fasting levels of insulin, indicating insulin resistance, which reduces glucose use and elevated fasting triglycerides which in humans increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Animals with low plasma adropin concentrations developed a more severe metabolic syndrome. Interestingly, development of type 2 diabetes was only observed in animals with low plasma adropin concentrations. These animals also showed more pronounced dysregulation of glucose and lipid metabolism.

Fasting hyperglycemia was also limited to animals with low circulating adropin, indicating glucose intolerance.

“Monkeys with low adropin may therefore not be oxidizing glucose as well, explaining their higher fat content as the glucose is



converted to lipids instead of being used as a metabolic fuel,” Butler said.

“Last year we reported that adropin appeared to be an output of the biological clock using mouse models and cultured human cells. What we show in this paper is that expression of the ENHO gene is higher in daytime and lower at night in most primate tissues,” Butler said.

This is consistent with the idea that adropin expression is controlled via “clock-related” mechanisms.

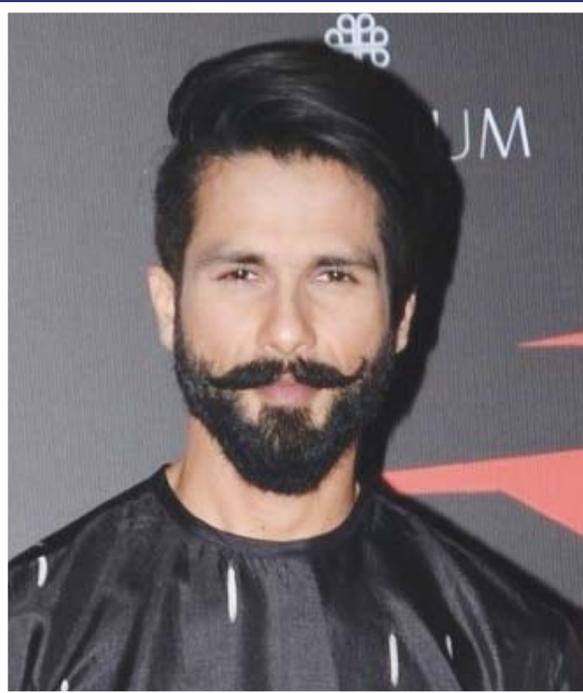
The current finding suggests that adropin may link the biological clock to rhythms in the way the body uses sugar and fats as metabolic fuel.

“At night time, the body relies on energy reserves stored as lipids in fat cells and in the daytime relies more on the carbohydrates coming in from the diet,” Butler said.

In this way, stimulation of adropin expression by our internal clocks may contribute to increasing the use of glucose as a metabolic fuel during the daytime.

Celebrity Beard Styles 2019

Ranveer Singh, Shahid Kapoor, Jason Momoa give ultimate beard inspiration



Over the past few years the style quotient of Bollywood celebrities has scaled new heights irrespective of gender. Celebrities aren't only experimenting with their roles and wardrobe choices, but also their hairstyles and facial hair. Be it Bollywood's own quirky fashion icon Ranveer Singh's many interesting beards, former chocolate boy Shahid Kapoor's unkempt Kabir Singh beard, Abhishek Bachchan's classic faded stubble, the goatee that Johnny Depp's Captain Jack Sparrow sported or Jason Mamo's wild beard, there is style inspiration for everyone.

Read on to know what kind of

beard is best for you:

Ranveer Singh

Ranveer Singh is Bollywood's ultimate fashion icon, his style statement is not only unique and fearless, but also breaks gender stereotypes (when he shows up in skirts and ghagras!) and is effortless. It would be fair to say that no other Bollywood celebrity has sported as many styles of beards as Ranveer has.

From his crazy, but constant urban hipster beardsman look (above), to his on-again off-again beardstache - a mix of a moustache disappearing into stubble (below), there is no style that Ranveer can't pull off!

Shahid Kapoor

Shahid Kapoor was once Bollywood's ultimate chocolate boy with his cute face, personality and choices of roles. But those days are long gone, with films like Haider, Kaminey and Uda Punjab, Shahid proved that he is way more versatile than he gets credit for. In his latest movie, Kabir Singh, Shahid sported a bushy beard, and although he looked unkempt on account of his hair, with the right amount of grooming the beard will be perfect! One will need the assistance of some beard oil to help grow a thick beard and a trimmer, to ensure the length is uniform. This beard is perfect for round and chubby faces.

Jason Momoa

Jason Momoa is best known for his role in Game of Thrones, where he portrays Khal Drogo. Other than Jason, his huge, scraggly, unkempt beard also garnered many eyeballs. This beard covers most of the face and is perfect for men with square, oval, round, triangle and diamond-shaped faces.

Johnny Depp

If one were to equate Ranveer Singh's quirks to a Hollywood actor, Johnny Depp would be the right answer. When Johnny Depp isn't playing a character he usually sports a beard known as the Van Dyke. The Van Dyke can be achieved quite easily, it is an unconnected moustache and a

goatee, and looks best on men with chiselled and angular faces, as most of the jaw is clean shaven.

Abhishek Bachchan

Abhishek Bachchan's beard in Jhoom Barabar Jhoom probably got more attention than the movie itself. Abhishek's chiselled jaw is the perfect canvas for any beard, and even though the actor has been away from the limelight for a while now, his grooming game is still strong and the actor sports a perfectly faded beard. While the style has only come to the forefront in the past few years, it has picked up, and is perfect for men with oval, square and round faces.

Style Trends 2019: Indian baroque reigns supreme

Couture nods in favour of desi decadence, giving a traditional twist to modern.

Picture Maharaja jewellery, decadent mahals and preening peacocks and you've pretty much summed up the current mood of Indian couture. Be it the dance of sequins and crystals mimicking the imagery of the palaces, or the thread embroidery reigniting Mughal regalia - it's all about toasting decadence though in a current format. Be it Falguni and Shane Peacock's ode to the grandeur of Amer or Tarun Tahiliani's interplay of resham-crystal-baadla and Swarovski or Sabyasachi's Charbagh Chowk

collection - the season-neutral and timeless Indian Baroque has never looked more relevant or desirable. "Anything associated with the richness of work, can be termed Indian Baroque. There is Baroque-ness in the choice of colours and in the style of gilding but I believe, we are all global citizens and therefore, I like to keep the expressions representative of that true synthesis that we have become rather than, as Bollywood puts it, overtly western or overtly Indian," says designer Tarun

Tahiliani. A section of Indian designers have singularly owned the culture-centric and heritage-focused aesthetic. "Extrapolating the localised imagery inspired by some of our maharanis, creating a royal experience for the consumer and offering bespoke bridal services have been the winning mantra for these labels. Also, designers have realised that consistency is key and it's also about reviving the lost craft of our country," says stylist Akshay Tyagi. Jade by Monica and Karishma is another brand, which has single-handedly



revived the craft of the painstakingly done ek taar embroidery. Designer Monica Shah of the label says, "Indian craftsmanship can't grow old as it's part of our history and pride.

It's really about how you use it and how you make it younger and relevant. Our lehengas are heirloom pieces which could be easily passed down from one generation to another."

Mission Mangal movie review

Vidya Balan and Akshay Kumar carry off an oversimplified film

Mission Mangal movie review: Akshay Kumar leads an all-star cast that includes Vidya Balan, Nithya Menen, Sonakshi Sinha and Kirti Kulhari in this inspiration fact-based story. Rating: 2/5.

Mission Mangal

Director - Jagan Shakti

Cast - Akshay Kumar, Vidya Balan, Sonakshi Sinha, Kirti Kulhari, Nithya Menen

Rating - 2/5

It's a godawful small affair. Rakesh Dhawan is a mission director at the Indian Space Research Organisation, and after his last mission was a non-starter, he's been given a punishment posting and assigned to a mission nobody really wants: an expedition to Mars. This ambition appears entirely out of reach given ISRO's budgets, and the film Mission Mangal - in an overture to exaggerate this impressive Indian achievement - depicts the Mars exploration department as a rundown room with no people, just a solitary cat. Okay then.

India's first interplanetary mission, the Mangalyaan launch of 2013 was a triumph and made

us the fourth space agency in the world to reach Mars. The facts are stupendous, but director Jagan Shakti decides to go fast and fictional, creating an underdog story that - while often likeable - plays out like a fable. There are cute scenes, but it is worrisome that a film about several incredibly talented women constantly plays up their stereotypical womanhood more than their scientific acumen. These are scientists, not utterly inexperienced homemakers, and their epiphanies should not exclusively be based on examples like the frying of pooris and the hailing of auto-rickshaws. Vidya Balan is wonderful as Tara Shinde, a scientist who must juggle her research with wifely and motherly duties. She gives the narrative a boisterous can-do spirit that is eventually well matched by Akshay Kumar's

Dhawan. Kumar is typically solid as he encourages these ladies to shine - he clearly wants this to be his Chak De India - but he is gifted too many of the best lines. Meanwhile the other actresses are given 'types' rather than characters. There's the licentious one, the clumsy one, the pregnant one... It's all a bit 'Four More Shots Please: Science Edition.' As the girl with the mousey hair, Taapsee Pannu does reliably well. Sonakshi Sinha is rather spirited, while fine actors like Nithya Menen and HG Dattatreya are sadly wasted. The problem with creating 'types' as underdogs - especially in a film that will largely be mistaken for real-life - is that while asking audiences not to judge these female characters, ironically enough the filmmakers have created them (and their



quirks) by judging them.

Films about science have to simplify the subject - films about rocket-science doubly so - but here things are brought down to a regrettably basic level. So while there are times Mission Mangal plays out as a pleasant enough entertainer with a message, complete with a caricaturish villain (Dalip Tahil with an unholy accent) there are other times everything feels like too much of a stretch - even the runtime. The film becomes a saddening bore. The Mangalyaan had stunned the world.

publications put out racist cartoons about this third-world nation knocking on the doors of their exclusive cigars-and-planets club. We were incensed, and rightly so. Now in Mission Mangal - starring Akshay Kumar (one of our least hidden figures) and a shiny tinfoil version of ISRO that often looks like a lavish backdrop to a Rajinikanth song - we applaud a Prime Minister who had very little to do with supporting the mission. The message is clear: We shall create our own world. American Make in India.

Once Upon a Time in Hollywood movie review

Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt shine; Quentin Tarantino shocks



Once Upon a Time in Hollywood
Director - Quentin Tarantino

Cast - Leonardo DiCaprio, Brad Pitt, Margot Robbie, Al Pacino, Kurt Russell

Rating - 3.5/5

Once Upon a Time in Hollywood is a solid yet surprising addition to director Quentin Tarantino's singular filmography - a languid and laid-back mood piece that doubles as a throwback to the filmmaker's lifelong obsessions, and ends with one of the most controversial sequences of his career.

Despite being fully prepared for

what was in store, I was taken aback by how many surprises Tarantino had in store. There is none of the breakneck back-and-forth dialogue that the filmmaker is known for; the conversations, instead, are paced as sleepily as the summery vibe of the film, which is set during a period of great upheaval in Hollywood, circa 1969.

Don't get me wrong, his characters are still partial to a long chin-wag, but in a less aggressive, and more internalised manner - perhaps a sign that Tarantino, like the fading movie

star Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio), is maturing with age. Dalton is one of the filmmaker's finest creations, a character upon whom Tarantino has projected some of his own self-seriousness. He's pathetic without ever seeming weak; selfish without ever coming across as self-centred, and I was taken aback by how funny he is. Rick was one of the most famous television stars in Hollywood a few years ago, but could never transition to a career in the movies. This is a matter of grave concern for him.

The only reason the town still takes him seriously, he tells his companion and longtime stuntman Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt), is because he'd listened to some solid advice when he was starting out, and bought his own house in the Hollywood Hills, instead of renting an apartment.

"It means you're here to stay, and you're not just moving through," Rick tells Cliff one evening, and Cliff's standard response: a smile and a nod of acknowledgement.

Cliff is a man of few words. He is 'more than a brother' to Rick, 'but less than a wife,' the narrator (voiced by Tarantino regular Kurt Russell) informs us. Their dynamic isn't unlike a married couple's. Why he has stuck by Rick is never really explained - he rarely ever performs stunts for him anymore, and is more of a gofer instead - but he has his own skeletons. Word around town is that he was involved in his wife's death. It really seems like neither Rick nor Cliff has anyone but each other in the world.

So when the hottest director in the business, Roman

Polanski, moves in next door with his wife, the actor Sharon Tate (Margot Robbie), Rick sees it as a sign from above; as if the universe is conspiring to ensure that he have a career.

Ironically for a film about the movies, Once Upon a Time in Hollywood is far less kind to historical figures than it is to fictional characters such as Rick and Cliff.

Having assumed that her murder at the hands of the Manson Family would be a significant part of the film - every moment she appears on screen seems to be building towards it - I was stunned by how little Sharon Tate has to do in Once Upon a Time in Hollywood. Honestly, barring DiCaprio and Pitt, everyone else in the film's sprawling cast, is basically playing a cameo.

Once Upon a Time in Hollywood review: Leonardo DiCaprio and Brad Pitt bring effortless chemistry to the most surprising film of Quentin Tarantino's career. Rating: 3.5/5.

Radhika Apte says she misses working on Sacred Games: 'I loved the character'?



Actor Radhika Apte says she miss being part of her first Netflix show Sacred Games where she got the opportunity to play a "starkly" different character. The critically-acclaimed show, which features Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Saif Ali Khan in the lead, recently returned for its sophomore season to universal praise.

Apte, however, did not feature in the second season as her character, RAW agent Anjali Mathur, was killed off towards the end of first season. "I do miss working on the show. I loved the character. I had a lot of fun doing this starkly different role of Anjali Mathur. I knew that the show would be liked by the audience, it was the first Hindi Netflix Original series and very different from the kind of content we saw before," the actor told PTI. Apte said she has not yet started viewing the second season but will soon "binge watch it".

The actor is currently on cloud nine after her 2018 thriller Aandhadhun bagged three National awards recently. Apte said the film's wins is a proof that the industry is on the right path of creating path breaking

movies.

"It feels absolutely amazing. I feel blessed to be associated with the film. The amount of appreciation we have got from the audience and the critics is unimaginable. That is why the National Award win is gratifying."

She said the year 2018 was a memorable one for her as she got to act in films such as Padman, Andhadhun, Lust Stories and Baazaar.

"I can feel the love and appreciation. Life has definitely changed; I'm getting better scripts now. 2018 was a very memorable year for me. I did Padman, Andhadhun and Baazaar. "It feels great to receive the gratitude and the success for your hard work, but I am also going to look ahead and not dwell on the past. I would rather look forward to the coming months and my upcoming releases," Apte said.

The actor believes that the industry's approach towards women on and off the screen is certainly changing for the better. "Today, the actresses are being offered meatier roles. You can see Alia Bhatt in Raazi, her character was so powerful and profound. Audiences are recognising the efforts nevertheless and I believe this will only get better and better with time."

Apte will be seen next in The Wedding Guest, a British-American movie with Dev Patel, and Raat Akeli Hain with Nawazuddin Siddiqui.

Radhika Apte, who played an important role in the first season of Sacred Games, says she missed being a part of the show. The show's second season was released last week.



Rambo: Last Blood teaser out, Sylvester Stallone still has a lot to fight for

The first teaser for Sylvester Stallone's Rambo: Last Blood is out. John Rambo returns as an old man with a lot of fight for.



Sylvester Stallone unveiled the teaser of his upcoming film Rambo: Last Blood on Instagram on Tuesday. The 73-year-old actor shared the teaser and captioned it, "BRAND NEW TEASER!! I am re-posting this FULL frame! IT GETS BETTER THE 2ND TIME.. 'They started it, I will end it!' Rambo said. Coming September 20." The intense clip opens with a flashback to the first film in the franchise that depicts Stallone soaked in blood. The teaser majorly consists of quick cuts between action

sequences revealed in the first teaser. However, the teaser gives a fair idea of the plot of the film as to what drives John Rambo on a violent mission of vengeance this time around.

"I finally came home to defend the only family I've ever known. All she's got is me. She's coming home," says the character. "You started this. I'll end it. I'm going to tear you apart."

It looks like that a person close to Rambo will be kidnapped in the flick which will make him track her down.

The film also features Paz Vega, Sergio Peris-Mencheta, Adriana Barraza, Yvette Monreal, Genie Kim, Joaquin Cosio, and Oscar Jaenada and is scheduled to hit theatres on September 20.

It Chapter 2 gets mixed first reactions: 'Bill Hader steals the show but adult Losers lack chemistry'



The first reactions for It Chapter 2 are in and things do not look all too pleasant. While some critics have called it the perfect sequel to 2017's hit horror film, others called it clumsy, bloated and needlessly too long. The embargo from first reactions was lifted on Thursday when movie lovers and critics flocked to Twitter to share their opinions on the film. Steven Weintraub of Collider wrote, "#ITChapterTwo is awesome. The adult cast is perfect and loved the way the film mixes in the old and new. I don't want to say too much because

most of you are going to see it. Congrats to everyone that worked on it for a job well done."

Cyrstal Ro of BuzzFeed wrote, "I don't write reviews but I would like to inform you all that #ITChapterTwo is dark af, very emotional, and I'm still not over how damn good the casting is." Heather Wixson of Daily Dead News wrote, "So #ITChapterTwo was pretty damn great & the ending left me in tears. There are some excellent set pieces (finale had me holding my breath at times) that got under my skin & I think the adult Losers are awesome. Relies a bit too much on flashbacks tho but fans should be happy." However, people had plenty of complaints with the film as well. "So, #ITChapterTwo: it's v. good, but not great. I liked it, but didn't LOVE it. First movie is a tough act to follow. TWO is gruesome, strange but rarely scary.

Belle Hassan cuts a glamorous figure in a pink PVC mini dress as she parties at Love Island co-star Lucie Donlan's hair brand launch



She is known for her glamorous outfits and sartorial prowess. And Belle Hassan ensured all eyes were on her as she attended the launch party of her friend and fellow Islander Lucie Donlan's, 21, new business endeavor Peng Hair in London on Wednesday. The reality star, 21, oozed style and glamour in a pale pink PVC mini dress which boasted a plunging neckline as she arrived for the swanky event. The make-up artist teamed her beautiful ensemble with a pair of transparent stiletto heels and compact Louis Vuitton bag slung

over her shoulder. Letting her long blonde locks cascade down her shoulder, the star accessorised her look with a pair of silver dangling earrings and a dazzling silver choker around her neck. Thrilled to have her pals supporting her latest project, Lucie was all smiles as she arrived for the launch of her new hair brand. The surfer slipped into a leopard-print dress that cinched in at her svelte waist and boasted slits across her arms as she joined the fellow Islanders. With her blonde locks styled into tousled waves, the surfer teamed her garment with a pair of black boots. She completed her look with an assortment of silver rings and impeccably-applied make-up to highlight her glowing features.

Also spotted making an arrival at the glamorous party was fellow Love Island star Francesca Allen who looked beautiful in a yellow-patterned bodycon mini dress that boasted

capped sleeves. The star teamed her summer dress with a pair of silver chunky heels and a gold glittery pouch bag by her side. The reality star, who was kicked out of the Love Island villa alongside Michael Griffiths after failing to find romance during her brief stay, completed her look with a red headband across her brunette tresses. Also among the Love Island alumni was model Nabila Badda who cut a stylish figure in a grey bodycon knee-length dress. The star added height to her appearance in a pair of beige platform heels as she made her arrival to the party. She accessorised her look with a pair of red lens circular-framed sunglasses and a stylish red rucksack to tote her belongings. Joining the stars for the launch party was model and influencer Victoria Valentine Brown who ensured all eyes were on her in a red mini dress. Letting her blonde tresses cascade down her shoulders in tousled

waves, the star completed her look with a delicate silver necklace and a touch of pink gloss to her pout. Also making an appearance at the party was Casa Amor contestant Marvin Brooks and Absolutely Ascot star Leah Fletcher. Earlier this month it was announced that Lucie would be the face of Peng Hair after the star secured a staggering £200,000 deal with the company. However the news immediately left some Love Island fans pointing out that the reality star wore hair extensions and 'barely brushed' her tresses during her time inside the Mallorcan vila. One social media user said: 'Lmao Lucie the face of "PENG hair" even tho her extensions or just lacking on the show



P Chidambaram arrested in INX Media case

What next for Akhilesh, Mayawati, others

Opposition parties have been accusing the BJP of playing vendetta politics and resorting to political witch hunting. The BJP has rubbished these charges and maintained that the CBI and ED work in an independent manner.

(News Agencies)- A day after the CBI arrested senior Congress leader and former Finance Minister P Chidambaram in the INX Media case, the Congress alleged that the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre is playing vendetta politics. Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala accused the BJP of targeting Opposition leaders in a "political witch hunt".

From time to time, Opposition parties have made similar allegations against the BJP. On its part, the BJP has always rubbished these charges and maintained that the investigating agencies - CBI and Enforcement Directorate (ED) - work in an independent manner and the BJP does not influence its investigations.

Here is a list of Opposition leaders facing investigations at present:

AKHILESH YADAV (SAMAJWADI PARTY)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on January 17, 2019 registered a money laundering case against former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav in connection with alleged illegal mining.

The CBI registered a case on January 2 against 11 people, including public servants, under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act, to probe the

role of the state's mining ministers, including Akhilesh Yadav, during 2012-16.

Status of case: Under investigation

MAYAWATI (BSP)

1) MEMORIAL SCAM

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on January 31, 2019 conducted searches across seven locations in Uttar Pradesh in connection with the alleged irregularities in the construction of memorials and statues at a cost of Rs 111 crore during Mayawati's tenure as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh.

The probe agency has filed a criminal case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after taking cognisance of a state vigilance department complaint dating back to 2014.

The vigilance complaint was filed under sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) pertaining to alleged financial irregularities in the construction of memorials, including statues of BSP founder Kanshi Ram and the party's poll symbol, the elephant, when Mayawati served as the chief minister between 2007 and 2012.

The constructions "resulted in a loss of more than Rs 111.44 crore to the government exchequer and unlawful gain to public servants and private individuals", the vigilance complaint alleged.

Status of case: Under investigation

2) ATTACHMENT OF BENAMI PROPERTY OF MAYAWATI'S BROTHER

In July 2019 Income Tax Department attached a 'benami' property of Mayawati's brother worth Rs 400 crore in Noida. Mayawati recently appointed her brother, Anand Kumar, as national vice-president of the Bahujan Samaj Party.

The provisional order for the attachment of the seven-acre plot, "beneficially owned" by Kumar and his wife Vichiter Lata, was issued on July 16 by the Income Tax Department's Delhi-based Benami Prohibition Unit.

VIRBHADRA SINGH (Congress)

A case was registered in September 2015 under the Prevention of Corruption Act against Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh and his wife Pratibha, among others. The allegation was that he acquired assets disproportionate to his known sources of income during his tenure as Union steel minister in the UPA-II government. A Delhi court in February 2019 framed charges of criminal misconduct and amassing disproportionate assets of over Rs 10 crore against Virbhadra Singh, paving way for commencement of trial in the case.

Status of case: Trial pending in lower court

BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA (Congress)

Former Haryana CM Bhupinder



Singh Hooda is facing the heat in a string of CBI and vigilance cases over controversial land deals during his 10-year tenure as chief minister. The ED had initiated investigation under the provisions of PMLA, on the basis of an FIR registered at Manesar in Gurgaon under sections of cheating, criminal conspiracy and Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. On July 26, 2019, the ED provisionally attached land and bank balances worth Rs 66.57 crore in connection with the Manesar land scam under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

Status of case: Under investigation

DK SHIVAKUMAR (CONGRESS)

In September 2018, senior Congress leader from Karnataka DK Shivakumar and his four associates were booked under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) by the

Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with alleged tax evasion and hawala transactions. They were booked under the PMLA based on a chargesheet filed by the Income Tax Department against them.

Shivakumar has been under the scanner of Income Tax authorities since August 2017. The Directorate of Income Tax (Investigation), Karnataka & Goa had raided the Eagleton Golf Resort in Bidadi in suburban Bengaluru then, where he had hosted 44 Gujarat Congress MLAs ahead of the crucial Rajya Sabha elections.

Tax raids lasting a week, which were conducted at nearly 60 premises of Shivakumar, his relatives and associates across Karnataka and in Delhi, had reportedly led to the recovery of over Rs 10 crore in cash from the four properties in Delhi and in Karnataka, which are said to be linked to them.

Indians pawning the family gold amid credit crunch



(News Agencies)-Refused a loan by a state-run lender and desperate for funds to buy cotton seeds before the summer sowing season window closed, Indian farmer Babasaheb Mandlik ran out of choices - he pawned his wife's

gold jewellery. Mandlik, who owns an 8-acre cotton farm in western India, pledged 70 grams of gold, almost all of his wife's precious trinkets, in June in return for Rs 1,50,000

(\$2,105).

"Pawning the jewellery was a difficult decision as my wife likes to wear it at festivals and weddings," 50-year-old Mandlik told Reuters. "I convinced her that we didn't have any other option." Mandlik is not alone. While pawning gold has long been an option for quick funds in a country that is the world's second-biggest consumer of the yellow metal, several lenders told Reuters of unprecedented demand as people struggle to secure loans from banks grappling with bad debt and a shadow lending industry stung by a liquidity crunch.

The trend, which has prompted some lenders to impose

restrictions as risks and borrowing costs rise, has been accelerated by record gold prices.

Indians' penchant for gold spans centuries and is rooted in the Hindu religion. Households own an estimated collective 25,000 tonnes of gold, which passes from one generation to the next. Domestic gold prices MAUc1 have risen more than a fifth this calendar year, hitting a record high of Rs 38,666 per 10 grams earlier this month amid a global rise. "As a lot of NBFCs (non-bank financial companies) have become cautious of giving unsecured or even secured loans, we are seeing more

customers opting for gold loans instead," said Sumit Bali, chief executive officer of IIFL Finance. "One can obtain a gold loan and walk out of the branch in just thirty minutes." IIFL's gold loan portfolio stood at Rs 6,583 crore (\$922 million) at the end of the June quarter, up 46% compared to a year earlier. Those pawning their precious possessions are most often independent workers, including farmers and small shop owners. Muthoot Fincorp (MUTT.NS), a leading gold financing shadow bank with 2.98 million customers, said its gold loans rose 6.6% between April 1 and July 24 this year to Rs 35,800 crore.