

Rising Number Of U.S. Counties Are Majority Hispanic Or Black

Non-Hispanic white Americans account for 60% of the U.S. population, but in a growing number of counties, a majority of residents are Hispanic or black, reflecting the nation's changing demographics and shifting migration patterns. US Census data reveals 41 counties have flipped to majority of black and Hispanic residents since 2000 - rising from 110 at start of century to 151 in 2018

*Analysis released this week by the Pew Research Center finds 41 counties now have Hispanic or black resident majorities that did not in 2000

*Most of the new counties to have majority Hispanic and black populations are located in the South and Southwest

*Indigenous people also made up majorities in some of the counties in the same southern areas

*The Pew analysis also found that the number of majority black counties grew from 65 to 72 between 2000 and 2018



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Long Island Gujarati Cultural Society Celebrates Grand Diwali on Nov 9th 2019



(By our staff reporter) Jericho, New York: Gujarati Cultural Society's annual Diwali celebration was recently held in Jericho, NY. Long Island

Objective is to focus on cultural, spiritual, educational, and charity events for the benefit of our members and our community and passing the cultural heritage to upcoming generation. Evening started with delicious appetizers and exchange of love and greetings during social hour. A brief cultural program started with invocation – prayer dance and other dance forms by beautiful Young girls. About 250 members and guest including New York State senator Hon. Kevin Thomas and Former Deputy Comptroller of Nassau County Hon. Dilip Chauhan Honored by Long Island Gujarati Cultural Society. President Mr. Vijay Shah, introduced the hard working

officers and Executive committee members, senior citizen forum committee members and Women's wing coordinators. Also focused on the main objective to promote Gujarati/Indian cultural arts with Sanskrit shloka narrating the importance of "PRAKASH" in our life on this festival of lights – Diwali. The party picked up the momentum with Sumptuous Dinner and open Dance floor on the beats of DJ Bobby. In closing note President also recognized the backbone of entire event planner and coordinator LIGCS secretary Mr. Paresh Raval. Dilip Chauhan emphasized in speech about importance of Census count as well as how important to register to vote and active participation in civic process, he said "If you don't vote you don't have a right to complaint" Also he thanked



President Vijay Shah, Bhadresh Acharya and Secretary Paresh Raval, entire executive com-



mittee for organizing such celebration. a successful Diwali Cel-

Hindi Kavi Sammelan organized by Akhil Vishwa Hindi Samiti, New York



(By our staff reporter) New York: Recently, Akhil Vishwa Hindi Samiti, Inc, New York (AVHS) organized a Hindi Poetry Recital (Kavi Sammelan) in Queens to promote Hindi language, literature, and Indian culture.

This Kavi Sammelan was organized by Sushma Malhotra, the Cultural Secretary of Akhil Vishwa Hindi Samiti, and attended by a large number of Hindi poets, doctors, educationists, and students from the New York Public Schools. The Kavi Sammelan was presided over by Dr. Vijay Mehta, the president of Akhil Vishwa Hindi Samiti, General Secretary Dr. Ved

Malhotra, and Yoga and Indian Cultural Acharya Dr. Dayashankar Vidyalkar from Consulate General of India, New York. The program started with Deep Prajavalan (lighting the lamps) and the prayer mantras recite by Dr. K.K. Dixit, head priest at Hindu Center, NY. Then followed with Saraswati Vandana by Seema Kalia an Indian cultural artist from Vienna, Austria, Ganesh Vandana performance by Angel Tandon, a high school student, and Ma Sharda Vandana by Parkash Latchminarine also a high school student. Many re-

nowned local poets recited their poems. To mention a few were Dr. Dayashankar Vidyalkar, Dr. Vijay Mehta, Dr. Madan Lal Mistri, Dr. Rajni Goyal, Dr. Mangala Sand, Mrs. Purnima Desai, Mrs. Pushap Malhotra, Mrs. Sushma Malhotra, and Mr. Deepak Arora. Arihant Tiwari a student from a high school recited "Khooni Hastakshar" a Hindi poem written by a renowned Indian poet Sh. Gopal Prasad Vyas. Every one praised Arihant for his effective recital of the poem. At the end Akhil Vishwa Hindi Samiti announced the launching of its website.

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Indians buying UK property may have to pay 3% more

Indians have been among top foreign buyers of property in London in recent years, with agents citing figures and growing interest from places such as New Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai and Hyderabad.

(By Our Staff Reporter) Indian and other foreign nationals buying property in the United Kingdom will have to pay a higher 3 per cent stamp duty under plans to be implemented if the Conservative party wins the December 12 election. Indians have been among top foreign buyers of property in London in recent years, with agents citing figures and growing interest from places such as New Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai and Hyderabad.

Rishi Sunak, chief secretary to the Treasury, said on Friday: "Today, if you are foreign company or someone living overseas, it is as easy to buy a property as it is for someone who is actually living here".

"We don't think that is right so we are saying we will have a 3 per cent stamp duty surcharge on

those foreign transactions. That should make housing more affordable especially for (UK resident) first-time buyers", he said.

Foreigners buying property in large numbers is considered one of the reasons for high property prices, which makes it difficult for residents to get on the property ladder. A higher duty for foreign buyers is in line with similar measures in other international cities attracting such buyers.

Sunak, who is a Conservative candidate in Richmond, Yorkshire, added: "The Conservative Party is levelling up opportunities across the country, helping millions of people into home ownership".

"Evidence shows that by adding significant amounts of demand to limited housing supply, purchases by non-

residents inflate house prices. That is why we are introducing a higher rate of stamp duty for non-

UK residents that will help to address this issue and could raise up to £120 million." The falling value of

pound in recent months and a rise in the number of Indians buying flats and other properties in London and other areas in the UK

Indian couple on trial in Germany for spying on Sikhs, Kashmiris

The suspects were charged in March and have been named only as Manmohan S., 50, and his wife Kanwal Jit K., 51, in keeping with German privacy rules for defendants.

(News Agencies) An Indian couple accused of spying on Sikh and Kashmiri communities in Germany went on trial Thursday on charges that carry a sentence of up to 10 years in prison. The suspects were charged in March and have been named only as Manmohan S., 50, and his wife Kanwal Jit K., 51, in keeping with German privacy rules for defendants. Their trial



was being held in a court in Frankfurt. "Manmohan S. agreed... to provide information about Germany's Sikh community and Kashmir move-

ment and their relatives to an employee of the Indian foreign intelligence service Research & Analysis Wing," prosecutors said in a state-

ment earlier this year. His wife joined him in monthly meetings with the Indian intelligence officer between July and December 2017, and in total the couple were paid 7,200 euros (\$8,100). Sikhs in Germany number between 10,000 and 20,000 -- their third biggest community in Europe after Britain and Italy, according to the religious rights group REMID.

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Indians account for 93% H4 visas issued by US: S Jaishankar

The H4 category permits the spouse of an H-1B visa holder to work in the US.

(News Agencies) Indians account for 93 percent of the total number of visas issued under H4 category by the United States, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told Rajya Sabha on Thursday. The H4 category permits the spouse of an H-1B visa holder to work in the US. Replying to a question raised by a Rajya Sabha member about US government move to prevent the spouses of H1B visa holder to get the

visa, Jaishankar said that the Donald Trump administration has indicated that it "may review it sometime".

"Ability of spouses of H1B visa holders working in the US to work was introduced in 2015. This category of visa is covered in H4 visa. Indians today account for 93 per cent of a total number of visas issued in this category," said Jaishankar. "There is a court order to the effect to continue the program.

Trump (US President) Administration has indicated that it may review it sometime," he added.

H-4 employment authorisation document (EAD) is an Obama-era rule of 2015 that allowed job opportunities to qualified spouses of H-1B visa holders. The Trump administration has publicly said and also in its court filing that it wants to revoke work permits to H-4 visa holders. Early this month,

a US court refused to strike down the H-4 EAD rule.

Meanwhile, when nominated member Swapan Dasgupta asked the External Affairs Minister about the government's position on the work visas, Jaishankar said that New Delhi is constantly in touch with Washington, to persuade them that tapping into "Indian pool talent" will be beneficial. He also noted that numbers of H1B visas have been going up in the



In Impeachment hearing, Indian-American official named as source for providing Ukraine info directly to Donald Trump

House of Representatives Intelligence Committee Chair Adam Schiff on Thursday named Kashyap Patel as a source providing information on Ukraine matters directly to Trump, bypassing the National Security Council (NSC) staffers in-charge of the country's matters.



(News Agencies) An Indian-American White House Official has been enmeshed in the controversy over President Donald Trump's dealings with Ukraine that is the focus of the impeachment hearings against him.

House of Representatives Intelligence Committee Chair Adam Schiff on Thursday named Kashyap Patel as a source providing information on Ukraine matters directly to Trump, bypassing the National Security Council (NSC) staffers in-charge of the country's matters.

Patel, who is the senior director of counter terrorism in the NSC, is a political appointee caught in the crossfire between Trump loyalists and those taking on the president.

During the impeachment hearing testimony by Fiona Hill, the former NSC Senior Director

dealing with Ukraine, Schiff said, "The indication is that Kash Patel provided some information directly to the president without your knowledge."

"That seems to be the indication," she replied.

To reinforce the Democratic line that there was an unofficial parallel foreign policy set up dealing with Ukraine, Schiff said that Trump thought an individual was the director of Ukraine in the NSC and asked her who it was.

Hill said that the person was referred to only as "Kash" and "I had to search my mind. The only Kash I knew at the National Security Agency was Kash Patel." Schiff asked her if he worked on Ukraine and reported to her, and she replied that Lt Col Alexander Vindman, who testified on earlier, was the director for Ukraine and she did not oversee Patel.

In secret hearings last

month Vindman had told the panel investigating Trump for impeachment that Patel had misrepresented his expertise on Ukraine to the president. Because of this he had been prevented from attending a briefing for Trump, he said.

Patel had worked for the Intelligence Committee, when it was controlled by the Republicans and David Nunes was its chair.

As an aide to Trump's vociferous supporter Nunes, Patel raised questions about the credibility of the allegations against Trump of colluding with Russians, which led to the protracted inquiry by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, who ultimately did not find such collusion. Patel was the principal author of a memo issued by Nunes that accused the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Justice Department of bias

against Trump and of abusing laws to get warrants to conduct surveillance of a Trump campaign adviser, Carter Page.

last few years even though the rejection rate is coming down. We are constantly in touch with the American system, the American government and members of Congress to persuade them that tapping into the Indian talent pool is for our mutual benefits and in that, we have been successful in large measure... Actually, if you look at the number the numbers of H1B visas has been going up in the last

few years even though the rejection rate is coming down," he said. He also pointed out that the number of visas that Indian companies have applied for has come down and denial rate has also gone up. "Number of visas that Indian companies have applied for has come down and denial rate has also come up but they have gone up for all companies not just Indians companies," Jaishankar said

Why the Gandhis cannot lead India's Opposition

Younger Indians are rightly appalled that the party of the freedom movement believes that only a fifth-generation dynast can lead it. Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka may think they owe it to the Congress to stay in politics. They owe it to the country to go

By Ramachandra Guha

Mahatma Gandhi had four sons. All four went to jail during the freedom struggle. None sought political office of any kind in independent India.

Gandhi's rectitude was not followed by his closest associates. It is well known that Jawaharlal Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi became Congress president in 1959. It is less well known that the son and daughter of Vallabhbhai Patel became members of Parliament, piggy-backing on their father's name. The son of C Rajagopalachari became a member of Parliament (MP); as did the son of Govind Ballabh Pant. Gandhi's strong sense of propriety was not

shared by other stalwarts of the freedom movement. However, to use your influence to get your son or daughter a parliamentary seat is one thing; to have your family control and dominate your party, quite another. Nehru, Patel, Rajaji, and Pant were guilty of nepotism on a minor scale. It was Indira Gandhi who made nepotism into a defining principle, when she anointed Sanjay Gandhi as her political successor in 1975. When Sanjay died prematurely, Indira brought her other son, Rajiv, into politics, making it clear that if the Congress stayed in power, he would succeed her as prime minister. Sonia Gandhi venerated her mother-in-law, and

is devoted to her memory. That is why she doesn't think the Congress needs to apologise for the Emergency; and why she was so keen that her son, and only her son, would succeed her as Congress president. After the son led the party to humiliating defeats in successive general elections, he resigned. Rahul Gandhi said he wanted a non-family member to become Congress president; in the event, his mother came back, restoring the Family's hold over a shrinking domain. Although I am a lifelong critic of the Congress's First Family, I recognise that not all those who support them are self-seeking sycophants. Some do so in the

belief that only the Congress can mount a countrywide opposition to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP); and since (they claim) only a Nehru-Gandhi can keep the party together, the Family must remain at the helm. Others point to the fact that in many other parties, the BJP included, sons and daughters of prominent politicians become members of legislative assembly (MLAs), MPs, and ministers. So, they say, why single out the Congress in this regard? I find these arguments unconvincing. The Congress was not a Family party from 1885 to 1975; or from 1991 to 1998. Notably, Sonia Gandhi has not been able to keep the party united; hence the

formation of the Trinamool Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party, and the YSR Congress, which between them have almost as many MPs as the so-called "Indian National Congress". Secondly, for a party to have the odd hereditary MP is a relatively trifling matter; whereas for a party's controlling leadership to pass from parent to child is a perversion of democratic politics. Unlike the Congress, the BJP has never been a Family party. Therein lies its strength, and its appeal among the electorate. Narendra Modi is a self-made man entirely. He had no father in politics; nor even a godfather.

(Contd on page 21)

Engaging with Colombo's new regime

Do business with Gotabaya, but don't sacrifice key interests

The Sri Lankan presidential election has seen the return of the Rajapaksa family to power. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who handled defence when his brother Mahinda was the president during the last lap of the civil war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, is the new president. With the widespread support of the country's Sinhalese majority in the south, Gotabaya was able to offset the opposition he faced from the Tamil and Muslim minorities in the north and the east. His return will mark not just the arrival of a new regime

in Colombo, but also the shrinking of space for an inclusive Sri Lanka.

India is in a difficult spot. It quite actively sought to encourage the formation of an opposition alliance — led by Maithripala Sirisena and Ranil Wickremesinghe — to oust Mahinda Rajapaksa five years ago. Delhi was motivated by two concerns. The Rajapaksas had engineered a geopolitical tilt towards China. And their staunchly anti-Tamil outlook also went against India's attempts to have a more politically inclusive Sri Lanka. But Delhi was aware

that the arrangement was fragile. Mr Sirisena and Mr Wickremesinghe did not get along; the economy was not doing well; and the Easter Sunday terror attacks eroded the government's credibility on security. The return of the Rajapaksas was a matter of time. Delhi engaged with them, and assured that India would not interfere in the elections.

India has no choice but to do business with Gotabaya Rajapaksa. That is why it was wise of external affairs minister, S Jaishankar, to pay

a visit to Colombo and reach out to the new president on Tuesday. Gotabaya is also expected to visit New Delhi at the end of the month. But India must draw clear redlines on two issues. The first is China. Colombo is free to engage with Beijing as a sovereign entity, but if the engagement affects Indian security interests, Delhi should make it clear that it will exercise its leverage. And the second is the question of an accommodation with Tamils. The Rajapaksas must be told

that a return to an exclusivist ethnic State could potentially lead to a revival of the Tamil insurgency, which will harm both countries. India should draw lessons from its mistake in Nepal, where, in its effort to accommodate the ultra nationalist majoritarian government of KP Oli, it has dropped its support for an inclusive constitution and lost leverage even as China is making substantive inroads. Delhi must respect the political dispensation in Colombo, but be firm when necessary.

India should be concerned about its portrayal in the West

The nation must burnish its record as an open, multicultural society, vibrant democracy, and robust economy. If India gets its domestic act right, its international narrative will be stronger.



Few understand the power of the narrative as deeply as Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There is little doubt that irrespective of electoral ebbs and flows in states, Mr Modi's messaging and narrative in

India's domestic sphere is dominant. But this has not translated in the international context. In fact, the government, and subsequently, India, is staring at the prospect of its carefully cultivated

narrative in the West coming under greater scrutiny.

Over the past few months, a range of international publications have published reports, opinion and analysis pieces, and editorials which have certain common strands. One, they suggest that India's democratic credentials are weakening, and its autonomous constitutional institutions are compromised. Two, they have been critical of the government's actions in

Kashmir. Coupled with the National Register of Citizens exercise in Assam, it has been presented as evidence of India's turn to a majoritarian State. And finally, these pieces have focused on India's economic slowdown.

There have been various kinds of responses to this portrayal. The first, led by Mr Modi's supporters on social media, tends to paint all the negative coverage as motivated, driven by out-of-touch liberals, or funded by Pakistan. While not all the

coverage is fair or accurate, presenting it as a part of some conspiracy is wrong. There is also an accompanying impulse to ignore it, claim that foreign media coverage is irrelevant, and what matters is what happens at home. While it is true that decisions must be guided by national interest, pretending that how the world thinks of India does not matter is myopic, given the deep interdependence. There is a third more nuanced response. By putting forth the government's point of view

internationally, external affairs minister S Jaishankar, in particular, has sought to explain the context and history of certain decisions like Kashmir, and argue that changes in India must be seen as a product of deepening of democracy. But at the core, what is needed is for India to burnish its record as an open, multicultural society, vibrant democracy, and robust economy. If India gets its domestic act right, its international narrative will be stronger.

The opacity around electoral bonds

The recent disclosures that the Election Commission (EC) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had expressed reservations about the Electoral Bonds scheme highlight the importance of this issue. In 2017, the then RBI Governor wrote to the then Finance Minister that “allowing any entity other than the central bank to issue bearer bonds, which are currency-like instruments, is fraught with considerable risk and unprecedented even with conditions applicable to electoral bonds.” The EC warned that this would allow illegal foreign funds to be routed to political parties.

Objections were overruled and the scheme was passed in the Lok Sabha as part of the Finance Bill so that it would not have to go through the Rajya Sabha where the then-government lacked a majority. There is no other country in the world where such a scheme exists.

Need for funds

But first, why is this important? The main reason is that in the 21st century, money plays an increasingly larger role in elections. This was not so about 50 years ago. Today, India spends more on elections than the U.S. with a per capita GDP that is 3% of the U.S. Today, having more money does not guarantee success, but, at the other extreme, having no money certainly guarantees defeat. Some party may win a one-off election by spending very little, but sustaining victory over several elections requires funds. To reach voters, candidates and parties use hoardings and advertisements on printed, electronic and social media. They hold election rallies. They travel and have to pay party workers. In India, there is the added expenditure of buying votes through distribution of gifts, money, liquor and so on.

Given that money is required, a central issue is whether a winning candidate or party will work for the public or for those who have funded them. So, some countries have public funding of elections. Campaign funding laws and reforms are a constantly evolving subject internationally. They focus on public funding, limits on expenditure, limits on donations, transparency in funding and penalties for non-compliance.

We need to look at the issue of electoral bonds in this context — the importance and need for funding, and proper laws. Even a glance at the best international laws and rules shows that we in India are lagging far behind. The gaps between the stated purpose of the electoral bonds scheme and the letter of law are glaring, and several articles in the media have pointed them out. The voter does not know who is funding whom through electoral bonds. This is supposed to protect the donors from harassment from the authorities.

However, such harassment is always by the party in power through law enforcement agencies — police, the Central Bureau of Investigation, the Intelligence Bureau, the Enforcement Directorate and so on. The simple remedy is to stop such motivated actions. However, the bank knows the purchaser of the bonds as well as the party that cashed it. The law agencies can obtain this information whenever they want. Can the ruling party use this to demand donations for itself, prevent donations to others, and use the law enforcement agencies to harass those who donate to rival parties? There is nothing in the electoral bonds scheme or existing laws to prevent this from happening. Equally troublesome, donation limits have been removed. In theory, a large corporate could buy the government using electoral bonds. This would not be possible in any other country. India continues to have spending limits but, as everyone knows, hardly any winning candidate sticks to it.

It is true that black money cannot be used to buy electoral bonds. However, black money can be used outside the scheme during elections. The reduction in cash donations from ₹20,000 to ₹2,000 is not good enough. There are parties with hundreds of crores of declared income who claim that all the funds were received from small cash donations of ₹100 or less. This cannot be prevented by merely reducing the cash limits. Meanwhile, we see reports that the ₹2,000 notes printed after demonetisation are being hoarded. Whether this will be used as black money and in elections is unknown. In short, electoral bonds cannot eliminate black money. There are other provisions in the electoral bonds scheme and the amended Finance Act, 2017. All of them were there earlier as well. No doubt, there have been protests from the Opposition parties and from civil society. Political parties are sometimes seen as lacking credibility as they protest when they don't get money but keep quiet when they get funds. Civil society is seen as anti-establishment. In India it is possible for those in power to ignore all this. However, we are missing the elephant in the room. We don't need an incentive to be transparent and honest. Any political party can voluntarily choose to disclose its funds and sources. There is no law that prevents them from doing so. They can also state publicly that they will henceforth not use black money. No party has done this. Perhaps there are some compulsions under which they function — whether as the ruling party or as the Opposition.

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The peril of split verdicts

When Maharashtra, and the rest of the country, slept on Friday night, it appeared certain that Uddhav Thackeray of the Shiv Sena would become the state's next chief minister (CM). He, it seemed then, had the clear support of both the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), and the Congress, which had come around after initial ambivalence.

When Maharashtra, and the rest of the country, woke up on Saturday morning, the state had a new CM. But it wasn't Thackeray. The last CM, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s Devendra Fadnavis, was back in power. Ajit Pawar, who was, till Saturday, the official leader of the NCP legislative party (and also happens to be the party patriarch Sharad Pawar's nephew) was the new deputy CM.

From the unlikely Sena-NCP-Congress alliance within inches of grabbing power, Maharashtra suddenly appeared to have an equally unlikely BJP-NCP alliance saddled in power. The stunning twist in the tale — which no one saw coming, and perhaps less than a dozen individuals had an inkling of — shook the entire polity. But the story did not end there, and it continues to remain fluid.

The BJP claims that all 54 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) of the NCP are backing the government, and it will comfortably cross the majority mark. Sharad Pawar claims that Ajit Pawar acted on his own; there are only 10-11 MLAs who have moved and that some of them are moving back; Fadnavis will fail to prove his majority on the floor of the house; and the NCP-Sena-Congress alliance will stay intact. The Congress, which was initially suspicious of Sharad Pawar on Saturday morning, came around to giving him the benefit of doubt by the evening and is banking on him to turn the political wheels around once again. Beyond the intrigue, the drama, and the family wars, the entire episode throws up several issues about the larger practice of Indian democracy. The first issue is about the nature of a mandate. In recent years, voters in many states have decided to give a clear mandate to one party or leader. When that happens, there is a clear winner, the CM is strong, and the government is stable. But decisive verdicts have often created a situation where the winner becomes excessively strong and is perceived as functioning in an authoritarian manner. This is true of West Bengal under Mamata Banerjee, Uttar Pradesh under Yogi Adityanath, or even Tamil Nadu under the late Jayalalithaa. At the same time, when voters have chosen to give fragmented verdicts, parties have had no choice but to work together in the spirit of accommodation. But this has generated political instability, encouraged horse-trading, weakened governance, and left the state more corrupt. This is, most recently, true of Karnataka.

One could argue that in Maharashtra, politically speaking, the clear verdict was in favour of the National Democratic Alliance (the BJP and the Sena together had a majority, and they did have a pre-poll alliance), but the rift between the two, left the door open for instability in a hung assembly. So here is the dilemma. Exceptionally strong verdicts potentially lead to weakening of democracy, fragmented verdicts potentially lead to instability.

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India's unemployment crisis is worrying

The labour force participation rate the number of people looking for jobs is simultaneously shrinking. In 2016, it was 47-48%. Today, it's 43%. So while the number of people unable to find jobs has grown, the number seeking them has fallen. That is not good news

Let me start with an admission. I'm not an economist and what I know of the economy has been culled from the papers or by listening to economists on television. So it's second-hand knowledge. But the picture that's emerged of the unemployment situation is deeply worrying. Yet I don't hear politicians speaking about it, not even those of the Opposition.

Mahesh Vyas, the CEO of the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy, says unemployment has risen to 8.5% in October. When it touched 6.1% in 2017-18 it was said to be the highest in 45 years, though the government had reservations about that claim. Since then, it's soared.

More worryingly, the labour force participation rate — the number of people looking for jobs — is simultaneously shrinking. In 2016, it was 47-48%. Today, it's 43%. So while the number of people unable to find jobs has grown, the number seeking them has fallen. That is not good news.

If this overall picture is disturbing, it becomes more worrisome when you look at specific survey results. The first are a set on general unemployment between 2011-12 and 2017-18. An early one,

by Laveesh Bhandari and Amresh Dubey, commissioned by the PM's Economic Advisory Council, shows employment grew from 433 million to 457 million. More recently, two others come to the opposite conclusion. Santosh Mehrotra and Jajati Parida, in a paper published by Azim Premji University, claim employment fell from 474 million to 465. A piece by Himanshu in Mint claims the fall was greater, from 472.5 million to 457.

The Mehrotra and Parida survey offers a plausible explanation for why jobs have shrunk. It shows between 2011-12 and 2017-18 agricultural jobs fell by a massive 27 million, a decline of 11.5%. The rest of the economy did not generate enough new jobs to make up.

This is corroborated by the CMIE's findings. It reports rural joblessness is at 8.3%, just 0.6% behind its urban counterpart. Normally the difference should be closer to 2%. The fact it's considerably narrower suggests a sharp deterioration in village jobs. As Mahesh Vyas puts it: "A rate of 8% in rural India is stressful, because there are not many fall back options as in towns and cities. It would become a question of survival if the



situation worsens further."

Perhaps more worrying are specific findings on youth unemployment. The survey by Mehrotra and Parida shows the total number of unemployed youth (15-29 years) went up marginally from 8.9 million to 9 million between 2004-05 and 2011-12 but jumped to 25.1 million by 2017-18. MGNREGA appears to corroborate this. The total number of young workers (18-30) seeking employment under MGNREGA is rising. It was one crore in 2013-14. It declined to 58.69 lakh in 2017-18. It's risen to 70.71 a year later in 2018-19. That trend seems to be

continuing. As of October 21, it's reached 57.57 lakh.

One reflection of this is the number of young people (15-29) who are neither part of the labour force nor in education or training. It's risen to over a 100 million in 2017-18. It was 83 million in 2011-12. The conclusion Mehrotra and Parida reach concerns all of us. "The slow growth (or scarcity) of non-farm jobs and the rising open unemployment together have resulted in a massive increase of disheartened youth... these are young people who are disheartened by the state of affairs and are neither looking for jobs nor are they interested

in studying or training themselves." It seems India's youth — its future — is opting out.

Honestly, I didn't realise how serious the unemployment situation is nor how grim things are for the young. Perhaps it's not surprising the government doesn't talk about it — why would it? — but isn't it perplexing it is not being held to account? It's a worrying situation, yet the government is getting away with it. The question is: how long can this continue?

Karan Thapar is the author of Devil's Advocate: The Untold Story

No light at the end of the Brexit deadlock

More than three years after the United Kingdom voted, by a narrow margin, to leave the European Union (EU), Brexit has claimed the scalp of two Prime Ministers. Should Boris Johnson's Conservative Party fare poorly in the upcoming general election scheduled for December 12, he could be the third PM to exit. The biggest casualty, however, has been clarity about the country's future as Britain continues to rehash the tactical battles of the 2016 referendum on whether or not to remain in the EU, the destination of 45% of the U.K.'s exports and the source of 53% of its imports, including half of its food supplies.

The U.K. is now a country more divided than ever into tribes of 'Leavers' and 'Remainers', divisions that cut across traditional political lines. At one extreme are the most ardent Remainers, who would like to cancel Brexit altogether, whether through a second

referendum or by voting in a government that will revoke the process of leaving the EU. They refuse in principle to consider a future outside the EU. Gathered at the opposite pole are the hardcore Brexiteers who wish to see Britain cut all its ties with the EU on exit day, in order to start creating new trading relationships with a clean slate. Both sides are, consciously or otherwise, perpetuating a dangerous fallacy that lies at the heart of what ails Brexit: the notion that Brexit is an event, a one-off.

Brexit, however, is not an event, but a process of dissociation and reassociation. Mr. Johnson is rallying the faithful by urging to country to 'get Brexit done.' His slogan plays to the sentiments of the Brexiteers, for whom Brexit has become totemic of sovereignty to be upheld and defended at all costs. For too long, the Brexiteer argument goes, the U.K. has been subservient to

ever-expanding EU rules and regulations. Brexiteers believe that a democratic state ought to be able to set its own rules about, among other areas, food standards, pet well-being, road safety, banking regulations, and, most importantly, immigration limits.

However, Britain's exit from the EU, from the ever-closer ties that have bound this island nation to its continent since it joined the European Communities (the EU's predecessor) in 1973, is not an event but a process. These, and many other regulations, will not just disappear overnight once Britain leaves the EU. They are written into British law, and Parliament will need to decide on whether and how to replace them. Brexit is closer to the amputation of a healthy limb than to tooth extraction. There will be blood vessels to cauterise, a prosthetic limb to be fitted and

adjusted, and a phantom limb to be contended with. And yes, movement after the amputation will become a little more challenging. Brexit, then, is a great unravelling. The fact that two Prime Ministers have tried and failed to negotiate an acceptable withdrawal agreement — something that will govern U.K.-EU relations until the two entities can agree on a new trading relationship — is a testament to the complexity of this uncoupling. In mountaineering terms, if the summit is a constellation of new trading relationships with different countries, then Theresa May and Boris Johnson have failed to get Britain even to base camp, the point at which there is agreed common ground to begin negotiations with the country's largest trading partner. Further, through the EU, Britain is currently part of trading arrangements with about 70 other countries. After

Brexit, the U.K. will need to replace these with bilateral pacts.

Getting from the base camp to the summit, then, is going to be exponentially more complex. As British delegations set forth to negotiate new trade deals with other countries, they will confront tough questions about what Britain can offer to say, U.S., India and China. What the U.K. is willing to concede is likely to be equally difficult. Would London really be willing to open up British markets to American meat or allow American pharmaceuticals free access to its National Health Service (NHS)? Having defended its right to control immigration through Brexit, will the U.K. be willing to grant more visas to Indian workers? How much access will Britain be comfortable with for Chinese goods and technology?

(Contd on page 25)

Social media has reshaped caste mobilisation

Subaltern castes have used it to create discourse, ideate, and connect with each other, and the world



The advent of social media has heralded a new era in public discourse. Popular social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have allowed the forging of new networks among like-minded people, and changed the contours of public debate and socio-political mobilisation. But what is often not discussed is how social media has reshaped caste imagination and mobilisation in the country. Since caste is omnipresent in India, it is not surprising that it has touched social media.

Recently, protests broke out against Twitter over the allegations of a systematic denial of the blue tick verification to handles belonging to the Dalit and backward communities. Even the official handles of Prakash Ambedkar or the Bhim Army chief were not verified, while the handles of even the lesser-known members of liberal chatterati, with a few thousand followers, would have the blue tick. Hard-hitting Twitter hashtags trended for several days accusing the company of being a casteist enterprise, and asking it to either verify the handles of public figures of the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC) communities, or cancel blue ticks of all accounts.

This brings out a curious phenomenon in the Indian media space. Historically, the representation of the subaltern castes in the media has been negligible. Unable to find their voices and issues heard in the mainstream media space, they created an alternative space for information dissemination. Even the political parties representing Dalit and OBC communities hardly paid any attention to the media space until recently.

But social media changed it. While social media is often accused of being casteist and discriminatory, it is the only media space that has provided the subaltern castes with the most free and least-discriminatory platform to create their discourse and ideate. It has led to the organic growth of subaltern media, and explosion of a Dalit-Bahujan discourse, including that of the Pasmandas (the subaltern lower caste Muslims). Social media is replacing pamphlets in the political rallies of parties such as the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) as the preferred medium of dissemination of counterculture. The social media channels of Dalit-Bahujan groups have thousands of subscribers now, and their posts and videos are shared widely, even though they may be invisible in mainstream discourse. This has enabled caste-based mobilisation on a far larger scale.

This was visible during the April 2018 protests against an order of the Supreme Court on the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled

Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and also during the anti-Bharatiya Janata Party mobilisation in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan for restoring status quo. This has also reshaped caste imagination because now people can overcome the ghetto mentality, which was ingrained by caste-based socialisation. For a large number of youth in the villages and small towns, social media has provided an opportunity to interact with people who don't think like them and don't fit into their social worldview. This has sharpened the contrast between the subjective notions of the social status of their caste, with the objective reality, resulting in bitterness and aggression.

YouTube is also flooded with the new age songs of caste-assertion and caste-glorification, often descending into humiliating "others". According to a recent Lokniti-CSDS study, the spread of social media has largely been among the upper-castes in urban centres, followed by the Muslims. But there is an increasing presence of those belonging to the SC/ST and OBC communities in recent years. But despite having a rapidly-growing user base on social media platforms, these communities hardly find any representation in the organisations and policymaking of these companies. This has led to allegations of a systematic caste bias in the

policies and the social media platforms' ways of working.

Social media companies need to have a transparent user policy and take action against caste-based abuse and demonisation. Currently, the standard reply of Twitter to such abuse is that it doesn't find a violation of rules in the reported content. There must also be more transparency in the parameters used in their algorithms and mechanisms adopted for decision-making. Suspension of accounts will go a long way in ensuring the credibility of these platforms amid allegations of ideological, political or social biases.

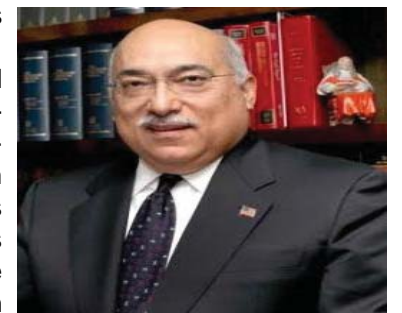
Abhinav Prakash Singh

Unhelpful rhetoric to genocide Hindus

"As a Patriot and an American who understands that every Lincolnesque Government's Job 1 is Public Safety, so Freedoms and Rights can be exercised freely, I reject with extreme prejudice - unprincipled self-promoting liberal lunatics who have never governed - folks like Pramila Jayapal and Ilhan Omar ("some people...did something"; see footnote 2 in my supplemental testimony in Congress), who merely pander for political advantage shamelessly. As Rep. Omar is insultingly wrong about WTC and 9/11, Rep. Jayapal gets no kudos for being Pro-Terror and an ignoramus self-defaming Anti-Hindu, and assisting those who wish to engage in a new genocide - as

the Speaker in the video argues for.

Freedom of religion, and separation of church and state - two key pillars of a free society - were not intended for folks with hypocritical treasonous strategies to advance politically - that was Hitler's. Jayapal's political recipe would require every American Jewish Congress-member to be against Israel in order to be a loyal American; absurd. Both Omar and Jayapal need to visit Ground Zero and 9/11 Museum, and pay heartfelt homage to the dead, survivors and brave First Responders - as we in New York and those in Mumbai have tasted the painful evil of Terror. I would happily trade 100 Omars & 1000 Jayapals for one Imran Khan and



By Ravi Batra
Chair, National Advisory Council for South Asian Affairs
one Narendra Modi - both Imran & Narendra are dear to me, as they dare to make their nations Terror-Free, escape the chains of war-mongers or chaos-loving liberal-lunatics, preferring instead to have actual peace so rights can be equally enjoyed by minorities and majorities."

The weaponisation of food is taking a new form. It could change warfare

Insect Allies, a defence programme, may enable attacks on an adversary's food crops, with far-reaching impact

By Manmohan Bahadur

An essay, "War is not over", in the latest issue of the Foreign Affairs magazine, argues that contrary to popular thinking, war is as prevalent as before. It is only that it has become less lethal with the ratio of three to one between the wounded-to-dead having changed to ten to one. From the death of 5,000 and 7,000 individuals per day in World War I and World War II respectively, it now averages at around 50 per day.

Though the essay speaks of improvements in medical science and fast transportation of the wounded, and a distinction between the two world wars and modern day conflicts, as being major reasons for the reduction in statistics, it has omitted the arrival of precision weaponry as one of the major reason for the reduced bloodshed.

Cautioning that nations still display "a great deal of belligerent behaviour", the authors point to the fact that while there were less than ten border walls post the collapse of the Berlin Wall, there are close to 70 walls across the world now. "It strains credulity that the better angels of our nature are winning when humanity is armed to the teeth" the essay concludes.

An ongoing scientific programme, which projects itself as being an "angel", but is anything but, and is as "precise" as precision can get, needs red flags going up. The Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) of the United States is in the middle of a four-year programme called Insect Allies in which it has demanded "...proposals that enable expression of crop traits within a single growing season... by delivering a modified virus to target plants by a mobile insect vector;target crop must be an

important annual, perennial, or subsistence plant....Proposals to work solely with model plants (e.g., Arabidopsis, Nicotiana, etc.), will not be considered."

The project has already been called out for its sinister implications by scientists, led by the Max Planck Institute, in a Science magazine article, and at a meeting on September 1 at the United Nations Biological Weapons Convention held in Geneva, which I attended.

In a nutshell, the Insect Allies programme is working towards creating genetically modified viruses to be carried by insects to fully mature crops of agricultural importance — in other words, crops whose non-availability would affect the food security of a nation. The viruses, on dispersal by insects, would modify the genes of the target crops and secure them from man-made or natural vagaries like drought, salinity,

flooding, or so the programme says. DARPA has also cited another reason for the project; "A wide range of threats may jeopardize food security, including intentional attack by an adversary..." But the programme is frightening, to say the least, for five reasons.

First, it is in violation of the spirit of the Biological Weapons Convention since, once the technology gets developed, it can be used to create genetically modified viruses to attack an adversary's food crops through use of insects as vectors. For sure, genetic modification of agricultural plants is already happening, but its effect is from one generation to another in a controlled manner, and takes decades. The transfer through insects would, however, genetically modify the whole crop in just one season; imagine the

potential sinister use against an adversary's food chain through insects let loose. Second, since no nation will accept its food security situation to become vulnerable, other countries would start similar programmes. In fact, they already may have commenced, as has been alluded to by DARPA, stating that its research would counter threats from States and non-State actors. Third, the resultant domino effect would result in a breakdown of deterrence in the social security sector, where food assurance is among the primary responsibilities of a government. Just as the development of a ballistic missile defence shield is a destabilising step in the nuclear realm, so would the case be here when an asymmetry of capability develops.

(Contd on page 23)



Explained: In Maharashtra drama, the key legal provision - Anti-defection law

It remains unclear precisely how many NCP lawmakers are with Ajit Pawar in his decision to join hands with the BJP. Here is how the anti-defection law came to be, and how it has evolved in the last 30-odd years.

(News Agencies) In the extraordinary political drama unfolding in Maharashtra since dawn on Saturday (November 23), it remains unclear precisely how many Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) lawmakers are with Ajit Pawar in his decision to join hands with the BJP.

NCP supremo Sharad Pawar has said that his nephew's action is an act of indiscipline, and attracts the provisions of the anti-defection law. "NCP MLAs who support the BJP should know this move attracts provisions of anti-defection law," Pawar said in a joint press conference with Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray who until past midnight on Friday looked set to be the next Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari administered the oath of office to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar at 7.30 am.

It was not immediately clear what evidence of support from NCP MLAs Fadnavis and Pawar presented to the Governor.

Here is how the anti-defection law — the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, inserted by The Constitution (52nd Amendment) Act, 1985, when Rajiv Gandhi's government was in power — came to be, and how it evolved over the three decades that followed.

The 1967 elections

The seeds of the anti-defection law were sown after the general elections in 1967.

The results of those elections were a mixed bag for the Congress. It formed the government at the Centre, but its strength in Lok Sabha fell from 361 to 283. During the year it lost control of seven state governments as MLAs shifted their political allegiance.

In this backdrop, P Venkatasubbaiah, a Congress MP in Lok Sabha who served in the Cabinets of both Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, proposed the setting up of a

high-level committee to make recommendations to tackle the "problem of legislators changing their allegiance from one party to another".

The proposal saw a spirited debate in Lok Sabha. Opposition members suggested renaming the proposal to "save Congress", while the ruling party accused the opposition of inducing MLAs to defect.

The Y B Chavan panel

Despite the acrimony, the Lok Sabha agreed to the setting up of a committee to examine the problem of political defections. The then Home Minister, Y B Chavan, headed the committee.

The panel defined defection — and an exception for genuine defectors. According to the committee, defection was the voluntary giving up of allegiance of a political party on whose symbol a legislator was elected, except when such action was the result of the decision of the party.

In its report, the committee noted "that the lure of office played a dominant part in decisions of legislators to defect". It pointed out that out of 210 defecting legislators in seven states, 116 were given ministerial berths in governments which they helped form by their defections.

To combat this, the committee recommended a bar on defecting legislators from holding ministerial positions for a year — or until the time they got themselves re-elected.

It also suggested a smaller Council of Ministers both at the levels of the Centre and the states. The committee was in favour of political parties working together to help evolve a code of conduct to effectively tackle disruptions.

Early attempts at a law

Following the report of the Y B Chavan committee, two separate legislative attempts, both unsuccessful, were made to find a solution to defections.

The first one was made by Indira's

Home Minister Uma Shankar Dikshit in 1973; the second, in 1978, by Shanti Bhushan, Minister for Law and Justice in the Janata Party government of Morarji Desai.

The third attempt — which was successful — was made in 1985, after the Congress won more than 400 seats in Lok Sabha in the aftermath of Indira's assassination.

The Tenth Schedule

The Bill to amend the Constitution was introduced by Rajiv Gandhi's Law Minister Ashoke Kumar Sen, the veteran barrister and politician who had also served in the Cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru.

The statement of objects and reasons of the Bill said: "The evil of political defections has been a matter of national concern. If it is not combated, it is likely to undermine the very foundations of our democracy and the principles which sustain it."

The amendment by which the Tenth Schedule was inserted in the Constitution, did three broad things.

* One, it made legislators liable to be penalised for their conduct both inside (voting against the whip of the party) and outside (making speeches, etc.) the legislature — the penalty being the loss of their seats in Parliament or the state legislatures.

* Two, it protected legislators from disqualification in cases where there was a split (with 1/3rd of members splitting) or merger (with 2/3rds of members merging) of a legislature party with another political party.

* Three, it made the Presiding Officer of the concerned legislature the sole arbiter of defection proceedings.

Criticism and passage

During the debate in Parliament, Opposition MPs argued that the Bill would curtail the freedom of speech and expression of legislators. MPs like the socialist leader Madhu Dandavate

expressed concern over the impact the amendment could have on the office of the Speaker.

The Law Minister, however, succeeded in navigating the Bill through Parliament in two days. The Bill was debated in Lok Sabha on January 30, the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, and was passed by Rajya Sabha the following day. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi referred in Parliament to the Mahatma's seven social sins, the first one being politics without principles.

The immediate challenges

No sooner was the law put in place than political parties started to stress-test its boundaries.

The issue of what constitutes a split in a political party rocked both the V P Singh and the Chandra Shekhar governments.

The role of the Presiding Officers also became increasingly politicised. Lok Sabha Speaker Shivraj Patil said in 1992: "The Speaker is not expected to dabble in keeping the political parties weak or strong or discipline the Parliamentarians for their party purposes."

The intervention of the higher judiciary was sought to decide questions such as what kinds of conduct outside the legislature would fall in the category of defection, and what was the extent of the Speaker's power in deciding defections.

The Supreme Court, while upholding the supremacy of the Speaker in defection proceedings, also held that the Speaker's decisions were subject to judicial review.

The 2003 Amendment

The last step in the legislative journey of the anti-defection law came in 2003.

A Constitution Amendment Bill was introduced in Parliament by the government of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to address some of the issues with the law. A committee headed by Pranab Mukherjee examined the Bill.

'Do it or we will order': Supreme Court to Centre on women in army

The Supreme Court bench told the Centre's law officer Sanjay Jain to come back with a positive response by next Thursday.



(News Agencies) The Supreme Court on Tuesday told the army to take a decision on permanent commission to eight women army officers who had approached the top court in 2010 against the bar on their absorption in the armed forces. Over the next nine years, the government finally agreed to grant permanent commission but this

decision left out the women who had first approached the court. "We can pass an order but we are giving you an opportunity to take credit for it," a bench led by Justice DY Chandrachud told the army after being told that a decision had been taken to grant permanent commission to women officers in the army's 10 branches where women are inducted for short service commission, or SSC. At Tuesday's hearing, the Supreme Court was also told about reports that this facility would only kick in for women officers from April 2020. Aishwarya Bhatti, the lawyer for the women officers, told the top court that this meant that the decision to grant permanent commission prospectively would not cover the women who fought gender bias in the forces. The bench told the Centre's law officer Sanjay Jain to come back with a positive response by next Thursday. Jain had earlier sought time on the ground that he had been recently assigned this case. Under the new system, SSC women officers would be required to indicate if they want a permanent

commission within four years of service. The Indian Air Force has already opened all branches including fighter pilots for women officers. In the navy, all non-sea going branches and specialisation had been opened for induction of women officers through Short Service Commission. Women SSC officers have been made eligible for grant of permanent commission in the Naval Armament branch at par with the male officers. The Delhi High Court had ordered the armed forces to give women officers on SSC a permanent commission in March 2010. The army was the only one of the three services to appeal against this decision in the Supreme Court. Before the high court verdict, women officers retired after 14 years and had no scope of extension while their male counterparts were eligible to receive it after five years. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also backed the idea of permanent commission for women and announced the change in policy in his address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort last year.

12-year-old girl on way to Sabarimala stopped after Aadhaar card check

The shrine of Lord Ayyappa in Sabarimala had opened for the annual 41-day pilgrimage on Saturday. Five women stopped from trekking up to the temple on the first day of the pilgrimage by the police.

(News Agencies) A 12-year-old girl was stopped by Kerala police while she was trekking to Sabarimala temple along with her family, news agency PTI reported. She was shown as 10 years old during online booking but when police examined her Aadhaar card she was found to be 12 years old, PTI added. She wasn't allowed to proceed from Pamba base camp, but her family proceeded to the hill shrine. The shrine of Lord Ayyappa in Sabarimala had opened for the annual 41-day pilgrimage on Saturday. Around 10,000 security personnel have been deployed at Pamba and women police officers have been checking age proof documents of all female devotees. Five women stopped from trekking up to the temple on the first day of the pilgrimage by the police. The women were asked to go back from the Pamba base camp in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district. The base camp

is at the foothills of Sabarimala, about 5 km from the shrine. Activists had said the move to stop women is against the Supreme Court's orders allowing the entry of women of menstruating age in the temple. Last week, the top court had referred petitions challenging its 2018 judgment to a larger bench. The petitions had sought a review of the verdict that overturned a decades-old ban at Sabarimala on female devotees between 10 and 50 years of age. The new seven-judge bench will also look into seven other matters linked to faith. The Left-led government in the state has refused to provide police protection to help women enter the temple. "It is proper to maintain the status quo at the temple. The government is all for peace," Kadakampally Surendran, Kerala's temple affairs minister, had said. There were protests in Kerala after the Supreme Court's



verdict in 2018. Traditionalists claim the entry of women of childbearing age into Sabarimala is sacrilege because Lord Ayyappa is celibate. Though there have been over a dozen attempts, only two women had been able to pray inside the sanctum of the temple under police protection since the court order last September.

Gurdaspur Akali Dal vice-president shot dead, legs chopped off

(News Agencies) Dalbir Singh, 55, the vice-president of the Gurdaspur Shiromani Akali Dal unit, was shot dead and his legs were chopped off allegedly by a poultry farm owner following a dispute over hiring a servant at Dhillwan village, 25 km from Batala town, on Monday night. Police said on Tuesday that the accused, Balwinder Singh, 55, and his sons Major Singh, 25, and Mandeep Singh, 24, along with six others, barged into Dalbir's house around 10pm on Monday. While Major and Mandeep fired a dozen bullets, Balwinder cut off Dalbir's legs with a sharp-edged weapon before threatening shocked family members with dire consequences. Villagers, requesting anonymity,



said that Dalbir was a former sarpanch and had intervened to sort out a dispute Balwinder had with another resident earlier in the day. A compromise was reached but Balwinder was nursing a grudge and took revenge by forcibly entering Dalbir's house at night and brutally killing him. Batala SSP Opinderjeet Singh Ghuman said that the police had registered a case of murder against the nine accused and a search was on.

Google takes down 'Sikh Referendum' app

(News Agencies) CHANDIGARH: Conceding Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh's demand, Google has removed the secessionist, anti-India mobile application, "2020 Sikh Referendum," from its Play Store with immediate effect. A spokesperson of the chief minister's office said the app was no longer available on Google Play Store for mobile phone users in India to download. "Sikhs for Justice", a group based abroad and banned by India, has been lobbying for Punjab's secession through its "2020 Sikh Referendum" campaign.

The chief minister, who had also urged the central government to persuade Google on the matter, had asked the

state police chief to coordinate with central security agencies to tackle the threat resulting from the launch of the app. During an analysis of the application and the website in the Digital Investigation, Training and Analysis Centre (DITAC) Lab, it was found that the data of voters registered through the app was also linked and stored in the server of the website, created and handled by Sikhs For Justice. Based on these findings, the cyber crime centre of the Bureau of Investigation, Punjab, moved to get the app removed from Google Play Store and the website blocked in India. On November 8, a notice under Section 79 (3) B of the Information Technology Act

was sent to the Google legal cell for the immediate removal of the app. After approval from the additional chief secretary, home, a request was sent to the cyber law division, department of electronics and information and technology, Government of India, for blocking the application from Play Store and the website. On November 9, inspector general, crime, Nageshwar Rao, and the state cyber-cum-DITAC Lab in-charge, raised the issue with the legal cell of Google India, which was convinced that the Google platform was abused for illegal and anti-national activities by Sikhs For Justice. This was followed by the decision to remove the app from Play Store. Google refused to comment on the matter.

Hindutva, Mehbooba Mufti and Nitish Kumar in Sena's latest attack on BJP

Earlier on Sunday Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi had announced that Sena was being allotted seats in Opposition camp in the Lok Sabha as it was 'working out alliance with the Congress and the NCP'.



(News Agencies) In a stinging attack on ex-ally Bharatiya Janata Party, the Shiv Sena in its mouthpiece Saamana went back in time to remind the ruling party of its roots using 'Hindutva' and 'Nationalism' to drive home the point.

Accusing the BJP of announcing the Sena's ouster from National Democratic Alliance (NDA) without any discussion, the editorial said, "we supported Hindutva at a time when nobody touched it... when many of you were not even born". Sena further asked: "who are the they (BJP) to expel Shiv Sena from the NDA." "Those who announced

our ouster from the NDA must take lessons in history. We are the ones who powered the Sangh ... When Balasaheb Thackeray, AB Vajpayee, LK Advani, Parkash Singh Badal and George Fernandes laid the foundation for the NDA, many of the present leaders were nowhere..." the editorial in Tuesday's edition said.

Earlier on Sunday Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi had announced that Sena was being allotted seats in Opposition camp in the Lok Sabha as it was 'working out alliance with the Congress and the NCP'.

"Shiv Sena's minister has resigned from the NDA government... they are not attending today's NDA meeting and working out alliance with the Congress and the NCP. So it is natural that they will be allotted seats on the opposition side in both houses," Joshi told reporters after an all-party meeting. To this the Saamana responded with, "One Pralhad Joshi has said this... he clearly is not aware of the Shiv Sena's spirit and NDA's actions and deeds... There was a time when nobody would stand next to the BJP, and words such as Hindutva and Nationalism were not even in the political lexicon

of the country."

The editorial hit out at the BJP over its tie-ups with the PDP in Jammu and Kashmir and the JD(U) in Bihar. "Did the BJP seek NDA's permission before coming together with Mehbooba Mufti or with Nitish Kumar?" the editorial asked adding that if the BJP thought that the Sena has gone against the NDA then why it hadn't invited the Sena to discuss the issue in an NDA meeting. The editorial compared the BJP to Mughal emperor Muhammad Ghori and said those who are backstabbing will be given a befitting reply from Maharashtra. "This is the

beginning of the end of egoistic and arbitrary politics," it said. The decades-old alliance between the Shiv Sena and BJP turned sour after the former pressed for the demand of sharing the chief ministerial post in Maharashtra. The Sena is now holding talks with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress to form a non-BJP government in the state. Arvind Sawant, the lone Sena minister in the Union council of ministers submitted his resignation last Monday. The party also kept away from the meeting of NDA constituents on the eve of the winter session of Parliament.

Naidu orders review of marshals' uniform

(News Agencies) New Delhi: Rajya Sabha chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday ordered a review of the new military-style uniform of marshals in Parliament's upper House amid criticism including from former Army chief General Ved Prakash Malik, who called the attire illegal and a security hazard.

The marshals appeared in the Rajya Sabha on the first day of its 250th session on Monday in the deep blue winter uniform and peak caps similar to those senior army officers wear on ceremonial occasions. The uniform also has an aiguillette and braided cord similar to military uniforms. Earlier, the marshals wore bandhgala suits and turbans during winters and safari suits in summers.

Naidu said that the Rajya Sabha secretariat would revisit the decision to replace the marshals' ethnic dress and turbans. "The secretariat of Rajya Sabha, after considering various suggestions, came out with a new dress code for the marshals. But we have received some observations from some political as well as some well-meaning people. So, I have decided to ask the secretariat to revisit the same [new uniform]," Naidu said.

Malik objected to the new uniform in a tweet on Monday. "Copying and wearing of military uniforms by non-military personnel is illegal and a security hazard." Malik, who led the Army during the 1999 Kargil War, hoped Naidu and defence minister Rajnath Singh will take "early action".

A Rajya Sabha official, who did not wish to be named, said that the request for the change in uniform came from the marshals, who complained that it was too cumbersome to "maintain their stiff turbans".

"Several senior officials discussed it over time, and from a range of options, we choose one [new uniform]," said the official. The design, the official added, was finalised in-house and no external agency was involved.

10 government agencies can tap phones, Lok Sabha told

Ministry of home affairs also stated that any interception or monitoring or decryption of any information from any computer resource can be done only by authorised agencies as per due process of law, and subject to approved safeguards and standard operating procedures.

(News Agencies) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) are among 10 central agencies that can intercept telephone communications, provided they have the Union home secretary's prior permission to do so, the government informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. "Section 69 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 empowers the central government or a state government to intercept, monitor or decrypt, information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer resource in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states or public order," minister of state for

home G Kishan Reddy said. He was responding to questions related to the interception of WhatsApp calls and messages. The ministry of home affairs also stated that any interception or monitoring or decryption of any information from any computer resource can be done only by authorised agencies as per due process of law, and subject to approved safeguards and standard operating procedures.

Importantly, Reddy also clarified that the government didn't give "blanket permission to any agency for the interception or monitoring or decryption and permission from competent authority is required, as per the due process of law and rules, in each case." "Each case is also reviewed by a



committee chaired by the Intelligence Bureau, Central Cabinet Secretary in case of Central Government and Chief Secretary of the State concerned in case of a State Government," he said in a written reply to a question. The competent authority in the central government has authorised 10 agencies for the purpose are:

Intelligence Bureau, Central Bureau of Investigation, Enforcement Directorate, Narcotics Control Bureau, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, National Investigation Agency, R&AW, Directorate of Signal Intelligence and Delhi Police Commissioner.

Mexican tourist dies after eating breakfast at Himachal's restaurant: Police

Two other foreigners, who were at the restaurant, brought Roman to a nearby health centre for treatment around 11 am but he was declared dead an hour later, Kullu Superintendent of Police Gaurav Singh said.

(News Agencies) A 29-year-old Mexican tourist died on Tuesday at a primary health centre in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district, police said. Roman is said to have had breakfast at a restaurant in Manikaran when he felt uneasiness, Kullu Superintendent of Police Gaurav Singh said, adding that the cause of

death is yet to be found. Two other foreigners, who were at the restaurant, brought Roman to a nearby health centre for treatment around 11 am but he was declared dead an hour later, Singh said. After getting a call, a police team arrived at the health facility, the police officer said. Roman's belongings, including his

passport, could not be ascertained so far, he said, adding that the body has been taken to Kullu Regional Hospital for autopsy. Proceedings are being carried out under Section 174 (police to enquire and report on suicide) of the Code of Criminal Procedure at the Kullu police station, Singh said.



UK, India scientists collaborate on clean air solutions for Delhi

The UK has extensive experience of conducting atmospheric chemistry measurements and carrying out computer modelling of air pollution that is world-leading. India has a rapidly growing research base in this field and a huge amount of local knowledge and understanding of the air pollution problems in Indian cities.



(News Agencies) Atmospheric scientists from the UK and India have partnered to tackle chronic air pollution, which is impacting the health of more than 20 million people in Delhi. The Indian capital, one of the country's most densely populated metropolis, has some of the worst air pollution of any city in the world. Air quality experts from the University of Manchester partnered with their counterparts from the Indian Ministry of Earth Sciences (IMES), the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) to help drive science-based policy changes. Their new, and ongoing, study will further identify the causes behind the pollution crisis and inform ongoing and future policy before analysing the effectiveness of

the interventions. "Air pollution in Delhi is linked to a range of factors, including heavy traffic, burnt waste and dusty air in pre-monsoon season. Crop burning is a very important source at the end of the growing season. Pollution impacts are similarly wide-ranging: lung damage, heart disease, cognitive impairment and other conditions have been associated with poor quality of air," said Professor Hugh Coe, who is a leading member of the team from the University of Manchester. One of the key measures for determining the true extent of Delhi's current pollution problem will be to measure particulate matter concentrations across the city. This detail will build a picture of the sum-total of all hazardous solid and liquid particles suspended in the air. "The research into these is in its

early stages but is already providing insights. The work we have done shows that although there are some variations in particulate matter concentrations across the city, the contributions from different sources are broadly similar," Coe said. "This will facilitate better policy implementation since the routes to reduction via policy interventions need to be broadly similar across the city," he added.

The UK has extensive experience of conducting atmospheric chemistry measurements and carrying out computer modelling of air pollution that is world-leading. India has a rapidly growing research base in this field and a huge amount of local knowledge and understanding of the air pollution problems in Indian cities. "Harnessing these two

strengths in a joint programme that has collaborative and multi-disciplinary research at its heart is vital in making rapid progress towards improving air quality in cities across the globe," Coe noted. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has described the city's pollution as having "reached unbearable levels", with low visibility due to smog and an increase in respiratory illnesses, sparking urgent concern. Schools across the city have recently been ordered to close, construction projects halted and residents advised to avoid outdoor activities as the air quality has reached hazardous levels.

Scientists from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology have already developed the SAFAR (System of Air Quality and

Weather Forecasting and Research) for advanced air quality forecasting for Delhi. An IITM statement noted: "The collaboration with UK scientists will make a valuable addition to the SAFAR model by providing expertise in developing new parameterisation for secondary aerosol formation. The SAFAR system has recently developed ultrahigh resolution (400 m²) emission inventory for Delhi which accounted 26 sources and concluded that the transport sector is the most dominant sector contributing 41% in total particulate matter concentration. "The industrial sector has been found to be the second most dominating factor contributing 22.3%. The contributions from power sector, biofuel sector, re-suspended dust and others are found to be 3%, 5.7%, 18% and 11.7% respectively."

Terror financing: ED takes possession of Kashmir assets linked to Syed Salahuddin, others

The federal probe agency had filed a criminal case of money laundering in this instance after taking cognisance of a National Investigating Agency (NIA) charge sheet filed against Syed Salahuddin.

(News Agencies) The ED Adjudicating Authority of has taken possession of the said law recently seven of the 13 assets upheld the order, the attached by it in the past possession notice was issued, they said. The ED financing case against had attached a total of 13 Syed Salahuddin, the properties worth Rs 1.22 crore in Kashmir that Pakistan-based terrorist belonged to Mohammad Shafi Shah, a resident of Mujahideen, officials said Bandipora, Gulam Nabi, a on Tuesday. The resident of Anantnag district, and five other Enforcement Directorate residents of Jammu-Kashmir, who allegedly (ED) had attached these worked for the terror outfit. Money Laundering Act Possession of the (PMLA). After the remaining six assets will

also been taken soon, they said. The federal probe agency had filed a criminal case of money laundering in this instance after taking cognisance of a National Investigating Agency (NIA) charge sheet filed against Salahuddin, Shah and others under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Action (UAPA) and other sections of the Indian Penal Code. "Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, the most active terror outfit in Kashmir, has been

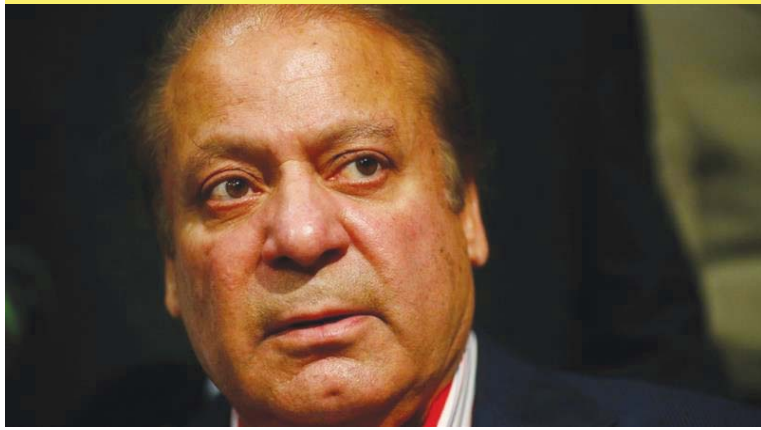
responsible for funding terrorist and secessionist activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Headed by Syed Salahuddin, its self-styled commander based out of Rawalpindi in Pakistan, it funds terrorism on Indian soil through money organised by a trust called JKART (Jammu and Kashmir Affectees Relief Trust) in alleged connivance with the ISI and other Pakistan-based entities," the ED had said.

It had said its probe found that "terror funds" were being sent to India through hawala -- an illegal way of routing money by skirting banking channels, barter trade and human carriers. "The funds are illegally distributed to the next of kin of Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists, active and dead," it said. The US government had in August, 2017 designated Hizbul Mujahideen as a 'foreign terrorist organisation'. Besides heading Hizbul

Mujahideen, Salahuddin is the chairman of the United Jihad Council (UJC), a conglomerate of terrorist outfits operating in the Kashmir Valley. The NIA had arrested Salahuddin's son Syed Shahid Yousuf in this case in 2017 and the J-K government had later suspended him from service as he was working in the state agriculture department. Shah and three others are lodged in Tihar Jail in the national capital in connection with this terror funding case, the ED had said.

Pakistan's ailing ex-PM Sharif flown to London for treatment



Nawaz Sharif, reportedly 'fighting for life', flown in air ambulance to London after bail granted on medical grounds.

(News Agencies) Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has left Pakistan in an air ambulance to receive medical treatment in London, his party said, a month after the three-times prime minister was released on bail from a seven-year sentence for corruption. Sharif, 69, was accompanied by his younger brother and personal physician, according to leaders of his Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) Party (PMLN).

The former prime minister is suffering from an auto-immune blood disorder, high blood pressure and deteriorating kidney function, according to aides. His doctor said he was "fighting for his life". Despite his convictions for corruption, Sharif remains popular among some Pakistanis, and his health has dominated newspaper front pages and TV channels in recent weeks. "Thank God that he has left for the medical treatment he

needs urgently," the party's parliamentarian Ahsan Iqbal said on Tuesday.

"Nawaz Sharif will go to Boston after going through a detailed checkup in London. During his travel, he will stay in Doha for two hours," Sharif's close aide Pervaiz Rashid told Reuters.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi told Reuters in a November 8 interview that the government had no objection to Sharif travelling abroad, opening the possibility of his imminent departure. But Sharif was only allowed to leave after agreeing to a series of conditions preventing him seeking exile, including submitting

periodic medical reports notarised by Pakistan's embassy in London, according to court documents. 'Lion of Punjab' Sharif was sentenced to seven years in prison on corruption charges in December last year. Since he was granted bail last month on medical grounds, his party and family have been fighting to get his name removed from a travel ban list to allow him to seek treatment overseas.

Last week the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan demanded he pay a bond of seven billion Pakistani rupees (\$45m) as a condition of his travel - which the PML-N, immediately rejected. After days of political deadlock

the condition was finally lifted, party workers showered rose petals on his car as it left his house on the outskirts of the eastern city of Lahore. Known as the "Lion of Punjab", Sharif is a political survivor who has repeatedly returned to the country's top office. He served three terms - but did not complete a single one. His first tenure, beginning in 1990, ended in 1993 when he was sacked over corruption. The second lasted from 1997 to 1999, when he was deposed by the powerful military. Sharif blamed the security establishment again for targeting him in 2017 when the Supreme Court disqualified him from politics for life over graft allegations. He has denied the allegations.

Indian prince's descendants can claim fortune from NatWest after 70 years

(News Agencies) One of the UK's longest running legal battles has been resolved after more than 70 years, enabling descendants of an Indian princely family to collect £35m from NatWest bank. The dispute dates back to 1948 and tumultuous events following India's independence, when the last Nizam of Hyderabad transferred £1m into the account of Pakistan's high commissioner in London. The monarch's family was Muslim and had resisted his state's incorporation into Hindu-dominated India. Over seven decades, the deposit has accumulated interest and is worth around £35m. Pakistan claimed the money was payment for weapons that would have been used to defend Hyderabad against the Indian army. The family of Nizam VII maintained that the cash had merely been lodged abroad for safekeeping. The case first arrived in the chancery division of the high court in London as long ago as 1954 when the Hyderabad royals challenged the bank and the Pakistan commissioner for the return of the money. With its echoes of the Jarndyce v Jarndyce saga in Charles Dickens' Bleak House, the claim reached the House of Lords in 1957 where Pakistan

successfully asserted sovereign immunity. Legal proceedings were then effectively frozen for the next 60 years. In 2013, Pakistan decided to waive its right to sovereign immunity and launched legal action to claim the cash from NatWest. Their action triggered rival claims by the two grandsons of Nizam VII. In a 140-page ruling handed down on Wednesday, the high court in London declared that: "Nizam VII was beneficially entitled to the fund and those claiming in right of Nizam VII - the princes and India - are entitled to have the sum paid out to their order." India also lodged a claim but the grandsons - Prince

Mukarram Jah who is now Nizam VIII and his younger brother Prince Muffakham Jah - reached a settlement with the Delhi government last year as to how funds should be distributed if they won. The court case also focused on whether the case was justiciable since it involved a foreign act of state. The judge, Mr Justice Marcus Smith, ruled that the court could deal with the dispute. Paul Hewitt, a partner in the London firm Withers LLP, who acted for Nizam VIII, said: "Our client was still a child when the dispute first arose and is now in his 80s. It is a great relief to see this dispute finally



resolved in his lifetime." Philip Barden, a partner at the London law firm Devonshires, who acted for Prince Muffakham, said: "This was an unusual and fascinating case that required the court to delve into the

history books and reconstruct events that took place over 70 years ago, around the time of the partition of India and annexation of Hyderabad. In this case, justice delayed has not ultimately been denied."

What the return of the Rajapaksa family means

(News Agencies) After a campaign many had thought close, Gotabaya Rajapaksa has won a decisive victory in Sri Lanka's presidential election. Gotabaya, candidate of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) and brother of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, won 52.25% of the vote. His main rival, Sajith Premadasa, candidate of the ruling United National Party (UNP), came a distant second with 42%. Gotabaya's victory reveals a

dangerously polarised country. While both candidates are from the ethnic majority Sinhalese, Rajapaksa, who ran a strongly nationalist campaign, won large majorities among the Sinhalese - enough that he needed few Tamil or Muslim votes. Premadasa's overwhelming majorities among Muslim and Tamil voters - who together form a quarter of the population - were not enough to overcome Gotabaya's big edge among Sinhalese.

Gotabaya was widely seen as the front-runner from the start, backed by his brother Mahinda, who remains popular among Sinhalese voters, but was constitutionally prevented from running himself. Gotabaya ran on a promise of security, appealing to widespread anger and vulnerability felt by many Sri Lankans at the UNP government's failure to prevent the devastating ISIS-inspired Easter Sunday attacks on Christian churches and hotels, despite

advance warnings. Anti-Muslim sentiment, already strong, spiked in the wake of the attack, including two days of rioting against mosques and Muslim properties.

Gotabaya ran a strongly Sinhala nationalist campaign, and his promises of security resonated with Sinhala voters, who remembered the key role Gotabaya played as defence secretary in the 2009 military victory over the separatist Tamil Tigers.

New Sri Lankan President accepts PM's invite to visit India: Jaishankar



Sri Lankan officials said the Indian minister carried a letter of personal congratulations to Gotabaya Rajapaksa from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the invitation to visit India.

(News Agencies) Newly-elected Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa will travel to India on November 29 at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday. He made the announcement after meeting Rajapaksa on his first day in office after being sworn in as the country's new

President on Monday. This is likely to be Rajapaksa's first official visit abroad after assuming office.

Jaishankar, who arrived here on an unannounced two-day visit, said President Rajapaksa has accepted Prime Minister Modi's invitation to visit India on November 29. He became the first foreign dignitary to call on

President Rajapaksa.

Sri Lankan officials said the Indian minister carried a letter of personal congratulations to Rajapaksa from Prime Minister Modi and the invitation to visit India.

"A warm meeting with Sri Lanka President @GotabayaR. Conveyed PM @narendramodi's message of a partnership for shared peace, progress, prosperity & security. Confident that under his leadership, #IndiaSriLanka relations would reach greater heights," Jaishankar tweeted after the meeting.

Rajapaksa stormed to victory in

Sri Lanka's presidential elections, the results of which came on Sunday.

Modi telephoned Rajapaksa on Sunday to congratulate him on his electoral win and invited him to visit India as his first official foreign tour. The Lankan leader thanked the prime minister for his good wishes and expressed his readiness to work with India very closely to ensure development and security, the Prime Minister's Office said.

Conveying the good wishes on behalf of the people of India and on his own behalf, Modi expressed confidence that under the able leadership of Rajapaksa,

the people of Sri Lanka will progress further on the path of peace and prosperity. Rajapaksa is the younger brother of the former president Mahinda Rajapaksa. He was a colonel in the Sri Lankan Army before leaving it to migrate to the US in 1992. He was until then in the battlefield against the LTTE in the north. He returned to Sri Lanka when older brother Mahinda was named the presidential candidate in 2005. With his brother's victory he was appointed to the powerful position of Secretary to the Defense Ministry.

US and Australian hostages freed in Taliban prisoner swap

The Afghan Taliban have freed two Western academics held hostage since 2016 in exchange for three imprisoned senior militants.

(News Agencies) American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks were released three years after being kidnapped outside the American University of Afghanistan in Kabul where they worked as professors. The three militants arrived in Qatar from Afghanistan as part of the swap. Afghan officials say the deal is aimed at restarting talks with the Taliban. President Ashraf Ghani said last week the decision was "a tough, but important" one and a "humanitarian gesture". The swap includes Anas

Haqqani, a leading figure and fundraiser in the Haqqani militant group, and two other senior commanders, who had been held in prison by Afghan authorities. Anas Haqqani's older brother, Sirajuddin, leads the Haqqani network of fighters and is a deputy leader of the Taliban, which has a political office in Qatar. The Taliban also announced they had released 10 captured Afghan National Security Force members, saying the prisoner exchange had been "successfully executed". "These actions are a

step forward in good-will and confidence building measures that can aid the peace process," the group said in a statement. What happened to the professors? The two professors of English were ambushed by gunmen and taken from a vehicle while leaving their university campus in Kabul in August 2016. US Navy Seals attempted a rescue mission several days later but Mr Weeks, originally from Wagga Wagga in Australia, and Mr King, from Pennsylvania, had been moved on just hours before. The pair then appeared in a



video, released in January 2017, appealing to then US President-elect Donald Trump to agree to a deal to secure their release. On Tuesday, a Taliban source in southern Afghanistan told the BBC the pair had been handed over in the Nawbahar district of

Zabul province at 10:00 local time (05:30 GMT). According to a local police officer, who was involved in the swap, a 48-hour ceasefire was observed before the swap. The men were then flown away in a US helicopter.

Bangladesh flies in planeloads of onions amid national outcry over shortage

Even the prime minister has chopped the vegetable out of her official menu after monsoon caused Indian crop failure

(News Agencies) Bangladesh has been forced to import planeloads of onions as the price of the cooking staple soared to record highs, an official said, with even the prime minister chopping the bulb from her menu. The price of onions - a sensitive subject in south Asia where shortages can trigger widespread discontent with political ramifications - has climbed to eye-watering levels in Bangladesh since neighbouring India banned exports in late September after heavy monsoon rains reduced the crop. One kilo of the vegetable usually costs 30 taka (US\$36c) but has soared to up to 260 taka after the ban was

imposed. Hasina's deputy press secretary Hasan Jahid Tusher said onions were being imported by air freight, and that "prime minister (Sheikh Hasina) said she has stopped using onion in dishes". None of the dishes at the PM's residence in Dhaka on Saturday contained onions, he added. Local media reported several onion consignments arrived at a major port in Chittagong city on Sunday after the government - facing a public outcry - imported the bulb from Myanmar, Turkey, China and Egypt. The state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) is also selling onions at a

discounted 45 taka per kilo in the capital Dhaka. At the city's busy Farmgate neighbourhood, hundreds of people queued for hours - some getting into scuffles - to buy the subsidised vegetable. "Even if I have to stand another two hours, I will do that. I can save some 250 taka by buying one kilo of TCB onion. I am standing here because I have to save money," said Ratan, an English teacher who goes by one name. "I am 41 years old. I have never seen onion prices ever crossing beyond 120 taka." Sharmin, a housewife who also goes by one name, said she had stopped using onions in her cooking in



the past week.

"My husband sells piazu (pakora), which needs a huge quantity of onion. But after the recent price hike, he stopped selling piazu," she added. Restaurants have cut onions from their menus and there has

been a fall in the sale of deep-fried snacks normally cooked with onions. Bangladesh's largest opposition party has called for nationwide protests on Monday over the record prices, which they blame on the government.



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US state department official quits amid 'inflated CV' claims

(News Agencies) A senior US state department official has resigned amid reports she filled up her CV with false claims about her education and professional background.

Mina Chang was accused by US media of claiming a non-existent university degree and creating a fake Time magazine cover with her face on it.

Ms Chang, 35, was deputy assistant secretary for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO). In her resignation letter, she denied all the allegations.

Ms Chang also said she had been "unfairly maligned, unprotected by my superiors, and exposed to a media with an insatiable desire for gossip and scandal, genuine or otherwise".

What is Mina Chang accused of? NBC News reported last week that Ms Chang had inflated her educational achievements and exaggerated the scope of her non-profit work.

It said that an NBC News investigation had found that Ms Chang:

Created a fake Time magazine cover with her face on it Claimed a non-existent degree from the University of Hawaii Invented a role on a United Nations panel \ Claimed to have addressed both the Democratic and the Republican national conventions Footage has emerged back from 2017, where Ms Chang is interviewed and the fake Time magazine cover is shown.

US media say the scandal has raised questions about the

Trump administration's vetting process.

Ms Chang took her post at the CSO in April, and US media report that before the row she was being considered for a more important government position managing a budget of more than \$1bn (£772m). Ms Chang denied all the allegations in her resignation letter on Monday. In the letter, obtained and published by CNN, she wrote: "A character assassination based solely on innuendo was launched against me attacking my credentials and character. This was not an accident." Despite answering every question put to me by a reporter and offering a detailed rebuttal, my superiors at the department refused to defend me, stand up for the truth or



allow me to answer the false charges against me." Today, the politics of division and personal destruction are at their very worst, and I have found myself in the crosscurrents of that very division. "It is essential that my resignation be seen as a protest and not as surrender, because I will not surrender

my commitment to serve, my fidelity to the truth or my love of country." She described the current environment at the state department as "toxic", saying the organisation was experiencing "the worst and most profound moral crisis". The state department has so far made no public comments on the issue.

Hong Kong Polytechnic University: Protesters still inside as standoff continues

(News Agencies) Up to 200 anti-government protesters remain barricaded inside a Hong Kong university, surrounded by police, as the standoff continues for a third day. Those who are still inside Polytechnic University (PolyU) are said to be running low on supplies. Protesters have been inside the campus since last week, initially stopping police from entering by lighting fires and throwing petrol bombs. Adults who leave face arrest, and some are too scared to come out. Hundreds of protesters tried to run from the campus on Monday, but many were hit with tear gas and rubber bullets and arrested. Police have revealed that on Monday alone, at the campus, they used:

1,458 tear gas canisters

" 1,391 rubber bullets

" 325 bean bag rounds

" 265 sponge bullets

A small group of protesters managed to leave using rope ladders before being picked up and driven away by

motorcyclists.

Those arrested could be charged with rioting, which carries a penalty of up to 10 years in prison.

On Sunday night, police warned protesters they had until 22:00 (14:00 GMT) to leave the campus. Police later moved in, surrounding the campus, leading to protesters throwing petrol bombs and firing stones from catapults. The violence at PolyU is one of the biggest flare-ups Hong Kong has seen since protests broke out in June.

Tuesday saw the UN human rights office urge the Hong Kong authorities to de-escalate the situation at PolyU and address the humanitarian situation of those inside which it said was "clearly deteriorating".

It added that some demonstrators' use of violence, including against the police, "cannot be condoned".

The mostly young protesters have five key demands, including an investigation into police

brutality and universal suffrage.

But underpinning it all is the fear Hong Kong's unique identity is threatened by China.

Tensions now could be further inflamed after China condemned a decision by Hong Kong's high court to overturn a ban on facemasks.

What is happening on Tuesday? An estimated 100 to 200 protesters still remain in PolyU, authorities have said.

One protester called Jeff told the BBC that he was hiding in a building on the campus.

"I have been trapped inside Polytechnic University for two days and food and water is running out," he said.

"Most people tried to get out of this hell-like place, most of them tried to escape but ended in failure, being arrested or wounded or something."

"I didn't expect this incident to get so desperate in here. The campus is so desperate and I am not well prepared. I would call it a disaster."



He said his parents were concerned for his safety and he had told them he would make it out.

One tourist from mainland China is too scared to leave.

He told BBC News Chinese that he was curious about what was going on at the university and had arrived on Sunday at the invitation of a friend who studies there.

After a visit to the library and a meal, he learnt that police had cordoned off the whole area.

"I am not a rioter," the tourist,

who wishes to stay anonymous said. "I don't want to get caught and I just need to go back to China." A handful of protesters have been trickling out of the university, some suffering from hypothermia and leg injuries, according to news site SCMP. One protester said he had decided to come out because of "hunger and cold", adding that many inside were "hurt without enough medical supplies". Another 16-year-old protester told Reuters new agency she had chosen to "surrender".

Julian Assange: Sweden drops rape investigation

(News Agencies) Prosecutors in Sweden have dropped an investigation into a rape allegation made against Wikileaks co-founder Julian Assange in 2010. Assange, who denies the accusation, has avoided extradition to Sweden for seven years after seeking refuge at the Ecuadorean embassy in London in 2012.

The 48-year-old Australian was evicted in April and sentenced to 50 weeks in jail for breaching his bail conditions.

He is currently being held at Belmarsh prison in London.

The Swedish investigation had been shelved in 2017 but was re-opened earlier this year following his eviction from the embassy. Separately, the US is seeking Assange's extradition from the UK over his alleged role in the release of classified military and diplomatic material by Wikileaks in 2010.

What did the prosecutors say? Deputy Director of Public Prosecution Eva-Marie Persson

took the decision to "discontinue the investigation regarding Julian Assange", the Swedish Prosecution Authority said.

"The reason for this decision is that the evidence has weakened considerably due to the long period of time that has elapsed since the events in question," it added.

Ms Persson said: "I would like to emphasise that the injured party has submitted a credible and reliable version of events."

"Her statements have been

coherent, extensive and detailed; however, my overall assessment is that the evidential situation has been weakened to such an extent that there is no longer any reason to continue the investigation."

One chapter over, another barely begun Caroline Hawley, BBC diplomatic correspondent With the end of Julian Assange's legal troubles in Sweden, one long chapter in the saga is over. But another one, in the United States, has barely begun.

The Wikileaks founder always argued that his fear of being extradited from Sweden to the US was why he had taken refuge in the Ecuadorean embassy in London. That political refuge ended unceremoniously in April, when he was dragged out by British police. Now Assange faces 18 criminal charges in the US, including conspiring to hack government computers and violating espionage laws. If convicted, he could face decades in jail.

Caruana Galizia murder: Malta suspect may get pardon

(News Agencies) Malta's prime minister says he is considering doing a pardon deal with an alleged money launderer suspected of being the middleman in the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia.

But PM Joseph Muscat said the suspect must first give evidence in court, the Times of Malta reported.

Caruana Galizia, a prominent anti-corruption blogger, was killed by a car bomb in 2017. Malta's handling of the case has drawn international criticism.

In all, four suspects are in custody.

Three men - brothers Alfred and George Degiorgio and their friend Vincent Muscat, all in their 50s - have been charged with triggering the car bomb which killed Caruana Galizia near her home in October 2017. They were arrested in December 2017 and pleaded not guilty in pre-trial proceedings.

Vincent Muscat is not related to the prime minister.

Caruana Galizia investigated alleged high-level corruption in Malta. The murder - bearing the hallmarks of a contract killing -

shocked not only Maltese society but also Malta's EU partners.

The new suspect, arrested on Thursday, has not been named. He is suspected of having linked the mastermind of the murder plot to the alleged killers and accomplices who helped procure the explosive device, the Times of Malta reported.

"I gave a mandate to the attorney general to negotiate with the person's lawyers to take an unprecedented step," Prime Minister Muscat was quoted as saying.

"If the person collaborates and the information provided is sufficient to prosecute the mastermind of this crime, they will receive a presidential pardon."

Europol involved

Mr Muscat said the suspected middleman was under tight police protection and his questioning in custody would continue for several days.

The Times of Malta says experts from Europol - the EU police agency - accompanied Maltese police on the raid that targeted a suspected money-laundering ring. The Europol officers seized

devices in the alleged middleman's possession.

In October, the press freedom organisation Reporters without Borders issued a detailed report on the Caruana Galizia case, sharply criticising the "flawed" Maltese investigation.

Europe's top human rights watchdog, the Council of Europe (CoE), had urged Mr Muscat's government to launch an independent public inquiry into the murder, but when the government complied in September, the CoE voiced concerns that it would not be impartial enough.

The government then agreed to change the inquiry panel and its terms of reference, following talks with Caruana Galizia's family. The inquiry is led by retired Judge Michael Mallia, assisted by two other judges, instead of the law professor and retired forensics expert previously appointed.

Lawsuits against family

Separately, the CoE's Human Rights Commissioner, Dunja Mijatovic, complained that Caruana Galizia's family was subject to some 30 civil defamation suits relating to her



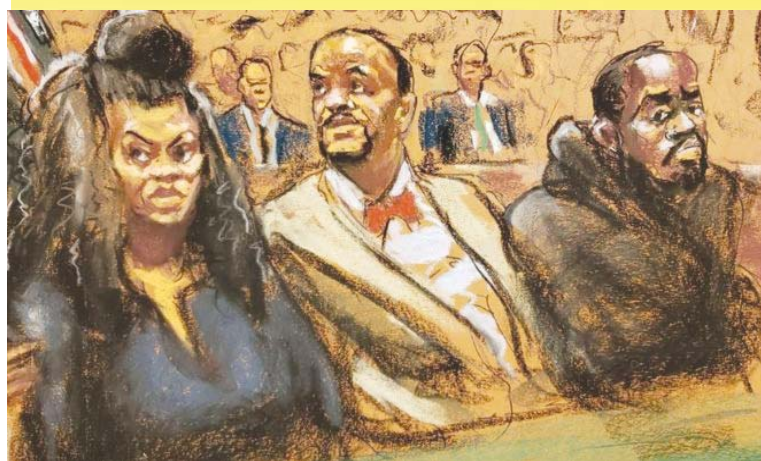
investigations, and that "pursuing these lawsuits puts unjustified psychological and financial pressure on the family". Ms Mijatovic's letter to PM Muscat said that pursuing such claims was perceived as "intimidation" and raised questions about the authorities' commitment to solving the murder case.

Mr Muscat's response to Ms Mijatovic defended the lawsuits, including one of his own against the family.

He said his government "cannot interfere in, abolish or truncate civil actions started by third parties and private citizens against the heirs of a deceased journalist". He said he would be ready to drop his

libel suit against Caruana Galizia's heirs "if the Caruana Galizia family make a declaration to the effect that they accept the findings of the Egrant Inquiry". That inquiry, headed by a magistrate, cleared Mr Muscat and his wife of any wrongdoing. Caruana Galizia had alleged that Mr Muscat's wife was the beneficial owner of a secret Panama company used to channel funds from Azerbaijan's ruling Aliyev family. Mr Muscat and his wife vehemently denied the allegations. Malta's attorney general said the 15-month investigation had failed to establish any links between the family of the prime minister and the Panama-based Egrant company.

Jeffrey Epstein guards charged with falsifying records



(News Agencies) Two prison guards who were on duty on the night of disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein's death have been charged with falsifying records.

They are accused of failing to check in on him every 30 minutes and fabricating log entries to show they had.

Both appeared in court on Tuesday and pleaded not guilty. Epstein, a convicted sex offender, hanged himself in jail in August while awaiting trial on federal sex-trafficking charges. He had pleaded not guilty to sexually abusing dozens of

girls, some as young as 14.

"Who was Jeffrey Epstein?"

"The case of Jeffrey Epstein - in 300 words

The 66-year-old was previously jailed in Florida in 2008 for procuring a minor for prostitution.

The charges against the two guards are the first to arise from a criminal inquiry into his death. What are the two guards accused of?

They were supposed to check on Epstein every 30 minutes on the night of his death. He had been taken off suicide watch

after a previous suspected attempt to take his own life and was alone in his cell at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in New York.

But attorney Geoffrey Berman said the two guards had "repeatedly failed to conduct mandated checks on inmates, and lied on official forms to hide their dereliction".

The guards were named in a statement by the Southern District of New York Attorney's Office on Tuesday as correctional officers Tova Noel and Michael Thomas, aged 31 and 41 respectively.

For "substantial portions" of their shifts, they "sat at their desk, browsed the internet, and moved around the common area", the statement said. They then signed "false certifications" showing that they had conducted counts of inmates.

Both guards have been charged with "making false records and conspiring to make false records and to defraud the

United States".

"We allege these officers falsified records to create the appearance they were following... protocols. The security risks created by this type of behaviour are immense," FBI assistant director William Sweeney said in the statement.

Surveillance footage showed that no other people had entered the area where Epstein was held that evening, the statement added.

Both guards appeared in court on Tuesday and pleaded not guilty. Bail was set at \$100,000 (£77,000) each, US media reports.

Both guards were previously reported to have been working overtime shifts on the night of Epstein's death.

US Attorney General William Barr ordered their suspension in August after the FBI opened an investigation.

Federal prosecutors later offered the guards a plea bargain but they turned it down,

according to the Associated Press news agency.

Who was Jeffrey Epstein and what was he charged with?

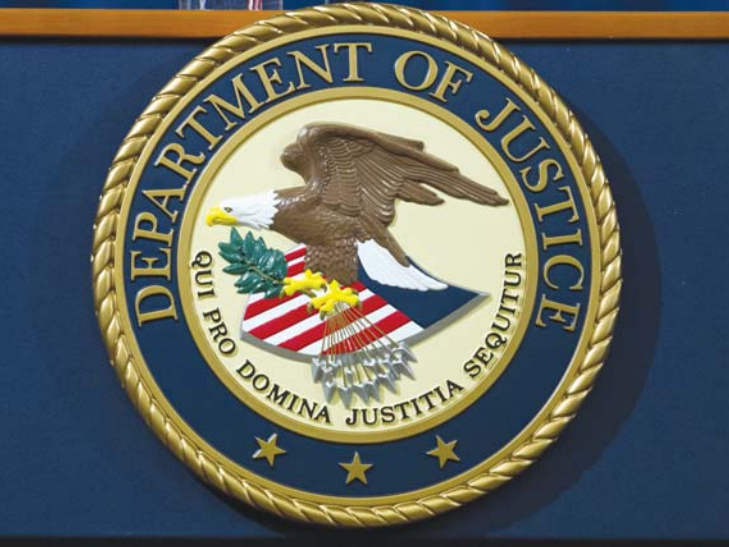
New York-born Epstein worked as a teacher before moving into finance. Prior to the criminal cases against him, he was best known for his wealth and high-profile connections.

He was often seen socialising with the rich and powerful, including US President Donald Trump, former President Bill Clinton and the UK's Prince Andrew.

"New Epstein accuser calls on Prince Andrew to talk

"Six things we learned from Prince Andrew interview Epstein was accused of paying girls under the age of 18 to perform sex acts at his Manhattan and Florida mansions between 2002 and 2005. He was arrested on 6 July. He avoided similar charges in a controversial deal in 2008, pleading guilty to a lesser charge of soliciting and procuring a minor for prostitution.

'One Of The Worst Forms Of Evil': More Than 330 Arrested In Child Porn Site Bust



(News Agencies) More than 330 people have been arrested around the world in a major takedown of a massive child pornography website, which U.S. officials say is among the first to be found using cryptocurrency to carry out video sales. "These agents and prosecutors rescued some 23 children worldwide from abusive situations" in the U.S., Spain and the U.K., said Jessie Liu, the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia. She described this type of crime as "one of the worst forms of evil imaginable." "Our message for those who produce, distribute, and receive child pornography is clear: You may try to hide behind technology, but we will find you and we will arrest and prosecute you," Liu added.

At a news conference on Wednesday, federal officials said they seized 8 terabytes of child sexual exploitation

videos. "That's more than 10,000 CD-ROMs full of imagery that's no longer in the hands of child pornographers," said Don Fort, chief of IRS Criminal Investigation. The porn site, called Welcome to Video, accepted payment in bitcoin and was on the Tor network, which is encrypted and hidden. The site's upload page explicitly asked users not to upload "adult porn." It operated for nearly three years before it was shut down in March 2018. Investigators targeted hundreds of the sites' users. Among them was Michael Lawson, a father of two young children from Midland, Ga. He is currently serving 121 months in prison and was deemed an "extreme danger" to his community, said Richard Downing, the deputy assistant attorney general for the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

Was Taylor Swift really banned from playing her hits?

(News Agencies) "I don't know what else to do," declared Taylor Swift in a lengthy Twitter post last week. "I just want to be able to perform my own music."

The star was distressed and upset. She wanted to play a medley of her hits at Sunday's American Music Awards but her old record label had forbidden it.

Or so she claimed. The label hit back with a statement of its own, saying it hadn't tried to stop the show and that Swift's narrative "does not exist".

Insults were traded, politicians weighed in and, eventually, a settlement was reached.

Big Machine Records issued a statement on Monday night saying it had agreed "to grant all licences of their artists' performances" for "the upcoming American Music Awards".

It didn't mention Swift by name but the implication was clear: Her performance could go ahead.

But the second half of the statement was the really interesting part.

"It should be noted," said the label, "that recording artists do not need label approval for live performances on television or any other live media.

Record label approval is only needed for contracted artists' audio and visual recordings and in determining how those works are distributed."

In other words, Swift never



needed permission to play hits like Shake It Off, Love Story or I Knew You Were Trouble at the AMAs (in any case, performance rights belong to the publisher, not the record label).

What she couldn't do was put them online afterwards. And that matters.

Last year, 6.5 million viewers tuned in watch the AMAs on television, down from 9.15 million a year earlier, but clips from the show went viral.

Cardi B's carnivalesque performance of I Like It has racked up 28m views on YouTube alone, for example - making that platform more valuable to her as an artist than the TV broadcast itself.

Taylor Swift obviously wants her performance archived online, too... but that's where things get tricky. "If Taylor was performing her own songs live at a festival, which wasn't being broadcast, it wouldn't be a problem," leading music and entertainment lawyer Talya Shalson tells the BBC. "The

issue in this situation is that, as it's a recorded performance, that would effectively be a re-recording" of the star's biggest hits.

"It's very common for labels to put in a re-recording restriction, which normally lasts three or five years after the end of the artist's deal," she explains.

Such a clause prevents the artist from taking their songs, recording them again and delivering them to another label, allowing the original rights-holder to "protect its investments".

A crucial bit of background to this story: Swift fell out with Big Machine in June this year, after the label was bought by Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande's manager Scooter Braun for \$300 million.

Swift made no secret of her dismay. One of Braun's on-and-off clients is Kanye West, who has tormented Swift for more than a decade, interrupting her at award shows, disparaging her in his songs and putting a waxwork of her naked body into a music video.

Disney+ fans without answers after thousands hacked

(News Agencies) Thousands of Disney customers say they have been hacked after signing up to its online streaming service.

Since Disney+ went live, attackers have stolen thousands of customers' accounts and put them up for sale on the dark web, according to a report.

People waited on telephone and online chat lines for hours, and many still say that Disney has yet to sort their problems.

But the firm says it does not believe its systems have been compromised.

"Disney takes the privacy and security of our users' data very

seriously and there is no indication of a security breach on Disney+," a spokesman said.

The statement indicates that members' details have been stolen by other means.

That could involve spyware on users' devices or the re-use of login details stolen from elsewhere.

Disney's answer to Netflix, Disney+ is an online platform where fans can view its movies, short films and TV shows, including the Marvel and Star Wars franchises.

Ten million people signed up in its first week.

Disney+ has not yet launched in the UK, but is available in the United States, Canada and the Netherlands.

Dark web

On 12 November, its first day live, people had technical problems and many complained on social media. Others said they were locked out of their accounts, and since they contacted Disney they have not heard back.

According to an investigation by Zdnet, thousands of user accounts went on sale on the dark web.

Only hours after the service launched, hackers were selling

Disney+ accounts for as little as \$3 (£2.30).

A subscription to the service costs \$7 (£5.40) a month.

With the help of a cyber-security researcher, the BBC also found several hacked customer accounts for sale on the dark web.

Many say they used unique userIDs and passwords to access the streaming platform.

But Jason Hill, a lead researcher with CyberInt, says it looks like many were stolen because people use the same passwords for different sites. Mr Hill said that hackers

can lift someone's password from a different site which has previously been hacked and then try it on a new site, like Disney+. If it works, they steal the account.

"Whilst many may consider having a unique password for each online service to be difficult to manage, password managers simplify this process and allow you to generate and securely store unique difficult-to-guess passwords," he said. The streaming service does not have two-factor authentication. This is when a separate password is sent upon login, to verify an account identity.

Victoria's Secret is canceling its fashion show

"Hong Kong Would've Been Obliterated In 14 Minutes If

Not For Me": Trump



"demeaning comments about women" by one of Victoria's Secret's top executives.

That was in response to a 2018 interview that Ed Razek, then chief marketing officer for L Brands, who among other things said he didn't think the brand should include "transsexuals" in its show. "Why not? Because the show is a fantasy," Razek said in an interview with Vogue. "It's a 42-minute entertainment special. That's what it is."

Razek later apologized for his "insensitive" comments. He left the company earlier this year. On Wednesday, Victoria's Secret posted another quarter of declining sales.

The company has lost customers to rivals such as Target, Kohl's, American Eagle and lingerie startups. Leaders at Target and Kohl's both called out their

strength in their lingerie businesses during their most recent quarters.

Victoria's Secret has also dealt with the fallout from L Brands founder and CEO Leslie Wexner's ties to disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein.

Epstein, whose death in jail last August has been ruled a suicide, was Wexner's former personal money manager and a trustee of the Wexner Foundation, Wexner's charitable group based Ohio. Wexner said he cut ties with Epstein in 2007.

In September, Wexner said that he was "embarrassed" that he put his trust in Epstein.

"Being taken advantage of by someone who was so sick, so cunning, so depraved is something that I am embarrassed that I was even close to, but that is in the past," Wexner said.

"It was a very important part of the brand building of this business and was an important aspect of the brand and a remarkable marketing achievement," Burgdoerfer said Thursday. "We're figuring out how to advance the positioning of the brand and best communicate that to customers." The show has generated

controversy in recent years, with publications from Cosmopolitan to The Guardian calling it sexist and anti-feminist. Online lingerie startups like Third Love have pointed to the show as an example of Victoria's Secret falling out of touch. And a year ago Third Love's CEO wrote an open letter to the company denouncing

Defence ministry to select manufacturers for helicopter deal worth Rs 21,000 crore

of the helicopters, according to sources. The foreign equipment manufacturers will play a key role in transfer technology and be a strategic partner for the Rs 21,000 crore deal. These helicopters will replace the ageing Chetak helicopters and will be used for search and rescue operations, casualty evacuation, low intensity marine operations and torpedo drops. The strategic partnership model aims at a collaboration between Indian manufacturers and foreign firms who are willing to share technology and then set up Indian production lines. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) had issued Expression of Interest for short listing of potential Indian Strategic Partners and foreign OEMs for the procurement of 111 Naval Utility Helicopters for the Indian Navy on February 12, 2019. Out of the 111 helicopters 95 will be manufactured in India by the selected Indian Strategic Partner. The foreign firms, which will be strategic partners, will have to set up dedicated manufacturing line, including design, integration and manufacturing processes for the helicopters in India and

make Indian manufacturing line as a global exclusive facility for the NUH platform being offered. In July last year the MoD approved guidelines for the strategic partnership model aimed at giving a push to indigenous defence manufacturing, more than a year after the policy was unveiled in May 2017. "This will give a major fillip towards encouraging self-reliance and aligning the defence sector with the Make in India initiative of the government," a defence ministry statement said. Through the strategic partnership model the government aims at reducing defence imports that currently account for 60 per cent of military acquisitions. A parliamentary report, tabled last year in the Parliament, highlighted the slow progress of the strategic partnership model and observed that dependence on foreign suppliers particularly for military hardware not only resulted in huge expenditure on import of defence equipment but made the security of the country vulnerable as during emergency situations the supplier may not provide the required weapons or spare parts.

The weaponisation of food is taking a new form. It could change warfare

Fourth, there would be no end to attempts of staying ahead of an adversary once deterrence stability is adversely affected. It would start an "agricultural weapons race", with more exotic methods being devised. And fifth, this "precision" agricultural weapon would be deadly, skewing the wounded-to-dead ratio in an agonisingly long time frame. The horizon in creation of weapons of war is vast, limited only by man's ingenuity. Weaponisation of food is centuries old. But how the Insect Allies programme as different is

that it opens up an avenue for the implementation of devious intent

to squeeze an adversary, on an immediate basis (one growing season), in a precisely targeted way, of crops of importance. One hopes that the Indian government has its ears to the ground to see whether a similar programme is happening in our neighbourhood. Any country that disregards the cliché that "capability takes time to build but intentions can change overnight", is courting trouble.

Why the Gandhis cannot lead India's Opposition

This emphatically marks him out from Rahul Gandhi. To be sure, Modi has other advantages over his opponent. He is more intelligent, works harder, is a better orator, and has years of administrative experience behind him. These are all important additions to his principal and fundamental advantage — that he is not a dynast.

When Sonia Gandhi first came to India, in 1968, the country was marked by deference and hierarchy. It mattered a great deal who your father or grandmother was. Fifty years later, the country has become far less feudal. People want to know what you have done, not whose son or daughter you are. This is the case in sport and business, and in politics too. Younger Indians are rightly appalled that the party of the freedom movement believes that only a fifth-generation dynast can lead it.

It may be that Sonia cannot see this profound change in how Indians now think. It is past time that

she did. I write this as someone who has no sympathy for Hindutva or for the present regime. In five-and-a-half years in power, Narendra Modi's government has tacitly endorsed majoritarianism, grievously undermined the autonomy of our public institutions, attacked science and scholarship, and damaged the economy. The cult of personality and the centralisation of power and decision-making in the prime minister's office are worrying signs of a slide towards authoritarianism. To rehabilitate our democratic credentials, and to restore our social fabric, India is in urgent need of a strong and credible Opposition. However, it is overwhelmingly unlikely, if not impossible, that Sonia Gandhi and her family can provide it.

The BJP is not invincible. It has lost important state elections in recent years. It won successive general elections in large part because these became presidential; with Modi's principal challenger

handicapped by his lineage and crippled by his own lack of political intelligence. This was demonstrated in the flawed campaign Rahul ran, where, instead of confronting the prime minister for his failure to create jobs and solve the agrarian crisis, he charged him with personal corruption, a strategy which — given the Congress' own past record on corruption — put off, rather than attracted, voters. The Congress of today reminds one of the later Mughals; the emperor and empress in their palace, surrounded by courtiers singing their praises, while, outside, the territory owing allegiance to the ruler shrinks to nothingness. This would be funny, were it not so tragic. The longer the Congress remains a Family firm, the easier it will be for Narendra Modi to deflect criticism of his policies and remain not just in power, but in control of the political narrative. Sonia and Rahul and Priyanka may think they owe it to the Congress to stay in politics. They owe it to the country to go.

Rising number of U.S. counties are majority Hispanic or black

Non-Hispanic white Americans account for 60% of the U.S. population, but in a growing number of counties, a majority of residents are Hispanic or black, reflecting the nation's changing demographics and shifting migration patterns. US Census data reveals 41 counties have flipped to majority of black and Hispanic residents since 2000 - rising from 110 at start of century to 151 in 2018

***Analysis released this week by the Pew Research Center finds 41 counties now have Hispanic or black resident majorities that did not in 2000**

***Most of the new counties to have majority Hispanic and black populations are located in the South and Southwest**

***Indigenous people also made up majorities in some of the counties in the same southern areas**

***The Pew analysis also found that the number of majority black counties grew from 65 to 72 between 2000 and 2018**

(SAI Bureau) New York: The United States saw the number of counties that are majority Hispanic or black residents rise from 110 to 151 between 2000 and 2018, according to a new study of Census data. The analysis released this week by the Pew Research Center identifies the 41 counties, the majority of which are found in the South and Southwest of the US. Indigenous people also made up majorities in some of counties in the same southern areas, concludes the analysis. The report finds that non-Hispanic white Americans account for 60 percent of the US population. The United States saw the number of counties that are majority Hispanic or Black rise to 151 between 2000 and 2018, an increase of 37 per cent, according to a new study of Census data. Of the 41 counties, clusters appear in border states, including five in New Mexico nine in California, and 12 in Texas.

The counties represent just 5 percent of the total 3,142 counties in the US, and about half of the 293 majority non-white counties, a figure that includes counties where multiple racial and ethnic groups are combined to make a majority, Pew says. The analysis includes only counties with a minimum population of 10,000 in 2018. The counties represent 77 percent of all US counties and 99 per cent of the US population, according to Pew.

The number of Hispanic counties increased from 34 to 69 from 2000 to 2018, mostly in the South and West. The Hispanic population grew in all but four of the 69 counties, during the years studied by Pew, and those that experienced declines only saw small decreases. The number of Hispanic counties increased from 34 to 69 from 2000 to 2018, mostly in the South and West, according to



Pew's latest analysis of Census data (shown)

No county that was majority Hispanic in 2000 fell below 50 percent. Pew reports the trends are in line with the growth of the US Hispanic population, which reached a record 59.9 million in 2018, up 1.2 million over the previous year and up from 47.8 million in 2008, according to US Census Bureau population estimates. Despite the increase, growth in the Hispanic population over the past decade had slowed due to a decline in Hispanic women who had given birth and decreases in immigration, another Pew analysis reports. Until then, the Latino community had been growing at a faster rate because of high birth rates and immigration from Latin America, Pew says. Texas last year had 10 counties with the largest share of Hispanics, according to the latest Pew analysis. Starr County, which is on the border with Mexico, south of San Antonio, has about 65,000 residents overall and the largest concentration of Hispanics, about 96 percent of the population. Starr County, which is on the border with Mexico, south of San Antonio, has about

65,000 residents overall and the largest concentration of Hispanics, about 96 per cent of the population. Neighboring Webb, Hidalgo and Cameron counties, also on the Mexican border, also had Hispanic populations of 95, 92 and 90 percent respectively. The populations of some larger US counties also grew between 2000 and 2018, including in San Bernardino County, California, which has a population of 2.2 million. The populations of some larger US counties also grew between 2000 and 2018, including in San Bernardino County, California, which has a population of 2.2 million. San Bernardino was the most populous county to become majority Hispanic during the years studied. Florida's Osceola County south of Orlando, with a population of 370,000 and which includes neighboring touristy Kissimmee and along its southern edge Yeehaw Junction, a swampland crossroads, was 55 percent Hispanic, up from 29 percent.

While the US black population has remained relatively unchanged over the last 20 years, Pew found that the number of majority black coun-

ties grew from 65 to 72 between 2000 and 2018. While the US black population has remained relatively unchanged over the last 20 years, Pew found that the number of majority black counties grew from 65 to 72 between 2000 and 2018. A contributing factor is the migration of black Americans from the north to the south. A contributing factor, Pew says, is the migration of black Americans from Northern states to the South, and from cities to suburbs. The Pew study found fifteen counties with black majorities in 2018 that were not majority black in 2000. Rockdale County, Georgia, outside Atlanta, grew from 18 percent to 55 percent, making it the largest increase of black residents over the period studied by Pew. Shelby County, Tennessee, home to Memphis, was the county with the largest population to become majority black, growing from 48.5 percent in 2000 to 53.6 percent in 2018. Ten counties with the highest shares of black residents reported in 2018 were Mississippi, which had seven, Alabama with two and Virginia,

which had one. Pew notes that the total number of black residents in the ten counties was about 70 percent or more. Pew found 41 counties (listed above) had a majority Hispanic, black or indigenous residents in 2018 that did not have the same majorities in 2000. Overall, Pew tallied 69 counties that were majority Hispanic, 72 were majority black and 10 were majority American Indian or Alaska native across the US in 2018. Pew points out that the majority American Indian or Alaska native counties are unique because they experienced overall population declines, while their share of American Indian or Alaska natives in these counties remained flat. There were no counties where Asians accounted for at least half of the population. In Honolulu County, Hawaii, the population was 42 per cent Asian, 9 per cent Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Overall, Pew tallied 69 counties that were majority Hispanic, 72 were majority black and 10 were majority American Indian or Alaska native (shown above) across the US in 2018.

(By RALPH R. ORTEGA FOR DAILYMAIL.COM)

U.S. Hispanic population reached new high in 2018, but growth has slowed

The U.S. Hispanic population reached a record 59.9 million in 2018, up 1.2 million over the previous year and up from 47.8 million in 2008, according to newly released U.S. Census Bureau population estimates. Over the past decade, however, population growth among Hispanics has slowed as the annual number of births to Hispanic women has declined and immigration has decreased, particularly from Mexico.

Even so, Latinos remain an important part of the nation's overall demographic story. Between 2008 and 2018, the Latino share of the total U.S. population increased from 16% to 18%. Latinos accounted for about half (52%) of all U.S. population growth over this period.

Here are some key facts about how the nation's Latino population has changed over the past decade:

1 Population growth among U.S. Hispanics has slowed since the 2000s. From 2005 to 2010, the nation's Hispanic population grew by an average of 3.4% per year,

but this rate has declined to 2.0% a year since then. Even so, population growth among Hispanics continues to outpace that of some other groups. The white population saw negligible growth between 2015 and 2018, while the black population had annual average growth of less than 1% over the same period. Only Asian Americans have seen faster population growth than Hispanics, with a 2.8% growth rate between 2015 and 2018. (All racial groups are single race, non-Hispanic.)

2 The South saw the fastest Latino population growth of any U.S. region. The Latino population in the South grew 33% during this period, reaching 22.7 million in 2018, up 5.6 million from 2008. This growth was part of a broader increase in the Latino population in regions across the country since the 1990s. States in the Northeast (25% increase), Midwest (24%) and West (19%) also experienced growth in the number of Latinos from 2008 to 2018.3 The states with the fastest His-

panic population growth tend to have relatively small Hispanic populations – and are not in the South. North Dakota's Hispanic population grew by 135% between 2008 and 2018 – from 12,600 to 29,500, the fastest growth rate of any state. However, the state ranked 49th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia in its overall Hispanic population in 2018. Hispanic populations in South Dakota (75%), the District of Columbia (57%), Montana (55%) and New Hampshire (50%) also experienced rapid growth during this period, though all have relatively small Hispanic populations.

4 Los Angeles County had more Hispanics than any other U.S. county, with 4.9 million in 2018. The next largest were Harris County, Texas (2.0 million), and Miami-Dade County, Florida (1.9 million). Overall, 11 counties had more than a million Hispanics in 2018; these include Maricopa County, Arizona; Cook County, Illinois; and Riverside County, California. In 102 U.S. counties, Hispanics made up

at least 50% of the population in 2018. 5 Puerto Rico's population declined nearly 4% in 2018 and is down about 15% since 2008. The island's population stood at 3.2 million in 2018, down from 3.3 million in 2017, when hurricanes Maria and Irma hit. The two disasters led many Puerto Ricans to leave for the U.S. mainland, especially Florida. Even before the hurricanes, however, the island's population had experienced a steady, long-term population decline due to a long-standing economic recession.

6 Latinos are among the youngest racial or ethnic groups in the U.S. but saw one of the largest increases in median age over the past decade. Latinos had a median age of 30 in 2018, up from 27 in 2008. Whites had the highest median age nationally – 44 in 2018 – followed by Asians (37) and blacks (34). The median age for both Latinos and whites has increased by three years since 2008, tying for the largest uptick of any racial or ethnic group.

In a rising number of U.S. counties, Hispanic and black Americans are the majority

Non-Hispanic white Americans account for 60% of the U.S. population, but in a growing number of counties, a majority of residents are Hispanic or black, reflecting the nation's changing demographics and shifting migration patterns.

In 2018, there were 151 U.S. counties where Hispanics, blacks or two much smaller racial and ethnic groups – American Indians and Alaska Natives – made up a majority of the population, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data. That was an increase from 110 such counties in 2000. The 41 counties that joined the list between 2000 and 2018 are all majority Hispanic or majority black. (For a full list of these counties, see the sortable table at the end of the post.)

Overall, 69 counties were majority Hispanic in 2018, 72 were majority black and 10 were majority American Indian or Alaska Native. The majority American Indian or Alaska Native counties are unique in that most have experienced overall population declines since 2000, even as the share of American Indian or Alaska Native residents in these counties remained fairly flat. There were no U.S. counties where Asians accounted for more than half of the population, but in Honolulu County, Hawaii, the population was 42% Asian and 9% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

The South and Southwest of the United States hold most of the

counties where Hispanic, black or indigenous people make up a majority of residents. These counties represent just 5% of the 3,142 counties in the U.S. and about half of the country's 293 majority nonwhite counties (a figure that includes counties where multiple racial and ethnic groups combine to account for a majority).

Rapid growth in majority Hispanic counties

The number of majority Hispanic counties doubled between 2000 and 2018, from 34 to 69 – mostly in the South and West. In all but four of these 69 counties, the Hispanic share of the population grew during that period. The few counties that experienced declines saw only slight decreases, and no county that was majority Hispanic in 2000 fell below 50% Hispanic by 2018.

These trends are in line with the growth of the U.S. Hispanic population as a whole, which reached a new high in 2018 even as its rate of growth slowed. The Latino population grew at a faster rate than most other racial or ethnic groups during the 2000s, due to relatively high birth rates among Hispanic women and immigra-

tion from Latin America.

In 2018, Texas was home to the 10 counties in the U.S. with the largest shares of Hispanic residents. Starr County, home to about 65,000 people overall, had the largest concentration of Hispanic residents, at 96% of the population. Other counties where Hispanics accounted for an especially large share of residents included Webb (95%), Hidalgo (92%) and Cameron counties (90%) – all in Texas. The Hispanic populations of some larger U.S. counties also grew between 2000 and 2018. San Bernardino County, California (population 2.2 million) was the most populous county to become majority Hispanic during this span. Osceola County, Florida (home to about 370,000) saw the largest percentage point increase in Hispanic residents during this time (26 points, rising from 29% to 55%).

The migrating U.S. black population

While the black share of the total U.S. population has not changed substantially over the last two decades, the number of majority black counties in the U.S. grew from 65 to 72 between 2000 and 2018. One contributing factor may be migra-

tion of black Americans

There are now 15 majority black counties that were not majority black in 2000. Among them, Rockdale County, Georgia, located about half an hour outside Atlanta, had the largest percentage point increase in the share of black residents (from 18% in 2000 to 55% in 2018). With about 930,000 residents, Shelby County, Tennessee, which contains Memphis, was the county with the largest population to become majority black.

The 10 counties with the highest shares of black residents in 2018 were in Mississippi (seven counties) Alabama (two) and Virginia (one). In these 10 counties, about 70% or more residents were black. Meanwhile, eight counties that were majority black in 2000 are no longer. Three of these are large U.S. cities that the Census Bureau includes in its county estimates: Washington, D.C.; Richmond, Virginia; and St. Louis, Missouri. Washington (home to roughly 702,000 residents in 2018) saw a 19% increase in total population during that period, while its black population decreased by 9%. The city's share of black residents de-

clined by 15 percentage points, from 60% to 45%.

Majority American Indian or Alaska Native counties In 2018, there were eight U.S. counties where more than half of the population was American Indian; two other counties were majority Alaska Native. While majority Hispanic and black counties are growing in number, these predominantly American Indian or Alaska Native counties have experienced net population loss from 2000 to 2018.

And one county that was majority American Indian or Alaska Native in 2000 is no longer: San Juan County, Utah, where the share of American Indian residents fell 8 percentage points, from 55% to 47%. All 10 majority American Indian counties are located on or near reservation land in the Midwest and the West, and most have populations of fewer than 20,000 people. The exceptions are McKinley County, New Mexico, and Apache County, Arizona, both of which are home to about 72,000 people. The two counties where the majority of residents were Alaska Native are both in rural Alaska: Bethel Census Area (population of roughly 18,000) and Nome Census Area (population of about 10,000).

[illegible]

WeWork's former CEO got a massive payout. Now 2,400 employees are losing their jobs



(News Agencies) WeWork said Thursday it is laying off about 2,400 employees globally as part of a broader effort to cut costs and find a viable path forward after a disastrous IPO attempt. "As part of our renewed focus on the core WeWork business, and as we have previously shared with employees, the company is making necessary layoffs to cre-

ate a more efficient organization," a WeWork spokesperson said in a statement provided to CNN Business. "The process began weeks ago in regions around the world and continued this week in the U.S."

The company added: "This workforce reduction affects approximately 2,400 employees globally, who will receive severance, continued benefits, and other forms of assistance to aid in their career transition. These are incred-

ibly talented professionals and we are grateful for the important roles they have played in building WeWork over the last decade."

The company -- which branched into co-living buildings, a gym and a school in recent years -- had ballooned to more than 12,000 global employees.

The layoffs have so far impacted departments across the company, including WeWork's human resources, growth, and corporate technology departments, according to one source. The company declined to comment on this.

This total doesn't include the roughly 1,000 cleaners and building maintenance staffers who were told their jobs will be outsourced and were given the opportunity to accept new jobs at real estate services company JLL, one of the outsourcing partners, or be involuntarily terminated from their

job at WeWork with no severance.

The specter of sweeping layoffs has hung over the company for much of the past two months since it failed to pull off an IPO. During that time, WeWork's cofounder and CEO Adam Neumann was forced to step down and the company accepted a multibillion-dollar bailout from SoftBank. As part of that deal, Neumann received a massive payout despite all but running the company into the ground.

In an email sent to staff Monday and obtained by CNN Business, WeWork executive chairman Marcelo Claure did not specify how many people will be laid off but said that "the necessary job eliminations" will "start in earnest this week in the U.S." The company had yet to publicly put a number on how many people would be laid off. Multiple reports in recent weeks have

said WeWork could cut 4,000 jobs, if not more, with The New York Times reporting that many of those positions are part of its core coworking business. Leading up to the layoffs, leadership had attempted to ease concerns about the cuts by promising to prioritize treating those laid off with "dignity and respect," as Claure said in a separate company-wide email. He emphasized that WeWork's business is secure. The unfolding saga highlights the risk of working for a high-flying tech startup. While some employees once saw their paper wealth soar as WeWork's valuation rose as high as \$47 billion on the private market, WeWork's valuation has since plummeted to a fraction of that. WeWork reportedly delayed laying off staffers because it couldn't afford to pay severance, prior to accepting the SoftBank bailout.

UK's Crime Agency arrests 5 Indians among 10 people for laundering money

Examinations of their travel history suggests the group transported more than GBP 14 million in 2017 and 2018 alone, the NCA notes.



(News Agencies) Five Indian nationals are among 10 people arrested by the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) as part an investigation into an international drugs, illegal immigration and money laundering operation.

The 10 suspects, who also include British and French nationals, are believed to be part of an organised crime group which is suspected of having flown an estimated 15.5 million pounds out of the UK to Dubai hidden in suitcases.

The group, which includes Indian nationals aged between 28 and 44 arrested from London in raids on Wednesday, are also under investigation for trying to smuggle 17 migrants into the country earlier this year.

"Cash is the lifeblood of organised crime groups and they need the services of money launderers. We believe that the action we and our partners have taken will have caused permanent damage to a well-established money laundering network, said Chris Hill, NCA senior investigating officer.

We are determined to do all we can to target illicit financial flows and hit organised criminal networks where it hurts in the pocket, he said.

The suspects are alleged to have been part of a well-orchestrated conspiracy to launder millions of pounds of money made through illegal Class A drugs and organised immigration crime, transferring it from the UK to Dubai over the last three years.

Examinations of their travel history suggests the

group transported more than GBP 14 million in 2017 and 2018 alone, the NCA notes.

A 41-year-old Indian national is alleged to be the head of the network and was arrested at his home in Hayes, west London. NCA officers recovered a quantity of cash, illegal drugs and luxury cars, including Range Rovers, Audi Q7s and BMW 5 series, during raids in Hounslow, Hayes, Uxbridge and Southall across south-west London.

The raids follow an NCA investigation, supported by Scotland Yard, into cash seizures totalling more than GBP 1.5 million made by Border Force officers over the course of 2019. In all cases the cash was being transported between UK airports and ports and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

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Selfless acts of kindness makes you feel happier

Kindness is good for your brain, may activate reward areas of the brain and make you feel happier, says a new study.

(News Agencies) The glow of kindness is real — even if it has nothing in it for you. Psychologists at the University of Sussex have confirmed the same by undertaking a major analysis of existing research showing the brain scans relating to over 1,000 people making kind decisions.

For the first time, they split the analysis between what happens in the brain when people act out of genuine

altruism — where there's nothing in it for them — and when they act with strategic kindness — when there is something to be gained as a consequence.

Many individual studies have hinted that generosity activates the reward network of the brain but this new study from Sussex is the first that brought these studies together, and then split the results into two types of kindness — altruistic and strategic.

The Sussex scientists found that reward areas of the brain are more active — i.e. use up more oxygen — when people act with strategic kindness when there is an opportunity for others to return the favour. But they also found that acts of altruism, with no hope of personal benefit, activate the reward areas of the brain too, and more than that, that some brain regions were more active during altruistic generosity, indicating that there



is something unique about being altruistic with no hope of gaining something in return.

Lead author Dr Daniel Campbell-Meiklejohn said, "We know that people can choose to be kind because they like feeling like they are a 'good person', but also that people can choose to be kind when they think there might be something 'in it' for them such as a returned

favour or improved reputation." "The finding of different motivations for giving raises all sorts of questions, including what charities and organisations can learn about what motivates their donors. Some museums, for example, choose to operate a membership scheme with real strategic benefits for their customers, such as discounts," said co-author Jo Cutler.

Single and ready to mingle? Here's how to find a date without dating apps

Online dating may seem like the norm with modern relationships, but that's not the case. Here's how some millennials find dates offline. You may be able to relate, or you may get ideas on new places to meet people.

(News Agencies) Like them or not, dating apps have become an acceptable way for younger generations to meet a potential love interest. As of 2016, Tinder, a popular location-based mobile dating app, had a staggering 9.6 million daily active users, accounting for some 1.4 billion swipes per day.

Tinder has been operating in India since 2013. On Wednesday, US-based dating app Bumble, Tinder's fierce rival, said it will foray into the country by the end 2018. The company has roped in actor Priyanka Chopra as an investor, she will also act as an adviser to the app. Yet, no matter how common dating apps and sites have become, they're not necessarily for everyone. Though definitely convenient for busy people, who don't have the time to look for a significant other in

real life (IRL), online dating can be tiring for some.

22-year-old Pritha Ghosh, an engineering student at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, finds the idea of internet dating a "tricky little business" and has no plans of being a part of it. Some of my friends have tried the infamous dating app, Tinder, and have gone on a few first and only dates. They found people very flaky on the apps. I prefer meeting future dates in person, without the help of an app," Pritha says.

After being addicted to them for almost a year, Sourav Chatterjee, 28, deleted all his dating apps and ended up loving it. As efficient as some dating apps are — you can message someone one minute and literally be out on a date with them the next — going to a friend's birthday party and hitting it off with somebody IRL is even

more so, says the IT professional.

The biggest advantage of meeting potential dates in real life, according to him, is getting to experience their vibe right away, which is something no online dating platform can deliver.

"There's no better way to gauge attraction and chemistry than to be physically present with someone," Sourav says.

Kolkata-based psychologist Aparna Sengupta agrees that while meeting people as potential partners is possible on digital applications or social media, meeting people in person tends to yield better results. That's because physicality can help you figure out whether or not there are sparks.

"When meeting someone in real life, you have the benefit of eye contact, viewing nonverbal cues, and judging a connection," Aparna



explains. That's hard to gauge from just a few words on a screen. All the above said, the question is, how do people who don't like online dating actually go about meeting people?

Entrepreneur Abhinav Singh, 30, says he's had the most success while meeting up with friends from years ago. His two most meaningful connections with women he dated happened with old friends; in fact, he is currently dating a girl he knew in college, and it's going really well.

"Different lifestyles causes people to grow apart. After a random, 'What have you been up to?' message, we hung out and something clicked. Dating someone you've known for years has the advantage of skipping over the initial small talk. of meeting people. Since you have been friends for a while, you already have built-in mutual interests. I have found that generally, knowing the person from before can accelerate the relationship. This is good and bad at the same time, but if handled

well, it can lead to a good, meaningful relationship," says Abhinav. For Shruti Shah, a 19-year-old college student from St. Xavier's college, Kolkata, online dating sites are appealing because there's not as much stress as talking in person. But she thinks having a good conversation with someone in person, suits her better.

"It's nice to be able to go to a place where I can meet a lot of people I have things in common with. Many of the people I've ended up dating, or having a romantic relationship with, I've met through mutual friends at events. I like going to musical gigs and a lot of the times, I end up meeting people over there. Sometimes, it can be really hard to go out and find people with similar interests, so going to a gig, where we already have something in common makes it easier. Being in a group setting with friends who also share these interests has helped a lot in the past, too, since it makes it a lot easier to talk," says Shruti.



Survey finds 60% urban Indian women at risk of diabetes

According to the results of a new survey conducted across 14 Indian cities, despite being aware that diabetes is a serious health concern, urban women did not take steps to adopt an active, healthy lifestyle.

(News Agencies) Over 60% of urban Indian women do not follow a regular exercise regime, which puts them at increased risk of diabetes, according to the results of a new survey.

Released on the occasion of World Diabetes Day, the survey conducted by diabetes care company Novo Nordisk India also showed that 73% of urban women in the country are unaware of gestational diabetes and its related health risks for the next generation. For the survey, over 1,000 women, belonging to the age group of 18-65 years were

interviewed to draw insights on the level of awareness on risks emerging from diabetes. The survey was conducted across 14 cities in the country – Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Lucknow, Ludhiana, Indore, Guwahati, Kochi and Vijaywada. The findings showed that 78% women interviewed were aware of diabetes as a serious health concern and more than 70% women believed that a healthy lifestyle will help prevent diabetes

and its associated complications. While it is encouraging to note that 78% of the respondents were aware about diabetes and its complications, it is alarming to note that women are not taking concrete actions to address this challenge," Melvin D'souza, Managing Director, Novo Nordisk India, said in a statement. According to a study published in the journal Lancet, lack of physical activity is linked to an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers and is associated with more than five



million deaths per year. With 72.9 million people currently living with diabetes, India is known as the world capital for the disease. According to an estimate, the diabetic population in India is expected to grow up to 134.3 million by 2045.

Men more at risk of sudden cardiac arrest after sex. Women, learn CPR

According to a US study, men who have a history of cardiovascular disease may be at greater risk of experiencing sudden cardiac arrest during or soon after sex.



(News Agencies) Men with a history of cardiovascular disease may be more at risk of facing sudden cardiac arrest during or soon after sex, a study has revealed. Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart suddenly

stops beating. It usually occurs without warning. The findings showed that although the incidence of SCA is very rare, survival rates in such cases remain low. It is because, the partners failed to immediately perform

cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), which could save more lives, the researchers said.

"Even though SCA during sexual activity was witnessed by a partner, bystander CPR was performed in only one-third of the cases," said Sumeet Chugh, associate director at the Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute, LA, California.

For the study, published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, the team examined records of

more than 4,500 cardiac arrests over a period of 13 years in persons above 18 years. Out of these only 34 were during or within an hour of having sex, and 32 of those were men, who were already taking drugs for heart conditions.

Patients who experienced sudden cardiac arrest related to sexual activity also had a higher rate of ventricular fibrillation/tachycardia than those who did not. Only one-third of these SCA cases received

bystander CPR. This low bystander CPR rate accounted for less than 20% of patients who survived to hospital discharge, the researchers noted.

Moreover, some cases of SCA after sexual activity may also involve medications, stimulants and alcohol use, the researchers said. "These findings highlight the importance of continued efforts to educate the public on the importance of bystander CPR for SCA, irrespective of the circumstance," Chugh added.

World Diabetes Day: 8 fruits to include in your diet if you have diabetes

From apples, berries, guavas to amla and jamun leaves, here is a list of fruits that can help keep a diabetes patient's condition from worsening.

(News Agencies) Diabetes has come to become one of the most dreaded offshoots of modern and hectic

condition from worsening.

*Pomegranates contain the richest combination of antioxidants, protecting you from free-radicals and chronic diseases. They play an important role in lowering the levels of bad cholesterol and resistance, which the body has against insulin. *Apple is a hypoglycaemic fruit which contains plenty of fibre that is an impeccable ingredient for a diabetic.



lifestyles. In such cases, fruits play a major role and can go a long way in helping keep a diabetes patient's

It also contains the chemical Pectin, that has the capability of reducing blood sugar levels and the requirement

of insulin in the body by almost 50%.

*Berries have the capability to break glucose into energy, which reduces the increased glucose levels by a considerable amount. Further, they increase the release of insulin. Thus, regulating glucose levels in the body.

*Guava is very rich in dietary fibre that helps ease constipation (a common diabetic complaint) and can lower the chance of developing type-2 diabetes. Guavas are also high in vitamin A and vitamin C.

*Natural antioxidants in papaya make it a great choice for diabetics. As diabetics are prone to many ailments, like heart or nerve damage caused by irregular blood sugar levels, the diet

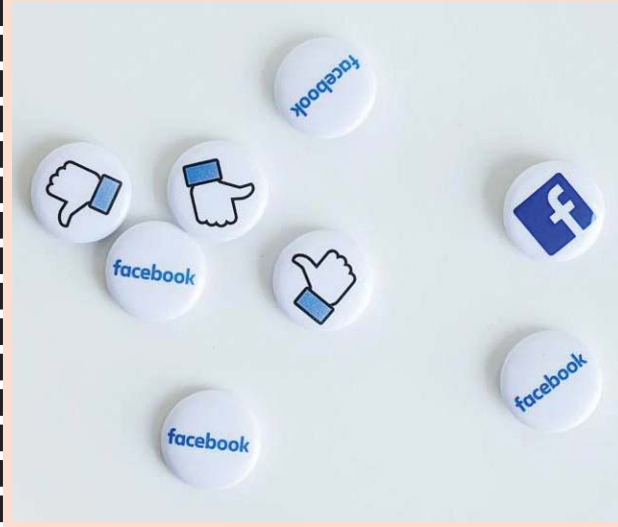
having papaya can obstruct future cell damage for a better and longer life span. *Jamun leaves are good for diabetics. They help convert starch into energy and keep the blood sugar levels in check. Jamun has a low glycemic index and reduces symptoms such as frequent urination and thrusting.

*The glycemic load of an orange is about 5, a low number that indicates a small rise in blood glucose. But avoid consuming orange juice.

*Amla is a good source of chromium which is good for the pancreas, where insulin is produced and therefore, helps to manage blood sugar levels.

Quitting social media can escalate exam results of below average students

By devoting less time to Facebook and other social networking sites, students with below-average grades could boost their results.



(News Agencies) By devoting less time to Facebook and other social networking sites, students with below-average grades could boost their results, says a recent study. The study, led by Dr James Wakefield from the University of Technology

Sydney (UTS), looked at the amount of time first-year university students spent on Facebook, and the impact it had on their grades. The research showed that while high achieving students were not affected by the amount of time on Facebook, below-average students had significantly lower grades with greater Facebook use. "Our research shows time spent on social networking platforms puts lower academic achievers at higher risk of failing their course," said Dr Wakefield. Students taking part in the study spent on average nearly two hours a day on Facebook, however,

some were on the social networking site in excess of eight hours a day.

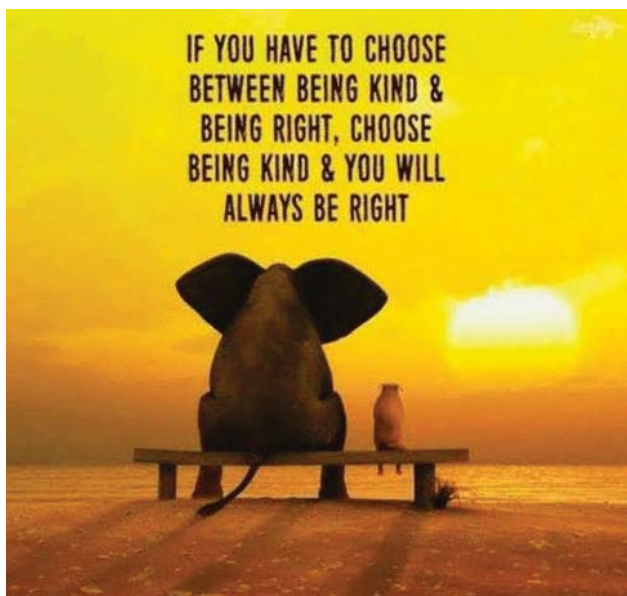
"Lower achieving students may already be grappling with self-regulation and focus, so it seems time spent on Facebook provides a further distraction from studies," Dr Wakefield said. "We found that if they used Facebook for three hours a day -- not substantially higher than the average of just under two hours -- the difference was around six marks in a 60 mark exam or 10%," added Dr Wakefield. The research, recently published in --

Computers and Education -- with co-author Dr Jessica Frawley from the University of Sydney, aims to help Quitting Facebook can escalate exam results below average students better understand the impact of social networking use on a student's educational achievement. While the research applies to university students studying STEM and business degrees, it is likely to also be relevant to high school students who use social media. More than 500 students enrolled in the first year subject

'Introductory Accounting' at an Australian university took part in the study, with an average age of 19. Researchers assessed the students' general academic achievement using their weighted average mark (WAM) across all of their studies and surveyed them about their Facebook use. They also controlled for other factors that might influence their achievements, such as whether they were planning to major in accounting, as well as their age and gender.

A Calmer You, by Sonal Kalra: Kill bitterness with small acts of joy

Go on and help someone who may not be able to return the favour. Or help people overcome their little fears, without showing any condescension. It will make them, and you, happier than you imagine!



(News Agencies) Next time when I say 'excuse me' to someone and they reply with 'excused', I will deliberately bump head-on into them. There, I'm officially becoming short-fused. Pata nahi yaar, one has lost patience even for smaller, harmless idiocies that would have otherwise made one smile, because there's such monumental stupidity on display everywhere these days. Life has become this senseless tamasha, where all that you see is people debating with each other on who has the right to be more outraged. Everyone seems angry about something. Regardless of whether you are Right-wing or Left-wing or BJP or Congress or Rahul or Modi, whether you are Hindu or Muslim or rural

or urban or Indian or Syrian or American — don't you feel and see bitterness and anger, in general? And although most of us know that this anger is engineered by vested parties, fuelled on by polarised media, and spread by social media warriors, the point is, it leaves all of us drained and exhausted every single day. So, what to do for calmness? I have realised that when stress captures you through situations beyond your immediate control, what works like magic to bring instant joy are random acts of kindness. Kindness that isn't expected or planned, kindness that doesn't take much thinking, kindness that isn't done as an in-

your-face favour to the recipient. Recently, I was waiting to board a flight at an international airport, and like everyone else, scrolling social media on my phone like a maniac. Ten minutes of reading people's Facebook statuses and Twitter abuses to each other, and my blood pressure was up north. Just then, a voice interrupted my distress. 'Indian you are?' I looked up, to see a young girl, almost in tears. 'Haan, aap bolo,' I replied, and the Hindi put her face immediately at ease. "Mujhe announcement

samajh nahi aa rahi," she said, describing how she got separated from her group of tourists, and was in utter panic that she couldn't find her gate, or follow announcements about flights. I had a lot of time before boarding my flight, and the long walk to her gate with her just didn't seem long at all. When I saw her off to where the rest of her group was, the look on her face helped me more than any anti-anxiety pill could have done.

This isn't the first time I felt the urge to go the extra mile, to help

someone who was in need for no reason other than being in unfamiliar surroundings. It doesn't even seem like help, let alone a favour, but still brings an unexplained sense of joy. I'm sure you all encounter such situations all the time. Let me give you an example.

The malls in our cities and towns have been developed on the Western model, and most shoppers enjoy the facilities. But you'd ALWAYS find someone hesitating a bit at the bottom of the escalator. It could be an elderly

person, or simply someone who isn't used to it. It's the easiest thing to brush them aside and go up. But it's so, so beautiful to hold their hand and help them up once, so that they are able to do it on their own without their heart thumping, from then on. You know, the first time I did it, I was so worried that they'd refuse assistance, and I'd be left looking like an elitist fool who was judging people. But I realised that whether that happens or not completely depends on how you offer that help. Remember:

Watching porn could be linked to erectile dysfunction, here's why

According to a sexual health expert in UK, single or divorced men are more likely to suffer from erectile dysfunction (impotence) because they have become too used to porn or having 'unsatisfactory' sex lives.

(News Agencies) If you are not enjoying a good bedroom life, blame pornography. According to a sexual health expert in UK, single or divorced men are more likely to suffer from erectile dysfunction (impotence) because they have become too used to porn or having 'unsatisfactory' sex lives.

A report by London-based clinic Numan found that 80 per cent of men living in the UK have experienced erectile dysfunction. Speaking on the report to FEMAIL, women's column in the Daily Mail, Chartered Psychologist Felix Economakisto blamed pornography and drinking

too much for causing problems in the bedroom of single, divorced men.

"The first reason is that they often tend to have either negligent, absent or unsatisfactory sex lives. That means they feel rather 'de-skilled' and not confident when it comes to the bedroom," Economakisto, was quoted as saying. Millions of men have been affected by erectile dysfunction. The study, which was conducted by the Market Research Society, asked 1,000 divorced men in the UK if they had experienced a sexual performance problem, reported Daily Mail. According to

the research, four-fifths of those men questioned admitted they had struggled with erectile dysfunction. "If men become 'wound up' about goals and work, it could also impact their performance during sex," Economakisto said. "Sometimes men can also be so wound up about performance goals and reviews at work that they tend to start perceiving performance in the bedroom as yet another 'customer' to keep happy, complete with fear of unsatisfactory reviews," he said. "Watching pornography could cause erectile dysfunction," he added.

US grants Huawei new 90-day licence extension

The US Commerce Department had added Huawei to its "Entity List" in May after it concluded the company is engaged in activities "contrary to US national security or foreign policy interests."

(News Agencies) The Trump administration on Monday issued a new 90-day extension allowing US companies to continue doing business with China's Huawei Technologies Co Ltd as US regulators continue crafting rules on telecommunications firms that pose national security risks. After adding Huawei to an economic blacklist in May citing national security concerns, the

US Commerce Department has allowed it to purchase some American-made goods in a series of 90-day license extensions that it says aim to minimize disruption for its customers, many of which operate networks in rural America. Reuters on Sunday reported the planned 90-day extension after the Trump administration initially planned a

short-term two-week reprieve, but ran into bureaucratic issues and opted instead to issue another 90-day extension. "The Temporary General License extension will allow carriers to continue to service customers in some of the most remote areas of the United States who would otherwise be left in the dark," said US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross in a statement. "The Department will

continue to rigorously monitor sensitive technology exports to ensure that our innovations are not harnessed by those who would threaten our national security."

The US Commerce Department added Huawei to its "Entity List" in May after it concluded the company is engaged in activities "contrary to US national security or foreign

policy interests."

Huawei said Monday the extension "won't have a substantial impact on Huawei's business either way. This decision does not change the fact that Huawei continues to be treated unfairly either." The company argues the decision to "add Huawei to the Entity List has caused more harm to the US than to Huawei."

IT companies may shed 30,000-40,000 mid-level staff: Mohandas Pai

The former Chief Financial Officer of IT major Infosys Ltd termed these job losses as once-in-five-years normal phenomenon with maturing of the industry.



(News Agencies) India's information technology services companies may shed 30,000 to 40,000 middle-level employees this year as growth slows down, IT industry veteran T V Mohandas Pai said Monday.

The former Chief Financial Officer of IT major Infosys Ltd termed these job losses as once-in-five-years normal phenomenon with maturing of the industry. "As in all sectors in the West, in India too when a sector matures so many people will be there in the middle level who will not be adding value to the salary they get," Pai told PTL.

Promotions are okay when companies are growing fast but when it slows down, people getting fat salaries will aggregate at the higher level, prompting companies to periodically reset their pyramids, and shedding people, he said. "It's going to happen again and again and again every five years," said Pai, Chairman of Aarin Capital and Manipal Global Education Services. "Nobody is entitled to a fat salary and high-paying job unless you perform, right? You have to deliver value". "All across industry, may be 30,000 to 40,000 in a year...", he said when asked about the number of middle-level staff who would lose their jobs. But Pai said about 80 per cent of those who lose jobs would have employment opportunities in industries in general if they are specialists.

HP turns down \$33 billion takeover bid from Xerox

HP board said it still would like to discuss the possibility of reaching a deal with its rival, a venerable US tech company best known for its photocopy machines.



(News Agencies) HP Inc. said Sunday it turned down a \$33 billion hostile takeover bid from Xerox, saying it undervalued the computer and printer maker.

But the HP board said it still would like to discuss the possibility of reaching a deal with its rival, a venerable US tech company best known for its photocopy machines.

"We recognize the potential benefits of consolidation, and we are open to exploring whether there is value to be created for HP shareholders through a potential combination with Xerox," HP said in a statement.

But the company's board members have "fundamental questions that need to be addressed" first, it added. It said, for instance, that

Xerox's revenue dropped from \$10.2 billion to \$9.2 billion since June 2018. And HP is three times more valuable than Xerox with a \$27 billion market value. Hewlett-Packard was one of the first Silicon Valley giants. In 2015, it spun off its enterprise products and services business, and held onto the PC and printer businesses. It was renamed HP Inc. Xerox, founded in 1906 as Haloid, was the pioneer in photocopy machines, so much so that in the United States, its name became a verb meaning to make a photocopy.

Economy losing steam, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das faces tough balancing act

Das, overseeing what was until recently the world's fastest-growing major economy, has worked tirelessly to restore relations with the government after a bitter public spat led his predecessor Urjit Patel to quit.

(News Agencies) Soon after taking over as India's central bank governor almost a year ago, Shaktikanta Das decorated his 18th floor office overlooking the Arabian Sea with two statues of Lord Jagannath, a form of the Hindu god Vishnu. Revered in Das's native Odisha state, Jagannath is depicted with round, lidless eyes that are always watching over the welfare of devotees. It's an appropriate adornment. Das, overseeing what was until recently the world's fastest-growing major economy, has worked tirelessly to restore relations with the government after a bitter public spat led his predecessor Urjit Patel to quit. Colleagues say Das usually tucks papers under his arms at the end of the work day to continue plugging away from home. He's paid a hefty dividend



to the finance ministry, swung into stimulus mode and eased up on bank lending restrictions -- all of which Patel resisted in the face of government pressure. But there's still much to do: the economy is losing steam on many fronts, the banking sector remains saddled with one of the world's worst bad-debt loads and the government's fiscal targets are slipping by the day. Insiders say Das has turned around the mood in the bank's

Mumbai headquarters with an affable, plain-spoken approach. As one official said: He listens to everyone and then sticks to his own decision. Among the RBI rank and file, the more academically-decorated predecessors of Patel and Raghuram Rajan were considered outsiders due to their long stints in American academia. Long-timers were put offside as in-house talent was often bypassed in senior

appointments. Not with Das: in the job posting for a deputy in-charge of monetary policy, at least 25 years of government experience within India tops the priority list among requirements for the role. Rajan and Patel were contrasting personalities -- Rajan the rockstar of global central banking and Patel reclusive both inside and outside the bank. Silver-haired Das strikes a balance. He has his own Twitter account and is more open to the media, giving interviews to local and foreign media including Bloomberg News. But he hasn't taken to the global stage in the way Rajan did, such as when he led criticism of the Federal Reserve in 2014 for not taking into account the spillovers of its policies on emerging markets

Motherless Brooklyn movie review

Edward Norton sabotages his passion project

Written, produced, directed by and starring Edward Norton, the film can't help but feel like the result of a lost bet.



Motherless Brooklyn
Director - Edward Norton
Cast - Edward Norton, Willem Dafoe, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Alec Baldwin, Michael K Williams, Bobby Cannavale, Bruce Willis
 Written, produced, directed by and starring Edward Norton, *Motherless Brooklyn* is the sort of

passion project that is made only when everyone agrees that they're dealing with top-draw material. That, or Norton had some quality dirt on a top-level Warner Bros executive.

How he managed to convince a studio with which he doesn't have a longstanding legacy

relationship — Norton has appeared in just one WB movie in the last decade — to pay him millions to make a nearly two-and-a-half hour detective drama with a central cast whose average age is probably about 55, is beyond me.

It is a film in which people listen to jazz and uncover real estate scams; a film in which Willem Dafoe plays an engineer and Michael K Williams plays the trumpet. Its final showdown is not a physical confrontation on a rooftop, but a verbal one across a table. What I'm trying to get as is this: films like *Motherless Brooklyn* aren't made these days.

And almost as if to test how

far he'd be allowed to push things, Norton, in his infinite wisdom as the sole credited writer of the piece, has transported the

contemporary plot of Jonathan Lethem's source novel to the 1950s. Just because he loves a good gumshoe story.

As a tribute to the fast-fading genre, *Motherless Brooklyn* certainly looks the part — with more stylish costumes than you'd see at the Met Gala, scored to the luxurious tones of a saxophone by the always interesting Daniel Pemberton, and set-decorated to within an inch of its life. Narratively, however,

Norton's screenplay could do with another pass or two. Often, he gets so bogged down by the minutia of his period New York that he loses sight of the most interesting themes of the story. *Motherless Brooklyn* is more than just a character study of a private eye with Tourette's; it is a tale about corruption, both moral and political. But Norton takes such an inaccessible route in tackling ideas of systemic racism and social inequality that for a moment you wonder if all he wanted out of his movie was an excuse to revisit his heyday as an actor in the 90s.

Norton has never been a

subtle performer. He is a good actor, but nearly incapable of allowing the story to be the priority and not himself. In that regard, he is a lot like our very own Nawazuddin Siddiqui, blessed with the unique talent of making even silences as bombastic as a rallying cry in a war movie. Norton's distractingly loud performance would've most likely been excused had *Motherless Brooklyn* come out in the 90s, when he was delivering films such as *Primal Fear* and *American History X*. But in today's context, it feels more outdated than nostalgic. Sadly, so does the film.

Motichoor Chaknachoor movie review

Nawazuddin Siddiqui tries hard in a deeply problematic film

Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Athiya Shetty film's soul seems to be stuck in the '80s as is apparent by its casual sexism. The jokes never make up for it.



Motichoor Chaknachoor
Director: Debamitra Biswal
Cast: Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Athiya Shetty

The biggest achievement in India is leaving it.

An old joke, it has been told often but still hasn't lost its sting. Perhaps because like all good jokes, its foundation lies in truth.

In *Motichoor Chaknachoor*, Athiya Shetty's Anita Tripathi aka Ani has but one dream — to leave India for foreign shores and update her Facebook account with photos taken against the Statue of Liberty, or the London Eye or even the Burj Khalifa. If push comes to shove, she will settle for Pashupatinath Temple, but India will simply not do. She has decided she will marry a visa -- find a suitable boy who is settled in 'phoren' and relocate post the saat pheras.

Her friends have done it, and countless Indian women before them. This doesn't make the practice any less regressive, or the premise of the film any less problematic.

The yin to her yang is Nawazuddin Siddiqui's Pushpinder Tyagi. A Bhopal lad, who has been working in Dubai for the last seven years, his once-in-three-years visits home are in the hope of finding a bride. He is pushing 40 and hoping that the 'laine of brides' his mother (Vibha Chibber) keeps on bragging about will finally materialise.

This 'brahmachari' is close to the breaking point but mommy (Vibha) has her own agenda. Her plan is to find a fat dowry for Pushpinder with which she will marry off his sister. In one telling dialogue, Pushpinder mentions to a

prospective bride that she is a woman and he is a man and that's enough to get married, while his mother is clear that nothing less than Rs 25 lakh and the suitable amount of gold will do. The problems in the film's premise is nothing short of a Gordian knot, as tangled in patriarchy as it is — a woman who is training to be a lawyer is not considered good enough as she is overweight, with a samosa-jalebi joke thrown in for cheap laughs;

wedding is the end-all and be-all of a woman's existence and a single aunt is never allowed to forget it, and then there is the issue of a man slapping a woman and the film's deeply disturbing treatment of it. Cinematic slaps have rung loud in 2019 but have not stopped people from heading to theatres. If Kabir Singh did it as a blockbuster, *Motichoor Chaknachoor* may do it on a smaller scale. The film does register as a comedy.

Mona Singh on relationship rumours. 'The day I get married, I will happily announce it to the whole world'

Rumours of her impending marriage have been doing the rounds for a while now but actor Mona Singh wants to put the record straight once and for all by saying there is no immediate plan. "Well I have never spoken about my personal life and I would like to maintain that. But one thing is for sure the day I do get married, I will happily announce it to the whole world, shares Mona, adding she remains unfazed by the rumours. It was reported that the actor has been dating someone special for the past one year. On the work front, a lot of Mona's career has taken an interesting turn. Not one to shy away from experimenting right from the beginning of her career with shows such as *Jassi Jaissi Koi Nahin*, *Kya Huaa Tera Vaada* and *Pyaar Ko Ho*



Jaane Do, Mona has carried forward that as well in her web projects *Kehne Ko Humsafar*, *Hain Yeh Meri Family* and the recent *M.O.M. - Mission Over Mars*. "For me it is all

To a large extent, the film's leads and ensemble cast bring alive the small-town milieu. The ever-reliable Nawazuddin is a win as a sex-deprived man who cannot go against his mother. Nawaz eats up the scenery as he channels the frustration and confusion of the mild-mannered Pushpinder. Athiya is the true revelation of the film as a feisty small-town girl. She gets the Bundelkhandi dialect right and tries to match pace with Nawaz. While she does fall short in the stretched emotional sequences, there is tremendous improvement since 2017's *Mubarkaan*. The characters who inhabit this world are identifiable and relatable. From the parents and siblings to the mausi and daadi, the film gets the small-town India and the people who inhabit it absolutely right. While that has been the flavour of Bollywood for some years now, the success rate is not so encouraging.

about getting out of my comfort zone, anything that is too comforting and safe is too boring for me as an actor," shares the actor about her unusual choices. She goes on to add, "I like to think out of the box, I do things which challenge me and excite me, which is why I have chosen all different kind of roles." The actor, who has done films, TV as well as web projects, says she is totally enjoying the digital space as she feels there is so much more freedom in terms of content. "I am so happy with the kind of work that I am getting. And not just web series', I have also done a number of short film on different OTT platforms. It is the best not just actors but also directors and creators who want to tell different stories," she concludes.

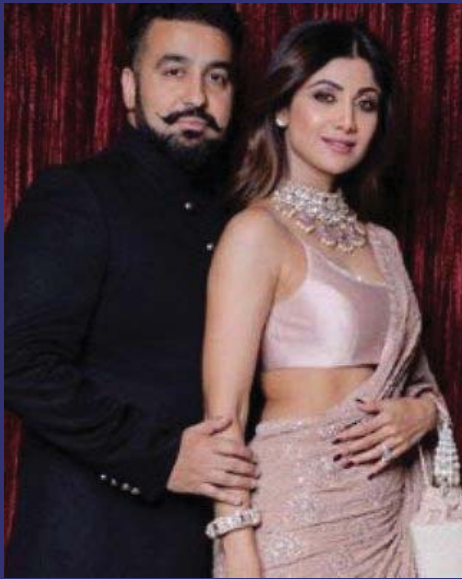
Kim Kardashian shows off her signature curves as she struggles to fit in Versace dress

(News Agencies) Kim Kardashian West has found success this year with her popular shapewear line Skims. But even she can still relate to the very real struggle of trying to squeeze into that perfect piece that just won't fit. She took to Instagram Thursday as she showed off her signature curves in a sexy Versace dress that she had trouble putting on. The 39-year-old captioned the photo: 'How good would this @versacedress have been if it fit.' She still stunned in the floor-length spaghetti-strap ruched sparkling burgundy gown, which showed off her cleavage and gorgeous curves. The reality star took to her Instagram story as she took in an evening workout with her personal trainer Melissa Alcantara. She said: 'Ok, so we're doing a night workout before my dinner, which I never do, with this one, but I figured we have to get into it at some point.' And yeah, I mean, sometimes you fall off and sometimes you really gotta get it together and this is one of my fallen off times where I am, I think, 18 pounds up from what I was about a year ago, a year and a half ago.' Kim said that she's working toward her 'goal weight' by her 40th birthday, which is next October 21. She added: 'To feel good, I just want to get it like, a really good goal weight and so that means working out at all costs...But Melissa and I have a major goal for by the time I'm 40.'



Shilpa Shetty flies to Japan to celebrate her 10th wedding anniversary

Shilpa Shetty and husband Raj Kundra will be celebrating 10 years of their wedding on Friday.



(News Agencies) Shilpa Shetty had been working around the clock and took a break from her chock-o-bloc shoot schedule for bringing in the special day with her better half. Talking about the anniversary, Shilpa says, "Our journey so far has been beautiful and I have loved every part of it. These 10 years have definitely been very memorable and while a decade is a milestone for any marriage, I wanted a break from work and keep the celebrations modest. A trip to Japan was Raj's idea." Shilpa is awaiting the release of her movie Nikamma, which is on floors currently.

Taapsee Pannu on Anil Kapoor's son Harsh Vardhan: 'If I was in his position, I wouldn't have got a second film'

(News Agencies) Taapsee Pannu did not mince her words when she appeared on Neha Dhupia's radio show, No Filter Neha. The actor went on to share quite a few personal stories besides naming Urvashi Rautela as the one who needs a stylist and Harsh Vardhan Kapoor as the newcomer who wouldn't have been able to move ahead without his parents. On being asked to name a newcomer who would have been nowhere if he/she didn't have famous parents, Taapsee named Harsh Vardhan. Harsh is the son of actor Anil Kapoor and brother of

Sonam Kapoor. He made his debut with Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's Mirzya in 2016 but it turned out to be a disaster at the box office. He went on to star in a vigilante drama, Bhavesh Joshi Superhero two years later. He is currently working on the Abhinav Bindra biopic in which he plays the central role. "Whatever I have seen of him till now, I think it would have been pretty difficult to get a second film after a not so appreciated debut. If I would have been in his position, I wouldn't have got a second film," she said. Neha also asked Taapsee to name a person who needs a new stylist. Taapsee named Urvashi and said, "I think she has got a great body, I would love to see better clothes and not just the kind that show only the body." Urvashi will now be seen in Anees Bazmee's multi-starrer comedy, Pagalpanti. She is paired opposite Arshad Warsi in the film. It is set to hit theatres this Friday. Moving ahead in the game, Taapsee named Jacqueline Fernandez as the worst co-star, besides Vicky Kaushal. "She has so freaking hot body because I was struggling to match up to her in Judwaa 2. I was just like I just hope that I don't put myself to shame," she said. Talking about Vicky, she said, "I am always so conscious that I should not lose out to him in a scene because he is just so good."



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Victoria's Secret is canceling its fashion show



(News Agencies) Victoria's Secret parent company L Brands confirmed on Thursday that it will not air its fashion show this year after falling ratings and backlash to the event in recent years. "We think it's important to evolve the marketing of Victoria's Secret," L Brands Chief Financial Officer Stuart Burgdoerfer said on a call with analysts Thursday. The first Victoria's Secret fashion show aired in 1995, but last year the show fell to its lowest ratings since its inception. (Contd on page 21)



"Hong Kong Would've Been Obliterated In 14 Minutes If Not For Me": Trump

(Contd on page 21)

AMAZON ORIGINAL INSIDE EDGE SEASON 2 TRAILER OUT NOW

All 10 episodes of the second season to launch on Amazon Prime Video on the 6th of December 2019



(Press Release by Sterling Media) Mumnai : In the next edition of the PPL, a volatile Vayu Raghavan leads the Mumbai Arvind Vashisht. But the

teams must also counter virtue and sex, money, colossal scandals that'll rock the world of cricket. In the sport's upper echelons, Zarina Malik allies with Bhaisaab, but those in the shadows threaten to destroy the very game they seek to control. Building on the success of its International Emmy nomination last year, Inside Edge is the story of the Mumbai Mavericks, a T20 cricket franchise playing in the PowerPlay League. Set in a landscape of sports, secrets, and scandals where selfishness is a

Defence ministry to select manufacturers for helicopter deal worth Rs 21,000 crore

The foreign equipment manufacturers will play a key role in transfer technology and be a strategic partner for the Rs 21,000 crore deal.



(News Agencies) The Narendra Modi government's first defence procurement under the strategic partnership model for 111 Naval Utility Helicopters (NUH) will enter the final stage of selecting the manufacturers soon. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is likely to give a final clearance next week for the Request of Proposal (RFP) after having identified the Indian firms and foreign manufacturers who will get together for the production (Contd on page 21)

