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## Tsu Namu 2.0

# *BJP returns to power*

# *Riding on Modi Wave in India*



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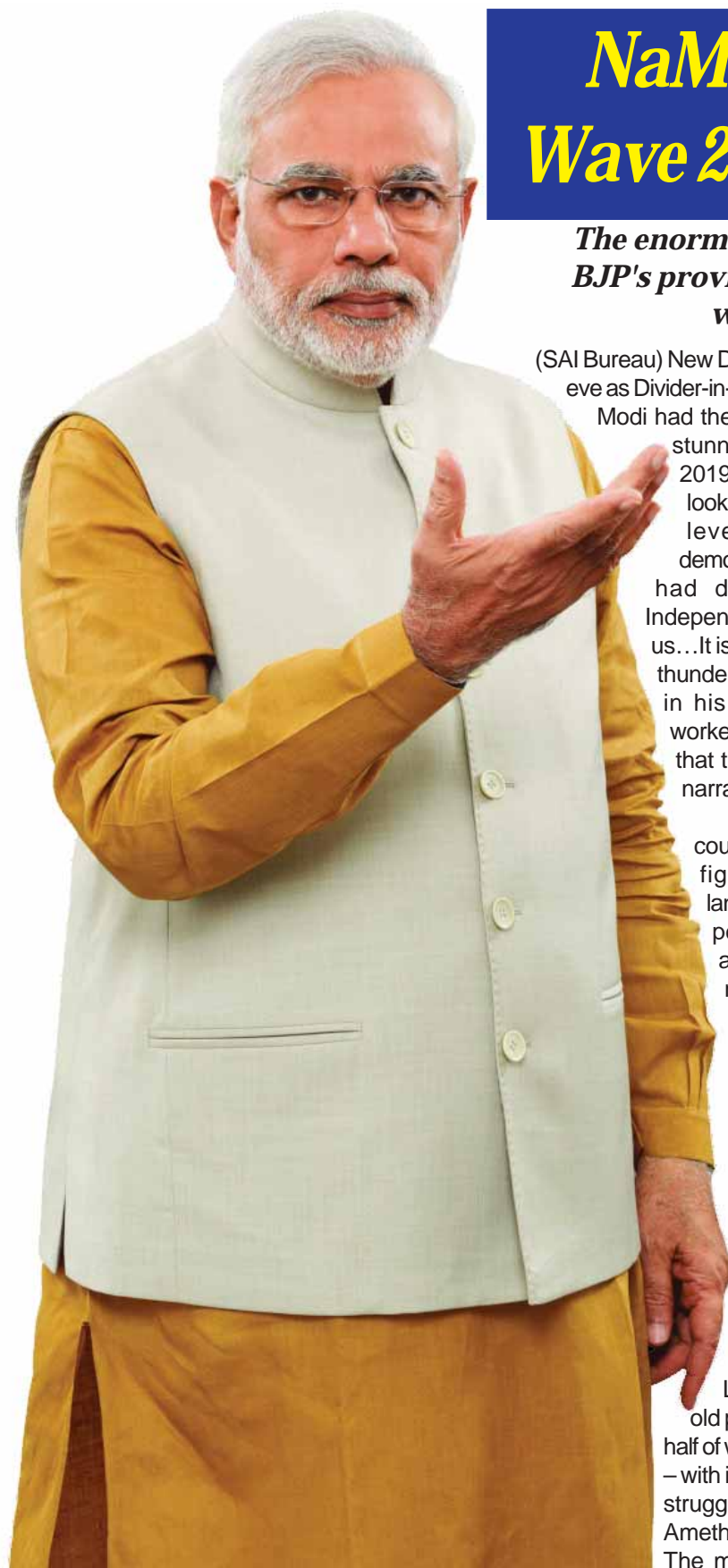
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## NaMo resonates across India again Wave 2.0 breaches Caste, Class Barriers

**The enormity of the Modi victory can be encapsulated in one simple statistic: BJP's provisional vote share as per the current trends stands at 48%. In other words, every second Indian who voted chose Modi as PM.**

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: For a man dubbed on election eve as Divider-in-Chief by Time magazine, Narendra Modi had the last laugh on Counting Day. His stunning victory in General Elections 2019 shattered the age-old prisms of looking at India, as the Modi juggernaut levelled the divides of caste, demography, gender and geography that had defined Indian politics since Independence. India has united to elect us... It is a mandate from New India," Modi thundered from the BJP HQ in New Delhi, in his thanksgiving speech to party workers as the day wound down, adding that this election had presented a new narrative in front of the nation.

"There are only two castes in the country now: poverty and people who fight poverty," he said. The NDA landslide was a case of hard work and personal chemistry trumping cold arithmetic as the Modi-led BJP notched up a simple majority on its own (in terms of trends) while the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) looked poised to better its 2014 score of 332 – at last count the NDA was leading in 354 seats. The BJP on its own was leading at 303 seats.

The Congress failed to make any impact whatsoever despite a high-decibel campaign, and if the current trends hold it might not even be able to claim the Leader of Opposition status in Lok Sabha. At last count, the grand old party was leading at just 51 seats – half of which came from Kerala and Punjab – with its national president Rahul Gandhi struggling to retain the family borough of Amethi.

The much-feared SP-BSP combine in

Uttar Pradesh was the only formation that put up any resistance worth noting, but the 10-odd seats that BJP might lose from its previous tally of 71 in UP could easily be offset by its stunning gains in West Bengal and Odisha. Mamata Banerjee in Bengal had the rug being pulled under her feet with BJP leading in 19 seats as against Trinamool Congress Party's 22, while the wannabe architect of a federal front, Chandrababu Naidu, ended up losing his state to Jaganmohan Reddy's YSR Congress Party.

BJP was up against three formidable alliances in the Hindi heartland states – UP, Bihar and Jharkhand. In all three, the caste arithmetic never suited the BJP. The party had won 117 out of 134 seats up for grab in these states in 2014. In UP, BJP worked to mobilise all caste groups outside the catchment area of the so-called gathbandhan – Jatavs, Dalits and Muslims, which constitute a little over 40 % of the electorate. The BJP seems to have successfully mobilised the remaining 60% of the electorate. The non-Yadav OBC and non-Jatav consolidation behind BJP in the elections was seamless, making it a mobilisation against the haves by the have-nots among dalits and OBCs. In Bihar, the lessons from the assembly polls were learnt well, and it helped BJP stitch a winning combination. Nitish Kumar still holds sway over some 15% of the 'OBC plus development' votes. Which is why the BJP made the Janata Dal (United) supremo an equal partner and contested five seats less than the 22 it won in 2014 to keep him in the alliance. In Jharkhand, BJP conceded one seat to All Jharkhand Student's Union to consolidate the kurmi votes in the state. It helped BJP to stitch an upper-caste cum OBC alliance. At the end of the day, the 2019 verdict that resonated from Kashmir to Kanyakumari was about the smart, swift and constantly-evolving tactics adopted by the Modi-Amit Shah duo. From candidate selection to matching Opposition slogan by slogan, the duo left no stone unturned. Unfazed by the controversies that ensued, BJP went out on a limb and fielded a bunch of fiery newbies such as the terror-accused Sadhvi Pragya in Bhopal, youngster Tejasvi Surya, cricketer Gautam Gambir, sufi singer Hans Raj Hans and Bhojpuri actor Ravi Kishan. Initial estimates indicate 80 of these 103-odd newbies contesting on BJP ticket were well on their way to the lower house.

### Tsunami 2.0 sets Twitter on fire with crazy memes celebrating PM Modi

**With Prime Minister Narendra Modi coming back in power once again, his supporters are bombarding Twitter with the most hilarious memes that we have ever seen.**

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: Saffron Party supporters celebrate their win with hilarious Twitter memes. With the Lok Sabha elections vote counting almost on the verge of its end, the nation has quite a clear picture that, is bar bhi Modi sarkar. With BJP leading the elections by a huge gap, the supporters of the saffron party have taken to the internet and are sharing some of the most hilarious memes we have ever seen.

At the moment, Twitter is full of

memes that are relating Prime Minister, Narendra Modi to Avengers Endgame's Thanos who was the most powerful person in the entire world. Some of the other funny memes are juxtapositioning the Prime Minister of India with legendary cricketer Virendra Sehwag saying that they are the only two people to score 300 twice. On the other hand, the opposition party has also become fodder for some memes but well they are not in Rahul Gandhi's favour as per se.

### No party could fool voters donning mask of secularism: PM Narendra Modi after NDA seals

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: As NDA registered a thumping majority in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a huge gathering of BJP workers and supporters at the party headquarters on Thursday evening. BJP president Amit Shah and other leaders accompanied him on the stage as Modi thanked party workers and voters for participating in the election process. Prime Minister Modi slammed the Opposition and observed that no party could mislead the voters by donning the mask of secularism.

Addressing the crowd of hundreds of BJP workers in the middle of light drizzle, PM Modi said, "Megh raaj bhi aaj humaare beech shamil hone ke liye aa gaye (Even the God of clouds has joined us in our celebrations)".

"If someone has won today, it is the people, the democracy," said PM Modi as the crowd burst into loud cheers. PM Modi also said that this is the win of people who were pining for an honest government, a victory of those who were pining for toilets and basic amenities. He said, "I assure all state legislative assembly winners that BJP is committed to the Constitution and federalism. I promise them we will work shoulder to shoulder."

Speaking before Modi, Amit Shah said, "Politics of casteism, dynasty and appeasement politics has been buried in this massive mandate to BJP."

BJP is leading in over 300 seats and it has crossed the 272 majority mark all by itself. NDA has managed to get as many seats it had won in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.



# Rahul Gandhi's Chowkidar, Rafale slogans fail, Congress wins only a handful seats more

**While the Congress has registered substantial gains in south India, it continues to suffer huge losses in the Hindi heartland.**



(SAI Bureau) New Delhi - As votes were counted in the Lok Sabha elections and trends rolled in, Congress chief Rahul Gandhi's mother Sonia Gandhi and sister Priyanka Gandhi met him at his residence to discuss the outcome of the elections. Depressing statistics for the Congress, which has once again failed to fire and is set to win 55 seats, only 11 more than it did in 2014. The poor show has once again exposed the structural weaknesses in the party organisation on the ground, especially in Hindi speaking states. While the grand old party has registered substantial gains in south India, it continues to suffer huge losses in the Hindi heartland. The real cause of concern for the Congress is the reverses in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh where it had defeated the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the assembly elections just six months ago. Even Karnataka, where the Congress is in alliance with the Janata Dal (Secular), has been a big disappointment. The BJP trounced the ruling alliance in the southern state, a year after the JD(S) and the Congress came together to form the government. Though Congress leaders argue that Lok Sabha elections are different from state polls, the fact that the Congress failed to capitalise on those victories could also be attributed to the absence of well-oiled party machinery on the ground. But the big takeaway is the failure of the Congress to convince the voters about its promise of Nyay (Nyuntam Aay Yojana). The party had promised a minimum income guarantee scheme of Rs 72000 a year or Rs 6000 a month to the country's 20% or five crore poorest of the poor families. Similarly, Rahul Gandhi's campaign theme that

focused on the alleged irregularities in the Rafale deal and his "Chowkidar chor hai" slogan directed at Prime Minister Narendra Modi failed to cut much ice with the voters who did not accept his assertions. The Congress was also clearly outfoxed by the BJP's campaign narrative of nationalism, national security and decisive action against terrorism. After the 2014 Lok Sabha poll debacle, the Congress had promised to reinvent itself. The party leadership had stressed the need for expanding the worker base and indicated that structural as well as changes in the leadership style will be carried out to arrest the electoral slide. Rahul Gandhi did make some organizational changes after taking over as the Congress president from his mother Sonia Gandhi in December 2017. He brought in young blood but at the same did not neglect the old guard. The reshuffle that took place in bits and pieces over several months saw Rahul Gandhi handing over the reins of crucial states to young leaders with Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Jyotiraditya Scindia given the charge of Uttar Pradesh, Shaktisinh Gohil (Bihar), Rajiv Satav (Gujarat), Gaurav Gogoi (West Bengal), RPN Singh (Jharkhand) and KC Venugopal (Karnataka). Similarly, veterans Ambika Soni, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Mallikarjun Kharge, Harish Rawat, Oommen Chandy and Mukul Wasnik handled Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Maharashtra, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala/Tamil Nadu respectively. The other big worry for the Congress is the lack of regional satraps except in Punjab where chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh managed to salvage some pride for the party.

The only difference for the Congress between 2014 and 2019 is that the grand old party will this time get the tag of the main opposition party. With the help of its pre-poll allies, the party is also expected to get the post of the Leader of the Opposition.

## Should Rahul Gandhi step down as Congress chief ?

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: Congress president Rahul Gandhi conceded defeat in the Lok Sabha elections and congratulated PM Modi for the victory. He took full responsibility for the defeat of the party in the Lok Sabha elections and said the issue of his resignation was a matter between him and the Congress Working Committee. Congress is poised to win 51 seats in the Lok Sabha polls, only seven seats more than the seats it won in 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Gandhi led the party's campaign in the elections. So, as the party failed to make any significant improvement in its tally in 2019, will there be a change in leadership in Congress? And soon after conceding defeat, there were reports that Rahul Gandhi has offered to resign as Congress chief. Is this the right step? And who could be next Cong chief if Rahul's resignations is accepted? Watch the panelists debate.



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# Lok Sabha Election Results 2019



**Decoding the role BJP chief Amit Shah played in PM Modi's epic victory**

**A political fighter to the core, Amit Shah had requested the BJP election committee to allow him to fight from Amethi against Rahul Gandhi.**

he expected the BJP to win around 23 seats in West Bengal and around 63 seats in Uttar Pradesh. While many armchair strategists thought the BSP-SP will overcome the BJP in UP and the Trinamool will comfortably retain Bengal, Shah obviously had other plans. Clearly, his predictions are not far off the mark.

After the 2014 win, Narendra Modi and Amit Shah knew that they had to win over eastern India to balance any losses from north and west of India in 2019 as the BJP held optimum seats in these parts. Shah also focused on Uttar Pradesh.

When the October 2, 2014 Burdwan blasts exposed the TMC to allegations of links to the Bangladesh-based Jamait-ul-Mujahideen (JMB), it provided Shah with an opportunity which he utilized to the optimum. Shah had told Hindustan Times back in January 2015 that the BJP's time had come in Bengal because of corruption by the TMC leaders and the worsening internal security situation in the state. Just as Shah discovered Himanta Biswa Sarma as the leader of the BJP in the North-East, he pushed strongman Kailash Vijayvargia and the suave Sidharth Nath Singh as BJP faces in West Bengal. After Singh became a minister in the Yogi Adityanath government in UP, Shah put his best poll teams into action with Sarma being brought in from Assam and other teams from Gujarat. Although the

intellectual face of the BJP was led by Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta and Anirban Ganguly, Shah knew that he had to take on mercurial Mamata Banerjee on the Trinamool's terms and stake claim. The strategy worked with West Bengal chief minister taking the BJP bait to the full and ending up alienating large sections of rural and urban Bengal. Even though Shah focused on eastern India, Uttar Pradesh remained his principal focus as he knew that the state was critical to BJP victory. For anyone sitting at Lal Bahadur Shastri airport in Varanasi, this was quite evident as a Club one Falcon Charter jet used by Shah was seen going up and down the runway at all hours. Three helicopters and a 737-200 Air Force jet carrying PM Modi were on a similar routine. Today, the BSP-SP grand alliance has been cut to size with the BJP crossing the 50 mark in Uttar Pradesh alone. The BJP has made serious inroads into Bengal and now the target will be the 2021 Assembly elections. When Modi filed his nomination from Varanasi on April 26, the senior Badal told Shah that the prime minister should not be casual about Kashi and leave the constituency to his voters.

He suggested that PM Modi should address another rally in Varanasi closer to the May 19 polls.

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: Amit Shah had planned to land up at the Gandhinagar returning officer to file his nomination with all of 11 supporters. But then, he got a phone call from Shiromani Akali Dal patriarch Parkash Singh Badal. The 91-year-old leader advised Amit Shah to get all NDA allies to join him for a show of strength before filing his papers on March 30. The 54-year-old BJP president was reluctant to make his nomination into such a big deal or broach the topic with anyone. But Parkash Badal prevailed on Shah, called up PM Modi and got a whole rally-cum-road show organised for Amit Shah with Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in tow. Clearly reading the political signs, Badal insisted on speaking first at the rally and set the agenda for the ascendency of Shah as the leader in the BJP pantheon. The run-away victory in 2019 elections has just underscored the point. Amit Shah has arrived.

A political fighter to the core, Shah had requested the BJP election committee to allow him to fight from Amethi against Congress President Rahul Gandhi even as he promised to give him a tough fight. However, former party

president and Home Minister Rajnath Singh prevailed upon him to fight from safer confines of Gandhinagar so that he could spare time to consolidate the party's best seats.

Shah's biggest strength is his political astuteness combined with humungous reserves of energy, which are second only to PM Modi.

As an example of how his day looked like in the run up to the national election, Shah participated in an unusual Kolkata road show at 6 pm on May 14. He then addressed a meeting of intellectuals in Rajarhat

at 8.30 pm amidst a slew of interviews, boarded a charter flight to Varanasi at midnight, held a meeting with Railway Minister Piyush Goyal at Amethi House in Kashi and then returned to Delhi by 6 am. He held a press conference on the Kolkata roadshow violence at 10 am and then went back to Uttar Pradesh for his usual five-rallies-a-day schedule. On his way to Chandigarh about 10 days earlier, Shah had in an informal interaction with Hindustan Times said that some in his party may think of him to be off his mind but





# Rahul Gandhi's Big Failure Was to Not Promote Fresh Faces in the Congress



next assembly elections come around, some will have matured in their own right, while the second rung will have risen to the challenge or fallen by the way-side, making way for the new. Rahul is now a three-term MP and we are still talking about his coming of age, maturing and taking responsibility. He is the president of India's oldest political party and has seen ten straight years in power which his mother manoeuvred. His father became a prime minister at 42, but he is 49, received the leadership on a platter and is still maturing. By all accounts he is not a born leader, and nor is the Congress a political party. He inherited his mantle and Congress is family property. In his case - just as in the case of Akhilesh, Tejaswi, Jagan, Stalin, Mehbooba, etc. - he received a transfer of property. His first duty was to establish control within, rather than seek expansion outside. Where the rest of them seem to have succeeded, he is still struggling with his property.

(SAI Bureau) : In an informal discussion with Arun Oraon, All India Congress Committee secretary in charge of Chhattisgarh, I suggested that Congress should give Lok Sabha tickets to entirely new faces, with no background rooted in sycophantic family loyalty. Choose people from all walks of life who command respect, are young, liberal and can walk the distance with the party in the years ahead even if they lose just now. I also asked, rhetorically, why the Congress always gives tickets to family retainers or their lap dogs? A former IPS officer, he fidgeted a little and regained composure and smiled: You write about it.

In contrast: Intelligence reports reached the Prime Minister's Office on why the Bharatiya Janata Party did so badly in the Chhattisgarh assembly elections. The PMO insisted on finding out how this report had been so accurate and what the remedy was. The suggestion that filtered through was that the BJP should change all its candidates as the anti-incumbency was against local leaders and not the party. The Narendra Modi-Amit Shah leadership changed all 11 - ten of them sitting - candidates in one stroke. The new contestants were all third-rung leaders, who replaced the second and first in due course. By 2023, when the

# We Are Witnessing a Defining Moment in West Bengal's Political History



(SAI Bureau) - Certain moments in the life of a nation or a state shape its future destiny. The 2019 general election is one such defining moment in Bengal's political history. For the first time, the Hindu right-wing has been catapulted to the centre of the state's electoral narrative. From a slender two-seat tally in the 2014 general elections, the Bharatiya Janata Party has notched up a double-digit figure, winning nearly 19 seats and bringing the Trinamool Congress tally down to 22 from 34. At the time of writing this article, counting is still underway. The possibility that the BJP could go on to win more seats and perhaps, even exceed the TMC's tally, cannot be ruled out.

"Congratulations to the winners. But all losers are not losers. We have to do a complete review and then we will share our views with you all. Let the counting process be completed fully and the VVPATs matched," tweeted Bengal's TMC chief minister Mamata Banerjee. Her words may appear casual at a moment as critical as the one the TMC is grappling with. A consummate politician, Banerjee, must, however, be more than aware of the daunting political challenges that lie ahead in the next couple of years. The Right's strong political assertion in Bengal coincides with the Left's total decimation in West Bengal: a state it once ruled uninterruptedly for over three decades.

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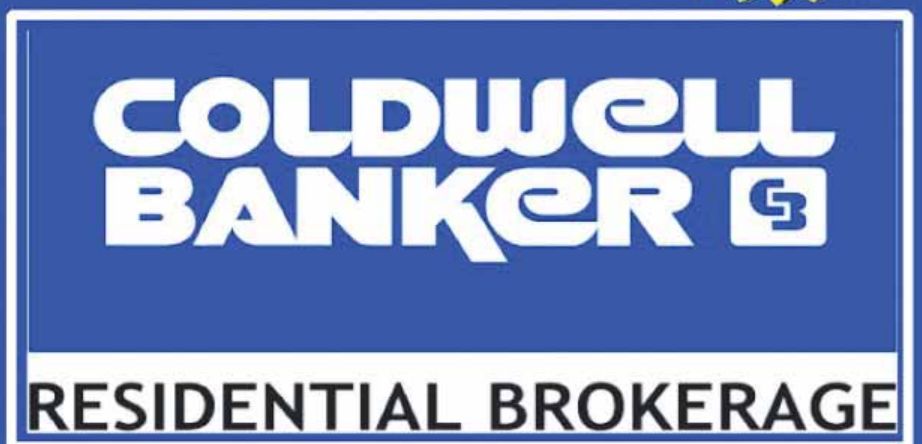


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## Don't Blame RG; He Is Not Why Modi Has Crushed Congress

The Indian National Congress, once the default party of government in Indian politics, won 44 seats in 2014, and will likely not even double that number in 2019. To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, to lose one election by that margin is a mistake, to lose two looks like carelessness. Or, if you prefer to paraphrase Karl Marx, the first time it was tragedy for the Congress, but now it's farce. Yes, the party won three states back from the Bharatiya Janata Party in December last year. Yes, it is holding on in Punjab and Kerala. But it has fundamentally failed to break through in the crucial dimension for its politics: to retain a foothold in the politics of the north and centre of India at the parliamentary level. Plus it has been swept out of the way in Maharashtra, a state it certainly should have, if not won, at least dented the BJP alliance in.

Many reasons will be given for this failure, and perhaps there are indeed many reasons. One of these, an obvious numerical reason why the Congress looks particularly bad right now, is that the bastion of undivided Andhra Pradesh, where it was at one time assured of at least a sizeable proportion of seats, has now slipped from its grasp. If it loses Maharashtra in addition, and becomes a poor also-ran in coastal Karnataka and the Lingayat belt of that state, it means that it just no longer has the geographical base to be a real contender.

India, at one point, had a clear political structure. There was a national force in Indian politics, and that was the Congress. It had, in every state, various opponents that represented state-level interests. Where the BJP was its principal state opponent - in Gujarat, in Rajasthan, in Madhya Pradesh - strong state leaders for the party made it an election about sub-national pride and governance. (Remember Chief Minister Modi campaigning on Gujarati asmita?) That position in national politics, as the national pole in most state polities, has been taken now by the BJP. It has taken that position for one simple reason: its conception of Indian nationhood has fought and won a battle, over the past decade and more, against the Congress' "Idea of India".

To the extent that the Congress' "Idea of India" can be summarised through the career and words of any one leader in that party, I would recommend a study of Digvijaya Singh. He is a tremendously devout man, and yet one of the greatest hate figures for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh precisely because he embodies the Congress' ideology. It is, at its core, pragmatic nationalism: the notion that India is a bundle of contradictions, of competing group assertions, and it is the duty of the Indian

state is to play an arbiter between them, to cover up and manage these centripetal and divisive forces through inclusion, representation and occasional preferential treatment. It is precisely this that is known now as "appeasement" when it comes to Muslims - but the ideology is far vaster than that, it is founded on the belief that India, without such management, dances at the edge of a precipice. That Digvijay Singh is losing to Pragya Thakur is a fine and poetic summation of the defeat of this ideology.

It has been replaced at the national level by another ideology: not just that of the Sangh, but its version as refined by Narendra Modi. This conception is that India is essentially Hindu; India is a unitary civilisation, divided by the vestiges of countless invasions; India must eventually be strong on the world stage, and in order to be strong, it must embrace its Hindu identity and be united in mind. This oddly European notion of national identity can be traced back to Savarkar and Golwalkar and even further, but under Modi, it has been refined to include the promise of social and economic mobility within the great Hindu umbrella, and that has made a crucial difference. Other identities are dangerous, by the BJP's reckoning and the Congress' - and Amartya Sen's - notion of India being constructed of multiple overlapping and argumentative identities must be replaced with that of a single one. Dalits, OBCs, Bengalis, Lingayats, and even minorities must remember they are Hindus first if India is to progress. I wrote in 2014 that Modi's idea of India's future was that it should be strong, rich and Hindu, and that all three things would have to happen together or none of them would happen at all. And this, in a nutshell, is the dominant conception in national politics today.

Bengal is looking at a saffron surge as the BJP is racing towards an impressive score, closing the gap fast with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress. The Congress has lost this election not because it failed to strike a few alliances, or because of the personality of Rahul Gandhi, or because it was poorer than the BJP and had fewer levers of influence. It lost because it has lost the ideological argument. Yes, it could have won a dozen or even two dozen more seats had it worked out an alliance with Prakash Ambedkar in Maharashtra or with the Aam Aadmi Party or with the Grand Alliance in Uttar Pradesh. But when faced with this mandate for Modi, what are two dozen seats? What, even, would crossing 100 mean? It is simply postponing the inevitable.

## Congress is not above the law when it comes to impeachment – Don't weaponize the Constitution

The mantra invoked by those Democrats who are seeking to impeach President Donald Trump is that "No one is above the law." That, of course, is true, but it is as applicable to Congress as it is to the president. Those members of Congress who are seeking to impeach the president, even though he has not committed any of the specified impeachable offences set out in the Constitution, are themselves seeking to go above the law. All branches of government are bound by the law. Congressmen, presidents, justices, judges must all operate within the law. All take an oath to support the Constitution, not to rewrite it for partisan advantage.

It is the law that exempts presidents from being prosecuted or impeached for carrying out their Constitutional authority under Article 2. The same Constitution precludes members of Congress from being prosecuted for most actions taken while on the floor of the House and Senate or on the way to performing their functions. The same Constitution, as interpreted by the courts, bestows immunity on judges for actions which would be criminal or tortuous if engaged in by non-judicial individuals. None of this means that these government officials are above the law. It means that their immunized actions are within the law. The Constitution, which is the governing law, precludes Congress from impeaching a president for mere "dereliction" of duty or even alleged

"corruption." Under the text of the Constitution, a president's actions to be impeachable must consist of treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors. The Framers of the Constitution considered broadening the criteria for impeachment to include maladministration in office. But this proposal was soundly rejected, on the ground that it would give Congress too much power to control the president.

The time has come to stop weaponizing the Constitution and our legal system for partisan advantage. Impeachment would be a lawless response to undertake, as is the use of partisan committees to obtain an electoral advantage. Yet Democrats who are now seeking to impeach the president, despite the absence of impeachable offenses, are trying to do precisely what the Framers of the Constitution forbade them from doing: mainly exercising control over a president that is not authorized in the Constitution itself. Consider for example Congressman Maxine Waters who has said the following: "Impeachment is about whatever the Congress says it is. There is no law that dictates impeachment." It is she, and other like-minded members of Congress, who are claiming the right to be above the law. That is a dangerous claim whether made by a president or by member of Congress.



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# India must refresh its foreign policy

*As the global power balance shifts, the next government will face several challenges*

The next government in India will face several foreign policy challenges as the international order copes with a shifting balance of power and mutating competitive strategies of its primary determinants. One of the main challenges will be to deal with the contradictions in the US-Russia- China relationships, and in India's relations with each of them.

In terms of comprehensive national interest, the relationship with the United States (US) remains critical for India. At \$140 billion, it is our largest trading partner, and recipient of bulk of our Information Technology services exports. Despite being an overall trade deficit country, we have a nearly \$25 billion surplus with it. It also hosts the largest number of Indian students (200,000) in foreign universities, the largest single country presence of Indian origin diaspora (4 million). It has an investment stock of around \$28 billion in India, while Indian companies have invested around \$18

billion in the US, especially over the past decade. Defence trade has risen from close to zero in 2008 to \$18 billion today, and interoperability has been increased through regular bilateral and trilateral (Malabar, with inclusion of Japan) exercises, and signing of agreements providing for logistics support (LEMOA), and communications compatibility (COMCASA). Technology and co-production partnerships are being worked upon. It has supported and piloted India's aspirations in multilateral export control regimes such as Nuclear Suppliers Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, Australia Group, and Wassenaar Arrangement.

The US, however, remains a difficult partner. It expects others to accept its foreign policy choices, often driven by its own domestic compulsions and preferences. Following political fatigue with two decades of post-Cold War unilateral military

interventions, it has increasingly weaponised economic policies, variously sanctioning individuals, entities, governments and countries. Its partners are expected to follow, either on account of support they have received or may need, or in light of cost-benefit analysis, factoring in the deeper linkages with the US economy and society. India's energy import bills will be higher on account of US sanctions on Iran and Venezuela.

Russia is another critical partner. Despite the post-1990 diversification, it still accounts for around 60% of our defence inventory. It has provided vital political support since the 1950s, including at the United Nations. However, it has become increasingly linked to China for energy and finance on account of difficulties in its relationship with the US and Europe. It has initiated military exercises and supplies to Pakistan. Its outreach to the Taliban in Afghanistan has not been



in sync with India's being in lock step with the Afghan government.

Unless the US-Russia relationship moves to a more cooperative and less adversarial plane, India will be subjected to policy choices that could cause negative reactions in the US, Russia or both. The US domestic Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act provisions, which make India's acquisition of S-400 missile defence system from Russia sanctionable, is one indication.

There is some convergence in the US and Indian approach to the Indo-Pacific, where the region is coping with the consequences of the economic and military

rise of China, its militarisation of some features in the South China Sea, and its growing military and economic footprint in South Asia and the Indian Ocean. India has its own particular difficulty on account of the Chinese pressures on the unresolved border, its support for Pakistan, huge imbalance in trade, and security implications of potential penetration in technology sectors, including 5G.

China has also repeatedly weaponised its economic policies. Japanese companies faced boycotts when differences with Japan over Senkaku islands reached a pitch. Korean company Lotte had to shut down its

operations in China when it made land available for deployment of US THAAD missiles. European countries have been subjected to similar pressures, often successfully, when their leaders have met the Dalai Lama, or they have sought to honour Chinese dissidents.

At the same time, India would benefit from enhancing elements of cooperation and interaction in the otherwise inevitably competitive relationship with China. This would lessen the sharpness in the adversarial aspects, create uncertainty in Pakistan's calculus about Chinese support on every occasion, and widen options for India.

## How the US immigration plan will impact India

***A country which so strenuously wants its best talents to move to and prosper in another country does not appear to be confident in its ability to provide good jobs and business environment at home***

United States (US) President Donald Trump unveiled a new immigration plan for his country on Thursday. The idea, in the words of Mr Trump, is to move to a "merit-based, high security plan". One part of the plan is a crackdown on illegal immigration. This is directly concerned with making America more secure. The other part is to prioritise young, educated and skilled

workers over those that seek entry purely as relatives of people in the US. Under the current arrangement, 66% of the Green Cards go to relatives and 21% to asylum seekers and those selected randomly. Only 12% of the 1.1 million Green Cards go to those selected on the basis of skill and merit. Mr Trump wants to elevate this last number to 57%, and possibly even higher.

Mr Trump's plan is unlikely to get the nod of the Democrats, especially not unless the plan gives some relief to Dreamers - young immigrants brought to the US as children. The total number of Green Cards being allocated is not going to change. Therefore, Indians seeking Green Cards need not be too worried. Indians are anyway among the most educated and highest earning communities in



the US. But does the new plan benefit India? In the past, New Delhi has often lobbied - and continues to do so - to protect Indians from adverse changes in H-1B rules. A country which so strenuously wants its

best talents to move to and prosper in another country does not appear to be confident in its ability to provide good jobs and a conducive business environment at home. While Mr Trump's plan may

not cut the Gordian knot of American domestic politics, the question for New Delhi is much bigger and starker. The US is ready to make the maximum use of India's best, but are we?



# India and Japan can provide an alternative to BRI

India, Japan and Sri Lanka have jointly agreed to develop the Colombo port, according to a report in Nikkei Asian Review on Monday. The tripartite work to begin next March would be on the newly expanded East Container terminal. This development will obviously be seen as a joint India-Japan counter to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), especially with the second Belt and Road Forum having concluded recently. But that is not the most important part of the story. A number of steps taken by the Sri Lankan government in the recent past

show how much the island country itself wants to loosen the Chinese grip. After having surrendered the control of Hambantota port to a Chinese firm, Sri Lanka became an exemplar of all that could go wrong with BRI investments. Colombo's insistence that the port will not be used for military purposes by the People's Liberation Army wasn't taken too seriously. So last month, Sri Lanka used the Chinese-controlled Hambantota port to host a joint naval exercise with the United States. This was Colombo's message to Beijing and the rest of the world that Sri Lanka's

sovereignty cannot be taken for granted. Earlier, Sri Lanka has also invited Airports Authority of India to operate the China-built Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport in Hambantota. Infamously dubbed as the world's "emptiest" airport, it is one more among the Chinese projects that did not yield any return for the host country. This newspaper has held that BRI has many problems but not so many alternatives. Sri Lanka shows that there are countries out there looking for alternatives to BRI. Bangladesh has also indicated an interest in sources of funding other than



the predatory loans being offered by China. India and Japan can together provide an alternative. The idea of Asia-Africa Growth Corridor is, therefore, very promising. And this latest

collaboration on the Colombo port is exactly the kind of project in which India and Japan should pool their resources to the benefit of less-endowed countries in the region.

## What the 2019 poll campaigns tell us about Indian democracy

With the general election results due on May 23, now is the best time to look back at the nature of the campaign, especially of the two major parties, and what it tells us about the state of Indian democracy.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was clearly ahead in the campaign game. It has a robust organisation which it mobilised from last year; it had the maximum resources and thus was able to command the most visibility; it had the ability to market its government schemes down to the level of beneficiaries using the party machine; and it

had the biggest brand in Narendra Modi. This combination of leadership, resources and ground-level strength gave the BJP the edge. Yet, there were some extremely disturbing elements in the party's campaign. From giving a ticket to a terror accused to the PM and party president Amit Shah quite openly practising divisive politics, the BJP also sought to appeal to raw emotions and distracted people from real issues. The Congress had the advantage of being the opposition, and it is always easier to attack the incumbent. Rahul Gandhi did run an aggressive

campaign and came across as more focused than in the past. But the party had two problems. Its consistent effort to pitch Rafale as evidence of the PM's wrongdoing did not work on the ground, and corruption did not become an issue against the government. Its promise of Nyay had potential, but there was both a crisis of communication since the announcement was made too late and a crisis of credibility since many voters did not seem to believe the Congress based on its track record. The regional parties ran a campaign that combined both sub-nationalism



(Mamata Banerjee) and caste arithmetic (Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh). All of this made the elections a contest between leadership,

institutions, issues, but also threw up learnings on what parties must avoid next time around to make democracy more meaningful.

## Can India grow now and clean up later? No, it can't

What is the BJP's track record in the areas of environment, energy and climate change? The important themes of national security, economic management, and farmer distress are the battlegrounds of this election. Yet it is important not to lose sight of environmental performance because a deteriorating environment undermines both the economy and quality of life. The data show that there are reasons to be concerned. The Centre for Science and Environment finds that 275 of 445 rivers are polluted, up from 121 in 2009, and that 90% of solid waste is unprocessed in a rich state like Maharashtra and 48% in Delhi. Air quality is a public health crisis. Greenpeace finds that 228 out of 280 cities are not compliant

with standards. According to Lancet, air pollution is estimated to cause 1.24 million premature deaths in India. The impacts of climate change are projected to reduce agricultural incomes in unirrigated areas by 20-25% in the long run, according to the Economic Survey 2017. In 2018, India was ranked 177th out of 180 countries in a Yale-Columbia Environmental Performance Index. Can India afford further deterioration in the quality of our environment? Clearly, this crisis has been long in the making, and transcends any single government. But equally, the trend has not substantially reversed under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In the past five years, India has gone backwards on environmental quality regulation, has tried bold ideas in energy but with implementation challenges, and has improved

messaging on climate policy but made limited change to the substance.

On environment, the Union government has sought to ease the cost of doing business through faster, easier clearances. For example, the government has attempted to exempt building and construction projects from the requirements of environmental impact assessment and consent requirements under the Water Act. Infrastructure projects have been allowed to fell trees on forest land before clearances are granted. Amendments to the Coastal Zone Notification loosen requirements for reclamation of land and developmental activities. Stricter emission controls from coal power plants were pushed back by five years through an appeal to the Supreme Court.



And key institutions such as the National Green Tribunal have been hamstrung through lack of timely appointments. While unnecessary red tape is in no one's interest, measures that cannibalise the basis for future growth are unproductive. We need streamlined but effective regulation, not gutted regulations and weakened institutions. The BJP's initial reaction to the

air quality crisis downplayed the impact on health, and even weakened regulations on power plants and polluting vehicles. While the tone remained defensive, more recently the issue has been taken more seriously with the passage of a National Clean Air Programme, which is an important step, albeit one with limitations.



**Agusta Westland case**

**SC to hear Gautam Khaitan's plea tomorrow, to affect ongoing cases under black money act**



provisions under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002. Khaitan had challenged his arrest, and argued that the black money rules were notified by the center before the act itself came into force.

The two judge bench of the Delhi HC had agreed with the argument.

"We are prima facie of the considered view that the official respondents could not have exercised powers granted to it under the provisions of sections 85 and 86 of the said act, prior to the enactment itself coming into force, in terms of the provisions of sub-section (3) of section 1 of the said act", the High Court had said in its May 16 order. The center has now argued that this order will have a detrimental affect on all pending black money cases, since the rules for investigation have been declared invalid. The Supreme Court has agreed to hear the plea on Tuesday.

(Agencies) - With the Delhi High court taking a prima facie view that the black money rules notified in April 2016 are incorrect, the central government has now knocked on the Supreme Court's doors. Appearing before the vacation bench of the apex court, solicitor general Tushar Mehta said that the High Court ruling would "affect all ongoing cases under the Black Money Act".

On May 16, the Delhi High court had granted relief to businessman Gautam Khaitan, who is facing a black money and money laundering case. Gaurav Khaitan had been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on January 26. According to the prosecution, Khaitan had deposited nearly Rs 6,000 crore in offshore accounts. A chargesheet has also been filed against him in violation of

**After 7 deaths in 10 days, doctors warn elderly against travelling to Kedarnath**



(Agencies) - The health department has issued a warning to the elderly against travelling to Kedarnath due to poor oxygen condition in the pilgrimage site. This season, at least seven people have died in 10 days due to low oxygen in Kedarnath. Doctors, too, have warned the elderly against visiting Kedarnath. This year, the pilgrimage site recorded a heavy snowfall. The health department said that the conditions in Kedarnath are worrisome for the citizens riddled with health issues.

This season, at least seven

people died due to lack of oxygen in Kedarnath. A 65-year-old woman died on Saturday morning after a heart attack. On Thursday, two pilgrims from Rajasthan's Jaipur succumbed to hypothermia after visiting Kedarnath shrine in two separate incidents. Both were women and over 60 years of age. SS Negi, Uttarakhand health department, said, "This year four people have died in Kedarnath. All those who died were above the age of 60 years, indicating that weather conditions are still precarious for elders and people who are not well."



Saradhascam

Ex-Kolkata CP Rajeev Kumar moves SC seeking extension of protection



(Agencies)- Former Kolkata police commissioner Rajeev Kumar Monday moved the Supreme Court seeking extension of the seven-day protection granted to him by the apex court in connection with the Saradha chit fund scam case. Kumar's lawyer mentioned the matter for urgent listing before a vacation bench comprising of Justices Indira Banerjee and Sanjiv Khanna. The counsel said the apex court had on May 17 granted seven days time to Kumar to approach the competent court for legal remedies but they want

extension of time as lawyers in Kolkata courts are presently on a strike. Kumar's counsel said four days have already elapsed and they needed time to approach the competent court in Kolkata. However, the bench said since the May 17 order was passed by a three-judge bench, they can approach the registry for listing of the matter before an appropriate bench. "You are a lawyer and you know that CJI is the master of roster," the bench told Kumar's counsel and asked him to approach the registry for listing of the matter.

Air India suspends pilot charged with sexual harassment

Air India had ordered a probe after the female pilot wrote a letter to the management on May 9, charging her colleague and senior commander of sexual harassment.



(Agencies)- The national carrier Air India on Tuesday suspended a senior pilot charged with sexual harassment of a female co-pilot, nearly 10 days after initiating the probe in the matter. The letter of suspension was

released on Monday by the Regional Director Northern Region. Pending enquiry and without prejudice to any other action that may be taken in this regard, you are hereby placed under suspension with immediate effect, read the suspension letter. Air India has further put in five restrictions for the pilot. During the suspension period the pilot in question "Will not enter the premises of Air India without written permission

"He will not be allowed to leave the station (Delhi) without prior permission of the Regional Director "The pilot isn't allowed to enter in any employment or vocation either "He will not hold the The Pilot In Command and ID card and "He won't be eligible for any wages except the subsistence allowance. Air India spokesperson has told India Today TV that the final report on the matter will be readied within a month's time and that on the basis of final report

the management will take a decision whether or not to terminate the pilot. Air India had ordered a probe after the female pilot wrote a letter to the management on May 9, charging her colleague and senior commander of sexual harassment. Both the pilots in question are based out of Delhi and had gone to Hyderabad on May 5 for training purposes when the alleged incident took place. The female pilot in her complaint had alleged that the accused asked her about her sexual relationship with her husband also threatened her. On Thursday, Air India issued a circular to curb sexual harassment. Even Air India CMD Ashwani Lohani expressed his displeasure over the incident.

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Newspaper masthead for 'Hum Hindustani' (हम हिंदुस्तानी) with a price of 50¢ and date of May 22-28, 2019. Main headline: 'मोदी का एलान-ए-जंग बूंद-बूंद को तरसेगा पाक' (Modi's declaration of war will make Pakistan tremble drop by drop). Other headlines include 'अमेरिका ने एंट्री देने से किया इंकार' (USA refused to give entry) and 'भारतीय-अमेरिकन कम्युनिटी द्वारा धोर निंब' (Statement by Indian-American community).



## Burning garbage in Agra can now land you in jail

**The SSP said he held a meeting of all departmental officials to find out a way to control the huge volume of pollutants mixing in the city's air.**



method would be the most effective. He said that the police station in charges have been given the task to prevent garbage burning in their areas. Action will be taken against those failing to carry out their duties. The SSP added that although the task of preventing garbage burning is not that of the police, he had to do the needful after observing how deadly the air of the city becomes in the morning when the garbage burns.

(Agencies)- After Agra's Municipal Corporation failed to put a check on the incessant garbage burning in the state despite several Supreme Court warnings, the Agra SSP Amit Pathak has now taken up the mantle to control the pollution caused by this burning of garbage.

He wakes up early in the morning and tours select areas of the city at 6 am on a bicycle, looking out

for those burning garbage outside their homes or establishments. Several convent schools and private citizens have been fined so far and FIRs have been filed against them for burning garbage.

The SSP said he held a meeting of all departmental officials to find out a way to control the huge volume of pollutants mixing in the city's air due to garbage burning. It was decided that the punitive

Pathak said he ensures that his orders are being followed and cycles throughout the city in the morning, conducting surprise checks. He also ensures that the tourists arriving in Agra do not face any difficulties. Several touts were recently arrested for harassing tourists after his surprise check at the Agra cantonment and Agra Fort railway stations.

## Setting example of communal harmony, Ayodhya's Shri Sita Ram temple hosts Iftar



(Agencies)- In the holy month of Ramzan, a temple in Ayodhya hosted Iftar on Monday.

Setting an example of communal harmony, people cutting across religious lines, sat together to relish the Iftar meal in the premises of Shri Sita Ram temple.

Speaking to ANI, the priest of the temple Yugal Kishor said: "This is the third time we have organised an Iftar party. I will continue to do the same in the future as well. We should celebrate every festival with great zeal." Echoing similar sentiments, an attendee Mujammil Fiza said that he also celebrates Navratri with his

Hindu brethren every year. "People with an agenda do not want communities to come together and hold an event like this. In a country where people play politics in the name of religion, people like Kishor send out a message of love," he added. During this month, the devout observe rigorous fasting for about 30 days and do not consume food or water from dawn to dusk. They eat Sehri (a pre-dawn meal) and break the day-long fast with Iftar in the evening. Eid ul-Fitr marks the end of the fasting month of Ramzan. The festival is celebrated on the first day of Shawwal, the 10th month of the Islamic lunar calendar.



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# Supreme Court stays Delhi HC order on Black Money Law

**The Supreme Court stayed the Delhi High Court order regarding retrospective applicability of Black Money Law on Tuesday.**

(By Our Staff Reporter)- The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the Delhi High Court order regarding the retrospective applicability of the Black Money Law. A Vacation Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra issued a notice to the lawyer of Gautam Khaitan, who is an accused in the VVIP chopper deal scam, and also facing charges in the black money case. The court has asked to file a reply in six weeks. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had contended before the apex court that the Delhi High Court order

may affect other cases, too. The Delhi High Court passed the order on May 16, preventing the government and the Income Tax Department from initiating any punitive action against advocate Gautam Khaitan under the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015. Khaitan, an accused in the VVIP chopper deal scam, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on January 26 for allegedly depositing

money in offshore accounts. Khaitan challenged his arrest contending the Centre's notification, which stated the Act would come into force from July 1, 2015, instead of April 1, 2016 (before it became operational), was ultra vires. He also contended unnecessary action had been initiated against him under the Act for assets that didn't exist before the law came into force. The high court queried the Centre on the applicability of the retrospective effect of the Act, from July 2015, till

its enactment in April 2016, to take into consideration undisclosed foreign income and assets. The high court said, "... at this stage, we are prima facie of the considered view that, the official respondents could not have exercised powers granted to them under the provisions of Sections 85 and 86 of the said Act, prior to its enactment itself..."



## UP: 13 students injured in violence in Muzaffarnagar college

(By Our Staff Reporter)- At least 13 students, including three girls, of a college in Muzaffarnagar were injured



when they were attacked by another group over old enmity, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place on Monday, they said.

The injured were rushed to a hospital and a case has been registered against 26 students, of which only six have been identified, station house officer of Miranpur police station, Pankaj Tyagi said. An FIR was filed by assistant director of Bhagwant Institute of Technology, Raghav Mehra. According to the complainant, the students were in class when another group of students entered the college and beat them up over old enmity. The students were attacked with sticks. Security has been tightened in the college after the incident, the police said.



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# Delhi High Court directs Customs Dept to pay Rs 94 lakhs to foreigner for selling off her seized gold

**When Delhi High Court was informed that the proceeds collected during the auction were equal to the value of the gold, Rs 93,34,783, it directed the Customs Department which comes under the Ministry of Finance, to refund the amount to the Kenyan national by June 30.**

(Agencies)- The Customs Department has been directed by the Delhi High Court to pay Rs 94 lakh to a foreigner for hurriedly selling off nearly 4 kg gold seized from her even though the proceedings were pending in the court.

When the high court was informed that the proceeds collected during the auction were equal to the value of the gold, Rs 93,34,783, it directed the Customs Department which comes under the Ministry of Finance, to refund the amount to the Kenyan national by June 30. On failure to refund the amount by the time fixed, the authorities

will have to pay the money along with a simple interest at 6 per cent per annum on the sum for the period of delay, it said.

A bench of Justices S Muralidhar and I S Mehta set aside the adjudication order passed by the Commissioner of Customs (Airport and General) confiscating the seized gold and imposing Rs 18 lakh penalty on her. The court questioned the customs officials as to why they were constrained to dispose of the seized gold, when it was neither perishable nor hazardous. The officials had no explanation to offer for this action, it noted.

"In the present case with the seized material not being perishable, being gold bars, there was no reason for the Respondents to have hurriedly disposed it off and that too without notice to the petitioner (woman)," it said. The bench said the entire manner in which the respondents have proceeded to pass the adjudication order and also dispose of the gold without notice to the woman leaves no doubt that not only the disposal of the seized gold, but the adjudication order as well, are both "unsustainable in law". The court also noted that even the show cause notice was



not served upon the woman, from whom 3,732.48 gms of gold bars were seized at the IGI Airport on January 5, 2015. The woman said she had arrived at IGI Airport here from Nairobi on January 5, 2015 and was carrying the gold which she wanted to be used for making jewellery in India and then take it back to Kenya to sell for profit. The authorities had claimed to

have found 32 pieces of gold bars, each weighing 10 tolas, from the woman's pouches. According to the woman, she had purchased the gold in Kenya after selling her car and taking loan from her friends and relatives. When she was exiting, she was stopped at the gate and was asked if she was carrying any gold.

## Indian Coast Guard apprehends Pakistani boat with drugs worth Rs 600 crore

**Early Tuesday, the Coast Guard intercepted 'Al-Madina', a Pakistani fishing trawler, eight nautical miles inside Indian waters off the Jakhau coast.**



(Agencies)- A Pakistani boat carrying narcotic substance worth Rs 600 crore was seized by the Indian Coast Guard on Tuesday after two days of relentless search of nearly 200 nautical miles along the International Maritime Boundary Line off the Gujarat coast, a top official said.

Six crew members of the boat were taken into custody, Additional Director General of the Coast Guard VSR Murthy said. He said a joint team comprising intelligence agencies will interrogate the crew members. On May 19, the Coast Guard received inputs from the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) about a Pakistani ship trying to enter Indian waters,

Murthy said.

A day later, the maritime security agency received similar inputs from the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence. Following this, the search operation was intensified.

The Coast Guard deployed Aranjay, a fast patrol vessel, two interceptor boats and an aircraft for scanning the sea, Murthy added. Early Tuesday, the Coast Guard intercepted 'Al-Madina', a Pakistani fishing trawler, eight nautical miles inside Indian waters off the Jakhau coast.

"The suspect boat did evasive manoeuvres to avoid getting apprehended. However, they were apprehended despite the rough sea conditions," Murthy said.

## Pune man spits blood, chokes after biting into burger with broken glass

**A man, who went to Burger King with his three friends, landed in a hospital in Pune after he ate a burger with pieces of glass in it.**

(Agencies)- A lunch outing of four friends in Pune at a global fast-food chain outlet turned into a nightmare after one of them took a bite of his burger and landed in hospital.

According to a report in Mid-Day, the four of them had gone to Burger King on FC Road to grab a bite. As soon as Sajit Pathan, 31, bit into his burger, he complained of irritation in his throat and spat blood. When his friends checked the burger, they found pieces of broken glass in it.

The incident, which took place at around 3pm on Wednesday, came to light after Pathan and his friends filed a complaint against Burger King and its employees at the Deccan Gymkhana police station.

Speaking to the Mumbai tabloid about the incident, Pathan's 33-year-old friend Ajay Chacale said, We had met after a long time. Sajit bought burgers, french fries and soft drinks for all of us. He spent around Rs. 521. As soon as Pathan bit into his burger, he began coughing and we assumed something



was stuck in his throat.

He had a soft drink to feel better but started bleeding instead. We checked his burger and found small pieces of glasses in it. Sajit soon began vomiting, and complained of uneasiness and breathlessness," he added. Friends took Sajit Pathan to a nearby hospital. The hospital was not equipped to handle the case, so they took him to Sahyadri Hospital. Doctors advised admitting Pathan to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) but his friends did not have enough money for it.

"We paid Rs 15,000 and returned home. The doctors told us the next day that the

small glass pieces would exit the body through excretion and vomit. We spent around Rs 35,000 at the hospital," Chacale added. When the four approached Burger King, they accused them of mixing the glass pieces to "encash on the incident and defame them". The friends then approached the police. "We want to teach them a lesson," Chacale told Mid-Day.

According to the tabloid report, senior inspector Deepak Lagad of Deccan Gymkhana police station said that a case has been registered and the matter is under investigation.



**India can sell sarees in Germany, we can sell cars here: German envoy ahead of Angela Merkel's visit**



(Agencies)- German Chancellor Angela Merkel will be visiting India for the biennial summit level meeting this autumn; Germany's new ambassador to India Walter J Lindner confirmed that to India Today TV. "Chancellor Merkel will come [to Indi] this autumn. Don't know whether it will be October or November. It is a biennial thing that we do when the two governments come together and have a summit-level meeting where we discuss all aspects of our ties," Walter J Lindner said after presenting his credentials to President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday. Chancellor Merkel will make a big push to fight climate change, one of the biggest global challenges. Merkel will come with an entourage of cabinet ministers. ENVIRONMENT Both sides will discuss collaboration in the spheres of artificial intelligence, modernisation, future working conditions, safety of the planet, global warming, development and economic aspects. "Climate change is a very important subject. It will impact the whole of mankind.

**Nine naxals, including three carrying bounty, surrender in Chhattisgarh**

**Seven of the naxals surrendered in Bijapur district, while two surrendered in Sukma district. Both districts fall in the insurgency-hit Bastar division.**

(Agencies)- Nine Naxals, three of them carrying cash rewards on their heads, surrendered on Tuesday in Chhattisgarh, police said. Seven of them surrendered in Bijapur district while two surrendered in Sukma district. Both districts fall in the insurgency-hit Bastar division. Laxman Vanjami (29), Neelkanth Ranjit (26), Gudsa Vacham (29), Raju Ram Vacham (30), Laysu Vacham (25), Manga Diwa (18) and Chinna Majji (19) turned themselves in before Bijapur police. Laxman and Neelkanth, both active LGS (local guerrilla squad) members, and Gudsa Vacham were carrying rewards of Rs 1 lakh on their heads, a police official said. Raju, who was deputy head of the Dandakaranya Adivasi Kisan Mazdoor Sangthan (a frontal outfit of the Maoists), also handed over a muzzle-loading gun to



police. These seven rebels were allegedly involved in incidents of murder, attempt to murder and attack on police teams, the official said. In Sukma, two lower-rung cadres -- Podiyam Pandu (35) and Hemla Suya (30) -- surrendered before CRPF and police officials at Dornapal police station. The two were allegedly involved in the deadly Kasalpad attack in Chintagufa area of Sukma in 2014 in which 14 security personnel were killed, the official added. Surrendered ultras said in their statements that they were disappointed with the Maoist ideology and violence and wanted to see development in tribal areas. Those who surrendered in Bijapur district were given "encouragement" allowance of Rs 10,000 each. All nine rebels would be given assistance as per the surrender and rehabilitation policy of the state government, the official said.

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## Blackbuck Case: Sonali Bendre, Tabu and Saif Ali Khan get fresh notices

*A single judge bench of Justice Manoj Garg issued notices to the actors following an appeal by the Rajasthan government against their acquittal by a Chief Judicial Magistrate's (CJM) court on April 5 last year.*

(Agencies)- The Jodhpur bench of the Rajasthan High Court on Monday issued fresh notices to actors Saif Ali Khan, Sonali Bendre, Neelam Kothari and Tabu in the 1998 blackbuck poaching case following an appeal by the state government against their acquittal.

A single judge bench of Justice Manoj Garg issued notices to the actors following an appeal by the Rajasthan government against their acquittal by a Chief Judicial Magistrate's (CJM) court on April 5 last year.

Notice was also issued to Dushyant Singh who was allegedly accompanying the actors when the poaching took place.

Justice Garg has directed that the case be listed for hearing after eight weeks.

The high court had on March 11 issued notices to the five



respondents on the state government's appeal challenging their acquittal in the case.

Bollywood star Salman Khan was, however, convicted under Section 51 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act by the CJM's court and was awarded a five-year prison term along with a fine of Rs. 10,000 after being found guilty of killing two

blackbucks in Jodhpur during the shooting of his 1998 blockbuster "Hum Saath Saath Hain".

The appeal of Salman Khan, who is on bail, is pending before the high court.

The trial court had acquitted his co-stars -- Saif, Sonali, Neelam and Tabu, besides Dushyant Singh due to lack of evidence.

## J&K: Massive crackdown on illegal poppy cultivation in Pulwama



(Agencies)- The district administration in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, in a massive crackdown on cultivation of illegal poppy, arrested several farmers for allegedly cultivating opium poppy in their fields on Friday.

Special teams led by Executive Magistrates in all the eight Tehsils of the district launched a major crackdown against the poppy cultivators in which over 100 arrest warrants were issued and most of the offenders were immediately arrested and sent to Correctional Home for seven days. The offenders were arrested under section 107/151 of CrPC. Poppy crop on 100 kanals of land

in the horticultural fields and common land was also destroyed during the crackdown. The drive was being supervised by District Magistrate Dr Syed Abid Rashid Shah, who reiterated his commitment of zero tolerance towards the individuals involved in illegal poppy cultivation. Engaging in production, manufacturing, possession, sale, purchase, transportation, warehousing, concealment, use or consumption, import interstate, export interstate of such drugs/substances is illegal under law under section 18 of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act 1985.

## Arunachal Pradesh: NPP MLA Tirong Aboh, son among 11 shot dead by unknown assailants

*Tirong Aboh was the sitting MLA from the Khonsa West Assembly seat and was shot dead by unknown assailants in Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh.*




(Agencies)- Eleven people, including sitting MLA from National People's Party Tirong Aboh and his son, were shot dead by unknown assailants in Arunachal Pradesh on Tuesday. The attack took place in the Bogapani area of Tirap district.

Tirong Aboh was the sitting MLA from the Khonsa West Assembly seat and was seeking re-election in the ongoing state assembly polls in Arunachal Pradesh.

Militants belonging to the National Socialist Council of Nagaland

(NSCN) are suspected to be behind the attack. Aboh's personal security officer is said to be in critical condition.

Reacting to the tragedy, Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma tweeted, "The NPP is extremely shocked and saddened by the news of the death of its MLA Shri Tirong Aboh (Arunachal Pradesh) and his family. We condemn the brutal attack and urge @rajnathsingh and @PMOIndia to take action against those responsible for such attack."




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## Savings dried up, no jobs: Jet Airways employees narrate stories of hardship

**A 44-year-old engineer who did not want to be named was nearly drawn to tears as he narrated his ordeal over the phone. He also asked if it was "so hard for the government to say a few words" for the Jet Airways employees.**

While there are many lucky ones who have been able to find jobs in the rival airlines post the Jet Airways fiasco, there are still a lot many who are struggling to get a job. The market undoubtedly cannot absorb the vast 22,000 employees from the Jet Airways.

However, the competing airlines are exploiting the opportunity by hiring cheap labour.

"I have given up all the hope. I get all sorts of thoughts in my mind. I am not getting a job even after having 19 years of experience with Jet Airways. They [other airlines] tell me that it will take more time and I need to wait but I am not able to meet my finances now. Friends and relatives are giving me money in good faith but for how long?" a 44-year-old engineer employed with Jet Airways said.

This 44-year-old engineer who did not want to be named was nearly drawn to tears as he narrated his ordeal over the phone. He also asked if it was "so hard for the government to say a few words" for the Jet Airways employees.

When India Today TV told him that the banks are searching for prospective investors and that the Etihad Airways was still around, he said, "SBI caps aren't letting anyone in. Do you see any transparency in their working? There is no direct effort from the banks to revive the Jet Airways. Everyone wants to grab whatever is left of the airline. For a mere 1,500 crores, 22,000 employees have been rendered jobless."

There are many like him facing the same set of adverse circumstances. With the companies focusing on hiring the youth, the experienced ones are

facing a tough time.

Another Jet Airways employee, on the condition of anonymity, said, "I am 46 now. In terms of experience, I can compete with a 25-year-old but not in terms of energy. The philosophy of the airlines these days is to hire people with more energy and at a less pay package. How do I manage my family? My savings have nearly dried up and there are no jobs in the market."

Another employee said that after the resignation of CEO, CFO and CPO, he and his colleagues got "so frustrated" that they went to meet the SBI officials in Mumbai and had a huge showdown.

"With the resignations of top officials, we were like a headless company. I told them that the banks are responsible for the present state and they, in turn, told me that there were technical



issues that had caused the roadblocks. I told them that it is because of their inefficiency that they failed to recover both the money and the airline. SBI isn't a small firm. Didn't it have competent officials to audit the company and get experts to advise them in advance? Now how do we survive? Where are the jobs?" he asks.

The Jet Airways employees have now decided to stage a protest in New Delhi outside the Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan on May 21.

Another Delhi-based employee said that he has already defaulted on the EMI for he hasn't

received his salary for the last five months.

"In August last year, we were told that there would be a cut of 25-50 per cent in our salaries but it would be reimbursed by December 31, 2018. Then, our Chairman Naresh Goyal assured us that our salaries would be cleared by March 31. Of course, none of it ever happened. Now, I am not able to pay the school fees of my kid," he said.

When India Today TV asked him if he has tried at other airlines, he said, "You tell me what I should do. I am getting a straight 50 per cent pay cut."

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## Tsu Namo 2.0 , BJP returns to power riding on Modi Wave in India

(By our staff reporter) New Delhi: In a 45 minute victory speech to the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday promised to devote "every moment" of his time and "every fibre" of his being for the people of India and said the country will now have only two castes -- the poor and those who want to alleviate poverty. In a rousing speech at the party headquarters here to celebrate the BJP's spectacular victory, Modi told cheering supporters that the election has thrown up a mandate to build a new India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday led his Bharatiya Janata Party towards a super-sized victory for a second term in office, as his message of nationalism, security, Hindu pride and a New India was wholeheartedly embraced by

voters across large swathes of the country. The elections have established the 68-year-old Modi as the most popular Indian leader in decades. The BJP led NDA (National Democratic Alliance) has won 348 seats, while Congress led UPA won 79 and others won 115. The elections were held for the 542 Lok Sabha seats, that went to polls in seven phases. In the end, BJP's prediction in the final stages of campaigning of "ab ki baar 300 paar" came true, as Congress President Rahul Gandhi's campaign slogan of "chowkidar chor hai" found no resonance among voters. In almost all the states where BJP won, its vote share was more than 50 percent.

Striking a conciliatory political tone, he also reached out to his rivals, urging everyone to put the

rancour of the bitter and often nasty campaign behind them. What's past is past, he said. "We have to move ahead. We have to take everyone with us, even our opponents. We have to work for the benefit of the country," he said. "You have filled this fakir's bag with a lot of hope. All your hopes, dreams, ambitions are dependent on it," he said. This is the victory of toiling farmers who struggle to feed the nation, this is the victory of those who now live in proper houses, this is the victory of the middle class which follows the rules, pays taxes, but wondered if his taxes were being used for the benefit of the country, he said. In the last five years, people have realized that the money they are contributing in taxes

has been put to nation-building, he said. The results have raised questions about Rahul Gandhi's leadership and his party's future. At a press conference, Gandhi refused to address that issue, saying the party will hold a meeting on Friday to discuss the future. Even though the opposition had criticized the BJP campaign as divisive and polarising, the trend shows that the Modi wave and the party's brilliant election management swept across geographies, caste lines, age, gender and economic status. The Modi wave not only swept through the Hindi heartland and Gujarat, as was expected, but also rippled through West Bengal, Odisha, Maharashtra and Karnataka. Only Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh appeared untouched. Even in

Telangana, where it was expected to fare poorly, the BJP was ahead in four seats, the same as the Telangana Rashtra Samiti.

However, Andhra Pradesh threw up a shock in the Assembly polls, which were held simultaneously, voting out of power the Telugu Desam Party of Chandrababu Naidu, and electing Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSR Congress. After Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, Narendra Modi is the third prime minister of the country—and the first non-Congress one—who has been able to retain power for a second term with full majority in Lok Sabha. The results were staggering for BJP in the Hindi-speaking states, including those where Congress had won in the recent Assembly elections: in Madhya Pradesh.

## John Walker Lindh, American ex-Taliban militant, set to walk free Thursday

(Agencies)- The Islamic militant who became known as the infamous "American Taliban" member is set to be released from a U.S. federal prison Thursday despite lawmakers' concerns about the "security and safety implications" of freeing an unrepentant terrorist who officials say continues to "openly call for extremist violence."

John Walker Lindh, who is currently behind bars in Terre Haute, Indiana,

is set to be discharged May 23, several years before he would complete the prescribed 20-year prison sentence he received for joining and supporting the Taliban. The former Islamist fighter and enemy combatant, named "Detainee 001 in the war on terror," was arrested in 2001, just months after the Sept. 11 attacks and the start of the war in Afghanistan, along with a group

of Taliban fighters who were captured by U.S. forces.

"We must consider the security and safety implications for our citizens and communities who will receive individuals like John Walker Lindh, who continue to openly call for extremist violence," Sens. Richard C. Shelby, R-Ala., and Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., wrote in a letter to the Federal Bureau of Prisons

late last week that was obtained by the Washington Post.

In the letter, the lawmakers reportedly sought details on how the agency is working to prevent prisoners such as Lindh from committing additional crimes after their release. They also asked which other "terrorist offenders" are next in line to be freed and how the Federal Bureau of Prisons determines whether or not someone is an "ongoing public threat." Lindh has been blamed for playing a role in the death of Johnny "Mike" Spann, a U.S. Marine turned CIA paramilitary operative who became the first American to be killed in combat in Afghanistan, amid the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Spann's daughter, Allison, told Fox News in March that Lindh's early release "feels like such a slap in the face." In November 2001, U.S. forces learned that an American - Lindh - was among the cluster of Taliban fighters left in limbo after their leader surrendered to the Northern Alliance in the northern Afghanistan province of Mazar-i-Sharif. Spann was the first to go into a compound there, serving as a prison, to interview Lindh, peppering him with questions about where he was from and what he was doing. But Lindh refused to respond.

"In those moments, when he chose to stay silent, he sealed his fate as a traitor to the United States," Allison Spann said. "At any point,



he could have warned him that something was being planned."

Hours later, Lindh's fellow detainees erupted in a violent revolt that left Mike Spann dead. The initial charges leveled against the then 20-year-old Lindh in 2002 included one for murder conspiracy due to the role he played in the deadly prison rebellion. However, nine of the ten counts in an indictment were then dropped and Lindh ended up pleading guilty to disobeying an executive order outlawing support to the Taliban and for possessing a weapon in Afghanistan.

Sentencing reports have indicated that "good behavior" may serve as justification for Lindh's early release. A convert to Islam hailing from northern California's Marin County, Lindh made the journey to Afghanistan after journeying through Yemen and Pakistan as a 19-year-old shortly before the Sept. 11 attacks. He underwent training in Kandahar and met with Al Qaeda chief Usama bin Laden on at least one occasion.

In 2017, the National Counterterrorism Center, according to documents obtained by Foreign Policy, underscored that Lindh continued to "advocate for global jihad and write and translate violent extremist texts."

## Let's praise Robert F. Smith — and heed the problem his donation has laid bare

(Agencies)- While considering the incredible generosity of billionaire philanthropist Robert F. Smith, who announced during a commencement speech that he'd be creating a program to pay off the student loans for every student in Morehouse College's class of 2019, you should also think about this: according to statistics from the Department of Education, 99% of borrowers have been rejected by a federal student loan forgiveness program designed to spur public service and reduce the nation's



mountain of student loan debt. The contrast couldn't be starker: a member of the much criticized 1% has pledged to provide 400 students with the best graduation present ever, even as the federal government and student loan creditors have found a thousand different ways to undermine even seemingly well-intentioned programs.

I must first praise Smith, even though I get that the \$40 million his gift will cost his family is but a drop in the bucket of his estimated \$4.5 billion of personal wealth. I must also point out that a lone billionaire -- or a gaggle of billionaires -- will never

be enough to solve our growing student loan debt crisis. Smith is an extremely successful black man who understands the importance of keeping the American dream alive -- but he doesn't pretend that all is well. As he told The Washington Post a few years ago, he gets stopped by police several times a year as he drives himself to an airport in Texas -- to board a private plane he owns.

"You shouldn't have to be fearful of your life," he told The Post. "You should be able to drive to the airport and not be stopped three to seven times a year."

Smith was also the second-largest donor to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, behind Oprah Winfrey. He's done that, and much, much more, mostly purposefully away from the spotlight after emerging from a working-class family headed by parents who were educators. I don't know his faith background, but his refusal to brag, pat himself on the back or forget about or abuse his power and influence to belittle those less fortunate are the kinds of qualities the Christian Bible encourages.



## Lawyer, 43, is first known British victim of 'Mexico suicide tourism'



(Insider Bureau)- A lawyer and former Ukip candidate has become Britain's first known victim of Mexican suicide tourism after buying a euthanasia drug in the country.

Calvin Paul Chapman took a fatal overdose of a substance that is used to kill death row prisoners at his flat in Manchester.

The 43-year-old bought it while on holiday after having been diagnosed with a cancerous tumour and smuggled the drug, which is illegal in the UK, back to Britain.

On the night of his death, he emailed Greater Manchester Police to request they collect his body.

'It will probably kill me in 20 minutes,' he wrote. 'Can you please send someone to pick up my body. My flat door is unlocked. Much appreciated.'

He had left suicide notes addressed to the police and the coroner. Before he killed himself, the respected solicitor tweeted: 'Goodnight and fond farewell. It's been fun.' Less than a year before he died, Mr Chapman had posted a video online saying he was going to kill himself.

He had a history of seizures and was taking strong painkillers before he died but still left in agony and battling depression.

Mr Chapman emailed officers at 8.40pm on April 20 last year, Manchester Coroner's Court was told. Police tried giving Mr Chapman CPR at his Ancoats flat after arriving at around 9.27pm as they

called for an ambulance. But Mr Chapman was pronounced dead at 10.30pm. Police coroners' officer Benjamin Dobbs said the notes 'clearly expressed his intention to take his own life'.

'The three suicide notes addressed to the coroners and the police outlined the background to Mr Chapman and the mental issues previously shared,' he said.

'The notes clearly expressed the medication was obtained on holiday in Mexico he named his friend as the sole beneficiary and a copy of this receipt was retrieved with the notes.'

'A large package addressed to Anita Rabar was found on the floor this package was opened and found to contain jewellery and cash.'

'He had clearly planned this and these letters reference holidays he had taken prior to this to purchase the medication abroad which he had used to take his own life. Calvin had previously intimated a desire to end his own life as recently as last July.'

'Of note taken from his lap top were the suicide notes written on this device, a PDF on euthanasia, and poems by Henry Scott and Tennyson about death.'

A coroner concluded Mr Chapman took his own life after deliberately taking an overdose. The commercial litigation specialist had a history of serious health problems, including a heart attack in 1995 which saw him have a pacemaker fitted the following year.

# Trump threatens swift but vague action against Mexico

(Insider Bureau)- President Donald Trump last month backed off a threat to close the U.S.-Mexico border, an about-face from previous declarations that he would shut down traffic between the two countries if Mexican leaders were unable to stem the flow of migrants crossing into the United States.

"I am very disappointed that Mexico is doing virtually nothing to stop illegal immigrants from coming to our Southern Border where everyone knows that because of the Democrats, our Immigration Laws are totally flawed & broken," the president wrote on Twitter. "Mexico's attitude is that people from other countries, including Mexico, should have the right to flow into the U.S. & that U.S. taxpayers should be responsible for the tremendous costs associated w/this illegal migration," he continued. "Mexico is wrong and I will soon be giving a response!"

Trump last month backed off a threat to close the U.S.-Mexico border, an about-face from previous declarations that he would shut down traffic between the two countries if Mexican leaders were unable to stem the flow of migrants crossing into the United States.

After Republicans, business groups and some of his own aides warned of the dire economic consequences a border closure could bring, Trump said he would instead give Mexico a "one-year warning" to stop the flow of drugs into the United States. The same day in April, he also pledged to impose auto tariffs on Mexico before taking the more drastic step of shutting down the border. "Before we close the border, we'll put the tariffs on the cars," Trump told reporters at the time. "I



don't think we'll ever have to close the border." Trump's latest warning comes days after he lifted steel and aluminum tariffs on Mexico and Canada, marking major progress in efforts to finalize a new North American trade pact. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle had warned that leaving the tariffs in place would cause major hurdles to U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement on Capitol Hill. Passing the new trade agreement would provide the president momentum heading into the 2020 election, allowing him to tout the fulfillment of the promise to replace NAFTA, which he has claims puts U.S. workers in unfair competition with lower-wage Mexican workers. The deal also moved a step forward amid an escalating trade war with China that poses significant economic ramifications for American consumers - but could benefit Mexico, whose geographic proximity makes it particularly well-suited to seize the opportunity to produce goods previously made in China.

## U.S. must ensure access to safe abortions: U.N. rights office

(Insider Bureau)- The United Nations human rights office called on U.S. authorities on Tuesday to ensure that women have access to safe abortions, saying bans lead to risky underground abortions that can endanger a woman's life. Missouri's Republican governor, Mike Parson, could sign a bill into law as early as this week that prohibits women from seeking an abortion after the eighth week of pregnancy, days after Alabama enacted the most restrictive abortion law in the United States.

"We are very concerned that several U.S. states have passed laws severely restricting access to safe abortion for women, including by imposing criminal penalties on the women themselves and on abortion service providers," U.N. human rights spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani told Reuters Television in Geneva. Evidence and experience have shown that complete bans on abortions do not reduce their number, but drive them underground "jeopardizing the life, health and safety of the women concerned", she said. Such bans are also "inherently discriminatory", affecting women who are poor, from minority backgrounds or other marginalized communities,



conservative-majority U.S. Supreme Court to cut back or overturn the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion nationwide and recognized a right under the U.S. Constitution for women to terminate pregnancies.

The most restrictive of those bills was signed

into law in Alabama last week. It bans abortion at all times and in almost all cases, including when the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest, but allows exceptions when the mother's life is in danger. Anti-abortion advocates are aware that any laws they pass are certain to be challenged. But supporters of the Alabama ban said the right to life of the fetus transcended other rights, an idea they would like tested at the Supreme Court.

Shamdasani added. "So we are calling on the United States and all other countries to ensure that women have access to safe abortions. At an absolute minimum, in cases of rape, incest and fetal anomaly, there needs to be safe access to abortions," she said. Missouri is one of eight states where Republican-controlled legislatures this year have passed new restrictions on abortion. It is part of a coordinated campaign aimed at the



# Democrats pound Treasury official over Deutsche Bank, Trump

(Insider Bureau)-Senate Democrats on Tuesday hammered a top Treasury Department official over a bombshell report that Deutsche Bank resisted reporting suspicious financial activity tied to President Donald Trump and his son-in-law Jared Kushner, whose companies were clients of the German lender. One after another, Democrats at a Senate Banking Committee hearing that focused on anonymous shell company abuse urged the director of Treasury's Financial

Crimes Enforcement Network, Kenneth Blanco, to take action on the New York Times story. Blanco's agency, known as FinCEN, is responsible for policing illegal money laundering and would have received any so-called suspicious activity reports filed by Deutsche Bank. According to the Times, bank employees prepared the reports but were blocked by executives. "The alleged facts are in plain sight," Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) said. "It's essential it seems to me to the public trust and the integrity of FinCEN that these be

actively pursued."

Despite the pummeling by Democrats - not a single Republican at the hearing brought up Deutsche Bank - Blanco said he was unable to comment on allegations made in the story, which he said he had been briefed on but had not read.

"You're a very smart man," Sen. Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), responded. "It wouldn't take very long to read it, but it might be very informative to you." "Just because it's in the newspaper doesn't mean it's true," Blanco said. "I'm not saying it's false, either." Blanco suggested that the bank might have been comfortable with the risks it was taking with Trump. "Everything is fact-specific," he said. "At the end of the day, it could be quite appropriate."

Before Tuesday's hearing, Van Hollen and Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) wrote to Deutsche Bank CEO Christian Sewing asking him



to confirm the accuracy of the Times story and to divulge how many suspicious activity reports were quashed. Deutsche Bank has said there were "numerous inaccuracies and misleading statements" in the Times story but that legal restrictions prevented it from refuting them in detail.

## Some Republicans unsettled by Trump's sweeping claims of immunity

**Veteran lawmakers are increasingly alarmed over the president's claim that Congress can't police him.**



(Insider Bureau)- Senior House Republicans are breaking with Donald Trump over the president's legal claims that Congress can't investigate whether a commander in chief violated the law.

That view, advanced by Trump's personal attorney and the White House counsel late last week, would upend long-held understandings about Congress' ability to scrutinize presidential conduct - especially alleged criminal activity.

"I'm in Congress. I'm aligned with Congress. I'm not aligned with the executive branch. And I think we have oversight authority over the administration," said Rep. Ken Buck (R-Colo.), a member of the House Judiciary Committee. "And if the president has acted illegally, then I think we have oversight authority."

Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), a veteran lawmaker who first came to Capitol Hill in the early 1980s as a congressional staffer, said he didn't agree with Trump's legal theories.

"Obviously there is such a thing as congressional oversight," Cole said.

Institutionalist-minded Republicans are increasingly uncomfortable with the far-reaching arguments Trump and his lawyers are using to make their case, amid fears the claims of near-immunity from congressional scrutiny would set dangerous precedents.

But these lawmakers are not preparing to act in any way that constrains Trump. They roundly support the president's rejection of House Democrats' investigations and subpoenas, arguing Democrats are taking their investigations of the president too far - particularly those targeting his business dealings and personal finances.

Democrats "are taking too broad of a view of the investigative powers of Congress and the administration's taking way too narrow of one," Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho) said. Cole added, "I think the executive branch has a right to [say] whether it's legitimate or not.

## 28-Year-Old Indian Man Jailed For 29 Months For Stalking Woman In UK

**Rohit Sharma was jailed at Isleworth Crown Court in London on Wednesday after pleading guilty to stalking, harassment and failing to appear in court.**

LONDON: An Indian man who stalked a woman over a period of 18 months after she attended to him just once in a shop in London has been jailed for 29 months. Rohit Sharma was jailed at Isleworth Crown Court in London on Wednesday after pleading guilty to stalking, harassment and failing to appear in court. The 28-year-old Indian national will be deported back to India at the end of his sentence.

"Stalking and harassment has a devastating impact on the lives of those targeted. There is intrusion into the victim's life, and they are left to feel vulnerable, distressed and threatened," said detective Constable Nicola Kerry from the Metropolitan Police West Area Command Unit, who led the investigation. "Sharma was incessant in his pursuit of his victim. He would phone her up to 40 times a day and use around 15 different numbers to contact her, making it near impossible to block his calls, and would also get friends and relatives to contact her on his behalf," she said.

The man began stalking his victim, aged in her 20s, after she served him in a shop in Wembley, north-west London, in November 2017. After that brief interaction, Sharma returned later that same day with his father and asked her to marry him. Four days later, the victim changed jobs, but Sharma found out where she worked and managed to obtain her phone number. His behaviour escalated and he bombarded the victim with multiple messages via phone, text and social media, the Met Police said. The victim reported Sharma to police and in February 2018 he was issued with a harassment warning.

However, the court was told that this did not deter him and his campaign of stalking and harassment continued. This consisted of the victim receiving up to 40 calls a day and Sharma continually watching her at her place of work. In July 2018, Sharma was charged with harassment but after being bailed from court he continued to pursue his victim. He failed to attend a court hearing in November 2018 and was circulated as wanted by police.

"Sharma's stalking continued persistently to such a point that the victim quit her job and moved away from the area in an attempt to get away from him. However, this only seemed to fuel his campaign and he systematically began contacting people who knew the victim, trying to find out where she had gone," the Met Police said. In April 2019, Sharma was arrested by police after intelligence linked him to an address in Wembley. He was subsequently charged and, due to the weight of evidence against him, was left with little option but to plead guilty at court.

In a statement, the unnamed victim said: "This whole experience has completely shattered my nerves, I have gone from being a confident young woman to constantly feeling scared and on edge. I have no desire to socialise or meet new people, which has really taken its toll and ruined the university experience I had always envisioned. "I cannot understand why this male became so obsessed with me. It is so unfair and completely undeserved. I just want him to realise what he has done and to know that he cannot do this to me or anyone else. I now want to move on knowing that he is locked away and cannot harm or hurt anyone else like he has done to me."



## Trump: 'If Iran wants to fight, that will be the official end of Iran'



(Insider Bureau)-President Donald Trump on Sunday again threatened the government of Iran, warning amid escalating tensions between Washington and Tehran that a military conflict would bring about "the official end" of the Middle Eastern nation. "If Iran wants to fight, that will be the official end of Iran. Never threaten the United States again!" Trump tweeted. The New York Times reported last week that Trump was considering

sending as many as 120,000 troops to the Middle East, after U.S. intelligence that suggested Iran might be planning attacks on American people and facilities in the region. The president dismissed the report, adding he would send "a hell of a lot more troops than that" if he decided to get more aggressive with Iran. Asked Thursday by a reporter outside the White House whether the U.S. would go to war with Iran, Trump replied: "I hope

not." Later Sunday, in an interview with Steve Hilton that aired on Fox News, Trump reiterated that he had no intention of letting Iran obtain nuclear weapons. "I don't want to fight. But you do have situations like Iran, you can't let them have nuclear weapons - you just can't let that happen," he said. The president's tweet on Sunday is not the first time Trump has sought to intimidate Tehran via his favored social

media platform. In July 2018, Trump fired off an all-caps warning to President Hassan Rouhani, cautioning him to "NEVER, EVER THREATEN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE." Earlier Sunday, Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah) expressed confidence that war with Iran would be averted.

"Going to war with Iran, not going to happen," Romney, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told CNN's Jake Tapper on "State of the Union." "I don't believe for a minute that either the president or John Bolton or, frankly, anyone else in a serious senior position of leadership in the White House has any interest in going to the Middle East and going to war," Romney continued. "The president made it very clear that he thinks the greatest foreign policy mistake, probably in the modern age, was the decision by President [George W.] Bush to go into Iraq," the Utah Republican said. "The idea that he would follow the same path by going after Iran, a more difficult enemy, if you will, militarily - that's just

not going to happen."

Romney's colleague Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) also downplayed the threat of military conflict with Iran in an interview Sunday.

"No one, to my knowledge, is proposing what you saw in Iraq with 150,000 troops mass to invade a country, overthrow its government and try to govern 80 million Iranians," Cotton told the host Chuck Todd on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"We'd like to see the regime change its behavior," he continued. "But my point about the first strike and the last strike is, the United States is not going to take the first strike here. But if Iran attacks the United States or our allies in the first strike, then it will be up to America in a time and a manner of our choosing to take the last strike because our military will devastate theirs."

When asked by Todd about the potential for Trump to meet with and negotiate directly with Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Cotton demurred.

"We're focused on trying to deter military action against the United States personnel and our allies in the region," Cotton said. "And that's not very fruitful conditions for sitting down with any foreign leader."

## US intercepts Russian bombers, fighter jets off the coast of Alaska

(Insider Bureau)- US F-22 stealth jets intercepted four Russian bombers and two Russian Su-35 fighter jets off the coast of Alaska on Monday, according to a statement from North American Aerospace Defense Command. The Russian nuclear capable long-range bombers flew into the Air Defense Identification Zone, which extends approximately 200 miles off Alaska's western coast.

The Russian bomber flights are seen by US military officials as part of Moscow's effort to train its military for a potential crisis

while simultaneously sending a message of strength to adversaries.

This latest intercept comes amid tensions with Russia on a wide range of geopolitical issues and a week after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met Russian Vladimir Putin in the resort town of Sochi where he warned Russia about interfering in US elections, taking a tougher public line than President Donald Trump on the issue.

US F-22s fighter jets and an E-3 Airborne Early Warning and Control System from North

American Aerospace Defense Command "positively identified and intercepted a total of four Tupolev Tu-95 bombers and two Su-35 fighters entering the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) on May 20," NORAD said in a statement.

"Two of the Russian bombers were intercepted by two F-22s, and a second group of bombers with Su-35 fighters was intercepted later by two additional F-22s, while the E-3 provided overall surveillance," NORAD said, adding that "the



Russian bombers and fighters remained in international airspace and at no time did the aircraft enter United States or Canadian sovereign airspace." The Russian Ministry of Defense confirmed the incident in a tweet Tuesday,

saying the Tu-95 bombers "made scheduled sorties over the neutral waters of the Chukotka, Bering and Okhotsk seas, as well as along the western coast of Alaska and the northern coast of the Aleutian Islands."

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# Great things in store'

## Donald Trump congratulates PM Modi on 'BIG' win

"Congratulations to Prime Minister @narendramodi and his BJP party on their BIG election victory," Trump said on Twitter.



(Insider Bureau)- US President Donald Trump congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his big election victory that put BJP on course to increase its parliamentary majority. "Congratulations to Prime Minister @narendramodi and his BJP party on their BIG election victory," Trump said on Twitter. "Great things are in store for the US-India partnership with the return of PM Modi at the helm. I look forward to continuing our important work together!"

# Hobbling Huawei: Inside the U.S. war on China's tech giant

(Insider Bureau)- In early 2018, in a complex of low-rise buildings in the Australian capital, a team of government hackers was engaging in a destructive digital war game. The operatives - agents of the Australian Signals Directorate, the nation's top-secret eavesdropping agency - had been given a challenge. With all the offensive cyber tools at their disposal, what harm could they inflict if they had access to equipment installed in the 5G network, the next-generation mobile communications technology, of a target nation? What the team found, say current and former government officials, was sobering for Australian security and political leaders: The offensive potential of 5G was so great that if Australia were on the receiving end of such attacks, the country could be seriously exposed. The understanding of how 5G could be exploited for spying and to sabotage critical infrastructure changed everything for the Australians, according to people familiar with the deliberations. Mike Burgess, the head of the signals directorate, recently explained why the security of fifth generation, or 5G, technology was so important: It will be integral to the communications at the heart of a country's critical infrastructure - everything from electric power to water supplies to sewage, he said in a March speech at a Sydney research institute. Washington is widely seen as having taken the initiative in the global campaign against Huawei Technologies Co Ltd, a tech juggernaut that in the three decades since its founding has become a pillar of Beijing's bid to expand its global influence. Yet Reuters interviews with more than two dozen current and former Western officials show it was the Australians who led the way in pressing for action on 5G; that the United States was initially slow to act; and that Britain and other European countries are caught between security concerns and the competitive prices offered by Huawei. The Australians had long harbored misgivings about Huawei in existing networks, but the 5G war game was a turning point.

# How your friends change your habits- for better and worse



(Insider Bureau)- We often think that self-control comes from within, yet many of our actions depend just as much on our friends and family as ourselves. Those we surround ourselves with have the power to make us fatter, drink more alcohol, care less about the environment and be more risky with sun protection, among many things. This is not simply peer pressure, in which you deliberately act in a certain way to fit in with the group. Instead, it is largely unconscious. Beneath your awareness, your brain is constantly picking up on cues from the people around you to inform your behaviour. And the consequences can be serious. It is now well accepted that our personal sense of self is derived from other people. "The more of your identity you draw from a group, even when you're not around that group, the more likely you are to uphold those values," says Amber Gaffney, a social psychologist from Humboldt State University. "If a big part of how you identify is as a student from a certain university, or like me an academic, then that's what you take with you into most interactions with others. I see things first through my lens as an academic." Students, for instance, tend to have stronger attitudes towards things like legalising drugs or supporting environmental sustainability than the rest of the population. These are called social norms. And while these norms are usually stable, some interesting things happen if just one person in the associated group acts out of character. Consider the following study, which found that people were likely to change their opinion on green travel if they found out their peers were acting hypocritically.

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# This election was like a pilgrimage for me, says PM Modi



(Insider Bureau)- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday told his ministerial colleagues that this Lok Sabha election was like a pilgrimage for him, Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar

informed the media persons after the meeting.

Quoting Prime Minister Modi, Tomar said: "Prime Minister Modi said that he has seen many elections but this election's

campaign did not seem like a pilgrimage for him.

"Termining the completion of the NDA government's tenure as a successful experiment, PM Modi said the alliance should be further strengthened," Union Minister Tomar said further.

Prime Minister Modi on Tuesday had a meeting with the members of his Council of Ministers and congratulated them for successfully working as a team for the last five years.

The 2-hour long meeting was attended by all the ministers, who on their part congratulated Modi for the development works that

the government did in the last five years under his leadership.

Fully confident to return to power, Union Minister and SAD leader Harsimrat Kaur said: "We are 110 per cent forming the next government. The opposition is staring at their defeat." On the allegations about drawbacks in electronic voting machines (EVMs), Kaur said: "When they won the Assembly polls in three states, EVMs were good for them but when the exit polls have shown their defeat, they have started blaming EVMs." Seeking apologies for their baseless allegations against Modi, Giriraj Singh said: "Opposition parties

should apologise to the public for their baseless allegations.

They have won elections when it was conducted by EVMs in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, and Delhi." Predicting more than 300 seats for BJP and 350 plus for the NDA, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan said: "Scared of defeat, the opposition parties indulged in violence and bloodshed. They are not able to digest the defeat." Union Minister and LJP president Ram Vilas Paswan also thanked Prime Minister Modi for running a strong government at the Centre for five years.

## US millionaire put plane on autopilot to have sex with minor, faces jail



(Insider Bureau)- A 53-year-old millionaire trader could get five-year jail term after pleading guilty to engaging in sex acts with a 15-year-old girl, once even putting his private plane in autopilot mode for the purpose. Stephen Bradley Mell, 53, of Bedminster, New Jersey, pleaded guilty to federal charges of engaging in interstate travel to engage in illicit sexual conduct and receiving child pornography in December 2018 and is now due for sentencing on Tuesday. Mell, a father-of-three who had a brokerage firm, was accused of committing sex acts with a 15-year-old girl whose mother had approached him so that he could give her flying lessons, the Daily Mail reported.

Ahead of his sentencing, Mell's legal team has argued he is a 'humble man' who was on 'multiple antidepressants' after falling into 'a spiral of depression' brought on by survivors' guilt over giving up his seat on a fatal helicopter trip with friends in 2012. Mell also faces sentencing in July on a state charge related to sexual activity with the teen, which he pleaded guilty to earlier this month. Mell started his own charity, Air LifeLine, which flew children with medical needs anywhere in the US for treatment.

## Indian Restaurant Fined 25,000 Australian Dollars For "Mould, Grease"

*The Curry Club Indian Restaurant and its owner were convicted after the restaurant fell short on a number of fronts.*



(News Agencies) MELBOURNE: A Perth-based Indian restaurant has been fined a whopping 25,000 Australian dollars for multiple food regulation breaches.

The Curry Club Indian Restaurant on South Street and its owner Nilish Dokhe were convicted after the restaurant fell short on a number of fronts when it came to cleanliness and not providing appropriate hand washing facilities.

The restaurant was found breaching seven food acts, including failure to store food properly protecting it from the likelihood of contamination, failure to maintain food premises to a standard of cleanliness and failure to clean and sanitise food contact surfaces.

Health inspectors during their visit to the restaurant last December found non-compliance in relation to sewage and water disposal, mouldy cutting

boards and a lack of hot water and soap, The West Australian reported.

A spokesman for the City of Fremantle said inspectors found a number of breaches, including an open spoon drain that had been cut across the floor and was "covered in mould and slime".

"Waste water was also observed leaking directly onto the floor in the main kitchen from drainage pipes located under the sink," he said.

"Waste water appeared to spill from the wash sink, drains and bucket trap and flow around into the cool room, posing a further risk of cross contamination," the spokesman said, adding that "a number of chopping boards used for food preparation were warped and mouldy."

The spokesman said a chest freezer was observed to be "rusty, mouldy and full of old food scraps", while the cool

room door was "covered in a build-up of dirt, mould and grease".

Drainage pipes under the sink were "mouldy and slimy", while no hot water, hand soap or hand towels were available.

There was also no chemical sanitiser used to clean food contact surfaces, the dishwasher was not working and several dirty and mouldy dishwashing racks were found.

"A manhole cover in the ceiling was missing, leaving a large opening directly into the ceiling space," the spokesman said.

The breaches amounted to a fine of 25,000 dollars for the restaurant.

The report quoted the restaurant owner Mr Dokhe as saying that he was not on site during the inspection, however, ensured the kitchen was cleaned to the proper standard the next day.



# PNB likely to take control of 2-3 small state-run banks: Report

***This could be the one of the first decisions to be taken by the new government after election results to be announced on May 23.***

India's Punjab National Bank is looking to merge with two or three government owned banks that could include Oriental Bank Of Commerce, Andhra Bank and Allahabad Bank, two sources familiar with the situation told Reuters, as New Delhi tries to cut the number of state-owned lenders.

This could be the one of the first decisions to be taken by the new government after election results to be announced on May 23. Exit polls showed that the alliance led by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi could win with a

big majority.

Banking sector reform is unfinished business from the last five year term of Modi's government as banks struggle under a huge debt pile than of more than 9 trillion Indian rupees (\$130 billion), or nearly 5% of the nation's gross domestic output.

The proposal to merge PNB with 2-3 other banks would be put before the cabinet for its nod, according to a government source.

Currently, there are 20 state-run banks following mergers of small banks with State Bank of India

and Bank of Baroda, and with IDBI Bank taken over by state-run Life Insurance Corporation.

PNB could start the process of taking control of the banks in the next three months, according to the sources, who declined to be named, as they are not authorised to speak to the media. PNB shares fell as much as 4% after Reuters reported the news. Its shares ended down 2.55% at 86.10 rupees on India's National Stock Exchange on Tuesday.

Allahabad Bank fell 2.6% to close at 45.15 rupees a share, while



Oriental Bank of Commerce ended down nearly 1% at 95.20 rupees per share. PNB declined to comment, while the other banks did not immediately reply to an email from Reuters seeking further information. India's finance ministry also declined to comment on the story.

**GOVERNMENT EFFORT**  
To revive the banking sector the

government of India has injected about \$36 billion of tax payers money in the last five years and also initiated an asset quality review of banks by the central bank. According to another official, the government is considering injecting another \$7 billion into state-run banks to help them offer cheaper loans to their customers.

## Reliance Retail set to disrupt Amazon, Walmart-Flipkart: Report

***The time is ripe for Reliance Retail, which operates 10,415 stores in more than 6,600 cities, with 500 million annual footfalls - giving the company the kind of scale required to swiftly launch India-based operations.***

Reliance Retail's upcoming entry into the online retail sector is the biggest challenge for Amazon and Walmart-Flipkart as the Mukesh Ambani-led behemoth is well positioned to create massive disruption in the market, a new report has stressed.

According to the global market research firm Forrester, the online retail sales in India will grow at a five-year CAGR of 25.8 per cent to reach \$85 billion by 2023, despite the hiccups of demonetization in 2016, GST in 2017 and the governmental changes in eCommerce policy announced last December. The time is ripe

for Reliance Retail, which operates 10,415 stores in more than 6,600 cities, with 500 million annual footfalls - giving the company the kind of scale required to swiftly launch India-based operations. "One of the things that will trouble Amazon and Flipkart is Reliance's history of launching operations via massive discounts," Satish Meena, senior forecast analyst at Forrester Research, said on Tuesday. Reliance entered the telecom sector in 2003 with the Monsoon Hungama tariff plan, which brought tariffs for voice calls down to just Rs 0.40 a minute from the existing rate of

Rs 2 a minute, followed by the launch of Jio 4G plan in 2016 that dropped data rates from Rs 250 per GB to Rs 50 per GB. "This kind of discounting can disrupt any market, and we expect something similar to happen in the grocery space during Reliance's launch," Meena added. Reliance is fast working on creating the world's largest online-to-offline New Commerce Platform, according to Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director, Reliance Industries. "Due to the recent changes in eCommerce policy and the restrictions on an inventory-led model for market-



places with FDI, Reliance Retail is finding a favourable policy environment to launch operations where it can use its existing retail infrastructure to deliver goods to customers," the Forrester report noted. Reliance launched the food and grocery app among its

employees in April 2019 to prepare for the commercial launch later in the year. Reliance Retail is the largest retailer in India, with \$18.7 billion in revenue during financial year 2019, and it grew at a CAGR of 55 per cent in the last five years.

## ICICI? probe widens, 24 loans from Chanda Kochhar era under lens

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), investigating links between former ICICI Bank managing director and chief executive officer Chanda Kochhar and the Videocon Group, has expanded its probe into a total of 24 loans aggregating Rs 7,862 crore that, it believes, were loaned "illegally and criminally" by the bank to the conglomerate when she was in charge between 2009 and 2018. Both ED and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which started looking at quid-pro-quo between Videocon Group chief Venugopal Dhoot

and Kochhar after it emerged (courtesy, a whistle-blower) that the businessman was an investor in Kochhar's husband, Deepak Kochhar's company, were initially focusing on six high-value loans worth Rs 1,875 crore given by the bank to Videocon Group companies between 2009 and 2011, as alleged in the CBI FIR.

According to an internal investigation report of ED, exclusively reviewed by HT, the total loans - fresh loans or renewal of loans, guarantees - worth Rs 7,862.20 crore were sanctioned by the private bank to Videocon Group companies between May 2009

and June 2017. Some of these loans were as high as Rs 2,870 crore (April, 26, 2012, to Videocon Industries Limited [VIL] and its group companies); the most recent was on June 28, 2017 (~166.4 crore to VIL). Other big loans now being investigated by ED include a Rs 536 crore loan to VIL on September 15, 2016; a Rs 881.4 crore loan, also to VIL, on October 31, 2011; Rs 236 crore to VIL on December 23, 2015; and Rs 180 crore to Videocon Hydrocarbons Holdings Ltd on September 30, 2014. CBI and ED both allege that the payment of Rs 64 crore

into a Deepak Kochhar company, NuPower Renewables, in 2009 was a quid pro quo from Dhoot for a loan to VIL.

ED also suspects that considering the long association between the Videocon Group and the Kochhars, and with both ICICI Bank and Videocon having operations in India and abroad, there is a "possibility of generation and infusion of proceeds of crimes further in the case", according to the agency's internal investigation report.

Asserting that it needs to further probe money laundering in the matter since the loan amount

sanctioned "illegally and criminally by the ICICI Bank" is more than Rs 7,000 crore, the report adds that "it appears that more suspected payments may be unearthed in the thorough probe".

Dhoot declined comment and ICICI Bank did not respond to an e-mail seeking comment. Kochhar's lawyer Vijay Aggarwal also did not comment. ED has also termed the flat at CCI Chambers in Churchgate, Mumbai, where Chanda Kochhar lives, as an "illegal gain"; she has lived there since 1997.



## British Steel risks collapse with 25,000 jobs at stake

(By our staff reporter) - British Steel, the country's second largest steel producer, is on the brink of collapse unless the government agrees to provide an emergency 30 million pound (\$38 million) loan, two sources close to the situation said. British Steel said negotiations had not concluded and it continues to work with all parties to secure the future of the business. It also reassured employees that their salaries will be paid in full for May.

Owned by investment firm Greybull Capital, British Steel employs around 5,000 people, mostly in Scunthorpe, in the north of England, while 20,000 more depend on its supply chain.

Greybull, which specializes in trying to turn around distressed businesses, paid former owners Tata Steel a nominal one pound in 2016 for the loss-making company which they renamed British Steel.

British Steel had asked the government for a 75 million pound loan but has since reduced its demand to 30 million pounds after Greybull agreed to put up more money, according one of the sources, who is close to the negotiations.

Greybull was also the owner of Monarch, an airline that went bust here in October 2017.

If the British Steel loan is not approved by Tuesday afternoon, administrators EY could be appointed as early as Wednesday,

the source said.

Andrew Stephenson, a junior business minister, told parliament the government was in discussions with the company and will "leave no stone unturned in its support for the industry".

He added the government has been in contact with former British Steel owner Tata Steel.

### BREXIT BASHES STEEL SECTOR

The second source said British Steel lost the backing of one of its four big lenders earlier on Tuesday, while some of the others had already exited.

"The (company's) cash was not big enough to sustain even one bank pulling the plug," he said.

The possible collapse of British Steel comes after Germany's

Thyssenkrupp and India's Tata Steel ditched a plan this month to merge their European steel assets to create the EU's second largest steelmaker after ArcelorMittal. The collapsed merger leaves the wider EU steel sector fragmented and vulnerable to economic downturns. It also calls into question the fate of Britain's largest steelworks in Port Talbot, Wales, owned by Tata Steel. Stephenson said he held talks with Tata Steel this week about issues relating to Port Talbot, and that the India-based steelmaker had painted a positive picture of the site. EU steel company shares are currently trading at their lowest in nearly three years, driven down by poor demand, especially in

autos, and cheap imports that can no longer reach the United States due to trade tariffs.

Making steel profitably is particularly difficult in Britain, where steelmakers pay some of the highest green taxes and energy costs in the world and are saddled with high labor costs and business rates. They also face uncertainties surrounding Britain's planned exit from the European Union. After making a profit in 2017, British Steel cut around 400 jobs last year, blaming factors such as the weak pound. Earlier this month, it appeared to have secured the backing of lenders and shareholders to continue operating after the uncertainty around Brexit hammered its order book.

## Anil Ambani to withdraw defamation suits against Congress, National Herald



(By our staff reporter) - Billionaire Anil Ambani's Reliance Group Tuesday said it has decided to withdraw the Rs 5,000 crore civil defamation suits filed against Congress leaders and National Herald newspaper, saying it believes their statements and article on the Rafale fighter jet deal were made for political purposes in the run up to the general elections.

The suits were filed in an Ahmedabad court and were being heard in the court of city civil and sessions judge P J Tamakuwala.

"We believe that the defamatory statements by certain individuals and corporate bodies with regard to the offset agreement between Reliance Group and Dassault Aviation were made for political purposes in the run up to the Lok Sabha election 2019 that have concluded on Sunday, May 19, 2019. Besides, the subject matter is pending for adjudication before the Hon'ble Supreme Court," the group said in a statement.

It therefore "has decided to withdraw the defamation suits filed by it against these individuals and corporate bodies," the statement said without naming anybody.

The Congress party and its president Rahul Gandhi had over the past few months alleged corruption in the deal to buy 36 Rafale fighter jets from France and claimed that Ambani's group got Rs 30,000 crore of benefit by way of getting offset contracts of the deal.

Reliance Group had filed defamation suits against some Congress leaders but not against Gandhi. "We have intimated the defendants that we are going to withdraw the suits against them," the complainant's lawyer, Rasesh Parikh, told PTI in Ahmedabad. P S Champaneri, the lawyer representing the National Herald and some other defendants, said he was told by the Reliance Group's counsel that he received instructions from his client to withdraw the defamation suits against them.

## Worries of US-China trade war hits markets

*For overseas investors, a weaker currency is the latest factor making yuan-denominated assets less attractive.*

(By our staff reporter) - Sign up for Next China, a weekly email on where the nation stands now and where it's going next.

Expectations that \$200 billion of foreign money would flow into China's capital markets this year are looking nothing short of optimistic. For overseas investors, a weaker currency is the latest factor making yuan-denominated assets less attractive. They've been selling mainland-listed stocks at a record pace and their demand for Chinese bonds has been relatively tepid: monthly inflows have averaged at just 6.8 billion yuan (\$984 million) this year, versus the 44.4 billion yuan seen in 2018, ChinaBond data show. What had started as a promising year in China's markets is quickly turning sour as the country's trade stand-off with the US takes a toll on sentiment. The swift correction in stocks and concern that the yuan could tumble to dangerous levels is creating volatility in a market that -- for foreign investors -- remains difficult to hedge. It comes at a sensitive time for policy makers, who have been accelerating efforts to open the country's financial sector to the world. Sydney-based Nader Naeimi, who started selling China equities in April, said he won't be lured back until China's economic data significantly improves or the



government announces large fiscal stimulus.

"There are a lot of options outside China," said Naeimi, who oversees about \$1 billion at AMP Capital Investors Ltd., adding that foreigners remember last year's rout and the current volatility might keep them away. "It's two years in a row we've seen that -- starting well and then a big crash." The Shanghai Composite Index, which was up more than 30% for the year at its peak in April, has given up about a third of those gains and trading volume keeps dwindling. More than 42 billion yuan of A shares have been sold through trading links with Hong Kong in May, more than double the monthly record set in April. The offshore yuan has declined about 3% against the dollar this month and investors are debating whether it will weaken past 7 for the first time

since the financial crisis. A breach of that level could result in consequences from financial instability to a deterioration in China's balance of payments and derail efforts to open capital markets, according to Citigroup Inc. Investors should be cautious about capital outflows given expectations the yuan will fall more, Jianghai Securities said in a note dated Monday. While risk-off environment in China has helped government debt rebound since April, foreign flows into the nation's bond market are lagging expectations. Overseas investors bought just \$2.7 billion worth of Chinese notes last month even as sovereign debt was included in a major global index for the first time. Inflows would need to pick up significantly to reach Societe Generale SA's forecast of as much as \$100 billion in the 12 months after inclusion.



## Take it easy. Mental stress ups risk of death in heart disease patients

People with persistent mental distress are nearly four times as likely to have died of cardiovascular disease, say

(News Agencies) If you have a heart disease, you may do well to relax. According to researchers, people with persistent mental distress, including depression and anxiety, were nearly four times as likely to have died of cardiovascular disease and nearly three times as likely to have died from any cause. The team analysed the association between occasional or persistent mental distress and the risk of death in 950 people with stable coronary heart disease, who were between 31 and 74 years old. All the participants were part of the Long Term Intervention with Pravastatin in Ischaemic Disease Trial and had had a

heart attack or been admitted to hospital for unstable severe pain in the chest in the preceding three to 36 months.

They filled in a validated general health questionnaire (GHQ30) at six months, one, two and four years. This was graded according to severity and the length of time it lasted at each of the assessments: never distressed; occasional (of any severity); persistent mild distress on three or more occasions; and persistent moderate distress on three or more occasions. The participants' health and survival were then tracked for an average of 12 years.

They found that 398 people died from all causes and 199 died from

cardiovascular disease.

The questionnaire responses showed that 587 (62%) of participants said they had not been distressed at any of the assessments, while around one in four (27%) said they had experienced occasional distress of any severity. The findings suggested that in patients with stable [coronary heart disease], long term mortality risk is related to the cumulative burden of psychological distress. Dr Gjin Ndrepepa from the Technical University, Munich, Germany, describes the research as an "important and elaborative study which



helps to uncover the intricate relationship between psychological distress and cardiovascular disease. Nevertheless, mental distress activates the sympathetic nervous system and boosts stress hormone levels, which, if persistent, can produce potentially harmful physiological changes, some of which may be permanent, he explained. The study is published online in the journal Heart.

## Get off your desk and take a short walk. It lowers blood lipid levels

A brisk walk every half hour can lower blood glucose and insulin



(News Agencies) If you're used to a sedentary lifestyle, or working at your office desk for long hours at a stretch, it's bound to affect your health. It's time to change that. According to a recent study, office workers who take brisk walks for two minutes every half hour can lower their blood glucose and insulin levels. Increased sitting is known to be associated with an increased risk of a cardiovascular disease, diabetes and death from all

causes.

Now, the most recent Otago study shows this sort of activity also reduces triglyceride (lipid) levels when measured in response to a meal consumed around 24 hours after starting the activity. High levels of triglycerides are linked to hardening of the arteries and other cardiovascular conditions. The study's lead author, Dr Meredith Peddie of Otago's Department of Human Nutrition says that earlier international research had overwhelmingly failed to detect evidence that regular walking breaks affect lipid levels, but this is likely due to the effect generally not being immediate.

In what is known as a randomised crossover trial, 36 participants completed four two-day interventions in the Otago study: Prolonged sitting

Prolonged sitting with 30 minutes of continuous walking at the end of the first day

Sitting with two minutes of moderate intensity walking every 30 minutes

- A combination of the continuous walking and regular activity breaks described above.

Blood levels of triglycerides, which are non-esterified fatty acids (otherwise known as free fatty acids), glucose, and insulin responses were measured in the participants over five hours on the second day of the experiment. The scientists found that, overall, short regular walking breaks, 30 minutes of continuous physical activity - and especially the two combined - appear to have good potential to improve people's metabolic health, said Dr Peddie.

## Working on the night shift?

It may hinder your body's ability to repair DNA damage

(News Agencies) Beware if you work in late night shifts, as according to a study, working at night may hinder your body's ability to repair damaged DNA caused by normal cellular processes. The findings suggested that night shifts suppress the production of 'sleep hormone' melatonin, which regulates the internal body clock (circadian rhythm). They explained that the night shifts reduced the capacity to repair oxidative DNA damage due to insufficient levels of melatonin and may also result in cells harbouring higher levels of DNA damage. Over time, DNA damage that is not repaired will cause mutations that can lead to cancer. Previous research on 223 night shift workers has showed that day

sleep was associated with lower levels in their urine of a chemical by-product of active DNA tissue repair called 8-OH-dG than night sleep — potentially indicating reduced capacity to repair cellular damage. For the study, the team measured 8-OH-dG levels in the stored urine samples of 50 night shift workers from the previous study. These 50 people had exhibited the widest discrepancies in levels of circulating melatonin between night work and night sleep.

Analysis of the urine samples showed that melatonin levels were much lower when taken during a night shift than when taken during a normal night's sleep. The researchers said explained that a particular pathway

called NER is thought to be involved in the repair of DNA damage caused by oxygen free radicals, which are produced during normal cellular activity. The research has shown that melatonin production boosts the activity of the genes involved in the NER pathway. They noted that relative to night sleep, reduced melatonin production among shift workers during night work is associated with significantly reduced urinary excretion of 8-OH-dG. They added that if such effects are confirmed, melatonin supplementation should be explored as an intervention to reduce the occurrence of potentially carcinogenic DNA damage among shift workers.

Worried about early menopause?

Eat the right foods to protect yourself



(News Agencies) Early menopause is a serious concern. Research as indicated that it may predict heart disease and trigger old-age problems in women. Now, a new study says that high intake of barley, brown rice, oatmeal, soya and tofu over a long-term period may protect you from it.

The findings indicated that the women, who consume approximately 6.5% of their daily calories as vegetable protein had a significant 16% lower risk of early menopause compared to women whose intake was approximately 4% of calories. First author Maegan Boutot and Prof Elizabeth Bertone-Johnson conducted the study. The authors from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health explained that dietary vegetable protein intake is associated with ovarian aging and may identify ways for women to modify their risk of early onset of menopause and associated health conditions. Early menopause, the cessation of ovarian function before age 45, affects about 10% of women and is associated with higher risk of cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and early cognitive decline, the authors note. The team analysed 1,16,000 women aged 25-42 in 1989. The participants were asked to report how often they ate a single serving of 131 foods, beverages and supplements over the previous year, from "never or less than once a month" to "Six+ per day."



# Health benefits of different teas : Oolong, black or green



and manner.

health benefits different teas Oolong black green daily post. While we all drink tea as a stress buster, comforter, there are many other hidden benefits that different types of tea offer if consumed in a definite time and manner. Multiple brands have

come up with numerous teas like , Black tea is rarely mentioned in the context of

tea's health benefits but it is rich in antioxidants, improves oral health, boosts weight loss and even brings down stress levels.

Green tea is a storehouse of many antioxidant compounds, it's easy to assume that green tea is one of the healthiest beverages.

According to traditional Chinese medicine, drinking green tea helps relieve body

aches and pains, aids digestion, impacts the process of detoxification and, generally, enhances the quality of life. Oolong tea promotes fat metabolism (pushing the body to burn fat for energy), and blocks the absorption of excess fat and cholesterol. Regular consumption of oolong tea can actually boost your weight loss.

(News Agencies) While we many other hidden benefits all drink tea as a stress buster, comforter, there are if consumed in a definite time

## Playing video games can change our brains performance



(News Agencies) Playing video games can change brains performance. "Games have sometimes been praised or demonized, often without real data backing up those claims. Moreover, gaming is a popular activity, so everyone seems to have strong opinions on the topic," according to the sources. From their analysis, which included looking at 22 studies on the structural changes in the brain and 100 on changes in brain functionality or behaviour, the team found that playing video games can change both how our

brains perform and its structure. Some of the studies suggested that playing videos games can improve several types of attention, including sustained attention or selective attention, with the brain regions involved in attention appearing to be more efficient in gamers and requiring less activation. However the team also found that playing video games can be addictive in the form of "Internet gaming disorder," with gaming addicts showing functional and structural changes in the brain's neural reward system which are nearly the same as those seen in people with other addictive disorders.

## Few tips to reduce the stretch marks post pregnancy



(News Agencies) Few tips to reduce the stretch marks post pregnancy. Stretch marks appear on woman's body during pregnancy and after the delivery. Given below are some tips to reduce those stretch marks from the body and get a flawless skin back.

Moisturizing your body is necessary: Use Coconut oil to moisturize your body .

It will reduce the dryness and thus won't let the skin to break out. There are certain types of fatty acids present in coconut oil that would provide proper nourishment to the skin.

Drink plenty of water: Water is a

solution of almost every problem. Drink a lot of water to keep your body hydrated. Water helps in maintaining the elasticity of the skin, so include more water in your day.

Buy a good shea and cocoa butter: A good nourishment is provided to the body with the usage of cocoa and shea butter. They enrich our body with fatty acid and make it soft and healthy. These products provide natural hydration and elasticity by simply massaging the body with the same. Vitamin E: Vitamin E is an essential oil for providing the body with adequate nourishment. Either involve vitamin E in your diet or switch to massaging your body with

vitamin E enriched oil. Almond oil is the best available option for the same. Vitamin C: We all are aware of the benefits of vitamin C to our skin. It helps in rejuvenating our skin and keep the body hydrated. Including vitamin C rich fruits or food products in diet would help to keep the skin free from rashes and stretch marks. Vitamin C also blesses us with the healthy growth of the child. Carry adequate zinc in the body: Studies revealed that the appearance of stretch marks are higher in those women who lack zinc in their body. A proper nutritious diet is required to add zinc to the body. One can also consult their doctor to include supplements in their diet to eradicate this shortfall. Eat gelatin: Gelatin is good to maintain the elasticity of the skin as it contains collagen in it. So consumption of gelatin would help in removing the stretch marks or minimise their appearance on the body. Switch to medicated ointments: Even undertaking all the necessary measures, stretch marks still show up, then switch to the medicated ointments available in the market to get rid of the same.

## How to be active in Summer Season?



(News Agencies) When the weather changes, many troubles arise for our health. Humans have always been able to adapt themselves to the weather and win the bad influences of the weather. Whenever there is a problem with eating and drinking, there are many problems in health. In summer, we should mainly eat cold products. Even if many cold things invite coughs. This damages the lungs and throat, so we must eat common cold items, it is okay to not eat cold foods.

Things like cold things should be used less during childhood. In the summer, pollution increases, so walking, walking, or exercising in the morning benefits the lungs. Eyes also affect the summer. This requires a lot of sleep and eyes need rest. Morning bath is of prime importance but in the summer season evening bath is also required.

There are also issues related to digestion in summer, so it is important to lighten up the food, do not eat late-baked, fried foods. Try not to drink water with food.

The salivation of the mouth only works a lot in digesting food. Therefore, do not drink water 30 minutes before feeding and after 30 minutes of drinking water.

You can get a dip or a mint for quick cooking. Health problems are also caused by soft dunk, tea, alcohol, etc. If they are accustomed, skip or reduce them.

The clothes are light and cotton, so the best. In this season, light colored cloths are good. They do not absorb the sun's rays.



# At Cannes, Quentin Tarantino loses his cool post screening of Brad Pitt, Leonardo DiCaprio starrer *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*

**During the press interaction, post the screening of Quentin Tarantino's new film *Once Upon A Time in Hollywood*, the ace director appeared rude and edgy.**

Sometimes, one wonders why men and women are not happy. Quentin Tarantino should have been a very happy man; the Cannes Film Festival waited for his latest adventure, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, to be completed in the laborious 35 mm format, and slotted it in the main Competition. The movie evoked a mixed reaction, but that is how Cannes has always been. Yet, Tarantino seemed edgy at his media conference on Wednesday afternoon.

To questions on the portrayal of women in his cinema and disgraced director Roman Polanski, Tarantino's replies were snappy and

rude. He told a woman journalist from the New York Times to a question on why Margot Robbie (who plays Sharon Tate in the film) had so few lines: "I reject your hypothesis". The director also refused to speak about violence against women, and mentioned Polanski in the passing - as he did in his movie, which many felt was sad given Roman's magnificent cinema. Tarantino said that he had not spoken with Polanski before making the film.

Tarantino's answers had the dozens of journalists at the conference feeling angry. In fact, the master American auteur never ceases to surprise and shock me. In the early years of 2000, he, as the head of the Cannes Film Festival jury, gave the Palm d'Or to Michael Moore's Bush bashing documentary, *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Many of us were livid. The work did not deserve the honour, and was seen as a political

decision. Later, his *Inglorious Basterds* weaved in a Jewish fantasy during World War II of getting all the top Nazi leaders in one place and destroying them. Of course, we all know that such a thing never happened, but in Tarantino's canvas, it took place as the movie's finale. I loved the film (and many others as well) -- especially for having discovered a brilliant actor like Christoph Waltz. He was a small-time German television star, who rose to great fame after Tarantino cast him as a cruel Nazi officer. Tarantino became a hero as well. And just before the film was screened at Cannes some years ago, Tarantino made an appeal to all those about to watch his work. Please do not divulge the end. Similarly, just before Tarantino's latest, *Once Upon A Time In Hollywood*, was screened at Cannes on Wednesday evening, up went another plea. Please do not



reveal the climax.

Tarantino's newest outing is set in Hollywood in the late 1960s, when he was growing up there. *Once Upon A Time In Hollywood* was touted as a take on the brutal murder of actor Sharon Tate by the Manson Family, though it turned out to be different. Sharon was eight months pregnant with husband Roman Polanski's child. But the killers did not spare her. Many believed that the golden period of Hollywood ended on the night of the gruesome murder - August 9, 1969. Tarantino

must have been six, but the adoration he shows for Tate is admirable. Yes, in the brief screen time he offers her! The movie plot is rather thin, and does end in a crime. It has more to do with Tate's neighbours — Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio), a television star, and his best pal, Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt), a stunt artist. Though there are liberal takes on the Hollywood of an era gone by, the film seems more like a buddy adventure. There is very little of Sharon or Roman; they flit in and out of the screen.



## *John Wick 3 Parabellum* movie review

### *Keanu Reeves delivers the best action film since Mission Impossible Fallout*

***Keanu Reeves returns as a man of focus, commitment and sheer will in Chad Stahelski's groundbreaking action franchise.***

**John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum**  
 Director - Chad Stahelski  
 Cast - Keanu Reeves, Halle Berry, Lawrence Fishburne, Mark Dacascos, Lance Reddick, Ian McShane, Angelica Huston  
 Rating - 4.5/5

The only way *John Wick: Chapter 3 - Parabellum* could've been better is if Keanu Reeves had somehow got his hands on one of those 'desi kattas' from an Anurag Kashyap movie, and gone and shot the CBFC's worst ideas in the face. I'm being extreme; a couple of clips in the kneecaps would suffice. As hyper-stylised Neo-noir action threequels go, it's damn near a masterpiece - breathtakingly beautiful to look at, mythologically dense,

and featuring the best action set pieces since *Mission: Impossible - Fallout*. And for it to have been desecrated in the manner that it has is positively criminal.

When it is at its most euphorically adventurous, as *John Wick* is beating a giant man with a hardbound library book, the Indian censor board decides that watching this film having shown dozens of other deaths already - is too much for an adult human to handle. And so it arbitrarily slices and dices important scenes, making up its own rules as it goes along, guided by a wonky moral compass. It's disappointing, to be sure, but this is *John Wick* we're talking about - it is said that he once killed three men in a

bar with a pencil (a pencil!). He is a man of focus, commitment, and sheer will. He can smash mountains, bury oceans and escape the light. He can do better than a bunch of bored uncles.

Not two weeks have passed since the events of the first film, when that poor fool decided to kill John Wick's dog and ended up incurring that wrath of his alter ego, the Baba Yaga. In those two weeks, John Wick has taken down literally hundreds of New York's finest Russian gangsters, gone on an Italian 'vacation', and has thumbed his nose at the High Table - the mythical government of sorts in this fictional world of assassins and a\$\$holes.

This makes him a man on the run, with nowhere to hide and



an entire city's worth of assassins hot on his trail, looking to grab a slice of that \$14 million bounty. Like its two predecessors, it navigates between highbrow cinema and schlocky garbage better than Sebastian Vettel around a race track. At one point John visits a theatre named after the great Russian filmmaker Andrei Tarkovsky; and then there are the requisite nods to spaghetti westerns and Hong Kong gun-fu. It is, however, also a film in which a dog bites a man in the crotch multiple times. And

through cinematographer Dan Laustsen's lens, even the campiest bits look like high art. It's fabulously lean, plot wise - *John Wick* has a target on his back, and he must fight to have it removed. This takes him to Casablanca, where he meets up with an old friend (and possibly flame?) played by the perfectly cast Halle Berry. Keanu Reeves - bless his pure heart - isn't the best actor in the world (likely even his street), but in just a couple of scenes manages to convey years of history with Sofia, Berry's character.



## Sonam Kapoor takes us inside her dressing room as she shares BTS videos from Cannes 2019

Sonam Kapoor has shared new videos from Cannes Film Festival where she has already made two appearances at the red carpet this year



Bollywood actor Sonam Kapoor Ahuja has shared fresh videos showing her preparation for the gorgeous looks that she donned at the ongoing Cannes Film Festival. She has already wowed fans with two stunning looks at the Cannes red carpet this year. One of the videos shows Sonam getting decked up for a Chopard party where she wore a neon yellow gown by Ashi Studio.



The flared off-shoulder gown was paired with matching stilettos. Fashion police labelled her look as that of a 'modern maharani'. The video then moves to her interacting with people. The second video shows Sonam in a white dressing gown and later she is seen wearing a yellow gown as she launches a new range of Chopard perfumes. "There is no greater luxury than sustainability." @chopard #chopardparfums ?? @shakeelbinafzal.....Beauty begins the moment you decide to be yourself. Coco Chanel ?? @shakeelbinafzal @chopard

@abujanisandeepkhosla #chopardparfums," she wrote along the videos. Sonam and producer Rhea Kapoor, are Anupam Kher, who starred in Sonam and Shahid Kapoor's *Mausam*, also liked the tweet. The actor's first look at Cannes 2019 was in a red dress by Valentino. Later, she transformed into a modern creating waves at the 72nd edition of Cannes Film Festival, with Rhea styling her sister's looks for various appearances, including the ones at the red carpet. She has not only styled Sonam on several occasions, but also worked with her as a producer in films *Aisha*, *Khoobsurat* and *Veere Di Wedding*.

Earlier, actor Anil Kapoor shared a collage of Sonam's different looks at the French Riviera and wrote, "Taking the world by storm, one outfit at a time! So proud of my girls for creating art with fashion! @sonamakapoor

@RheaKapoor, Love the looks and the brains behind them! #proudfathermoment." Actor Anupam Kher, who starred in Sonam and Shahid Kapoor's *Mausam*, also liked the tweet. The actor's first look at Cannes 2019 was in a red dress by Valentino. Later, she transformed into a modern maharani for a Chopard party. She also showcased a neon yellow gown by Ashi Studio.

The flared off-shoulder gown was paired with matching stilettos. Sonam donned an ivory white Ralph & Russo tuxedo dress with a long train on her second day at the red carpet of the film festival, and wrote: "The French Riviera suits me." On the work front, Sonam was last seen alongside father Anil Kapoor and Rajkumar Rao in *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha To Aisa Laga*. She will soon feature in *The Zoya Factory* based on Anuja Chauhan's book by the same name.

## Aishwarya Rai turns on the heat in unseen photo from Cannes 2019

Actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan has been sharing pictures from her Cannes 2019 outing. Her latest picture from the French Riviera town is no less stunning.



A day after she returned from Cannes in southern France, actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan seems to be missing the ongoing Cannes Film Festival already. She shared a new picture from Cannes where she posed a casual look. Aishwarya can be seen posing gracefully, with her back to the camera, in a colourful jacket over a pair of denim pants. Her hair is let loose but is in simple curls. Aishwarya was spotted with daughter Aaradhya at the Mumbai airport early Wednesday. Her daughter has been accompanying the star to Cannes every year.

Earlier, Aishwarya also shared her one last look from Cannes on her Instagram account where she is seen wearing a black sheer skirt. She paired it with a brown

blazer and let her hair fall straight. Aishwarya walked the Cannes red carpet twice this year - she made her maiden appearance for the year in a metallic mermaid gown in yellow and green hues by Jean Louis Sabaji. For her second red carpet look, Aishwarya opted for a white-feathered tulle gown. On her first day in Cannes, she was also joined by Aaradhya (in a yellow dress) before the star's first red carpet appearance this year. She had shared her picture on Instagram with the caption, "My Sunshine Forever LOVE YOU" to which husband Abhishek Bachchan had commented, "The gold standard!" On the work front, Aishwarya was last seen in *Fanney Khan* where she starred along with Anil Kapoor and Rajkumar Rao.

## This is how Game of Thrones should have ended

The biggest validation of art today is if it gets its own share of memes. In 2019, in our Techolera-affected lives, that's what every thing worth writing home about boils down to. Take any moment from *Game of Thrones*. Chances are, you will have seen a dozen different memes on it. Season 8 was no different. But one meme that really took social media by storm in the years that we spent waiting for Season 8 to arrive was this one featuring Ned Stark. All of us who have seen the series (that's, what, 90 per cent of the world with access to television

and internet?), have been guilty of thinking Ned Stark would sit on the Iron Throne. He had it all. He was a great ruler, a kind man, a fantastic father... and took the hit. It did not take *Game of Thrones* even an entire season to kill off its most deserving king. That is just how unbelievable the series had always been. Till Season 8, that is. So when Season 8 ended with unanswered questions, destroyed character arcs, pivotal people killed off with un-fitting deaths and no real feeling of completeness, the anger among fans is understandable if not

totally justified. Why does it matter so much to each one of us? Why did we let a series hold us in thrall for these many years? And now when it is finally over, why are we going on and on about the sheer unfairness of it all? Why are we not happy with the series finale? Because it seems incomplete. We feel betrayed. So here's the finale that could have made some sense. Cersei is dead. Daenerys takes stock of her victory as King's Landing puts out the last of the dragonfires. Drogon flaps his wings behind his mother, as



Tyrion and Jon stand next to her. After Daenerys commands the Unsullied and the Dothraki into her new order of life, she meets Jon in front of the Iron Throne. Jon puts the dagger

through her heart. He is sentenced to die by dragonfire. But will Drogon listen to anyone except Daenerys? Who can say Dracarys except a Targaryen?



## TOWIE's Amber Turner sucks on a lollipop before stripping down to a hot pink bikini as she enjoys Ibiza getaway

She has been sunning herself in Ibiza. And Amber Turner carried on having fun in the sun as she sucked on a lollipop while enjoying the day by the sea on Tuesday.

The TOWIE star also took to Instagram to show off her sensational bronzed figure as she slipped into a neon pink bikini.

Amber embraced summer chic as she stepped out in the sunshine in a sheer patterned white co-ord which flashed a peek of her toned stomach.

A glimpse of her pink bikini was also visible under the two-piece and she accessorised with a slew of gold necklaces.

Amber's long, lean legs were on full display as she strolled along in a pair of sandals while harbouring her essentials in a tote bag.

Her blonde locks were pulled back into a tight bun and she shielded herself

from the rays with a pair of shades. Amber was clearly loving her time in the sunshine, as she was sure to upload a sizzling bikini snap with showed off



her bronzed figure to perfection.

The reality TV star's getaway comes after she announced on TOWIE that she has closed the door on ever rekindling a romance with her on-off ex Dan Edgar - after he came clean about two-timing her with co-star Chloe Sims, 36.

Amber has been dating Dan on and

off since joining the ITVBe show in 2017, she called it quits with the hunk earlier this year citing incompatibility issues but then shared she had been sleeping with him after they split on her return to the Essex show in May.

Amber was axed from TOWIE earlier this year, but insiders revealed exclusively to MailOnline that show bosses had been sympathetic to her break-up with Dan.

While TOWIE representatives confirmed she was told her contract

for the coming series had been terminated, she returned two weeks ago.

Amber was a divisive addition to the show when she made her entrance as Megan McKenna's best friend during the cast trip to Tenerife in 2017's series 20.



## Kylie Jenner shows off her impossibly toned tummy in kiss graphic pajamas as she shares sultry bathroom selfies: 'Hi. Still in my PJs'



She celebrated the launch of her skincare line with a blow-out party the night before. And Kylie Jenner took some time to rest afterwards as she posted a few intimate selfies from her bathroom on Wednesday with the caption: 'Hi. Still in my PJs' The 21-year-old cosmetics mogul flaunted her taut tummy and sculpted abs as she rocked a pair of kiss emoji pajamas while posing seductively. Daring to impress, the youngest of the Kardashian clan kept her trademark Brunette Tresses long and loose as she tilted her head back and forth for the camera.

The posting comes a day after she celebrated the launch of her skincare line with a party at a roller skating rink in Los Angeles. Various family members fired up their Insta Stories over the course of the evening to let their fans in

on the luxurious festivities while Kylie was leading the pack in her sexy look alongside Kourtney's sexy mini. The star confirmed that her new skincare line is 'cruelty free, vegan, gluten free, paraben and sulfate free and suitable for all skintypes.' But Kylie isn't resting on her laurels as it was reported the cosmetics mogul is throwing her hat into the hair care product game. She has filed for trademark applications to register the names Kylie Hair and Kylie Hair by Kylie Jenner, according to The Blast. The branding will include 'shampoos, conditioners, hair dye, hair spray, oils and mousse' as well as 'brushes, combs, curling irons and flat irons.' The news comes on the heels of Kylie getting into the baby product business as well as creating her own skincare line.

## Dimple Kapadia part of Christopher Nolan's Tenet, Bollywood stars and Twitter celebrate

Veteran actor Dimple Kapadia will feature in Christopher Nolan's next film, which has been named Tenet, the makers announced Wednesday. According to The Hollywood Reporter, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Kenneth Branagh, Clemence Poesy and Michael Caine have also joined the cast. However, there is no official confirmation yet from Kapadia, 61, regarding the same. John David Washington, Elizabeth Debicki and Robert Pattinson were already on board. Several Bollywood stars and fans took to Twitter to



congratulate Dimple on landing the role. Anil Kapoor called it 'phenomenal', producer Guneet Monga said she was 'so so proud'. Tenet will not be Kapadia's first appearance in an English language film. She was noted for her portrayal of the title role in the American production Leela (2002). As per reports, Tenet is Nolan's follow-up to his Oscar-nominated war drama Dunkirk that earned the noted filmmaker his first best director Oscar nomination.



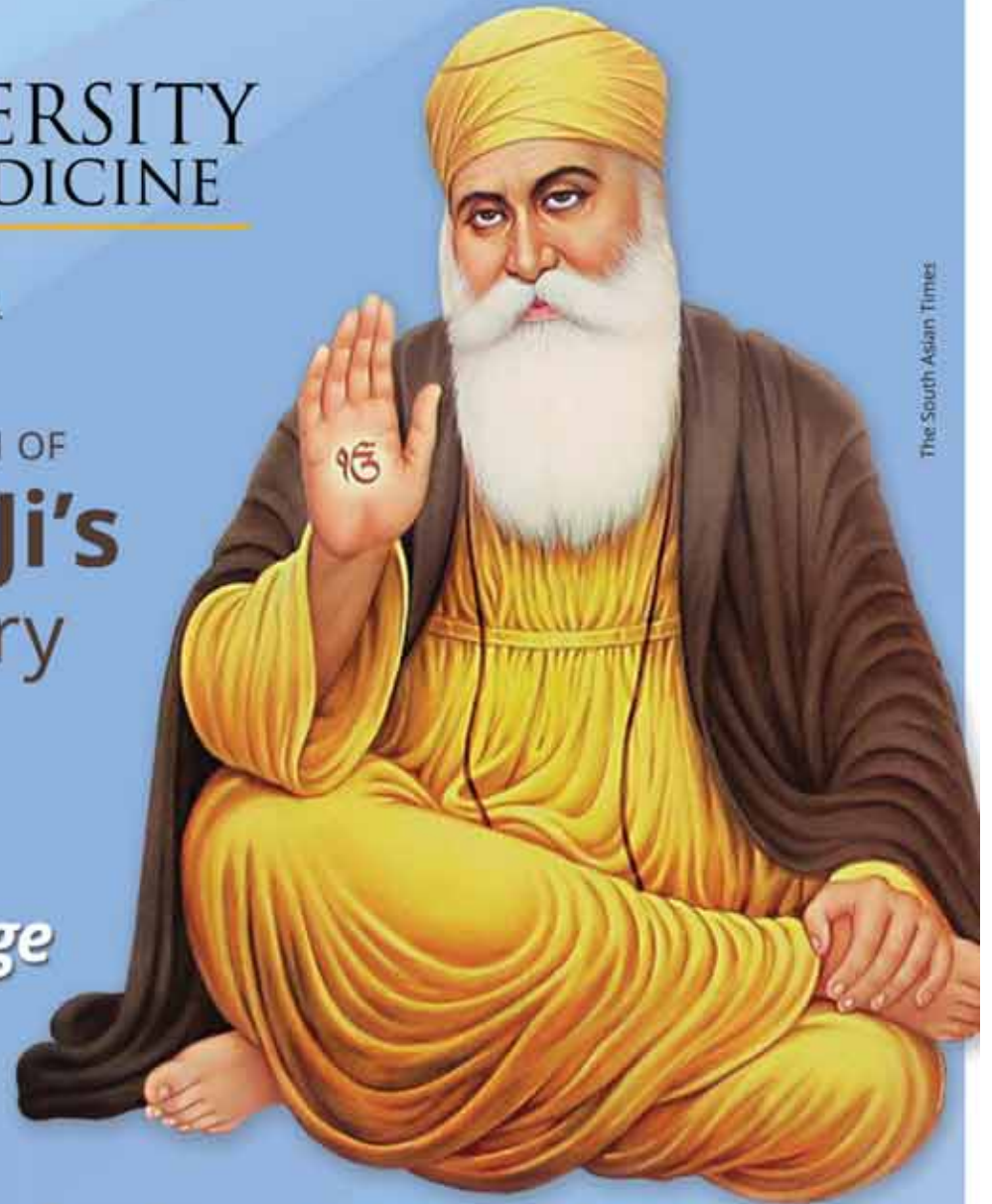


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