

The South Asian INSIDER

Voice of South Asian Community

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Time to end the charade
around Hafiz Saeed



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The Rush to Drill in the Arctic

HOW SCIENCE GOT TRAMPLED

This is one of the last untouched environmental treasures in the United States. It also sits on top of an immense reserve of oil. Even without drilling, the Refuge is already undergoing profound changes. Climate change is warming the Arctic nearly twice as fast as anywhere else in the world, setting in motion changes that have alarmed scientists who study the region. As sea ice has diminished greater numbers of polar bears have been forced to come inland to den along the coastal plain. This has led to more encounters between humans and bears and the deterioration of the overall health of the bear population. The southern Beaufort Sea population was listed as a threatened species in 2008, which is part of the reason that FWS has resisted approving permits for ecologically risky seismic surveys. Over the next 30 years, scientists fear that the population could be driven to extinction.



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Sant Rajinder Singh Ji in New York

Over 3000 people attended Science of Spirituality Event



(Our Staff Reporter) New York- Whether it is speaking at the United Nations or being interviewed by the New York Times, Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj is no stranger to New York. On July 20 and 21, the spiritual Master was once again in New York to speak on Long Island and in Queens. The opportunity of spending even a brief weekend with Sant Rajinder Singh Ji drew over 3000 people to the Science of Spirituality Meditation Center in Amityville on Saturday and Queens College on

Sunday.

His talk on July 20, "Spiritual Awakening," was in Hindi, a first for the Amityville Center. The auditorium was absolutely still as he spoke about meditation, bringing it back to its spiritual roots, as he said the purpose for which we came into this world is to know ourselves and to know God. As his talk ended, the audience erupted in applause. The talk was translated into both English and Spanish.

Prior to Sant Rajinder Singh Ji

Maharaj's Sunday talk at Queens College, he received seven citations from federal, state and city public officials, including Congresswoman Grace Meng (D-NY) and Congressman Tom Suozzi (D-NY), for his untiring efforts in bringing the message of inner and outer peace through meditation to all corners of the world.

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo paid rich tribute to the spiritual Master, saying: "On behalf of all New Yorkers, I applaud Sant

Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj for his invaluable leadership and dedication to bringing about a world of peace and spiritual awakening and thank him for sharing his wisdom and healing."

A message from United Nations Under Secretary-General for Operational Support, Atul Khare, offered this insight: "Just as we have made considerable progress in reaching out to the external world, we need to make the equally arduous journey

inside toward our souls."

In the opening remarks to his talk, "Explore the Journey Within," Sant Rajinder Singh Ji expressed his joy at seeing the diversity that New York exemplifies. He said although there are many different languages, in the spiritual arena, the language is the language of love; and when we experience the language of love, nothing else matters. Just as we experience our body, we can experience our soul, which is part of God. He defined spirituality as the journey of the soul to be with God. The evening ended with meditation. First the spiritual

Master explained the technique of meditation, then the audience sat in pin-drop silence, with closed eyes, enjoying the peace that not only pervaded the huge auditorium but also filled their hearts. From New York, Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj returns to the Chicagoland area where he has regularly scheduled programs at the Science of Spirituality International Meditation Center in Lisle, Illinois. For updates on his schedule, check www.sos.org.

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Fashion Parade deburs in USA: An international cultural Fashion Event



Institute of Technology (FIT), the event will showcase fashion by six renowned South Asian designers and highlights from Christie's upcoming auction of South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art, will also be on view.

Fashion Parade is aimed at an international audience in efforts to create awareness about South Asian fashion, art and culture through the fusion of traditional customs with modern trends. This year's designers will include Ali Xeeshan, Delhi Vintage Co., Elan, Faiza Samee and Kamiar Rokni.



representation of South Asians in the industry. She shares her reasons for bringing the show from London to NYC, "Fashion Parade will change the narrative and perceptions toward fashion designers in South Asia, who are exceptionally talented but not

well-known in the West. We stand for embracing, promoting and celebrating diversity."

Presenting sponsor Citi is supporting the project and its core value of cross-cultural inclusion. Ida Liu, Head of Citi Private Bank, North America, said, "As a private bank to Global Citizens in more than 100 countries, we value Fashion Parade's mission of promoting cultural diversity and Citi is honored to be the presenting sponsor of the inaugural Fashion Parade in the U.S. It is a great pleasure to provide these talented, diverse group of artists and designers with a platform to share their work with a new and global audience."

The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), is also partnering with Fashion Parade and will host a post-event panel discussion between

its faculty and participating designers. Dr. Mary Davis, Dean of FIT's School of Graduate Studies, remarked that the school was "extremely pleased to be partnering with Fashion Parade to explore the creative work of an exciting group of designers from an area of the world where fashion and the arts are a dynamic cultural force, but not yet well-known in America."

Over the last five years, Fashion Parade has represented South Asian fashion in London with events at Kensington Palace, Saatchi Gallery and Mandarin Oriental. With a creative platform that celebrates diversity, whilst bridging cross-cultural divides; Fashion Parade brings talented artists together under a global limelight as designers and fashion experts collaborate under one creative avenue.

(By our staff reporter) New York : Fashion Parade opens its doors to New York City at Christie's on August 27th, 2019 at its inaugural event in the United States. Presenting with Citi as its headline sponsor and partnering with The Fashion

Creator and Event Director for Fashion Parade, Sadia Siddiqui is expanding her efforts beyond the European market to promote cultural diversity and craftsmanship to a global audience. Siddiqui started her career as a model in London and found a lack of

Black Latino Asian and Progressive Caucuses demand immediate employment termination of Officer Pantaleo

(By our staff reporter) - After the Justice Department recently declined to pursue federal charges against a New York City police officer Daniel Pantaleo in response to the 2014 death of Eric Garner, members of the City Council, the Black, Latino, Asian and Progressive Caucuses and Public Advocate Williams gathered with advocates at 1 Police Plaza to demand that NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill terminate Officer Pantaleo immediately. On Thursday, July 18, 2019, the Caucuses sent a joint letter to Commissioner O'Neill, demanding the immediate firing of Officer Pantaleo. In addition, the Black Latino Asian and Progressive Caucuses stand in solidarity with Gwen Carr, Eric Garner's mother, in demanding that all officers involved in Garner's death face disciplinary charges and in calling for greater transparency from the NYPD and the Mayor. The Mayor and the NYPD must release the names of all

officers who were responsible for Garner's death, and these officers must be held accountable for their actions through disciplinary charges. Four years has already been far too long, and Garner's family and the public deserve accountability, transparency and justice.

"Daniel Pantaleo and the other officers involved in Eric Garner's horrific death should be fired. I am outraged that our system has failed his family time and time again," said Speaker Corey Johnson, Member of the Progressive Caucus. "Last week, we learned that the Department of Justice decided not to file charges against officer Pantaleo. This was another slap in the face to Gwen Carr and her family. They have been denied justice for the past five long years. Simply put, those responsible must be held accountable for Eric's death."



MOIA & DSS to Launch IDNYC online renewal platform

IDNYC, nation's largest municipal ID program, to launch new online platform in December to make it easier for cardholders who enrolled in 2015 to renew their cards in 2020

(By our staff reporter) - NEW YORK - The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) today announced that the IDNYC program - the country's largest municipal identification program - will launch an online renewal portal for New Yorkers

who enrolled in the program in 2015. The new online portal will become available to cardholders on December 2nd, 2019, when the opportunity to renew will officially begin. IDNYC cards expire after five years, and with the fifth anniversary of the IDNYC program approaching, the

program has created a streamlined and flexible renewal process. Beginning on December 2nd, 2019, New Yorkers whose IDNYC is expiring in less than 60 days, or whose card has been expired for less than 6 months, will be eligible to renew their IDNYC through the online portal.

They may also choose to renew in-person at an Enrollment Center. Most card changes will be able to be updated through the online portal, including change of address and adding a gender designation. For change of address, cardholders may be asked to upload and submit scanned residency documents. For changes to a cardholder's name, height, or eye color, renewals must be completed in-person at an Enrollment Center. "The IDNYC card is proof you live

in the greatest city in the world and can be used for everything from opening a bank account, to receiving vital health documents, to gaining free access to world-class cultural institutions," said J. Phillip Thompson, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives. "The online renewal portal will now make it easier than ever for card-carrying New Yorkers to continue to reap the benefits and services solely reserved for those who call this place home."

Da Poker Scandal Could Taint Mayor and Courthouse

(By Wayne Dolcefino)- Texas : The Harris County District Attorney white collar crime "consultant" at the center of the botched poker raids apparently funneled tens of thousands of dollars in cash from a Houston Poker Club to help bankroll Democratic political candidates, including a number of judges and Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner. Amir Mireskandari had been given three contracts by Kim Ogg to help organize her white-collar crime division and serve as a liaison to federal law enforcement. Mireskandari was fired by Kim Ogg on July 15th, 2019, the same day her office dismissed felony money laundering charges against employees of Prime Social citing multiple conflicts of interest, but more than a month after she learned of the trouble. Ogg has not detailed any other employees who may have been conflicted in the case but has now called in the feds to investigate.

Defense lawyers say Mireskandari was one of three men, including a prominent

Houston attorney, who claimed they were working on an ordinance for the poker club. Prime Social attorneys say the club paid more than \$500,000 for the effort, including envelopes of cash to Mireskandari for campaign contributions. Dolcefino Consulting has been spearheading the club investigation.

Mireskandari has now been linked to two political fundraising operations.

First, it was Texans for Fairness and Justice.

Mireskandari was treasurer and the group donated money to a communications firm that was run by Kim Ogg's former campaign manager Jaime Mercado.

A second political action committee, Texans for Fairness, was created in January 2018. The Treasurer of that fundraising organization is Kevin Kennedy, the attorney and business associate of Amir Mireskandari.

That second group may create

the most problems.

Records from the Texas Ethics Commission show Mireskandari was one of the largest donors to Texans for Fairness, which raised \$290,000 dollars since January 1, 2018. Mireskandari donated \$41,000 himself to the PAC, most of it during the time he was reportedly picking up envelopes from Prime Social.

Among the donations in the Ethics Commission reports are \$15,000 dollars in total

contributions to Brian Middleton, the Fort Bend County District Attorney. Prime Social internal financial records detail a \$5,000 cash payment to Mireskandari on October 30th, 2018 to be given to the Democratic candidate for DA.

The following day the Texans for Fairness PAC gave a donation to Middleton. There is no reported contribution from Prime Social identified in the PAC

report. The PAC also donated \$5,000 to Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzales and \$5,000 to Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner.

The Texas Election Code strictly prohibits making contributions in the name of another person.

The poker scandal could create trouble for Mayor Turner.

Turner's new campaign report lists \$8,800 dollars in new

political contributions from the Mireskandari family, which total \$14,450 since January 1, 2017. Last September, while Mireskandari was allegedly picking up cash from the poker club, the Texans for Fairness PAC donated another \$5,000 to the Mayor.

The lion's share of Texans for Fairness money went to Democratic judicial candidates.

Three months ago, Kennedy and Mireskandari formed a company called Texas Justice Center, a mediation and arbitration firm that could benefit from judicial decisions. This was done while Mireskandari still had a title from the Harris County District Attorney's Office.

Ogg has refused to explain if she knew about Mireskandari's political activities. She had banned political fundraising in 2017, but Mireskandari was clearly playing politics long after that. Ogg's office is fighting the release of some of her email communication with Mireskandari. Other than a written statement, she has not addressed the poker scandal publicly.



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

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It is time to broaden the counter-terrorism battle

Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States must act on Indian requests and crack down on Khalistani groups

(News Agencies)- When does a seemingly formerly bloody, but currently peaceful, political movement turn violent? yet again? And when it does, how soon is it before it spins so out of control? that counting bodies becomes the first, and only, line of defence for a while?

These are questions that India would wish for countries to ask themselves as they look away, while people and entities abuse their hospitality to revive the movement for Khalistan. This movement had led to the desecration of the holiest shrine for Sikhs; assassination of a prime minister; massacre of Sikhs; bombing of an international flight with more than 300 people on board; and countless people dead on both sides of the divide in the 1980s and the early 1990s.

Though largely dead in India now, the movement has survived abroad among pockets of the Sikh diaspora of varying size in Canada, the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK). In fact, one of the more recent instances of related violence was reported from London, where, in 2013, four men and a woman tried to kill an Indian Army general who had led Operation Blue Star to flush out militants hiding inside the Golden Temple in 1984.

Also read: Trump praises himself in Hafiz Saeed tweet, experts say Pak pulled a fast one

Yet, authorities in the UK, Canada and the US have remained oddly impervious to increasingly urgent Indian requests in recent years to curb these groups. They have claimed their inability to do much unless a law, or more, was violated.

Indians have found that argument utterly unconvincing in the light of the many terrorism cases brought pre-emptively against individuals of a specific religion and region(s), especially in the US. "Why can't they show the same enthusiasm for dealing with Khalistan extremists," said an Indian security agency official, who has had several of these frustrating conversations with host country counterparts. Indian officials have alerted US authorities multiple times in the past to the activities of these separatists, some of whom have talked of a "hit list" of Indian officials and have called for preventing certain Indian officials from visiting certain countries. They have also turned over proof of the involvement of the Pakistani spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence. The



agency officials have brazenly enough attended - apparently in a bid to humour overly meddlesome superiors in Islamabad-Rawalpindi - protests and demonstrations staged by these groups on their payrolls, outside Indian missions or US government facilities such as the White House during high-level visits.

Let's get this straight. They are not the Greenpeace or the White Hats of Syria. These groups are attempting to resuscitate a violent movement that left a trail of dead and destruction at its peak. Can you imagine, for

argument's sake, the now vanquished Islamic State's Caliphate being allowed to find a new lease of life in the US or Canada or the UK 20 years hence, in the hands of supporters who appeared peaceful and legally compliant at the time?

One of these groups was banned recently by the Indian government, with an open and unsaid call to the like-minded countries that have suffered the consequences of violent political movements - such as the Irish Republican Army - and terrorism.

Priyanka Gandhi, come back home

Only the Congress can fill the political vacuum in Uttar Pradesh



(News Agencies)- The Congress faces a crisis in the crucial state of Uttar Pradesh (UP). In the last three decades, it has, in elections, tied up with the Bahujan Samaj Party (losing its original Dalit voters to them), with the Samajwadi Party (to face a great drubbing in the 2017 assembly polls), and fought alone. None of it has worked. There was a glimmer of hope in 2009, when Rahul Gandhi, on the back of welfare schemes and hard work, led the Congress to success. In 2016, Gandhi's Kisan Yatra across UP energised the cadre but there was little follow-up thereafter. In the recent Lok Sabha polls, the party won merely one seat, and its vote

share shrunk to 6%.

In the last 20 months, having travelled to numerous districts in the state, especially central and east UP, I witnessed the reality of the moribund Congress organisation and its infighting. But despite being out of power for over 30 years, the fact that the party structure, organisation, people and supporters exist gives reason for hope.

The BJP is sitting pretty with a majority government in both Delhi and Lucknow. It has successfully combined muscular Hindu nationalism with micro caste management.

But an examination of other players in the theatre reveals that the ground is ripe for a new force.

The SP managed to hold on to five seats in the Lok Sabha with an alliance with the BSP. But Akhilesh Yadav won Azamgarh only because the Congress chose not to put up an influential candidate, Ramakant Yadav (he contested and lost his deposit from Bhadohi instead). The party has seen a steady dip in its vote share in the state.

The BSP has had a minor revival, primarily due to its alliance with the SP, winning 10 seats. The alliance broke; Mayawati made her brother the number 2 of her party, and officially launched her nephew in politics. It remains to be seen whether her dwindling vote bank (the BSP has been slowly losing vote share since 2012) of Jatavs will get enamoured by Mayawati's dynasty.

This churn provides an opportunity to revive the Congress under Priyanka Gandhi's capable leadership. In marketing, they teach that to launch or relaunch a new product in the market, you have to find a central idea or a figure. For the Congress in UP, that central idea is Priyanka Gandhi.

No two ways about it: Plagiarism is cheating

(News Agencies)- Indian academics have contributed 35% of all articles published in fake journals between 2010 and 2014, the government-appointed P Balam panel has highlighted. According to a report published in the news website ThePrint, the committee also flagged plagiarism and data manipulation as issues of greater concern that damage the credibility of institutions.

Pointing out that there is a lack of qualified human resource for research guidance and poor infrastructure, the panel has suggested a slew of measures to improve research, including reviewing the practices in recruitment of faculty members, providing grant for new faculty, and reviewing the mechanism by which vice-chancellors are appointed with good academic leadership being vital for improving research culture.

There are several reasons why plagiarism has been flourishing: our academic system, starting from the primary level, encourages rote learning and not independent thinking; widespread access to the

Internet; guidelines on research misconduct don't have any time frames for the closure of plagiarism cases; lax punishment for plagiarism, and, there's a kind of hesitation attached to openly discussing the problem.

But last year, India introduced regulations to detect and punish acts of plagiarism. Punishments for researchers or students caught breaking the rules range from requiring that a manuscript be withdrawn to sacking or expulsion, a report in Nature said. Earlier, punishments were left to the discretion of the institution. The regulations will apply to the 867 universities and their affiliated institutions that report to the University Grants Commission. The New Education Policy, which is in the works, is also alert to the challenge. "Students will be taught at a young age the importance of doing what's right... In later years, this would then be expanded along themes of cheating, violence, plagiarism, tolerance, equality, empathy..." the draft policy says.

US courtship of Pakistan amplifies India's challenge

The United States (US) has quietly replaced its threat of sanctions against Pakistan with renewed engagement - and rewards. Desperate to finalise a "peace" deal with the brutal and thuggish Taliban, President Donald Trump is wooing its sponsor, Pakistan, to help the US "extricate ourselves" from Afghanistan. The courtship has been highlighted by a \$6-billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout for Islamabad, the US designation of the leading Baloch separatist group as "terrorist", and Trump's re-hyphenation of India with Pakistan, including offering to mediate the Kashmir conflict - the equivalent of a red rag to a bull. Look at this paradox: The Taliban, despite countless attacks on US forces, are still absent from the US terrorism lists. Yet, to appease Pakistan and China (whose interests and citizens have been targeted), the US on July 2 listed the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) as "terrorist" under Executive Order 13224. The action provides Pakistan international legitimacy to go after the group and step up its dirty war in Balochistan, even as it shields State-nurtured terrorist outfits. By handing Pakistan a major diplomatic victory, BLA's listing balances India's gain from the earlier US-aided UN designation of the Pakistan-based Masood Azhar as a terrorist. Similarly, as if to balance its \$10-million bounty on the India-sought Hafiz Saeed, America last year announced \$11 million in reward money for information on three of Pakistan's most-wanted men linked to Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). It then assassinated TTP's third consecutive chief, even as Saeed's very public life continued. Meanwhile, Trump, by hosting Pakistan's Imran Khan at the White House, has bestowed legitimacy on a figure derisively called "selected prime minister", a reference to how the military generals engineered his ascent to power. Indeed, Pakistan's army chief and Inter-Services Intelligence head chaperoned Khan on his US visit and attended the White House meeting. Khan is one of the weakest PMs Pakistan has ever had. Almost servile in his fealty to the military, he has shown himself to be a willing puppet - more loyal than the king. Pakistan, in the run-up to the White House meeting, made some seemingly right moves, including arresting Saeed, agreeing to create the Kartarpur Corridor by November, and reopening its airspace to east-west overflights after more than 15 weeks - a closure that forced airlines to incur additional costs by taking detours but also cost a cash-strapped Pakistan \$55 million in lost overflight fees. The new moves signal anything but behavioural change. Take Pakistan's revolving-door policy on Saeed: Pakistan has enacted a catch-and-release drama eight times

since 2001. Saeed will again be released once pressure on Pakistan eases. The real issue is not his detention but whether Saeed will be tried and convicted for international terrorism. Make no mistake: America has ample leverage to reform Pakistan but is loath to exercise it. In contrast to Trump's sanctions-heavy approach to Iran, preposterously labelled "the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism", he - like his predecessor - is relying on carrots to handle the real epicentre of global terror, his public threats notwithstanding. Trump's suspension of security assistance to Pakistan and several other nations was intended to signal that there is no free lunch - much like his recent expulsion of India from the Generalized System of Preferences. Washington retains Pakistan as its "major non-NATO ally" and refuses to bring Pakistan's military to account for exporting terrorism. Hoping that Pakistan on its own would reform and be at peace with itself is akin to expecting a dog to straighten its tail. Coddling terrorists seems to be second nature for Pakistan's generals. Refusing to bail out Pakistan's economy could perhaps have yielded as good results as the use of military force. Instead the US, despite enjoying veto power over IMF decisions, has done the opposite. The IMF bailout actually opens billions of dollars more for Pakistan from other international lenders. And by freeing up Pakistani foreign exchange for debt repayments to Beijing, it also bails out China's projects in Pakistan. Narrow geopolitical interests guiding America's Pakistan policy will likely continue to impose costs on India, as has been the case since the 1950s. Although US-India relations have been radically transformed, Washington's engagement with Pakistan still gives it leverage it values over India. Significantly, the US-Pakistan relationship is on the mend just as Indo-US ties are being tested by Trump's transactional approach, including punitively increased duties on 14.3% of India's exports to America. Another factor at play is Trump's determination to pull out most US troops from Afghanistan before he seeks re-election. Under the US-initiated "peace" process, Trump is preparing to sell out democratic Afghanistan's interests to the Pakistan-Taliban axis. India's exclusion from this process is a blessing in disguise because India must stay away from the sellout, which will bring anything but peace. Indeed, Trump's Faustian bargain with the Taliban will only embolden Pakistan's military by proving that sponsoring cross-border terrorism pays.

India needs a long-term strategy on floods



If residents of the northern plains of India are grappling with a deficit monsoon, the people of Bihar, Assam, and other northeastern states are facing a problem of plenty. Pounding rains have worsened flooding in these states, killing and displacing people in Bihar and Assam, destroying property and crops and livestock worth crores, and inundating forests and wildlife in two critical habitats of the country -- the Kaziranga and Pobitora wildlife sanctuaries in Assam. While the immediate job now is to rescue people and animals (livestock and those in the wild) in the flood-hit regions as quickly as possible, the long-term work -- ensuring availability of adequate drinking water, food, clothes, and medicines; rehabilitation; and rebuilding critical infrastructure such as roads -- will also have to be done at a rapid pace.

However, these efforts won't be enough, especially at a time when climate change is increasing the frequency of extreme weather events, unless and until the State, political leaders, and civil society mull over a critical question. Are our policies making India even more

vulnerable to natural calamities, and what can we do to fix existing problems? For example, since the colonial era, as Sunil Amrith writes in *Unruly Waters*, central governments have focused on gigantic engineering at the expense of local peoples and environments.

One such gigantic engineering experiment was embanking the rivers of Bihar (and now the nationwide river-linking project). But embanking a river is a bad idea because it prevents the spreading of water. Silt, which would normally spill over a vast area to form the flood plains, is confined to a much smaller area, raising the river bed. With time, the riverbed becomes higher than the surrounding land. Meanwhile, people start living near and on these embankments. When a river in spate breaches these embankments, there is devastation. The reason behind this pro-embankment policy is easy to understand - it helps perpetuate the well-oiled politician-technocrat-contractor nexus. Cuts and kickbacks are the order of the day. Naturally, no one is keen to take a call on what to do with these embankments in Bihar. The same discussion in missing when states clear projects that lead to encroachments of wetlands (which soak excess water) to construct houses or roads on them; or cut mangroves that save coastal cities from cyclones. Unless these policy/development-environment related questions are answered, India will be at the mercy of annual flooding in some part of the country or other.



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How to revive job growth in the country

First, the government must increase public investment in social services. Second, it should introduce a multi-pronged industrial policy to reverse the poor manufacturing performance since 1991

The Centre made some efforts in the Union budget to promote jobs in the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) and in the construction sector (both rural and urban). It announced 2% interest subvention for MSMEs under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on fresh or incremental loans. As far as the construction sector is concerned, under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), the budget proposed 1.95 crore houses for eligible beneficiaries under the PMAY-Grameen scheme and 19.5 million houses under PMAY-Urban scheme between 2020 and 2022. Given the need for jobs, however, these actions may not suffice. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS of the National Sample Survey Office) confirmed slow job growth in the non-agriculture sectors, much slower than the number of

those looking for work. Hence the rising unemployment rate, the highest in 45 years: from 2.2% in 2011-12 (NSSO) to 3.4% in 2015-16 (Labour Bureau), to 3.9% in 2016-17 (LB), and now 6.1% in 2017-18 (NSS-PLFS). Moreover, there is a massive rise in the youth open unemployment rate, particularly for educated youth: more than double for urban (male and female) and for rural females; and more than triple for rural males. So where is the problem? Between 2004-05 and 2011-12, about five million workers per annum left agriculture for non-farm sector jobs. Among these five million, about four (75%) were youth (15 to 29 years). This was a good news because it tightened the rural labour market, which resulted in real wages rising (it had been stagnant between 1996 and 2004 because of a rising number of workers in agriculture).

However, there has been a slowdown in non-agricultural job creation post 2012. It is not credible to argue that MUDRA loans or Ola-Uber type jobs and the informal sector jobs are not captured by the government's PLFS or the private surveys. For decades, these survey samples have been designed to take into account both jobs in the organised as well as the unorganised sector. So where was the problem? It is mainly in manufacturing and construction sector, and much less in modern services. India's manufacturing growth slowed, so there was a manufacturing job decline in absolute terms post 2012. The PLFS shows that the share of manufacturing in employment has fallen from 8.1 to 7.7 % for rural males (2012 to 2018); 9.8 to 8.1% for or rural females.



This is significant, since over half of the manufacturing output in India is contributed by rural areas. Similarly, for urban females, the share of manufacturing in the employment pie fell from 28.7% to 25.2%, while the share of urban male stagnated at 22.4%. What is particularly worrying is that the five labour-intensive manufacturing sectors (food processing, textiles, garments, wood and furniture, leather and footwear), which account for 50% of total manufacturing employment, saw absolute job losses. There was growth of jobs only in the services sector, thanks to the expansion of modern services (banking, financial services and insurance, logistics, airlines, telephones and communications, education, health) during the post-2012 period. While construction was a major employment generator between 2005 and 2012 (doubling its employment from 26 million to 51 million), it registered a much slower growth of jobs after 2012. The country is in urgent need for a two-fold strategy to increase the number of jobs: First, increase public investment in social services (health and education), because this will create jobs in the government. But limited investment in basic education is now a serious drag, because the human capital frontier for the new structural transformation has shifted further, thanks to the onset of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Second, India can reverse the poor manufacturing performance since 1991 with an industrial policy that has seven components: reverse inverted import duty structure in a range of manufactures that allows finished manufactured imports at low duty or no duty but discriminates against intermediates/raw materials imports for domestic manufacture;

Trump's irresponsible streak



United States President Donald Trump, at a meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, on Monday, claimed Prime Minister Narendra Modi had asked him to mediate on Kashmir. This was in response to Mr Khan's plea about how the

Kashmir issue needed the intervention of the world's most powerful state. Mr Trump said that Mr Modi, just two weeks ago, had asked him to be a mediator or arbitrator on Kashmir; that he would "love" to mediate if both sides wanted it; that there

was a "terrible situation" in Kashmir and, if he could do anything, he would do it. The remarks have caused understandable outrage in India. If this was true, it would have reversed decades-old Indian policy, which is completely against third party intervention on Kashmir. But in what has almost become a pattern with Mr Trump, they were not true. The ministry of external affairs responded immediately, and rightly, on Monday night. It rejected Mr Trump's claim that Mr Modi had ever asked him to mediate. It reiterated Delhi's policy that all outstanding issues must be resolved bilaterally between India and Pakistan, and

engagement required an end to terror. The strong Indian response, and the fact that no serious South Asia observer in Washington - both inside and outside the establishment - could believe that Mr Modi would make such a suggestion meant that the State Department had to pick up the pieces. It issued a statement, which said that Kashmir is a bilateral issue, a nod to the Indian stand, but that the US would welcome both parties sitting down and is ready to help, which is meant to be a face saver for Mr Trump. Mr Trump now has a record of disrupting the

US' most important relationships. He has antagonised Canada, Mexico, and key European allies. He has, unilaterally, walked away from the Iranian nuclear deal, bringing the world to the brink of a war. He has upended the international economic order. And while there was hope that he would understand the value of strategic relationship with India - especially since he was already taking on China on economic issues - Mr Trump has also opened a front with New Delhi. Over the past few months, he has ramped up pressure on trade and tweeted provocatively, in what can be only be

construed as an effort to bully Delhi; and he has also jeopardised Indian diplomatic ties with Iran and Russia. India - taking into account the big picture and the value of the partnership, and Mr Trump's personal traits - has been remarkably patient so far. But this time, Mr Trump overstepped. Kashmir is among India's core interests. And while there is much Delhi can do to improve the domestic dynamics in the valley, for Washington to be economical with the truth, and attribute to Mr Modi what he never said, is unacceptable. The onus on repairing ties rests on Mr Trump.

The lessons from the Karnataka imbroglio

After a prolonged political crisis, the Karnataka assembly may witness a vote today. And this will determine if the Janata Dal (Secular)-Congress government survives or makes way for either fresh elections or a new government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). There has been enough written about the decay of political morality in the state, the spate of defections, the ruthless quest for power on both sides, and the perils of a fractured mandate which created the situation in the first place. But there are two larger takeaways from the Karnataka crisis, which are far more

worrying. The first is a complete breakdown of institutions. Each actor in the political system has a well-defined responsibility. The Governor is meant to be a non-partisan figure, above the fray, who does not dabble in politics. The Speaker is meant to be the head of the legislature, who acts in accordance with rules, without favouring any particular side. But in Karnataka, instead of the ruling alliance and the Opposition battling it out, there has been a rather open battle between the Governor -- seen as sympathetic to the BJP -- and the Speaker -- seen as sympathetic to the JD(S)-Congress combine. If individuals representing

institutions act in such a prejudiced manner, and disregard the rules of the game, faith in the democratic system itself would diminish.

The second takeaway -- a logical corollary of the first -- is that Karnataka represents the erosion of constitutional morality. The Constitution is predicated on the hope that all actors would exercise restraint, and they would submit to due and formal processes in case a conflict erupts. In Bengaluru, over the past week, no actor has observed restraint -- the actions of dissident Members of Legislative Assembly, and the fact that



they are being lured by both sides, is a glaring example. And there has also been an unwillingness to let formal processes -- the confidence vote, in this case -- take its own course. This has meant dangerously stepping out of

constitutional boundaries. If the example is emulated elsewhere, politicians will end up being increasingly reckless in acquiring power. It is time for the political class to pause and reflect on the consequences of their action.

The monsoon shortfall won't lead to food scarcity, but will hurt incomes



It's a rather long expedition that nature undertakes each summer. Moisture-laden winds in the south-Pacific start racing northwards, preparing to travel more than 8,000 km to reach the Indian subcontinent on time. If the winds survive natural

disruptions during its ocean journey, a hot Indian summer will turn them into a refreshing June-September monsoon. But the monsoon is more than just a cool respite. It is said to be the lifeblood of the economy. The rains are critical because two-thirds of Indians depend on a

farm income and nearly 60% of India's net-sown area does not have irrigation cover. India will be lucky if a fairly widespread drought doesn't shrivel farm incomes this year, as the rains have been 18% deficient so far. The deficiency in June was higher at 33%. Naturally, a truant monsoon has sparked concerns, since its impacts ripple around the economy. Poor rainfall has shrunk the sowing of summer crops -- accounting for half of India's annual food output -- by 7%. Yet, this paper would like to point out that some old concerns associated with droughts may no longer be relevant. In the British colonial era, drought was a word for famines. The 1943 Bengal famine, following a missed

monsoon, killed an estimated four million. In 2009, a drought year, the country managed to produce a million more tonne of foodgrains than it did in 2007, a normal year. This obviously has to do with better agricultural practices, leading to higher productivity. Moreover, there is no one-on-one correlation between high food inflation and droughts. There are inflationary spikes in perishables anyway, even in a normal year. Rather than food scarcity, droughts have become an issue of balance-of-payments crisis, power shortfall and water crises. As far as farm incomes are concerned, the rains do matter. When agricultural output is robust and rural incomes rise, rural spending on almost

everything, from television sets to gold, goes up. This creates demand for manufactured goods. For instance, 48% of all motorcycles and 44% of TV sets are sold in rural India. It is these inter-sectoral linkages between agriculture and industry that ultimately matter. Without rural demand, industrial growth itself tends to sputter. The real impact of a failed monsoon on agriculture today is on farm incomes through decreased yields. The government can prevent this by doubling down on India's well-honed drought contingency plan customised for various agro-climatic conditions. The government would do well to focus on the plan's implementation more than anything else.

Johnson's Brexit challenge: PM has no plan to operationalise it

The final act of Brexit is in the hands of its original author with Boris Johnson's ascension to the British prime ministership. There is no evidence Johnson has any better idea of how to seamlessly bring Britain out of the European Union than his hapless predecessor, Theresa May. He has said he will hold to the October 31st deadline for Britain's formal departure from the EU. He has rejected the Brexit deal that May had worked out with Brussels. But the EU greeted Johnson's election by saying it was not interested in renegotiating. He himself has rejected a "no deal" Brexit. All of this indicates the new prime minister will cross the river by

feeling the stones along the way. The only thing that seems certain: Johnson's sees his political mandate as implementing Brexit, and he will do so in some fashion or another. India has not been enthusiastic about Brexit, seeing it as an additional complication to an already unstable international situation. A Brexit that excludes a customs union will be financially damaging to the many Indian firms who have set up shop in Britain. Yet there may be some minor advantages in a post-Brexit Britain. For example, Britain will need to negotiate free trade agreements with major non-European partners after it leaves the EU. This gives India a fair

amount of leverage when it comes to deciding the terms of such an agreement. When May tried to explore this possibility during her visits to India, it was made clear that New Delhi would expect major concessions on immigration in return. Johnson will face the same demands, and it will be a test of his political leadership whether he can sell expanded immigration to his party.

A London that reorients itself away from Brussels in terms of trade, migration and possibly security will have benefits for India. No one should expect a return to the days of Commonwealth privilege. A newer India-UK relationship will have to



be slowly constructed from the debris of Brexit, perhaps that looks to exploiting London's financial skills and New Delhi's desperate need for capital or expanding the already existing bonds in education and

technology. But the shadow of Brexit uncertainty will have to be lifted first. It is on that Prime Minister Johnson, the leader of a minority government and a person with minimal experience of high office, will be judged.

A promotional poster for Speed Records & Studios LLC (SRS). The background is dark grey with red and black geometric patterns. At the top left is a circular logo with a microphone icon and the text "SRS Speed Records & Studios". The top right features musical notes. The center text reads "MUSIC EVENTS MOVIES" in large, stylized fonts. The bottom section has two microphone icons flanking the company name "Speed Records & Studios LLC (SRS)", followed by the address "1737, New hyde Park Road, New Hyde park New York 11040 USA", and contact information: "Phone: 917 295 3262, 516 373 5425, 917 612 3158" and "Email: speedrecordsus@gmail.com".

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No mercy for urban Maoists, says Amit Shah as LS okays anti-terror bill

The approval by the lower house came minutes after Home Minister Amit Shah put up a strong defence of the government's proposal

(News Agencies)- A law to tighten the country's lead anti-terror law and empower the government to designate individuals as terrorists has been cleared by the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. The lower house's vote came minutes after Home Minister Amit Shah put up a strong defence of the government's proposal, arguing that terrorists such as Indian Mujahideen's Yasin Bhatkal, who stayed under the radar for years, would have been caught much earlier if they had been designated as terrorists. "It would have been possible to track them down before he carried out 11 explosions", Shah said. The Congress, which had demanded that the bill be referred to a standing committee for scrutiny, walked out when the government did not relent, insisting that the changes needed to be carried out urgently to check terrorism.

"If vote bank is stopping the Opposition and that's why, they are walking out, then so be it," Shah said as many opposition leaders walked out. The anti-terror law, so far, only had provisions to ban groups as individual groups, not individuals. Lately, there had been some judicial rulings that had made it difficult for the agencies to prosecute people accused of being members of banned groups. The amendment seeks to plug this gap. Pitching for support to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019, Shah questioned arguments from the opposition benches that spoke about the misuse of provisions of the anti-terror law. "The criminal procedure code is also misused.... So should it also be abolished," he shot back. Shah presented the same argument to counter arguments that many people convicted of terror were eventually let off. "People charged with murder under Section 302 of the penal code are also acquitted... Should 302 be removed from the penal code," he asked. Shah said the fact was that security agencies which fight terror needed laws with teeth on their side, not the ones that couldn't bite. The home minister, who responded to concerns expressed by opposition leaders over the amendments, also rebutted a suggestion that activists who propagate a different ideology should not be treated as terrorists. Shah rejected the suggestion. It is not just the people who wield the gun who should be treated as terrorists but also those who nurture, prepares and funds terrorists. "Same for those who propagate



literature and theory of terror to brainwash the youth... I believe terrorism is not born out of the barrel of the gun," he said, holding the misinformation campaign run by terrorists masquerading as activists and ideologues responsible for spread of terrorism and extremism. The government has no sympathy for people who promote urban Maoism in the name of ideology, he said. The amendment cleared by the Lok Sabha - 288 members voted in favour and eight against - on Wednesday aims to achieve three major objectives. One, it allows the National Investigation Agency to attach property of terrorists on orders of the NIA chief and not the state government concerned. The second change allows the government to declare an individual as a terrorist and the third, empowers inspector-rank officers to probe terror cases. Shah said the existing law that stipulated that a Superintendent of Police-rank officer would be the investigating officer was slowing down trials and investigations. The NIA has just about 25 SPs but many more cases before courts. Since the investigating officer has to be present in court on every date, it had taken a toll on the trials.

Talks with Pak won't be only on Kashmir, also PoK: Rajnath Singh



(News Agencies)- Defence minister Rajnath Singh said in Parliament on Wednesday that Prime Minister Narendra Modi didn't discuss Kashmir with US president Donald Trump and ruled out any possibility of mediation on the issue. "As S Jaishankar ji (External Affairs Minister) said Kashmir issue was not discussed in President Trump and PM Modi meeting. There is no question of mediation in Kashmir issue as it will be against the Simla agreement," Rajnath Singh said in Lok Sabha. "Kashmir is an issue of national pride for us. We can never compromise with it... if there

said the president "does not make up things". "The President does not make anything up. That's a very rude question in my opinion. I am going to stay out of that. It's outside of my lane. It's for Mr (National Security Advisor John) Bolton, Mr (Secretary of State Mike) Pompeo and President," Trump's Chief Economic Advisor Larry Kudlow said.

Both houses of Indian Parliament -Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha-witnessed protests over Trump's stunning claim. The opposition, led by the Congress, demanded a statement by PM Modi. The opposition continued its demand on Wednesday and staged a walkout in the Lok Sabha.

Rahul Gandhi tweeted that PM Modi must "must tell the nation what transpired" in his meeting with Donald Trump. "President Trump says PM Modi asked him to mediate between India & Pakistan on Kashmir! If true, PM Modi has betrayed India's interests & 1972 Simla Agreement. A weak Foreign Ministry denial won't do," Rahul Gandhi tweeted.

Nalini Sriharan, Rajiv Gandhi assassination convict, gets month-long parole

(News Agencies)- With the Tamil Nadu Governor yet to take a decision on the state government's recommendation on early release of the seven life convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, one among them, Nalini Sriharan, is likely to walk out of the prison on a month-long parole on Thursday morning. Arguing in person before a division bench of the Madras High Court on July 5, she secured ordinary leave of 30 days to make necessary arrangements for the wedding of her daughter, Harithra. According to prison officials, she has submitted the sureties and the particulars of her stay during the period outside prison. According to prison sources, the two sureties were provided by her mother and a woman from Katpadi town, closely associated with the family. Further, she would be staying at the residence of a functionary of a pro-Tamil organisation, Dravida Iyakka Tamilar Peravai in Vellore city. "Nalini is likely to be released tomorrow morning from the Vellore Special Prison for Women, where she has been lodged for 28 years. This is as per the High Court order and she has submitted the necessary documents as the court directive, which have been verified," a senior police officer of the Tamil Nadu Prison department told HT. The High Court had directed that the state government bear the escort expenses for Nalini. In the High Court, Nalini had sought six months' parole. During the 28 years of her incarceration, she had availed only a day's parole that too to attend the post-funeral rites of her father. She is the longest serving woman convict in the country. Her daughter Harithra, who was born in prison, is currently residing in the UK. Besides Nalini, her husband, Sriharan alias Murugan, AG Perarivalan, Santhan, Jayakumar, Robert Payas and Ravichandran are serving life term in the case. Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated on May 21, 1991, by a Sri Lankan woman suicide bomber during an election rally at Sriperumpudur near Chennai.

Eminent citizens write to PM on mob violence

The celebrities who come from various fields wrote to the Prime Minister expressing their concern over the rise in hate crimes all over the nation.

(News Agencies)- Expressing concern over instances of mob violence in the country, 49 intellectuals, artists and professionals have written an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him to institute exemplary punishment for the perpetrators of such crimes. "The lynching of Muslims, Dalits and other minorities must be stopped immediately," the letter said. Signatories to the letter include filmmakers Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Aparna Sen, Mani Ratnam, Shyam Benegal, Ketan Mehta, Gautam Ghose; actors Soumitra Chatterjee, Revathy Asha; author Amit Chaudhuri; historians and

academics, Ashis Nandy, Sumit Sarkar, Tanika Sarkar, Partha Chatterjee, Ramchandra Guha; and singer Shubha Mudgal. The letter prompted an immediate response from Union minority affairs minister, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, who asserted that Dalits and minorities are safe in the country and that those "yet to recover from" the defeat in the Lok Sabha polls are trying to communalise "criminal incidents". Acknowledging that the Prime Minister has criticised incidents of lynchings in the Parliament, the letter said it was "not enough". "Lynching is a heinous crime. Why should not punishments that are applicable

in case of murder be applicable in case of lynchings? The Prime Minister is the highest executive in the country. Who else could we approach?" Aparna Sen told the media. In the letter, the filmmakers and intellectuals said "Jai Shri Ram" has been reduced to a war cry, referring to recent instances in which those being lynched have allegedly been forced to chant the slogan. The letter also said there is no democracy without dissent and people should not be branded "anti-national" or "urban Naxal" and incarcerated because of dissent against the government. Naqvi said a few people, who claim to be "custodians of human rights and secularism, are trying to communalise such type of criminal incidents".

These people are yet to come out of the "depression" after the resounding victory of Modi for a



second time and have started the "second edition of award wapsi" movement, he said, referring to 2015, when several people sought to return awards given by the government citing what they claimed was rising intolerance against minorities.

In order to deal with such crimes, law enforcement agencies and state governments have taken effective and strong actions, the minister said. The letter also called for stronger punishment for instances of lynching. "We strongly feel that such offences should be declared non-bailable, and that exemplary punishment should

be meted out swiftly and surely. If life imprisonment without parole can be the sentence in cases of murder, why not for lynchings, which are even more heinous?" the letter read. Drawing attention to figures of atrocities against Dalits based on the national crime record bureau, the letter said, "The lynching of Muslims, Dalits and other minorities must be stopped immediately. We were shocked to learn from the NCRB reports that there have been no less than 840 instances of atrocities against Dalits in the year 2016, and a definite decline in the percentage of convictions."

Karnataka moves on: BJP's legislature party meets today, will stake claim next



(News Agencies)- After days of political uncertainty and turmoil in Karnataka, the Bharatiya Janata Party is expected to stake claim to form the next government after the legislature party meeting today. This comes a day after the Congress-JD(S) government in the state collapsed after it lost the confidence vote, garnering 99 votes against the 105 of the BJP in the assembly, ending nearly three-week-long high political drama. The coalition needed 103 votes in its favour to win the motion as 20 MLAs - Congress-JD(S) (17), BSP (1), Independents (2) - skipped proceedings, reducing the effective strength of the House to 205. "We will have the legislative party meeting today and will wait for the directions from the parliamentary board. It might have come... Next we will stake claim to form the government," BJP state general secretary C T Ravi told PTI. The party may approach

Governor Vajubhai Vala on Thursday and stake claim to form the government, they said. A large number of BJP leaders and workers thronged the party office here as the lodestone of power shifted from the coalition partners - Congress and JD(S), to BJP. "We were all waiting for this glorious moment. The voters had BJP as their first choice. Now that the BJP is set to form the government, there is celebration all over the state," actor-turned-politician Tara told reporters outside the BJP office. Meanwhile, the rebel MLAs have decided to not return to Bengaluru. "There are no immediate plans to return to Bengaluru. We will stay here for some more time," rebel JD(S) MLA from Hunsur A H Vishwanath told PTI. He, however, refused to comment on a query whether the disgruntled legislators were waiting for the BJP government to come to power.

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Jaipur may run out of water in a month if monsoon is further delayed

The IMD data for the period July 1 to July 15 shows that the Bikaner and Jodhpur divisions in western Rajasthan have been worst hit.

(News Agencies)- With the monsoon playing truant in Jaipur region and the Bisalpur dam having water for only 40 days, the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) is putting in place a contingency plan to avert a crisis. The IMD data for the period July 1 to July 15 shows that the Bikaner and Jodhpur divisions in western Rajasthan have been worst hit. Bikaner division recorded 60% less than normal rainfall while Jodhpur division had 64% less rainfall. Jaipur division had 5% less than normal rainfall. Ajmer, Bharatpur, Kota and Udaipur divisions have had excess rainfall. The Bisalpur dam is the lifeline for around 90 lakh people in Jaipur, Ajmer, Tonk and Dausa districts, which get water from the dam that is

situated in Tonk district. However, if the monsoon is further delayed, people can expect water rationing with supply being restricted to once in two to three days, PHED officials said. The dam which supplies water to these four districts has not got filled due to poor monsoon. The dam has a height of 315.5 metres and the water level is currently at 304.97 metres. Drinking water from the dam can be supplied till 302 metres. An additional chief engineer in the PHED said contingency plans were being made for all four districts. As part of the contingency plan, tube wells will be dug and tankers will be used to supply water. Around 680 tube wells will be dug in Jaipur alone, he said.

However, the engineer said the contingency plan will take around

two to three months to execute as tenders will have to be issued and then work orders will be given. PHED minister BD Kalla is monitoring the water situation in the state and is taking daily updates from officials, the department officials said.

Sandeep Verma, principal secretary, PHED, said they are monitoring the water situation and there is no imminent crisis. He said the situation would depend on the rainfall. "If there is good rainfall in the catchment areas of the Bisalpur dam then the situation would ease," he said.

Water train to Pali soon
Meanwhile, after a gap of 10 years, a train carrying water to drought-hit Pali district will start from Jodhpur station soon.

Additional chief engineer (urban)



ID Khan said a letter has been written to the railways seeking permission for the train and the train will start from Jodhpur's Bhagat Ki Kothi railway station anytime after July 24.

Pali district is reeling under water scarcity. The Jawai dam, which supplies water to the district, has a capacity of 207.5 million cubic metres. It currently has only 17.5 million cubic metres of water or 8.4% of its total capacity.

Rs 13 crore have been sanctioned for the water train. A rake of around 30 wagons has

been brought from Ratlam to Jodhpur and has been cleaned. The train will carry around 100 lakh litre water daily to Pali, a two-hour long journey from Jodhpur.

A tank near the Bhagat Ki Kothi station has been cleaned and water will be stored there and will be pumped into the wagons through a hydrant, said Neeraj Mathur, additional chief engineer, Jodhpur. The water will be stored in a similar tank at the Pali railway station and distributed from there through tankers.

Rare rhinos among more than 200 animals killed in Assam floods

Forty percent of Kaziranga National Park in Assam has been left under water following 10 days of torrential rains that have also killed more than 71 people in the northeastern state.



69 stranded animals -- including three rhinos and an elephant -- but some had since died at a rehabilitation centre, park officials said. Sivkumar said a Supreme Court ban on mining in the nearby Karbi Anglong hills, ordered in April, had helped save lives as the area became a sanctuary for animals which fled the rising water. "The animals used to avoid the highlands because of the mines. They were afraid of coming into contact with humans," he said. Rangers patrolling the mines had seen water buffaloes, rhinos, elephants and even tigers in the quarries. The park has set up a Special Rhino Protection Force to guard the more than 2,400 rhinos in the park against poachers. One notorious poacher was detained this month and Sivkumar said earlier that a select group in the force would be given automatic rifles for patrols during the floods. At their worst, the flooding covered 90 percent of the park.

(News Agencies)- Devastating floods have killed more than 200 wild animals -- including 17 threatened one-horned rhinos -- in one of India's best-known national parks, officials said Wednesday.

Forty percent of Kaziranga National Park in Assam has been left under water following 10 days of torrential rains that have also killed more than 71 people in the northeastern state. The UNESCO-listed heritage site is home to the world's biggest population of one-horned rhinos and draws thousands of tourists from around the world each year. But it has been stricken by the floods, and as the waters start

to recede workers fear the animal toll will rise.

Park director P. Sivakumar told AFP that 205 animals, including 17 rhinos, an elephant, 112 hog deer, 12 sambar deer, seven swamp deer, two buffalo, 18 wild boar and three porcupines.

He said another 16 hog deers and a sambar had been hit by speeding cars while trying to cross a highway that passes through Kaziranga. Sivkumar, who has proposed giving AK-47 rifles to park rangers to prevent poaching during the floods, said some animals were starting to return. "The flood situation is improving gradually," he said.

Rangers and volunteers rescued

Conman who impersonated as deputy collector nabbed in Bihar's Araria



(News Agencies)- For four years, a 35-year-old conman in Bihar's Araria rode his luck, allegedly cheating many people including government officers, impersonating as a deputy collector. On Tuesday, his luck ran out after a police officer called his bluff.

The conman Sunil Kumar Paswan, a contract teacher of government middle school in Araria, 320 km northeast of Patna, had also been drawing salary without attending school, police said. He landed the contract more than five years ago. Paswan, who intimidated the government officers for about four years continued with his chicanery until he ran into Araria circle officer (CO) Ashok Kumar Singh on Tuesday. Singh got suspicious when Paswan showed his forged identity card claiming himself to

be a nodal officer. Singh immediately informed his seniors. Police officers who came following Singh's warning, nabbed Paswan.

On being interrogated officers and often occupied the officers' chairs," a police officer probing his case, said. Paswan continued to draw his salary without attending his duties at the school he was posted.

Araria sub divisional officer (SDPO) K D Singh said, "On the basis of the FIR lodged by Araria circle officer Ashok Kumar Singh, police are probing the matter." He said, even after his arrest, Paswan continued to change his statements and tried to mislead the police and district officers. Later it came to light that Paswan continued to draw salary on the basis of forged papers of his deputation at the office of district magistrate.

Former Congress MP from Tamil Nadu sentenced to 2 years' jail in cheque bounce case



informed this to Anbarasu, he was not ready to repay my loan. He and the trustees of Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Educational Charitable Trust should be punished under IPC section 138 (dishonour of a cheque) of the Negotiable Instruments Act," Bothra had said in his petition. Subsequently, the court directed the police to book Anbarasu and other trustees including his wife Kamala Anbarasu, P Mani, S Paramasivam Pillai, TKT Nathan, M Shanmugaselvi and M Paramasivam under the Indian Penal Code's section 138.

The George Town metropolitan court VIII's magistrate N Kothandaraj also awarded a two-year jail term to the Congress leader, his wife and associate Mani on May 2015.

One of the accused, Nathan, died during the trial. The court also acquitted Paramasivam Pillai, Paramasivam and Shanmugaselvi. But, it confirmed the prison term to Anbarasu and Mani.

(News Agencies)-The Madras High Court on Wednesday upheld a lower court's order sentencing former Congress lawmaker R Anbarasu and his associate P Mani to two years' imprisonment in a 17-year-old cheque bounce case. Judge PN Prakash said while passing the verdict that the 78-year-old Congress leader Anbarasu and his associate Mani have to surrender immediately.

Anbarasu had taken a loan of Rs 35 lakh as the chairperson of the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Educational Charitable Trust from Chennai-based financier Mukundchand Bothra in 2002. However, when the three-time Congress MP gave a cheque to repay the loan in April 2006, it was returned due to insufficient balance. Bothra filed a petition before Chennai George Town local metropolitan court, saying that the cheque offered by the Congress leader was returned by the bank. "When I submitted the cheque before the Bank of Baroda's Chennai KK Nagar branch, it bounced due to insufficient balance. Though I

First earth bound orbit-raising maneuver for Chandrayaan-2 successfully performed



(News Agencies)- The first earth bound orbit-raising maneuver for Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft has been performed successfully on Wednesday, according to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The maneuver was performed at 2:52 pm as planned, using the onboard propulsion system for a firing duration of 57 seconds. The second orbit raising maneuver is scheduled on July 26 at 1:09 am, the space agency said. A Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mark III, carrying the Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft, had lifted off at 2.43 pm on Monday from the Satish

Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. This came exactly a week after the mission was aborted following the detection of a technical glitch less than an hour before the launch. In the run-up to the launch, the ISRO, on its Twitter handle, put out regular updates about preparations. Chandrayaan-2 will explore a region of the moon where no mission has ever set foot. The spacecraft consists of an orbiter, a lander and a rover together referred to as "composite body". The landing on the moon's south polar region is expected on September 6 this year. The spacecraft will be the first Indian

No documents in Russian archives on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, says Minister

(News Agencies)- Russia has time and again said that there is no information about Subhash Chandra Bose, believed to have died in a plane crash in Taipei in August 1945, in their archives, a union minister said on Wednesday. "Government has approached Russia a number of times

Bose, popularly known as Netaji, was one of India's most prominent nationalist leaders who tried to wrest India's freedom from the British by force from abroad during the latter part of World War II. Founder of the Indian National Army, Bose was reported to have died of third degree burns received as a consequence of a Japanese bomber jet crash in Taiwan on Aug 18, 1945, while en route to Tokyo and possibly Russia from Singapore.

The Justice Mukherjee Commission constituted in 1999 to inquire into the death of Netaji, after a seven-year inquiry,

since 2014 seeking info on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. In its response, Russian government conveyed that they were unable to find any documents in Russian archives pertaining to Netaji," Minister of state for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan told Lok Sabha, reports ANI:

The minister said that even after deeper investigation based on request from the Indian side, Russians could not find any documents giving more information on the subject

had concluded that Subhas Bose did not die in the plane crash. Similarly, Netaji's kin also believed that he did not die in a plane crash.

In September 2015, Mamata Banerjee declassified 64 secret files on Netaji, which were in the custody of Bengal government. Family members of Netaji visited Prime Minister in Delhi on October last year, where Modi announced complete declassification of secret files of the national hero. The process started from January 23 this year.



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How Science Got Trampled in the Rush to Drill in the Arctic

(By ADAM FEDERMAN)

Every year, hundreds of petroleum industry executives gather in Anchorage for the annual conference of the Alaska Oil and Gas Association, where they discuss policy and celebrate their achievements with the state's political establishment. In May 2018, they again filed into the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center, but they had a new reason to celebrate. Under the Trump administration, oil and gas development was poised to dramatically expand into a remote corner of Alaska where it had been prohibited for nearly 40 years.

Tucked into the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, a bill signed by President Donald Trump five months earlier, was a brief two-page section that had little to do with tax reform. Drafted by Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski, the provision opened up approximately 1.6 million acres of the vast Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas leasing, a reversal of the federal policy that has long protected one of the most ecologically important landscapes in the Arctic.

The refuge is believed to sit atop one of the last great onshore oil reserves in North America, with a value conservatively estimated at hundreds of billions of dollars. For decades, the refuge has been the subject of a very public tug of war between pro-drilling forces and conservation advocates determined to protect an ecosystem crucial to polar bears, herds of migratory caribou, and native communities that rely on the wildlife for subsistence hunting. The Trump tax law, for the first time since the refuge was established in 1980, handed the advantage decisively to the drillers.

One of the keynote speakers at the conference that afternoon was Joe Balash, a top official at the Department of the Interior. Balash, who grew up in a small town outside Fairbanks and describes himself as "a local kid," referred to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as a "jewel," and predicted that the entire North Slope region was "about to change in some pretty astounding ways." The executives were there to hear him talk about what was going to come next: Before development could begin, Interior needed to complete a review of potential environmental impacts, and then get the first leases sold to industry. He recounted for the audience that on his second day on the job—right around when the tax bill was passed—then-Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt sat him down and told him that he would be "personally responsible" for completing the legally complex environmental review process for the wildlife refuge and "having a successful lease sale."

"No pressure," Balash said to audience laughter.

The pressure, in fact, couldn't be greater.

A variety of species such as polar bear and caribou depend on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to give birth to their young. The plain is also believed to sit atop one of the largest untapped reserves of oil in the United States. A

new law has opened up ANWR to drilling for the first time, but some scientists at the Department of the Interior have raised concerns about the adequacy of the environmental review process, which is designed to minimize impacts on the environment.

Today, Bernhardt is the secretary of the Interior, driving energy policy in the Arctic and beyond. And although the tax bill gave DOI four years to complete the first sale, top officials at the department, including Bernhardt and Balash, are determined to get it done in half that time, before the end of 2019.

The only thing standing in the way of establishing an oil and gas leasing program is the environmental review process, which includes an assessment of the proposed seismic surveys and an evaluation of the impacts of leasing and future development on the refuge. Environmental reviews are a standard part of oil and gas drilling elsewhere in Alaska, and normally, such impact statements for ecologically sensitive and undeveloped land would take at least two to three years—or even longer, according to three former DOI officials interviewed for this article. Instead, the administration is compressing it into just over one year. The environmental impact statement for leasing commenced in April 2018, and the final results, already publicly available in draft form, are expected to be published next month.

Top: The Arctic Village is a Gwich'in Athabaskan community reliant on the caribou that calve on the coastal plain of the Refuge each spring. Bottom Left: Two bull musk oxen face off in the land that will be leased. Bottom Right: The proposed drilling area is located across from the bed of the Canning River, where it flows close to its delta into the Arctic Ocean in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine

According to interviews with more than a dozen current and former employees at the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska, that speed has come at a significant cost to the reliability and comprehensiveness of the overall environmental review. They describe a process that has been confusing and "off the rails," according to one BLM employee. Documents leaked to POLITICO Magazine and Type Investigations reveal that the work of career scientists has at times been altered or disregarded to underplay the potential impact of oil and gas development on the coastal plain. Moreover, DOI has decided it will undertake no new studies as part of the current review process, despite scientists' concerns that key data is years out of date or doesn't exist.

At least two BLM employees, according to the documents, have submitted strongly worded complaints as part of the administrative record alleging that key findings in their work on the environmental assessment for seismic surveys were altered or omitted. In one case, according to the leaked documents, a biologist's

conclusion was reversed from saying the impacts of seismic surveys on polar bears were uncertain or potentially harmful to a finding that the impact would be "less than significant"—an important distinction in environmental law. In another complaint, a BLM anthropologist was surprised to find that large portions of her analysis of potential impacts on native communities had been removed. A third BLM scientist, who studies fish and water resources, noted that "fundamental inaccuracies" had been introduced into his section without his knowledge. Moreover, these same scientists received an email from the district office instructing them not to modify or correct the changes, which were "based on solicitor and State Office review."

The conclusions of the environmental assessment for the seismic surveying, which has now undergone numerous revisions, aren't yet known. But Balash has already signaled the results: In a recent interview with Alaska Petroleum News, he said seismic surveys, a key preliminary phase of development, were likely to take place this coming winter.

In a written statement, DOI did not respond directly to detailed questions regarding who approved the changes made to the environmental assessment and said the analysis is currently on hold while the license applicant revises its plan of operations. BLM Alaska Associate State Director Ted Murphy said, "The Bureau of Land Management Alaska is not aware of any actions by the agency as a whole, or its partners, employees, agents or outside entities to suppress any science; nor has any evidence to the contrary been presented."

Geoff Haskett, who served as regional director for the Alaska Region of the Fish and Wildlife Service during the Obama administration, said the rush to lease has undermined the scientific integrity of the review process. "In the time they've allotted there's no way they can meet all the legal requirements to do an [environmental impact statement] that's this complicated and this big and this important," Haskett said. "They're going to make mistakes and there will be legal ramifications."

Why the hurry? Observers point out that the tax bill's drilling provision is at huge political risk: If Trump is defeated next year, a Democratic administration would almost certainly move to reverse any effort to drill in the wildlife refuge, which is a far easier task if no leases have been granted. In fact, the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives has already introduced legislation repealing the section of the 2017 tax bill that opens the refuge. Getting a lease issued quickly may be the only opportunity to achieve what no other Republican administration has been able to do: secure leases for drilling in the refuge.

Bottom: Interior Secretary David Bernhardt is driving the push to speedily open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling, which President Donald Trump has said will be one of his most important

achievements. Top: Department of the Interior employee Joe Balash (center) leads the effort to review and prepare the Refuge for sale. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine, AP Photo/Evan Vucci

"Balash is there to follow through on the Murkowski legislation and to get at least one lease sale done in ANWR so that whatever else happens in the future with policy, there will be pre-existing rights," a former DOI official who knows Balash told me.

A rushed and incomplete review poses a hazard not just to the environment, but to the companies that want to develop it: The less thorough the review, the less they can protect themselves against future legal risk associated with their drilling operations. More sophisticated and experienced companies have even been known to ask federal agencies to spend more time on an impact statement if they have concerns that the agency might be overlooking something of consequence. Asked about the draft environmental impact statement for leasing in the coastal plain, an Interior official with experience working in Alaska said, "Unless there are some significant changes made, our feeling is it's going to be very susceptible to litigation."

Like many officials inside and outside Alaska, Balash sees opening ANWR as long overdue. And Trump is just trying to make good on a promise that has been made by multiple presidents before him. "The timeline is ambitious, but I think it's an indication of the priority this administration puts on the effort," Balash told me at a meeting in February in Kaktovik, the only North Slope municipality located within the refuge boundary. It could take years, even decades, before actual drilling happens. In the National Petroleum Reserve, a major drilling area also on the North Slope, nearly 20 years passed, he said, between the first lease sale and full-scale oil and gas production.

"Is it going to take that long?" Balash said. "Who knows? The first step is we've got to have a lease sale."

A Battle from the Beginning

To fly over the unbroken boreal forests of the Alaskan interior, the mostly nameless peaks of the Brooks Range—the northernmost extension of the Rocky Mountains—and the ecologically fragile lagoons and salt marshes of the coastal plain is to see a place scarcely impacted by human development. Even in a state with more than 100 million acres of protected land, the refuge seems to stand apart. Jimmy Carter once called it "America's last truly great wilderness."

The 19.6 million-acre wildlife refuge was created by Carter in 1980, when he signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. The Act established strong protections for most of the refuge, but gave Congress more discretion over the fate of the coastal plain, a narrow stretch of remote tundra that abuts the Arctic Ocean and where the oil reserves are concentrated.

Environmental science has

been guiding development on federal lands in Alaska for decades, not just in wilderness areas, but even in those with active drilling. Since the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1970, Bureau of Land Management has routinely carried out environmental reviews of proposed development, including a large percentage of the region's oil rich North Slope. The purpose of the reviews is not to prevent drilling but to ensure that it's done with a minimum impact on the environment and Native communities. BLM employees are accustomed to working for Republican and Democratic administrations with different policy agendas.

Fran Mauer, a retired caribou biologist at USFWS, has seen prior mischaracterization of science in relation to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—including the manipulation of scientific data by the George W. Bush administration. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine

Fran Mauer was involved in some of the early analysis of draft legislation that led to ANILCA in the 1970s, and went on to work as a caribou biologist at the Fish and Wildlife Service for more than two decades until his retirement in 2002. Mauer, who has a deep, gravelly voice and the weathered look of someone who has spent much of his life outdoors, grew up in the Midwest but has lived in Alaska for nearly 50 years. Over that time, he has seen Washington policy seesaw from more protective administrations to those pushing hard for more drilling, sometimes in disregard of science. When I met him at a café in Fairbanks earlier this year, he came prepared with a stack of documents and newspaper clippings detailing efforts by previous administrations to mischaracterize science or undermine FWS authority in order to advance a pro-development agenda.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has the congressionally mandated authority to oversee the refuge, but as an agency focused on managing and protecting wildlife, the FWS has often been at odds with Republican administrations interested in developing the coastal plain. As early as 1981, Interior Secretary James Watt issued a memo trying to strip the FWS of its authority to oversee the first environmental impact statement and assessment of the area's oil and gas reserves, and hand it to the United States Geological Survey, which has historically had closer ties to the energy industry. At the time, the conservation group Trustees for Alaska sued Watt over what it viewed as a brazen power grab. Several months later, a U.S. district court judge in Alaska declared the order invalid and described Watt's effort as "a clear error of judgment."

In 1987, a 208-page assessment—published with input from more than three dozen FWS scientists, including Mauer, and done in consultation with USGS and BLM—provided the first comprehensive overview of the refuge's natural

(Contd on page 21-22)

Time to end the charade around Hafiz Saeed

Great pressure has been exerted over the last two years to find him!" Trump tweeted on Wednesday.

There was no need for a search, let alone a 10-year one. Saeed was available, giving Friday sermons by the week and in television studios, all the time. Trump should know that his predecessor Barack Obama even placed a \$10 million bounty on Saeed in 2013. The question that Trump needs to answer, if any, is why the bounty has never been executed considering how freely Saeed has been roaming around.

What pressure is Trump talking about? And what exactly does he mean by "so called mastermind"? The 26/11 Mumbai attack was one of the worst terror strikes ever, which

killed 166 civilians including six American citizens. David Coleman Headley, a Pakistani-American, had visited Mumbai multiple times to videotape the targets that were eventually chosen for the final attack. Headley's account, recorded by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and then the National Investigation Agency of India, leaves no doubt whatsoever of Saeed's role in the planning and execution of the attacks.

The US House Foreign Affairs Committee did well to counter Trump's comments, saying, "FYI Pakistan wasn't searching for him for 10 years. He's been living freely..." The Committee also suggested that Trump hold the applause until Saeed was convicted by the Pakistani authorities.

So, let's come to Pakistan. Numerous dossiers have been handed over by India to Islamabad and they've been called "a piece of fiction" by none other than Pakistan's foreign secretary. India has called off talks with Pakistan over the issue of terror, but the country's stand always has been - in the particular instance of Saeed - that he was freed by a court of law.

The fact of the matter is that Pakistan just hasn't put pen to paper and collected pieces of evidence that lie on its soil. If Saeed has been arrested again - this time on terror financing charges - it is because Prime Minister Imran Khan will shortly be leaving for Washington for a meeting with Trump. Saeed has also been arrested - and the so-

called charities run by him have been taken over - because Pakistan has been told in no uncertain terms that it stands the risk of being blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in October.

Pakistan has for long, played the sham game.

This writer visited the headquarters of LeT, which was rechristened as the Jamaat-ud-Dawaah after it had ostensibly been taken over by the Pakistan government but it was clear that it was still in the firm grip of Saeed and Co. The writer was escorted in by Saeed's son-in-law; not a government functionary. Yes, there was a functionary there but he was pretty much quaking in his boots. Trump and Khan, shed the charade please. Here are words

that ought to be paid heed to. Rejecting Saeed's plea that his name be removed from the list of terrorists, the United Nation's Security Council, had this to say in March this year:

"From the reasonable decision by the Pakistani judiciary to lift the petitioner's (Saeed) house arrest, the petitioner can only deduce that he does not represent a security or terrorist threat to Pakistan... The court did not pronounce on whether the petitioner could pose a terrorist threat outside Pakistan. But if any, the latter seems to be the case."

Saeed remains a terrorist, one sanctioned by the United Nations, and that is what both Trump and Khan need to understand in its totality and with the seriousness it deserves.

90 years later, India must send Simon back

In advance of the 75th anniversary of our Independence, Parliament must begin undoing Simon's compact. While this is necessarily a gradual exercise, it has three fundamental elements. First, create a federal framework; second, repeal British laws which are outdated; third, set in forth a process to meaningfully Indianise four pillars of the legal system - the Civil Procedure Code, the Indian Penal Code, the Indian Evidence Act and the Indian Contract Act. In the last five years, the term 'cooperative federalism' has been in vogue. But a close look at the constitutional framework, particularly the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution that deals with power-sharing

between Centre and States, will reveal that state governments, though popularly elected, are severely hamstrung. They can set up universities, but not decide what to teach at such universities. They provide law and order, but depend on central financial support to do so. They create hospitals, but are not able to regulate drugs to be used in these hospitals. This is a direct legacy of the Government of India Act, 1935, enacted pursuant to the Simon Commission recommendations, which created responsible government at provincial level but maintained ultimate control with New Delhi. The Constitution must become truly federal first, if the Centre and states are to meaningfully

cooperate to serve the people. The starting point of such cooperation should be the repeal of outdated British laws. The law commission recommended 133 colonial laws for repeal in 2014. Though several laws were repealed by Parliament in the last five years, a majority still remains on the statute book. The Police (Incitement to Disaffection) Act, 1922, designed to curb nationalist activities, made it an offence to spread disaffection among the police. Its continuance is a blot on our proud proclamations of freeing the country of the colonial yoke. On the other hand, the Bangalore Marriages Validating Act, 1936, funnily enough, validated certain marriages that were mistakenly

solemnised by a particular priest in Bangalore. Though now recommended for repeal, its perpetuation for over seven decades in independent India, while harmless, is a symbolic indication that while Parliament and state legislatures are sovereign in form, they need to start taking their sovereignty seriously in practice.

But laws such as these are mere accoutrements. The foundation of the Indian legal system - the Civil Procedure Code, 1908, the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and the Indian Contract Act, 1872 - are all colonial legislations that have survived the test of time. Lawyers swear by them, law students grapple with their contents, and

judges decide cases relating to their provisions everyday. To the legal fraternity, they are gifts that keep on giving.

But outside the legal fraternity, it is time to dispassionately assess their relevance to modern India. For example, the contract Act bars wagering contracts but makes an exception for horse racing prizes, a hat tip to the centrality of derbies to social life in the Raj. The CPC is wedded to a strictly adversarial nature of dispute resolution whereas a more communitarian and cooperative process is natural to India. The Indian Penal Code, its drafting prowess notwithstanding, is squarely designed to entrench a police State.

Farewell, Sheila Dikshit

Internally, the old stalwarts of the Delhi Congress saw her as an outsider, and Dikshit had to face factional challenges for much of her stint. And on the governance front, Delhi was more of an overgrown village than a cohesive city. Dikshit's astute political and administrative skills, warm and affable personal style, and a larger vision, helped her deal with this situation. She prioritised infrastructure, reflected in the construction of new flyovers. She played her part in pushing the construction of the Delhi metro. Under court orders, she oversaw

the transition of public transport to CNG -- Delhi would have been even more polluted otherwise. Power privatisation happened under her regime, and while this had its share of critics, it did help the city overcome acute shortages. She encouraged participatory governance through the flagship Bhagidaari initiative. And but for her last-minute micromanagement, Delhi would have struggled to host the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

Dikshit's tenure saw allegations of corruption (especially during the Games). The December 16 rape incident symbolised the

increasing perils women faced in the city. And the Arvind Kejriwal-led movement capitalised on the increasing disillusionment against both the central and city governments. Dikshit lost in 2013. Her final few years were difficult. The Congress first proposed her as the CM-face in the UP elections of 2017, only to withdraw it after it entered an alliance. She was given charge of Delhi only months before the recent elections; she opposed any tie-up with the Aam Aadmi Party; and she lost her own election. Her health too had begun fading.

US nearly doubles cost of 'visas for millionaires'

circumstances, preserve 10 permanent full-time jobs for qualified American workers." Investments can be made in certain areas designated as Targeted Employment Areas (TEA) and in nonTEA areas. The standard minimum investment goes up from \$1million to \$1.9 million, the USCIS announced Tuesday and from \$500,000 to \$900,00 in TEA areas.

A "final rule" effecting this change and others will be published in

the federal register Wednesday.

The last change in the investment level was in 1990. USCIS Acting Director Ken Cuccinelli said in a statement, "Our reforms increase the investment level to account for inflation over the past three decades and ... to ensure that the reduced investment amount is reserved for rural and high-unemployment areas most in need."

resources and the potential impacts of oil and gas development on the region. The report found that oil and gas activities would have significant impacts on wildlife, including the 180,000-strong Porcupine caribou herd, which migrates hundreds of miles to use the coastal plain as a calving ground. FWS also concluded that development would have a "major adverse effect on subsistence lifestyles" of Native communities and that the "wilderness character of the coastal plain would be irretrievably lost."

Top: Elder and former chief Trimble Gilbert leads a prayer for no development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge during a summer solstice celebration in Arctic Village. Bottom right: Jewels Gilbert on a ridge above Arctic Village just after midnight on summer solstice. Hunters often drive up to this ridge to look for caribou, the main source of food for this remote community. Bottom left: The Gwich'in Athabaskan community will likely be impacted by any drilling in the Refuge. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine

The Reagan White House saw it differently. Despite the FWS findings, Interior Secretary Donald Hodel called on Congress to open all of the coastal plain to development. He described the refuge as "the most outstanding onshore frontier area for prospective major oil discoveries in America."

In 2001, in the wake of 9/11, Republicans renewed their efforts to open the refuge, casting the push for energy independence as a matter of national security. Then-Sen. Frank Murkowski (Lisa Murkowski's father), who was chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, decided to revisit the issue of the potential impact of drilling on the Porcupine caribou herd. The Gwich'in nation, an indigenous people whose more than 6,000 members live in villages scattered along the refuge boundary in the U.S. and Canada and view caribou as central to their way of life, describe the coastal plain as "The Sacred Place Where Life Begins."

As one of the refuge's senior biologists, Fran Mauer was asked to provide data and analysis in response to several of Murkowski's questions; but he later learned that the conclusions relayed to Murkowski's office had been substantially altered without his input and that other key information had been omitted from the final version. Mauer's research showed that concentrated calving took place within the coastal plain during 27 out of the 30 years for which data was available. After working its way up the chain of command to Interior Secretary Gale Norton's office, however, Mauer's text was reversed to say that concentrated calving took place primarily outside of the coastal plain, suggesting that the region was not especially critical to the survival of the herd. According to Mauer, the data he provided was also modified to reflect far less frequent use of the birthing grounds.

David Bernhardt, who was then Norton's congressional affairs director, was reportedly involved in rewriting the answers: Documents showing the difference between

Mauer's analysis and the final version were leaked to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and the Washington Post in October 2001. In response, Bernhardt, in a letter to then-Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.), claimed that the department had simply made a clerical mistake. But he added: "Scientists can and do disagree. There are often areas of interpretation and judgment." Mauer says shortly after the episode he spoke to a high-level Fish and Wildlife Service employee in Washington, who told him that Bernhardt was "extremely vexed over the leak." Several months later, a vote to open the refuge to development fell short.

In May 2017, just days before Bernhardt's confirmation hearing as deputy secretary of the Interior, the scandal over the caribou data resurfaced. In a news release, PEER, the same group that had blown the whistle in 2001, said Bernhardt had played a central role in the affair and called for a Senate investigation before considering his nomination. PEER's then-executive director, Jeff Ruch, said Bernhardt had an "unfortunate affinity for alternative facts" and accused him of "political manipulation of science."

At his confirmation hearing, Bernhardt said a number of different entities were involved in drafting Secretary Norton's responses and that his office in particular was engaged "at each stage and ultimately transmitted the testimony to the [Murkowski's] Committee." Bernhardt also added that he was not the primary policy adviser on the wildlife refuge.

As deputy secretary and now secretary, Bernhardt is shaping that policy. When the tax bill was finally passed several months after Bernhardt's confirmation, it effectively removed the Fish and Wildlife Service from having any meaningful involvement in establishing the oil and gas leasing program.

While previous bills seeking to develop the coastal plain, in 2002 and 2005, had given FWS a direct role in co-managing the program and would have granted the service greater decision-making authority, Senator Murkowski's version omitted any reference to FWS. Instead, it granted exclusive authority over the leasing program to the Bureau of Land Management, which historically has had no jurisdiction over the refuge. "Right now the Fish and Wildlife Service director, acting director or even assistant secretary for the agency, does not have any involvement in the development of this EIS or decision making process," an FWS employee told me. "Everything is done by Joe Balash."

Top left: An arctic fox wanders outside of the village of Kaktovik beneath a rising winter sun along the northern edge of the Arctic Refuge. Top right: Evelyn Reitan is a Kaktovik resident against drilling in the Refuge because she believes the infrastructure will limit access to hunting lands for locals. Even if they start with a small footprint, it will expand, she says. She points to other developments in villages near the north slope that have kept locals from hunting grounds. Bottom: 24-year-old Kaktovik resident and pilot Roy-Robert Fisher Atookchook with his

dog Spunky. Spunky was attacked by a polar bear that came off the ice and took a bite out of his side while he was chained up in the yard. Bears have become a much larger problem in the past decade or so as lack of sea ice forces them ashore in late summer and fall. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine

Though FWS is technically a cooperating agency on the environmental impact statement, none of its staff scientists were included as part of the interdisciplinary team charged with drafting the document. Throughout the review process FWS scientists, in particular those who work at the refuge, have been largely sidelined. "Here we find ourselves outsiders," one refuge staffer told me.

In a written statement FWS Alaska Regional Director Greg Siekaniec said the service's technical and subject matter experts were involved in the review process and "provided comments to BLM that reflected the input of this broad team."

The Alaska delegation has also successfully installed pro-development allies in key positions at BLM. Steve Wackowski, a former campaign aide to Lisa Murkowski, was named by former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke as senior adviser for Alaska affairs. Chad Padgett, a longtime former aide to U.S. Representative Don Young (R-Alaska), was recently named Alaska BLM state director. According to a story in E & E News, he was "handpicked" by Balash. Joshua Kindred, a former AOGA attorney, is now a DOI solicitor in Alaska. Meanwhile, FWS refuge staff has dwindled, due to a combination of early retirements and transfers, and is at its lowest level in years. Until recently there were five vacancies at the refuge and the main office in Fairbanks has been without a botanist and aquatic ecologist for more than a year.

Pat Pourchot, who served as special assistant to the secretary for Alaska affairs at Interior during the Obama administration, said Fish and Wildlife should have played a much larger role in the review process and that he doubts the department can complete an environmental impact statement that meets the legal requirements under federal environmental rules in such a short period of time.

"FWS is chafing that they do not have a bigger role in an area that they are charged with managing," Pourchot told me.

A visitor and a lone caribou watch each other on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's coastal plain, an area in the north of the refuge known for its rich biodiversity. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine

Conclusions First, Science Second

At the Fairbanks office of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the walls are lined with large format photographs of the remote rivers and valleys of the Brooks Range and panoramic shots of caribou crossing the coastal plain. An old banner celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, passed in 1964 and inspired in part by the early effort to protect the refuge, hangs from the reception desk. Another poster

describes the refuge as "a symbol of wildlife and wild places, now and for the future."

Fish and Wildlife Service scientists, many of whom work at this office, have historically played a central role in advocating for and expanding refuge protections, even recommending in 2015 that the coastal plain be designated as wilderness. But the new law effectively changed the overarching mission of the Refuge. With the stroke of a pen, the tax act established an entirely new purpose for the Refuge—to "provide for an oil and gas program on the coastal plain."

"It felt like the world got turned upside down," one FWS employee told me.

Oil drilling often relies on seismic surveys, a highly involved process that itself requires significant development. The last time seismic surveys had been done was in the mid-1980s. In 2014, when Balash was acting commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, the state of Alaska sued Interior over the department's refusal to allow seismic surveys of the coastal plain. David Bernhardt, then a lawyer with Brownstein Hyatt Farber & Schreck, represented the state in its unsuccessful bid. Now, Balash and Bernhardt were calling the shots.

Even before the tax act was passed, the Interior Department was looking at ways to change FWS regulations in order to allow seismic surveys in the refuge, according to one Interior employee who was present at meetings during which the issue was discussed. Though seismic technology has changed considerably since the 1980s, surveys of the coastal plain would still have wide-ranging impacts on vegetation and permafrost, according to an independent analysis by the University of Alaska Fairbanks Geobotany Center. "There will likely be significant, extensive, and long-lasting direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of 3D-seismic to the...permafrost and vegetation of the 1002 Area," the authors wrote.

Top left: Children often play in the community center in Arctic Village. Top right: The last few signs of civilization before wilderness in the Refuge. Bottom: Drums left behind from seismic exploration in the 1980s sit on the tundra of the coastal plain about a mile west of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge border, which is also the border of the 1002 lands, where further exploration is set to occur in the coming year. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine

The initial BLM timeline for approving seismic surveys was wildly ambitious, even by the standards of this administration. Liz Klein, associate deputy secretary of the Interior during the Obama administration, said the sensitivity surrounding the refuge and the presence of threatened and endangered species on the coastal plain should have compelled a more thorough environmental impact statement. In order to begin surveys during the 2018-19 winter season and obtain data in advance of the lease sale, however, Interior initially pushed to complete its part of the review in just a few months. Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act,

FWS was also required to conduct its own review of the application and issue a permit to ensure that seismic surveys would not do further harm to the threatened southern Beaufort Sea polar bear population.

In May 2018, SAExploration, a Houston, Texas, oil and gas company, formally submitted an application to conduct surveys of the coastal plain, which would require the use of heavy industrial machinery, the construction of ice roads, temporary landing strips for aircraft, and hundreds of workers housed in camps across the leasing area. Two months later, BLM announced that it would publish an environmental assessment—a less rigorous analysis than an environmental impact statement. Even before it had heard from its scientists, the agency had stated publicly that seismic surveys would have no significant impact.

According to two DOI employees in Alaska, there were internal questions about whether an environmental assessment was sufficient, but DOI leadership insisted on the expedited review. In an email obtained by POLITICO Magazine, the assistant manager for the BLM Arctic district office described the effort as "fast paced and often times confusing." Another BLM employee who worked on the assessment told me they had "never seen something so off the rails in my life." The lack of transparency has been compounded by a culture of fear and intimidation, according to current employees of Fish and Wildlife and BLM; even former employees are reluctant to speak on the record because they believe that doing so could jeopardize the careers of their colleagues. "We barely can talk about ANWR with each other," one BLM Alaska employee told me.

Still, in mid-September 2018, according to documents obtained by POLITICO, BLM was prepared to publish the draft environmental assessment, despite concerns from its own employees and the FWS about potential impacts to polar bears. According to a leaked FWS memo BLM was preparing to publish the draft "as early as Monday September 10th, with a provisional Finding of No Significant Impact." On September 13, Sarah LaMarr, assistant manager of the BLM's Arctic District Office, informed the BLM seismic team that BLM hoped to post the preliminary draft of the document to the department's NEPA website the next day. A 30-day public comment period would follow, and BLM had even set a date for a public meeting in the North Slope city of Utqiagvik on October 5. This would leave enough time for SAExploration to begin seismic surveys as early as December or January, when the ground is thoroughly frozen and can support heavy machinery.

Scientific Findings Altered, Distorted and Omitted

Scientists at the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska were asked to submit their findings for an environmental assessment that was part of the permitting process for three-dimensional seismic surveys of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's coastal plain. The scientific review is a key part of assessing the potential

negative impacts of the surveying, which can pose risks to plants and wildlife. These emails show the dissatisfaction of several of the BLM scientists who learned that their work had been altered without their input.

1. Sarah LaMarr, assistant manager of BLM's Arctic District Office
2. Debora Nigro, a BLM wildlife biologist
3. Stacey Fritz, a BLM anthropologist
4. Matt Whitman, a BLM fisheries biologist | Adam Federman for Type Investigation

Up to this point, the environmental assessment had received a level of attention reserved for only the most sensitive internal documents, according to two BLM employees. "That EA—every word of it—was the most scrutinized, politicized and controversial thing any of us had ever seen," one of those BLM employees told me.

On the eve of publication, members of the BLM seismic team were given one last chance to review their respective sections but also instructed "to not make any changes to this document." After thanking the team for its diligence and hard work, LaMarr wrote, "Please be aware that there have been numerous edits based on solicitor and State Office review. You may see some changes to your sections based on these edits."

In some cases, the changes were deeply troubling to those who had originally drafted the document. At least two BLM employees took the unusual step of submitting complaints, which become part of the administrative record, an internal way of documenting the decision-making process for NEPA reviews. This sort of forceful condemnation of changes made by higher-ups within the department is rare, though not unheard of, according to Klein, who served at DOI under Obama.

In one instance a fisheries biologist wrote in an email to the project managers that, as a result of changes to his text, there were "fundamental inaccuracies in the seismic EA." Another career employee was surprised to find that entire paragraphs on potential impacts to native communities, including environmental justice concerns, had been scrubbed from her analysis. "I am troubled by numerous omissions from my sections," the employee wrote. She also warned that BLM might not be complying with guidance on tribal consultation for the EA. "[BLM] normally conduct government-to-government consultation for large seismic projects in the NPR-A, therefore doing so would not have been extraordinary," she wrote.

Perhaps the most dramatic change was the reversal of a conclusion reached by Debbie Nigro, a BLM wildlife biologist, who found that seismic activity could have a negative cumulative impact on the southern Beaufort Sea polar bear population. Nigro, a long time BLM biologist who has received recognition for her work to protect threatened waterfowl, wrote the section in consultation with marine mammal experts at the FWS.

Polar bears are an important regional predator, as well as one of the best-known symbols of Arctic wildlife, and they're considered a threatened species: The southern Beaufort Sea population has declined by more than 40 percent to just 900 bears in the past few decades. Based on SAExploration's initial proposal, Nigro and FWS concluded there was a real possibility that polar bears and their critical denning habitat would be harmed by winter seismic exploration. According to Nigro's assessment, "It is unknown to what extent, but possible that cumulative effects to polar bears and their habitats would result from the incremental addition of winter seismic exploration in the Coastal Plain." Yet after undergoing "solicitor and State Office review," according to the email from the assistant manager of the Arctic District Office, the section was changed to say the opposite. The draft version stated that if seismic exploration moved forward, "Cumulative effects to polar bears and their habitats would be less than significant."

In her comments submitted as part of the administrative record, Nigro described the textual change as "significant" and included a copy of her original paragraph alongside the new version. "I know there is likely nothing that can be done," she wrote, "but I would like it to be in the admin record that I do not agree with this wording change or with the new conclusion."

The Department of the Interior says the draft environmental assessment was not reviewed by the department's lawyers in Washington, D.C., or by Bernhardt. Nor was Bernhardt aware of the changes made to the document, according to DOI. In addition, the department said BLM's "approach was predicated and dependent on the presumption that the applicant would be able to" receive the necessary approvals from the FWS. "This never came to fruition and thus the BLM could not move forward."

Asked whether Balash had reviewed the draft analysis and was aware of the changes made to the document, DOI did not provide a yes or no response. His calendars show he was very much engaged with ANWR issues. Between August 23 and September 13, when Sarah LaMarr sent out her email to the seismic team, Balash had no fewer than nine meetings related to the Arctic Wildlife Refuge. He was also traveling in Alaska in late August and, according to his calendars, had a meeting with regional solicitors to discuss coastal plain matters.

Klein said the documents raise "significant questions about interference with scientific integrity processes at Interior and with the expert conclusions of the department's own staff. Their work has been changed in ways they don't agree with. That's unusual and very troubling."

In the winter, boats are left

on the edge of the lagoon outside Kaktovik until the ice breaks up in spring. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine

The Final Report, But Not the Last Word

Even without drilling, the Refuge is already undergoing profound changes. Climate change is warming the Arctic nearly twice as fast as anywhere else in the world, setting in motion changes that have alarmed scientists who study the region. As sea ice has diminished greater numbers of polar bears have been forced to come inland to den along the coastal plain. This has led to more encounters between humans and bears and the deterioration of the overall health of the bear population. The southern Beaufort Sea population was listed as a threatened species in 2008, which is part of the reason that FWS has resisted approving permits for ecologically risky seismic surveys. Over the next 30 years, scientists fear that the population could be driven to extinction.

In early February, I flew to Kaktovik, population 250, to attend a public hearing on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for leasing the coastal plain. The much-anticipated document had been published on December 20, two days before the government shut down. Like the environmental assessment for seismic surveys, the draft EIS for leasing, which evaluates the potential impact of leasing on everything from polar bears and caribou to water resources and vegetation, had been produced with unusual speed, in about eight months. The required public hearings commenced less than one week after DOI announced that they were taking place so there was very little advance notice. Robert Thompson, a polar bear guide in Kaktovik and an outspoken opponent of oil and gas development who follows the issue closely, learned about the meeting when I called him a few days before the hearing. "How do you have this meeting if no one knows about it?" he said.

I had attended the first hearing in Fairbanks the day before, when activists holding Defend the Sacred placards protested that the format for the hearings reflected the department's lack of transparency and its desire to stifle public participation. DOI had announced that the meetings would be "open house" style with subject matter experts on hand and that comments would be taken only by court reporters or in writing. I watched as activists seized the podium and, for the next two and a half hours, I listened to dozens of speakers, all of them opposed to developing the refuge, make their case. At one point, Balash, who in his introductory remarks acknowledged that there were "strong feelings on both sides of the issue," conceded that DOI had lost control of the meeting.

Community members, here at the BLM hearing for the draft EIS statement for drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

held in the Kaktovik school, are divided on the prospect of drilling. Some support the opening of the Refuge, which could benefit native corporations. Others are opposed to the imposition of new infrastructure, especially where it could impact the region's polar bear population. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine

Kaktovik proved to be friendlier terrain for the officials from Interior. About 30 residents gathered at the local school, which had recently received a \$16 million upgrade, including a new basketball gym, largely funded with oil and gas tax revenue. At least half the population of Kaktovik supports the opening of the refuge and two native corporations—Kaktovik Iñupiat Corporation and the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation—stand to benefit financially if the coastal plain ever becomes a producing oil field. (ASRC and KIC, along with SAExploration, have formed a joint corporation to conduct the seismic surveys of the refuge.)

But in order for that to happen, a considerable amount of infrastructure, including barge landings, docks, spill response staging areas, and road and pipeline connections, will be required. Steve Amstrup, a former USGS polar bear researcher who is now chief scientist for the conservation group Polar Bears International, is doubtful that this sort of development can happen without doing further harm to the species and its remaining habitat. "The developments and associated activities described in the [draft environmental impact statement] are sure to accelerate ongoing declines in the SBS polar bear population," Amstrup wrote in a comment letter submitted to the BLM. (A request by POLITICO to speak with the U.S. Geological Survey's lead wildlife biologist studying polar bear population dynamics in the region was denied.)

The morning after the meeting, I borrowed an old Chevy Suburban with a cracked front windshield and, along with a wildlife photographer and a documentary filmmaker, drove out onto the narrow stretch of land where a polar bear had been seen the day before. It was just after 9:30 a.m. and the sun was coming up over the horizon, casting everything in a pale blue glow. The early morning coastal fog had not yet burned off and the wooden homes and power lines in Kaktovik were barely visible in the distance. Fishing boats half buried in snow were scattered along the shore of the lagoon. We didn't see any bears but did encounter tracks, about the size of a dinner plate, which led in a straight line to the center of the city.

Just beyond Kaktovik, extending out in a web-like pattern, is the highest density denning habitat for the southern Beaufort Sea polar bear population. As sea ice continues to disappear, this territory will become only more important to

the bears' survival. And according to the draft EIS, this same habitat happens to overlap with what are believed to be the richest hydrocarbon reserves in the coastal plain and where potentially "the least restrictive development activities would be most likely to occur." But whatever the risks associated with future development, the Interior Department has concluded in the draft environmental impact statement that with mitigation measures in place the impacts to the declining polar bear population would likely be "negligible."

Top: Fox tracks lead onto a lagoon that feeds into the Beaufort Sea beside the village of Kaktovik. Bottom: Midwinter in Kaktovik. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine

In late June, Mauer flew into the Sadlerochit Mountains on the north side of the Brooks Range for a two-week backpacking trip. Now 73, he said this might be his last trip to the coastal plain. "It could be my opportunity to say goodbye to what I've always known," Mauer told me a few days before he left. "Because, unfortunately, with a place like that, when you bring industrial activity in, there's no going back. It'll never be the same again in anybody's lifetime."

The final draft of the environmental impact statement is expected in August, after which the Interior Department can move forward with a lease sale. Environmental groups say they will consider litigation, and have asserted that the leasing process was driven by "political deadlines" rather than sound decision-making or scientific integrity.

"It's clear the administration is desperate to jam through Arctic drilling while President Trump is still in office," said Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Washington), the ranking member of the Senate Commerce Committee that oversees marine fisheries and coastal management. "The entire environmental review process has been a rush job, and its integrity has been undermined by politics. The Interior Department has ignored its legal obligations and the findings of their own career scientists."

The eastern edge of Kaktovik, from which one can see the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and, farther in the distance, the Brooks Range. | Nathaniel Wilder for Politico Magazine

Trustees for Alaska and other conservation groups have called on Interior to go back to the drawing board and redo its analysis. But even if the federal court rules in their favour, it's unclear whether such a decision would delay or postpone the lease sale.

One thing, though, is clear: For the Trump administration, establishing a foothold in ANWR is paramount. Five days before Fran Mauer arrived in the refuge, Trump told ABC's George Stephanopoulos that, along with the tax cuts and slashing of regulations, opening up ANWR would be one of his most important and lasting achievements.

Boris Johnson becomes new UK prime minister, meets Queen Elizabeth



Soon after taking over, Johnson exuded confidence about leaving the EU by the deadline of October 31, "no ifs and buts", and restore public trust in democracy sullied by long-drawn debates and MPs voting down various aspects of Brexit in parliament.

(News Agencies)- Queen Elizabeth appointed Boris Johnson as the UK's new prime minister during a brief audience in Buckingham Palace on Wednesday, heralding a new phase in British politics fractured by Brexit that consumed two prime ministers since the 2016 EU referendum.

Soon after taking over, Johnson exuded confidence about leaving the EU by the deadline of October 31, "no ifs and buts",

and restore public trust in democracy sullied by long-drawn debates and MPs voting down various aspects of Brexit in parliament.

"After three years of unfounded self-doubt, it is time to change the record. No-one in the last few centuries has succeeded in betting against the pluck, nerve and ambition of this country. They will not succeed today," he said in his first speech as PM outside 10, Downing Street, in a veiled

warning to Brexit negotiators in Brussels.

Johnson took over after the outgoing Prime Minister Theresa May received a prolonged farewell in the House of Commons and delivered a speech before travelling to meet the queen to resign. She thereafter returned to her Maidenhead constituency near London.

May said: "I repeat my warm congratulations to Boris on winning the Conservative leadership election. I wish him and the Government he will lead every good fortune in the months and years ahead".

"Their successes will be our country's successes, and I hope

that they will be many. Their achievements will build on the work of nearly a decade of Conservative or Conservative-led government".

Before Johnson's term began, leading lights of May's team - Philip Hammond, David Lidington, Rory Stewart - symbolically tendered their resignation to signal their reluctance to serve under him, primarily due to his ambition to leave the EU by October 31 with or without an agreement.

Johnson was expected to appoint his ministerial team from Wednesday evening, with at least three Indian-origin MPs likely to be given key portfolios or promotions: Priti Patel, tipped to

be the next Home secretary; and promotion for junior ministers Alok Sharma and Rishi Sunak. David Cameron led the Conservative-led government from 2010 to 2015 (with Liberal Democrats) and resigned in 2016 after the EU referendum resulted in the vote to leave the EU. May took over from Cameron and led a minority government after the 2017 election.

Evoking extreme feelings of support and disdain, Johnson, who was elected Conservative leader on Tuesday, becomes the 14th prime minister appointed by Queen Elizabeth since her coronation in 1953; Winston Churchill was her first prime minister.

Malaysia's ex-king divorces former Miss Moscow by triple talaq: Report

The former Miss Moscow says she is still married to Sultan Muhammad V, and has continued to post pictures of the couple on social media.

(News Agencies)- Malaysia's former king has divorced a Russian ex-beauty queen just months after news of their wedding emerged and he abdicated in a first for the country, his lawyer said.

The former Miss Moscow, however, says she is still married to Sultan Muhammad V, and has continued to post pictures of the couple on social media.

The sultan stepped aside as Malaysia's monarch in January after just two years on the throne

when reports of the marriage surfaced last year while he was officially on medical leave.

His abdication was the first by a monarch in the Muslim-majority country's history.

The sultan "has irrevocably divorced Ms Rihana Oxana Gorbatenko on 22 June 2019 by three talaqs in accordance with syariah laws", said a statement from his Singapore-based lawyer, Koh Tien Hua.

"Triple talaq" is the practice which sees a Muslim man end

his marriage by saying "talaq" ("you are divorced") in Arabic three times. An Islamic court in the northeastern Malaysian state of Kelantan, where Muhammad is still the sultan, had issued a divorce certificate, the lawyer said earlier this week. But the former beauty queen denied knowing about the separation, telling news portal Malaysiakini: "I have never heard of any divorce statements made directly to me". She has continued to post pictures on Instagram with the



sultan and of a son she gave birth to in May. Lawyer Koh told Singapore's Straits Times newspaper there was "no objective evidence as yet as to the biological father of the child". After Muhammad's abdication,

Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah -- a keen athlete who holds a string of positions on sporting bodies -- was chosen as Malaysia's new king during a special meeting of the country's Islamic royalty.

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Indian industrialist Pramod Mittal held in Bosnia

The case is related to the running of a coking plant in the northeastern town of Lukavac, which Pramod Mittal has co-managed since 2003. It has a 1,000 employees.

(News Agencies)- Indian industrialist Pramod Mittal, the younger brother of steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, was arrested Wednesday in Bosnia for suspected fraud and "abuse of power", a prosecutor said.

The case is related to the running of a coking plant in the northeastern town of Lukavac, which Pramod Mittal has co-managed since 2003. It has a 1,000

employees.

"Police, who acted upon the order of the prosecutor, arrested the president of the supervisory board of GIKIL, Pramod Mittal," prosecutor Cazim Serhatlic told reporters.

GIKIL was founded in 2003 and is co-managed by Pramod Mittal's Global Steel Holdings and a local public company (KHK).

The coking plant in Lukavac employs a

thousand people.

Two other company officials -- general manager Paramesh Bhattacharyya and another member of the supervisory board -- were also arrested.

They are suspected of "organised crime, notably the abuse of power and economic crimes," the prosecutor said.

Serhatlic said that if found guilty the suspects could get jail sentences of up to

45 years.

An arrest warrant has been issued for a fourth man "considered to be a member of this organised criminal group with Pramod Mittal on top".

The suspects will appear before a judge on Wednesday.

According to the Zurnal.info website which covers organised crime, the suspects were believed to have embezzled "at



least five million marks" (2.5 million euros, \$2.8 million).

Lakshmi Mital, the CEO of global steel giant

ArcelorMittal, has bailed out his cash-strapped brother Pramod in India.

Pramod Mittal owns several companies in the Balkans.

FTC Imposes \$5 Billion Penalty and Sweeping New Privacy Restrictions on Facebook

FTC settlement imposes historic penalty, and significant requirements to boost accountability and transparency

Highest Penalties in Privacy Enforcement Actions



(News Agencies)- NOTE: The FTC will host an IN-PERSON press conference at FTC Headquarters, 600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington D.C., at 11 am ET TODAY (July 24). Participants will include: FTC Chairman Joe Simons, FTC Commissioners Noah Joshua Phillips and Christine S. Wilson, and Gustav W. Eyler, Director of the Department of Justice Civil Division's Consumer Protection Branch.

Media also can call into the press conference by calling (800) 288-8967, confirmation number 470293. Call-in lines, which are for media only, will open 15 minutes prior to the start of the call. The press conference will also be

webcast at FTC.gov.

Facebook, Inc. will pay a record-breaking \$5 billion penalty, and submit to new restrictions and a modified corporate structure that will hold the company accountable for the decisions it makes about its users' privacy, to settle Federal Trade Commission charges that the company violated a 2012 FTC order by deceiving users about their ability to control the privacy of their personal information.

The \$5 billion penalty against Facebook is the largest ever imposed on any company for violating consumers' privacy and almost 20 times greater than the largest privacy or data security penalty ever imposed worldwide. It is one of the largest penalties

ever assessed by the U.S. government for any violation.

The settlement order announced today also

imposes unprecedented new restrictions on Facebook's business operations and creates multiple channels of compliance. The order requires Facebook to restructure its approach to privacy from the corporate board-level down, and establishes strong new mechanisms to ensure that Facebook executives are accountable for the decisions they make about privacy, and that those decisions are subject to meaningful oversight.

"Despite repeated promises to its billions of users worldwide that they could control how their personal information is shared, Facebook

undermined consumers' choices," said FTC Chairman Joe Simons. "The magnitude of the \$5 billion penalty and sweeping conduct relief are unprecedented in the history of the FTC. The relief is designed not only to punish future violations but, more importantly, to change Facebook's entire privacy culture to decrease the likelihood of continued violations. The Commission takes consumer privacy seriously, and will enforce FTC orders to the fullest extent of the law." "The Department of Justice is committed to protecting consumer data privacy and ensuring that social media companies

like Facebook do not mislead individuals about the use of their personal information," said Assistant Attorney General Jody Hunt for the Department of Justice's Civil Division. "This settlement's historic penalty and compliance terms will benefit American consumers, and the Department expects Facebook to treat its privacy obligations with the utmost seriousness."

More than 185 million people in the United States and Canada use Facebook on a daily basis. Facebook monetizes user information through targeted advertising, which generated most of the company's \$55.8 billion in revenues in 2018.

FTC Imposes Conditions on Quaker Chemical Corp.'s Acquisition of Houghton International Inc.

(News Agencies)- Philadelphia-area chemical companies are global suppliers of metal processing products. Chemical companies Quaker Chemical Corp and Houghton International Inc. have agreed to divest certain products and related assets to a subsidiary of French multinational corporation Total S.A., to settle Federal Trade Commission charges that Quaker's proposed \$1.4 billion acquisition of Houghton would violate federal antitrust law. The FTC's complaint

alleges that the proposed acquisition would harm competition in the North American market for aluminum hot rolling oil, or AHRO, and associated technical support services, and in the North American market for steel cold rolling oil, or SCRO, and associated technical support services. According to the complaint, the SCRO market includes steel cold rolling oil, tin plate rolling oil, or TPRO, and pickle oil. AHRO, SCRO, TPRO, and pickle oil are critical inputs in the production

of sheet metal.

The complaint alleges the proposed transaction may substantially lessen competition in the markets for SCRO, AHRO, and their associated technical support services. Quaker and Houghton are the only two commercial suppliers of AHRO in North America and the two largest commercial suppliers of SCRO in North America, according to the complaint.

Under the proposed settlement agreement, Quaker must divest

Houghton's North American AHRO and SCRO product lines and related assets to Total. The proposed settlement agreement also requires Quaker to divest to Total certain product lines used in conjunction with AHRO and SCRO, including steel cleaners and AHRO compatible hydraulic fluids. Further details about the consent agreement, which allows the Commission to appoint a monitor, are set forth in the analysis to aid public comment for this matter.

FTC Sues Cambridge Analytica, Settles with Former CEO and App Developer

FTC alleges they deceived Facebook users about data collection

(News Agencies)- The Federal Trade Commission filed an administrative complaint against data analytics company Cambridge Analytica, and filed settlements for public comment with Cambridge Analytica's former chief executive and an app developer who worked with the company, alleging they employed deceptive tactics to harvest personal information from tens of millions of Facebook users for voter profiling and targeting.

As part of a proposed settlement with the FTC, two of the defendants-app developer Aleksandr Kogan and former Cambridge Analytica CEO Alexander Nix-have agreed to administrative orders restricting how they conduct any business in the future, and requiring them to delete or destroy any personal information they collected. Cambridge Analytica has filed for bankruptcy and has not settled the FTC's allegations.

The FTC alleges that Cambridge Analytica, Nix, and Kogan deceived consumers by falsely

claiming they did not collect any personally identifiable information from Facebook users who were asked to answer survey questions and share some of their Facebook profile data. The FTC separately announced that Facebook will pay a record-breaking \$5 billion penalty and submit to new restrictions that will hold the company accountable for the decisions it makes about its users' privacy as part of a settlement resolving allegations that the company violated a 2012 FTC privacy order.

Kogan is the developer of a Facebook application called the GSRApp-sometimes referred to as the "thisisyourdigitallife" app. The GSRApp asked its users to answer personality and other questions, and collected information such as the "likes" of public Facebook pages by the app's users and by the "friends" in their social network. During the summer of 2014, the FTC alleges, Kogan, together with Cambridge Analytica and Nix, developed, used, and analyzed

data obtained from the GSRApp. The information was used to train an algorithm that then generated personality scores for the app users and their Facebook friends. Cambridge Analytica, Kogan, and Nix then matched these personality scores with U.S. voter records. The company used these matched personality scores for its voter profiling and targeted advertising services.

For this project, Kogan was able to re-purpose an existing app he had on the Facebook platform, which allowed the app to harvest Facebook data from app users and their Facebook friends. In April 2014, Facebook announced it would no longer allow app developers to access data from an app user's Facebook friends. Facebook, however, allowed developers with existing apps on the Facebook platform to access this data for another year. The FTC alleges that the GSRApp was able to take advantage of this access to collect Facebook profile data from 250,000 to 270,000 users



of the GSRApp located in the United States, as well as 50 million to 65 million of those users' Facebook friends, including at least 30 million identifiable U.S. consumers.

The app users were paid a nominal fee to take the GSRApp survey. Almost half of the app users, however, originally refused to provide their Facebook profile information. To address this issue, the GSRApp began telling app users that it would not "download your name or any other identifiable information-we are interested in your demographics and likes."

The FTC alleges, however, that this was false, and that the GSRApp in fact collected users'

Facebook User ID, which connects individuals to their Facebook profiles, as well as other personal information such as their gender, birthdate, location, and their Facebook friends list.

In addition, the FTC alleges that Cambridge Analytica falsely claimed until at least November 2018 that it was a participant in the EU-U.S. Privacy Shield framework, even though the company allowed its certification to lapse in May 2018. The Privacy Shield establishes a process to allow companies to transfer consumer data from European Union countries to the United States in compliance with EU law.

Equifax to Pay \$575 Million as Part of Settlement with FTC, CFPB, and States Related to 2017 Data Breach

Settlement includes fund to help consumers recover from data breach

(News Agencies)- NOTE: The FTC will host an IN-PERSON press conference at FTC Headquarters, 600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington D.C., at 10 am ET TODAY (July 22).

Participants will include: FTC Chairman Joe Simons, CFPB Director Kathy Kraninger, and Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh.

Media also can call into the press conference by calling (800) 230-1074, confirmation number 470210. Call-in lines, which are for media only, will open 15 minutes prior to the start of the call. The press conference will also be webcast at FTC.gov.

Equifax Inc. has agreed to pay at least \$575 million, and potentially up to \$700 million, as part of a global settlement with

the Federal Trade Commission, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), and 50 U.S. states and territories, which alleged that the credit reporting company's failure to take reasonable steps to secure its network led to a data breach in 2017 that affected approximately 147 million people.

In its complaint, the FTC alleges that Equifax failed to secure the massive amount of personal information stored on its network, leading to a breach that exposed millions of names and dates of birth, Social Security numbers, physical addresses, and other personal information that could lead to identity theft and fraud.

As part of the proposed settlement, Equifax will pay \$300 million to a fund that will provide

affected consumers with credit monitoring services. The fund will also compensate consumers who bought credit or identity monitoring services from Equifax and paid other out-of-pocket expenses as a result of the 2017 data breach. Equifax will add up to \$125 million to the fund if the initial payment is not enough to compensate consumers for their losses. In addition, beginning in January 2020, Equifax will provide all U.S. consumers with six free credit reports each year for seven years-in addition to the one free annual credit report that Equifax and the two other nationwide credit reporting agencies currently provide.

The company also has agreed to pay \$175 million to 48 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, as well as \$100

The Equifax Breach – A Global Settlement

- \$575,000,000+ settlement
- Free credit monitoring and identity theft services
- Strong data security requirements

→ Learn more: ftc.gov/Equifax

Source: Federal Trade Commission | FTC.gov

million to the CFPB in civil penalties. "Companies that profit from personal information have an extra responsibility to protect and secure that data," said FTC Chairman Joe Simons. "Equifax failed to take basic steps that may have prevented the breach that affected approximately 147 million consumers. This settlement requires that the company take steps to improve its data security going forward, and will ensure that consumers

harmed by this breach can receive help protecting themselves from identity theft and fraud." "Today's announcement is not the end of our efforts to make sure consumers' sensitive personal information is safe and secure. The incident at Equifax underscores the evolving cyber security threats confronting both private and government computer systems and actions they must take to shield the personal information of consumers.

The inside story: How New Delhi charted its diplomatic win in Kargil

Atal Behari Vajpayee, Jaswant Singh, Brajesh Mishra and K Raghunath played an exemplary role during the crisis

Once the Indian political establishment, led by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, became aware of the extent of Pakistan's Kargil intrusion in 1999, it resolved to end it - if possible, without enlarging the conflict. Military and diplomatic elements of national power were brought into play in flawless coordination to achieve the objective. The splendid work of India's defence forces has attracted great attention, but not, in any substantial measure, the country's diplomatic endeavour in that testing time.

The background to India's diplomacy during the Kargil ingress was provided by Vajpayee's visit to Lahore in February 1999. That visit was a consequence of a political initiative on the part of Vajpayee and Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The two had first met in Colombo, on the sidelines of the Saarc summit, in July 1998, and had established a good rapport. Two months later, in their meeting on the margins of the United Nations General

Assembly session in New York, they approved the modalities of the Composite Dialogue, and also decided to establish the Delhi-Lahore bus service.

After he had returned to power in February 1997, Sharif made efforts to tilt the country's civilian-military balance in the former's favour. He threw out the army chief, General Jahangir Karamat, in 1998, and hand-picked a relatively junior mohajir (a term to describe those who migrated from India during Partition) general, Parvez Musharraf, to succeed him. At this time Sharif's father, the influential Mian Muhammad Sharif, made inroads among the army's corps commanders. These were indications that the Sharifs may be able to contain the army's role while India-Pakistan ties improved. Vajpayee's visit strengthened this impression, despite some negative army signals prior to his visit, and some during it. Apart from Vajpayee's statesmanlike gestures, the visit also resulted in the Lahore Declaration, the

most substantial bilateral document after the Simla Agreement of 1972.

As India proceeded with its response to the intrusion, there was no way of firmly knowing the extent of Sharif's involvement in the enterprise. It had to be logically assumed that he was fully complicit because of his seeming hold over the army. Besides, incontrovertible evidence had surfaced to show that Sharif had initially applauded the Kargil venture, though his father is believed to have admonished him for betraying Vajpayee.

At this stage, India had to rupture Sharif's relations with the army. It successfully did so with the recording of Musharraf's conversations with Chief of General Staff, General Aziz Khan, one of Indian external intelligence agency's great achievements, playing a crucial part. Pakistan claimed that the mujahideen, and not its regular troops, had crossed the Line of Control (LoC). It linked the intrusion to militant and terrorist



actions in the Kashmir Valley. This lie was exposed. The Kargil tapes showed that Pakistani forces were the aggressors, but eventually the Pakistani claim was torn to shreds when Indian troops recovered army documents and personal effects of its soldiers from recaptured posts. The message was effectively conveyed to the international community that Pakistani regulars were directly involved.

The Kargil ingress was a violation of the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir. Without conceding that its regular troops had crossed the LoC, Pakistan tried to obfuscate the issue by seeking to project that it had not taken any extraordinary step, and that both

sides nibbled at the LoC from time to time. It also tried to sow further confusion, through counter allegations regarding the Indian presence in Siachen. Indian diplomats had to clarify the intricacies of the LoC to their international interlocutors. They effectively emphasised that Pakistan's action was direct and unacceptable territorial aggression. They also stressed that no responsible nuclear weapons-possessing State had ever undertaken such provocative and dangerous action against a neighbouring nuclear weapon State. Pakistan had hoped that the major powers would insist on an immediate ceasefire, and that would leave it in control of the Kargil posts.

Domestic violence has not got the attention it needs

We have very few domestic abuse counsellors in India and the police who are the first port of call for a victim often do little more than warn the husband and then send the woman back to the abusive home.

On an enforced period of medical leave recently, I watched a disturbing documentary on domestic abuse in the Thames Valley area in England called Behind Closed Doors. It was worrying on many counts - the first being that seemingly loving partners can turn almost overnight into violent monsters. The second is that the victim continues in the abusive relationship till it becomes life-threatening. But the most heartening aspect is the efficiency of the official support system once a complaint is made. The police are quick to respond, often making the difference between life and death for the victim; the State provides legal support and domestic abuse counsellors talk to the victim on the nature of the violence; the victim's home is put on priority for the police to

respond; and the victim is provided a round-the-clock alarm mechanism to summon help. None of this is foolproof, but in the majority of cases, it has helped the victim rebuild her life away from the arena of abuse. Domestic abuse is an area of women's rights that has not got the attention it needs in India though it is one of the many problems that women face daily. Our system can in no way match that in the UK, but there are not even rudimentary systems in place for victims of domestic violence. The National Family Health Survey 4 (NFHS-4) says that every third woman in India faces some form of domestic violence, 27% of them since the age of 15. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, is a comprehensive law, but as with many other such laws, it fails in the

implementation. Of all the women abused, only 14% have sought any form of help. There are many reasons for this. One is that many women in India do not even know that there is a law to support them. Many abused women take it as normal to be beaten or emotionally abused for a variety of issues, ranging from not looking after the home well enough to failing to pander to her husband's needs. Surprising, a sizeable number of women are supportive of domestic violence. The NFHS-4 survey found that 54.8% agree that the violence is justified, with 47.7% of women in the age group of 15-19 saying that the husband had a right to beat his wife. Domestic violence in middle and upper class homes is often kept under wraps so that the family name is not undermined.



Women who have been exposed to their mothers being abused, or who lack economic means, go to great lengths to justify staying on in abusive marriages or relationships. He is a good provider; he only gets this way when he drinks; I am also to blame are some of the excuses women give to avoid making a break.

We have very few domestic abuse counsellors in India, and the police, who are the first port of call for a victim, often do little more than warn the husband and then send the woman back to the abusive home. This has often

proved dangerous in many ways. The abused woman suffers serious health problems, sleep and eating disorders, mental trauma and even suicidal impulses. In the worst case scenarios, she is killed or maimed.

One avenue to help women, especially those who live in the rural areas, is the panchayats. However, studies by the International Centre for Research on Women show that women do not approach the panchayat as an institution, but would rather go to the sarpanch in a personal capacity.

Kargil redefined Delhi-Washington ties

For the first time, US publicly sided with India against Pakistani aggression

The Kargil war was a seminal turning point in American foreign policy with India. President Bill Clinton's diplomatic intervention in the war, and his high-stakes summit with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, set the stage for Clinton's visit a year later to India - the first by an American President in over 20 years - and for the warm engagement between Washington and New Delhi, which has persisted till today. Before the Kargil incursion, the United States (US) was preoccupied with non-proliferation concerns in South Asia, especially after the Indian nuclear tests. Strobe Talbott's dialogue with Jaswant Singh was an important channel of communications, but it was devoted to curbs on nuclear weapons almost entirely. The

focus was on securing India's adherence to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

When the US determined that Pakistan had deliberately violated the Line of Control (LoC) near Kargil, Clinton did not hesitate to blame Pakistan for risking a broader war. For the first time, an American administration was siding publicly with India against Pakistani aggression. The Pakistani generals who had planned the Kargil incursion, led by Pervez Musharraf, had badly misread the likely American reaction. Sharif insisted on a summit in Washington with Clinton on July 4, 1999. Clinton was adamant that Pakistani troops had to withdraw to their old positions behind the LoC. If not, Washington would blame Pakistan for the war. He warned

Sharif that he would also speak out about Pakistan's coddling of al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.

The American intelligence community had told the President that Pakistan was flirting with nuclear war. It was perhaps the most important and intense meeting of his presidency. The normally soft negotiator who usually sought compromise was tough and firm. I had never seen him more concentrated.

The outcome of the Kargil war altered the substance of the Talbott mission. The focus moved to conflict prevention. The Musharraf coup that ousted Sharif reinforced the new direction of the Indo-American dialogue. The stage was set for Clinton's multi-day trip to India and his few hours in Islamabad. The contrast was striking. Clinton's



trip to India not only broke the decades-old famine of presidential travel to India; his two successors followed in his steps and visited India. The security dialogue between Washington and New Delhi has deepened and strengthened enormously. The current administration has also committed to a strong relationship with India, but is so dysfunctional that it has been largely absent from the subcontinent. Clinton came into office in 1993 determined to rebuild the US' relations with

India, which had been in disrepair since the mid 1960s. Like his predecessor and idol, John F Kennedy, Clinton believed India was bound to be a major power in the future - and a democratic one as well. He was determined to visit India, but a succession of short-lived governments in New Delhi and the distraction of other events kept the trip from happening. The nuclear tests in May 1998, first by India and then by Pakistan, seemed to be the final blow to the President's plans.

A little-known story of Nepal's Sikh connection

The story of Sikh transporters is legendary in Nepal. In the early 1950s, hailing from the Jammu region, many of them personally navigated the newly laid tracks of the Tribhuvan Highway, and crossed rivers to haul their trucks to Kathmandu. They also started the first public bus service in the country, and have been active in the setting up of modern schools in the country.

Nepal has a small but a vibrant Sikh community that is best known for its role as transporters, who opened Nepal to the modern world. Not many, though, know that Nepal's Sikh heritage dates to Guru Nanak Dev, who travelled through Nepal during his third udasi.

Marking his sojourn in Kathmandu is Nanak Math, which has a peepul tree marking the exact spot where Guru Saheb meditated. The math, like a few other shrines in Kathmandu, is linked to the Udasi tradition and has a mahant presiding over it. The shrine is not well-known and remains neglected; this prompted author Desmond Doig to call it the "forgotten shrine of the Sikhs". Nepal also boasts several handwritten copies of the Guru Granth Sahib, including a couple in the Pashupatinath Temple complex.

The Sikh connection with Nepal developed during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh when the armies of the Sikh and Gorkha

courts fought inconclusively in the Kangra region. The valour of the Gorkhas led the Lahore Court to recruit them. Even today, Nepalese serving in the Indian Army are colloquially referred to as "Lahureys".

Later, when Maharani Jind Kaur escaped from the British, she came to Nepal and lived in the country for several years. Accompanying her was a large body of Sikhs. When she left Nepal, many of them settled down in the area around Nepalgunj, bordering Uttar Pradesh. Retaining their Sikh identity, including wearing unshorn hair and maintaining gurudwaras in the villages of their concentration, they are a community largely missing in the annals of the Sikh diaspora.

In modern times, Sikhs have played pioneering roles in Nepal not only as transporters but also as engineers, doctors, police officers, teachers, educationists, pilots, and even as fashion designers. Indeed, the person

credited with laying the first drinking water pipes in Kathmandu was a Sikh, Manohar Singh. And, of course, by setting up the first restaurants, they paved the way for popularising Punjabi cuisine in Nepal.

The story of Sikh transporters is legendary in Nepal. In the early 1950s, hailing from the Jammu region, many of them personally navigated the newly laid tracks of the Tribhuvan Highway, and crossed rivers to haul their trucks to Kathmandu. They also started the first public bus service in the country, and have been active in the setting up of modern schools in the country.

The Sikh community in Nepal in the 1980s totaled more than a few thousand and built a grand gurudwara in Kathmandu's Kupondole neighbourhood, apart from smaller gurudwaras in Birgunj, Nepalgunj and Krishnanagar. It is further enriched by Nepalis like Sardar Gurbaksh Singh embracing Sikhism.



India's diplomatic ties with Nepal also have a strong Sikh connection with Sardar Surjit Singh Majithia being the first ambassador and establishing the embassy in 1947. His arrival and departure, by air, saw the first uses of the landing strip that is now the runway at Tribhuvan International Airport. As we celebrate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev,

the Sikh connection of Nepal will be further strengthened as Nepal has started minting three commemorative coins - two in silver with denomination of Nepali Rupees 2,500 and 1,000 and a cupronickel coin with a face value of Nepali Rupees 100 - to be launched on this auspicious occasion. Nepal is one of few countries issuing legal tender featuring a Sikh connection.

Morning mantras: Your ideal morning ritual

Irrespective of what time you wake up, here's what nutritionists, fitness experts and dermatologists advise for a healthier, and more beautiful, you

What's one of the first life lessons that's drilled into us in our growing up years? "Early to bed and early to rise makes one healthy, wealthy and wise." We repeat it as a mantra, as we roll bleary-eyed out of bed and rush to make it to class in time through the long years of school, college and university life. And then stop short as we enter the professional world and realise that while this mantra may once have been true, it doesn't work anymore. The "nine-to-five" office clock has long since stopped working and with it the "early to rise, early to bed..." life.

So what happens to the diligent yoga/workout-healthy breakfast routine that we have been told makes for the ideal morning ritual?

No, a late start to the day is not the end of your healthy lifestyle. As pilates master instructor Yasmin Karachiwala says, "In today's world we live very hectic and very different lives and you cannot say this is the best time to work out, because what is the best time for you, may not necessarily work for me."

So whether you wake up at 7am or earlier, or at 9am (just in time to rush to work), or slumber for longer, here's what experts recommend for an ideal healthy morning routine.

Text: Poulomi Banerjee

Experts consulted: Nutritionists Kavita Devgan & Neha Arora, Pilates Master Instructor Yasmin Karachiwala,

Fitness Trainer Kamal Singh and Dermatologist Asheena Mehra

A healthy diet that's not so healthy



Have 10 glasses of water every day. Salads are good for health and help lose weight. No carbs or zero cholesterol, means a great diet. There are so many 'healthy dietary habits' that we all follow religiously. But do they really work? HT talks to nutritionists Kavita Devgan and Neha Arora, to bust a few food myths. Here's what they say: Salad dressing should be totally fat-free Not true. Salad veggies are a good source of nutrients. But these are better absorbed with a little help from fat. No, don't drown your veggies in oil or high-cheese or mayonnaise dressing. A drizzle of olive oil will do. Or mix some low-fat cheese, nuts or seeds with the greens. A

cholesterol-free label means healthy food

Zero cholesterol won't help one bit if the food is rich in saturated fatty acids or trans fatty acids, which may raise blood cholesterol. Pickles are not rich in calories With the amount of oil (read calories) and salt used in pickles for preservation, you couldn't be more wrong. So try a mint and coriander chutney with low salt instead.

Missing one meal a day will help you lose weight

Myth! Not only will your body crave more, leading to overeating later, your metabolism will slow down in a panic attack, to conserve the available energy. The result? A sluggish, exhausted body.

FOR EARLY RISERS

Diet

- Start the day with a glass of water. It cleanses the system, unclogs the gut, flushes out toxins from the body, and boosts metabolism. Next, drink a glass of warm water and lemon juice. Or warm water with kari patta to flush out toxins.
- Eating a date or two early in the morning is a great idea. They don't overwhelm the stomach after the night-long fast, they activate the release of digestive secretions and prepare the stomach for food.
- Breakfast should include some fruit and protein. A protein-rich breakfast keeps hunger at bay for longer. So if you are non-vegetarian, have an egg. Vegetarians can go for paneer, tofu or even a protein shake.

Fitness

- Take in the sun for some Vitamin D.
- Do some cardiovascular exercise, like walking, jogging or cycling.
- Push-ups, pull-ups and squats strengthen the muscles after sleep and planks, the core.
- Don't do any forward-bending exercise on waking up as it may hurt the back.

Skincare (15-minute routine)

- Clean your face with a gentle cleanser.
- Follow with a skin toner, to shrink the pores, deliver antioxidants and vitamin B derivatives. Antioxidant serums help in neutralising the damage from UV rays and pollutants.
- Moisturise to lock in hydration and maintain a protective layer. Apply a sunscreen which has both UVA and UVB blocking effects.

FOR LATE RISERS

Diet

- Drink a glass of plain water first thing in the morning. If you don't have time for lemon water or kari patta water, at least switch your normal cup of tea with green tea. It has antioxidants which are good for the body and also help burn fat.
- Have some dates and a few nuts – almonds or walnuts – mixed with seeds, such as sunflower, pumpkin or flax seeds.
- Don't skip breakfast.
- If you don't have time to have both fruit and protein in the morning, you can have the fruit and nuts as a mid-morning snack.

Fitness

- Spend just 10-15 minutes on a workout to ensure overall fitness.
- Do a combination of cardiovascular exercise (skipping, spot jogging or jumps), with some squats, push-ups and abdominal curls and planks. You can do some weights to tone the arms. All this can be done at home.

Skincare (5-minute routine)

- Clean, moisturise and apply a sunscreen and you are ready for the day.

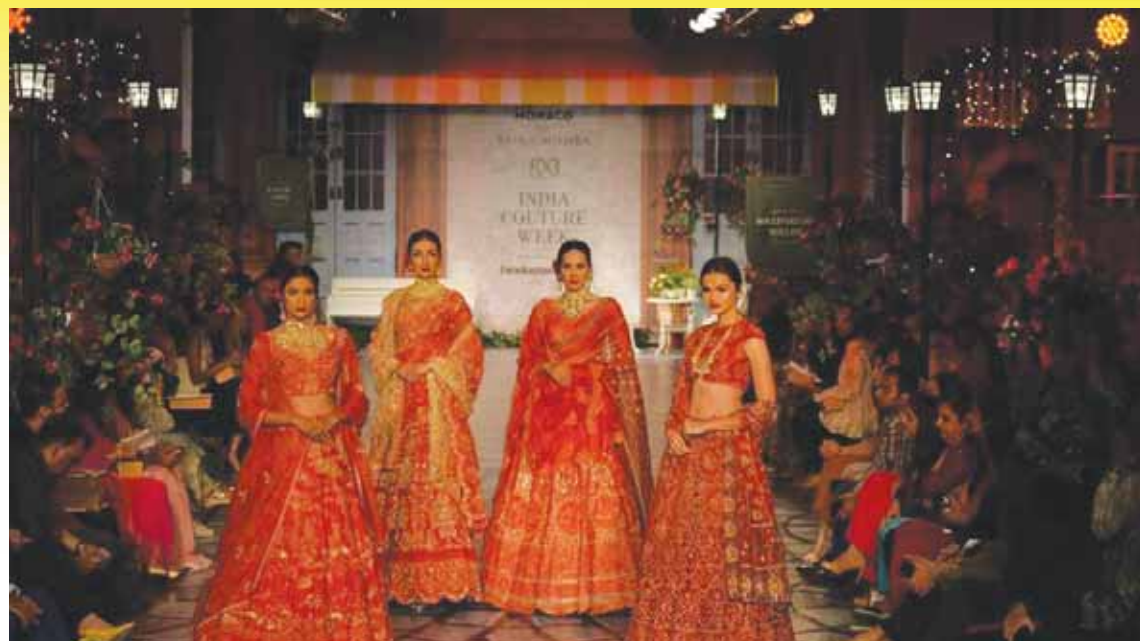
India Couture Week 2019: Rahul Mishra showcases his collection

On the third day of India Couture Week 2019 Rahul Mishra presented his collection, comprising lehengas enriched with a dense play of florals, blended with architectural elements in a subdued form.



Ace designer Rahul Mishra enthralled everyone with his annual couture collection on the third day of the FDCI India Couture Week (ICW) 2019 on Wednesday. The ensemble was inspired by his recent trip to Monaco and his childhood memories of a village in Uttar Pradesh. The set for the show

was created to look like the streets of Monaco, surrounded by European facades and lush foliage that continued into the garments that the models walk in. The International Woolmark Prize winner showcased the collection which was in continuation with his autumn/winter 2019 couture collection at



Paris Fashion Week -- but with Indian influences. "It was a new journey for me to showcase a short western dress that I showcased at Paris into something which fits to the Indian couture idea -- say a 'gherdaar' lehenga. We have been working on the collection since November," Mishra told reporters here. He has used Indian silhouettes with a dense play of florals motifs weaved with

intricate multi-colour hand embroideries, three-dimensional hand embroideries and appliques. There were lehengas, anarkalis with jackets, sarees with dupattas and gowns, and kurta-churidaar with intricate hand embroidered nehru jackets, rendered in silk organzas, silk crepe and muga silk with shimmering, glossy texture. The entire collection was set on ivory and pastels colours that took

over to gold, yellow, navy and peaches. The designer also showcased quintessential red bridal lehenga with zardozi work. "For men and women, I don't see any difference in terms of the motifs used. Similar kind of motifs goes for both the genders. I'm now experimenting with the silhouettes. I find it very stereotype that a particular kind of silhouette is for the men and another for women."

ICW 2019: Designer Suneet Varma celebrates 'light within'

India Couture Week 2019: Suneet Varma used Indian silhouettes, traditional motifs and applique on a wide range of fabrics like satin, silk, net and georgette.



For ace couturier Suneet Varma, every person has got a "light within" which makes them unique. Drawing inspiration from these energies, the designer curated his latest collection titled "Amara", showcased on the second day of the FDCI India Couture Week in association with Hindustan Times on Tuesday.

"Amara' means the light within. I have met a lot of people over the course of work in this industry in the last 31 years. The more people I meet, the more girls I dress, my believe that there is light within everyone gets stronger. Some of them are aware of it, and a lot of people don't know this. I am more interested in the light that is within

a bride. "

Varma presented 52 pieces, including lehengas, sarees as well as contemporary wears with bead work, Swarovski crystals, mirror work and intricate hand embroidery. He has used Indian silhouettes, traditional motifs and applique on a wide range of fabrics like satin, silk, net and georgette. Ivory, beige and icy



pink dominated the ensemble. Dark shades of midnight blue and burgundy with silver accents were used. Ditching too much of red or dark navy blue which the designer has used in the past, there were hues of green, light blue and gold. Varma said the idea was to create beautiful clothing, not

necessarily only traditional as people today are more open about fashion, and are addressing and talking about it. "For me everything should come from the heart. It cannot be about the colour of the season or what would sell, and is commercial. It will sell regardless. I have to be happy with what I do," he said.

The Lion King movie review

The greatest visual effects spectacle since Avatar; a monument to Hollywood excess

The Lion King movie review: Disney's latest, big-budget remake is a narratively bankrupt, towering monument to Hollywood excess. It's also the greatest achievement in VFX since Avatar. Rating: 3/5.

The Lion King

Director - Jon Favreau

Cast - Donald Glover, Beyonce Knowles-Carter, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Seth Rogen, Billy Eichner, John Oliver, James Earl Jones

Rating - 3/5

The new Lion King is like a deeply triggering and very expensive episode of Planet Earth narrated by Childish Gambino, here to traumatise a whole new generation of viewers. Falsely described as a live-action remake, the film is, more accurately, a photorealistic animated demo reel for times to come, when actors and emotion are rendered obsolete, and our entertainment needs are facilitated by one corporation trapped in a circle of life of its own making.

For a film that exists purely to make money, it is narratively bankrupt - a shot-for-shot remake of a universally beloved classic that is ironically less

affecting, despite aiming for realism, than the cartoon that inspired it. The story is still engaging, though, but it always has been, ever since it was called Hamlet. The new Lion King, I'm afraid, is tonally and visually similar to director Jon Favreau's remake of The Jungle Book - a quasi-realistic fantasy in which animals (sort of) talk, but display none of the magic this very basic concept of talking animals demands.

That being said, The Lion King is perhaps the greatest achievement in visual effects storytelling since Avatar - and distractingly so. As I understand, no live-action photography took place in the African savanna, but for the first time ever, I couldn't tell what was real and what was computer-generated.

The Lion King script, now credited to veteran Disney scribe Jeff Nathanson, hits the exact same beats, but with an unmistakable

deadness in the eye. Simba is born, he's introduced to Pride Lands, taught lessons in honour and legacy by his father, Mufasa. When Mufasa is killed in a wildebeest stampede, young Simba is banished from the land by his evil uncle Scar, and is raised by a group of jolly animals, until years later, he is summoned back to claim what is rightfully his, and save the kingdom from Scar's torment.

The cast, it must be said, is very good; especially Donald Glover as the adult Simba (who only arrives an hour into the film) and Chiwetel Ejiofor, who had the unenviable task of filling Jeremy Irons' shoes as Scar. But I was pleasantly surprised by how seamless the Hindi dub, lead by Shah Rukh Khan and his son Aryan was. Shah Rukh brings an incredible gravitas to the role of Mufasa, and his stardom seeps through the ones and zeroes of his



formidable CGI character.

Curiously for a film that is so heavily dependent on its visuals, the musical numbers that were such a delight in the original Lion King are easily the most boring aspects of the remake. Instead of frolicking about in a Hula skirt or swinging from jungle vines, nearly all of Timon and Pumbaa's song sequences involve interminably long walks. Sometimes they jog. And for some baffling reason (I'll bet it was to do with the animation), the song Can You Feel the Love Tonight has been set in the daytime, which is, as you'd agree, a slap in the face of its title. But such is the power of

Beyonce's vocals, I guess. Besides utterly overwhelming poor Donald Glover, whose voice is reduced to mere background noise, they can successfully alter the time of day, in spite of lyrics that include words such as 'evening' and 'twilight'. As an experiment, try watching some of these musical numbers (they're available on YouTube) with the volume turned off, and you'd notice this strange lack of flair, especially because the facial animation, despite everyone's best efforts, is still quite iffy. It's certainly less expressive than Andy Serkis' recent Netflix film, Mowgli.

Jhootha Kahin Ka movie review

Rishi Kapoor is wasted in a flat farce



Jhootha Kahin Ka movie review: In director Smeep Kang's comedy of errors starring Rishi Kapoor, Omkar Kapoor and Sunny Singh, the treatment and the performances somehow feel dirty.

Jhootha Kahin Ka

Cast: Rishi Kapoor, Sunny Singh, Omkar Kapoor, Jimmy Shergill

Director: Smeep Kang

Rating: 1/5

In the 90s, David Dhawan made atrocious comedies about the most inappropriate subjects. For instance, if I remember correctly, Dhawan made three different films about a man having to juggle two wives, with fidelity being the gag - I say three, there may well have been more. Yet even this bawdy premise was rendered mostly innocuous

thanks to preposterously unsalacious leading men like Govinda and gifted actors like Anil Kapoor, making the film play out like a tasteless joke. A tasteless but often funny joke.

Jhootha Kahin Ka, directed by Smeep Kang, is the opposite of those films. True to its title, the film is about several men basing their lives on abject lies, but while the subject matter - a comedy of convoluted errors - isn't shameful, the treatment and the performances feel somehow dirty. When a man repeatedly snarls at his wife, accusing her

of having affairs and declaring that his daughter can't be his own, it shows a meanness of spirit that does not belong in comedy. Equally out of place in a comedy are actors like Omkar Kapoor, ostensibly this film's leading man - a young fellow given to far too much ham (who, ironically enough, was a child actor in some of those David Dhawan comedies). The film is about Kapoor's character, Varun, lying to a girl, her parents and his father in order to get married under false pretences, while his friend, Karan (Sunny Singh) lies to a girl, her parents and his brother in order to get married under false pretences. The lies double up and while there could have been some hijinks in this situation of crossed-wires, the all-out chaos here involves lesser

confusion for the characters than for the writers and, eventually, the few of us viewing this film. Rishi Kapoor stars as Varun's father, a retired policeman who lies about the amount of land he owns, and while the veteran appears to have visibly refused to read the bad-acting memo, he can't do much with the numbskulls around him. Still, the actor pretends this is a real movie, conjuring up little moments like humming songs from Padosan sternly, as if scolding himself to remember the lyrics, with an eye on the house next door. There are a few good performers - the always-entertaining Jimmy Shergill shows up in an orange kurta-pyjama meant to stand in for a prison jumpsuit, Lilette Dubey stays graceful in a thanklessly

written role full of double entendres, and it's grand to see Rakesh Bedi find some laughs - but the old guard doesn't have enough room to save this show. Singh plays Karan relatively straight, in refreshing contrast to Kapoor who rushes through too many expressions, but the boys are given vacuous heroines with no discernible personalities, and the film's mounting chaos is never sufficiently clever, interesting or even twisted beyond predictability. This is a film in which a girl teaches French using oversized alarm clocks and pineapples, a film where a father sings a peppy song about the looseness of his son's character, but, most of all, this is a film where nothing seems to matter.

Aishwarya Rai confirms she is working with her 'guru' Mani Ratnam in his magnum opus Ponniyin Selvan

Aishwarya Rai, who was at an event in Chennai recently, spoke about doing Mani Ratnam's next, based Tamil classic called Ponniyin Selvan, and her special relationship with 'her guru'.

Actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, who was last seen in Fanney?Khan, will soon begin working in Mani Ratnam's ambitious new film, Ponniyin Selvan. The actor, who was in Chennai for an event, also spoke about her special relationship with the ace Tamil director.

Confirming the news about her participation in the film, she was quoted in The Hindu as saying: "I will confirm that I am doing the film. I am on

this journey with

guru. I started my first film ever (Iruvar) with him, and even though there's such warmth and familiarity in our professional relationship today, it's his wish to share details with the world whenever he chooses to."

Ponniyin Selvan (Son of Kaveri) is a popular Tamil classic, written by Kalki Krishnamurthy and is based on the early life of Chola ruler, Rajaraja Chola I, who was born as Arulmozhi Varman. Aishwarya is rumoured to be playing his wife, and an antagonist in the film. The film will have an ensemble cast including Vikram, Karthi, Jayam Ravi and Amala Paul. Aishwarya, who started her film career with Mani Ratnam's Iruvar, has worked with the ace director in films like Raavan and Guru in the past.

The actor was in the US on a vacation with husband Abhishek Bachchan and daughter Aaradhya. Pictures of their meeting with Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Singh in New York and family dinner with her sister-in-law Shweta Bachchan Nanda's daughter Navya Naveli in the Big Apple were eagerly lapped up by her many fans.

him, and it will be an honour to be a part of anything Mani chooses to do ever."

"I don't think it will be fair to override Mani sir and speak about the project. He's my

Aishwarya Rai

Kiara Advani says her name is inspired by Priyanka Chopra's character in Anjana Anjani



Kiara Advani has revealed the reason why he chose 'Kiara' as her name when she made her debut in Bollywood.

It is not a secret that Kiara Advani's birth name was Alia. Now, in a recent interview to Filmfare, the actor has revealed the reason behind changing it and what inspired the new name. "My name has been Kiara since my debut in 2014. I didn't want to confuse the audience with Alia Bhatt, an established superstar. It just felt like the right thing to do - to have your own identity. Why have two Alia's? The name, Kiara, was inspired from

Priyanka Chopra's movie Anjana Anjani, where she introduces herself as, 'Hi, I'm Kiara.' I thought, 'What a beautiful name. If I have a daughter, I'll call her Kiara'. But before that I needed a name for myself. (Smiles) So, I took it on," she said in the interview. Earlier on an episode of Voot's Feet Up with the Stars Season 2, Kiara said it was Salman Khan who advised her to change her name. "Alia is my first name. Salman Khan suggested me to change it because of Alia Bhatt because there can't be two actresses with the same name in Bollywood,"

Kiara said. "He suggested the change, but Kiara is the name that I chose. Now even my parents have started to call me Kiara," she added. Kiara and Alia recently starred together in Kalank. The film was a flop at the box office. But Kiara has a lot to celebrate. Her latest film Kabir Singh is now the most successful Hindi film of the year, with the box office collection of Rs 270 crore in one month. In a lengthy Instagram post, Kiara thanked the team and the audience for believing in Kabir and Preeti's love story.

Kriti Sanon wishes to shoot a film abroad, wants 'to wear hot pants and look glamorous'



Actor Kriti Sanon is back as a small-town girl in her next, Arjun Patiala, which is set to hit theatres this Friday. The actor has said that after consecutively playing a small-town character, she now wants to play a glamorous role and go abroad for the shoot.

Talking about how she was flooded with offers of small-town characters post her 2017 film, Bareilly Ki Barfi, Kriti told Bombay Times in an interview, "I recently told someone, 'Yaar, main shooting ke liye kaafi time se baahar nahi gayi hoon, I am doing the rounds of Lucknow, Gwalior, Mathura, and Chandigarh. I would love to

shoot a film with a great script abroad, in which I get to wear hot pants and look glamorous. That's not happened in a while for me."

Kriti also spoke about female actors not being given enough credit for the success of the film. Talking about how male actors are named in headlines, she said, "Even if you didn't like my performance or want to criticise me, please write about it. I would love that feedback." She is now playing a crime reporter in Arjun Patiala that stars Diljit Dosanjh and Varun Sharma as male protagonists. Day before the film's release, Kriti has now shared a video to promote the film.

Love Island USA

Zac and Elizabeth go on their first real date, while Eric keeps pursuing Kyra before TWO newcomers are booted from the island



Love Island USA's first official couple - Zac and Elizabeth - finally get some alone time with their first date outside of the villa on Wednesday's new episode.

While they leave the villa to spend some quality time together, Eric continues his aggressive pursuit of Kyra, though he was in danger of elimination due to the fan vote at the end of Tuesday's episode.

At the end of the episode, two newcomers - Marli and George - were sent home, ahead of Thursday's re-coupling which could really shake things up and leave one guy single and vulnerable for elimination.

Last night, Eric tells Kyra how he feels says 'missed connections are a tragedy.'

Kyra chats with Elizabeth and Caro about Eric, tells them he doesn't care, adding, 'He's coming on strong. He's not putting on a front.'

Kyra awkwardly says that Elizabeth looks like a doll which kinda weirds her out.

'I was put on a journey just now and he knows exactly what he's doing and that's scary,' Kyra adds.

Caro in confession talks about Eric, stating, 'Do i wanna be with a guy who puts out that spice with everyone?'

Kyra adds, 'He's testing the waters with everyone he's interest in and that's what every

guy should have done.'

Weston takes Kelsey alone and she's scared he's gonna tell her something bad. Kelsey says 'I'm not connecting with anyone on a level i'm connecting with you on.'

Kelsey says she doesn't date guys like him but she is really attracted to her. Weston says he's not feeling that with Katrina cause she's so reserved.

Katrina walks by and they stop holding hands. Says he's kinda touching her butt and she's gonna have to deal with it and she smiles.

Kyra chats with Cashel and he gets kinda pissed. Kyra rolls over and goes to bed.

Weston says he wants to make sure Katrina is fine in middle of the night but she insists she's fine.

Next morning everyone working out. Time for a big reveal, with Marli stating, 'It's time for America to see my missing eyebrow.'

Dylan chats with Weston and Cashel. Weston says 'I'm in a giant pickle. It's not a bad thing to be in but it's a really tough decision.'

Katrina chats with George, George says he's on the same page.



Karrueche Tran is spot on in leopard print mini dress while BFF Christina Milian stuns in red at Warner Media Summer 2019 TCA afterparty

They were celebrating after a day of panels on the hottest upcoming film and television products.

Karrueche Tran, 31, nearly stole the show at the Warner Media TCA afterparty in Beverly Hills on Wednesday in her leopard print mini dress.

Also causing a stir at the swanky get-together was Christina Milian, 37, who flaunted her curves in a stunning red and blue dress.

Karrueche put her elegantly toned arms and legs on display with her short animal print dress, which was held up by dainty spaghetti straps.

She had on a vibrant pair of

pointy metallic pink heels with straps around her ankles.

The 5ft11in actress had her brunette tresses styled straight and parted down the middle as her locks rested gently over one shoulder.

She added some flash with a pair of gold hoop earrings and a pair of gold rings with unusual tassels, as well as a gold luxury wristwatch.

She enjoyed a tasty cocktail underneath an inflatable moon in the party's courtyard

Christina highlighted her curves in a figure-hugging coral dress covered in blue flower designs.

The off-the-shoulder outfit wrapped around her cleavage

and featured a single strap of fabric running past her neck.

The singer had her dark locks straight and parted down the middle, framing her extra large hoops.

She completed the look with a reserved pair of beige open-toe heels.

She and Karrueche compared the looks while posing next to each other.

Niecy Nash put her prominent cleavage on display with a low-cut scarlet jumpsuit.

The suit's baggy legs reached all the way to the ground, completely obscuring her footwear.

The Reno 911! star showed off a winning smile, which was framed



by a large pair of gold hoop earrings.

She wore her caramel-colored locks in straight feathered waves and had her face elegantly made-

up.

Joining her was Oscar-winner Regina King, who wore a black suit and had long purple-tinged braids.

Time to end the charade around Hafiz Saeed



(News Agencies) - It is time to end the charade around Mumbai attack mastermind and Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) founder, Hafiz Saeed. For too long, both Pakistan and the United States have played games around a man who openly espouses terror and exports his mercenaries to

India. His arrest on Wednesday - for the eighth time since 2001 and for the sixth time since the Mumbai terror strike in 2008 - is a sham, just as his previous detentions were. Saeed, who likes to call himself a professor, has been giving open calls for jihad against

India and the US and it was quite bemusing to read the tweet posted by President Donald Trump.

"After a ten year search, the so-called 'mastermind' of the Mumbai Terror attacks has been arrested in Pakistan.

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90 years later, India must send Simon back



(News Agencies) - In 1928, the Simon Commission, established to study the working of the Government of India Act, 1919, and recommend constitutional reforms, visited India. The ignominy of a seven-member panel, solely comprising British Members of Parliament (MPs), and headed by John Simon, MP from an obscure hamlet in Yorkshire, was not lost on Indian nationalists. Throughout 1928, cries of "Simon, Go Back" rang out in every city which the Commission visited. While the Commission did go back, it was not before reinforcing the basic legal framework of British governance in India - carefully representative provincial governments under the suzerainty of the Viceroy, implementing laws that had been enacted by the British for India. Today, while India is sovereign and governed by its own Constitution, Simon's basic framework remains - an imperfect Union of Centre and states where, by a recent law commission estimate, over 250 British laws continue to govern the lives of citizens.

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US nearly doubles cost of 'visas for millionaires'



(News Agencies)- US visas under an employment generation programme for wealthy foreigners that can lead to citizenship will cost more starting Wednesday with standard minimum investment going up from \$1 million to \$1.8 million, and from \$500,000 to \$900,000 in certain designated areas.

The EB-5 visas, which have also been called "visas for millionaires", are popular among rich Indians and those who can afford it to scale up from H-1B visa for highly skilled professionals, according to immigration companies that have been pushing it in India in recent years.

The United States grants 10,000 such visa every year and there is a cap on the number that can go to nationals of any one country. Immigration lawyers said this visa type is very popular with those born in China, Vietnam and India, with wait times of 14, 7 and 6 years for them respectively.

Under the EB-5 program, foreign nationals can apply for conditional lawful permanent residence in the United States in return for necessary investments in a commercial enterprise in the United States and "create or, in certain

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Farewell, Sheila Dikshit

Delhi will remember her with fondness and gratitude



(News Agencies) - Sheila Dikshit, who served as the chief minister (CM) of Delhi for an uninterrupted 15 years, passed away on Saturday. A towering figure in the Congress, Dikshit's political socialisation happened at home. Her father-in-law, Uma Shankar Dikshit, was a close associate of Indira Gandhi, and had served in her Cabinet. And so when Dikshit chose to enter politics, she had the advantage of access to the party's top leadership. When Rajiv Gandhi won a historic mandate in 1984, Dikshit -- elected

to the Lok Sabha from Uttar Pradesh's Kannauj -- served as his minister of state for parliamentary affairs, which helped her build links across party lines. But Dikshit really came in to her own when she took over as Delhi's CM in 1998. It was a challenging context. Externally, the Bharatiya Janata Party was in power at the Centre. And given Delhi's unique constitutional status, its autonomy was constrained and the local government was dependent on harmonious ties with the Centre.

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