



The South Asian

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Kate Murray running for
Hempstead Town Clerk



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Christchurch Attack

9 Indian-origin people missing after shootings that killed 49

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An election that will shape India



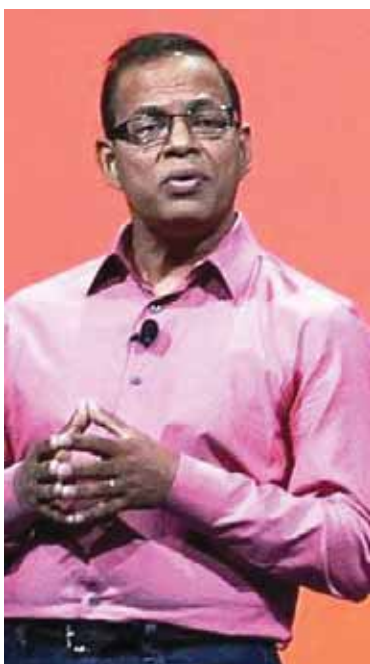
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*'I didn't call Trump
back and it's one of
the best decisions I
ever made'*
Preet Bharara

(Page 19)



Google paid \$45 million to its former India-born executive accused of sexual misconduct



The previously undisclosed amount was in the separation agreement for Mr. Singhal, a senior vice-president who ran Google's search operations until early 2016.

(By a Staff Reporter) Tech titan Google agreed to pay its former India-born top executive Amit Singhal a whopping \$45 million as an exit package when he resigned from the company in 2016 after being accused of sexual harassment, according to a media report.

The previously undisclosed amount was in the separation agreement for Mr. Singhal, a senior vice-president
(Contd. on page 19)



**Ocasio-Cortez, her
chief of staff illegally
moved in campaign
contributions
'off the books,'**

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FIRST ANNUAL NJ DEVILS SIKH HERITAGE DAY

SAVA and Sikhs of NY Sponsor Celebration of Sikh Heritage



(By - Jasjit Singh Bindra) New York, NJ - The first annual NJ Devils Sikh Heritage Day was hosted on February 9th, 2019 at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey and was sponsored by two national Sikh organizations- Sikhs of NY and Sikh American Veterans Alliance (SAVA), a non-profit dedicated to promoting diversity, equality, religious freedom and inclusion in the military. "The program honored the work and service of Mayor Ravi Singh Bhalla, the first turbaned Sikh Mayor in the U.S., and LTC Kamal Singh Kalsi, the first Sikh to be granted an accommodation to wear his religiously mandated turban and beard in the military," said Jasjit Singh Bindra, one of the event organizers. "It is a great opportunity to bring awareness about Sikhs and educate who we are" said Ravi Singh Bhalla, Mayor of Hoboken. "A turban represents love, peace and equality and Sikh wear it with pride. It was special seeing turbans being tied to the wider community, as it not only represents Sikh faith but also American traditions" The NJ Devils event was an opportunity to highlight the Sikh turban, identity and culture. Sikhs of New York's founder Chanpreet Singh proudly announced

that over 800 bright red Devil turbans were tied on fans that day. "It's an opportunity for us to de-mystify the turban for the broader American public." The event featured Bhangra, a traditional Punjabi dance, by PBA Bhangra Group, a percussion performance by the Nagara drum group and red turbans on MSG's national broadcast. NJ Devils welcomed Sikhs to come and celebrate their heritage with the wider community and became a part by donning the red colored turbans. "We're honored to be part of the first Sikh Heritage Day with the NJ Devils! It's our mission to drive diversity and inclusion while growing new fans for the game as well. This day was quite special for the organization and we look forward to growing the night next year!", said Justin Ragone, NJ Devils Account executive for Group Events. "As part of our effort to increase diversity in our national security systems, we believe it is also important to promote understanding of our Sikh heritage," said LTC Kamal Singh Kalsi. "Our partnership with Sikhs of NY to launch this celebration of our identity allows the broader community to get an insight into Sikh life. In the coming years, we hope to take this spirit of connecting through culture and

history to other states and regions throughout the country." Sikhism is the world's 5th largest religion and as a monotheistic faith that is focused on service, Sikhs have traditionally gravitated towards military and police careers. "It took years of advocacy and policy work to open doors in the Army, and SAVA is focused on now opening doors in the US Air Force and

other branches of the military," said Geena Kaur Sidhu, a young Petty Officer in the U.S. Navy and active member of SAVA. SAVA's mission is to promote Sikh military history and service while advancing diversity throughout the national security system. SAVA is working closely with the U.S. Air Force and other branches of the military to ensure Sikh soldiers can practice their faith

freely. Sikhs of NY aims to bring a modern approach to establishing the Sikh identity in the United States. A blend of traditions, cultures and beliefs together represents the ideology of Sikhs of NY. It organizes the popular Turban Day annually at Times Square, NY to bring awareness among all Americans about Sikhism. "We are looking forward to make it bigger and better next year."





(By our staff reporter) American Telugu Association, ATA, a 28 year old Telugu organization serving the interests of Telugu people across North America celebrated Women's day weekend with much fervor & gusto. International Women's Day Celebrations were held on a grandeur scale with events across Washington DC, New Jersey, Delaware, Detroit, Nashville, Austin, Dallas and Raleigh areas. Women's day theme concept of #BetterforBalance focused primarily on addressing the immediate needs and challenges of modern day Indian women and how to strike a balance between eastern and western cultures. Scores of saree clad Indian women enjoyed the festivities across various cities. Fashion shows and thought provoking discussions enthralled the audiences. Sumptuous lunch with various delicacies from both the Telugu states was served.

International Women's Day celebrated at The Consulate General of India



(By our staff reporter) -The event was graced by the presence of distinguished celebrity guests - National Award winning Bollywood actress Ms. Neetu Chandra, popular TV host and of Emmy award-winning show Equitrekking - Ms. Darley Newman, Mrs. Taruna Chakarborty, distinguished community member as well as more than 150 members from across the tri-state area majority of them women. The event marked the annual International women day by honoring women and their resilience and perseverance. Distinguished women addressed the gathering and shared their

experiences and struggles and what distinguished them and made them leaders. Consulate General of India, New York, Mr. Sandeep Chakravorty also graced the occasion and spoke about leadership in women and the need of equal rights.

Mrs. Sukhminder Kaur, Mrs. Sheetal Trivedi, Mrs. Arun Anand, and Mrs. Rina Shah were honored by the consulate general and FIA committee for their distinguished achievements and contributions to the society. FIA president Mr. Alok Kumar along with the FIA executive committee members, Chairman Ramesh Patel joined the felicitation of all celebrities, annual honorees including the all-women crew of Air India, along with Mrs. Bhouvna Rao, RM Americans for Air India.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale called on US Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo

(By our staff reporter) Washington DC-Embassy of India "Washington DC""They expressed satisfaction over the significant progress and the quality of the India-US Strategic Partnership since Secretary Pompeo's visit to India in September 2018 for the first ever Ministerial 2+2 Dialogue.""Foreign Secretary conveyed appreciation to the US

Government and to Secretary Pompeo personally for the firm support that India received from the US in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Pulwama, in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. He apprised Secretary Pompeo about recent developments in this regard.""Secretary Pompeo expressed his understanding of India's concerns regarding cross-border terrorism. They agreed

that Pakistan needs to take concerted action to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure and to deny safe haven to all terrorist groups in its territory. They also agreed that those who support or abet terrorism in any form should be held accountable.""Foreign Secretary and Secretary Pompeo also discussed other issues of mutual interest including Afghanistan and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific



region, and agreed to closely work together in this regard.""In response to Secretary Pompeo's reference to bilateral trade matters, Foreign Secretary underscored the significant reduction in trade deficit in the last three years and conveyed India's willingness to remain engaged with the U.S. for a meaningful and mutually acceptable package on trade issues.

Celebrating Ambassadors of Change for Children's Rights



(By our staff reporter)- CRY, Child Rights & You America [CRY America], a 501c3 non-profit that works towards ensuring underprivileged children their basic rights, hosted their Annual Gala Dinners across Houston, Long Island & New Jersey in March 2019 to bring people together for the cause of children's rights. The CRY Gala Dinners were organized in Houston on March 3 at the Marriott Town Square, on March 7 at the Hilton Melville, Long Island and on March 8 at the Crystal Plaza in Livingston, NJ. Speakers included New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, Houston Consul General Anupam Ray & Special Guest Tanishaa Mukerji who joined Shefali Sunderlal, President of CRY America, to amplify the voices of

underprivileged children. The 3 Gala's were attended by 800 guests and raised over \$260,000 which will be directed towards grass roots Projects working on critical children's issues. Apart from raising awareness for the cause, guests enjoyed the evening with dinner, cocktails, auctions, bollywood entertainment, music and dancing. Performances by Rhythm India in Houston, Kanushree Jain in Long Island and the Satrangi School of Dance in New Jersey added spark & were much appreciated by all the guests. Auction items donated by famous Indian artists included beautiful paintings by Late Badri Narayan, Solanki, Prakash Deshmukh, Datta Thombare,

Suresh Gulage, Sachin Sangare, Dinkar Jadhav, Anuradha Thakur; fashion ensembles donated by Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla, Anita Dongre; evening clutch bags donated by Sabyasachi; Jewelry donated by Sia Art Jewellery, Shillpa Purii; Cricket bats signed by Saurav Ganguly & Sehwag were popular and sold out quickly. Our Dinner Committees in each city played a key role in enabling sold out & successful events! We thank our event sponsors, donors & volunteers for their generous contributions. Event sponsors included BCB Indus American Bank, Navika Capital, Software People Inc, Moghul Caterers, Farmers Insurance, Enigma Salon, Mint, AMRINJ, KW NJ Metro Group, Objectwin, Vantive



Inc, Wisemen, Wells Fargo, Shipcom, Ailings, A&B Systems & KW Points North. A special shout out to the media for your ongoing support - TV Asia, Star TV, Hum Hindustani, Voice of Asia, Meena Dutt Radio, Indian Panorama, South Asian Times, South Asian Insider. Millions of children are denied their rights on a daily basis. CRY America works with grass-root Projects,

communities and local government bodies to ensure children have quality education, healthcare, and protection from child labor, child marriage and issues which hinder their development. Shefali Sunderlal says, "CRY America believes that "YOU" can empower children's dreams and be ambassadors of change for children's rights.

Nation Honors "Ekal Foundation" with Iconic 'Gandhi Peace Prize'



(By Prakash Waghmare)- New Delhi- "Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation (EVF)", the largest global organization dedicated to integrated village development in rural India was recently honored with the most prestigious National Award in India for social work. On February 26, "Ekal Abhiyan Trust" (Ekal's umbrella Orgz) was bestowed with 'Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize' for Yr. 2017 for its contributions in providing Education to rural & tribal children and for providing Empowerment

with gender social equality in remote parts of India. This prize is conferred by the Govt of India under the Chairmanship of Hon. Prime Minister, Chief Justice, leader of the largest opposition party and many others. The ceremony took place at the 'Rashtrapati Bhavan' in New Delhi and was graced by the Hon. President of India, Ram Nath Kovind as well as Hon Prime Minister N. Modi. On behalf of 'Ekal' the award from the Hon. President was received by M.L.

Jain, a senior trustee of 'Ekal Abhiyan'. This unique Honor carries a grant of Rs 1 Crore, a Citation and a Plaque to commemorate the distinction. This prize was instituted in 1995 on 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhito highlight his concept of 'Gram Swaraj Model'. In his laudatory message to "Ekal", PM Modi commended its efforts to give educational opportunity to children in tribal areas and empowering rural women-folks. Currently, "EVF" has been

supporting 82,000 Ekal-schools across Rural-tribal pockets of India and grooming almost 2.2 Million Children - more than half of which are girls. "Ekal" is empowering village folks, not only through adult education classes related to healthcare and environmental-issues, but also, by preparing them for cottage-industries with skill-development training. At this year's "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas" in Varanasi (India), Ekal Founder in Australia - Nihal Singh Agar - was honored

with 'Pravasi Bharatiya Sanman' Award by Hon President Ram Nath Kovind. Nihal Singh-ji has also been a recipient of prestigious "Order of Australia Award" in 2015. During 'Pravasi Bharatiya Divas', Ekal's Renu Gupta, who had been a Board Member & Chairperson of "Ekal-USA" and Dr Sudha Parikh, who had been ardent supporter of "Ekal Foundation" received 'She The Change - Nari Udyami Award' for their exemplary service to the community. The honor was given by 'Beti Shiksha Foundation' at an event presided over by the Governor of Uttarakhand. On March 1, EVF 'Founding Member', Ma. Shaymji Gupta was felicitated by "Kurukshetra University" with 'Goyal Peace Prize' for spreading education in remote areas (of India). It must also be noted that Ekal serves people without any credence to caste, creed, religion and regions and has presence even in conflict-ridden patches.



US Department of Homeland Security policy declaration workshop for supporting Global Entry Program was recently held at Albert Palace in interest of Indian community support. South Asian Insider has exclusive pictures from the event (Pictures by Vijay Shah)

US to deny visas for ICC members investigating alleged war crimes



(Insider bureru)- The United States has announced it will revoke or deny visas to members of the International Criminal Court involved in investigating the actions of US troops in Afghanistan or other countries. The US secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, said Washington was prepared to take further steps, including economic sanctions, if the war crimes court goes ahead with any investigations of US or allied personnel. "The ICC is attacking America's rule of law," Pompeo told reporters. "It's not too late for the court to change course and we urge that it do so immediately." The United States has never joined the ICC, where a prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, asked judges in November 2017 for authorization to open an investigation into alleged war crimes in Afghanistan.

Pompeo's announcement of visa restrictions was the first concrete action taken by the US against the ICC since the White House threatened reprisals against the Hague-based body in September. "I'm announcing a policy of US visa restrictions on those individuals directly responsible for any ICC investigation of US personnel," he said. This would include anyone who takes, or has taken, action to request or further an investigation, he told reporters. "If you're responsible for the proposed ICC investigation of US personnel in connection with the situation in Afghanistan you should not assume that you still have, or will get, a visa or that you will be permitted to enter the United States," Pompeo added.

The secretary of state said visas could also be withheld from ICC personnel involved in conducting probes of US allies, specifically Israel. Pompeo said "implementation" of the policy has already begun but he did not provide any details, citing confidentiality surrounding visa applications. "These visa restrictions will not be the end of our efforts," Pompeo said. "We're prepared to take additional steps, including economic sanctions, if the ICC does not change its course." The secretary of state said the US had declined to join the ICC "because of its broad unaccountable prosecutorial powers" and the threat it proposes to American national sovereignty. "We are determined to protect American and allied civilian personnel from living in fear of unjust prosecution for actions taken to defend our great nation," he said. Pompeo said the US government was obliged to protect its citizens and procedures were already in place to deal with members of the US armed forces who engage in misconduct. "The US government, where possible, takes legal action against those responsible for international crimes," he

added, noting that it has supported prosecution of war crimes in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere. The ICC and human rights groups reacted swiftly to Pompeo's remarks. "The ICC, as a court of law, will continue to do its independent work, undeterred, in accordance with its mandate and the overarching principle of the rule of law," the ICC said. Richard Dicker, the international justice director at Human Rights Watch, said the US move "is a naked attempt to bully judges and impede justice for victims in Afghanistan" and "blatant contempt for the rule of law". James Goldston, the executive director of the

Open Society Justice Initiative, said Pompeo's remarks reflected the administration's view that international law matters "only when it is aligned with US national interests". "Attacking international judicial actors for doing their jobs undermines global efforts to hold to account those most responsible for atrocity crimes such as torture and mass murder," Goldston said. The ICC was established in 2002 under the Rome Statute and joined by 123 countries. But ICC membership was never ratified by the US Senate and the "America First" administration of Donald Trump has been a particularly virulent opponent.



New York State Senator Kevin Thomas recently presented a Proclamation to Indians "in Nutrition and Dietetics" Member Interest Group of the Academy of "Nutrition and Dietetics" arch during National Nutrition Month.

Elizabeth Warren's call to disband tech giants is a step in the right direction

Democratic presidential candidate and Senator Elizabeth Warren argued in a blog post on Friday that "it's time to break up Amazon, Google, and Facebook." The reason, she says, is because they have become such large monopolies that they're stifling competition from smaller startups and therefore impeding opportunities and innovation. Warren's proposal would ban companies with \$25 billion or more in annual revenue from owning both a platform and companies that participate on the platform -- so Google, for instance, would have to split its search engine from its ad business. Warren also said she would reverse mega mergers, like Facebook's ownership of WhatsApp and Instagram, the merger of Amazon with Whole Foods and Zappos, along with Google's acquisition of companies like Waze. Sen. Warren is right that the business monopolies these companies enjoy are bad for other American businesses and ultimately reduce the choices of consumers. But there's another kind of power these tech companies all have that is an even bigger threat: their monopoly on information. Warren's proposal doesn't fully fix this larger problem. First, these tech companies largely determine what we find on search engines or news feeds when we search for information to make decisions -- like who to vote for or where to seek medical treatment. According to the Pew Research Center, nearly 90% of Americans use the Internet. As Sen. Warren notes in her proposal, Google and Facebook own the sites that receive over 70% of the traffic on the Internet. So they certainly have a monopoly on the information Americans access. And they have structured their algorithms so that the information people see on their sites is at least partly determined by their own business interests. For example, companies and politicians who buy ads jump to the top of Google search results, regardless of whether a person searching for information online might be better served by seeing other sites first. In a 1998 paper, Google's own founders, Sergey Brin and Lawrence Page, highlighted this conflict when they noted that if someone searches the words "cellular phone" on a search engine that sells ads to cell phone companies -- like Google -- the search engine would have incentives not to show a study about how cell phones dangerously distract drivers first. Sen. Warren's proposal to have the Google search engine split off from its ad business would only partially solve this problem. Most people don't scroll very far down search engine results so if we want Americans to be well informed and to easily access a broad spectrum of information when they make important decisions, we need laws that prevent

search engine companies from designing algorithms to favor their advertisers or information that serves their own political interests. Second, big tech companies have vast troves of personal information -- from the medical symptoms we search for on Google to the pictures of our kids that we post on Facebook. And it's clear after hacks and other unintended breaches that they aren't very good at safeguarding it. In October, for example, Google announced it would shutter its social network Google Plus after admitting that a software problem exposed the personal information of up to half a million of its users to outside developers. Another bug, which was fixed after six days, exposed user data from a shocking 52.5 million accounts. Sen. Warren argued that reversing some of the mergers she seeks to break up would "put pressure on big tech companies to be more responsive to user concerns, including about privacy." She's right that more competition could result in new startup companies that better protect personal information, which could put market pressure on companies like Google and Facebook to improve their own security controls. But what's also needed is for government regulators to oversee how all this data is stored to ensure that it's better protected. Sen. Warren, who created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to protect Americans from financial institutions, would be well placed to propose a regulatory structure for technology companies. In addition to more safeguards from unintended breaches, Americans should have more choices about what companies like Facebook and Google do with our data. In December, for example, the New York Times revealed that Facebook had been sharing the data of its users with other companies, including Amazon, Netflix, Spotify and even foreign entities like the Chinese telecom company Huawei and Russian search giant Yandex. Sen. Warren's proposal wouldn't allow large tech companies to share user data with third parties. That's a great first step, but it still doesn't give Americans enough choices about how their data is harvested and used. Facebook, for example, gathers user data internally which it uses to sell ads to third parties. Last year, Cambridge Analytica -- a company the Trump campaign hired during the 2016 presidential election -- accessed user data without permission. That data was then used to create "psychographic profiles" of users to predict their voting behavior. Even if third parties couldn't access such data anymore, nothing in Sen.

India needs bargaining options to deal with China

China has once again decided to put a technical hold on the listing of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist under United Nations Resolution 1267. Azhar Masood, as is well known, is the chief of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), the group responsible for a number of terrorist attacks against India, including the one in Pulwama on February 14. The proposal to list Azhar was initiated by France and backed by the US and the UK among other members of the Security Council. What are the lessons for India from this incident?

First, one should be clear that the listing process is a symbolic move. The JeM is already a proscribed organisation and that hasn't stopped it from launching dastardly terrorist attacks on Indian soil. The Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) chief, Hafiz Saeed, too, features in the United Nations sanctions list. However, he continues to enjoy all kinds of freedom in Pakistan and has even floated a political party that contested the 2018 national elections. The listing, therefore, itself wouldn't have achieved a great deal.

Second, China responds to incentives. At the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) summit in February 2018, it agreed to grey listing of Pakistan in return of being offered a vice-presidency of the inter-governmental body. India

obviously did not have an equivalent offer to make in exchange for Azhar's listing. New Delhi needs to find a range of bargaining options with China in the future. The options could be economic (access to Indian markets, tenders, etc.) as well as political (affecting Tibet, Taiwan and Xinjiang).

Third, India needs to realise the limits of its relationship with China. The informal summit in Wuhan in April 2018 was aimed at the two leaders - Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping -



understanding each other's concerns. Either our concerns about Pakistan-backed terrorism weren't clearly communicated to him or Mr Xi simply chose to ignore them. In either case, the Wuhan exercise seems to have failed. Not just Pakistan-backed terrorism, China has not yielded ground on anything else (from trade imbalance to India's membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group). At a time when China was facing economic pressure from the US in the form of a tariffs war, North Korea was increasingly moving out of Beijing's shadow and Australia was making noises about China's interference in its domestic politics, the Wuhan summit only helped remove the pressure on Beijing from one front altogether. India needs to add a dose of reality to its China relationship.



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Ayodhya mediation: The process may not result in an amicable conclusion

With a representative suit such as this, where the parties are not claiming the property for their personal use and benefit but on behalf of larger communities and interests, valid questions can be raised as to whether such a dispute can be settled through mediation at all.

Can the Babri masjid title suit be settled through a court ordered mediation? The strictly legal answer provided by the Constitution bench of the Supreme Court (SC) is: Yes. There is no legal bar to the SC referring the appeal from the Allahabad High Court judgment to a panel of three mediators (notwithstanding the problematic inclusion of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar). The feeble legal ground raised by some of the parties to the appeal opposing such mediation has no basis in the law as the court correctly pointed out.

There are, however, deeper questions that arise when a representative suit such as the Babri masjid title suit is referred to mediation. Mediation is an out-of-court

process in which parties are encouraged to set aside their animosities in a non-adversarial setting and arrive at a binding settlement to resolve their differences amicably. Theoretically, all civil cases can be referred to mediation and, in the hands of a skilled and patient mediator, there is no reason why parties cannot work out their concerns in a non-confrontational and amicable manner. In India, mediation is largely resorted to in matrimonial cases and family disputes within the court system. We have also seen an interstate boundary dispute being referred to a panel of mediators, which included Sriram Panchu who is on the present panel. Recently retired

Justice Kurien Joseph famously was a fan of mediation, whether it involved matrimonial issues or even corporate disputes. The success or failure of such a process can depend on the willingness of parties to walk that extra mile and the wisdom of the mediator in helping them along the path. However, with a representative suit such as this, where the parties are not claiming the property for their personal use and benefit but on behalf of larger communities and interests, valid questions can be raised as to whether such a dispute can be settled through mediation at all. Whereas a representative suit merely makes the person filing it make legal and factual

claims on behalf of a group of people, asking such a person to go through mediation requires something quite entirely different. It asks the person filing the suit to not just make legal arguments, but also be a spokesperson on behalf of the people represented and also protect their interests in the mediation itself. This is an expansion of the role of the parties to the suit that the parties may not be willing or able to take up. While the cause title of the Babri masjid suit may have the names of M Siddiq, Mahant Suresh Das and others, it is really a dispute between Hindus and Muslims over the land in question. While the parties mentioned may be legal representatives of



these groups in court on a legal question, can they, outside the court, claim the authority and legitimacy to arrive at a settlement on behalf of the groups? They are not elected or appointed under any process known to law that might have given them such legitimacy. There is no mechanism by which the parties can assess whether a settlement they're agreeing to is acceptable to the community that they claim to represent. While the SC may have been well intentioned in attempting to ensure the settlement of the Babri Masjid dispute through mediation, it has put the parties in a piquant situation not of their choosing, potentially dooming the mediation right from the start. Even assuming that the mediation is limited to the main parties to the dispute (not including the numerous intervenors and plain busybodies), and the mediators attempt a resolution in good faith, it is hard to see this end in an amicable conclusion without questions being raised about its legitimacy.

Why China is doing well in defence manufacturing

China's success flows from its massive investment in research and development (R&D) - well over 2% of GDP now. Of late, it has also embraced private companies' role in defence production

A recent report by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) notes that India's arms imports decreased by 24% between 2009-13 and 2014-18, and, as a result, it is no longer the world's largest defence importer. However, it is too early to celebrate. The reduction in arms imports has little to do with India's indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities. The most likely causes for the sharp reduction in imports include delay in,

as the Sipri report notes, "deliveries of arms produced under licence from foreign suppliers, such as combat aircraft ordered from Russia in 2001 and submarines ordered from France in 2008". India's attempt to bolster indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities has seen several false starts. The country aims to be among the world's five top arms producer by 2025. In order to achieve this ambitious goal, we should learn from our northern neighbour, China,

which has made impressive strides as a defence manufacturer and exporter. After having been an arms importer for much of its existence, Communist China is now the world's fifth largest defence exporter. It still imports a lot - China is the world's sixth largest arms importer - but it has been a net arms exporter for much of this decade. Seven Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs), according to International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), were among top 20



defence production firms in terms of arms sales in 2016. These SOEs have been helped by a captive domestic market. However, they have done well on exports too, especially when one takes into the account that some of the largest arms importers like India, South Korea, Vietnam and Australia do not buy Chinese arms for

political reasons.

China's success flows from its massive investment in research and development (R&D) - well over 2% of GDP now. Of late, it has also embraced private companies' role in defence production. India should quickly embark on the path to create a level playing field between defence

public sector units and private companies. It should increase its budget outlays on R&D, temper its expectations on transfer of technology from foreign original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and make the country a more attractive destination for manufacturing firms in general.

Why India must ban highly hazardous pesticides

Pesticide poisoning is the most common method of deliberate self-harm in India. The majority of deaths are due to ingestion of highly hazardous pesticides (HHP). The Government of India banned 18 HHPs in August 2018. Twelve are to be removed immediately; the remaining six will be done away with over a period of two years. The ban follows the 2015 Anupam Verma report that recommended the review of 27 pesticides by 2018. This ban is indeed a welcome step. However, there are 99 pesticides that are banned in other countries but still in extensive use in India. In 2017, activist Kavitha Kuruganti and others launched a PIL in the Supreme Court urging the government to ban HHPs banned in other countries. The

government has responded that any negative consequences of pesticide use are due to misuse or indiscriminate use of such products by farmers. It also argued that some HHPs are still used in the high-income countries and that pesticide toxicology findings are location specific, meaning that not all HHPs need to be banned in India. Some high-income countries such as the US use many HHPs. However, in the US only 2% of the population is directly employed in agriculture and the sector is highly mechanised, reducing the contact of farmworkers and farming households with pesticides. This reduced contact between humans and pesticides in US agriculture allows the use of more HHPs. This is the reason for the

continued registration of a few hazardous pesticides in the US and other industrialised countries. In India, a vast number of households are dependent on agriculture. Most of these households are small-land holders, who perform farming without mechanisation. There are many manual operations in agriculture in India, including weeding, harvesting, and pesticide spraying that result in much greater direct contact between pesticides and farmers and labourers. The accidental exposure to pesticides of farmers is due to lack of education, affordable protective equipment, user regulation and enforcement and safe storage. Recognising this situation across low and middle-income countries, the United Nations' International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management states that the handling and application

of such pesticides that require the use of personal protective equipment that is uncomfortable, expensive or not readily available should be avoided, especially in the case of small-scale users and farm workers in hot climates.

While decisions to use or ban a pesticide is location-specific, the findings from studies of toxicity of specific pesticides even from other settings are useful in assessments of the risks of pesticides to health by national regulatory agencies in India. For example, the USA Environmental Protection Agency's factsheet on monocrotophos reports that this pesticide has been shown to be highly toxic to birds, fish and mammals. They recommend that occupational use requires the wearing of respirators. These findings have resulted in

monocrotophos being banned in the US and this is highly relevant to the Indian situation where it is a common cause of pesticide poisoning and death. Progressive judicial action has also been shown to rapidly reduce pesticide poisoning deaths. Endosulfan poisoning has long been a problem in India, with around 30% of poisoned patients dying. A legal case filed by endosulfan-affected communities led to a Supreme Court ban and virtual disappearance of endosulfan poisoning over the last five years. Bans of 15 pesticides by the state of Kerala in 2006 and 2011 has resulted in a remarkable 83% reduction in the number of pesticide suicides each year (from 1,934 in 1995 to 327 in 2015).

Rivers are critical for groundwater recharge

In a report released recently, the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, the University of California, and the India Meteorological Department, Pune, said nearly 50% of the country is currently facing drought with at least 16% falling in the exceptional or extreme category. The drought will only hasten the pace of already depleting groundwater resources in the country. At present, Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu are the worst affected even though India had a normal monsoon in 2018.

The scientists said that the situation is dire because of two

reasons: India's groundwater recharge is not adequate even though drought conditions are making us extract more and more of the resource; and people are wasting too much water. At 260 cubic km per year, the country is the highest user of groundwater in the world. We use 25% of all groundwater extracted globally, ahead of the US and China. This was not the case in the 1960s and 1970s but then need to grow more food (the Green Revolution) changed that. In 1947, the share of groundwater in agriculture was 35%; today it is 70%. India cannot avoid a water disaster unless people understand the critical relationship that exists

between adequate river flows and aquifer recharge, and the reasons behind its current broken state. When a river flows, almost 20-30% of its monsoon water feeds aquifers, saturating the water table; 30-40% evaporates; and 40-50% flows on the surface. But when we hold the monsoon flow in a reservoir behind a dam, both the surface flow and the associated aquifers suffer. People also don't realise that an aquifer is an ecosystem in its own right and hence when rivers don't run free, both rivers as an ecosystem and aquifer as an associated ecosystem suffer. With more and more structures (dams, barrages and anicuts) being built on our rivers and their



tributaries (the Ganga basin already has 942 dams, barrages and weirs in its various tributaries), the flow gets reduced and so do the opportunities for groundwater recharge. It also compromises the other natural ecological functions of a river. The situation is worse in the case

of the peninsular rivers, which receive no water due to glacial melt. To make India water secure, we must restrict groundwater withdrawal to shallow aquifers, which get annually recharged during the monsoon season, thanks to the flowing streams.

Errors and Omissions May Have Weakened India's Case on Kulbhushan Jadhav

The term "lawfare" was coined in 2001 by Major General Charles J. Dunlap, Jr. He defined it as a method of warfare where law is used as a means of realising a military objective. Today, the most refined definition of the term is "the strategy of using - or misusing - the law as a substitute for traditional military means to achieve an operational objective." The grandeur and dignity of the judicial proceedings in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case at the International Court of Justice last month is a salient example of the contours of modern-day lawfare battlefields. The four-day-long

proceedings unfolded sandwiched between two events that stand in stark contrast with this image - the violence and horror of the attack by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) on Central Reserve Police Force personnel in Pulwama on February 14, followed by the Indian Air Force's 'non-military, pre-emptive' airstrikes targeted at a JeM camp in Pakistan's Balakot on February 26. Indeed, these events are indicative of the multi-dimensional strategies necessitated by the hostilities that characterise India-Pakistan relations. India's conventional military superiority over Pakistan

has been demonstrated more than once, and the "Surgical Strike 2.0" demonstrated, yet again, India's capacity to retaliate against sub-conventional warfare tactics. However, today's lawfare battles demand a recalibration of the rules of engagement. In order to succeed, India must be able to leverage existing law to achieve military objectives, without the use of kinetic force. At closing arguments, Harish Salve, arguing on India's behalf, asked the court to order Jadhav's release from detention in Pakistan "in the interest of justice, of making human rights a reality". We witnessed him

bravely withstand, and calmly rebuff, lawyer Khawar Qureshi's attacks against him for, among other things, having "murdered the English language". Whether Salve's demonstrated ability to withstand the violence of language inflicted upon him will triumph over Qureshi's language of violence, to result in Jadhav's release, remains to be seen. In the interim, as we anxiously await the ICJ judgment, let us not be distracted by the seductive eloquence of the Queen's English or her counsel, and focus on what should, and will, form the basis of the court's

decision - the applicable law.

I. Admissibility of the application Due to the fact-dependent nature of the objections to admissibility raised by Pakistan, it would not be appropriate to comment on the issue without full and complete knowledge of the facts not in the public domain. Where both parties have levelled serious allegations of attempts by the other to sow discord and finance terror on the territory of the other, the principle of sovereign equality should prevent the court from making any radical departures from its firmly established jurisprudence.

India general election voting begins on April 11, officials say

(Insider Bureau)- India announced on Sunday a general election to be held over nearly six weeks starting on April 11, when hundreds of millions voters will cast ballots in the world's biggest democracy.

Some 900 million voters from the

Minister Narendra Modi run for a second term against Rahul Gandhi, the latest scion of the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty to seek leadership of the world's second-most populous nation. They are the two strongest challengers from a field of



Himalayan peaks to the deserts and tropical shores are eligible to vote for a new government for the next five years in an enormous democratic undertaking.

From April 11 to May 19 voters will elect 543 lawmakers to India's lower house of parliament, the Lok Sabha, which governs the Asian nation of 1.25 billion people from the capital New Delhi, the electoral commission said. Counting will be completed and the final results announced on May 23, it added.

The election will see Prime

Minister Narendra Modi run for a second term against Rahul Gandhi, the latest scion of the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty to seek leadership of the world's second-most populous nation. They are the two strongest challengers from a field of

hundreds of political parties from across the culturally and geographically diverse country of 1.25 billion. Modi, whose right-wing party won an outright majority in the 2014 elections, enters the race in a strong position and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) hopes to decimate Gandhi's left-leaning Congress party once again.

His Hindu-nationalist political machine is riding on Modi's personal popularity and an array of emotive issues.

In recent weeks he has been

able to bolster his nationalist credentials in India's most serious stand-off with Pakistan in years, sparked by a suicide bombing in the disputed Kashmir region on February 14 that killed 40 Indian paramilitaries.

The deadliest attack on Indian forces in a 30-year-old insurgency in the part of Kashmir that New Delhi controls was claimed by a militant group based in Pakistan, one of many that India and others have long accused Islamabad of harbouring.

Twelve days later the Indian air force bombed what New Delhi said was a training camp of the group deep inside Pakistan, the first time since 1971 that India hit territory beyond Kashmir. Doubts have been raised about what the raid achieved, and when Pakistan carried out its own air raid a dogfight ensued and an Indian aircraft was shot down and its pilot captured by Pakistan. But Modi has shrugged this off and continued to talk tough, accusing the



opposition of being weak.

"We won't spare anybody who is looking to destroy our country even if their (terrorists') chiefs are sitting on the other side of the border," Modi told a recent rally in his home state of Gujarat. "But the oppositions have a problem with such stern actions too. But I am going ahead with my resolve to root out terrorism."

The 68-year-old prime minister has also sought to contrast his humble origins as a tea seller against Gandhi, the 48-year-old privileged half-Italian princeling of India's most famous family.

But opinion polls have suggested ebbing support for the BJP and it may fall short of the 272 seats it needs to form

a government on its own.

Gandhi, long criticised as a lacklustre leader, has also started looking more recently like a serious challenger Congress, which has ruled India for much of its time since independence from Britain in 1947, won three key state election victories in December, chipping into Modi's core support base in the Hindi "Cow Belt" regions home to nearly half a billion voters.

He has also gone on the offensive over Modi's economic record, with Congress state wins attributed to the prime minister's perceived failure to help impoverished farmers and create jobs. In the 2014 elections, 830 million people were eligible to vote but only 550 million cast their ballots.

'Will announce on March 22 which party I am joining,' says Shatrughan Sinha

The two-time MP claimed he could win an election from anywhere but insisted that would not change his constituency under any circumstance.

(Insider Bureau)- Rebel BJP MP from Patna Shahib Shatrughan Sinha on Tuesday said he would reveal on March 22 which party he would contest from in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections but insisted that he would fight only from the constituency that he had won twice.

Voting in Patna Sahib will take place on May 19.

"Just wait and watch. No more speculations required. It will be clear on March 22. My stand is clear that I will contest the 2019 general election from Patna Sahib constituency. I will continue to stay among my brothers and well-wishers here," said Sinha.

Maintaining that he would not change his constituency under any circumstance, the two-time

MP claimed he could win an election from anywhere, but Patna Sahib remained close to his heart due to his long association with the people.

The actor-turned-politician had comfortably won the Patna Sahib seat in 2014 defeating the JD (U) candidate Gopal Prasad Sinha by almost four lakh votes. While Sinha received 4,85,905 votes, his rival could fetch only 91,024 votes.

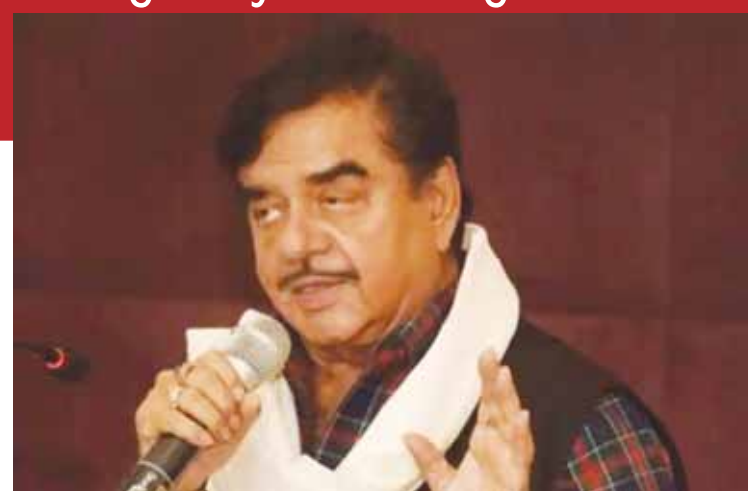
In 2009, Sinha had defeated television host Shekhar Suman who had contested from the Congress party. Out of total 552,129 votes polled, Sinha received 316,472 votes while Suman got only 61,308 votes.

The BJP had distanced itself from Sinha a long time ago following his anti-party barbs

from public platforms. The state organization in Bihar neither involved him nor invited him to the various party programmes including the March 3 Sankap rally where Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the NDA's election campaign. Despite being sidelined, Sinha has so far desisted from quitting the party.

The Bihari Babu, as Sinha is popularly known, has been in talks with both Congress and RJD for his candidature from Patna Sahib. But he is weighing his options keeping in mind the winning potential of the two parties from the constituency.

Both Sinha and former BJP MP from Darbhanga, Kirti Azad shall need full support of



the RJD if the grand alliance doesn't break ahead of the polls to retain their seats they earlier won as BJP candidates. Azad officially joined Congress in New Delhi last month after meeting party president Rahul Gandhi.

The NDA too is yet to finalise its candidate from Patna Sahib. Several names including that of Sushil Modi and Ram Kripal Yadav have cropped up in the recent past

as the potential candidate to contest the prestigious seat. Shatrughan Sinha was a minister in the cabinet of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He was first appointed as union minister for health and family welfare in 2003 but within a year his portfolio was changed and he was given shipping ministry. He was also anointed head of the BJP's cultural and arts department in 2006.

Hyderabad cops bust Rs 1,000 cr multi-level marketing scam by Noida firm; one held

Police said the promoters attracted mostly students, women and retired persons luring them with easy means of making money.



(Agencies)- The Cyberabad police in Hyderabad on Tuesday busted a multi-level marketing scam worth Rs 1,000 crore involving a Noida-based company eBiz.com Private Ltd , arrested ta man who allegedly ran it and froze its bank deposits worth

more than Rs 70 crore. Cyberabad police commissioner V C Sajjannar told reporters that the company had duped more than seven lakh people across the country. "We have arrested Hitik Malhan (31), who looks after the company activities and

are on the lookout for his parents Pavan Malhan, managing director of the company and Anita Malhan, its director," he said. The police booked cases against the accused under Sections 406, 420 and 506 of Indian Penal Code and also under other sections of

Prize Chits and Money
Circulation Schemes (Banning)
Act of 1978.

Sajjannar said the promoters attracted mostly students, women and retired persons luring them with easy means of making money. Each person would join paying Rs 16,821. Each member would in turn, had to enrol more members who would be part of the chain. After paying the money the new comer would get some products/e-learning courses/holiday package and the promoter got commission. The new representatives were required to enrol three more members. As the number of persons increased down the line the older recruits would get more money as commissions, he said.


"However, as finding new members becomes difficult, the chain gets broken somewhere

and the scheme collapses at one point of time. All those who invested in the form of deposits, would lose their money," the police commissioner said.

The Cyberabad police, acting on a complaint by a 20-year old student from Hyderabad, probed the case and busted the scam. "The scheme is rampant in cities of Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai and States of Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Goa," he said, adding that a detailed investigation was being done into the whole scam.

In September last year, the Cyberabad busted a similar scam worth Rs 1,200 crore. Police had arrested two men belonging to Hissar in Haryana and seized Rs 200 crore from them.

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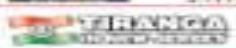
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Why India's election is among the world's most expensive

This time the polling exercise, due to start on April 11 and be completed by May 19, will cost an unprecedented 500 billion rupees (\$7 billion), according to the New Delhi-based Centre for Media Studies. About \$6.5 billion was spent during the US presidential and congressional races in 2016.

(By Our Staff Reporter)-The world's biggest democracy will soon hold what's likely to be one of the world's costliest elections. India's six-week-long vote will span the Himalayan range in the north, the Indian Ocean in the south, the Thar desert in the west and the mangroves of the Sundarbans in the east. This time the polling exercise, due to start on April 11 and be completed by May 19, will cost an unprecedented 500 billion rupees (\$7

billion), according to the New Delhi-based Centre for Media Studies. About \$6.5 billion was spent during the US presidential and congressional races in 2016, according to OpenSecrets.org, which tracks money in American politics.

The CMS projection marks a 40 percent jump from the \$5 billion estimated to have been spent during India's 2014 parliamentary vote. And it amounts to roughly

\$8 spent per voter in a country where about 60 percent of the population lives on around \$3 a day. "Most of the jump in spending will come in use of social media, travel and advertising," said N. Bhaskara Rao, chairman of the Centre for Media Studies, who has advised previous governments and ran a market research group. Social media spending is likely to be dramatically higher, surging to about 50 billion rupees from 2.5 billion rupees in 2014, Rao said. His group—which bases its projections on field interviews, government data, contracts given out, and other research—also expects a jump in the use of helicopters, buses and other transportation by traveling candidates and party workers.

Specific data can be hard to pin down, but costs are rising in general as constituency sizes increase and more candidates join the fray, said Simon Chauchard, a Columbia University lecturer who has followed elections in India. Politicians feel "you've got to do new things, and crazier things, and bigger



things and louder things," Chauchard said. "It's a bunch of panicky candidates throwing money around to voters but also to vendors selling all kinds of stuff useful in a political campaign."

Which is worse, crackers or cars? Supreme Court asks Centre for comparative study

(By Our Staff Reporter)- The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Centre to give a comparative study on pollution caused by firecrackers and automobiles and observed that people are running after firecrackers and seeking ban on it when it seems that automobile is the bigger polluter. The top court, however, expressed concern over unemployment caused after it put curbs on fire crackers. "Legal trade cannot be stopped. At best

license conditions need to be changed," a bench led by just SA Bobde said while hearing petition on ban on fire crackers. Court asked the Centre to suggest some way of preventing unemployment in the sector. "We can't let people go hungry because some others think fire crackers is not good. Moreover, there are areas where crackers could be used without causing much damage, such as community fireworks," the court said

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In today's India, SC judges seek justice': Rahul Gandhi on PM Modi's home turf

'Rahul Gandhi launched fresh attack on PM Modi from his home turf in Gujarat.'



(Insider Bureau)- Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday targeted Prime Minister Narendra while addressing a public rally in his home state, Gujarat saying the institutions of the country are being attacked under the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre. Gandhi said the judges of the Supreme Court are seeking "justice" complaining that they are not being allowed to function.

"In today's India the judges of the Supreme Court seek justice in front of people... This is not happening only with the Supreme Court... The institutions are under attack everywhere," said Gandhi hitting out at the Modi

government.

"For the first time in history, four judges of the Supreme Court went to the press and said we are not being allowed to work, and take the name of judge (Brijmohan) Loya immediately after that," Gandhi said at the Jan Sankalp rally of the Congress in the Gujarat capital.

CBI judge Loya was hearing a case pertaining to alleged fake encounter of Sohrabuddin Sheikh at the time of his death in 2014. His death led to a huge political row last year following a media report claiming foul play behind his death. BJP president Amit Shah was an accused in the case.

The Congress president said the government doesn't talk about the real issues. "The biggest issue

in the country is unemployment, which is at 45-year high but the government doesn't talk about this," he said.

Gandhi made the remarks at an election rally in Gujarat's Gandhinagar after attending the Congress Working Committee meet at Ahmedabad. He said the decision to hold CWC meet in Gujarat after nearly six decades was taken in the view of the "fight between two ideologies" in the country.

"Both ideologies are seen here in Gujarat. On the one hand, there is an ideology of Mahatma Gandhi that ideology has built this nation... Today, the other powers are trying to weaken this country," said Gandhi.

The highest decision making

body of the Congress met in Ahmedabad earlier in the day to prepare final strategy for the Lok Sabha elections that will be held between April 11 and May 19 spread over seven phases. This was the first CWC meeting in Gujarat since 1961. It was also the first CWC meeting attended by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. At the Congress strategy meet, the party leadership decided to corner the BJP-led ruling National Democratic Alliance over the issues of demonetisation, GST (goods and services tax) rollout,

unemployment, agrarian distress and corruption. The Congress has alleged corruption in Rafale deal.

At his election rally, Gandhi reiterated his charge that PM Modi scrapped the Rafale deal being negotiated by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government and signed a new agreement with France to "benefit his friend Anil Ambani". Both the government and Reliance Defence have, on several occasions, denied the allegations levelled by the Congress and Gandhi.

No sacrifice too big to win battle, says Rahul Gandhi on 2019 elections

The Congress Working Committee held its meeting in Gujarat for the first time since 1961.

(Insider Bureau)- Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday set his party's tone for the Lok Sabha elections at the Congress Working Committee meeting in Gujarat's Ahmedabad. Gandhi hit out at the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party saying they follow the ideology of "fascism, hatred, anger and divisiveness." Gandhi said the CWC has resolved the defeat the RSS/BJP ideology. "No sacrifice is too great in this endeavour; no effort too little; this battle will be won," Gandhi wrote on Twitter following the Congress strategy meet.

The Congress president's comment comes amid talks for alliance with other opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. The Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party are contesting the Lok Sabha polls together in Uttar Pradesh. The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) is also part of the grand-alliance. There have been talks over accommodating the Congress in the alliance to keep the anti-

BJP vote in Uttar Pradesh intact. Similarly, the Aam Aadmi Party has been calling for an alliance with the Congress in Delhi, which has seven parliamentary seats. The Delhi Congress leadership is not in favour of having a tie with the AAP. The Delhi unit has rejected Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's call for an alliance. However, the AAP has kept its options open for fighting the Lok Sabha elections with the Congress to challenge the BJP, which had won all the parliamentary seats in 2014 in Delhi.

At the Congress strategy meet in Gujarat, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the party should highlight the achievements of the UPA government that was in power at the Centre from 2004 to 2014. UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying he plays victim card but the people of this country are the real victims of his policies. She stressed that the Congress should move forward with a new vision.

The Congress has been trying to



corner the Modi government over a range of issues including demonetisation, rollout of the goods and services tax (GST), Rafale deal, agrarian distress and unemployment.

'Idea of India Under Attack': CWC Addressing a press conference after the CWC meeting, Congress leader Anand Sharma said the party adopted a political resolution expressing concern over attempts by the ruling party to "challenge" the values enshrined in the Constitution.

Sharma said, "The Congress believes that the values enshrined in the Constitution and the rights given to people are under constant onslaught under the present government."

"The idea of India, envisaged by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru... is being challenged in a way to replace the values that are against the principles espoused by the makers of the Constitution," he said targeting the BJP.

The CWC resolution, Sharma

said, condemned the attempts to take political mileage by the ruling BJP out of recent strike by the Indian Air Force on a terror camp in Pakistan's Balakot in the aftermath of Pulwama terror attack. "Entire blame goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP," Sharma told a press conference in Ahmedabad. "The Prime Minister is playing with the emotions of the people only to take mileage in the elections. We condemn it," said the Congress leader briefing



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Adulation, jail, criticism: At 25, Hardik Patel has seen it all

Three years after he made the whole nation take note of him by leading the Patidar youths' agitation for quota in education and jobs, Hardik Patel now needs to walk the tight rope in carving out his path to Delhi.

(Insider Bureau)- Patidar leader Hardik Patel joined Congress in Ahmedabad in the presence of its president Rahul Gandhi and other top leaders in Gujarat's Ahmedabad on Tuesday. Three years after he made the whole nation take note of him by leading the Patidar agitation, which reopened the debate around caste based reservation system in India, the firebrand leader now has to wait and watch, before he can make his next big leap - entry into electoral politics. A conviction in a rioting case and two years' sentence, unless stayed by a higher court, could pose hurdles in his political career.

"I am just a 25 years old. I still have time on my side," he said, when asked about contesting the Lok Sabha elections.

In 2015, fame came suddenly and unexpectedly soon after college for the young man born to a Kadva Patidar middle

class family. But now, Hardik, who hails from a Viramgam town near Ahmedabad, needs to walk the tight rope in carving out his path to Delhi. For one, stir is over. The NDA government's big move of clearing 10% reservation for economically weaker sections of non-reserved category is expected to pacify the angry Patidars.

Secondly, the ground support that he enjoyed from the community during the peak of the agitation is a matter of past. Except a grand reception in July 2016 given to him upon release from nine-month imprisonment in Surat Lajpore Jail in connection with two sedition cases, his subsequent programmes in the past two years have failed to regenerate the magic of the August 2015 Ahmedabad rally. His efforts to revive the agitation through hunger strike in August 2018 got lukewarm response. Recently, his Kadva Patidar community

invited PM Modi for inauguration of religious and educational complex to come up at a cost of Rs 1,000 crore, signalling that BJP has wooed back its traditional vote bank. Luxurious lifestyle, sprawling home in posh areas, swanky cars, branded watches and expensive phones that Hardik acquired soon after the Ahmedabad 2015 rally, led accusation against him of siphoning off community funds. A luxury resort sojourn and big fat wedding ceremony for his sister, further dwindled the support as his dictator like style of functioning alienated him from other founding members of the agitation. So when he opted for a low-key event for his wedding earlier this year, it was seen as well thought out strategy.


A closed-door meeting ahead of December 2017 in an Ahmedabad-based luxurious hotel he had with Gandhi, was the last blow to his then already cracking team.



While the Patidar ignore him publicly. businessmen and Hardik's outfit Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS) has supported the Congress in past two elections - 2015 local body polls and the 2017 assembly elections. On both the occasions, the Congress made inroads into BJP's rural Patidar dominated bastions. The urban fortress of BJP, however, has remained intact. Hardik, if he will contest, has been on the lookout for a seat where the caste arithmetic goes in his favour, like Jamnagar or Amreli.


The BJP has been calling him the design of the Congress. "Hardik who?" asked BJP state chief Jitu Vaghani when his reaction on the matter was sought. The BJP's strategy has been to

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Congress culture is 'anti-thesis of Gandhian thought': PM Modi

The Prime Minister, in a blog, called the Congress culture an "anti-thesis of Gandhian thought" on a day the opposition party is holding a meeting of its working committee in his home state of Gujarat ahead of the Lok Sabha election 2019.

(Insiderbureru)-Prime Minister Narendra Modi has targeted the Congress on the 89th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March, which he said "shook the foundations of colonial rule and became a strong symbol of fighting injustice and inequality".

The Prime Minister, in a blog that coincided with a key Congress meet in Gujarat, called the Congress culture an "anti-thesis of Gandhian thought" on a day the opposition party is holding a meeting of its working committee in his home state of Gujarat ahead of the Lok Sabha election 2019.

"Gandhi Ji taught us to think of the plight of the poorest person we have seen and think about how our work impacts that person. I am proud to say that in all aspects of our Government's work, the guiding consideration is to

see how it will alleviate poverty and bring prosperity. Sadly, the anti-thesis of Gandhian thought is the Congress culture," the Prime Minister wrote in the blog on his website.

Modi listed how the Congress party worked against everything that Mahatma Gandhi held dear and said that the party has worked against the country.

"In many of his works, Gandhi Ji said that he does not believe in inequality and caste divisions. Sadly, the Congress has never hesitated from dividing society. The worst caste riots and anti-Dalit massacres happened under Congress rule," he said.

Modi quoted the Mahatma on issues like governance, corruption and dynastic politics among others to criticise the Congress.

The Congress and corruption, Modi said, have become

synonyms. He quoted the Mahatma as saying that, "it is the duty of all leading men, whatever their persuasion or party, to safeguard the dignity of India. That dignity can't be saved if misgovernment and corruption flourish.

Misgovernment and corruption always go together." Modi said while his government had "done everything" to punish the corrupt and that "... Name the sector and there will be a Congress scam- from defence,



telecom, irrigation, sporting all that Congress has done is events to agriculture, rural to fill their own bank accounts development and more." and lead luxurious lifestyles at "Bapu spoke about the cost of providing basic detachment and staying away necessities to the poor," the from excess wealth. However, Prime Minister said.



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Pakistan Has Assured the US

it will deal 'firmly' with terrorists : john bolton

"The [Pakistani] FM assured me that Pakistan would deal firmly with all terrorists and will continue steps to de-escalate tensions with India," tweeted the US national security advisor.

(By a Staff Reporter) - Pakistan has assured the United States that it will deal firmly with all terrorists and take steps to de-escalate tensions with India, a top White House official said on Monday.

This assurance was given by Pakistani foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi during a call with the US national security adviser, John Bolton, the latter said in a tweet.

"Spoke with Pakistani FM Qureshi to encourage meaningful steps against JeM and other terrorist groups operating from Pakistan," Bolton said. "The FM assured me that Pakistan would deal firmly with all terrorists and will continue steps to de-escalate tensions with India," tweeted the US national security advisor.

The Pakistani readout of the conversation, posted by the foreign ministry, omitted Bolton's reference to Islamabad having to take action

against terrorism. Instead, it said that Bolton "concurred" with the Pakistani foreign minister when he "cautioned against any Indian misadventure, keeping in view the forthcoming elections".

Bolton's call with Qureshi came during the ongoing US visit of the Indian foreign secretary, Vijay Gokhale. On the first day of his official visit, the top Indian diplomat met US secretary of state Mike Pompeo.

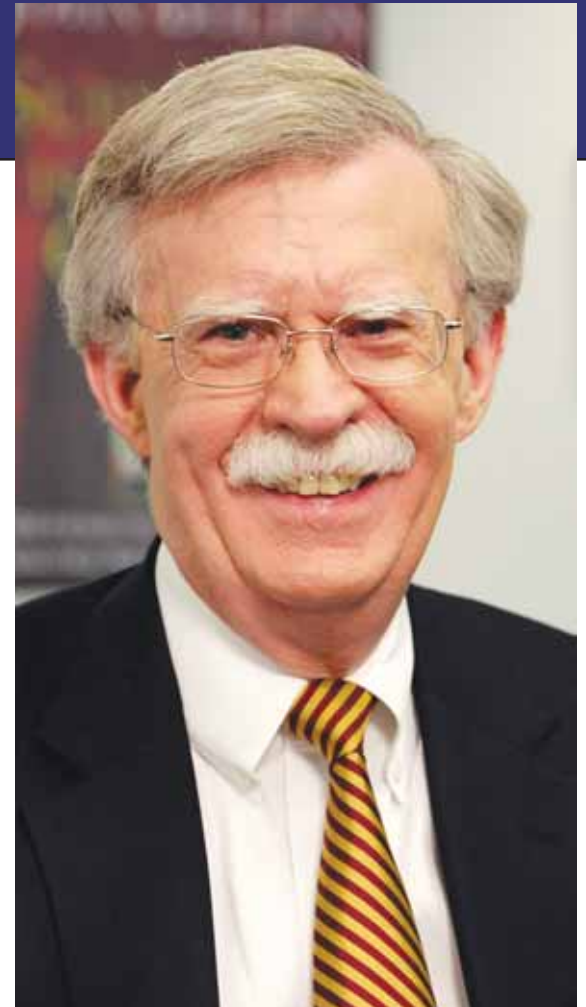
The United States continued to maintain pressure on Pakistan, according to a readout of the meeting issued by the State Department.

"Secretary Pompeo and foreign secretary Gokhale discussed the importance of bringing those responsible for the (Pulwama) attack to justice and the urgency of Pakistan taking meaningful action against terrorist groups operating on its soil," State Department deputy

spokesperson Robert Palladino said. Pompeo affirmed that the United States stands with the people and government of India in the fight against terrorism, he said.

"They noted the strength of our partnership and discussed ways to further enhance cooperation, including on counterterrorism," Palladino said. Tensions flared up between India and Pakistan after a suicide bomber of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM) killed 40 CRPF personnel in Kashmir's Pulwama district on February 14.

The Indian Air Force then carried out a counter-terror operation, reportedly hitting a JeM madrasa in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan, on February 26. The next day, the Pakistan Air Force retaliated and downed a MiG-21 in an aerial combat and captured an Indian pilot, who was handed over to India on March 1.



UN members warn of 'other actions' as China blocks bid to list Masood Azhar as global terrorist

The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity to give a sense of the feeling of other members of the Security Council after China blocked the move to designate Azhar a global terrorist.

(By a Staff Reporter) - Some permanent members of the UN Security Council plan to "pursue other actions" to counter China's continued opposition to designating Jaish-e-Mohammad founder Masood Azhar, a Security Council diplomat said Wednesday, stressing the case for listing the Pakistan-based terrorist was "undeniable".

The diplomat did not elaborate but other UN officials familiar with the rules and regulations of the listing of terrorists by the UN said the stalled designation proposal can be escalated to the Security Council itself now, which would be an unprecedented move and a "public" rebuke of China, which will be forced to "defend its defense of a well-known terrorist in full public view". Open UNSC proceedings are telecast live.

China "should not protect terrorists from Pakistan or any other country from being held accountable to the Council," the diplomat said on background to Hindustan Times. "If China continues to block this designation, responsible member states may be forced to pursue other actions at the Security Council. It shouldn't have to come to that."

The diplomat, who spoke presumably for all three Security Council members who moved the Azhar designation proposal, also criticized Pakistan for depending "on China to protect it from the listing of Pakistan-based terrorist groups and individuals", tying Islamabad, at the same time, to the terrorists it harbors and shelters from proscription. There was anger and frustration all around with China preventing the

designation of Azhar on Wednesday by putting a technical hold on the proposal moved jointly by three Security Council permanent members, France, the United States and the United Kingdom. India said it was "disappointed" by the failure of the designation of the head of the outfit which killed 40 CRPF personnel in a terrorist attack in Pulwama last month. "This is the fourth time that China has placed a hold on this listing," the Security Council diplomat said pointedly. "China should not prevent the Committee from doing the job the Security Council has entrusted it to do. China's move to hold the listing is inconsistent with its own stated goals of combatting terrorism and furthering regional stability in South Asia.

The official did not expand on



what other actions were being considered by the "responsible" members.

But other UN diplomats familiar with the functioning and rules of the 1267 sanctions committee of the UN Security Council, which lists and delists global terrorists, said the designation can be escalated to the highest level and be presented before the Security Council itself for an open discussion and vote that would force the opponents of Azhar's designation to publicly acknowledge their defense of

terrorism.

India has been critical of the opaque process by which the sanctions committee lists terrorists. Its proceedings and decisions are confidential and members do not have to explain their vote.

But if the designation is put before the Security Council, speculated upon, China will be forced to take a stand publicly, "in full view" of those watching the live feed as it either defends its opposition to the designation of a man who is undeniably a terrorist or give up".

Ocasio-Cortez, her chief of staff illegally moved in campaign contributions 'off the books,'

(Insider Bureau)

New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Saikat Chakrabarti, the progressive firebrand's multimillionaire chief of staff, apparently violated campaign finance law by funneling nearly \$1 million in contributions from political action committees Chakrabarti established to private companies that he also controlled, according to an explosive complaint filed Monday with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and obtained by Fox News.

Amid the allegations, a former FEC commissioner late Monday suggested in an interview with The Daily Caller News Foundation that Ocasio-Cortez and her team could separately be facing major fines and potentially even jail time if they were knowingly and willfully violating the law by hiding their control of the Justice Democrats political action committee (PAC). Such an arrangement could have allowed Ocasio-Cortez's campaign to receive donations in excess of the normal limit, by pooling contributions to both the PAC and the campaign itself.

The FEC complaint asserts that Chakrabarti established two PACs, the Brand New Congress PAC and Justice Democrats PAC, and then systematically transferred more than \$885,000 in contributions received by those PACs to the Brand New Campaign LLC and the Brand New Congress LLC -- companies that, unlike PACs, are exempt from reporting all of their significant expenditures. The PACs claimed the payments were for "strategic consulting."

Although large financial transfers from PACs to LLCs are not necessarily improper, the complaint argues that the goal of the "extensive" scheme was seemingly to illegally dodge detailed legal reporting requirements of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, which are designed to track campaign expenditures. "It appears 'strategic consulting' was a mischaracterization of a wide range of activities that should have been reported individually," the complaint states.

The complaint notes that Ocasio-Cortez was a board member of Justice Democrats when money was being disbursed to Brand New Congress LLC.

FILE - In this Wednesday June 27, 2018, file photo, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, left, the winner of New York's Democratic Congressional primary, greets supporters following her victory, along with Saikat Chakrabarti, founder of Justice Democrats and senior adviser for her campaign. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan, File)

The complaint was drafted by the conservative, Virginia-based National Legal and Policy Center (NLPC). Ocasio-Cortez and Chakrabarti, according to the NLPC's complaint, appeared to have "orchestrated an extensive off-the-books operation to make hundreds of thousands of dollars of expenditures in support of multiple candidates for federal office."

The funds, the NLPC writes, were likely spent on campaign events for Ocasio-Cortez and other far-left Democratic candidates favored by Chakrabarti, who made his fortune in Silicon Valley and previously worked on Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign. But no precise accounting for the expenses is available, and the complaint asks the FEC to conduct an investigation into the matter immediately.

"These are not minor or technical violations," Tom Anderson, director of NLPC's Government Integrity Project, said in a statement. "We are talking about real money here. In all my years of studying FEC reports, I've never seen a more ambitious operation to circumvent reporting requirements. Representative Ocasio-Cortez has been quite vocal in condemning so-called dark money, but her own campaign went to great lengths to avoid the sunlight of disclosure."

Brand New Congress LLC does not appear to be registered as an LLC in any state, according to the complaint, but is a registered 527 tax-exempt organization. Fox News confirmed that Brand New Campaign LLC is a registered Delaware corporation, but Brand New Congress LLC is not.

Ocasio-Cortez's office did not return a request for comment. But Chakrabarti defended the set-up on Twitter, saying, "We were doing something totally new, which meant a new set-up. So, we were transparent about it from the start."

A separate explanation posted by Justice Democrats last year cast the arrangement as above-board. "The ONLY way to do work for multiple candidates legally at this scale is to create an LLC and act as a vendor," the group said. In announcing the complaint the NLPC pointed to a 2016 interview on MSNBC, in which the 33-year-old Chakrabarti told anchor Rachel Maddow that he wanted to employ a "single, unified presidential-style campaign" model to "galvanize" voters nationally to elect progressives to Congress, while helping candidates avoid the stress of fundraising and managing their own campaigns.

Other legal experts also sounded the alarm on Monday, saying Chakrabarti's unusual arrangement raised serious unanswered questions.

Former FEC Associate General Counsel for Policy Adav Noti, who currently directs the Campaign Legal Center, told Fox News that it was a "total mystery" to him why Chakrabarti had established an LLC seemingly to take money from the PAC, rather than simply create a "normal venture," like a consulting business, to provide services for candidates on the books.

"Certainly, it's not permissible to use an LLC or any other kind of intermediary to conceal the recipient or purpose of a PAC's spending," Noti said. "The law requires the PAC to report who it disburses money to. You can't try to evade that by routing it through an LLC or corporation or anyone else."

Noti added: "What's so weird about this situation is that the PAC that disbursed so much of its money to one entity that was so clearly affiliated with the PAC. Usually, that's a sign that it's what's come to be known as a 'scam PAC' -- one that's operated for the financial benefit of its operators, rather than one designed to engage in political activity."

At the same time, Noti said, Chakrabarti had provided "long descriptions of why they structured it the way they did -- which is not something a scam PAC would do," because it only draws attention to the unusual set-up. And Noti cautioned that there is a tendency for some groups to try to gain attention by invoking Ocasio-Cortez. "But on the other hand," Noti added, Brand New Congress' "explanations don't make a lot of sense on their face. I read their explanation multiple times, and I still don't understand. If you want to start a business to provide services to campaigns -- many of those are organized as LLC's, and you sell your services." "I read their explanation multiple times, and I still don't understand," said Former FEC Associate General Counsel Adav Noti.

Instead, Chakrabarti "started a PAC, which has legal obligations to report all of its incoming and outgoing money, and then used the PAC to disperse its funds to the LLC," Noti said. Added former FEC chairman Bradley A. Smith, in an interview with The Washington Examiner: "It's a really weird situation. I see almost no way that you can do that without it being at least a reporting violation, quite likely a violation of the contribution limits. You might say from a campaign finance angle that the LLC was essentially operating as an unregistered committee." Last week, Anderson also raised concerns over Ocasio-Cortez's decision to announce, with much fanfare, that she would offer a minimum salary of \$52,000 to her staffers, and a maximum salary of \$80,000 -- far below the typical six-figure highs hit by chiefs of staff and other high-level congressional workers.

Government watchdogs pointed out that federal law requires congressional workers making more than \$126,000 a year -- which would ordinarily include Chakrabarti -- to file detailed forms outlining all of their outside income, including investments and gifts.

"Purposefully underpaying staffers in order to avoid transparency is an old trick some of the most corrupt members of

Congress have used time and again," Anderson said.

Speaking to the New York Post, Ocasio-Cortez spokesman Corbin Trent dismissed the FEC complaint, saying the campaign had consulted an elections lawyer and that all money was properly accounted for.

"It was payment for services. ... We believe that complaint is politically motivated, basically intended to create a political story," Trent told the Post.

Noti told Fox News that Trent's explanation could be plausible -- and if so, it might help Brand New Congress and its related entities and organizers avoid civil fraud lawsuits.

"One possibility -- a strong possibility, based on the description they put out, is they just got really bad legal advice that somehow said they had to do this," Noti said. "But regardless, when they decided to use the PAC form, which they did, they subjected themselves to all the legal requirements that come with that."

Election laws are complicated, Noti added, and there have been some erroneous recent reports related to Ocasio-Cortez's campaign. For example, FEC filings reviewed by Fox News show that Ocasio-Cortez's congressional campaign paid the Justice Democrats PAC more than \$35,000 from 2017 to 2018 for "web services," "strategic consulting," and "campaign services."

While some outlets have incorrectly reported that federal rules generally prohibit PACs from providing more than \$5,000 in services to campaigns, Noti told Fox News that the payments were likely proper so long as they were for the fair market value of the services rendered.

In terms of possible penalties, Noti said that Brand New Congress could be facing fines if it followed bad legal advice and made reporting errors. But civil or even criminal fraud statutes, as opposed to campaign finance laws, would potentially kick in if it were determined that Chakrabarti had intentionally tried to hide the money to use for illicit expenses.

Preet Bharara : 'I didn't call Trump back and it's one of the best decisions I ever made'

Preet Bharara is used to dealing with bullies. When he was the US attorney for the southern district of New York, the premier law enforcement body in America, his office prosecuted Osama bin Laden's son-in-law, Crips and Bloods gang leaders and mafia bosses. For going after the infamous arms dealer Viktor Bout he was banned from Russia, and the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan once tried to persuade the then US vice-president, Joe Biden, to sack him (he didn't). The TV series *Billions* is loosely based on his legal battles with a hedge-fund billionaire. As he puts it himself: "Neither I nor anyone I know was too afraid to prosecute rich men in suits."

So when Bharara says that even he is now feeling apprehensive about his personal safety, and that his fears relate not to al-Qaida or the Gambino family, but to the president of the United States, it comes as a jolt. "I used to have great confidence that my government would protect me," he says. "You understood that if you were an American citizen like me, or resident like Jamal Khashoggi, you weren't going to be rendered somewhere, you didn't think that if you travelled

to Madrid, say, and a BS red notice was issued for you, you'd be on your own. I'm a citizen of the United States and I served my country for 17 years, yet I don't have that confidence any more. I don't know that the government at its highest level thinks of Americans first – it's whether you are on his side, or not on his side." Bharara, 50, has been thinking a lot lately about bullies, and their nemeses – those unsung heroes who strive for what's right. His first book, *Doing Justice: A Prosecutor's Thoughts on Crime, Punishment and the Rule of Law*, takes us back to basics, asking us to reflect on what truth means when a serial liar sits in the Oval Office; what civility involves amid all the social media yelling; and how to uphold the rule of law when thuggish behaviour appears to be the order of the day.

The book is a love letter to the southern district of New York (SDNY) that he led for more than seven years until he was abruptly fired by Donald Trump in March 2017. He praises its spirit of independence – its moniker is "Sovereign District" – and the committed people who work there, such as the "real-life mob-busting cop" Kenny McCabe who

took on all five families of the Cosa Nostra.

As one of the earliest law enforcement agencies in the

country, its aligned federal court, known as the "mother court", has sat continuously since 1789, hearing cases from the sinking

of the Titanic to the trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg as Soviet spies. The reach of SDNY prosecutors is unlimited.

Christchurch Attack Suspect had white-supremacist symbols on weapons

(By Our Staff Reporter) The suspected perpetrator of a massacre at two mosques in New Zealand displayed white supremacist symbols during the deadly assault that killed 49 people and triggered heightened security at mosques around the world. The attack in Christchurch, the worst mass shooting in the nation's history, shattered the illusion that New Zealand was one of the few countries beyond the reach of global terrorism. The carnage, described by New Zealand's prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, as one of its "darkest days", prompted prayers and vigils around the world, and revulsion that live footage of the atrocity was allowed to circulate on social media. Ardern said she would consider a total ban on semi-automatic firearms after the alleged gunman obtained five guns legally. "I can tell you one thing right now: our gun laws will change," she told reporters.

Christchurch remained on lockdown on Saturday as the country's security threat level was raised from low to high. Mosques across New Zealand and in other countries were warned to be vigilant. In the UK and the US, police stepped up patrols in areas with large Muslim populations and around places of worship in direct response to the attack. Responding to the attack on Friday, the UN secretary general, António Guterres, warned there was an urgent need to tackle Islamophobia across the world. A man in his late 20s will appear in court in Christchurch on Saturday morning,

charged with murder. Police did not name him or two other suspects who were being questioned, but Brenton Tarrant, a 28-year-old Australian man, identified himself as being behind the attack.

Some witnesses criticised the emergency services for being slow to respond to the shooting, claiming it took up to 20 minutes for the police to arrive on the scene in the largest city in the country's South Island. The attack, launched during Friday prayers when both mosques were packed, was livestreamed via a camera strapped to the perpetrator.

Horrific images of bloodshed and people desperately trying to evade the gunman were copied and shared on social media sites including YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, which struggled to remove the footage. Mainstream media organisations were criticised for hosting clips. The gunman arrived at Al Noor mosque at 1.40pm, opening fire on about 400 people. He killed 41 people before driving four miles to the Linwood Islamic Centre, where another seven people were shot dead. One of the 48 people injured in the attacks later died in hospital. A bomb disposal team was called in to dismantle explosive devices found in a stopped car. At Al Noor mosque, Khaled Al-Nobani said a man entered with two rifles, one a "pump-action [gun]", and "started shooting everyone – young people, old women". He added: "He shot the first one on the gate, two people in the corridor, and go inside started shooting everyone." One man was killed in front of his three children, Al-Nobani said.

9 Indian-origin people missing after New Zealand shootings that killed 49

Among the missing nine people of Indian origin are Ahmed Jahangir, who hails from Hyderabad and who has family in the city.

At least 9 people of Indian nationality or Indian origin have been listed as missing after Friday's Christchurch shootings at two New Zealand mosques, Indian envoy to New Zealand Sanjiv Kohli tweeted, citing updates received from multiple sources. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has condemned the shooting, described as the country's worst ever mass shooting, as a terrorist attack. A gunman stormed into two mosques and opened fire killing 49 people and leaving 20 others injured during Friday prayers in the country's worst mass shooting every. The attacker live-streamed footage of him going room-to-room, victim to victim, shooting the wounded from close range as they struggled to crawl away. Identified as an Australian extremist, the gunman had also published a "manifesto", in which he referred to immigrants as "invaders". New Zealand was placed on high security alert immediately and four people

have been taken into custody, with one of them being charged with murder. As reports of some people of Indian nationality and origin emerged, New Delhi said the Indian mission was in touch with local authorities to find out more details. "It is a sensitive matter and therefore we can't give confirmed numbers/names till we are absolutely certain," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said. Back home in Hyderabad, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi identified one of the missing people of Indian origin as Ahmed Jahangir. Owaisi put out two tweets in which he tagged external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj saying that a video from Christchurch "shows one Ahmed Jahangir who was shot". New Zealand police described the footage shot by the gunman as "extremely distressing" and warned web users that they could be liable for up to 10 years in jail for sharing such "objectionable content".

Google paid \$45 million to its former India-born executive accused of sexual misconduct

who ran Google's search operations until early 2016.

The amount was revealed on Monday in a shareholder lawsuit accusing the board of directors of Alphabet, the parent company of Google, of shirking their responsibilities by agreeing to pay executives accused of misconduct instead of firing them for cause, the New York Times reported.

The lawsuit was part of the fallout over how Google has handled sexual harassment cases, it said. The lawsuit was filed in January in California Superior Court with redactions in the passages referring to board discussions. An amended version was filed on Monday without the redactions.

According to the amended suit, Google agreed to pay

Singhal \$15 million a year for two years and between \$5 million and \$15 million in the third year as long as he was not employed by a competitor. He agreed to take a job at Uber about a year after his departure, then resigned from the ride-hailing company a few weeks later when the sexual harassment claim at Google became public, the report said.

Frank Bottini, an attorney for the shareholders, said the board-approved payments were an "abdication of responsibility".

A Google spokeswoman said Monday that the company had "made many changes to our workplace and taken an increasingly hard line on inappropriate conduct by people in positions of authority". "There are serious consequences for anyone who

behaves inappropriately at Google," she said.

Mr. Singhal left Google after an employee said he had groped her at an off-site event. Google investigated the allegation and found that Mr. Singhal had been inebriated. The company also concluded that the employee's account was credible. At the time, Mr. Singhal said he wanted to spend more time with his family and focus on his philanthropy, the report said. Mr. Singhal did not respond to a request for comment, it said. Born in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Singhal received a Bachelor of Engineering degree in computer science from IIT Roorkee. He received an MS degree from University of Minnesota Duluth and was head of Google's core search team for 15 years.

America fairs badly in World War 3 simulations

The US may not stand a chance against Russia and China should World War III break out, advanced warfare analysts have warned. Nonprofit global policy think tank RAND has been performing simulated war scenarios, often sponsored by the Pentagon, to test how American forces would fare to test how American forces would fare against the world's other leading military superpowers. Last week, RAND analysts revealed that in scenario after scenario, the US has suffered severe losses despite spending nearly \$1trillion annually on the military, exceeding the spending of any other country by more than double. In our games, when we fight Russia and China, "blue" gets its ass handed to it,' researcher David Ochmanek explained at the Center for a New American Security on Thursday, Breaking Defense first reported. American forces are generally color-coded in blue in the simulations. 'We lose a lot of people. We lose a lot of equipment. We usually fail to achieve our objective of preventing aggression by the adversary,' Ochmanek added. Though hypothetical, the simulated games warn that the world order

America has fought to protect for more than a century could be at risk. The simulated conflicts take place in all five domains of battle: land, sea, air, space and cyberspace. Accord to RAND, 'red' aggressor forces frequently burn US military bases to the ground, sink warships and take out cyber systems. Robert Work, a former deputy secretary of defense and experienced war-gamer, explained that America's F-35 fighter jet is

the most advanced of its kind in the sky, but is vulnerable on the tarmac. 'In every case I know of, the F-35 rules the sky when it's in the sky,' Work said Thursday. 'But it gets killed on the ground in large numbers.' Work also warned that US military bases across Europe and the Pacific are not equipped to handle the fire they would face in a high-end conflict. Work and Ochmanek both said China focus

on cyberspace with 'system destruction warfare', which involves targeting US communications satellites, command-and-control systems, and wireless networks. 'The brain and the nervous system that connects all of these pieces is suppressed, if not shattered,' Ochmanek said. The Chinese would 'attack the American battle network at all levels, relentlessly,' Work warned, adding that 'they practice it all

the time'. 'These are the things that the war games show over and over and over, so we need a new American way of war without question,' Work said. Work and Ochmanek's bleak observations mirror the findings of an assessment carried out last fall by the National Defense Strategy Commission, a bipartisan panel of experts selected by Congress to evaluate America's National Defense Strategy. '

Ethiopian air crash investigators begin black box analysis

Air crash investigators have begun analysing the black box data recorder from Ethiopian Airlines flight 302, amid reports that the plane wreckage suggested similarities with a previous disaster involving the Boeing 737 Max jet. Accounts have also emerged of communications between the plane and air traffic control, in which the pilot is said to have asked in panicked tones to turn back three minutes into the flight, as the 737 Max dipped and climbed. The black box recorder, which arrived in Paris showing some external damage, is being reviewed by French aviation experts at the request of Ethiopian Airlines. French authorities have said it was unclear what data could be retrieved to shed light on Sunday's crash, which killed 157 people outside Addis Ababa. It is likely

to be several days before any interim findings are released, according to Ethiopian Airlines chief executive Tewolde Gebremariam. Evidence gathered by investigators at the scene of the crash, according to two sources cited by Reuters, includes a piece of the plane's stabiliser, which was set in an unusual position – potentially suggesting similarities with the Lion Air crash off Jakarta in October. Gebremariam said there was a "clear similarity between our crash and the Lion Air crash." Inquiries in Indonesia have focused on how an automated system used the stabiliser to pitch the nose down, against the pilots' commands. The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Boeing declined to comment on the claims.

Kate Murray running for Hempstead town clerk

(By our staff reporter) Long Island Kate Murray, Former Hempstead Town Supervisor is running for Town of Hempstead Clerk. For years, Murray won election after election in the Town of Hempstead. First as town clerk, and then repeatedly as the supervisor of America's largest township. The Republican is a household name in Hempstead and has never lost a town wide race. Political analyst Jerry Kremer says Murray figures to boost the Republican ticket because of her name recognition and prior electoral success in the town. As for angry Islander fans, Kremer says they likely don't factor in much, since the team might be playing hockey on Long Island again.



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April 6th, 2019

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Taxing the rich may not pay the bills for liberal agenda

(Insider Bureau)- House Democrats on Wednesday sparred with Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen over whether illegal immigration at the U.S.-Mexico border justifies the national emergency declared last month by President Donald Trump.

During a three-hour hearing before the House Homeland Security Committee, Democratic lawmakers also pressed Nielsen over the administration's practice of separating families. Thousands of migrant families were split apart from April to June under Trump's "zero tolerance" enforcement strategy.

Chairman Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) slammed Nielsen for not providing the committee with documents related to family separation and the treatment of children in custody. He also asserted that Trump used "an emergency that does not exist" to obtain funds for a border wall outside the will of Congress.

"The president wants to build a wall so there is something to point to," he said.

The hearing comes amid a pitched political battle over

Trump's decision to declare a national emergency after Congress declined to provide \$5.7 billion to build a border wall. The House voted last week to block the emergency declaration, and the Senate is expected to do the same later this month. Trump has said he will veto the bill, and neither the House nor the Senate appears to have sufficient votes to override.

A spate of lawsuits have argued that Trump exceeded his authority by declaring the emergency. While plaintiffs in those cases have sought to block Trump's declaration, no courts have taken that step yet.

In opening remarks at the hearing Wednesday, Nielsen said that the situation along the southern border is a "humanitarian catastrophe," and described the area as a conduit for criminals, drugs and human trafficking.

"This chain of human misery is getting worse," she said, citing recent statistics that show a spike in border arrests, a metric used to estimate crossings.

Border Patrol arrested 66,450 migrants at the southwest border

in February, the highest single-month total since March 2009. Since October, monthly arrests have averaged 53,600, the highest rate since 2008 but still far below arrest rates in the 1990s and early 2000s.

In one exchange Wednesday, Rep. Jim Langevin (D-R.I.) pressed Nielsen to acknowledge that the current level of arrests remains far below historic highs - and that Trump spoke falsely when he said during a January visit to South Texas that there have "never [been] so many apprehensions ever in our history."

Langevin cited Customs and Border Protection statistics that show 1.6 million border arrests in fiscal year 2000 - far above the 397,000 arrests recorded last year.

Nielsen said she did not "know the full context" of Trump's statement, and emphasized instead that arrests of family members have reached the highest level on record. CBP has been tracking such records only since fiscal 2012.

"In some categories," Nielsen said, "we have had record-



breaking apprehensions."

Langevin, though, slammed Trump's claims as "deceitful."

White House officials watched Nielsen's appearance closely and were pleased with it, saying she did a stellar job representing the administration.

"She held her own," one former DHS official who served under Trump told POLITICO. "It's tough [because] Trump speaks in generalist terms and committees deal in specifics."

Nielsen also won accolades from House Republicans, several of whom praised Trump's emergency declaration.

"I think it is a crisis," said Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas), who chaired the committee in the last session of Congress. "I think the president's correct in saying it's an emergency and that we need dire action now."

McCaul added that Nielsen

shouldn't shoulder responsibility for the continued arrival of migrants at the border because U.S. asylum laws serve as a "magnet" for people trekking to the U.S.

"It's not your fault," he told Nielsen. "It's Congress that's failed to act to solve this problem." Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala.), ranking member of the committee, said he supported an "all of the above" approach to border security that includes manpower, technology and barriers.

"We never argued about whether barriers worked until Donald Trump wanted them," he said. "This is not rocket science."

Democrats, on the other hand, hammered Nielsen on a number of points, including the administration's separation of families at the border.

Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-Ill.), new to Congress in January, questioned the secretary about her knowledge of the health effects of family separations on children.

Nielsen, as she's done in the past, blamed migrant parents for crossing illegally or sending children to the U.S. alone.

"I would ask all parents to go to ports of entry, not to separate their children and send them on the journey alone, and not to break U.S. law," Nielsen said.

Medical experts opposed the policy last spring and argued it would have serious negative consequences for children.

The American Psychological Association said in May that separations can cause lifelong trauma and increase risk of mental illness. Colleen Kraft, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, asserted that it would result in "toxic stress" for kids.

Nielsen repeated her longstanding claim that the administration never had a formal family separation policy.

Ryan warns Trump could be beat in 2020

(Insider Bureau)- Former House Speaker Paul Ryan on Monday warned that President Donald Trump's reelection prospects could be in danger next year if he relies on his personality, rather than focus on policy to win another four years in the White House.

Speaking at a lecture in Vero Beach, Fla., in some of his first public comments since leaving Congress two months ago, Ryan bemoaned the political polarization that was a defining characteristic of his tenure as speaker, blaming the ultraconservative House Freedom Caucus for derailing attempts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act and blaming technology for deepening the political divide. Ryan focused heavily on policy in his speech, *Treasure Coast Newspapers* reported, and urged the president to do

the same during his reelection campaign. He told the audience that he believes there are some Democrats who could unseat Trump in 2020 and pushed him to define himself through his policy platform.

"The person who defines that race is going to win the race. If this is about Donald Trump and his personality, he isn't going to win it," Ryan said.

The former speaker did not address the thinly veiled criticisms Trump has lobbed at him since Ryan left office in January, especially over Ryan's failure to secure funding for the president's proposed wall on the U.S.-Mexico border before Republicans lost the House. Ryan did say that he hopes Congress addresses immigration issues like



increased funding for border security. But he also called for reforms for several visa programs and expressed hope for a solution for dreamers, migrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children. The former speaker cited Republicans' drawn-out repeal and replace efforts in 2017 as one of the biggest mistakes of

his tenure, arguing that the negotiation process for a replacement for the Affordable Care Act took too long and that delays led by the Freedom Caucus "eroded public support for it" so that by the time it arrived in the Senate, where it was defeated, "it was hanging on a thread."

But he also argued that he had many policy successes during his three-year tenure, saying he felt achievements like the GOP tax bill, bipartisan criminal justice reform, opioid response legislation and deregulatory action had been overlooked.

He would have been able to accomplish more, he said, if not for the Senate's filibuster rules for major legislation, which the former speaker said prevented him pursuing entitlement reforms.

its insane : De Blasio allies warn against 2020 run

The New York mayor has been flirting with a presidential bid, but has few backers.

(Insider Bureau)- New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio may be thinking of running for president, but many of those closest to him aren't on board.

As de Blasio touted his liberal record in Iowa and South Carolina in recent weeks, nearly three dozen former and current aides, consultants and allies who spoke to POLITICO panned the idea or doubted that the mayor would run for the Democratic nomination. Aside from the few people working on the nascent effort, only two said de Blasio should run.

Their reasoning: Some say the 2020 field, a dozen-strong and growing, leaves no room for de Blasio, who's long struggled to fashion a national persona comparable with past leaders of the country's largest city, like Rudy Giuliani or Michael

Bloomberg. Many note that he has too many glaring, unresolved problems at home. Others say the never-truly-popular de Blasio, whom a top Hillary Clinton backer once called "insufferable," lacks charisma.

A few skeptics in de Blasio's orbit have gone public. "I believe Bill de Blasio has 100 percent the right message; I'm just not so sure he's the right messenger," the mayor's former campaign and City Hall adviser Rebecca Katz said recently on a local politics podcast.

Behind the scenes, others are more blunt. The idea of a de Blasio candidacy is "f--ing insane," said one former aide, laughing out loud.

Another self-described friend of the mayor called the idea "idiotic."

It's a stark contrast to the

typical dynamics of a presidential exploration in which aides and allies tend to egg on the potential candidate. Indeed, the strongest advocate for a de Blasio candidacy seems to be de Blasio himself. Gone is the stable of trusted consultants whose advice he once relied on so heavily that he designated them de facto city employees during his first term. In their place are two City Hall aides volunteering their spare time to work on his explorations, and his wife, Chirlane McCray.

"I really appreciate everyone's views, but I don't know they can see things the way Chirlane and I see them, in terms of what we need to do with our lives, what we feel is the right thing to do, but also how we analyze the political circumstance - because it's been kind of a life's



work for both of us," de Blasio told POLITICO in a recent Gracie Mansion interview.

"I assure you I had a lot of folks who were friends and allies warmly put their arm around my shoulder and tell me what a crazy idea it was to run for Public Advocate, what a crazy idea it was to run for mayor," he said.

The only adviser whose approval de Blasio said he needs is his wife, who recently traveled with him to South Carolina to meet with local Democratic party

officials.

But even she seems to have doubts.

In a recent interview for POLITICO's Women Rule podcast, she said that while she thinks her husband would "be a great president," she added "the timing is not exactly right." McCray elaborated on her comments in a follow-up interview, saying "This is a very big undertaking. He has a big demanding job and I see closer than anyone the time and the work it takes to run this city."

Still, de Blasio has been making moves.

He tapped City Hall communications director Mike Casca, a 2016 Bernie Sanders alum, and Jon Paul Lupo, a top government aide with experience on national Senate races, to work on the effort in their spare time. Last month, he traveled to the battleground state of Iowa, trekking through a snowstorm to tout his successes in New York City to a small group of voters.

He also donated \$25,000 through his Fairness Political Action Committee to Democratic Party organizations in two key primary states, Iowa and South Carolina.

Longtime friends Peter Ragone, a former City Hall adviser, and Jim Crounse, who has consulted for de Blasio since his 2001 City Council campaign, have been informally advising him. "The only reason why he wouldn't be mentioned with [Los Angeles Mayor Eric] Garcetti or [South Bend Mayor Pete] Buttigieg ... is because the opinion-makers, the Gang of 500, have never seen a good story written about him," Ragone said, referencing de Blasio's poor relationship with the New York City press corps. When asked whether the mayor should be considered a contender, Ragone replied, "If you have a record of accomplishment, why not? The party needs this competition of ideas."

Facial recognition technology will be rolled out at 20 major US airports by 2021

(Insider Bureau)- President Trump accelerated the introduction of controversial facial recognition technology at 20 of the largest domestic airports in a move that will affect more than 100 million passengers travelling out of the United States.

The 'biometric verification of identities' of all travelers crossing US borders is set for a 2021 start date, with Homeland Security scrambling to get the system in place after Trump issued an executive order in March 2017 expediting the process.

Every single traveler, including American citizens, will have their faces scanned at the major airports, prompting fears among privacy advocates of an Orwellian program of surveillance.

A lack of regulatory safeguards and vetting have even led some to argue the introduction is in defiance of the law. According to a 346-page document seen

by BuzzFeed News, US Customs and Border Protection (CPB) is rushing to implement the 'biometric entry-exit system' with the aim of identifying passengers on some 16,300 flights every week within two years.

The introduction of the technology was signed off under President Obama's administration but carried forward enthusiastically under that of Trump's.

Controversially, just months ago there were no safeguards on how partnering airlines could potentially use the facial recognition data - while the accuracy of the technology is still yet to be proven in mainstream use.

During a privacy meeting in December last year, Customs and Border Protection took the steps of limiting participating companies from using the data, however, it remains to be seen whether they will enforce this new rule going

forward.

Under the guidelines, airports will 'retain photos... for up to 14 days' of all non-US citizens departing the country, which will be used according to the report for 'evaluation of the technology' and 'assurance of the accuracy of the algorithms'.

The opaque terminology is likely to raise fears over how the technology could be used in the long-term, with one implication being that the retained photos could be used for in-depth training of its facial matching AI.

'CBP is solving a security challenge by adding a convenience for travelers,' a spokesperson told BuzzFeed News.

There is also some suggestion that CBP failed to properly navigate the 'rulemaking process,' which requires the agency to ensure the feedback of the public is considered before adopting the use of the technology across the board.

Despite fears of surveillance and impeded free speech, CBP deny any cause for concern and say they are committed to shielding the privacy of all travelers.

Nonetheless, the documents outline an 'initial operating capability' of the technology before 2020, with the agency set to use it for more up to 30 international flights across more than a dozen US airports each day.

At present the law lags behind technology and as such the use of facial recognition technology is crucially not illegal, while the courts have yet to consider whether it impedes the Fourth Amendment.

The technology is already being used in seventeen major international airports including those in New York City, Chicago, Boston and Atlanta.

Some airlines have also signaled their willingness to use the technology, including British Airways, Delta, JetBlue and American Airlines.

Felicity Huffman, Lori Loughlin among several dozen snared in elite college cheating scheme, authorities say



(Insider Bureau)- Actresses Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin were among more than four dozen people charged in a nationwide college admissions cheating scandal that involved wealthy individuals purportedly paying up to \$6.5 million to place their children into elite universities, say court records released Tuesday.

The alleged scam -- it's said to have placed students in top colleges including Yale, Georgetown, Stanford, University of Southern California, UCLA and the University of Texas -- was run by William Rick Singer of California, who helped parents get their children's college admission through bribes, court documents unsealed in Boston claimed. Officials have been investigating the case, named "Operation Varsity Blues," for more than a year.

Singer, an admissions consulting company founder,

pleaded guilty in Boston federal court Tuesday afternoon to charges including racketeering conspiracy and obstruction of justice.

At least 13 people, including Huffman and Loughlin's husband, Mossimo Giannulli, were arrested Tuesday morning and were expected to make their first court appearance later in the day.

Singer ran the charity, Key

Worldwide Foundation, which received \$25 million in total to guarantee the admissions, U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling said during a Tuesday news conference. The charitable foundation was allegedly used as a front to run the admissions scheme.

"This is a case where [the parents] flaunted their wealth, sparing no expense to cheat the system so they could set their children up for success with the best money can buy," Joseph Bonavolonta, from the FBI's Boston field office, said in a Tuesday news conference.

Most of the students didn't know their admission was due to a bribe, authorities said, but in some cases, the children and their parents took part in the scheme.

"Singer would accommodate what parents wanted to do," Lelling said, adding that it "appears that the schools are not involved."

The scheme allegedly involved extensive coordination with parents. Lelling said Singer had

a knack for making fake credentials look realistic enough to avoid inviting close scrutiny. The children's parents would allegedly pay a specified amount of money, fully aware it would be used to gain college admission. The money would then go toward an SAT or ACT administrator or a college athletic coach, who would fake a profile for the prospective student - regardless of ability, according to the charging documents.

"There can be no separate college admission system for the wealthy and there will not be a separate criminal justice system either," Lelling said. "We're not talking about donating a building so a school is more likely to take your son or daughter, we're talking about deception or fraud." On a call with one parent, prosecutors said, Singer described the business simply: "What we do is help the wealthiest families in the U.S. get their kids into school. ... My families want a guarantee."

Singer would help his clients' children by having another individual take SAT or ACT tests on the youngsters' behalf, officials said. Parents would allegedly pay up to \$75,000 for each test and wire money to "charitable accounts."

Victims of Get-Rich-Quick Scheme to get checks from FTC

(By our Staff Reorter) -The Federal Trade Commission will be mailing refund checks totaling more than \$644,000 to people who lost money to a get-rich-quick scheme that falsely claimed they could earn significant money working online by using products marketed as "secret codes."

The refunds stem from a settlement with the operators of the Mobile Money Code scheme, which also used the names eMobile Code, Auto Mobile Code, Easy Cash Code, Full Money System, and Secret Money System. The defendants claimed that people could make substantial income using their "secret codes" online. In reality, these products were generic software applications for building mobile-friendly websites.

As part of the settlement, the FTC will be sending 12,072 checks averaging about \$53 to victims of the scheme. The checks will expire after 60 days.

These are legitimate checks, and the FTC urges people to cash them before they expire. The FTC never requires consumers to pay money or provide account information to cash a refund check.

Consumers who have questions about the refunds should contact the refund administrator, Epiq Systems, at 1-888-418-0477.

FTC law enforcement actions led to more than \$2.3 billion in refunds for consumers in a one-year period between July 2017 and June 2018. To learn more about the FTC's refund program, visit www.ftc.gov/refunds.

The Federal Trade Commission works to promote competition, and protect and educate consumers. You can learn more about consumer topics and file a consumer complaint online or by calling 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357). Like the FTC on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, read our blogs, and subscribe to press releases for the latest FTC news and resources.

30 years on, Internet founder Tim Berners-Lee laments spread of hatred on the web

Tim Berners-Lee is convinced the online population will continue to grow, but says accessibility issues continue to beset much of the world.

(Insider Bureau)- Tim Berners-Lee, the computer scientist who founded the Internet in 1989, says there is much to celebrate as half the world has since gone online, but also laments its misuse to spread hatred and commit crime. Berners-Lee, 63, wrote an open letter on Tuesday, the 30th anniversary of the day he proposed an information management system on March 11, 1989, which led to hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) and eventually the Internet. Knighted in 2004, he writes, "The web has become a public square, a library, a doctor's office, a shop, a school, a design studio, an office, a cinema, a bank, and so much more." "And while the web has created opportunity, given marginalised groups a voice, and made our daily lives easier, it has also created opportunity for scammers, given a voice to those who spread hatred, and made all kinds of crime easier to commit."

He identifies three sources of dysfunction: Deliberate, malicious intent, such as state-sponsored hacking and attacks, criminal behaviour, and online harassment; system design that creates perverse incentives where user value is sacrificed, such as ad-based revenue models that commercially reward clickbait and the viral spread of misinformation. Thirdly, the unintended negative consequences of benevolent design, such as the outraged and polarised tone and quality of online discourse. He writes, "While the first category is impossible to eradicate completely, we can create both laws and code to minimize this behaviour, just as we have always done offline. The second category requires us to redesign systems in a way that change incentives." "And the final category calls for research to understand existing systems

and model possible new ones or tweak those we already have", calling for global action to tackle what he calls the Internet's "downward plunge to a dysfunctional future." Calling on governments to translate laws and regulations for the digital age, Berners-Lee writes that digital companies must do more to ensure their pursuit of short-term profit is not at the expense of human rights, democracy, scientific fact or public safety. "The fight for the web is one of the most important causes of our time. Today, half of the world is online. It is more urgent than ever to ensure the other half are not left behind offline, and that everyone contributes to a web that drives equality, opportunity and creativity." "The web is for everyone and collectively we hold the power to change it. It won't be easy. But if we dream a little and work a lot, we can get the web we want," he adds.

China, Pakistan upgrading fighter aircraft used against Indian Air Force: Report

The JF-17, or the FC-1, is a single-engine multi-role light fighter jet jointly developed by China and Pakistan for export, according to the website of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China.



(Agencies)- China and Pakistan (LoC) last month.

have begun upgrading their jointly developed JF-17 fighter jet, the current version of which was reportedly used by the Pakistan air force (PAF) in the dogfight against Indian fighter aircraft near the Line of Control

"The development and production of the JF-17 Block 3 are underway," Yang Wei, a Chinese legislator and chief designer of the China-Pakistan co-developed fighter jet, was quoted as saying by the state

media.

The F-16 was part of the two dozen fighter aircraft that PAF had scrambled during the dogfight with the IAF. The current version is said to be a contender of India's indigenously developed Tejas aircraft.

Yang said his aim is to enhance the jet's "informatised warfare capability and weapons" or the use of cutting-edge communication technology in modern warfare.

"All related work is being carried out," Yang was quoted as saying by the nationalistic tabloid Global Times at a press conference held on the sidelines of China's ongoing Parliament session.

The JF-17, or the FC-1, is a single-engine multi-role light fighter jet jointly developed by China and Pakistan for export, according to the website of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China. Yang added that the development and batch production for the JF-17 Block 3 aircraft were going on simultaneously.

"The third block will see the JF-17's informatised warfare capability and weapons upgraded," Yang said.

Pakistan, the main user of the JF-17, could further share information between the fighter and other platforms, taking advantage of the whole combat system to effectively defend against strong

opponents like India, a military analyst Wei Dongxu was quoted as saying.

Wei explained how the upgraded version would be put to use against the IAF.

"JF-17 Block 3 is expected to be fitted with an active electronically scanned array radar, which can gather more information in combat, enabling the fighter jet to engage from a farther range and attack multiple targets at the same time. A helmet-mounted display and sight system could also allow pilots to aim whatever he sees," Wei said.

Once the new upgrades are ready, they can be fitted on the airframe very fast, ensuring a quick delivery time, Wei added. According to the tabloid, the JF-17 is often described by its manufacturer and military observers as an advanced but also a cost-effective fighter.

"It is currently contending with India's Tejas and South Korea's FA-50 in Malaysia's new fighter jet purchase plan, with the JF-17 being the most competitive option," Wei said.

Myanmar and Nigeria have reportedly purchased the Chinese-Pakistani warplane.

Balakot Airstrikes are a Replay of Modi's Notebandi Strategy

Launch a 'masterstroke' of questionable effectiveness, make exaggerated claims and then attack those who question your claims as being 'anti-India'

(Agencies)- It was fascinating to view the wave of public approval that greeted the government following India's airstrikes on Balakot. Celebrities vied with each other in extolling the move. Social media erupted in frenzied jubilation. The media eulogised the firm and decisive nature of the prime minister. Wild claims were floated in the media based on anonymous sources and 'educated guesses'.

Most channels claimed anywhere between 250-400 terrorists had died and considerable terrorist infrastructure had been destroyed. Some claimed that the brother of Maulana Masood Azhar had perished. The consensus view was that this was a decisive blow against terror. The few pesky folks who questioned the wisdom of the decision were quickly shouted down, their concerns contemptuously dismissed. It reminded one of the initial heady days following

demonetisation.

That was when anchors and spokespersons tried to convince the people that lakhs of crores of rupees would be returned to the public exchequer on account of not being deposited back. A time when anchors competed with WhatsApp forwards in reporting the most bizarre claims such as the reported nano GPS chip in new notes. The time when the media announced the impending demise of black money owing to this supreme 'masterstroke' of the PM.

It might be hard now to exactly remember that initial public mood after demonetisation. Just to capture the extent of the hyperbole that seemed normal at the time, the Indian cricket captain felt confident hailing demonetisation as the "greatest move in Indian political history". To be fair to Kohli, he wasn't the only celebrity extolling the move. A flood of big names from the film industry - Rajinikanth, Amitabh

Bachchan, Anushka Sharma, Rishi Kapoor, Anushka Sharma, Anurag Kashyap, Ajay Devgn - along with a host of smaller stars, took to Twitter to hail the 'masterstroke against corruption'. Words like 'paradigm shift' and 'game changer' that are being liberally attached to this new phase in our 'war on terrorism' were then appended with this new phase in the 'war on corruption'. With one fell swoop, Modi, aided by a pliant media, changed the whole discourse and captivated the attention of the nation. It was timed, probably not coincidentally, just a few months before the UP elections. Corruption took centre stage in the ensuing elections, and the BJP strode home to a decisive majority. The prime minister has now undertaken an even more reckless adventure (given the nuclear shadow), timed on the cusp of the general elections. It seems geared yet again for a short-term political boost, with



seemingly no regard for the attendant consequences. Unsurprisingly, it is unfolding exactly according to the demonetisation script - make a dramatic move, follow it up with wild claims of success, and then, most importantly, attack those who question the claims as being against the nation.

It is impossible to know today whether the strikes will turn out to be as fruitless in stemming terrorism as demonetisation was in checking corruption. But long before the answer is clear, Modi hopes he would already have cashed the electoral dividend. Well, the verdict on demonetisation is in, and it turned out to every bit of the monumental blunder that

sensible economists predicted it to be. Millions of jobs were lost and incomes evaporated, but the anchors, experts and celebrities that happily cheered the move escaped largely unscathed.

Much like demonetisation, the wild claims and hyperbole attached to the strikes are free of hard evidence. International news reports and satellite imagery dispute the government's claim of hitting a terrorist camp and causing a 'very large number of casualties'. The figure of 250-300 terrorists killed, floated by many including the BJP president, seems to have been conjured from thin air, quite like the lakhs of rupees that were supposed to be recovered by demonetisation.

Zuckerberg wants Facebook to build a creepy mind-reading machine

(Agencies)- If you're concerned about Facebook's privacy scandals or worried that it's listening in on your phone calls, you'll likely be disturbed by CEO Mark Zuckerberg's recent comments at Harvard.

Despite the fact that Facebook is under fire from Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass. and facing more skepticism from the public about its business practices, the tech giant's chief executive officer discussed the company's research into a brain-computer interface that would allow people to use their mind to navigate through augmented reality.

Even though this might sound creepy, don't worry, Zuckerberg said they have no current plans to develop surgically implanted chips. The idea would be to produce some type of external device, perhaps glasses, that allow users to control digital

additions to the landscape without speaking or typing anything.

When the moderator, Harvard law school professor Jonathan Zittrain, chided Zuckerberg about the "Fifth amendment implications" of such a technology, the CEO responded with something that sounds familiar to anyone who has paid attention to Facebook's privacy scandals since Cambridge Analytica. "I mean, presumably this [augmented reality technology] would be something that someone would choose to use a product. I'm not - yeah, yeah. I mean, yes, there's of course all the other implications, but yeah, I think that this is going to be - that's going to be an interesting thing down the line."

The technology that Zuckerberg has described could be used in conjunction with a new product

or as part of headsets manufactured by Oculus VR, which is owned by Facebook.

Zuckerberg explained that something implantable would not scale: "If you're actually trying to build things that everyone is going to use, you're going to want to focus on the noninvasive things," the tech mogul said. He elaborated on why he's bullish about augmented reality.

"The way that our phones work today, and all computing systems, organized around apps and tasks is fundamentally not how our brains work and how we approach the world," Zuckerberg said at Harvard. "That's one of the reasons I'm just very excited long-term about especially things like augmented reality because it'll give us a platform that I think actually is how we think about



stuff." Zuckerberg described the technology's possible benefits, according to Wired, like this in 2017: "Our brains produce enough data to stream 4 HD movies every second. The problem is that the best way we have to get information out into the world-speech-can only transmit about the same amount of data as a 1980s modem. We're working on a system that will let you type straight from your brain about 5x faster than

you can type on your phone today. Eventually, we want to turn it into a wearable technology that can be manufactured at scale. Even a simple yes/no 'brain click' would help make things like augmented reality feel much more natural." Although there has been a lot of talk and hype about augmented reality's potential future development, thus far even virtual reality headsets and glasses have not caught on with most consumers.

Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology to Hold Cybersecurity and Innovation Showcase

WASHINGTON (Agencies)- The 2019 S&T Cybersecurity and Innovation Showcase, one of the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate's (S&T) flagship events, will be held March 18 - 20 at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Expected to draw approximately 1,000 cybersecurity and technology professionals across government and industry, the S&T Cybersecurity and Innovation Showcase is not your average government conference. The event theme—"Solutions Now, Innovations for the Future"—highlights S&T's support to DHS operational components in today's aggressive threat landscape. The three-day event will introduce government, industry technology implementers, pilot and testing partners, investors, angel funders, and other potential market transition partners to more than 130 presentations, across more than 20 research areas, representing a combined \$250 million of federally funded cybersecurity research and development. One aspect of the Showcase is the Technology and

Demonstration and Poster Session, March 18 and 19, which will feature more than 75 R&D efforts, providing attendees an in-depth opportunity to see S&T-funded technologies first-hand.

Partnering with entrepreneurs and the international community to provide new technologies for national security is vital for mission success. R&D projects from startups connected through S&T's Silicon Valley Innovation Program and researchers funded by S&T's international partners will also be represented at the Showcase. Highlights of the sixth annual event include top government and private-sector thought-leaders including DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Director Christopher Krebs, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Kevin McAleenan, DHS S&T Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary William N. Bryan, and cyberspace policy and cybersecurity expert Melissa Hathaway. For a full list of S&T Showcase speakers visit the Speakers page. 2019 S&T Cybersecurity and Innovation Showcase

Facebook, Instagram suffer major global outage, down for hours

We're focused on working to resolve the issue as soon as possible, but can confirm that the issue is not related to a DDoS attack, says Facebook.

(Agencies)- Facebook and Instagram on Wednesday suffered a major global outage. Users were unable to access the two platforms on their smartphones as well as on desktop. Messenger is also down for several users.

Some users complained that they could not log into their Facebook accounts. Instagram and Messenger users also faced similar problems. Some also complained that the News Feed was not refreshing at all. WhatsApp is also partially down for some users as they are unable to access some key features such as voice notes. Facebook said it was aware about the issues with its applications and was working to resolve the problem.

"We're focused on working to resolve the issue as soon as possible, but can confirm that the issue is not related to a DDoS attack," Facebook said. DDoS, also known as distributed denial-of-service, attack is when multiple devices flood the bandwidth of a targeted system, ultimately causing it to crash.



"We're aware that some people are currently having trouble accessing the Facebook family of apps. We're working to resolve the issue as soon as possible," the company said in a tweet.

According to downdetector.com, Facebook went down around 10pm IST. The global outage however started somewhere around 9:38pm. The live map showed Facebook was down in many parts globally including India. Around the same time, photo sharing app Instagram also went down. It appears that Facebook and Instagram were affected by the same issue which caused the global outage.

Users naturally arrived on Twitter posting about the apps. Facebook is accessible but users cannot post any update. It shows a message saying that "something's gone wrong" and that it will get fixed soon.

The Facebook outage comes shortly after Google users faced similar issues with Maps and Drive services. Google later apologised for the interruption in the services.

This is not the first time Facebook suffered such global outage. In November last year, Facebook was down for approximately 40 minutes. The social networking company had then blamed a test for the interruption in services.



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Gene-edited food quietly arrives in restaurant cooking oil

The Minnesota-based company is hoping the announcement will encourage the food industry's interest in the oil, which it says has no trans fats and a longer shelf life than other soybean oils.

Somewhere in the Midwest, a restaurant is frying foods with oil made from gene-edited soybeans. That's according to the company making the oil, which says it's the first commercial use of a gene-edited food in the U.S. Calyxt said it can't reveal its first customer for competitive reasons, but CEO Jim Blome said the oil is "in use and being eaten." The Minnesota-based company is hoping the announcement will encourage the food industry's interest in the oil, which it says has no trans fats and a longer shelf life than other soybean oils. Whether demand builds remains to be seen, but the oil's transition into the food supply signals gene editing's potential to alter foods without the controversy of conventional GMOs, or genetically modified organisms. Among the other gene-edited crops being explored:

Mushrooms that don't brown, wheat with more fiber, better-producing tomatoes, herbicide-tolerant canola and rice that doesn't absorb soil pollution as it grows.

Unlike conventional GMOs, which are made by injecting DNA from other organisms, gene editing lets scientists alter traits by snipping out or adding specific genes in a lab. Startups including Calyxt say their crops do not qualify as GMOs because what they're doing could theoretically be achieved with traditional crossbreeding. So far, U.S. regulators have agreed and said several gene-edited crops in development do not require special oversight. It's partly why companies see big potential for gene-edited crops.

"They've been spurred on by the regulatory decisions by this administration," said Greg Jaffe of the Center for Science in the

Public Interest, a health watchdog group.

But given the many ways gene editing can be used, Jaydee Hanson of the Center for Food Safety said regulators should consider the potential implications of each new crop. He cited the example of produce gene-edited to not brown.

"You've designed it to sit around longer. Are there problems with that?" he said. Already, most corn and soy grown in the U.S. are herbicide-tolerant GMOs. Just last week, regulators cleared a hurdle for salmon genetically modified to grow faster. The fish is the first genetically modified animal approved for human consumption in the U.S.

Though regulators say GMOs are safe, health and environmental worries have persisted, and companies will soon have to disclose when products have "bioengineered"



ingredients.

and sauces and for frying, but Calyxt says its oil does not didn't specify if the oil's benefits qualify as a GMO. The oil is are being communicated to made from soybeans with two diners.

inactivated genes to produce Calyxt is working on other gene-more heart-healthy fats and no edited crops that it says are trans fats. The company says the faster to develop than oil also has a longer shelf life, conventional GMOs, which which could reduce costs for food require regulatory studies. But makers or result in longer-lasting Tom Adams, CEO of biotech products. Soybean oils took a hit company Pairwise, said when regulators moved to ban oversight of gene-edited foods oils with trans fats. Other trans could become stricter if public fat-free soybean oils have attitude changes.

become available in the years "You should never think of since, but the industry has found regulation as settled," Adams it difficult to win back food said. Pairwise is partnering with makers that already switched to Monsanto-parent Bayer on different oils, said John Motter, developing gene-edited crops. former chair of the United Views on gene-editing vary too. Soybean Board.

The National Organic Standards Calyxt said the first customer is Board said foods made with gene a company in the Midwest with editing cannot qualify as organic multiple restaurant and . And last year, Europe's highest foodservice locations, such as court said gene-edited foods building cafeterias. It said the should be subject to the same customer is using it in dressings rules as conventional GMOs.

Moderate muscle strength may lower risk of diabetes

The study, which involved over 4,500 adults, found that moderate muscle mass reduced the risk of type 2 diabetes by 32%.

Building muscle strength may be one way to lower the risk of type 2 diabetes, a recent study suggests.

The study, which involved over 4,500 adults, found that moderate muscle mass reduced the risk of type 2 diabetes by 32%. The benefits were independent of cardiorespiratory fitness, and higher levels of muscle strength did not provide additional protection.

According to the researchers, the results are encouraging because even small amounts of resistance exercise may be helpful in preventing type 2 diabetes by improving muscle strength. However, it is difficult to recommend an optimal level as there are no standardised measurements for muscle strength.

"Naturally, people will want to

know how often to lift weights or how much muscle mass they need, but it's not that simple," said DC Lee, lead author of the study published in the Journal of Mayo Clinic Proceedings.

"As researchers, we have several ways to measure muscle strength, such as grip strength or bench press. More work is needed to determine the proper dose of resistance exercise, which may vary for different health outcomes and populations," Lee explained.

Study participants completed chest and leg presses to measure muscle strength. Those measurements were adjusted for age, gender and body weight as potential confounders, which is an example of why researchers say it is complicated to provide general recommendations.

While several factors contribute

to muscle strength, according to Angelique Brellenthin, one of the lead researchers, resistance exercise is important. Information on resistance exercise was not available for most participants, with the exception of a small group, which showed a moderate correlation between muscle strength and frequency or days per week of resistance exercise. Other research has found resistance training improves glucose levels and reduces waist circumference - an indicator of excess fat associated with type 2 diabetes and other health issues, Brellenthin said.

"You're not necessarily going to see the results of resistance training on your bathroom scale, but there are several health benefits. It may help lower your risk for type 2 diabetes even though you do not lose body



weight, and we know maintaining muscle mass helps us stay functional and independent throughout life," said Brellenthin. Based on self-reports, Brellenthin says only 20% of Americans meet the guidelines (two days a week of muscle-strengthening activities) for resistance exercise. While data for the study are not sufficient to provide suggestions for weight training,

she says some is better than none. Getting started does not require a gym membership or expensive equipment. In fact, you can start at home by doing body-weight exercises.

"You can get a good resistance workout with squats, planks or lunges. Then, as you build strength, you can consider adding free weights or weight machines," Brellenthin explained

Karl Lagerfeld's final collection for Chanel at Paris Fashion Week



Karl Lagerfeld's Fall/Winter 2019-2020 women's ready-to-wear collection show for Chanel was presented at the Grand Palais, Paris for the Paris Fashion Week.

Fashion world's Kaiser, Karl Lagerfeld's Fall/Winter 2019-2020 women's ready-to-wear collection show for Chanel was presented at the Grand Palais, Paris for the Paris Fashion Week. This was also his final collection for the brand. He was known to be one of the most prolific designers of the past century and much regarded for his creations over

the years.

Lagerfeld passed away at the age of 85 on February 19. He was unable to attend Chanel's haute couture show in Paris in January saying he was "tired".

Chanel has said that a farewell ceremony for the designer will take place at a later date after his cremation.

Pictures from the fashion show go on to show the beautiful and artistic snow cottage where models walked the ramp while giving a tribute to Lagerfeld's legacy.



Calvin Klein abandons runway division

The brand's spokesperson told AFP it is "open to presenting our collections in a broad range of formats moving forward, including runway shows."

American fashion label Calvin Klein announced Wednesday it is closing its high-end runway division as part of a restructuring by parent company PVH. "I can confirm that the Calvin Klein 205W39NYC business is closing," the company told AFP. PVH brought in Belgian designer Raf Simons from Dior in 2016 to revitalize the brand, which had stagnated since the departure of its namesake New Yorker founder in 2002. Dubbed "chief creative officer," he had vast powers as he was charged with boosting profits of the brand's high-end collection. But Simons' departure was announced in December following weeks of uncertainty, after a PVH manager apportioned him some of the blame for declining sales. PVH, which also owns Tommy Hilfiger, in early January

announced strategic changes including tweaking Calvin Klein 205W39NYC's name, and the closure of its flagship store on Manhattan's Madison Avenue. But it has now chosen to totally abandon the division and, according to specialist website Women's Wear Daily, has let go 100 employees in New York and Milan. The brand's spokesperson told AFP it is "open to presenting our collections in a broad range of formats moving forward, including runway shows." In 2017, Calvin Klein's sales of products from perfume to watches and glasses led to a turnover of \$9.1 billion dollars.



Triple Frontier movie review

Netflix delivers the best Ben Affleck film in many, many years

Ben Affleck leads an ensemble cast that includes Oscar Isaac, Charlie Hunnam, Garrett Hedlund and Pedro Pascal in Netflix's first high-profile film of 2019. Rating: 4/5.

Triple Frontier

Director - JC Chandor

Cast - Ben Affleck, Oscar Isaac, Charlie Hunnam, Garrett Hedlund, Pedro Pascal

Rating - 4/5

Director JC Chandor's Triple Frontier is the first high-profile Netflix original film of 2019, after the streaming service made resounding leaps towards legitimacy with a spectacular 2018 that culminated with the glorious Roma. It is also perhaps one of the best examples of the tightrope that they are walking in terms of balancing a populist approach yet maintaining an auteur-driven identity. Triple Frontier has that 'something for everyone' quality that could either work in its favour, or be its undoing. It constantly keeps reinventing itself every 15 minutes; it goes from gritty drug drama to slick heist movie, and then transforms into an old-school Western, and ends as a

survival thriller/ chase film.

Understandably, this may be too much for an audience looking for cheap thrills, but for Chandor and his cast, it's an excuse to play in five movies instead of one, and to use genre to make important subtextual statements about violence, vengeance and warfare. Five former military veterans, bitter about the sorry hand they've been dealt by their country despite literally taking bullets for it, plan to take down a larger-than-life Mexican drug lord and keep all his dirty money for themselves. That is about as much as you need to know going in, and it is roughly a summation of what was shown in the film's trailer. Immediately after having seen it, I remember thinking that the trailer had essentially revealed the entire film's plot. But it turns out that Netflix has taken the Marvel approach to marketing this film, in that what we've seen so far is - to make an informed guesstimate - mostly footage from

the first 30 minutes.

The element of surprise has largely disappeared from modern mainstream moviemaking. And one of Triple Frontier's greatest accomplishments is how confidently it topples the expectations of a wary and weathered audience. It swerves around into strange and wonderful new directions in its remaining hour-and-a-half, piling set-piece upon set-piece, balancing action (of different styles) with deft character work and brazen political ideas. And although Ben Affleck is (understandably) the top-billed actor in the credits, Oscar Isaac is ostensibly the film's lead. It is he who plays the Bruce Wayne-style role, and rounds up his old brothers for the job. Charlie Hunnam is delivering 'inspirational' speeches to future recruits, and for the first time his typical wooden delivery makes sense. His (actual) brother, played by Garrett Hedlund, is an



MMA fighter. Pedro Pascal is once again playing one of his snaky charmers, and Affleck is peddling real estate. They are united by their feelings of resentment towards what they have sacrificed for their country - personally, physically and professionally - and what they have received in return. They are promised that the drug lord Lorea - an unseen entity who lingers like a spectre in the film's opening act - has a stash of close to \$75 million, which will be more than fair compensation for all their troubles, past and present. Triple Frontier is part-morality

tale about selfishness and greed and corruption, part-parable about the perils of military intervention, but more importantly, it's an insanely entertaining movie. Of course, it's slightly off-putting that it's so bashfully masculine (especially in this day and age), but that can be largely credited to writer Mark Boal's creative inclinations. Boal, the Academy Award-winning writer of recent Kathryn Bigelow films such as The Hurt Locker, Zero Dark Thirty and Detroit, is in many ways the only constant in Triple Frontier's long and precarious journey to the (small) screen.

Captain Marvel movie review

Brie Larson stars in a feature length trailer for Avengers Endgame

Captain Marvel movie review: The MCU's Avengers Endgame lead-up is a better Nick Fury origin story than a Captain Marvel origin story, despite Brie Larson's excellent performance. Rating: 3/5.

Captain Marvel

Directors - Anna Boden, Ryan Fleck

Cast - Brie Larson, Samuel L Jackson, Jude Law, Ben Mendelsohn, Djimon Hounsou, Lee Pace, Gemma Chan, Annette Bening

Rating - 3/5

It's a bit of a miracle that despite such a rocky take-off, Captain Marvel manages to regain any sort of control over its journey at all. From the very first scene, the film pounds you over the head with grand world-building, pointless backstory, and unintelligible exposition. Arriving late is out of the question.

While you're still familiarising yourself with the vibe (and perhaps still reflecting on that excellent new Marvel fanfare), Brie Larson has already had two

fight and learnt valuable lessons that may or may not come in handy in the film's final battle. There has also been a lot of talk about an ongoing war, a bulbous information dump about alien species known as the Kree and the Skrulls, as well as a bunch of planet hopping. It's exhausting. There's a lot to enjoy in Captain Marvel, though - especially since the pre-established goodwill of the Marvel Cinematic Universe will likely be forgiving to its many flaws - but it can't help but feel stunningly insignificant in the larger scheme of things. It's like a feature length trailer for the character - all set-up with little payoff - and reignites repressed memories of Iron Man 2.

Like that film, the primary agenda here seems to be setting up an Avengers movie; this time it's

Endgame. At more than a decade old now, the MCU has found that it can evoke nostalgia from the simplest moments - the return of Agent Coulson, despite not being a secret at all, will likely be welcomed with warm applause. Some of the film's best scenes are the ones in which Coulson and a young, more optimistic Nick Fury pretend like they're in a '90s buddy cop movie. Unfortunately, Captain Marvel, for lack of a better description, is just another Marvel movie - set to a robotic, unmemorable score; deeply reliant on old tropes; and featuring yet another underwhelming villain. It falls squarely into that half of the MCU that feels entirely committee driven; not at all like some of the franchise's best films - Iron Man



3, Guardians of the Galaxy, the first Avengers, Black Panther and Thor: Ragnarok, which were all proudly stamped by their filmmakers' personalities. Perhaps the most unique contribution directors Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck make here is to extract a brilliant performance out of their Mississippi Grind actor Ben Mendelsohn, who makes the objectively hilarious choice of retaining his native Aussie accent. Despite being slathered in Idris Elba-Star Trek levels of make-up, his Skrull character is

easily the most relatable of the lot. His arc is also the only time the film is likely to wrong-foot the very clued-in MCU fanbase. There is no point in trying to explain the finer details of the plot here, and I'm certainly not going to pretend like I understood any of it. But the film's strange, non-linear structure robs it of any chance of having an emotional payoff. Because we know so little about Carol Danvers - she disappeared like Amelia Earhart from the face of the Earth, but is also an amnesiac Kree warrior - it is difficult to fully invest in her journey.



Priyanka Chopra reacts to Miley Cyrus' post about her 'ex' Nick Jonas

Miley Cyrus sent her 'ex' Nick Jonas a throwback picture through direct message, and shared a screenshot on Instagram. Nick's wife Priyanka Chopra has reacted about her 'husband'.

Priyanka Chopra has reacted to a new Instagram post by singer Miley Cyrus, in which Miley had shared direct messages she'd sent to Priyanka's husband and her ex, Nick Jonas.

Sharing a screenshot of an old picture of herself that she'd sent Nick, in which both she and her younger sister can be seen wearing Jonas Brothers T-shirts, she wrote, "That moment when even your ex knows your

socials have been (lit)." Nick had replied to Miley's message with, "These throwback shots have been (lit)."

Priyanka responded to the post in the comments section and wrote, "Lol. Hahaha.. Hubby is right. These posts r (lit)." Nick and Miley were rumoured to be dating at the height of their stardom years ago, when he was a part of the Jonas Brothers boy band and she was a popular actor on TV show Hannah



Montana.

Nick and Priyanka were married in a lavish dual ceremony in Jodhpur's Umaid Bhawan Palace hotel in December, 2018. The Jonas Brothers reunited several years after having broken up with the recent comeback single, Sucker. The music video featured not just Priyanka, but also Joe Jonas' fiancée, Sophie Turner.

Miley, meanwhile, married her on-and-off boyfriend Liam Hemsworth (Priyanka's Isn't it Romantic co-star) in a quiet ceremony days after the Priyanka-Nick wedding. Priyanka recently shared a picture of a new Maybach, gifted to her by Nick. She captioned the picture, "When the hubby goes number one.. the wifey gets a @maybach !! Introducing.. Extra Chopra Jonas.. haha .. I love you baby!! Yaaay! Best husband ever."

'Made in Heaven': The Dark Story of India's Elite, One Wedding at a Time

The Amazon series, centred on a wedding planning business for the uber-rich, sees the world from a tower so tall that the rest of the world shrinks dot-like, magnifying the hypocrisies, prejudices and retrograde mindsets of the affluent.



The closest approximation of an outsider is an amphibian. She can live on land and in water - in essence, inhabit two different worlds - but there's a small twist: humans prioritise homes, one set of people and surroundings always feel more natural. The trick then is to figure out the unfamiliar - understand its coded language, social customs, behavioural tics - because feeling left out is a sorry embarrassment, like lip synching a song in a party you have not heard before.

Made in Heaven, an Amazon series conceptualised by Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti (and directed by Akhtar, Nitya Mehra, Prashant Nair and Alankrita Shrivastava), tells a story of amphibians who have learnt to swim but are still anxious of water. Set in Delhi, spread across nine episodes, Made in Heaven revolves around Tara (Sobhita Dhulipala) and Karan (Arjun Mathur), and their eponymous wedding planning company, targeting the city's uber-rich. Each episode introduces a new family and a story, with a set of recurring characters - the leads' families and friends and the employees of Made in Heaven - who complete the series.

As Karan and Tara navigate the competitive wedding planning market, we slowly understand their backstories through smart, taut flashbacks, rendering them complex and compelling. Karan, the son of a wealthy businessman, has to his credit a recent failed company, debts

to his father and a loan shark, and a life shrouded in secrecy and shame: he's a homosexual. Tara, on the other hand, belongs to an impoverished part of Delhi. After first working as a support staff in the company of a business tycoon, she climbs the ladder of social mobility by marrying its heir, Adil (Jim Sarbh).

There's a constant underlying dread as the series opens, as if legitimising our voyeurism. The first two episodes, directed by Akhtar, set the mood - the slow, languorous shots, especially, do a clever flip, gifting its mainstream premise an art-house robe - but, at the same, also slips up: the expository dialogues jar; the longish voiceovers by the detached photographer Kabir (Shashank Arora) spout tired truisms; some crucial plot turns, made predictable by on-the-nose foreshadowing, seem unconvincing. But something else is underway, too: the characters eschews labels and remain true to themselves; the mood is consistent; the power differential, subtly and smoothly materialised, underlines the central tension; and the story unfolds on its own terms, occasionally handing you signages, through flashbacks and terse dialogues, that demystify this maze. Moreover, these portions feel 'true', presumably because Akhtar (besides Kagti and her, the third writer is Shrivastava) is on a familiar turf: seeing this world from a tower so tall that the rest of the world shrinks dot-like, magnifying the hypocrisies, prejudices and retrograde mindsets of the affluent. This kind of storytelling has taken its time.

David Guetta, 51, packs on PDA with girlfriend Jessica Ledon

27, who flaunts her incredible physique in string bikini in

International DJ David Guetta is living the life in Miami.

The 51-year-old couldn't keep his hands off girlfriend Jessica Ledon, 27, as the couple soaked up the sun on Tuesday. The couple were seen putting on an affectionate display on sun loungers outside 5-star hotel The Setai Miami Beach.

David planted a kiss on his younger girlfriend as they played with their french bulldog in the sand

The 5ft 8in Cuban-born actress put her six-pack abs on full display in a colorful string bikini.

She wore her curly locks loose and donned gold hoop earrings.

David kept covered up for the outing, wearing a black T-

shirt and navy shorts.

The French DJ has been dating his Miami-raised girlfriend since mid-2015, following his 2014 divorce from his wife, club manager Cathy Lobé.

The two had been married since 1992, and Cathy was an important business collaborator throughout his career.

They share two children; son Elvis, 15 and daughter Angie, 11

Despite wearing a large diamond on her wedding finger, a source told TMZ back in November that it's a promise of 'love and commitment' - not an engagement ring.

The EDM star apparently doesn't believe in marriage, anymore at least.



Una Healy 'hits out at cheating ex husband Ben Foden in scathing lyrics for new break-up song'

Una Healy has reportedly written about her ex Ben Foden in a new track, which includes lyrics saying she felt 'crazy' after she believed all of her cheating husband's lies.

The Saturdays singer, 37, pulled the plug on her six-year marriage to the rugby star, 33, in July 2018 after it was revealed Ben cheated on her.

In an alleged brutal attack on her ex, Una is said to have declared she is 'so much better off' without the father of her two children in new lyrics seen by The Sun. According to the newspaper, the lyrics read: 'You made feel like I was going crazy / Believing all those lies that you fed me. 'Every word you said to me was empty / Broken every promise that you made me / No / We can't save this / Did I ever really get to know you / Did you really care for me like you're supposed to.

'So save your breath / There's nothing left worth keeping anyway / We are so much better off / To go our separate ways.'

MailOnline has reached out to Una Healy's representatives for further comment.

Instead of moving to the United States with Ben as planned before their split, Una took her two children and relocated to her mother's home in Ireland.

Yet Ben, who now lives alone on America's east coast after signing for Rugby United New York, recently insisted he isn't entirely to blame for the end of their marriage.

He told The Guardian: 'At the moment anything that's published about me is never very good and pretty rightly so because I was the one who committed adultery.

'At the same time, it wasn't the only reason for our divorce to go through. It's not ideal, but we're very amicable, we're getting through it, we're not the first people in the world to get divorced. We've got two little kids we adore.'

However, Ben confessed one of the big drawbacks of being in the United States was being away from his children daughter Aoife, six, and four-year old son Tadhg.

He said: 'It's hard because I'm away from my son and daughter. But I know they're in a great and loving environment with

Una, because she's a great mum. We never argue about that.'

Foden's tattered reputation suffered a further blow in 2018 after he used dating app Bumble to publicly announce his separation from the former Saturday's star.

Written in his dating app profile, the rugby player stated he was looking for someone who 'wasn't bossy' - widely perceived as a dig at his ex-wife.

Since their split, Una has been mending her heartache with her new Irish hurler David Breen after the couple went public with their romance in December.

Ben proved there was no bad blood between the exes as he liked an Instagram post from Una's first holiday with her new man in Mauritius.

Recently, the songstress admitted she was taking 'each day as it comes' as she pressed on with life following her marriage breakdown.

She told Hello! magazine: 'My life has been turned upside down and I'm trying to figure it out. I'm taking each day as it comes and just being there for my children.'



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