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FTC Sends More Than \$5.4 Million to People Who Paid for Worthless Student Loan Debt Relief

(By a staff reporter) New York: The Federal Trade Commission is sending more than \$5.4 million to nearly 40,000 people who lost money to a student loan debt relief scam.



The defendants behind the scam were required to turn over money under a 2018 settlement with the FTC.

The defendants' Los Angeles-based companies used the following names:

Alliance Document Services; United Legal Protection; Academy Preparation, LLC; EZ Center, LLC; Post Doc Prep; and Doc Preps; Grads Aid; Grad Aid; Alumni Aid Academic Discharge. The FTC alleged that the defendants' companies bilked millions from people trying to lower or eliminate their student

loan debt. The upfront fee of up to \$1,000 were qualified or on social media approved for permanently reduced monthly payments or loan forgiveness. In fact, the complaint alleged, the defendants had no affiliation with the U.S. Department of Education or the loan Department of Education and operated a service that provided no relief.

Millennials More likely to Report Losing Money to Fraud than Older Generations, New FTC Data Spotlight Reports

Millennials are 25 percent more likely to report that they have lost money to fraud than consumers aged 40 and over, according to a new Federal Trade Commission analysis of consumer complaint data. The FTC's latest Consumer Protection Data Spotlight shows that millennials—those ages 20-39—are twice as likely to report

losing money to online shopping fraud than those 40 and over. Online shopping fraud reports include complaints about items that are never delivered or are not as they were advertised. Millennials reported losing \$71 million out of the nearly \$450 million they reported losing to all types of fraud—in the last two years.

Other categories where millennials are much more likely to report losing money to fraud than consumers 40 and over include fake check scams, offers that promise to help fix debt-related problems, or offers promising income through jobs, investments, or business opportunities. For tips on how to avoid scams, visit consumer.ftc.gov. 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.

GOPIO former President and Chairman passed away

INDER SINGH, GOPIO's Founding Life Member, former President and Chairman and current Executive Trustee of GOPIO Foundation has passed away at a hospital in the Los Angeles area.



In a statement shared with South Asian Insider, Dr. Thomas Abraham, Chairman GOPIO International said that, "It is a great loss for all of us, GOPIO, Indian community in the USA and the Indian

rest in peace. GOPIO will do appropriate tribute for his contribution to build GOPIO and for his service to the Indian American community and the Indian

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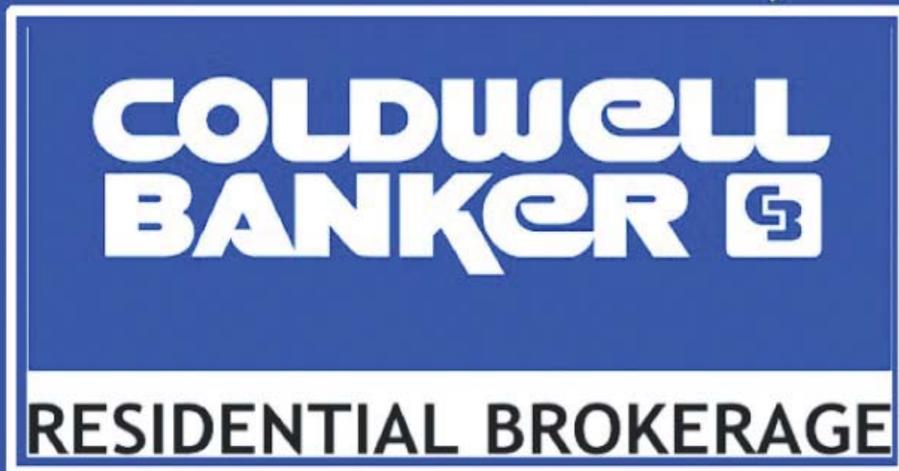


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New Comptroller Stringer Analysis Reveals Full Scale of Retail Vacancy Crisis as Amount of Empty Retail Space Doubled Since 2007

(New York, NY) - Despite New York City's continued economic expansion, a new in-depth analysis released today by New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer shows that the rate of empty and vacant storefronts across the five boroughs has skyrocketed by nearly 50 percent over the past decade, rising to a high of 5.8 percent in 2017. Using never-before analyzed data, Comptroller Stringer's new report found that the dramatic rise of retail vacancy citywide - which doubled to over 11 million square feet between 2007 and 2017 - has been fueled by the growth in online shopping, rising commercial rents, and burdensome regulatory hurdles. The rise of online retail in particular has dramatically reshaped the mix of New York City's retail space away from traditional retail stores in favor of service-oriented establishments such as restaurants, barbers, and exercise studios, contributing to the growing

vacancy trend as landlords, retailers - and the City bureaucracy - struggle to adjust. To turn the tide and support local small business growth, Comptroller Stringer proposed a series of measures, including a tax incentive for retailers in high-vacancy areas; reforming the City bureaucracy that stalls the construction, inspection, and permit processes; and improving planning for how retail spaces are developed. Key findings from Comptroller Stringer's report include:
 • The citywide vacancy rate, measured as vacant retail square feet divided by total retail square feet, rose from 4.0 percent in 2007 to 5.8 percent in 2017. An additional 5.2 million square feet of retail space was vacant in 2017 compared to 2007.
 • Vacancy rates have risen across all five boroughs. Although Manhattan is home to areas with some of the greatest amounts of vacant square-feet, the highest vacancy rate neighborhoods lie outside of Manhattan -

particularly in Staten Island and Queens.
 • Over the past decade, average retail rents rose 22 percent citywide. Rents rose most rapidly in parts of Manhattan - as much as 68 percent on the Upper West Side, and 55 percent in Central Harlem.
 • Rise of online shopping has reshaped the mix of New York City's retail space in favor of service-oriented establishments such as restaurants, barbers, and exercise studios. The number of merchandise retail outlets in New York City rose by 19 percent between 2007 and 2017, while the number of personal services establishments rose by nearly 50 percent, and bars and restaurants soared by 65 percent.
 "New Yorkers have all seen the signs of our changing economy in the last decade, as vacant storefronts have become all too common and neighborhood institutions have fallen by the wayside. Our report shows the

phenomenon of retail vacancies expanded considerably, by about 27.1 million square feet.
 • However, as the City grew, so did the vacant retail space. Citywide, the retail vacancy rate rose from a low of 4.0 percent in 2007 to 5.8 percent in 2017.
 • Reported vacant retail space roughly doubled over the last decade, rising to 11.8 million square feet in 2017, up from 5.6 million square feet before the great recession. (Roughly 1 million square feet of the reported increase is due to improved reporting of retail vacancy.)
 • Neighborhoods with the highest vacancy rates are outside of Manhattan - however, Manhattan neighborhoods account for half of the twenty neighborhoods with the greatest vacant square footage.
 • In addition to the report, Comptroller Stringer also released a set of 24 neighborhood profiles detailing how the shifting economy is impacting vacancy rates in communities across the five boroughs.

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Lessons from the Punjab & Maharashtra Co-operative Bank scam

Politician-banker nexus, poor corporate governance and slackness on the part of watchdogs are some of the pressing issues the banking sector must address

Hundreds of thousands of depositors have been left in the lurch by the scam that surfaced at the Punjab & Maharashtra Co-operative Bank (PMCB). The bank, which had Rs 11,617 crore in deposits as on March 31, 2019, had violated Reserve Bank of India (RBI) norms to lend heavily to one client-real-estate firm Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited (HDIL), which itself is facing bankruptcy proceedings. The RBI has imposed lending restrictions on PMCB, at Rs 10,000 per customer for six months, creating panic among depositors. Distraught authorities have now booked the former chiefs of the bank and the promoters of HDIL for cheating. Lookout notices have also been issued against them. But that does nothing to assure PMCB depositors that their money is safe. Here are some of the lessons to be learnt from this scam:
 • Rid banks of the politician-banker-corporate nexus
 This malaise has been hurting Indian banking for long. Politicians are all the more willing to use banks-in PMCB's case a large cooperative bank-where they wield immense clout in order to please

corporate honchos and take favours in return. Public sector banks have run into bad loans worth over Rs 8 lakh crore, and much of this can be attributed to this nexus. While greater public scrutiny of these banks has made bankers more cautious, cooperative banks remain largely out of public eye as most of them are unlisted. India had 1,551 urban cooperative banks in 2018, as per RBI data, down from 1,926 in 2004, pointing to the high risk of failure of these banks. Such banks often start on a small capital base, as low as Rs 25 lakh, making them all the more vulnerable. In PMCB's case, it had an exposure of over Rs 6,500 crore to HDIL, four times the mandatory cap fixed by RBI, amounting to over 70 per cent of the bank's entire assets. While corporate governance is a serious issue in private banks, it often goes neglected in the cooperative banking sector. How does one explain that former PMCB chairman Waryam Singh also held a stake of 1.9 per cent in HDIL till September 2017 and was a non-executive director of the real-estate company in 2005-15, the time the bank was sanctioning loans to HDIL?



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Prime Minister of India and President of the United States address packed NRG Stadium at "Howdy,

(By Our Staff Reporter) Houston: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump addressed a historic crowd of approximately 50,000 at the NRG Stadium in Houston on Sunday, September 22nd at the "Howdy, Modi!" community summit hosted by the Texas India Forum. The summit was broadcast live to an estimated audience of 500 million people in English, Hindi, and Spanish and marked a defining moment in India-America ties. The attendance of both leaders symbolized an ever-strengthening partnership between the world's largest and oldest democracies, India and the United States. Over 30 elected representatives across parties, including Governors, Senators and House Representatives witnessed this historic event with the two leaders. In his introduction of the President of the United States, Prime Minister Modi said, "Mr. President, this morning, in Houston,

you can hear the heartbeat of this great partnership in this celebration of the world's two largest democracies. You can feel the strength and depth of human bonds between our two great nations." President Trump responded with equal enthusiasm: "I've come to express my profound gratitude to the nearly 4 million amazing Indian Americans, all across our country. You enrich our values, you uphold our communities, and you are truly proud to be American. And we are proud to have you as Americans." Preceding the speeches of the two leaders, a 90-minute cultural extravaganza titled "Woven", coproduced by Mela Arts Connect with the support of the local arts community, showcased the rich diversity and culture of Indians in America. The President stressed the importance of forging strong US-India defense and

security partnership and extended his support for India's determination to protect its borders and fight terrorism. Republican Senators from Texas John Cornyn and Ted Cruz, and Democratic House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer spoke before the President took the stage. They spoke of India's rich history, current stature in the global stage, and the contribution of Indian-Americans to the United States. When Prime Minister Modi took the stage, he started his speech by saying: "The energy of NRG bears testimony to the growing synergy of India and the United States of America". He also stressed that unity and diversity is India's heritage and is what makes it unique. "This diversity of India is the very basis of our vibrant democracy. This is our strength, and this is our inspiration. Wherever we go, we take with us the values of diversity and democracy." The Indian PM emphasized that his country was impatient to



develop at a much faster pace than ever before. "From getting a cooking gas connection, to obtaining a passport, to road connectivity, to cost of data, India has made phenomenal progress," he noted. PM Modi's speech highlighted a resurgent and confident India, focused on removing barriers and uplifting society by reaping the benefits of modern technology, strong leadership, and a fundamental commitment to democracy. He stated

that India is today a global power, whose 1.3 billion population is determined to be the best in the world in every sphere and as their leader, he is determined to realize that ambition. He also gave a clear and unequivocal message to fight terrorism and its sponsors, in partnership with America. The community summit, in the end, emphasized the strong ties between the people of the United States and India, and it reaffirmed the strategic partnership

between the world's oldest and largest democracies. "'Howdy, Modi!' has stands as a testament to the strong Indian-American community, which came together in Texas with over 1400 volunteers and 650 welcome partners to produce an unprecedented community-led event. "Indian Americans have proven beyond doubt that we can organize in unprecedented ways to shape history and unite nations. The aspirations of a young Indian today are

'This daughter of immigrants needs no lectures from the north London, metropolitan, liberal elite'

Home Secretary Priti Patel vows to end freedom of movement 'once and for all' after Brexit

(News Agencies) - Priti Patel vowed to 'end the free movement of people once and for all' as she outlined a hardline immigration policy under Boris Johnson's leadership today.

The Home Secretary said the UK would introduce an Australian-style points based system as she hit the stage at the Conservative Party conference. It came after she used the event to warn criminals 'we are coming after you' amid multi-million pound plans designed to make the Tories the party of law and order again.

She unveiled a £10 million ring-fenced fund to equip up to 60 per cent of police officers with Tasers. She also announced a £20 million investment to aid in identifying and dismantling county lines drugs gangs which exploit children and other vulnerable people.

In a blunt, no nonsense speech

in Manchester Ms Patel said: 'As Home Secretary at this defining moment in our country's history, I have a particular responsibility when it comes to taking back control.

'It is to end the free movement of people once and for all.'

'Instead we will introduce an Australian style points-based immigration system.

'One that works in the best interests of Britain. One that attracts and welcomes the brightest and the best.

'One that supports brilliant scientists, the finest academics and leading people in their fields.

And one that is under the control of the British Government.'

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott criticised the speech, saying the Tories 'all voted to cut the police and oversaw a rise in serious and violent crime'.

But Ms Patel took a swipe at the opposition in her speech, saying:

'This daughter of immigrants, needs no lectures from the North London metropolitan liberal elite. That's what you get with a government that is driven by the people's priorities.

Of course, there will be only two dissenting voices. Diane Abbott and Jeremy Corbyn.

'Because the choice isn't just who the people want to be our next Prime Minister. It's also about who the people want to be their next Home Secretary. 'Do we really want a Labour Home Secretary who would leave our communities and our country less safe?

A Labour Party who won't even attempt to take back control of our borders? Because they want to surrender our border control and extend free movement.'

Elected to Parliament in 2010 at the age of 38, Ms Patel achieved ministerial rank four years later



as exchequer secretary to the Treasury, before promotion to employment minister following David Cameron's 2015 general election victory. She was one of the ministers who took advantage of Mr Cameron's decision to allow members of his Government to argue on both sides of the EU referendum and played a prominent role in the Leave campaign. But after being made International Development Secretary by Theresa May was forced to resign by Theresa May over secret meetings with Israeli

officials, including prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The tough-talking minister today announced a £10million plan to arm more police officers with stun guns when she addressed the Conservative Party conference in Manchester this afternoon. Ms Patel, who previous said she wanted felons to 'feel terror', said she would build on plans to put 20,000 more police on the beat to tackle fears of a violent crime epidemic in Britain's cities that has seen the party come under political attacks.

Monsoon 2019: A stark reminder of climate change and its implications

The monsoon of 2019 saw highest rainfall since 1994. September received highest rains in the last 102 years even as monsoon refuses to retreat. The monsoon is expected to start withdrawing from second week of October. India has witnessed almost twice the number of the extreme rainfall events (200 mm or more in 24 hours) in 2019 as compared to the last five years. Mumbai also saw five extreme rain events this year as compared to eight in the past decade and Delhi has seen least rains in the rainy season in the past five years. These rain related events may make 2019 one of the most bizarre monsoon seasons in the recent times but I am sure the worse is yet to come considering how weather pattern is changing across the world, all because of climate change and rising fossil fuel emissions. India Meteorological Department director general M Mohapatra would have been amused when he said on Sunday that the monsoon will officially end on September 30 (Monday) but the retreat may start by second week of October, which in normal times, is end of rainy season from tip of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Extreme rain events over central India has tripled between 1950 and 2015, according to a 2017 study led by researchers at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, affecting about 825 million people, leaving 17 million homeless and killing about 69,000. Different research papers in recent years have claimed that the Indian monsoon was changing in "significant ways". On the whole, the monsoon was "weakening in the long-term", said a January 2019 review of existing studies by IMD scientists. The rainfall over central India since the 1950s has declined, and more recently, it has risen over northwestern Rajasthan and parts of peninsular India. Going by these trends, the IMD changed the definition of a "normal" monsoon by reducing average rainfall received during rainy season from 89 cms to 88 cms. The normal monsoon is defined on the basis of long period average (LPA) rainfall received between 1950 and 2010. The change is because of dip in average rainfall due to surge in drought and depressed rainfall since 2000; 13 of the last 18 years have been "below normal" rains (where rainfall was less than 90% of the normal). The decrease may appear to be insignificant in number but in actual it shows that Indian monsoon is slowing down and the spread of rain shadow areas was increasing. Though the country may get normal or near normal (which is 90-95% of normal rain) as per the new definition, there would be vast regions which have received very less rainfall. Another indication that climate change was impacting monsoon is the IMD considering change in the onset and

withdrawal dates of the monsoon fixed in 1941. According to a study done by IMD, there has been an average of 8 to 10 days of delay in monsoon onset and retreat dates between 1940 and 2010, another indication of how climate change was impacting India's most amazing weather phenomenon. Since 2014, the monsoon had not started on June 1, the onset date, and has not retreated on September 1, the withdraw date, for Indian monsoon. A committee of experts has submitted its recommendations to the Earth Sciences ministry suggesting different formulations for new dates. Earth Sciences secretary M V Rajeevan in August 2019 said that the new dates will come into force from 2020 monsoon season, which experts say will have implications for agriculture, as advisories for farmers will have to be changed. At present, advisories on sowing and reaping of crops to farmers are based on the onset and withdrawal dates. India as a whole received 10% excess rainfall in 2019 and nearly 1,900 people died in rain-related incidents across the country since June 1, according to the data available with home ministry's disaster management division. Of this, 180 deaths have been reported in the past four days from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Gujarat. Despite news of heavy rains all around, 15% of country's geographical area received deficient rainfall, indicating the vast contrast in the Indian weather system. Most of these deaths have been caused by sudden downpour, termed as extreme weather event under climate change terminology. So far, in monsoon season, India has witnessed close to 2,000 extreme weather events, which has been highest for any monsoon season in the past decade. The probability of similar flooding in the years to come is high, driven by a global rise in temperatures-1 deg C since systematic record keeping began in 1850-according to an October 2018 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body formed to assess science on climate change. The 2019 monsoon data is just yet another example of how global warming was impacting Indian weather and causing an increase in extreme weather events, which have almost doubled since 1950s. While stopping climate change is not possible, controlling it by way of government intervention and citizen participation is possible. The climate talk at the United Nations last week in New York, in which head of 195 countries participated, was a disappointment as ambition was low.

The impeachment push against Trump



The United States presidential election campaign can officially claim to have started with the Democratic lower house of Congress announcing its intention to seek President Donald Trump's impeachment. The legal basis seems sound enough: that Mr Trump asked the Ukrainian government to provide him information that could be used to discredit one of the leading Democratic presidential candidates, Joe Biden. Mr Trump has argued this did not constitute a crime. Impeachment under the US Constitution is under the jurisdiction of the Senate, making it a political process.

Outwardly, Mr Trump would seem to have a strong hand. The Senate is firmly in the hands of Republicans. The party's senators know the base remains behind the president and will back him. So what does the Democratic Party hope to get out of the call for impeachment? The speaker of the lower house, Nancy Pelosi, has long resisted demands by left-wing firebrands

to seek impeachment. She has, probably rightly, argued Mr Trump remains too popular, the case against him too weak, and the Democrats would lose more than they would gain.

What seems to have changed the equation is the proximity of the presidential elections. The idea of a US president asking a foreign country for help against a fellow US politician feeds into an existing narrative about Russian interference to ensure Mr Trump's earlier victory. This time, the evidence seems stronger. Mr Trump's support, too, appears to be weakening as the election approaches. The US economy is showing signs of a slowdown, and the number of voters identifying themselves as independents is surging. An impeachment trial could well challenge Mr Trump's image of invincibility. The goal is then not to force him out of office, but simply have him be voted out of the same.



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

Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah
Photographers: Hamad
Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind

Special Correspondent :
Gagandeep Singh (INDIA)
Web Coordinator : Harpreet Singh

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REGD & MAILING OFFICE :
P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

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

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On Gandhi's 150th, it's time to review the sedition law

The colonial law meant to suppress dissent persists. Used as a political tool, it has deprived people of liberty. Scrap it

Earlier this month, during the course of a lecture, Supreme Court (SC) judge Justice Deepak Gupta, remarked that the time had come to reconsider the law of sedition. Highlighting a number of recent examples, he observed that the law of sedition "is more often abused and misused", and that "freedom of expression being a constitutional right must get primacy over the laws of sedition".

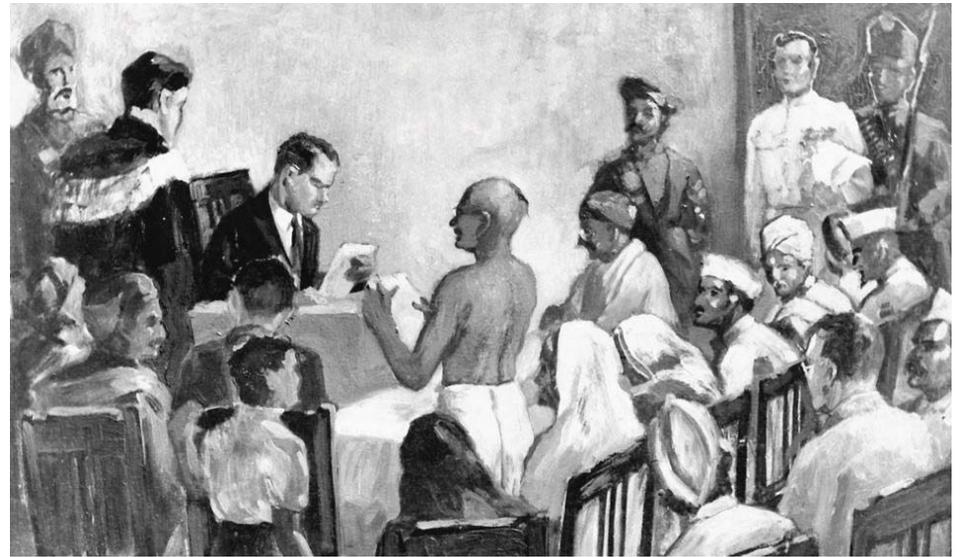
Justice Gupta's observations are a significant intervention in the ongoing debate about the utility of the sedition law in the India of 2019. As Justice Gupta correctly noted in his lecture, sedition is - of course - of colonial origin. The British regime enacted it in order to suppress political and cultural dissent, and many of the most famous figures of the freedom struggle - including Gandhi - were sent to jail on charges of

sedition. The very text of the sedition law reflects its colonial provenance. In prohibiting "disaffection", "contempt" or "hatred" against the government, it effectively requires citizens to love their rulers - or, at least, to not make their dislike publicly known. It was for this reason that there was a fierce debate about sedition in the Constituent Assembly. Attempts to include it as a specific restriction upon the freedom of speech were defeated, and Jawaharlal Nehru himself went on to promise that the government would soon get rid of it.

However, the government didn't, and in 1962, the SC upheld the constitutional validity of sedition. The court held that penalising sedition was a reasonable restriction upon the freedom of speech - however, only if the words of the provision themselves were given a narrow

meaning. In other words, it wasn't enough to just spread "disaffection" against the government, but to do so in a manner that incited violence or public disorder. In the five-and-a-half decades since that judgment, the SC has refined the test further, noting that the link between speech and public disorder must be like that of a "spark in a powder keg", and that it must constitute incitement to "imminent" lawless action.

The problem, however, is that there remains a massive gap between the words of the sedition law - "disaffection", "contempt", and "hatred" - and the interpretation placed upon it by the Supreme Court - incitement to imminent lawless action. An ordinary person who simply looks at the text of the law is unlikely to divine that what it actually requires is incitement to public disorder. It is this gap that



has allowed the law of sedition to be used as a political tool. As Justice Gupta also pointed out in his lecture, sedition is a cognisable offence, which means that the police can arrest an accused without the need for a judicial warrant. This allows for the deprivation of personal liberty with great ease; so while there are very few convictions for sedition, the provision's broad wording facilitates - to use an old cliché - "the process being the punishment".

Keeping this in mind, and the fact that we already have laws to penalise and

punish people who call for and incite violence, Justice Gupta's call to relook at, and review, the sedition law must be heeded. The real bite of the sedition law is in its broad wording. Terms like "disaffection" and "contempt" can be stretched to mean just about anything, enabling, for instance, prosecuting 7,000 farmers for protesting against a nuclear power plant (as happened a few years ago). But it is this precise broad wording - with its colonial rationale of insulating the government from the citizen - that is contrary to the

Constitution, and the precise reason why the SC has given it a narrow (and almost unrecognisable) meaning. As events have shown, however, the gap between the law and its judicial interpretation has become so wide that there can be no interpretive bridge that will adequately protect liberty; this being the case, the Supreme Court will, hopefully, reconsider its 1962 decision, and strike down the law of sedition as being unconstitutional. This will be the greatest tribute to Gandhi.

Pakistan's offensive on Kashmir will persist. India must be ready

For the moment, India has prevailed in the Kashmir argument with Pakistan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's week-long visit to the United States (US) capped a period of fervid diplomacy. This stretched from Howdy Modi in Houston to a series of bilateral/plurilateral meetings in global capitals as well as at the United Nations (UN) in New York to staving off a challenge at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

For Modi himself, for foreign minister S Jaishankar, and for officials in the ministry of external affairs, there is a sense of quiet satisfaction. India has been able to persuade the world community that changes in the legal and political architecture of Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh are well-



intentioned and deserve a future. Pakistan is hoping for two things.

First, it is almost praying for violence in the Kashmir valley. Prime Minister Imran Khan indicated as much during his UN General Assembly speech when he made dire predictions of what would happen after the restrictions were lifted. Second, Pakistan is working very hard through its own diaspora networks and political allies in the West, particularly in the United Kingdom and

Islamabad will deploy all political and diplomatic tools to lobby in the West. But it senses failure

Europe, and the US too. A case in point is the failed attempt to overshadow the Howdy Modi event in Houston. As soon as it was announced that Modi would be visiting the city, the Pakistani consul general in Houston, a mild-mannered diplomat, was sacked. She was replaced by a clear-headed and expensive project to mobilise protesters. A Pakistani federal minister flew down to Houston to mastermind the protests. Resources were raised, likely from the Pakistani community and Pakistani-run businesses in the US.

The Pakistani case has found a receptive audience in US media, particularly

so-called liberal newspapers. Within the political system, however, uptake has been limited. It will be significantly enhanced only if an ultra-Left candidate, such as Bernie Sanders or Kamala Harris, wins the Democrat nomination. While that looks unlikely, it is still early days in the presidential election. The same formula - of sending state agents from Islamabad/Rawalpindi and collecting financial contributions as well as crowds from the Pakistani diaspora - has been more successful in the UK.

There are many reasons for this, including the political profile of the

Pakistani community. In the US, the Indian community has a greater social, economic and, to the degree it matters, electoral cachet. Landmarks such as Y2K and the technology boom, the nuclear deal, and, now, the Howdy Modi event have showcased the relative muscle of the Indian diaspora.

In the UK, the Indian community has not demonstrated a matching profile. The Indian diaspora has had a steady rise but no one-shot quantum jump since perhaps the success of second-generation Indians of east African origin came to be noticed after the Thatcherite reforms.

Private sector should take the lead in investing in SDGs



Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and external affairs minister S Jaishankar spoke at length at different forums (the PM at United Nations General Assembly and Jaishankar at Asia Society) on how the world's largest democracy has embodied the SDGs in its work

towards "peace, development and progress in the world". On October 2, if reports are to be believed, the PM will declare India open defecation free (ODF), which is surely impact several SDGs. Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and external affairs minister S Jaishankar spoke at length at

different forums (the PM at United Nations General Assembly and Jaishankar at Asia Society) on how the world's largest democracy has embodied the SDGs in its work towards "peace, development and progress in the world". On October 2, if reports are to be believed, the PM will declare India open defecation free (ODF), which will impact several SDGs. India is central to the SDG because if the country doesn't reach the goals, the world will also fail to do so.

One of the key aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a global road map signed by 193 countries in 2015 for building a sustainable, equitable and prosperous world

by 2030, is private sector participation. It was clear from the beginning of the SDG journey that the world will not reach the ambitious goals without the active participation of the private sector because national governments don't have the wherewithal to meet those promises on their own.

According to the United Nations, there is an estimated SDG investment gap of \$2.5 trillion per year in developing countries. But financial investment is not that only thing that national governments are looking for from the private sector. They are also looking at the private sector to pitch in with their creativity, know-how, innovation and technology to help nations reach the goals.

Step up to the plate Unfortunately, many companies in India, and the world, still don't understand the value in participating in the SDG process. According to The Decade to Deliver: A Call to Business Action, by The United Nations Global Compact-Accenture Strategy CEO Study on Sustainability 2019, around 33% of global business leaders, who until three years ago saw integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a business opportunity, are shying away from adopting them. According to the study, currently 67% of CEOs see sustainability as a window of opportunity to recalibrate their efforts in line with the global milestones.

The value of linguistic pluralism

There has been a common thread in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent speeches, across geographies and venues. In Houston, addressing a strong Indian-American gathering, in the presence of the United States (US) President Donald Trump, Mr Modi spoke in many Indian languages to convey to the audience, and to the millions watching on television, that all was well back home. In New York, during his United Nations General Assembly speech, the PM quoted the Tamil poet, Kaniyan Pungundranar, and said that Tamil was the most

ancient language in the world. And on Monday, in Chennai, Mr Modi referred to how Tamil was echoing across the US. Mr Modi's statements come soon after Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, spoke of how India must preserve all its languages, but Hindi could serve as a possible language of unity, and be India's identity globally. To be sure, Mr Shah clarified that he had never sought Hindi's imposition over regional languages. But it did generate a controversy. The response in south India in general, and Tamil Nadu in particular, was negative - and this was no surprise given the state's

long history of resistance to any attempts to impose Hindi upon it. That is why the PM's remarks are important. For one, they will help quell any apprehensions in the non-Hindi speaking areas of the country that this government is planning to impose linguistic homogeneity. The recognition of diversity will, in fact, strengthen unity. Two, the PM's framing of the issue is apt. Having linguistic diversity is India's strength, not weakness. And this must be preserved. And finally, there is a clear political subtext. The Bharatiya Janata Party is seeking to make inroads in the south, and is well aware that



being seen as a party of the PM's message must be north, promoting only Hindi, internalised by his party, and would be counterproductive. The citizens at large.

Extreme weather is the new norm



For the second time this year, Bihar is submerged. In July, 13 districts in north Bihar were inundated, and now, it's the turn of four other districts, including the capital, Patna. To be sure, one cannot attribute

the excessive rainfall and the subsequent floods to climate change without a detailed scientific study. But its impact on the deluge is discernible. For one, the state was facing a rain deficit of up to 20% until

September 19, but the current spell has brought down the deficit to 2%. Two, normally, the monsoon begins to retreat around September 1. However, this year, there has been a delay of over a month. The broader context too, is hard to miss. Extreme rainfall events are on the rise in the country. Long dry spells, accompanied with more intense rainfall concentrated over fewer days, are becoming the norm.

The floods, especially in urban India, are taking place not just due to climate change, but also inadequate urban planning, which has not paid attention to natural water bodies and has forgotten

the "art of drainage", as environmentalist Sunita Narain writes in Why Urban India Floods. Urban water bodies, such as wetlands, provide crucial services like groundwater recharge (which is helpful during water-scarce summers, the other face of climate change) and flood management. Unfortunately, in India, water bodies are rarely recorded under municipal laws. And little is known about them. Planners see only land, not water, and the builder lobby just encroaches on them. A study by the non-profit, Centre for Science and Environment, shows that Chennai, which faced

devastating floods in 2015, had 600 water bodies in the 1980s; a master plan published in 2008 said only a fraction of the lakes in the city were in healthy condition.

All Indian states must conduct a detailed survey of their water bodies, which can serve as an insurance against floods. The Centre must incentivise these efforts by providing funds for water supply only to those states that have brought their water sources under protection. It is time for all stakeholders - governments, civil society, private sector, and citizens - to wake up to the emerging threats caused by such extreme events.

Howdy Modi: A Circus for the NRI's with Dead Souls!



CARTOON CLICK by **IRFAN**



By Dave Makkar

There is a famous Roman saying, 'If you can't give them bread, give them circuses' fits more on Modi than any other leader in the democratic world.

Howdy Modi in Houston (USA) was another circus like on going circuses in India since 2014; Ram Mandir, Cow Protection, Namami Gange, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Yoga Day, abolition of Article 370, etc. by PM Modi to divert attention from the rapidly sinking India; financially, industrially, militarily, morally and ethically.

Modi has become master in the art of organizing multi million dollar extravaganza circuses as a political leader. The 2 year long circus (Presidential style campaign) prior to his becoming PM of India in 2014 costing over Rs. 30,000 crore called "Achey Din Aaney Wale Hai" "Abki Baar Modi Sarkar" (Good Days are coming because Modi government is coming!) With 185 shows in 295 constituencies; Modi promises "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" (Collective Efforts, inclusive Growth). In reality under Modi, the share of the wealth of the richest 1% has increased to 73% in 2018, from 49% in 2014 and now they own 85% of the nation's wealth. In the name of

"Achey Din Aaney Wale Hai" India now stands 103rd from 55th in 2014 on the Global Hunger Index along with Nigeria and has been categorized as a country with 'serious' levels of hunger.

Again this Circus was revived prior to 2019 elections under the banner of unfulfilled promises "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" made in 2014 with a very heavy dash of Hindutva because of the massive job losses, hunger, poverty, massive non performing loans with banks & closures of numerous businesses under Modi's 5 years of rule. All the government machinery, corporate money, massive cash from dubious sources and 95% media were at Modi's disposal. Modi was instrumental in giving party ticket to known communal, criminals, rapist, bomb makers and terrorist accused. Modi won the elections with a bigger margin than 2014! According to ADR, Modi inducted 22 criminals in his new cabinet of Ministers.

After winning again in 2019; Howdy Modi is Modi's first circus in a foreign country and 4th in USA since 2014. Modi the star campaigner for himself & those who support him had a shock of his life when he got a hard slap from US House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer indirectly rejecting his style of functioning and his

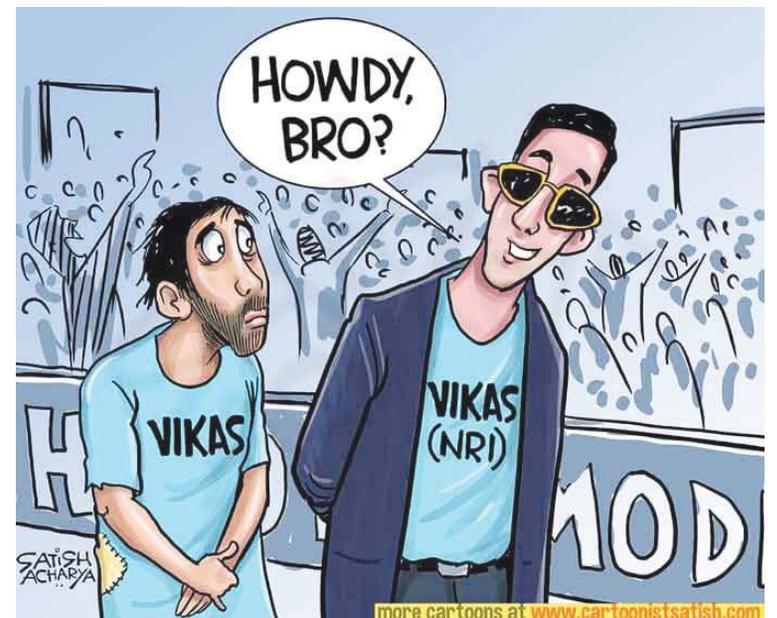
vision for India. Modi who is used to of bashing rather abusing Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and first PM Jawahar Lal Nehru in his all political rallies; was forced to learn history of India and how the foreigners look at India. Steny Hoyer said, "India, like America, is proud of its ancient traditions to secure a future according to Gandhi's teaching and Nehru's vision of India as a secular democracy where respect for pluralism and human rights safeguard every individual." He also recalled that Nehru on the eve of Independence had spoken of Gandhi's ambition "to wipe every tear from every eye" and that "as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over." "In that sense, the work of our countries is not over."

A shameless and self praising Modi after that spoke in 8-10 Indian languages, "All is well in India". He is Promoting Transparency, Public Participation & anti corruption by Gutting the Right To Information, turning the CBI & ED into agencies that gives Free Ride to the politicians & corporates that are on his side of the political divide! As per the Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). The Worker Population Ratio in India from 49.9% in 2014 stands at a record low of 46.8%. Employment Rate of 50.80% in 2012 and is now at a record low of 46.80% in 2018. The unemployment is 6.1% with 31 million unemployed is highest in 45 years. Recent Gallup survey revealed a big decline in the percentage of Indians who rate their lives positively enough to rate it as "thriving" since Modi assumed office. "Beginning in 2015, rural Indians began reporting increased difficulty paying for food." More than one in four rural Indians (28%) reported not having enough money to pay for food at some point that year (compared with

18% of urban Indians who reported the same hardship).

India Tops the Global Charts in; Malnourishment, Blindness, Diabetes, Leprosy, Environmental Pollution, Traffic Accidents and Suicides by Farmers. Lags behind; Bangladesh in Human Development Index, Nigeria in Global Hunger Index, Sudan in Human Capital Score, & Pakistan in GDP Growth Rate. GDP from over 8% in 2014 has fallen to below 5% in real terms. According to RBI, GNPA's of banks (bad loans) have gone up from Rs 2.63 lakh crore in March 31, 2014 to Rs 10.39 lakh crore as of March 31, 2018. A nearly four-fold increase under Modi

The worst is Modi failed to get Trump's statement that "Kashmir is India's internal matter". Rather Trump made a statement that India and Pakistan should sought out Kashmir issue amicably. Also he again retreated his past statement that if both leaders of India and Pakistan agrees, "he is willing to mediate on the issue of Kashmir." That makes "Kashmir" bilateral issue rather than internal issue of India. It made Modi look like an immature politician in the international arena and India has become a laughing stock. Modi must stop doing circuses in foreign countries; a new rather vulgar



regime. According to Modi, Still "All is well in India"! Modi all these years as PM of 1.35 Billion Indians has miserably failed to understand that "Leaders are defined by what they do, not how much they talk and how well they dress up". After the euphoria, showmanship, theatrics and symbolism at Howdy Modi; when Modi landed in New York for country's business, despite calling Trump his close buddy and acting like his campaign manager with Indian's money at Howdy Modi failed to get the Indo-US bilateral Trade deal signed. India had been expecting reinstatement to the Generalized System of Preferences, under which it gets better access to the US market, which was revoked in June this year. This also never materialized. As a consolation prize; Trump crowned Modi as Elvis Presley and Father of India knowing it too well that Mahatma Gandhi is the Father of the Indian Nation since its birth. Pathetically Modi accepted both the Titles awarded to him by his close buddy Trump without raising any objections.

trend he started in 2014 is hurting India & NRI's image in the world. Many Indian PM have visited USA many times in the history, yet they keep expenditures in mind. After all the Indians pay taxes for their expenditures. PM Nehru's visit to the US in Nov. 1949: without any special PR campaign, NRI crowd management or hyped-up media publicity a large crowd of Americans not Indians only gathers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to listen to his speech.

Now, 50,000 Indian / Indian origin dead souls gathered to hear Narendra Modi's blatant lies in a multi million dollar circus sponsored by Modi's Indian corporate friends & NRI rich supporters and Indian taxpayers in Houston. Entire mainstream Indian media & blind followers of Modi are calling it as a huge success and Modi's greatest accomplishment. Modi & his supporters can not change the history that Jawaharlal Nehru remains the only Indian Prime Minister to be greeted on arrival at the airport by a US President -and it happened twice:



The Mahatma's legacy for the world

His views on public service, development, rural empowerment, and social evils are relevant today



The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, launched in 2014, is perhaps among the greatest tributes paid, in letter and spirit, to the memory of Gandhiji. His emphasis on cleanliness is the mainspring of this initiative. Making it a people's movement is in consonance with the Gandhian ideal. When we

introspect on the quality of our parliamentary democracy, Gandhiji's words provide some illuminating guidance. Writing in *Young India* in 1920, he warned that "a most perfect constitution may be rendered nugatory if it is handled by selfish or ignorant councillors", and that "if the

voters wake up only to register their votes every three years or more and then go off to sleep, their servants will become their masters". For Gandhiji, character was the most important criteria for public service. He emphatically said, "I consider it impossible for a man without

character to do higher national service so that if I were a voter from among the list, I would first select men of character." He felt that ministers should hold their offices as avenues for service. On the conduct of the legislators, Gandhiji had laid out clearly that it "would have to be that of strictest honesty and courtesy in dealing with his opponents. He will not resort to shady politics, will not hit below the belt, will never take mean advantage of his adversary". Gandhiji said that the following seven deadly sins have to be avoided: wealth without work; pleasure without conscience; knowledge without character; commerce (business) without morality (ethics); science without humanity; religion without sacrifice; and politics without principle. These are the elements of the moral compass that Gandhiji presented to humanity. They are touchstones of ethical behaviour so essential for a just and harmonious society. As our nation gains in economic strength and inclusive development, making the fruits of

swaraj accessible to everyone, Gandhiji's words are a useful reminder to ascertain if we are moving in the right direction. Swaraj, for Gandhiji, was "not a matter of receiving or taking". It was one of evolution. "We either grow to it from day to day or we go away from it. If we, as a nation, are becoming more and more conscious of ourselves, of the fundamental unity of millions, then, we are certainly progressing towards it. Whereas if we are dissolving, then we are receding from it." Unity, harmony and progress underpin this vision. The government's endeavours have the same overarching goal encapsulated in its *Sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas* approach. It would be also pertinent to recall the words of Martin Luther King Jr on the relevance of Gandhi. He said: "If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought, and acted, inspired by the vision of humanity evolving toward a world of peace and harmony. We may ignore him at our own risk."

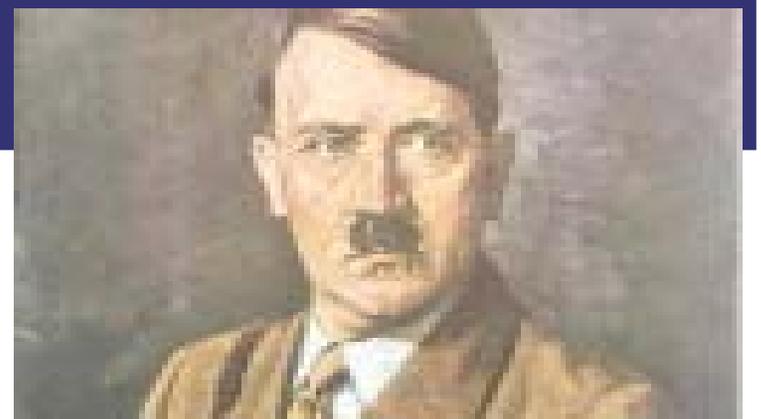
Hitler's rise exposes fragility of democracy

At every turn, the system gave Hitler the benefit of the doubt or looked the other way

Look out for the BBC's three-part serial "Rise of the Nazis". It concluded last Friday in London. It reveals how easily Adolf Hitler came to power, and the extent to which the German establishment facilitated his rise. And running through it is the call of nationalism. Hindenburg was president, and von Schleicher and von Pappen, the immediately preceding chancellors. They knew the Nazis could destroy the Weimar Republic but naively thought they could use Hitler to tackle what they considered a greater threat, the communists. Alas, they had no idea of Hitler's appeal. His promise to make Germany great again and fix its broken economy made him look like the saviour of the German people. Meanwhile his Stormtroopers ruthlessly dealt with dissent. In January 1933, Hitler became chancellor after von Pappen stepped down and agreed to be

his deputy. In the next six months, Germany changed rapidly. First, in February, Hindenburg agreed to Hitler's Reichstag Decree, giving the Nazis emergency powers to arrest and imprison without charge, and restrict civil liberties. In weeks, 25,000 were arrested. Then, on the March 23, the Reichstag passed the Enabling Act. Democracy was suspended and Hitler could govern without Parliament's approval. Yet, all the while, Hindenburg, von Schleicher and von Pappen thought Hitler was their man and willing to do their bidding! Tucked away in Bavaria, was Heinrich Himmler, the head of the Schutzstaffel (SS). His organization saw itself as Hitler's most loyal soldiers. They were anti-Semitic, anti-Left, anti-democratic. They invented the concept of "protective policy custody" to arrest opponents of the Nazis. Hundreds of

thousands were locked up without access to courts and the first concentration camp to "re-educate prisoners" set up in Dachau. Himmler brought every state in Germany under SS control, making it one of the most powerful institutions of the Nazi State. He also knew how to read Hitler's personality, and played on Hitler's dislike of judicial and bureaucratic constraints and his fear of assassination. The German system had many opportunities to reverse what was happening. But the establishment failed to respond. Hans Litten, a lawyer, petitioned the courts against the thuggish Stormtroopers but they would not support him. Josef Hartinger, then deputy national prosecutor, discovered the truth about Dachau but his bosses would not listen. At every turn, the system gave Hitler the benefit of the doubt or looked the other way. So, in 180 days, Hitler decimated



the opposition, subverted the legal system, created the Gestapo, expanded the SS, opened Dachau, and beguiled the German people with Nazi nationalism. Hindenburg, as president, was the only man with the power to sack him. Instead, he fell victim to Hitler's charms. By 1934, he was dead and von Schleicher and von Pappen killed. Hitler celebrated the Night of the Long Knives by inviting his Cabinet and their wives to a party. Champagne was served and everyone behaved as if nothing had happened the day before. Hitler now had supreme control. He had cajoled, coerced and manipulated his way to

dictatorship whilst those who could have stopped him helplessly watched. I guess the BBC's intention is to show how easily the rise of the Nazis happened and, perhaps, prevent it from occurring again. It was not inevitable and it could have been checked. There were several warning signs. They just weren't heeded. This is, therefore, a story worth retelling. Democracy is fragile. In order to be open and inclusive, it leaves itself vulnerable to being taken over by anti-democratic forces. This is why democracy should never be taken for granted. It needs vigorous defence.

Haridwar cops foxed after 5 'wives' claim body of man who committed suicide



(News Agencies)- The Uttarakhand police went into a tizzy after four women showed up at a hospital in Haridwar district claiming to be the wife of a man and wanted to take his body after he died Monday following a suicide attempt. The deceased was a resident of Rishikul area in Haridwar. He was married and worked as a driver, a police officer said. Praveen Singh Koshiyari, inspector at Haridwar police station said, "The man attempted suicide on Sunday night by consuming poison. His wife rushed him to a nearby hospital after seeing him in an unconscious state. He later succumbed during treatment in the hospital." Koshiyari said that police was confronted with an unusual situation when "one after another four other women claiming to be his wife, came to hospital to take his body."

"The man was declared dead at 4 am on Monday. One woman after another kept coming to the hospital claiming to be his wife and wanted to take his body. The women started coming to the hospital around 9 am," Koshiyari said. Unable to come to a solution, police asked all the five women to reach a compromise to initiate the last rites. "We asked them to do so because all of them were very poor and unable to produce marriage certificates. He was finally cremated under the observation of a police constable," he said. In the initial probe, police found that the deceased was facing severe financial crisis due to which he was distressed which ultimately pushed him to take his life. "A case has been registered in the incident and investigations are on," Koshiyari said.

Haryana assembly elections 2019: In first list of 78 candidates, BJP fields sportspersons Babita Phogat and Yogeshwar Dutt

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar will contest from Karnal, the seat he won for the first time in the last assembly election.

(News Agencies)- Wrestlers Yogeshwar Dutt and Babita Phogat will contest from Baroda and Dadri while former captain of India hockey team Sandeep Singh will fight from Pehowa, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced on Monday, releasing its first list of candidates for next month's assembly election in Haryana. Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar will contest from Karnal, the seat he won for the first time in the last assembly election. The BJP's central election committee met last evening to decide candidates for the Haryana assembly election. The BJP released list of candidates for 78 out of 90 assembly seats for the October 21 vote. Seventeen of the 90 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes Haryana BJP chief Subhash Barala will contest from Tohana. Seven MLAs including two Cabinet ministers Vipul Goel who represented Rao Narbir who was the legislator from Badshahpur, have been dropped from the list. Sandeep Singh and Olympic medallist Yogeshwar Dutt had joined the BJP on September



26 while Babita Phogat, also an Olympic medallist, had joined the saffron party on August 12. Phogat's wrestling saga had inspired the Amir Khan-starrer Bollywood film 'Dangal' The BJP which won 47 seats in the last assembly elections in 2014 to form its first government in Haryana, is contesting all 90 seats on its own. Seventeen of the 90 seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes. The party is already in pole position in the election campaign with the opposition seemingly in

disarray. The BJP is banking heavily on the clean image of chief minister Khattar and the development works carried out by his government. Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the BJP's Haryana campaign in Rohtak where he endorsed a second term for Khattar.

The revocation of Article 370 has become a major poll plank for the BJP in the campaign while the opposition parties are trying to corner the ruling party by highlighting the "economic slowdown".

Would not like any state to tell us: Jaishankar on S-400 purchase from Russia

The minister said India was discussing the US concerns but declined to forecast the ultimate decision on the fate of the S-400 purchase from Russia.

(News Agencies)- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is on a three-day trip to Washington DC, on Monday defended India's right to buy a missile defence system from Russia despite the threat of sanctions from the United States. The minister said India was discussing the US concerns but declined to forecast the ultimate decision on the fate of the S-400 purchase from Russia. "We have always maintained that what we buy -- the sourcing of military equipment -- is very much a sovereign right," he told reporters ahead of a meeting with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. "We would not like any state to tell

us what to buy or not to buy from Russia any more than we would like any state to tell us to buy or not buy from America," he said. "That freedom of choice is ours and we think it's in everybody's interest to recognise that," he said. Last year India agreed to buy five S-400 systems for \$5.2 billion, and Russia has said that delivery is on track. Under a 2017 law, the United States imposes sanctions against countries over "major" arms purchases from Russia due to Moscow's military involvement in Ukraine and Syria and alleged meddling in US elections. In June, Turkey angered the

United States by also going ahead with an S-400 purchase. President Donald Trump responded by ending Turkey's involvement in the F-35 fighter jet program but has yet to announce other sanctions. Jaishankar hailed warm relations overall with the United States but underlined India's differences with Trump's hawkish stance on Iran. The United States has threatened sanctions to force all countries to stop buying oil from Iran as it seeks to curb Tehran's influence in the Middle East.



In May, the Trump administration ended waivers for countries including India, formerly a leading customer for Iranian oil "We view Iran from the east, and from the east Iran has been a very stable, status quo power," Jaishankar said. For India, "we've been repeatedly assured that the affordable and

predictable access to energy will not change," he said, declining to comment further on discussions on Iran. India has been teaming up to expand Iran's Chabahar port, a way to ensure a supply route to Afghanistan that bypasses Pakistan, New Delhi's rival and historic ally of the Taliban.

Poll pact sealed with BJP, Shiv Sena announces first list of candidates for Maharashtra polls

Shiv Sena has retained most of its sitting MLAs, while it has also given tickets to legislator who switched over in the last few months. Aadiya Thackeray will contest from Worli seat in south Mumbai.



(News Agencies)-On the heels of the BJP announcing its first list of 125 candidates, the Shiv Sena on Tuesday released its first list of 70 candidates it will field in the Maharashtra Assembly elections on October 21.

The Sena has retained most of its sitting MLAs, while it has also given tickets to legislator who switched over in the last few months. Aadiya Thackeray, son of Sena

chief Uddhav Thackeray, will contest from Worli seat in south Mumbai.

Junior ministers in the state government Arjun Khotkar, Vijay Shiltare and Ravindra Waikar will contest from Jalna, Purandare and Jogeshwari east Assembly segments respectively.

Several turncoats have been given tickets by the party. Former legislator Abdul Sattar who joined the Sena last month has been fielded from Sillod in

Aurangabad, former NCP legislator to join the Sena and legislator Bhaskar Jadhav who was hoping to get a ticket. Instead, Vinod Ghosalkar has joined the Sena will fight from Guhagar Assembly segment. Pandurang Barora, former NCP MLA, has been given a ticket from Shahapur, in Thane district. Nirmala Gavit another turncoat was given a ticket from Igatpuri in Nashik district. In a surprise move, Avdhut Tatkare, who joined the Sena from the NCP, has not been given ticket from Shrivardhan. Tatkare had resigned as the

legislator who was hoping to get a ticket. Instead, Vinod Ghosalkar has been fielded from Shrivardhan. Ghosalkar was pushing for Dahisar seat in Mumbai, but the seat is with the BJP so he was accommodated from Konkan. South Mumbai division head (vibhag Pramukh) Pandurang Sakpal has been given a ticket from Mumbadevi in south Mumbai. He could take on sitting Congress legislator Amin Patel.

'Not giving up': Isro on making efforts to regain link with Vikram Lander

The Indian Space Research Organisation said on September 7 ground stations lost communication with Vikram (with rover Praygan tucked inside it), minutes before its planned soft-landing on the Lunar surface.

(News Agencies)- The ISRO has not given up efforts to spring Chandrayaan-2's lander Vikram lying on the lunar surface back to life after a hard-landing more than three weeks ago, senior officials indicated on Tuesday.

The Indian Space Research Organisation said on September 7 ground stations lost communication with Vikram (with rover Praygan tucked inside it), minutes before its planned soft-landing on the Lunar surface.

Since then the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency had been making "all possible" efforts to establish link with the lander but had apparently suspended those operations 10 days ago

following night fall on the Moon. "Now it's not possible, it's night time there. May be after this, probably we will start. It's night time at our landing site, power may not be there", the ISRO Chairman K Sivan told PTI on Tuesday. "We will make efforts afterwards (during day-time on lunar surface) also," he said.

The mission life of the lander and the rover will be one Lunar day which is equal to fourteen earth days, ISRO had said prior to the launch of Chandrayaan-2.

The Chandrayaan-2 was a highly complex mission, which brought together an orbiter, lander and rover to explore the unexplored south pole of the Moon.

Some space experts believe

regaining link with the lander now appears extremely difficult.

"I think finding link after so many days is going to be extremely difficult but there is nothing wrong in trying," an ISRO official said on condition of anonymity. Asked if the lander can withstand the severe cold conditions on the moon during night-time, this

official said: "Not only cold, impact shock is something one has to worry about; the lander has come down at a high speed". "... the shock generated can damage many things inside, that way it's highly doubtful. Communication antenna which orientation... where it's looking... that way it's extremely difficult to establish contact", he said.

Communication antenna which orientation... where it's looking... that way it's extremely difficult to establish contact", he said.



Meanwhile, Sivan said the orbiter is fine. The ISRO said on September seven the orbiter has already been placed in its intended orbit around the Moon and shall enrich our understanding of the moon's evolution and mapping of the minerals and water molecules in the Polar Regions, using its eight scientific instruments. The orbiter camera is the highest resolution camera (0.3 metres) in any lunar mission so far and shall provide

high resolution images which will be immensely useful to the global scientific community, it had said. "The precise launch and mission management has ensured a long life of almost seven years instead of the planned one year", the ISRO had said. The ISRO had constituted a national level committee consisting of academics and agency experts to analyse the cause of the communication loss with the lander.

Research on 'mangal' in life instead of searching for life on Mars: Union minister Sarangi

(News Agencies)- Playing with words, Union minister Pratap Chandra Sarangi on Monday pushed for 'mangal', as in happiness, rather than 'Mangal', the planet.

Addressing a session during the ongoing global peace summit organised by spiritual organisation Brahma Kumari at Abu road in Rajasthan's Sirohi, the Union Minister of State for Animal Husbandry said that in Europe there is competition between science and spirituality, while in India the two things are complementary to

each other. Asserting that knowing one's own self is spirituality, he said, "We are striving towards knowing the world, but we are not knowing ourselves." "I would like to ask scientists to do research to ascertain whether there is 'mangal' (well-being) in life instead of searching for life on 'Mangal' (Mars)," Sarangi said. Social activist Rani Bang said spirituality gives strength to face crises and challenges in life. Cases of rape and violence are increasing in the educated society not in tribal villages,

and there is a need for serious brainstorming on this, she said.

Activist Aruna Roy and Madhya Pradesh's Public Health Engineering Department Minister Sukhdeo Pance highlighted the work and role of the Brahma Kumaris in peace and harmony. The global summit-cum-expo on 'Spirituality for unity, peace and prosperity' was inaugurated by Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday at the organisation's headquarters in Sirohi district's Abu Road.





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Gandhi Jayanti: PM Narendra Modi to visit Sabarmati Ashram on October 2, to declare India open-defecation free



(News Agencies)-Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit the Sabarmati Ashram here on Wednesday, on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, and later declare the country open defecation-free, a BJP leader said. Several events will be

He will then visit the Sabarmati Ashram to pay tributes to the Father of the Nation, state BJP president Jitu Vaghani said. From there, he will go to the Sabarmati Riverfront, where he will declare the country open defecation-free (ODF) in the presence of over 20,000 village heads, he said. People associated with Gandhian institutions, high court judges, Padma awardees, students, educationists and village-level sanitation workers have been invited for the function. "Modi will also attend the state-level Navratri festival organised at the city's GMDC ground. He will spend some time at the garba ground before leaving for Delhi," Vaghani said. People visiting Gujarat to attend the October 2 function at Sabarmati Riverfront will be taken to different places associated with Mahatma Gandhi, like the

memorial at Dandi, which is associated with the historic salt march led by him in 1930, and the Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar. The administration of Navsari district, where Dandi is located, has organised a mega cleanliness drive at the Dandi beach, where Gandhi made salt as part of a civil disobedience movement, known as the 'Salt Satyagrah'. Around 1,500 people are likely to join the drive to clean Dandi beach, Navsari collector Ardra Agarwal said. At the Gandhi Ashram Sabarmati in Ahmedabad, the day will begin with a 'sarvadharm prarthana' (all faith prayer) held around 8.30 am. Around 900 students from primary schools across the state will gather at the Sabarmati Ashram and some of them will share their views on Gandhi's

teachings of non-violence. The ashram trust said these children are among the 30,000 students from government primary schools who are being taught a lesson in non-violence by facilitators trained at the Sabarmati Ashram. Students will speak on topics like 'Gandhi and non-violence', and 'Gandhi and cleanliness', the trust's director Atul Pandya said. Chief Minister Vijay Rupani will spend the morning in Porbandar, the birth place of Mahatma Gandhi, and will dedicate to the city a riverfront constructed on the Asmavati river at a cost of Rs 44 crore. He will also attend a prayer meet at Kirti Mandir, the ancestral house of the Gandhi family where Mahatma Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869. Rupani will also take part in a cleanliness drive in the city which will be attended by a large number of people.

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Will give Hindu refugees citizenship, expel infiltrators, says Amit Shah in Bengal

The RBI decision came on Monday after the Bimal Jalan Committee constituted by RBI to determine excess capital submitted its report to the federal bank.

(News Agencies)- Amit Shah reminded people that the BJP-led national coalition at the Centre had already moved a bill in Rajya Sabha back in 2016 to give citizenship to minority communities from neighbouring countries.

On his first visit to Bengal after the national elections, Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of trying to spread panic over the proposed National Register for Citizens, or NRC, and declared that Hindu, Sikh and Jain refugees in the state or elsewhere would not be forced out of the country due to the citizens' list.

"The Bharatiya Janata Party government will not force a single (non-muslim) refugee to leave the country," Shah said at an event called the NRC-Jagran Abhiyan in state capital Kolkata.

"Mamata is telling people of Bengal that lakhs of Hindu refugees (from Bangladesh) would be thrown out if NRC happens. There cannot be a bigger lie.... And I have come here today to make it clear that this will not happen," Shah said.

He reminded people that the BJP-led national coalition at the Centre had already moved a bill in Rajya Sabha back in 2016 to give citizenship to minority communities from neighbouring countries. That version of the bill could never be passed, he said, because Trinamool Congress MPs disrupted proceedings.

Before NRC, the Narendra Modi government is going to bring in this bill that will entitle refugees to Indian citizenship. "You will have the same rights as any of us," he said. "Not one refugee will have to leave. And we will not allow even one infiltrator to stay



back," he said, accusing Mamata Banerjee of trying to "shield infiltrators" because they vote for her. "We will not let any infiltrator stay here. We will identify and throw them out," he said, recalling that Mamata Banerjee had opposed infiltration when they used to support the Left front government. Amit Shah's explanation about the government's plan comes against the backdrop of a spirited opposition to the

citizens' register by Mamata Banerjee. The chief minister has also attacked the Centre's push for the register, holding it responsible for spreading panic among people over the last few weeks. In many of Bengal's border districts, people have been queuing up at government offices in case the Centre is able to push through a population register. Mamata Banerjee has ruled out

Maharashtra assembly polls: In Maharashtra's Alibaug, 5 candidates with the same name file their nominations



(News Agencies)- Sitting MLA Subhash Patil from Peasants and Workers Party of India (PWP) alleged that it was a dirty game being played by his opponents. Four independent candidates harboring the same name have also filed their nominations in Alibaug for upcoming state assembly polls.

There have been several occasions earlier when candidates having similar names have contested from two different parties, but Raigad's Alibaug constituency saw five candidates who have the same name file their nominations to contest the upcoming state assembly polls.

Sitting MLA Subhash Patil from Peasants

and Workers Party of India (PWP) filed his nomination on Tuesday, and four independent candidates namely Subhash Laxman Patil, Subhash Janardan Patil, Subhash Gangaram Patil and Subhash Damodar Patil also filed their nominations within the same period.

Subhash Prabhakar Patil told Hindustan Times that it is a dirty game being played by his opponents who fear his victory.

He said, "Four independent candidates with same name like me have filed their nominations till yesterday, and as per my information more with the same name are going to file nomination but I don't pay attention to all this."

After staffers, officers face CBI reshuffle move

(News Agencies)- The number of officers likely to be transferred as part of the policy from the CBI's 72 units has not been decided but it could be in hundreds, another officer added.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is in the process of identifying investigating officers, who have spent over seven years in a particular unit and 14 years at the same station or city, for transfers over the next two months as part of a rotation policy to break the domination of individuals in probe teams, an officer of the agency said on condition of anonymity.

The number of officers likely to be transferred as part of the policy from the CBI's 72 units has not been decided but it could be in hundreds, another officer added. The first officer quoted above said it is for the first time in CBI's history that officers would be rotated in such large numbers. The CBI has 72 units dealing with corruption, economic offences, cyber crime, special crimes, etc.

The officers who would be transferred include sub-inspectors, inspectors, deputy superintendents, additional superintendents, and superintendents.

The second officer cited above said that exceptions would be made for officers who have genuine medical reasons for serving for longer periods at particular units and stations or are handling probes monitored or ordered by the courts.

"There are officers, who have been posted in a certain unit for over 10 years even though new SPs [superintendents of police], DIGs [deputy inspectors general], joint directors have kept joining their teams," he said. He added that officers are capable of

influencing probes or other internal administrative matters if they stay in a unit for too long. "These transfers will streamline the processes and restore the agency's credibility."

CBI on September 20 transferred as many as 200 employees, including lower division clerks, upper division clerks and office superintendents who usually assist investigators in most of the paperwork. This was the first time in several decades that the agency transferred such a large number of lower-rung employees.



Mueller rejoins WilmerHale law firm, in latest post-Russia probe landing



(News Agencies)- Robert Mueller rejoined the WilmerHale law firm on Tuesday, following a nearly three-year hiatus as he served as special counsel investigating Russian meddling and potential collusion with Trump campaign associates during the 2016 presidential election. Mueller's role at the prominent Washington D.C. law firm will focus on high-profile investigations and crisis management, similar to his work there before being appointed special counsel in 2017. "We couldn't be happier to have Bob, our extraordinary friend, and colleague, return to WilmerHale," Robert Novick, the firm's co-

managing partner, said in a statement Tuesday. "Few lawyers have been entrusted with as many matters of national significance as Bob, in both his public service and in private practice. Bob embodies the highest values of our firm and profession. We're privileged to work alongside him once again."

Mueller said in a statement he was "glad" to be at WilmerHale again, calling it a firm with "a tradition of honoring public service." "It was an honor to serve as special counsel," he said. "Now, I look forward to resuming my private practice alongside the talented lawyers at the firm."

Mueller deputies James Quarles and Aaron Zebely, who both worked at the firm prior to joining

the special counsel's office, are also returning to WilmerHale.

Other top investigators who worked alongside Mueller also have landed on their feet since shuttering the special counsel's office. Michael Dreeben joined Georgetown Law School; Andrew Weissman joined New York University Law and has signed a book deal with Random House; Andrew Goldstein joined Cooley law firm; Zainab Ahmad joined law firm Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP; Greg Andres returned to Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP; and Jeannie Rhee, who formerly served at WilmerHale, joined Paul Weiss as a partner.

Meanwhile, some former prosecutors on Mueller's team have returned to public service-

like Brandon Van Grack, who is now leading the effort at the Justice Department to enforce the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA).

In May, Mueller announced the closing of his office and detailed the findings of the Russia investigation, reporting that there "was not sufficient evidence to charge a conspiracy" with regard to whether members of the Trump campaign coordinated with the Russian government during the 2016 presidential election. Mueller, though, left the door open on whether the president obstructed justice. "If we had had confidence that the president clearly did not commit a crime, we would have said that," Mueller said.

Angry Dutch farmers clog up 700 miles of highway during protest over emission rules

(News Agencies)- Slow-moving convoys of tractors clogged up nearly 700 miles of major highways in the Netherlands on Tuesday, as farmers inched toward The Hague to protest what they claim is an attempt to blame them over nitrogen pollution. About 10,000 farmers planned the protest to argue they are unfairly being blamed after a court ruling found that the Netherlands is violating European emission rules. "Farmers and growers are sick of being painted as a 'problem' that needs a 'solution,'" Dick Bruins of LTO, an agricultural

industry group, said in a statement. The morning protest caused the worst morning commute in Dutch history, ANWB, a road and drivers' organization, said. As the slow roll to The Hague continued, some farmers carried posters and signs that read: "No farmers, no food," according to the BBC. The Hague Mayor Pauline Krikke called the massive protest an "unsafe situation." "Some of the farmers in the Hague are driving over barriers, which causes damage and unsafe situations," her office said in a statement.

So far, police have arrested two demonstrators - one who plowed

down a fence with his tractor and another who attempted to interfere with his arrest.

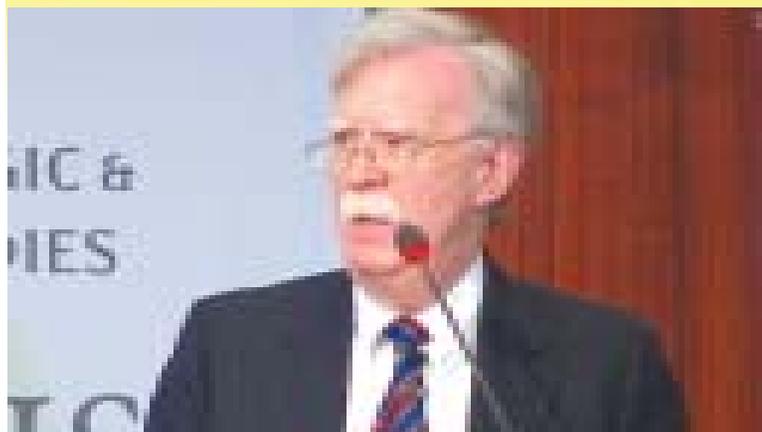
"The police respect that farmers are standing up for their interest and we're trying to facilitate this demonstration with hundreds of tractors as well as possible," the police said in a statement where they pleaded with drivers to abide by traffic guides. The idea that farmers are behind the bump in nitrogen pollution has prompted at least one political party official to suggest the country reduce the number of live animals it produces to cut down on the emission. The Associated Press reported that a broad package of



measures to tackle the increase in pollution includes a plan to grant financial aid to farmers who want to stop operations or adopt more eco-friendly agricultural practices Tuesday's protest

showed there's a lot at stake for the farmers. According to LTO, exports from the Netherlands' nearly 54,000 farms and agriculture businesses were worth \$98.3 billion last year.

US and North Korea to resume talks



(News Agencies)- The United States and North Korea plan to resume working-level talks next week, according to the US State Department. "I can confirm that US and (Democratic People's Republic

of Korea) officials plan to meet within the next week. I do not have further details to share on the meeting," US State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortogus said in a statement Tuesday.

The US special representative for North Korea, Stephen Biegun, will lead the US side of the working-level talks with North Korea, according to a State Department official.

Negotiations on denuclearization have stalled since February, when President Donald Trump cut short his meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Hanoi. Trump left the meeting with no joint agreement after Kim insisted all US sanctions be lifted on his country. The last time the two leaders met was in June in the Korean Demilitarized Zone where they agreed to revive staff-level talks. Trump and Kim had signed a joint statement during

their first summit in Singapore last year that said the North Korean leader "reaffirmed his firm and unwavering commitment to complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." The signed statement, however, was a vague commitment to nuclear disarmament that did not detail how the international community will verify that Kim is ending his nuclear program. North Korea had appeared to put its weapons program on hold to allow for negotiations, but the hiatus was broken on May 4 when it tested a new weapons system. While it has put a moratorium on testing long-range missiles, North Korea has continued to

test short-range ballistic missiles and has made no firm commitments to stop testing submarine launched missiles. Trump has played down Pyongyang's series of short-range ballistic missile tests that stretched into the summer, saying that the US never restricted short-range missiles, though the launches violate UN Security Council resolutions. Trump has also previously said he's in no rush to rid North Korea of its nuclear weapons. Trump showed off a "very beautiful" letter from Kim in August and said that he looks forward to seeing the North Korean dictator "in the not too distant future."



Deepfake Videos And The Threat Of Not Knowing What's Real

The rapid spread of technology that can essentially bend our digital reality has alarmed experts worldwide.

(By Jesselyn Cook)

It's November 2020, only days before the presidential election. Early voting is underway in several states as a video suddenly spreads across social media. One of the candidates has disclosed a dire cancer diagnosis, and is making an urgent plea: "I'm too sick to lead. Please, don't vote for me." The video is quickly revealed to be a computer-generated hoax, but the damage is done? especially as trolls eagerly push the line that the video is actually real, and the candidate has just changed her mind. Such a scenario, while seemingly absurd, would actually be possible to achieve using a "deepfake," a doctored video in which a person can be made to appear as if they're doing and saying anything. Experts are issuing increasingly urgent warnings about the advance of deepfake technology? both the realistic nature of these videos, and the ease with which even amateurs can create them. The possibilities could bend reality in terrifying ways. Public figures could be shown committing scandalous acts. Random women could be inserted into porn videos. Newscasters could announce the start of a nonexistent nuclear war. Deepfake technology threatens to provoke a genuine civic crisis, as people lose faith that anything they see is real. House lawmakers will convene on Thursday for the first time to discuss the weaponization of deepfakes, and world leaders have begun to take notice.

"People can duplicate me speaking and saying anything. And it sounds like me and it looks like I'm saying it — and it's a

complete fabrication," former President Barack Obama said at a recent forum. "The marketplace of ideas that is the basis of our democratic practice has difficulty working if we don't have some common baseline of what's true and what's not." He was featured in a viral video about deepfakes that portrays him calling his successor a "total and complete dipshit."

How Deepfakes Are Made Directors have long used video and audio manipulation to trick viewers watching scenes with people who didn't actually participate in filming. Peter Cushing, the English actor who played "Star Wars" villain Grand Moff Tarkin before his death in 1994, reappeared posthumously in the 2016 epic "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story." "The Fast and the Furious" star Paul Walker, who died before the series' seventh movie was complete, still appeared throughout the film through deepfake-style spoofing. And showrunners for *The Sopranos* had to create scenes with Nancy Marchand to close her storyline as Tony's scornful mother, after Marchand died between the second and third seasons of the show. Thanks to major strides in the artificial intelligence software behind deepfakes, this kind of technology is more accessible than ever.

Here's how it works: Machine-learning algorithms are trained to use a dataset of videos and images of a specific individual to generate a virtual model of their face that can be manipulated and superimposed. One person's face can be swapped onto another person's head, like this video of Steve Buscemi

with Jennifer Lawrence's body, or a person's face can be toyed with on their own head, like this video of President Donald Trump disputing the veracity of climate change, or this one of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg saying he "controls the future." People's voices can also be imitated with advanced technology. Using just a few minutes of audio, firms such as Cambridge-based Modulate.ai can create "voice skins" for individuals that can then be manipulated to say anything.

It may sound complicated, but it's rapidly getting easier. Researchers at Samsung's AI Center in Moscow have already found a way to generate believable deepfakes with a relatively small dataset of subject imagery — "potentially even a single image," according to their recent report. Even the "Mona Lisa" can be manipulated to look like she's come to life:

There are also free apps online that allow ordinary people with limited video-editing experience to create simple deepfakes. As such tools continue to improve, amateur deepfakes are becoming more and more convincing, noted Britt Paris, a media manipulation researcher at Data & Society Research Institute.

"Before the advent of these free software applications that allow anyone with a little bit of machine-learning experience to do it, it was pretty much exclusively entertainment industry professionals and computer scientists who could do it," she said. "Now, as these applications are free and available to the public, they've taken on a life of

their own."

The ease and speed with which deepfakes can now be created is alarming, said Edward Delp, the director of the Video and Imaging Processing Laboratory at Purdue University. He's one of several media forensics researchers who are working to develop algorithms capable of detecting deepfakes as part of a government-led effort to defend against a new wave of disinformation.

"It's scary," Delp said. "It's going to be an arms race."

NICOLAS ORTEGA FOR HUFFPOST

The Countless Dangers Of Deepfakes

Much of the discussion about the havoc deepfakes could wreak remains hypothetical at this stage — except when it comes to porn.

Videos labeled as "deepfakes" started in porn. The term was coined in 2017 by a Reddit user who posted fake pornographic videos, including one in which actor Gal Gadot was portrayed to be having sex with a relative. Gadot's face was digitally superimposed onto a porn actor's body, and apart from a bit of glitching, the video was virtually seamless.

"Trying to protect yourself from the internet and its depravity is basically a lost cause," actor Scarlett Johansson, who's also been featured in deepfake porn videos, including some with millions of views, told *The Washington Post* last year. "Nothing can stop someone from cutting and pasting my image."

It's not just celebrities being targeted — any person with public photos or videos clearly showing their face can now be inserted into crude videos with relative ease. As a

result, revenge porn, or non consensual porn, is also becoming a broadening threat. Spurned creeps don't need sex tapes or nudes to post online anymore. They just need pictures or videos of their ex's face and a well-lit porn video. There are even photo search engines (which HuffPost won't name) that allow a person to upload an image of an individual and find a porn star with similar features for optimal deepfake results. In online deepfake forums, men regularly make anonymous requests for porn that's been doctored to feature women they know personally. The Post tracked down one woman whose requestor had uploaded nearly 500 photos of her face to one such forum and said he was "willing to pay for good work." There's often no legal recourse for those who are victimized by deepfake porn.

Beyond the concerns about privacy and sexual humiliation, experts predict that deepfakes could pose major threats to democracy and national security, too.

American adversaries and competitors "probably will attempt to use deep fakes or similar machine-learning technologies to create convincing — but false — image, audio, and video files to augment influence campaigns directed against the United States and our allies and partners," according to the 2019 *Worldwide Threat Assessment*, an annual report from the director of national intelligence.

Deepfakes could be deployed to erode trust in public officials and institutions, exacerbate social tensions and manipulate elections, legal experts Bobby Chesney and Danielle

Citron warned in a lengthy report last year. They suggested videos could falsely show soldiers slaughtering innocent civilians; white police officers shooting unarmed black people; Muslims celebrating ISIS; and politicians accepting bribes, making racist remarks, having extramarital affairs, meeting with spies or doing other scandalous things on the eve of an election.

"If you can synthesize speech and video of a politician, your mother, your child, a military commander, I don't think it takes a stretch of the imagination to see how that could be dangerous for purposes of fraud, national security, democratic elections or sowing civil unrest," said digital forensics expert Hany Farid, a senior adviser at the Counter Extremism Project.

The emergence of deepfakes brings not only the possibility of hoax videos spreading harmful misinformation, Farid added, but also of real videos being dismissed as fake. It's a concept Chesney and Citron described as a "liar's dividend." Deepfakes "make it easier for liars to avoid accountability for things that are in fact true," they explained. If a certain alleged pee tape were to be released, for instance, what would stop the president from crying "deepfake"?

Alarm Inside The Federal Government Though Thursday's congressional hearing will be the first to focus specifically on deepfakes, the technology has been on the government's radar for a while.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, an agency of the U.S.

Deepfake Will Make Fake News Realistic

As India grapples with how to stop the spread of misinformation online, a new generation of digital forgery technologies threatens to upend whatever progress has been made thus far. Deepfake, a new suite of technologies, uses powerful machine learning to copy and superimpose the voice, face and speaking style from one person onto another. Early versions produced choppy and unconvincing results, but they've come a long way since. Across the internet, hobbyists have used the technology to create entertainment, pornography and art-sometimes with devastating personal consequences. Media has focused on how deepfake can be used to spread propaganda or spark military conflicts, but the larger threat is that the technologies can be weaponised and targeted against individuals and businesses.

Exaggeration, taking things out of context and outright lies have existed long before the internet. What deepfake changes is that it's now far cheaper and easier for anybody to create synthetic evidence for whatever purpose they want.

In the context of India's ecosystem, this can be especially dangerous. There's already the rampant spread of inflammatory statements, doctored videos and conspiracy theories causing social turmoil. That means that small groups of people without much technical knowledge will be able to develop powerful tools of division.

Take for example the June 2018 attacks on migrant workers in Rainpada. A group of people circulated grainy images of individuals allegedly committing wrongdoings, which was used to justify mob violence. With deepfake, a person seeking to

cause trouble can now insert a specific person's face and body movement into a video of a crime. In a similar situation, a hacker can download a CEO's speeches to create a model of their voice, and use that to damage a brand or give fraudulent orders to an executive. Security firm Symantec found that has happened at least three times already-causing millions of dollars in losses around the world.

With social media and messaging apps, we've seen the risks of adopting a technology without upgrading the security infrastructure around it. The Indian government recently implicated WhatsApp in the wave of communal violence that have rocked the country over the past years. The company has prioritised growth over user safety, and as a result, society as a whole has suffered. In the case

of deepfake, India can't afford to repeat that same mistake. These technologies are available for anyone to download, and it's too late to reverse course-instead we need to rebuild our defences. The stakes couldn't be higher.

Countering deepfake will necessitate the creation of new tools, systems and behaviours. Rising to the occasion will require a massive effort by the government, media and software companies to help users become more sceptical about what they see and thoughtful about what they share. This is no easy task to accomplish, but there are many places where they can get started today. These groups can work together to create mechanisms to report and remove fake content, determine what the acceptable limits of speech are, and establish verified

lines of communication for officials to disseminate news.

It is necessary to provide users a way to verify whether a piece of content is real or not. To do this, manufacturers and developers can harness cryptography to create a shared basis of truth. That involves having our devices digitally sign each photo or video so we have the ability to prove when and by whom it was taken.

These measures alone don't offer a full solution, but rather a starting point. It will require many rounds of incremental improvements to know what's effective. While it might be tempting to short-circuit the process by declaring the technology illegal, that won't stop bad actors from causing harm anyway. At the end of the day, technology or regulation alone can't solve what's fundamentally a cultural problem.

The Dark Art Of Deepfake: How This Height Of Manipulation Can Even Make Mona Lisa Frown

You might have seen him already. He was all over TV news spots and social media clips just last week. That puckish, boyish face, unmistakably Chinese, perhaps that of a young brat from one of its glittering coastal cities-but eerily, very eerily, equipped with that equally unmistakable Leonardo DiCaprio mop of blond hair falling over his eyes. Even more unsettling, he was Dicaprio-or at least the characters he played, in those very frames. You may have also heard a name being uttered with awe...Zao! A dreaded Han general? A new virus? No, it's just a new Chinese app that allows its users to do something extremely alarming. The boy in that video turned out to be a harmless, 30-year-old games developer based in Auckland called Allan Xia, who could access the app because of his Chinese number. His use of Zao too was innocuous: "Every media story came embedded with a clip of him strutting around in a Hawaiian shirt in Romeo+Juliet, and basking in the golden sunset on deck in Titanic," wrote the South China Morning Post. But what if he had done something more sinister? An early warning had come with a BuzzFeed video from 2018,

where former US President Barack Obama is saying something...but wait, he isn't saying it! It's somebody else who pulls off the digital mask half-way through. But not just you or I, even Obama could have been fooled. It simply looks that real. Which means, AI-enabled computer technology has got to the point where you can make anyone's digital alter-ego say anything! Now imagine this: a video purportedly of Prime Minister Narendra Modi or Rahul Gandhi with things they didn't say. Or of Imran Khan, or a Pakistani general! Or, for that matter, P. Chidambaram or D.K. Shivakumar, or an approver. Or just the girl who lives down the lane who had recently spurned a boy from the neighbourhood...we are perhaps sitting on a time-bomb here. Yes, advanced technology can detect the fake, but what good would that be if war or a riot has already broken out, or someone has already killed herself?

There's always that riddle: with reality itself so dark and bizarre, what use do we have for fakery? This question used to be once asked of art, but those were more innocent days. The building blocks of reality had a certain rock-solid aspect-everyone agreed, at least for form's sake,

that the 'truth' was paramount. (Philosophers disagreed only on what the damn thing was!) But now we are stepping into a dystopia whose exact shape we can't trace with our hands or our eyes, ears or minds-our sense-making apparatus. So form-shifting and malleable it is. It's almost as if 'fake' is now a part of 'real'-a bit like night was part of Faiz's dawn. Its job is to unsettle us so thoroughly from our everyday empirical truths that we don't even know what's what anymore. And technology is keeping pace with this new, diabolical need. The latest in the arsenal has an unsettling name too: deepfakes. The Chinese didn't invent it, but only created an app that makes creating deepfake videos ridiculously simple. And make no mistake, it's coming home to you.

The demos of it how it works runs the gamut of human affairs-from politics to pornography, further reducing the distance between those two. The presence of technological magic in politics is nothing new. Just this March, after a few years of everyone playing coy, social media giants operating in India agreed to a 'Voluntary Code of Ethics for the General Elections 2019', after meetings with the Election Commission. The likes of

Google, Facebook and Twitter made honourable mention of how they were committed to "increase confidence in the electoral process"-a tacit admission, if any, of manipulation via misinformation. That code was valid during the period of Lok Sabha elections; an updated one may be necessary with elections never far away, because the beast is evolving.

In a globalised world, parallels are easy because technology-and technological victimhood-connects us all. With a President in place who makes real appear fake and vice-versa, the US goes to the polls next year with a clear memory of the previous one. And how all the talk then, bolstered later, was about pervasive Russian meddling through news/social media manipulation. The fears are back; the modus-operandi is expected to be more sophisticated though. No wonder, in mid-July, the US House of Representatives intelligence committee chairman Adam Schiff wrote to social media companies about a new threat in poll season: Deepfake. So what exactly is this new mutant beast? Well, the earlier editions of fake news and misinformation as such were in textual form, taking up space as text-forwards on WhatsApp and

websites dedicated to its amplification on social media. Images, on the other hand, had that other allure: lulling us with that old adage, 'seeing is believing'. But the wave soon washed over that realm, with morphed photos, evolving into memes and the kind along the way. Videos were still seen to be inviolable, though. How do you simulate an entire moving ensemble of interconnected images? So, for a long time now, "I've seen the video" was the same as saying "I know it happened". Well, no more. If 'fake news' was the Collins Word of the Year for 2017, one could do worse than bet on 'deepfake' winning it in the near future. How did the word come about? You probably remember Deep Thought and Deep Blue, the IBM chess machines that beat grandmasters (the latter even Kasparov). A phrase of 1980s vintage, 'deep learning' came from that same edgy world of AI. But now, as that phrase forms a portmanteau with 'fake', we're really being pushed off the deep end. The deepfake phenomenon is already laying siege to the West and slowly creeping into our internet spaces-it's a simple Google search away. Porn is often the pioneering realm.

India-Pakistan Nuclear War Can Kill More Than 100 Million People: Study

If India and Pakistan engage in a nuclear war, more than 100 million people are likely to die, followed by global mass starvation, according to a study. "Such a war would threaten not only the locations where bombs might be targeted but the entire world," said co-author Alan Robock of Rutgers University-New Brunswick in the US. The study, published in the journal *Science Advances*, looked at a war scenario that may occur between India and Pakistan in 2025. While both the countries have waged several wars over Kashmir, they could come to possess a

combined count of 400 to 500 nuclear weapons by 2025, the study noted. The researchers, including those from Rutgers University, found that the exploding nuclear weapons could release 16 to 36 million tons of soot -- tiny black carbon particles in smoke -- that could rise to the upper atmosphere and spread around the world within weeks. The soot, the researchers said, would absorb solar radiation, and heat up the air, boosting the smoke's swift rise. In the process, the study noted that the sunlight

reaching the Earth would decline by 20 to 35 per cent, causing our planet's surface to cool by 2 to 5 degrees Celsius. Rainfall across the world may also reduce by 15 to 30 per cent, both of which could have larger regional impacts, the study noted. The researchers added that vegetation growth would decline globally by 15 to 30 per cent on land, and the oceans could see a productivity decline by 5 to 15 per cent. Overall, the study noted that recovery from all these impacts

would take more than ten years since the smoke would linger in the upper atmosphere. "Nine countries have nuclear weapons, but Pakistan and India are the only ones rapidly increasing their arsenals," Robock said. He added that the continuing unrest between the two nuclear-armed countries, particularly over Kashmir, made it important to understand the consequences of a nuclear war. According to the researchers, the nuclear weapons in the year 2025 could range from 15 kilotons in explosive power - the

same size as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima by the US in 1945 - to a few hundred kilotons. In the scenario, the researchers estimated that 50 to 125 million people could die from the direct effects, with additional deaths from mass starvation also possible worldwide. "Nuclear weapons cannot be used in any rational scenario but could be used by accident or as a result of hacking, panic or deranged world leaders," Robock said. According to Robock, the only way to prevent accidental usage of nuclear weapons was to eliminate them.

India's Kirana stores can hold their own against Amazon and Walmart, says Silicon Valley tech investor

From the poshest neighbourhoods to teeming slums, typical Indian kiranas are cramped spaces that can just about fit a king-size bed but are chock-full of sacks of rice, lentils and dried chili peppers. Their floor-to-ceiling shelves are stacked with toothpaste and cooking oil, and their shopfronts festooned with colourful bags of potato chips, tiny sachets of shampoo and pickles. With their personalized service, the stores usually offer door-step delivery and interest-free credit. GGV, which has focused almost exclusively on China and the U.S. for two decades, is bullish about India. "We are seeing the same movie played out a little differently in emerging economies," said Tung. "India can be very big over the next 10 years." As much as 20% of the

\$1.9 billion fund raised by the VC firm last year will be allocated to India as well as Southeast Asia. India has the market size and talent pool to make things happen and now investors are lining up with capital, said Foo. GGV Capital will write \$5-10 million in checks in the case of very early-stage entrepreneurs and \$50 million checks for later-stage startups, he said. The firm has built an investment strategy around kiranas based on the premise it's better to play with a model that already exists rather than building new supply chains that could take as long as a decade to materialize. GGV's first such investment amounting "to tens of millions of dollars" is in Udaan, a Bangalore-based B2B marketplace for small businesses, the partners said. More recently, GGV has put

money in Khatabook, a mobile app that's a digital version of the bahi khata, or the hand-written ledger that owners of tiny businesses traditionally use to keep track of daily accounts. It's an earlier-stage bet so the investment is "lower", Tung said. Large global investors like Tiger Global Management, Lightspeed Venture Partners and even consumer giant Unilever's investing arm are backing technology startups that serve kiranas but GGV Capital is the first to crystallize a proposition that goes beyond India to include the neighbourhood-store equivalents of kiranas in Indonesia, Vietnam and Latin America. "Across these countries, the value of the average online order is still low and the cost of last mile logistics is very high," said

Foo. "Entrepreneurs are finding a different way by empowering the mom and pops and that can get e-commerce going." In India, even the biggest conglomerates including Tata and Reliance have been unable to diminish kiranas' dominance while newer online retail entrants Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart are trying to embrace them, using the shops to facilitate deliveries or offer

assistance to customers going online for the first time. Reliance has already said it will equip kiranas with technology as part of its online-offline e-commerce model. GGV also sees the neighbourhood stores as more than a place to shop. "If you power them up and earn their trust, they can be the place to serve the community far beyond just groceries and daily necessities," said Tung.

When -- or if -- NASA finds life on Mars

'Can turn the clock back'

The judges, however, made it clear that this would not be possible since it had to give the state and central governments adequate time to respond. "The court can put the clock back... But it cannot hear such a matter without getting a response from the government," the bench ruled, pointing out that when the hearing on merits begin, the petitioners would want to debate everything. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had told the court that the Centre needed four weeks to file its counter to the 10 new petitions filed against the abrogation of Article 370 since they

raise different points. The bench, which also comprises Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, R Subhash Reddy, BR Gavai and Surya Kant, was set up last week after Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi underscored that he would be busy with the constitution bench that is hearing the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title dispute suit on a daily basis. The Centre ended special status to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the state into two union territories. A day later, Parliament passed the changes in the form Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019.

The next mission to Mars NASA's Mars 2020 rover will launch in July 2020 and land at the Red Planet's Jezero Crater in February 2021 (Mars is 140 million miles from Earth, after all). It's equipped with two high-definition cameras and a detachable helicopter to take aerial images of the planet's cliffs, caves and craters. The mission's main aim is to search for signs of life. The rover will look for past habitable environments, find biosignatures

in rock and will test those samples back on Earth. But if scientists fail to find evidence of life, that won't end the hope for human exploration. Mars 2020 will test oxygen production on the planet and monitor Martian weather to evaluate how potential human colonies could fare on Mars. Clarification: The headline of this piece has been changed to more accurately reflect NASA's chief scientist's comments regarding efforts to finding life on Mars.

In absence of ration card, 8-year-old boy dies of hunger in Madhya Pradesh

"They were also suffering from severe diarrhoea. Field staff are directed to further look into the matter," the magistrate said. Assuring that the family would receive benefits of the government welfare schemes, the officer said that strict action would be taken against those found guilty in the case.

People tried to talk Sandeep Dhaliwal out of joining the force

But he was determined to make a difference



Sandeep Singh Dhaliwal was sitting in a crowd at a gurdwara -- a place of worship for Sikhs -- on a winter day in 2008 when he first heard the call of duty. It was soon after an encounter between a Sikh family and Harris County sheriff's deputies had gone horribly wrong. The family had called to report a burglary, but when deputies

arrived and saw their kirpans -- small swords that are an Sikh article of faith -- they treated the family as if they were the criminals.

Adrian Garcia had just been elected Harris County sheriff, and wanted to make things right with the Sikh community. So he visited the neighborhood's gurdwara and made a plea:

Join the force to help change the department from the inside.

Dhaliwal turned to his father and said he wanted to join the sheriff's department. Friends and family tried to talk him out of it.

"I thought he had lost his mind," said BJ Josan, a childhood friend.

Law enforcement wasn't a profession that Sikhs in

Houston entered, Josan told CNN.

Those closest to him want others to know that Dhaliwal was a child at heart, an exceptional spirit, a friend to everyone and, in the words of one colleague, "a damn near saint."

"We've had many law enforcement officers who have paid a similar sacrifice and they were all good people," said Garcia, the former sheriff, who hired Dhaliwal and is now

Harris County Commissioner.

"But I want people to understand that the things that you're hearing about Sandeep are absolutely true."

He wanted to be out on the street, not behind a desk. Piara Singh Dhaliwal said people in the community told him law enforcement was dangerous and that he should persuade Sandeep not to do it. But the father decided to support his son's decision. Someone had to do the job, he said.

The younger Dhaliwal joined the force as a detention officer in 2009 and eventually worked his way up to deputy. He was the first Sikh deputy in the Harris County Sheriff's Office, one of the largest departments in the nation. When he got

permission in 2015 to wear his turban and beard as part of his uniform, it made headlines as a victory for Sikhs everywhere -- and paved the way for other Sikhs to join the department.

Serving in law enforcement as a turbaned Sikh had its challenges, but friends and colleagues say Dhaliwal never let on. He took pride in his role in law enforcement, knowing that he was representing the Sikh community in a very visible way.

"He wanted to show that a Sikh person with a turban is a symbol of someone who's there to provide service, to provide help whenever you need it," Josan said.

And it was his nature to defuse any strange look or rude question with a smile



Houston entered, Josan told CNN. Besides, Dhaliwal had other things going for him, like his trucking and pizza businesses. But Dhaliwal's mind was made up, his father, Piara Singh Dhaliwal, told

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Cell : 516-304-8808

Fax : 516-218-8009

Email : deepakbansalny@gmail.com

3498 Brodaway

Hicksville, NY 11801



or a joke. Garcia and others in the department encouraged him to make rank -- to seek a promotion that would earn him more responsibility and pay. The deputy's father, Piara Singh Dhaliwal, told CNN his son had actually passed the exam to become a sergeant. But Dhaliwal didn't want to sit at a desk and do paperwork. He was happy where he was -- out in the community, interacting with people. "I don't want to sit in the office," he told his father. "I don't want to be a sergeant. Maybe next year." At a vigil for Dhaliwal on Monday night, Harris

County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez recalled a resident telling him she was having trouble closing her garage door and needed to get to work. Dhaliwal told her not to worry and that he would keep watch over her house. Desmond Spivey, a fellow deputy, said that he worked night shifts while Dhaliwal worked days. Normally, their paths wouldn't cross. But on many nights when Spivey was patrolling the neighborhood, Dhaliwal would stop by to say hello. "He'd just drive by in his personal vehicle in the middle of the night just to check on me," Spivey said. Dhaliwal would tell him,

"Hey, if you need anything, man, I'm just one call away." Dhaliwal had a special connection with everyone, Josan said, but especially kids. He went out of his way to talk to them, to make them feel special. He wanted to inspire them and make them to feel like they could count on him. "He knew how to interact with kids," Josan said. "He was a big kid himself." 'He was always smiling' In Copperfield, a residential community in northwest Harris County, nearly every yard this week displays a sad sign. "Love One Another. In Loving Memory of Deputy Sandeep Dhaliwal," they

read. On Tuesday members of the community, a mix of whites, Hispanics, blacks and Asians, kept stopping by a makeshift memorial for the fallen deputy. Scores of candles, bouquets of flowers and American flags dotted the tree-lined street near where Dhaliwal was shot. Judith Aranda knelt and silently lit a candle. She first met Dhaliwal during a memorial for Deputy Darren Goforth, a Harris County deputy who was killed in 2015. Though Aranda said she talked to Dhaliwal only for a few minutes, she felt like she knew him from hearing her parents' accounts of seeing him often at a nearby gas station. This tribute to Dhaliwal can be seen in yards all over northwest Houston. "He was always smiling,

always a friendly face," Aranda said. Papa Johns locations across southeast Texas pledged to donate proceeds from Tuesday's sales to Dhaliwal's family. But the response was so overwhelming, and the wait times to order pizzas so long, that the pizza chain announced it would extend its fundraiser to Friday. It's a sign of how beloved Dhaliwal was by the community, Aranda said. Houston's affection for Dhaliwal is now translating into support for his wife and their three young children. A Facebook fundraiser for his kids' educational expenses has raised more than \$660,000. A GoFundMe campaign set up by Sikhs of Houston has raised more than \$570,000. And a separate GoFundMe campaign by United Sikhs has raised

more than \$200,000. Vigils in Dhaliwal's memory have been held in New York, New Jersey, California and even Punjab, India, where Dhaliwal's family is originally from. And congregations in gurdwaras as far away as Melbourne, Australia, have honored Dhaliwal in their ardas, a formal Sikh prayer that asks God for strength. He inspired others At the Sikh National Center in Houston, Piara Singh Dhaliwal sat on the ground Tuesday night, surrounded by friends who had traveled from around the country to pay their respects. He was still in shock over the death of his son a few days earlier and struggled to summon the energy to talk about him. "What I want to tell you, I don't think I am able to say right now," he said. With a sad smile on his face, the elder Dhaliwal showed a photo on his iPhone lock screen. It was a black-and-white image of a toddler in a patka -- a head covering worn by Sikh boys -- with his parents on either side of him. His son. The photo was taken in India, Dhaliwal said, before the family emigrated to Houston. Soon enough a friend came up to him to offer his condolences.



Expect more interstellar object sightings in our solar system, researchers say



Astronomers have spotted two interstellar objects to our solar system in the last two years, and that's just the beginning.

Researchers believe that in the future, we can expect to see several large objects that originated outside of our solar system zipping through it. And there could be hundreds of smaller objects passing through

each year.

The first observed interstellar object, or object that originated outside of our solar system, was 'Oumuamua. It was observed over a few weeks in October 2017. Astronomers have debated whether or not it was an interstellar asteroid or comet.

The second object, 2I/Borisov, is an interstellar comet that was

observed at the end of August this year. It was recently named by the International Astronomical Union's Minor Planet Center for the amateur astronomer who first observed it, Gennady Borisov. Astronomers will be able to observe 2I/Borisov for at least a year to learn more about the object.

These are the only two that have been observed, but that's likely to change according to a new study accepted for publication in *The Astrophysical Journal Letters*.

"There should be a lot of this material floating around," said Malena Rice, study author and graduate student at Yale University. "So much more data will be coming out soon, thanks to new telescopes coming

online. We won't have to speculate."

Studying these visitors to our solar system can help astronomers determine where they came from. One theory is that they're leftovers from other solar systems that got kicked out into interstellar space.

But of the 4,000 confirmed planets outside of our solar system, called exoplanets, most are closely orbiting their stars -- which means they couldn't eject planetary building block leftovers called planetesimals. In a close orbit situation, these leftovers would be stuck in orbits where they formed.

The new study suggests that these objects could actually be leftovers from large, newly formed planets with a distant orbit of

their star. These large planets would leave gaps in the disk around the star where material like gas and dust is used to form planets. The disk is called a protoplanetary disk.

Because of the distance from the star, these planets could send leftovers out into space.

These planets are harder to observe because they are located farther from their stars, which is why fewer of them have been found.

The researchers looked at three bright, nearby and large protoplanetary disks imaged by the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array Telescope in Chile. This was part of the Disk Substructures at High Angular Resolution Project, known as the DSHARP survey.

'Call of Duty: Mobile' is released



The highly anticipated new "Call of Duty" mobile game was released early Tuesday - and it's already one of the top new apps.

"Call of Duty: Mobile" is a free-to-download game that is available for iOS and Android devices. The first-person

mobile game from the franchise, but it "brings together experiences from both the Modern Warfare and Black Ops

shooting game is loaded with in-app purchases that start at \$1.49 and cost as much as \$159.99.

The game is already the second highest-grossing app in the Apple's US App Store, according to analytics service Sensor Tower. It's not yet ranking in the Google Play store.

"Call of Duty: Mobile" isn't the first

series of games" for the first time, according to Activision (ATVI). There's also a new "Battle Royale" mode that lets players fight as many as 100 people at once. The game was released worldwide Tuesday, with a few exceptions including China. "Call of Duty: Mobile" was developed by Chinese tech giant Tencent in conjunction with Timi Studio, which made the popular game "Arena of Valor."

Video game releases in China face tough scrutiny because regulators previously said they wanted to control the number of new online games and limit game time for minors. In May, Tencent (TCEHY) was forced to pull the

plug on PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds because of government restrictions on gaming.

"Call of Duty" is one of Activision Blizzard's most profitable games. The release could help boost the struggling company, which also owns "Candy Crush" and "World of Warcraft."

In the company's most recent earnings quarter, Activision recorded \$1.4 billion in sales compared to \$1.6 billion a year ago. Earlier this year, Activision said it was laying off 8% of its workforce. The company is struggling to keep up with free multiplayer games, such as Fortnite.

Elon Musk: Crew Dragon spacecraft for NASA could fly astronauts in 3 to 4 months

SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule could be ready to fly NASA astronauts in three to four months. It would mark the first time humans have launched to orbit from US soil in almost a decade.

CEO and chief engineer Elon Musk told CNN Business' Rachel Crane that SpaceX is "going as fast as we can" to get the overdue spacecraft, which is designed to ferry astronauts to the International Space Station, ready for flight.

Jim Bridenstine, NASA's administrator, said in an interview on Monday that he is not confident in that timeline. The space agency will likely have to

purchase more seats aboard Russian-made spacecraft in 2020, he said, to ensure US astronauts have continued access to the space station because of ongoing dealys with its Commercial Crew program, he said. That program includes Crew Dragon and a Boeing-built capsule, Starliner, which is also years behind schedule.

NASA asked the private sector to develop crew-worthy spacecraft to replace the Space Shuttle program after it retired in 2011. SpaceX was allotted \$2.6 billion and Boeing was awarded \$4.2 billion in 2014. NASA originally predicted both

companies' spacecraft would be up and running by 2017.

SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule flew an uncrewed demonstration mission in March, during which it briefly docked with the ISS. The company was expected to launch astronauts in July, but the craft exploded earlier in the year during a ground test of its emergency abort system.

Musk told CNN Business that 95% of SpaceX's resources are dedicated to its Dragon spacecraft and Falcon rockets, and the Crew Dragon vehicle that will conduct SpaceX's first crewed mission will arrive at its Florida launch site in November. "If there's some way just to make



it go faster, I would make it go faster," Musk said of Crew Dragon development.

Last week, Bridenstine chided Musk on Twitter for giving a presentation in Texas about SpaceX's futuristic Mars rocket,

Starship, while Crew Dragon is still on the ground. "I am looking forward to the SpaceX announcement," Bridenstine said on Twitter Friday. "In the meantime, Commercial Crew is years behind schedule."

Matters of the heart: how best to deal with stress

How can we modify the damaging effects of stress on our hearts and our well-being? Limiting stressors may be one of the ways

World Heart Day, observed today, is a day to promote health education and awareness on how to contain the epidemic of heart diseases. According to a conservative estimate, there are 30 million patients suffering from heart-related ailments. A contribution by all, and at every level, is a highly ambitious, but essential, step to fight this growing problem. Stress is emerging as an important risk factor contributing to heart disease besides tobacco use, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, and a lack of exercise, diet rich in fats, and obesity. However, this risk factor, stress, needs emphasis

since other factors are often talked about. Emotional or psychological stress, a common phenomenon in competitive environments seen in cities, contributes to heart diseases. INTERHEART, a scientific study, has established it as an independent risk factor for the causation of myocardial infarction. Several studies and experience suggest that emotional stress may increase blood pressure and bad cholesterol. It may also constrict arteries, lead to arterial inflammation and blood clotting, and increase the risk of a heart attack and sudden death. Stress is a normal physical response to events that

threaten or upset our balance. When we sense danger - real or perceived - the body's defences aggressively kick in, leading to a "fight-or-flight" response. An example of this could be if one is walking in a forest and is confronted by a wild animal coming out of the bush. There is no way but to face the dangerous situation. Stress hormones are then released into our blood stream. They increase heart rate and blood pressure; our blood sugar levels increase to supply immediate energy; and our breathing becomes faster. All these changes increase the supply of oxygen to the



muscles to respond to the threat. This response may be to fight or flee. Although the response is a protective one, beyond a certain point, stress stops being helpful. At that stage, it may cause damage to our health, negatively affecting our quality of life and increasing our risk of disease. Acute and chronic stress

have long been suspected as risk factors for a heart attack. Heart attacks commonly result from an acute blockage of a coronary artery, following the rupture of an atherosclerotic ulcer (plaque) in the arterial wall. These blockages occur suddenly and usually at a place where the narrowing of the artery is minimal. Thus, the transformation of

a stable plaque to an unstable one seems to occur acutely. Likewise, extended work hours, multitasking, long commutes, nuclear family households are just some of the issues many of us have to deal with. The message, therefore, is that it is not easy to avoid stress, but we need to manage and control it effectively.

14th vaping-related death in US reported in Nebraska



Nebraska health officials on Monday announced the state's first death due to severe lung disease linked to vaping, bringing the nationwide total of confirmed deaths to 14. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services said the death occurred in May -- before the outbreak was officially recognized this summer. Before then, "vaping-associated lung injuries were unreported and not tracked by public health agencies," state epidemiologist Dr. Tom Safranek said in a statement. "Once the problem was recognized, states quickly ramped up surveillance and found current cases, but have also discovered cases that occurred before the August

outbreak." The decedent, who was over age 65, was lived in Douglas County, Nebraska. Thirteen other deaths have been identified as part of the multi-state outbreak of lung injury associated with vaping: two in California, two in Kansas, two in Oregon, and one each in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Florida, Georgia and Mississippi. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced last week that the agency is aware of 805 confirmed and probable cases of lung injury associated with e-cigarette use in 46 states and the US Virgin Islands. A specific cause of the nationwide outbreak of lung injuries remains unknown, but health officials are zeroing in on potential clues.

Walmart, CVS, Walgreens pull Zantac and similar heartburn drugs because of cancer worries

Walmart, the United States' largest retailer, is the latest to announce it's suspending the sale of Zantac and other over-the-counter ranitidine medications due to concerns they might contain a substance that can cause cancer. Customers can return the products to Walmart or Sam's Club stores for a refund.



CVS Pharmacy and Walgreens also recently announced they are no longer selling the medications. CVS, the largest pharmacy chain in the country, said over the weekend it was suspending sale of Zantac and other products which contain ranitidine until further notice. Zantac and its CVS-branded generic counterpart have not been recalled, a statement from CVS said, and the FDA has not recommended that patients stop taking ranitidine products. Customers who have already bought the products can return them to CVS for a refund, CVS said. Walgreens said in a statement it is removing the medications from shelves while the US Food and Drug Administration continues its review of the products. The FDA said last month that some ranitidine medications -- including those known by the brand name Zantac -- contain low levels of an impurity that could cause cancer. Drugmaker Sandoz is recalling ranitidine

hydrochloride capsules in the United States because of confirmed contamination with the probable human carcinogen. Apotex Corp., which makes ranitidine tablets sold at Walmart, Walgreens and Rite Aid, has also recalled the drugs. Other medications under investigation The nitrosamine impurity known as N-nitrosodimethylamine, or NDMA, has been classified as a probable human carcinogen based on lab tests, and this isn't the first time that it has been detected in a common medication. Since last year, the FDA has been investigating NDMA and other impurities in blood pressure and heart failure medicines known as angiotensin receptor blockers or ARBs. Numerous recalls have been launched as the FDA found "unacceptable levels" of nitrosamines in several of those common drugs containing valsartan.

Drone finds fugitive living in cave after 17 years on the run

(News Agencies)- Chinese police have arrested a man who was on the run for 17 years after he was spotted by a drone living in a cave in remote mountains, local officers told the state-run China News Service.

Song Jiang, 63, escaped from a labor camp in southwestern China's Sichuan province in 2002. He was found living in a narrow cave near his hometown in Yongshan county, Yunnan.

Officers were reportedly given a tip about Song's whereabouts in early September

but struggled to search the area because of the difficult terrain. They sent out a drone instead, and eventually spotted his camp. Three teams were deployed and Song was arrested. According to the China News Service, Song had trouble answering police questions as he had not spoken to anyone for years.

Song was initially imprisoned for abducting and trafficking women and children, according to the local police source, who didn't elaborate on the circumstances of his crime.



A year later, what Khashoggi's murder says about Trump's close ally



(News Agencies)- A year ago, Jamal Khashoggi, a prominent Saudi writer, entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul to obtain paperwork so he could marry his Turkish fiancée, who was waiting for him outside the building. He was never seen again.

A contributor to the Washington Post, Khashoggi, aged 59, was a critic of the Saudi regime and was living in self-imposed exile in the United States. He was murdered inside the Istanbul consulate on October 2, 2018, by a team that was dispatched

from Saudi Arabia, among them associates of the Saudi Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman -- known as MBS -- the then-32-year-old de facto ruler of the country.

The Saudis (and MBS himself) have consistently denied that bin Salman had any direct role in Khashoggi's murder and instead have ascribed it to a rogue operation by overzealous subordinates. They charged 11 of them, five of whom face a possible death penalty, although given the opaque nature of the Saudi legal system little is clear

about the yet unresolved case. In November 2018, the CIA concluded -- with "high confidence" according to the Washington Post -- that bin Salman had ordered the murder of Khashoggi.

Khashoggi's murder brought into sharp focus concerns about the judgment of the young prince that had percolated for years. MBS had variously entered an ongoing war in Yemen that, according to the UN, had precipitated the worst humanitarian crisis on the planet; he had blockaded the gas-rich state of Qatar, a close American ally and the site of the most important US military base in the Middle East. Domestically, MBS had also imprisoned a host of clerics, dissidents and businessmen.

At first it looked like Trump might distance himself from MBS. Less than two weeks after Khashoggi's murder on CBS's "60 Minutes," President Donald Trump

promised "severe punishment" for the Saudis if it was proven that they had murdered Khashoggi. Khashoggi, after all, was both a legal resident of the United States and a journalist who was contributing regularly to a major American media institution.

A month later, Trump backpedaled, citing putative massive American arms sales to the Saudis. Trump told reporters, "...it's 'America First' for me. It's all about 'America First.' We're not going to give up hundreds of billions of dollars in orders, and let Russia, China, and everybody else have them ... military equipment and other things from Russia and China.

... I'm not going to destroy the economy for our country by being foolish with Saudi Arabia." Until Khashoggi's murder, it was possible to emphasize the positive case for bin Salman, to argue that he was genuinely reforming Saudi Arabia's society and economy. He had clipped

the wings of the feared religious police in the kingdom and had given women greater freedoms, such as the right to drive and a larger role in the workplace.

Bin Salman encouraged concerts and movie theaters in a society that had long banned both and he also started to end the rigid gender separation in the kingdom by, for instance, allowing women to attend sports events.

He also promised a magical moment in the Middle East when the Arab states could deliver a peace deal with the Palestinians, while he was liberating his people from the stultifying yoke of Sunni Wahhabism that had nurtured so many of the 9/11 plotters. For many years, Washington had puzzled over whether Saudi Arabia was more of an arsonist or a firefighter when it came to the propagation of militant Islam. Bin Salman appeared to be a firefighter.

Ethics panel reviews campaign payments to Rashida Tlaib

(News Agencies)- The House Ethics Committee is reviewing a potential campaign finance violation by Rep. Rashida Tlaib during her 2018 campaign, her office confirmed Monday. The Office of Congressional Ethics has recommended an investigation into claims that Tlaib reimbursed herself from her campaign fund after the 2018 election, when she was no longer a candidate. Tlaib's office denied any misuse of funds, stating that the Michigan freshman "fully complied with the law and acted in good faith at all times." While candidates

are allowed to pay themselves a salary during the campaign, Tlaib reported a salary of \$17,500 in two payments after the Nov. 6 election, according to her disclosure. The payments were dated Nov. 16 and Dec. 1.

The Federal Election Commission states that salary payments may continue "until the date of the general election." Tlaib's salary payments were first reported by the conservative Washington Free Beacon. "Representative Tlaib has cooperated completely with the Committee to resolve the referral, which involves the same claims over her publicly disclosed salary

during the campaign that conservative groups pressed back in March," Tlaib spokesperson Denzel McCampbell wrote in a statement to POLITICO. The House ethics panel said Monday it would extend its preliminary review after OCE - the House's independent ethics watchdog - recommended further scrutiny. That initial step, however, does not mean a violation occurred.

The House Ethics Committee now faces a 45-day deadline to announce whether to go ahead with a full investigation, or once again extend the review period and release the OCE report.





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War movie review

Hrithik Roshan-Tiger Shroff drama is high on action, low on story

War movie review: With swag, style and sass in abundance, where is the substance in Hrithik Roshan and Tiger Shroff's new film?

War
 Director - Siddharth Anand
 Cast - Hrithik Roshan, Tiger Shroff, Vaani Kapoor
 War has swag, style and sass in abundance, and comes peppered with high-octane action scenes, car-and-bike chases and jaw-dropping series of twists. What else do you expect from a film that has Hrithik Roshan and Tiger Shroff as the lead pair? Directed by Siddharth Anand, War is an espionage thriller that serves you with just the right amount of action, humour and tops it with ridiculously good-looking people. However, don't expect too much from story because with two bonafide action stars fighting it out on the big screen, everything else is secondary.

War opens with Kabir (Hrithik Roshan), a rogue agent, killing his own. Through a flashback sequence, it is established how

he met Khalid (Tiger Shroff) who went on to join his unit in an intelligence agency. Story takes an interesting turn when Khalid, who has always worshipped Kabir as his mentor, is assigned the task of finding and arresting him. Khalid is also supposed to find out why Kabir went bad and another flashback sequence post intermission reveals his reasons. Throughout War, Hrithik and Tiger's onscreen camaraderie is on point. It is the USP of the film - just as makers intended. Each frame where the two appear together receives whistles and cheers from fans. Whether they're fighting or dancing, or just flaunting their six-pack abs and chiselled bodies - it's nothing short of a visual treat. The best aspect of War is that no actor is aiming for one-upmanship, instead you see them feeding off each other's energy. There's a pleasant comic vibe, too, between

Hrithik and Tiger and director Siddharth Anand uses it cleverly without it sounding awkward. Hrithik - Bollywood's resident Greek god, unapologetically flaunts his age and swag. You'd love those wrinkles. Tiger - the hot favourite among youth - delivers an honest performance even though he seems absolutely star struck by his reel and real life mentor. But who's complaining?

Unfortunately, War doesn't give any scope to its female lead to perform. Vaani Kapoor only appears in the film in its second half, and before you can even understand what her role in the plot is, she disappears. The 20-minute forced cameo, with a song thrown in, doesn't impress one bit. Vaani's role seems to be limited to adding glamour to the film. It's sad that even in today's day and age, that's what many filmmakers cast female actors in



their film for.

And you'll feel the same for supporting actors too. Fine performers such as Ashutosh Rana and Soni Razdan are somewhat justify their screen time with whatever little comes their way. Anupriya Goenka, however, does make her presence felt. The one element that you get in abundance in War is beautifully-choreographed action. The first half has these sequences in plenty and it only gets better in the second half. Shot at exotic international locales like Morocco and Portugal, as well as Delhi and

Kerala, the film excels in the action department. War gives a callback to action extravaganzas such as Mission Impossible and Fast & Furious, and Hrithik's earlier outings Dhoom 2 and Bang Bang. Amid all this, you wonder what happened to the story if at all there was any. Just like we had Saaho a month back which was all things action but no story, War too makes you question why filmmakers don't put enough thought into having a substantial plot. War suffers from a relatively weak screenplay that does not go unnoticed as the two good-looking actors overshadow everything else.

Joker movie review

Joaquin Phoenix delivers Oscar-worthy performance in dreary and distressing masterpiece



Joker
 Director - Todd Phillips
 Cast - Joaquin Phoenix, Robert De Niro, Zazie Beetz, Marc Maron
 "All it takes," the Joker famously said once, "is one bad day to reduce the sanest man alive to lunacy." And that is all that separates him from the rest of society. One bad day.

This quote, as fans of the Batman comics would know, comes from Alan Moore and Brian Bolland's seminal 1988 graphic novel, The Killing Joke, which is one of only a handful of

recognisable comic book influences on director Todd Phillips' Joker. I couldn't think of a more thematically relevant quote to sum up this incendiary new film, which is at once a fable about moral decay, and a cautionary tale about societal division.

Besides a couple of tacked-on moments (including a cute speech by the Trumpian Thomas Wayne about men who hide behind masks), Joker has very little to offer fans of comic book movies. It is, instead, inspired (heavily) by the bleak philosophy

Joker movie review: Joaquin Phoenix and Todd Phillips' film might not incite violence, but it is sure to inspire heated debate. It's the best comic book movie since Logan.

of Martin Scorsese's Taxi Driver and The King of Comedy; an unrelentingly distressing drama about loneliness and unchecked mental illness.

From its gloriously gripping opening scene to its jaw-dropping final moments, it is nearly impossible to take your eyes off Joaquin Phoenix's incredible performance as Arthur Fleck, as much as you might want to. But it is this very repulsion that Phillips, I believe, is attempting to tap into.

There were several moments in the film, including Arthur's introductory scene, when I wanted to avert my eyes, as many of us do when confronted with things that make us uncomfortable. Our first instinct, understandably, is to get as far away from the discomfort as possible. But no matter how far

we run, the source of our problems will remain, festering in its own misery; drowning in its own despair.

Phillips looks at Arthur, a mentally ill loner, not with judgement, but with a mixture of pity and empathy. Despite his troubles, Arthur - crucially and controversially - isn't a bad person. He is eternally ridiculed, bullied, and beaten up; living at the mercy of a system that doesn't give two hoots about him or his ailing mother.

Now this may well be problematic for some audiences. God knows I've struggled with what to feel about it myself. A sympathetic portrayal of a someone who is clearly modelled after one of those mass murderers that we hear about on the news, especially in 2019, a year in which there have been a

reported 334 mass shootings in America, seems highly irresponsible.

Joker isn't an easy film to watch; nor is it particularly easy to understand. It isn't meant to be. For instance, I don't for one second believe that Phillips could be tactless enough to glorify a psychopath in the manner that his film suggests. Arthur is most certainly humanised, but he is never idolised. He is a product of the same civilised society that has dedicated itself to pushing him to the fringes of existence and ignoring his frequent cries for help. After an unrelentingly grim couple of acts, Joker transforms into a broad (but pitch-black) satire towards the end. This switch in tone, in my opinion, is what pulls the film off the ledge that it was fully prepared to leap from.

Mouni Roy sets the beach on fire in Thailand

Mouni Roy has been sharing stunning pictures from her Thailand vacation where she celebrated her 34th birthday.

Actor Mouni Roy is currently enjoying her birthday vacation in Thailand and has shared stunning pictures from the beach destination on social media. She has now shared a picture of herself standing in water in a long crochet dress, worn over a printed bikini. Her stunning picture got more than 1,50,000 likes within one hour on Instagram. Calling her a mermaid, actor Jibraan Khan commented to the post, "Jalpari !! Who clicks these ?" A fan wrote, "Looking gorgeous.." while another commented, "Slaying" while praising her look. Mouni shared another picture of herself sitting on wooden stairs in a short pink dress. She captioned it, "Moody coz am already burnt #lovingthetantough!"

While producer Ekta Kapoor dropped a heart emoji in reaction to the picture, a fan wrote, "Zeherr bilkul." The post got more than 3 million likes including one from actor Ayushmann Khurrana. The actor shared many more pictures of the beach and her fun moments at the resort. She had thanked her fans for their birthday wishes with a happy picture of herself in a pink bikini and the caption, "Cathartic tears of joy reading all your birthday wishes & msgs. Donot know how to say how grateful I am. Thank you." The actor just saw the release of first song titled Sanedo from her upcoming film, Made In China. She stars opposite Rajkumar Rao in the film and has called it a learning experience. Talking about how it felt to work with him,

she told IANS in an interview, "I have learned everything from Raj on this film and for my role. He helped me endlessly during our rehearsals, not only for the scenes that we had together, but also where I was on my own." "He helped me make all of my scenes with him and otherwise much better. Lending him her support is his loving and dutiful wife, Rukmini, essayed by Mouni. Produced by Maddock Films in association with Jio Studios, Made In China is set to release around Diwali this year.



Saand Ki Aankh song Womaniya

Taapsee Pannu, Bhumi Pednekar celebrate government's vasectomy drive



The second song from Taapsee Pannu and Bhumi Pednekar's Saand Ki Aankh is here. Titled Womaniya, the song is about celebrating woman power. Actors Taapsee Pannu and Bhumi Pednekar have shared a second song from their upcoming film, Saand Ki Aankh. Titled Womaniya, the song is a colourful dance number that shows the two

leads celebrating the government's vasectomy drive. The song begins with a clip from the film. In it, Bhumi is seen playing with marbles while Taapsee smokes a hookah. "In mardon ko ek hi toh kaam aave hai, sarkar uspe bhi paband laga degi ye karege ke (These men know just one thing. What will they do if the government put restrictions on this as

well)?," Bhumi asks Taapsee who replies, "Main toh yu kahu jiji, saari umar chalni chaiye nasbandi. Kam se kam saans toh apni marji se le rahe hain?(I'd say the vasectomy should last their entire lives. At least we could live on our own terms)." The scene then transitions into a song and dance number. It begins with the opening verse of

the Hanuman Chalisa and sings praises of the women that run the world. Womaniya, a word coined in Anurag Kashyap's Gangs of Wasseypur song O Womaniya, was also supposed to be the title of the film. However, Anurag, who has also produced Saand Ki Aankh, lost the right to the title and had to rename the film. Earlier, the song Uda Teetar was released late last month. It shows the remarkable journey of the sharpshooter grannies and their daughters in honing their shooting skills for a tournament. The trailer of the film also released last month, which took the audience into the world of the two women who have to battle with a male-dominated society in order to encourage their daughters towards a bright future and win against all odds.

War is biggest opener of 2019, their careers at Rs 50 cr



Actors Hrithik Roshan and Tiger Shroff have proven once and for all that when it comes to Bollywood movies, two stars are always better than one. Their latest film, Siddharth Anand's action epic War, has now become the biggest Hindi opener of 2019.

The film collected an impressive Rs 50 crore at the box office on its first day on Wednesday, according to a report in Box Office India. It is only beaten by Avengers: Endgame which collected Rs 53 crore on its first day this year.

The film is still second to last year's Aamir Khan starrer Thugs of Hindostan, by almost Rs 75 lakhs. Thugs collected Rs 50.75 crore on opening day and holds the record for best opening for a Hindi film, beaten only by Baahubali 2 and Avengers: Endgame.

War also becomes the biggest opener of Hrithik and Tiger's careers as well. The film is their first collaboration on the silver screen. Hrithik and Anand's previous film, Bang Bang, opened to Rs 27 crore, while Tiger's Baaghi 2 debuted with Rs 25 crore.

When -- or if -- NASA finds life on Mars



(News Agencies)- NASA's next mission to Mars will be its most advanced yet. But if scientists discover there was once life -- or there is life -- on the Red Planet, will the public be able to handle such an extraterrestrial concept? NASA chief scientist Jim Green doesn't think so.

"It will be revolutionary," Green told the Telegraph. "It will start a whole new line of thinking. I don't think we're prepared for the results. We're not."

The agency's Mars 2020 rover, set to launch next summer, will be the first to collect samples of Martian material to send back to Earth. But if scientists discover biosignatures of life in Mars' crust, the findings could majorly rock astrobiology, said Green, the director of the Planetary Science Division at NASA.

"What happens next is a whole new set of scientific questions," he said. "Is that life like us? How are we related?"

The Mars 2020 rover, along with the European Space Agency's ExoMars rover, will drill into the Martian crust. The surface of the Red Planet is believed to be radioactive, so if there is life on Mars, it likely lives below ground. "We've never drilled that deep," he told the Telegraph. "When environments get extreme, life moves into the rocks."

The principle's been proven on our home planet: After drilling miles into the Earth, researchers found more life in the Earth's crust than on its surface, he said.

"The bottom line is, where there is water there is life."

And if the agencies' new rovers find proof that water once flowed on Mars, he said, the confirmation could come weeks or months of landing -- so buckle up, space lovers. The realm of possibility might get much wider very soon.

'Can turn the clock back'

SC declines to stay bifurcation of J&K into 2 UTs

The constitution bench, which was set up last week by Justice NV Ramana, gave the Centre four weeks to respond to a bunch of petitions that challenged the move to scrap special status for Jammu and Kashmir. It will take up the case again on November 14.



A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to stop the Centre from carving out two centrally-administered union territories (UTs) out

of Jammu and Kashmir, telling the petitioners who challenged the scrapping of Article 370 that the top court could always "turn the clock

back". The constitution bench, which was set up last week by Justice NV Ramana, gave the Centre four weeks to respond to a bunch of petitions that challenged the move to scrap special status for Jammu and Kashmir. It will take up the case again on November 14. According to the government order, the state of Jammu and Kashmir would be split into two union territories on 31 October: Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. Senior lawyer Raju Ramachandran, who is representing one of the 10 petitioners, had asked the five-judge bench led by Justice NV Ramana to hold its hearing before this month-end or stop the government from carving out two UTs.

In absence of ration card, 8-year-old boy dies of hunger in Madhya Pradesh

The relatives of Ratan Kumar's family claimed that they had not eaten anything for the last few days. One of them also alleged that the family has no ration card to avail monthly ration at cheap rates and some villagers were helping them with the food.

In a sad incident, an 8-year-old boy from Madhya Pradesh allegedly died of hunger on Monday while five other members of his family have been hospitalised following complaints of vomiting and diarrhoea in Sindhwa block of Barwani district. The relatives of Ratan Kumar's family claimed that they had not eaten anything for the last few days. One of them also alleged that the family has no ration card to avail monthly ration at cheap rates and some villagers were helping them with the food. "They are daily wage earners. They were not receiving benefits of any government scheme," a relative told ANI. Dr Sunil Patel, who attended to the family, said the affected family told him that they had not taken food for the last few days. Anshu Jawla, the Sub-divisional magistrate of Barwani, said that prima facie evidence shows that they had not consumed food since last few days.



India's Kirana stores can hold their own against Amazon and Walmart, says Silicon Valley tech investor

From the poshest neighbourhoods to teeming slums, typical Indian kiranas are cramped spaces that can just about fit a king-size bed but are chock-full of sacks of rice, lentils and dried chili peppers.



One of the most successful Silicon Valley-Asia venture capital firms is counting on the humble mom-and-pop store that dominates India's retail landscape to hold its own against Amazon.com Inc. and Walmart Inc. Menlo Park, California-based GV Capital, a \$6.2 billion investor in some of the biggest unicorns in the U.S. and China including Airbnb, Xiaomi Corp., and Slack Technologies Inc., is backing startups that serve the tiny, family-run businesses known as kiranas. "It's all about powering the little guys," said Hans Tung, managing partner, in a recent joint interview with fellow investor Jixun Foo in Bengaluru, where the duo was meeting a dozen entrepreneurs. "We're backing startups that provide technology and working capital to make kiranas more efficient, so that these mom-and-pops can become e-commerce and lending enablers in their communities," Tung added.