

The battle lines are drawn for 2019

Without waiting for the EC, our politicians have gone on the offensive

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Feds file new indictment against Edward, Linda Mangano



(Agencies) Federal prosecutors Wednesday filed a superseding indictment against former Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano and his wife, Linda, adding details of statements to investigators by Linda that prosecutors allege are lies. The Manganos pleaded not guilty Wednesday to the superseding indictment at their arraignment before U.S. District Judge Joan Azrack, the same judge who declared a mistrial in May after the former Nassau County executive

and his wife stood trial on corruption charges for 12 weeks at the federal courthouse in Central Islip. Despite the new indictment, those original charges against the Manganos, both Bethpage residents, remain the same. But the addition of 11 specific examples in writing of Linda Mangano's alleged lies appears to be an attempt by prosecutors to explain precisely the details of her alleged false statements. It was one example of prosecutors attempting to refine their case in the superseding indictment as the case heads for retrial in October. Though many of Linda Mangano's alleged lies were elicited during trial testimony of an FBI agent, they were never formally included in prosecutorial court papers or introduced as an exhibit for the jury to review.

(Contd on page 18)

Toll in Indonesia earthquake rises to 131; rescuers intensify efforts to find people buried under rubble



(Agencies) Bangsal, Indonesia: Aid began reaching isolated areas of the Indonesian island struggling after a powerful earthquake that killed more than 130 people as rescuers intensified efforts Wednesday to find those buried in the rubble.

The national disaster agency stood by its latest death toll of 131 from Sunday's quake despite other government agencies including the military reporting much higher figures.

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Regionalism, not secularism, is the new pivot of Indian politics

The party that will be hurt the most by the ascent of regional forces and their localised identities will be the Congress. Most likely the political fault line in 2019 will be Hindutva vs Caste disruptions

At a recent panel discussion to launch a book of essays by senior lawyer and Congress spokesperson, Abhishek Singhvi, I pushed the speakers to define what “secularism” is. Singhvi’s introductory chapter identifies secularism as the first principle of Indian democracy. As a philosophical notion of diversity and a constitutional guarantee of equality, of course I entirely agree. It is what makes India unique and wonderful.

But I was more interested in exploring whether it still holds as a marker of political differentiation. Hasn’t secularism become corroded and compromised as an electoral slogan?

Dinesh Trivedi of the Trinamool Congress retorted — rather candidly — “This secularism debate is all politics.” He wasn’t dissing the idea of religious pluralism which he said was innate to India; his remark was on the electoral squabble over the word.

But perhaps nothing illustrates the fact that the old political silos no longer apply than the meeting between his party’s boss Mamata Banerjee and the Shiva Sena’s Uddhav Thackeray. Unlike his father, Uddhav is someone I have often



described as “the reluctant fundamentalist”. But notwithstanding his seeming discomfort with the traditional militant parochialism of his party, it would be hard for anyone to call the Sena a secular force. Yet, an unfazed West Bengal chief minister said she “respects Shiv Sena; no one is more communal than the BJP”. Since then, Uddhav has become an unlikely rallying force for the anti-Modi federal front, even though he hasn’t yet left the alliance with the BJP in Maharashtra.

The message is clear: the rhetoric notwithstanding, in the run-up to 2019, the pivot around

which the non-BJP parties will organise themselves will be regionalism and federalism — and not secularism. The anti-Narendra Modi sentiment among these state satraps is higher than an anti-BJP ideology per se. In any case, most of the regional political protagonists have had alliances and understandings with the BJP in the past. Naveen Patnaik, Mamata Banerjee, Nitish Kumar, Mayawati, N Chandrababu Naidu, K Chandrasekhar Rao have all either been in alliance with the BJP or showered praise on its leadership at different points of time. Nitish Kumar’s Janata Dal

United — stung by three consecutive losses to the Tejashwi Yadav-led RJD — has begun to murmur its disenchantment with the BJP, amid rumours that a faction could split under Sharad Yadav. In fact, nothing better represents the demise of secularism as a meaningful political slogan more than the Bihar chief minister’s fickleness. Nitish was hailed by liberals as a secular alternative to Modi. Last year, before Nitish walked into the arms of the BJP, historian Ramachandra Guha suggested that the Congress back Nitish as its prime ministerial candidate. “He is a

leader without a party,” Guha told me,” and the Congress is a party without a leader.” But neither Nitish’s alliance with the BJP, nor his second exit, should it come later this year, will have anything to do with secularism or an antithetical ideology. His decisions will be a by-product of realpolitik.

The Opposition’s win in Kairana has offered a ready blueprint for what lies ahead — alliances, arithmetic and an attempt to make the elections as local as Modi will try and make them presidential. On this chessboard of moves — and despite Jayant Chaudhary’s memorable winning line — Ganna, not Jinnah — the organising principle of the arrangement of power will be regional blocs, caste calculations and the cementing of anti-Modi calculations. Don’t be surprised if the Shiv Sena joins such a federal front officially revealing that the old rules of secularism have changed. No one is a political pariah any more. And the traditional notions of Left vs Right have collapsed. The party that will be hurt the most by the ascent of regional forces and their localised identities will be the Congress. For years the Congress has argued that the fundamental difference between it and the BJP is that it is secular. But now — unless wins in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh can tilt the scales — the Congress not just has to play second fiddle in a rainbow coalition of regional parties; it also has to accept that these state forces will set the narrative. Most likely the political fault line in 2019 will be Hindutva vs Caste disruptions.

The Congress displayed its confusion on the secularism issue by showing visible anxiety about the Right-wing labelling it anti-Hindu and pro-Muslim. It’s slightly vague attempt to be Hindu Lite to the BJP’s hard Hindutva hasn’t got it significant gains yet. As it wraps its head around how best to define a new version of secularism — different from the Nehruvian ideal — the regional parties have bypassed the question altogether.

Barkha Dutt is an award-winning journalist and author

For Delhi’s survival, let Yamuna be a river again

Even during the monsoon, the Yamuna rarely floods these days. And only when it does, it looks like a river. But the spectacle of vigorous flow and wider span is short-lived. As soon as the water recedes, the river goes back to being a drain.

Ten-year-old Aryaman Bharadwaj was taken aback when he saw water swirling under the Nizamuddin Bridge last week. As he wondered whatever happened to the stinky drain he had always seen there, his father couldn’t help but compliment the river by tweeting: “Delhi’s swollen #Yamuna looks like a calm #Brahmaputra.” Such



overwhelming reactions were not surprising from citizens who had rarely seen the Yamuna in spate. In fact, most of the new residents of Delhi, including Aryaman’s father who arrived in the national capital 18 years ago, have always known the Yamuna to be an oversized toxic sewer. Even during the monsoon, the Yamuna rarely floods these days. And only when

it does, it looks like a river. The surplus rainwater from the upstream allows it to reclaim the floodplains. But the spectacle of vigorous flow and wider span is short-lived. As soon as the water recedes, the river goes back to being a drain. That the river needs fresh water to live is native wisdom. We go against this natural principle

to meet our ever-increasing demand for irrigation and drinking water. We hold the river in the barrages upstream and divert it into canals, leaving only a trickle to flow downstream. To make it worse, we throw much of the city’s untreated toilet and industrial waste into the river. We also clutter the riverbed, which is the lung to

the river and the biggest aquifer the city can ever have, by building vast concrete structures right on the floodplains. Despite all the hardware commissioned to treat the city’s wastewater, the sewage treatment plants remain grossly underutilised. As much as 45% of Delhi’s habitation is not even connected to the network. Their wastewater lands into stormwater drains that empty out into the Yamuna, which has no water to dilute these toxins. “We are told that the Aviralta (uninterrupted flow) in the river will follow Nirmalta (purity). But the two go together,” explains Manoj Misra, a river activist who petitioned the NGT in the ongoing case on the cleaning of the Yamuna.

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China's Challenge Is America's Opportunity

American tensions with China over international trade spring partly from concerns that China gives tax breaks to its companies to boost their exports, restricts access to its markets, forces foreign companies to transfer their technology to Chinese companies, steals intellectual property and pursues industrial espionage.

Expert, decisive action is needed to stop these practices in defense of fair international competition and America's strategic and commercial interests. But it would be a mistake to think that an aggressive defense alone will somehow prevent China's technological success — or ensure America's own.

China is not an innovation also-ran that prospers mainly by copying other people's ideas and producing them quickly at low cost. The country is advancing aggressively to assert technological supremacy in critical fields of science and technology.

In quantum computing, China's Alibaba is battling Google to achieve the technical milestone of "quantum supremacy." In 5G technology, the three largest global players are Nokia of Finland, Ericsson of Sweden — and Huawei of China, which is spending more than two and a half times as much on research and development as its two rivals. The Fuxing bullet train, designed and built in China, is the world's fastest in regular operation. China is also a world leader in fields like mobile payment and facial and spoken language recognition, where Chinese companies have made the most of their advanced algorithms and their advantages in scale and data access. It is also making bold national investments in key areas of research like biotechnology and space, and directly supporting start-ups and recruiting talent from around the world. And China has unrivaled capacity to rapidly ramp up large-scale production of advanced technology products and quickly bring innovation to market. In short, stopping intellectual property theft and unfair trade practices — even if fully effective — would not allow the United States to relax back into a position of unquestioned innovation leadership. Unless America responds urgently and deliberately to the scale and intensity of this challenge, we should expect that, in fields from personal communications to business, health and security, China is likely to become the world's most advanced technological nation and the source of the most cutting-edge technological products in not much more than a decade.

But China's technological dominance is not inevitable. The United States has tremendous assets, including the immense global strength of our technology sector. This partly depends on a unique formula no other country has been able to copy: the large number of first-rate American universities pursuing advanced research with long-term federal support. This relationship is rooted in a national culture of opportunity and entrepreneurship, inspired by an atmosphere of intellectual freedom, supported by the rule of law and, crucially, pushed to new creative heights by uniting brilliant talent from every sector of our society and every corner of the world. For decades, these factors have helped make our nation the most powerful scientific and technological engine on Earth. Every American can take pride in this distinctive system. But there is nothing automatic about its excellence. While China is moving forward rapidly with a unified strategy called Made in China 2025 to become the world leader in manufacturing and technology, the United States has not made technological pre-eminence a matter of broad national focus. If we want to remain the most, or one of the most, technologically advanced nations in the world, we should double down on our strengths and make that vision real. For instance, to capitalize on the superb American pool of artificial intelligence research talent, we need the kind of long-range planning that helped build United States strength in nanotechnology: a stable, targeted, multiyear funding strategy that coordinates the investments of multiple federal agencies. The White House recently created a select committee on artificial intelligence; this good first step needs to be the start of an aggressive race to the frontier of knowledge. The same is true in quantum computing; a modest effort being floated in Congress to support advanced research should be larger, faster and more ambitious.

We also need to take a fresh look at industry-university-government partnerships as mechanisms for strategic co-investment in early-stage research. In the 1980s, such efforts, though far from perfect, helped the American semiconductor industry survive and thrive. Stressing what worked and discarding what didn't, we need to collaborate actively across those three sectors in the same spirit now to make our entire innovation system faster and more effective, so ideas generated in the United States get to market in the United States first.

At the same time, government, industry, schools and universities should boldly develop our homegrown talent, of every age and in communities across the country. An enduring benefit of the G.I. Bill and America's response to Sputnik was that Americans became, for some decades, the best educated people on Earth, and we can do it again. Finally, we should make sure we have an immigration system that welcomes the best talent from anywhere in the world, so that people hungry for opportunity continue to see America as the best place for their education and the best place to spend their lives and careers, enabling the United States to reap the benefit of their creativity and drive.

Indra Nooyi's Exit Has Far-Reaching Implications For Pepsi

Indra Nooyi will step down as Chief Executive Officer of PepsiCo Inc., Bloomberg News reported Monday. Two big problems trail in her wake.

Her departure, scheduled for October, leaves the S&P 500 on track to have just 23 female CEOs, less than 5 percent of the total, according to data from Catalyst, a non-profit research and advisory group.

It's not just that progress has stalled in getting more women into the top spot, it's going backward. Last year, there were 27 female CEOs in the index. Though corporate America says it wants to have more women as leaders, efforts to make real change are proving to be distressingly inadequate.

But the transition at Pepsi to 22-year company veteran Ramon Laguarta also has far-reaching implications for the drinks maker.

The company is one of many consumer goods groups struggling to generate growth from their traditional products as younger shoppers look for healthier, local and more-niche goods. For soft drink makers, the problem is acute. Overall soda consumption has dropped to its lowest level in more than 30 years. The pressure is on to find alternatives to sugary drinks.

Nooyi avoided large transactions that could have done just this. She passed on WhiteWave Foods, a maker of dairy alternatives that was sold to Danone SA for \$10 billion two years ago. During her tenure Nooyi also saw off activist Nelson Peltz, who called for the company to be split into its beverage division and its successful snack arm, which includes Doritos and Lay's chips.

Calls for a separation could emerge once more. Though the company's recent financial reports have been encouraging, changes in consumer tastes are here to stay.

Certainly the competition isn't standing still: with acquisition powerhouse Kraft Heinz Co. in need of a fresh deal to plug into its cost-stripping machine, Pepsi could come onto its radar screen. Last year, analyst speculation resurfaced that Kraft shareholder 3G Capital would engineer a complex three-way transaction under which Pepsi's snack arm would go to Kraft Heinz and the soda brands to Anheuser-Busch InBev SA.

With Kraft Heinz's share price having slumped after its failed tilt at Unilever NV last year, and AB InBev struggling to generate growth from its U.S. beer business, that idea has faded. But with Nooyi preparing to depart, a galvanizing force against big corporate change will also disappear. That leaves Laguarta on deck to tackle an existential problem at Pepsi.



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Abuse at shelter homes: MPs can't pass the buck

Parliament is in session, and there has been uproar in both houses over the two incidents. While raising the issue in Parliament is important, MPs must also answer as to why they themselves failed to do their bit when it came to monitoring the homes. Things probably would not have come to such a pass had regular inspections and audits been done.



of silence. However, there are another set of people who are equally to be blamed for such a situation: the Members of Parliament.

According to a report in Hindustan Times, since 2015, women and child development minister Maneka Gandhi wrote thrice to each one of the more than 700 Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs, requesting them to "take out some time and visit" such shelters for women and children in their respective constituencies periodically to check the living conditions as well as the level of care being provided to the residents. To date, not one MP has responded, according to Ms

Gandhi. "There is hardly any monitoring by state agencies either. I will not be surprised if more cases like Muzaffarpur and Deoria come out," she said. There are 9,000 government-run child care institutions and shelter homes for women and girls across the country. While the Centre provides 60% of the funds for running these institutions, states pay the remaining 40%. Usually, the state department concerned finds an NGO to run a home. In addition to this, there are shelters funded fully by state governments. The Deoria and Muzaffarpur shelters, for instance, are funded by the Uttar Pradesh

and Bihar governments respectively. The attitude of the MPs towards these shelter homes is shameful. Parliament is in session, and there has been uproar in both houses over the two incidents. On Tuesday, home minister Rajnath Singh assured the house that the guilty won't be spared. While raising the issue in Parliament is important, MPs must also answer as to why they themselves failed to do their bit when it came to monitoring the homes. Things probably would not have come to such a pass had regular inspections and audits been done.

On Monday, police in Uttar Pradesh's Deoria rescued 24 girls from a shelter home amid allegations of a sex racket thriving on its premises. This incident comes on the heels of one in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, where minor girls of a shelter home told the police last month that they used to be stripped and beaten if they refused to submit to sexual demands. These incidents could take place because of local administrative negligence and a conspiracy

Why Bharat needs to stay connected to its roots

We can protect this identity in the world and prepare ourselves for future challenges only if we remain connected and embedded to our roots



Bharat's deep cultural roots are its identity. Remaining connected to these roots, embedded in our identity (Asmita), is essential to our existence (Astitva). This identity has been called Hindutva or Hindu view of life by Dr Radhakrishnan and Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. If anyone has objection to the word 'Hindu', then they may call it Bharatiya or even Indic. But its core content remains the same. Even though the truth is one, it can be called by different names; that is the essence of Bharatiya thought. It is the content that is vital and

important. How does one think if one is deeply embedded to Bharatiya cultural-spiritual tradition? A good example comes from the saying of Acharya Mahaprajna ji. He was the head of the Tera Panth (a sect), which is one of the spiritual traditions among Shwetambara Jains. Being a saint with national perspective, he was recognised and respected far and wide. He used to say, I belong to the Tera Panth because I am a Sthanakavasi Jain. I am a Sthanakavasi Jain because I am a Shwetambara Jain. I am a Shwetambara because

I am a Jain and I am a Jain because I am a Hindu. This is a beautiful expression of the Bharatiya way. One can simultaneously belong to the Tera Panth, be a Sthanakavasi Jain, a Shwetambara Jain and also a Hindu. This is because Bharatiya thought does not see any contradiction in these diverse layers of identities. It is only a different expression of the One. This is the Bharatiya tradition. But when the connection to these deeper roots starts eroding, then the narration starts changing. And so begins the narrative that I am a Hindu but I am a

Jain. I am a Jain but I am a Shwetambar Jain. I am a Sthanakavasi Jain and I am a Sthanakvasi Jain but I belong to Tera Panthi. Further erosion of this deeper connect leads to a different narrative: whatever I may be, a Jain, a Shwetambara, a Sthanakavasi or Tera Panthi, but I am not a Hindu. And then politics comes into play. Once the ultimate erosion of the deep connection to the roots, the core identity (Asmita), is complete, the process of de-Indianisation also is complete. Slogans like "Bharat tere tukde honge, Bharat ki barbadi tak jung chalegi, jung chalegi" (India, you shall be broken into pieces! The fight will go on till India is destroyed).?are the outcome of this complete disconnect with the roots of Bharat. Such expressions do not emanate from the illiterate, backward and poor people, but from the ultra-modern young representatives of the Bharatiya intellectual community, representing the

so-called most progressive and modern educational institution. Surprisingly, they also get support from academicians and scholars who are drawing perks and benefits from the resources of the same country. Can there be a more glaring example of de-Indianisation through education? Therefore, Dr Pranab Mukherjee tracing the legacy of over five thousand years of togetherness and collective journey of the people of Bharat — he did this during his speech in Nagpur — that formed our national identity, becomes all the more important. We can protect this identity in the world and prepare ourselves for future challenges only if we remain connected and embedded to our roots. To conclude in the words of the poet and advertising professional, Prasoon Joshi: Why are you so disconnected, shallow tree? You will only wither away. The deeper your roots go, So much will you bloom! **Manmohan Vaidya**



Why India won't become a Hindu Pakistan

As long as Bharat is embedded within Hindutva, it will never become Pakistan

Manmohan Vaidya

A senior leader of the Congress recently said that if the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

returns to power, India will become a "Hindu Pakistan".

Several leaders of the Congress party, perhaps supported by the evangelical Church and influenced by the un-Indian ideology of Communism, continue to issue statements that hurt the very identity and glory of Bharat. When these highly educated people make such statements, one is reminded of the comment made in the report of education commission by former President Dr S Radhakrishnan in 1949: "One of the serious complaints against the system of education which has prevailed in this country for over a century is that it neglected India's past, that it did not provide the Indian students with the knowledge of their own culture. It has produced in some cases the feeling that we are without roots, in others, what is worse, that our roots bind us to a world very different from that which surrounds us." Clearly, this un-Indianisation has gone so deep that it has influenced our thinking, even our vocabulary. Hindu Pakistan, Hindu Taliban, Hindu terror — all these terms exhibit a completely un-Indian thought. In fact, the expression "Hindu Pakistan" is a complete oxymoron. Before we recognise the meaninglessness of this term, we should understand what Bharat and Hindutva are. Speaking about Bharat in Nagpur recently, the former President Dr Pranab Mukherjee said that "India was a state long before the concept of the European nation state gained ground. This model of a defined territory, a single language, shared religion and a common enemy... led to the formation of various nation

states in Europe. On the other hand, Indian nationalism emanated from "universalism", which finds its roots in the Bharatiya philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Niramayah. We see the whole world as one family and pray for the happiness and good health of all. Our national identity has emerged through a long drawn process of confluence, assimilation, and co-existence. The multiplicity in culture, faith and language is what makes India special. We derive strength from not just tolerance but acceptance and respect. We accept and respect pluralism that forms the basis of our composite culture. We take pride and celebrate our diversity. These have been a part of our collective consciousnesses for centuries. Any attempt at defining our nationalism in terms of dogmas and identities of religion, region, hatred and intolerance will only lead to dilution of our national identity." The foundation of this fundamentally liberal, all embracing, tolerant and universal thought is the integral and holistic view of life based on spirituality. This view of life has been called the 'Hindu view of life' by Dr Radhakrishnan. Enumerating its distinctive features, he said: "The Hindu method of reform enables every group to retain its past associations and preserve its individuality and interest. As students are proud of their colleges, so are a group of their gods. We need not move students from one college to another, but should do our best to raise the tone of each college, improve its standards and refine its ideals, with the result that each college enables us to attain the same goal." He adds: "We see that the Hindu recognises one Supreme Spirit, though different names are given to it. In his social economy he has many castes,

but one society. In terms of population there are many races and tribes, but all are bound together by one common spirit." Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore also said the same thing in his essay "Swadeshi Samâj". He wrote: "To feel unity in diversity, to establish unity amongst variety — this is the underlying dharma of Bharat. Bharat does not regard

difference as hostility, she does not regard other as enemy. That is why without sacrifice or destruction she wants to accommodate everybody within one great system. That is why she accepts all ways and sees the greatness of each in his own sphere. Because of this virtue in Bharat we shall not be frightened considering any

society as our opponent. Each fresh conflict will enable us to expand ourselves. The Hindus, the Buddhist, the Muslim and the Christian will not fight each other and die in India; here they will find a meeting point. That point will not be non-Hindu, but very specifically Hindu. However foreign may be her body parts, her life and spirit will be of Bharat only."

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Adultery law will preserve 'sanctity of marriage', says govt; SC asks how?

The adultery law punishes a married man for having sexual relationship with a married woman.

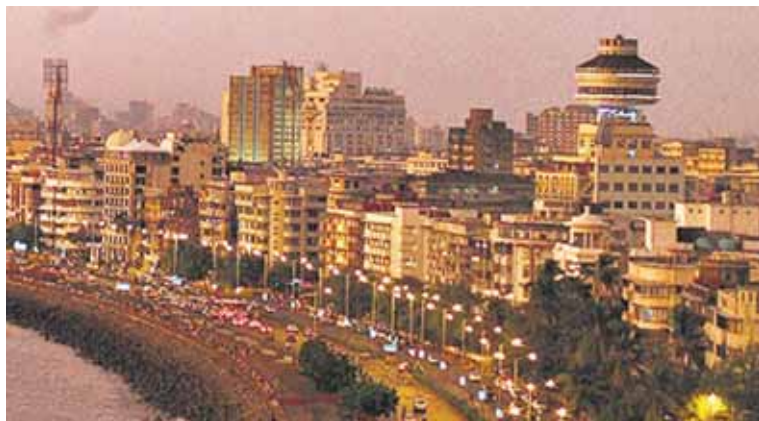
(Agencies) The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned the government's stand defending the adultery law that punishes a married man for having sexual relationship with a married woman. As the government defended the retention of Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for preserving the "sanctity of marriage", a five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra asked how it preserved the "sanctity" when with the extra-marital affair becomes non-punishable if the woman's husband stands by her. Other judges on the bench are Justice Rohinton Nariman, Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, Justice D.Y.

Chandrachud and Justice Indu Malhotra. "Where is the sanctity of marriage when the husband can consent," asked Justice Nariman. The Chief Justice said: "We are not questioning the legislature's competence to make laws but where is the 'collective good' in Section 497 of IPC." Telling Additional Solicitor General Pinki Anand that "dichotomy is manifest (in Section 497)", Chief Justice Misra said: "Husband can only have control over his emotion and cannot ask wife to do this or that." The court was hearing a PIL challenging the constitutional validity of Section 497 of the IPC and Section 198(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.



Why homes aren't selling in Delhi and Mumbai

An equilibrium between buyers and sellers will be reached eventually, but before that there may be more blood on housing street



(Agencies) This has been a monsoon of discount offers for residents of Mumbai and Delhi. Every day, a barrage of messages, emails and media advertisements assail us, from desperate real estate firms. A housing slowdown has been around for some time but now there are visible signs of panic. But buyers, particularly in north India, are just not interested. Sellers, having patiently waited it out so far, are now beginning to throw in the towel. An equilibrium will be reached eventually, but before that there may be more blood on the housing street. A recent Knight Frank report says that the residential housing market in Mumbai remained absolutely flat in the first half of 2018, despite prices falling nearly 10% in this period. The city has more than 1.2 lakh unsold flats. Some estimates suggest that it may take four years to clear Mumbai's unsold housing inventory. In Delhi, this number is even higher, at 1.5 lakh units. And for the top seven Indian cities, there are now nearly half a million unsold flats. This is scary. Demonetisation, RERA and

GST have been tossed around as reasons for a while now, but it is time to question whether a deeper malaise affects the Indian real estate sector. There are two types of home buyers in any market: genuine purchasers who acquire for self-use; and investors who regard it as a proxy to a financial instrument. It is the latter that sparked the initial decline, post demonetisation, as access to black money became problematic. Yet, Indians are very ingenuous at working around such constraints and cash is back in play, after a temporary hiccup. But the housing market is still dead. This is because returns have dried up. Investors may have worked out ways around the stick, but it is the carrot that continues to be elusive. Actually, what has happened in the real estate market is the exact opposite of the equity market. Where a switch has been snapped on with regard to stocks, with retail investors relentlessly pouring in money through SIPs every month; a switch has gone off in the real estate market. With practically no returns over the last three

years, people have simply abandoned it as an asset class. Episodes such as Jaypee Greens have only added to the disillusionment. That is only half the story. Even genuine home buyers have dwindled. The obvious reason is that prices are on a steady decline. Buyers aren't foolish and they can see the pile of unsold houses and signs of desperation from sellers. Prices have corrected about 10-20% in most north Indian cities but people are prepared to play the waiting game. The reality is that total costs of properties in metro cities are still way too overpriced. In Mumbai, the

average cost of owning an apartment is eight times a family's annual income. In Gurugram, it is five times. This is exorbitant. In comparison, southern cities like Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai are far more affordable, a reason why the housing slump is far less pronounced there. In this game of blink between buyer and seller, the buyer has the upper hand now. Prices may have to correct more. But, a bigger fundamental issue may be that the current generation of younger, salaried people don't seem to have the same sentimental attachment to owning a home as their parents may have had. Earlier, a home

meant security. Now, a more financially savvy generation has figured out that in a market of inflated prices and relatively low rental yields, it may just be prudent to keep renting, as opposed to owning. Ownership, after all is notional. Whether your landlord owns it or your housing finance company does, is hardly material. One shouldn't be alarmist and conclude that the housing market is dead for good. In time, it will recover but it is important to distinguish between a cyclical slump and a fundamental reset. We are in the throes of the latter. The way an average Indian buyer looks at a home may have changed.

Karunanidhi dictated the line on his casket to son Stalin 33 years ago

(Agencies) "He who worked without taking rest, now rests in peace", reads the engraving on late Karunanidhi's casket.

The DMK patriarch was laid to rest with full state honours and tributes from the who's who of Indian politics and lakhs of supporters near Anna Memorial on the Marina beach. Clad in his trademark style — white shirt and dhoti with a yellow shawl and dark glasses — Karunanidhi's body was buried near his mentor C N Annadurai and rival J Jayalalithaa.

But what caught many an eye was the writing on the wooden casket in which his body had been placed.

The engraving in Tamil read "Oivu edukamal

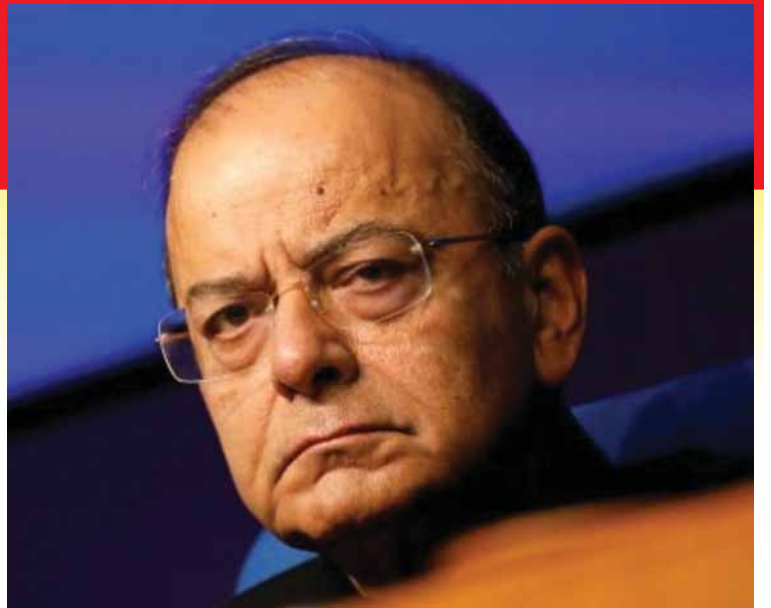
The engraving in Tamil read "Oivu edukamal uzhaithavan, idho oivu eduthu kondu irukiran", meaning "He who worked hard without taking rest, is resting in peace here".

uzhaithavan, idho oivu in Tirukkuvalai in the erstwhile Thanjavur district meaning "He who worked hard without taking rest, is resting in peace here". The words were a tribute to a man who was one of the most prominent faces of the Dravidian movement for social empowerment of weaker sections for more than six decades. His son Stalin, who is now set to lead DMK, said 33 years back, he had said that his grave should have these words. A five-time Chief Minister, the 94-year-old Karunanidhi had also played a key role in national-level coalition politics. Born

uzhaithavan, idho oivu in Tirukkuvalai in the erstwhile Thanjavur district on June 3, 1924, Karunanidhi was a multifaceted personality — journalist, playwright, script writer — whose fiery dialogues as an iconoclast in films unleashed changes in Tamil Nadu's social and political scene. 'Kalaigarnar' (Artiste), as Karunanidhi was called for his proficiency in arts and literature, fashioned theatre and cinema in a way that gave a fillip to the Dravidian movement and the rise of DMK as a major pole in Tamil Nadu. His death has left a void in the state.

Another attempt to tarnish govt's image, says Arun Jaitley on Rafale allegations

Two former BJP leaders Arun Shourie and Yashwant Sinha, along with advocate Prashant Bhushan, said the government needed to explain how the deal with France was concluded.



(Agencies) Union minister Arun Jaitley said on Wednesday there was not a grain of truth in the "wild allegation" against the government on the Rafale aircraft issue and it was "reprocessed lies" by forces increasingly desperate to prove their relevance. "It is even more reprehensible that this fresh attempt to tarnish the image of the Government should come less than two weeks after the miserable failure of a similar effort in the Parliament," Jaitley said in a blog Wednesday night.

Earlier in the day, two former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

leaders Arun Shourie and Yashwant Sinha, along with advocate Prashant Bhushan, said the government needed to explain how the deal with France was concluded, who took the decision to reduce the number of aircraft from 126 to 36, and why there is secrecy over the actual spending on the deal. Sinha demanded an audit of the deal by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and the report in three months. Jaitley said the government has already responded effectively to "each and every distortion and misinformation".

"Meanwhile, those raising alarm about the alleged danger to national security ought to realise their responsibility and refrain from politicising for narrow individual ends those very matters pertaining to defence of the nation that were consistently ignored by them and by those with whom they sympathise," Jaitley said. He added there was nothing substantiating the purported facts and voluminous documents marshalled to corroborate the accusations. Rajesh Dhingra, CEO of Reliance defence and aerospace denied the allegation

- made by Shourie, Sinha and Bhushan - that Rs. 21,000 crore has been to the company by the government to Anil Ambani. "No contract has been given to any Reliance Group company by the Ministry of Defence related to the purchase of the 36 Rafale aircraft that are coming in a flyaway condition from France," he said.

Rats nibble body inside ICU of hospital in Madhya Pradesh

Virendra Chadar said he found rat-bite marks on the body of hsi 70-year-old father which was returned following his death in the hospital's ICU.



(Agencies) A family in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district has claimed that they found rat-bite marks on the body of their 70-year-old relative which was returned following his death in the hospital's ICU, prompting an inquiry into the matter.

Virendra Chadar, of Sukha Satpara village, said his ailing father Jagdish Chadar (70) had been serious and admitted to the ICU of Damoh district hospital on Monday night.

"At around 2 am, we were informed that he had died. While taking my father's body we noticed some injury marks near his left eye and some ointment put there. The staff told us that a rat had bitten him," he said.

Chadar said he was in a state of shock and did not

raise the issue then, but he demanded action in the matter. Dr Mamta Timori, civil surgeon, said she came to know of the incident on Wednesday morning. "No one from the staff informed me about the incident. I have issued notice to the staff nurse on duty and also ordered an inquiry. I have also contacted an Indore-based pest control company to exterminate the rats," she said. Human rights activist, Manoj Devariya said this is not the first case of irregularity coming to light in the district hospital, but no action has been taken in earlier cases. He said a rat getting into the ICU is a serious matter and a high level inquiry should be ordered and action should be taken against guilty.



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Firecrackers not necessary to bring people together: Supreme Court

The Supreme Court posted for hearing on August 14 a batch of pleas seeking a country-wide ban on possession, sale and bursting of firecrackers and stubble burning by farmers.



hearing a PIL seeking a countrywide ban on manufacturing, sale and possession of firecrackers, was told that pollution has reached very high levels not only because of firecrackers, but also by vehicular pollution, construction dust and stubble burning.

"The question is whether an entire industry can be shut down citing air pollution while other industries are allowed to continue," contended counsel for the firecrackers manufacturers.

The counsel told the bench that during Diwali, it brings people together in celebration.

At this justice Sikri replied, "Diwali is a festival of lights. Firecrackers are not necessary to bring people together. People can be brought together by distributing and sharing sweets also."

The court posted for hearing on August 14 a batch of pleas seeking a country-wide ban on possession, sale and bursting of firecrackers and stubble burning by farmers.

Earlier, the bench had expressed concern over growing respiratory problems among children due to air pollution and had said it would decide whether there has to be a

complete or reasonable curbs on the use of firecrackers.

The bench had cited a report that said 20-25 per cent children suffer from respiratory diseases, adding: "The lungs of most infants in Delhi are grey." One of the pleas filed by a child, Arjun Gopal, who is represented by lawyer Gopal Shankarnarayan, sought a ban on possession of firecrackers in the National Capital Region (NCR) as it was contributing to an already alarming level of air pollution. Last year the apex court prohibited the sale of firecrackers in Delhi and NCR during Diwali.

(Agencies) The Supreme Court on Wednesday was told by the firecrackers' manufacturers that firecrackers alone were not the sole reason for rising pollution levels during Diwali though it was one of the contributing factors, and that an entire industry can't be shut down. A bench of justice AK Sikri and justice Ashok Bhushan,

Four puppies found beheaded: Hyderabad police

Following a complaint by representatives of Humane Society International/India and local animal activists, a case was registered on Tuesday, said police.



(Agencies) Four puppies were found beheaded near Hyderabad prompting animal activists to lodge a complaint with police. An FIR has been registered in connection with the recovery of the beheaded carcasses, police said on Wednesday. Following a complaint by representatives of Humane Society International/India and local animal activists, a case was registered on Tuesday, inspector G Shyamsundar told PTI. The incident seems to have been committed around two to three days ago at Parthiwada, the inspector said.

According to the complainants, the incident came to light when a local citizen visited the spot to find the mother dog and the carcasses of the puppies next to her and uploaded the video on social media. Apoorva Katpatal, cruelty response manager, HSI/India in a release said "We are appalled at the gruesomeness of the incident. We hope that the police will make the necessary arrests along with psychiatric evaluation of the accused. If the perpetrator/s are not caught, he or she will move on hurting other people too."

Refrain from making comments on PILs: Centre to Supreme Court

The exchanges between the Supreme Court and the attorney general KK Venugopal occurred when the bench was hearing a matter relating to inhuman conditions prevailing in 1,382 prisons across the country.



hearing a matter relating to inhuman conditions prevailing in 1,382 prisons across the country.

Attorney general (AG) KK Venugopal told a bench headed by justice Madan B Lokur that he was not "criticising" the apex court, but the problems facing the country were enormous and, in the past, its orders and judgements have resulted in a situation where people have lost their jobs.

He referred to apex court judgements on PILs relating to the 2G spectrum allocation cases and the order banning sale of liquor within 500 metres of highways across the country, saying these had impacted foreign investment and caused job losses respectively.

The top law officer told the bench, which also comprised justices S Abdul Nazeer and Deepak Gupta, that the country was facing several problems and the court should also look at the progress made by the government. But justice Lokur shot back, "We are trying to solve some of these problems" and referred to the matters relating to the rights of widows, children and prisoners which were being dealt with by the apex court. "We are also citizens of this country and we know the problems which the country is facing," the judge told Venugopal. The AG told the court that while dealing with a matter, there are possibilities that the court might not consider the impact it would have

on some other aspects. "With the Supreme Court's intervention, tremendous inroads have been made but problems in India are enormous," he said. To this, Justice Lokur said, "We are making it clear that we have not and we are not criticising the government for everything". "Please do not carry the impression that we are criticising the government and preventing them from doing their work. You also look at the positive directions of the court," Justice Lokur said. During the hearing, Venugopal referred to the issue of budgetary restrictions and said around 200 million people were living below the "hunger line" and the government's priority was to pull such persons out of this.

(Agencies) The Centre on Wednesday dared to tell the Supreme Court to restrain itself from making hard-hitting observations on Public Interest Litigation (PIL) matters saying these had an impact on several issues plaguing the country.

But the top court shot back to say that the judges were also citizens and knew the problems faced by the country, while making it clear that they "are not criticising the government for everything". It also asked the government "to obey the law of the land".

The exchanges between the court and the attorney general occurred when the bench was

China tight-lipped about recall of fake rabies vaccines exported to India

Media reports revealed last week that the company at the centre of the vaccine scandal in China had exported its products to India.



(News Agencies) China has begun recalling faulty rabies vaccines exported to several countries, including India, following revelations that a company which made the vaccines violated immunity standards and forged documents. The government, however, has declined to share details about the recall protocol that's been initiated.

Indian sailor to return home after 18-months' stranded aboard a ship in UK



(News Agencies) An Indian captain stuck aboard an Indian ship stranded at a UK port for 18 months due to a long-standing legal dispute over unpaid crew wages and port dues is set to return home, a media report said on Wednesday. Nikesh Rastogi, 43, is the captain of the offshore supply vessel Malaviya Twenty which has been held at a port in Great Yarmouth, in the East Anglia region of England, since July 2016 after its Indian owners declared bankruptcy.

Most of the original crew has since been repatriated back to India but Rastogi and three other crew members have been stuck aboard for 18 months due to a stalemate with the harbours owners. Lawyers acting for the crew made representations to the Admiralty Marshal at the high court in July and the ship has now been arrested, meaning the court can arrange to sell it and use the money for the sailors' wages.

"It is like a weight being lifted because there was a point of no hope. There was a period where things were really bad mentally," Rastogi was quoted as saying by the Independent newspaper.

He said he hopes to fly home with his colleagues within weeks. Rastogi, from Mumbai, said he and his three crew members had received no wages since last year and had feared they would not get paid if they left the ship as it would be "considered a derelict which means anybody can take it over". Paul Haworth, a director at the law firm Birketts which represented the crew, said a surveyor instructed by the court will value the ship and the sale process should conclude in September. Paul Keenan, inspector with the International Transport Workers' Federation, said the ship could sell for 700,000 to 800,000 pounds.

Haworth said this should be enough to pay those involved in the wrangle, including the Admiralty Marshal's costs, port dues, the crew's unpaid wages and lawyers. Rastogi said they looked out for "markers for depression" and he read books to keep busy.

Media reports from New Delhi revealed last week that the company at the centre of the vaccine scandal in China - Changchun Changsheng Biotechnology Corporation - had exported its products to India.

Given that it has now emerged the company was selling ineffective vaccines since 2014, experts believe a sizeable number of people in India could have been exposed to the deadly infection which had a 100% fatality rate in the country in 2017.

In New Delhi, a government official told the media: "We have ordered an immediate withdrawal of rabies vaccines manufactured by a Chinese firm for the time being till the investigation...is completed. As per our inputs, China's drug controller has issued an order to stop its manufacturing."

The Chinese government hasn't shared details about the number of countries that had

purchased the tainted vaccines. Hindustan Times sent a questionnaire to the foreign ministry on the recall of vaccines made by the company, which sold fake anti-rabies vaccines in China and abroad.

The foreign ministry did not also answer the question whether the firm had exported other types of vaccines - such as the DPT vaccine for infants - to India. The foreign ministry's statement didn't mention India at all.

"Changchun Changsheng has started recalling the export vaccines since July 16. The China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA) will continue to supervise the recall work," the ministry said in its written statement.

It didn't share details about the quantity of vaccines exported to India or the period when was the firm sent them to India. "According to the news released by CFDA, the State

Council (China's cabinet) investigation team is conducting investigations into the case of Changchun Changsheng illegal production of rabies vaccines. The CFDA has maintained communication with the World Health Organisation's representative office in China," the statement said. Changchun Changsheng, based in north-eastern Jilin province, violated national regulations while producing rabies vaccines since April 2014, the state media reported. "A recall protocol has already been initiated, including notifying other countries and regions about the incident and recalling the vaccines sold there, according to the inspection team sent by the State Council," the official Xinhua news agency reported on Tuesday. Some vaccine batches were mixed with expired ingredients, and production dates and batch numbers were inconsistent with the truth, Xinhua reported.

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Imran Khan's biggest challenge would be the economy

While it may be tempting for Pakistan to turn to China for help in the face of its worsening relations with the US, even an inexperienced administrator such as Mr Khan will be aware of the complications, including debt traps



Tehreek-e-Insaf chief could turn to China, Pakistan's "iron brother ally", for financial assistance in view of the worsening relations between Islamabad and Washington. The Donald Trump administration, which has already ensured that security aid for Pakistan has come down from the historic levels of more than \$1 billion a year to a few hundred million dollars, has made it clear that any IMF bailout cannot be used to pay back Chinese loans. Secretary of state Mike Pompeo said the US will be watching "what the IMF does" as there is no rationale for IMF tax dollars to go to China. Pakistan's economy has struggled in the past decade, largely due to a mix of poor security conditions following a

spate of terrorist attacks and poor governance. If it showed signs of picking up in the last few years, it was largely because of Chinese investments in the \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of the One Belt, One Road initiative. Pakistan's current account deficit has already risen because of massive imports of Chinese equipment and materials for CPEC and the country has already taken loans worth almost \$5 billion from China and its banks. Latest reports from Islamabad suggest Beijing has agreed to give another loan of \$2 billion that will boost foreign currency reserves, which the State Bank of Pakistan reported last month had

fallen to \$9 billion. While it may be tempting for Pakistan to turn to China for help in the face of its worsening relations with the US, even an inexperienced administrator such as Mr Khan will be aware of the complications, including debt traps, that have arisen in countries which aligned themselves too closely with China's Belt and Road Initiative. Any IMF bailout is expected to come with stringent conditions. Mr Khan will also be aware of the need for tax reforms, with only about one per cent of Pakistan's population of nearly 200 million paying taxes, and the need to rein in external debt that has soared to 31% of the GDP. All in all, Mr Khan has his work cut out for him on the economic front.

(News Agencies) The toughest task that Imran Khan will have to grapple with soon after he becomes Pakistan's new prime minister is not the security situation or political tensions; it is the issue of seeking another bailout from the International Monetary

Fund (IMF) to shore up its currency reserves and plug an external financing gap. Some reports have suggested that Pakistani officials are finalising a plan to seek a \$12 billion package from the IMF, while others have suggested that the Pakistan

Construction of grand Ram temple begins in Thailand's Ayutthaya



This Ram temple in Ayutthaya will pave way for the temple in Ayodhya, Ram Janmabhumi Nirman Nyas Trust president Mahant Janmejy Sharan said.

Court, we, the devotees of Ram, have started construction of a temple here," Ram Janmabhumi Nirman Nyas Trust president Mahant Janmejy Sharan told PTI over the phone from Bangkok.

We expect the decision of the apex court will come soon in our favour and we will start the construction of the temple in Ayodhya, Sharan said.

"This temple (in Ayutthaya) will pave way for the temple in our own Ayodhya," he added.

I expect the construction in Ayodhya will start before

Kumbh-2019, Sharan said.

He said the construction of the temple in Thailand will establish India as 'vishwa guru' (world leader) at the intellectual level and help spread the message of Lord Ram globally.

The Ram temple is being constructed on the bank of Chao Phraya river which flows through the heart of Bangkok.

It is said that in the 15th century, the capital of Thailand was a city called Ayutthaya, which is Ayodhya in the local language.

When Burmese soldiers overran this city in the 18th cen-

tury, a new king rose. He called himself Rama I, established the city now known as Bangkok, wrote the epic Ramakien, which is Ramayana in the local language, made it the national epic, and got it painted as murals on the walls of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, patronised by the royal family, it is believed.

Though he was a Buddhist, the king established his royal credentials by identifying himself with Lord Ram, who was as much a hero for Buddhists of south-east Asia as he was for the Hindus of south Asia.

(News Agencies) After an elaborate 'bhumi poojan' ceremony, the construction of a 'grand Ram temple' began on Wednesday by the Ram Janmabhumi Nirman Nyas Trust in Ayutthaya in Thailand, a senior functionary of the organisation said. The temple

would help spread the message of Lord Ram outside India, he said. "After performing rituals of bhumi poojan, the construction of a grand Ram temple has been started in Ayutthaya. As there is a delay in the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya with the matter pending in the Supreme

Will meet India's oil needs if US sanctions hit Iran imports: Saudi envoy

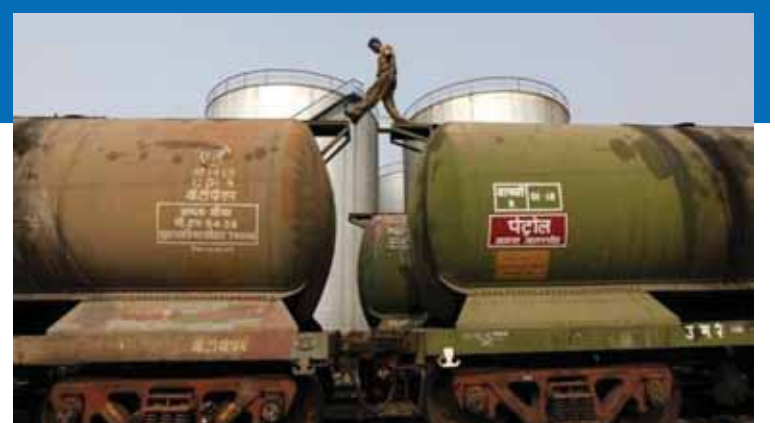
India imported 771,000 barrels of crude oil a day from Iran in May, a 35% increase over April.

(News Agencies) Saudi Arabia is ready to meet India's need for additional oil supplies should the US sanctions on Iran hit energy imports, the Saudi ambassador said on Wednesday. Iraq and Saudi Arabia are the top two suppliers of energy to India, which imports more than 80% of its oil. The US has said it wants India and other buyers of Iranian crude to reduce imports to "zero" by November 4, when sanctions will kick in

against Iran. "We have been a consistent and reliable supplier of energy to India and other countries. We will always be there to meet any demand of our customers, including India," Saudi Arabian ambassador Saud bin Mohammed al-Sati told a group of journalists.

"We have always been a strong energy partner for India," he added, while responding to a question on whether Saudi Arabia would step in to help if

the US sanctions led to a drying up of oil supplies from Iran, which became India's second biggest energy supplier in May. New Delhi imported 771,000 barrels of crude oil a day from Tehran in May, a 35% increase over April. The increase pushed Saudi Arabia to third place while Iraq retained the top slot. Al-Sati said he was "not aware" of any request from India for additional oil supplies in view of the impending US sanctions. However, he



noted that bilateral ties in a wide range of areas, from investments to security cooperation and cultural and people-to-people contacts, were "excellent and grow-

ing". "Indians play an important role in Saudi Arabia. One out of every 10 persons in our country is an Indian and this reflects our close friendship," he added.

Bihar minister quits after husband is linked to Muzaffarpur shelter home sex scandal

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had on Monday defended the minister



husband, Chandeshwar, but used to speak to him “over political and other issues.”

Verma had been under pressure to step down after her ministry was accused of inaction in the case. Former Muzaffarpur child protection officer Ravi Kumar Roshan’s wife, Shibha Kumari Singh, had last week claimed Verma’s husband was a regular visitor to the shelter home. She alleged that her “innocent” husband had been made a scapegoat and arrested. The minister and her husband had denied the allegations as baseless.

Opposition parties had demanded Verma’s removal even as chief minister Nitish Kumar and his deputy, Sushil Kumar Modi, defended the Janata Dal

(United) legislator from Cheria-Bariarpur.

Kumar had on Monday promised to remove Verma if anything was found against her in the investigation and warned opposition parties against politicising the “sensitive issue”. The Supreme Court had rapped the Bihar government on Tuesday and questioned why there had been no inspections of shelter homes earlier to prevent sexual abuse.

Over 30 girls rescued from the Muzaffarpur shelter home were found to have been sexually abused and tortured for several months.

The Congress said Verma should have resigned earlier to ensure a fair probe. “I had said that the chief minister was trying to defend the indefensible. When the entire

social welfare department is under the scanner, how can its head remain untouched? It is late but better it has happened,” said Bihar Congress president Kaukab Quadri.

Congress MLC Premchandra Mishra said that when the chief minister “was ashamed of the heinous crime against innocent girls and accepted lapses, it should have been the natural corollary for the minister to resign to ensure a fair probe”. Opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejaswhi Prasad Yadav sought Verma’s resignation as her ministry was in charge of overseeing the shelter home. “Removing small fries will not serve the purpose. The accountability should be fixed at the top,” he had said.

(Agencies) Bihar social welfare minister Kumari Manju Verma resigned on Wednesday amid allegations that her husband had links with the main suspect in a scandal linked to the sexual abuse of inmates of a government-funded shelter home in Muzaffarpur.

Malik, who is in Delhi, for acceptance, officials aware of the development said on condition of anonymity.

The resignation came hours after Brajesh Thakur, the main suspect in the scandal, told reporters outside a Muzaffarpur court that he had “no special connections” with the minister’s

Verma’s resignation letter was immediately faxed to governor Satya Pal



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France reopens investigation into missing flight MH370 after Malaysia's 400-page final report was accused of hiding the truth



is yet to be an official announcement of the investigation from the French government. Last week Malaysia's civil aviation chief quit after the report into MH370 found failings in air traffic control - as victims' relatives claimed officials were covering up what really happened to the plane. Voice 370, a group of victims' families, accused Boeing and the Malaysia Government of withholding flight data and criticised the report for ruling out murder suicide by the chief pilot, Captain Zaharie Shah.

Azharuddin Abdul Rahman, director-general of the Malaysia's Department of Civil Aviation, resigned after investigators found numerous lapses by air traffic controllers in both Malaysia and

Vietnam.

These included failing to initiate 'emergency phases' as required after the flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing vanished from radar displays. Rahman said the long-awaited, 400-page report released on July 30 found that the air traffic control did not comply with standard operating procedures. 'Therefore, it is with regret and after much thought and contemplation that I have decided to resign as the chairman of Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia effective fourteen (14) days from the date of the resignation notice which I have served today,' he said in a statement. The disappearance of the Boeing 777-200 triggered the largest hunt in aviation history. But no sign of it was

found in a 46,000-square mile Indian Ocean search zone. In the report, investigators said they still do not know why the plane vanished. They did, however, raise the possibility that the jet may have been hijacked even though there was no conclusive evidence of why the plane went off course and flew for over seven hours after severing communications. They said the course of the Malaysia Airlines aircraft had been changed manually, and refused to rule out that someone other than the pilots had diverted the jet. The investigative report, prepared by a 19-member international team, said the cause of the disappearance cannot be determined until the wreckage and the plane's black boxes are found.

(News Agencies) French police will open an investigation into missing flight MH370 after Malaysia's 400-page final report failed to explain the mystery amid claims of a cover up.

The Gendarmerie of Air Transport wants to examine data from satellite operator Inmarsat which tracked the plane before it

went missing in March 2014.

It intends to 'verify the veracity and especially the authenticity of all the technical data transmitted,' according to French newspaper Le Parisien. No other countries are probing the flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing that had 239 people including four French nationals on board. There

On US' plan to slap duties on \$16 bn of chinese goods, China's comeback

The US decision to levy 25 percent tariffs on the same value of Chinese goods is "very unreasonable," and China will have to retaliate to protect its rightful interests, said China's ministry of commerce.



(News Agencies) China confirmed that it will impose 25 percent tariffs on an additional \$16 billion worth of imports from the US from August 23, matching an earlier move from Washington in another ratchet higher for the trade war between the two nations.

The US decision to levy 25 percent tariffs on the same value of Chinese goods is "very unreasonable," and China will have to retaliate to protect its rightful interests and the multilateral trading system, China's ministry of commerce said in a statement.

The tit-for-tat protectionist measures are poised to surge even higher, with the US reviewing 10 percent duties on a further \$200 billion in Chinese imports that it may even raise to 25 percent after a comment period ends on Sept. 6. Should

the US proceed with those tariffs, China's ready to slap duties on an additional \$60 billion of American goods.

"We're not yet past the point of no return but we're edging closer to it," said Wang Tao, head of China economic research at UBS AG in Hong Kong. "The risk is that the US administration's gamble to strong-arm China into giving into all US demands without some compromise only leads to successive rounds of higher and higher tariffs."

President Donald Trump has suggested he may tax effectively all imports of Chinese goods, which reached more than \$500 billion last year. Reserve Bank of Australia Governor Philip Lowe Wednesday warned that escalation of the dispute could be "very damaging for the world economy."

China's exports grew faster

than expected in July, while imports surged, showing both domestic and international demand continue for now to shrug off the uncertainty of the trade conflict with the US. The world's largest exporter, China is still benefiting from robust global demand even as increasing tensions and rising trade barriers with the US weigh on the outlook.

The revised Chinese list released today added hundreds of new items to be hit with tariffs, and now covers items as diverse as coal, medical instruments, waste products, cars and buses. The tariffs will come into effect simultaneously with the US ones, at 12:01 pm in Beijing, according to the statements. The US announced earlier this week that its own tariffs on \$16 billion of Chinese goods would start on Aug. 23. U.S Customs will begin collecting duties on 279 product lines ranging from motorcycles to steam turbines and railway cars, the US Trade Representative's Office said in an emailed statement on Tuesday. The US had already levied 25 percent duties on \$34 billion in Chinese goods on July 6, prompting swift in-kind retaliation from Beijing.

Gates, star witness against Manafort, concludes testimony

The interview was part of an FBI investigation that sought to recover assets looted from the Ukrainian government under the rule of former President Viktor Yanukovich.

(News Agencies) ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Paul Manafort's protégé wrapped up his testimony Wednesday after implicating the former Trump campaign chairman and himself in financial crimes while also enduring stinging attacks on his character and credibility. Rick Gates has been the government's star witness in Manafort's financial fraud trial, testifying how, at the behest of his longtime boss, he helped conceal millions of dollars in foreign income and submitted fake mortgage and tax documents. Defense lawyers saw an opening to undermine his testimony by painting him as liar and a philanderer, getting him to admit to an extramarital affair and reminding jurors how he had lied to special counsel Robert Mueller's team while working out a plea deal for himself. The testimony, stretching across three days, created an extraordinary courtroom showdown between the two former Trump campaign aides who were indicted together by Mueller but who have since opted for radically different strategies: Manafort is the lone American charged by Mueller to opt for trial, whereas Gates pleaded guilty

and agreed to cooperate by testifying against his former boss.

Neither man was charged in connection with their Trump campaign work, but the trial has nonetheless been a distraction for a president who insists Manafort was treated shabbily and who continues to publicly fume about Mueller's investigation into potential ties between his associates and the Kremlin.

Prosecutors sandwiched the testimony of Gates around other witnesses who, in sometimes dry and detailed testimony, described Manafort's lavish spending and use of offshore accounts to stash Ukrainian political consulting fees.

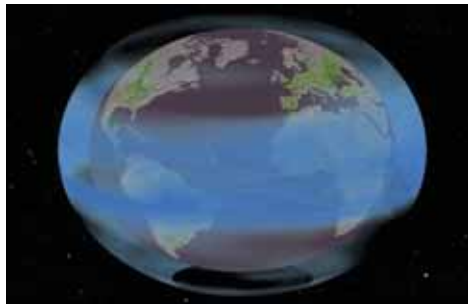
A clothier said he sold Manafort more than \$900,000 in luxury clothes, a bookkeeper says she helped disguise foreign income as a loan to reduce Manafort's tax burden and, on Wednesday, an FBI forensic accounting specialist said Manafort hid more than 30 offshore accounts in three types of currencies from the IRS.

Overall, the accountant traced more than \$65 million flowing into offshore accounts controlled by Manafort, and she detailed for jurors how more than \$15.5 million flowed out to fund his lavish lifestyle between 2010 and 2014.

But it was Gates' testimony

Blocking sunlight to cool Earth will NOT save humanity

Particles injected into the atmosphere may fix global warming but they could also kill off our crops by starving them of UV light



(Insider Bureau) Blocking sunlight to cool the Earth will not save humanity's farmland from climate change, according to a new study that dismisses a leading global warming prevention theory.

Researchers had speculated that injecting particles into the atmosphere would lower rising global temperatures enough to stop crops from dying out.

But scientists analysing the past effects of Earth-cooling volcanic eruptions showed that shielding the atmosphere damages crops as much as it helps them.

They concluded that any improvements to yield triggered by cooler

temperatures would be negated by lower productivity due to reduced sunlight – making the process ineffective as a way of stopping global warming. Some previous episodes of global cooling were caused by gases emitted during massive volcanic eruptions.

Some experts believe that humans could inject sulphate aerosols into the upper atmosphere in a similar way.

This could artificially cool Earth and alleviate the greenhouse warming caused by increased levels of carbon dioxide.

Rather like using an umbrella to create shade from the sun, experts think that a global sunshade could in theory slow warming.

For example the eruption of Mount Pinatubo injected about 20 million tons of sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere.

This reduced sunlight by about 2.5 per cent and lowered the average global temperature by about half a degree Celsius (nearly 1 degree Fahrenheit).

This type of solar geoengineering is

one proposed method for helping humanity manage the impacts of global warming.

However, findings by researchers from the University of California, Berkeley, suggest that this technology might not be as effective as hoped.

'Shading the planet keeps things cooler, which helps crops grow better', said lead author Jonathan Proctor, a UC Berkeley doctoral candidate in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics.

However, plants also need sunlight to grow, so blocking sunlight can affect growth.

'For agriculture, the unintended impacts of solar geoengineering are equal in magnitude to the benefits,' he said. 'It's a bit like performing an experimental surgery; the side-effects of treatment appear to be as bad as the illness.' Researchers say the problem in figuring out the consequences of solar geoengineering is that we can't do a

planetary-scale experiment without actually deploying the technology. 'The breakthrough here was realising that we could learn something by studying the effects of giant volcanic eruptions that geoengineering tries to copy', said Solomon Hsiang, co-lead author of the study and Chancellor's Associate Professor of Public Policy at UC Berkeley.

The team linked maize, soy, rice and wheat production from 105 countries from 1979-2009 to global satellite observations of these aerosols to study their effect on agriculture. Pairing these results with global climate models, the team calculated that the loss of sunlight from a sulphate-based geoengineering program would cancel its intended benefits of protecting crops from damaging extreme heat. 'It's similar to using one credit card to pay off another credit card: at the end of the day, you end up where you started without having solved the problem,' Dr Hsiang said.

Foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale in US to lay 2+2 groundwork

Foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale and other senior Indian officials will hold discussions with their US counterparts in Washington this week to prepare the ground for the first two-plus-two dialogue between the two countries, to take place in New Delhi in September, sources said.



(Insider Bureau) Foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale and other senior Indian officials will hold discussions with their US counterparts in Washington this week to prepare the ground for the first two-plus-two dialogue between the foreign and defence ministers of the two countries, to take place in New Delhi in September, people familiar with the development said.

Gokhale, accompanied by Gourangalal Das, joint secretary (Americans) in the external affairs ministry, left for the US on Tuesday evening.

"The foreign secretary, with US officials, will discuss a host of bilateral issues, and the upcoming two-plus-two dialogue in September that is expected to bring a new momentum in ties, especially in the areas of security and defence ties", one of the people said.

The discussions will also touch on a wide range of topics such as the "peace-process in Afghanistan, counter-terrorism issues, designation of terrorists at the United Nations, India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and trade

issues," the above cited person said.

For the inaugural United States and India two-plus-two dialogue on September 6, US secretary of state Mike Pompeo and defence Secretary James Mattis would be travelling to India meet their counterparts, external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj and defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman. "Pompeo and Mattis look forward to meeting with their Indian counterparts...to discuss strengthening strategic, security and defence cooperation as the US and India jointly address challenges in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond," state department spokesperson Heather Nauert said in July. Both Swaraj and Sitharaman were to visit Washington for the first two-plus-two dialogue on July 6 with Pompeo and Mattis. The two-plus-two dialogue was postponed because Pompeo had to visit North Korea. The meeting had been earlier scheduled for April this year, but was put off after Trump fired then secretary of state Rex Tillerson. "The United States and India relationship is based on strong foundations and two sides see this as an important part of their ties," said Lalit Mansingh, former foreign secretary and ex-Indian envoy to the US. "The forthcoming two-plus-two dialogue at the level of the foreign and defence ministers would bring a new direction in the relationship that spreads across various sectors," Lalit Mansingh added.

15 YEARS
CELEBRATING

As we complete 15 Years

"Words cannot express the monumental journey that each and every person reading this has crossed through. The South Asian Insider has completed fifteen year journey, that has brought a wave of information and has amassed everyone together in this community. Few people can claim to have been a part of a tireless effort to soar through the top of the skies of the newspaper industries and be able to remark on it, 15 years later. We believe an order of gratitude is granted to all of you. To everyone who has stayed with The South Asian Insider through our path, thank you.

If it was not for each and every one of you today who have supported our endeavours to become a reliable source of information, we would not have been able to voice our appreciation today. We as a family will continue to move forward with every article printed, with every word typed and with every voice incorporated into the publication that has stood to uphold the value of information and knowledge. Because with each idea shared, we as a community continue to move forward. And to all, thank you for sharing this achievement with all of us here today, working towards a new tomorrow."

-Sharanjit Singh Thind
Editor in Chief & Publisher

War Without End

The Pentagon's failed campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan left a generation of soldiers with little to fight for but one another.

Second Platoon did not hide its dark mood as its soldiers waded across the Korengal River in the bright light of afternoon. It was early in April 2009 and early in the Pentagon's resumption in earnest of the Afghan war. The platoon's mission was to ascend a mountain slope and try to ambush the Taliban at night. They were about 30 men in all, riflemen and machine-gunners reinforced with scouts, a mix of original platoon members and replacements who filled gaps left by the wounded and the dead. Many of them considered their plan foolish, a draining and dangerous waste of time, another example of a frustrated Army unit's trying to show activity for the brass in a war low on focus and hope. They muttered foul words as they moved.

Specialist Robert Soto had been haunted by dread as the soldiers left their base, the Korengal Outpost. His platoon was part of an infantry unit that called itself Viper, the radio call sign for Bravo Company, First Battalion of the 26th Infantry. Viper had occupied the outpost for nine months, a period in which its soldiers were confined to a small stretch of lower valley and impoverished villages clinging to hillsides beneath towering peaks. Second Platoon had started its deployment with three squads but suffered so many casualties that on this day even with replacements it mustered at about two-thirds strength. With attrition came knowledge. Soto knew firsthand that the war did

not resemble the carefully considered national project the generals discussed in the news. He had enlisted in the Army from the Bronx less than two years before, motivated by a desire to protect the United States from another terrorist attack. But his idealism had turned swiftly into realism, and the war had become a matter of him and his friends surviving each day as days cohered into a tour. He was doubtful about the rest, from the competence of the war's organizers down to the merits of this ambush patrol. There's no way this works, he thought. The valley felt like a network of watchers who set up American platoons, relaying word to those laying traps.

Soto sensed eyes following the patrol. Everybody can see us.

He was 19, but at 160 pounds and barely needing to shave, he could pass for two years younger. He was nobody's archetype of a fighter. A high school drama student, he joined the Army at 17 and planned to become an actor if he survived the war. Often he went about his duties with an enormous smile, singing no matter what anyone else thought — R. & B., rap, rock, hip-hop, the blues. All of this made him popular in the platoon, even as he had become tenser than his former self and older than his years; even as his friends and sergeants he admired were killed, leaving him a burden of ghosts.

He faced the steep uphill climb, physically ready,

emotionally spent. We're just trying to get out of here in two months, he thought. He and his fellow soldiers had been in the valley long enough that they moved in the sinewy, late-deployment fitness of infantry squads seasoned by war. Sweat soaked his back. His quadriceps and calves drove him on, pushing him like a pack animal for the soldier beside him, Specialist Arturo Molano, who carried an M240 machine gun. The two fell into a rhythm. One soldier would get over a hard patch, turn around and extend a hand to the other. "Hey, man, you good?" Soto would ask. Molano would say he was fine. "You want me to carry the gun?" Soto would offer. Molano declined every time. Soto considered Molano to be selfless and tough, someone who routinely carried more than men of much larger size. He liked being partnered with someone like this.

A few soldiers went forward to check the trail before the rest of the platoon moved to the ambush site. With little more than whispers, the soldiers arranged themselves in a triangle astride a mountain footpath. Second Lt. Justin Smith, their platoon leader, put Molano at one corner and a second man with an M240 at another, with their machine guns angled back toward each other so their fire could create an interlocking zone of flying lead. Other soldiers set claymore mines on small stands.

Everything was ready before dark. The air was chilly and the

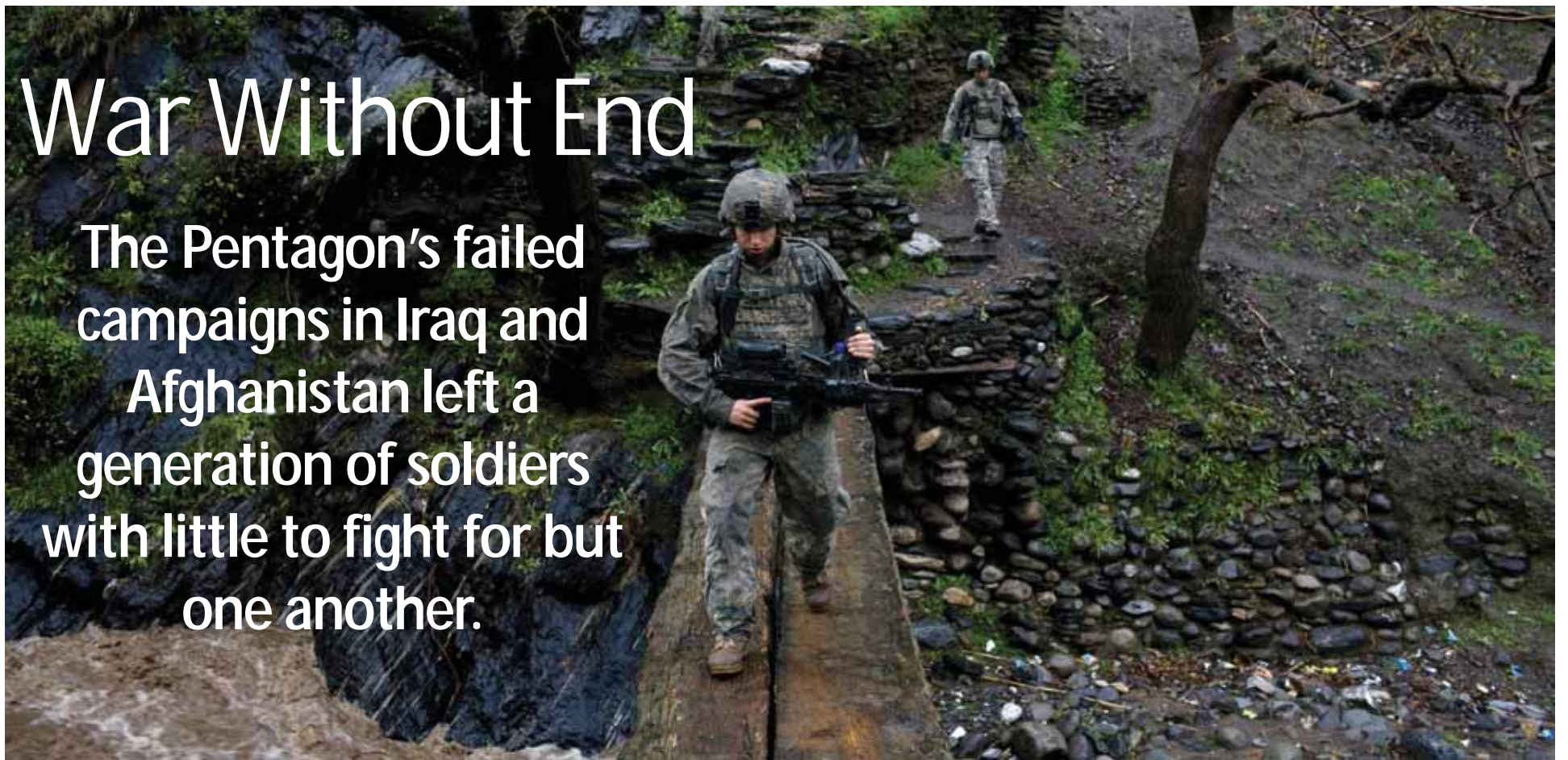
ridge raked by gusts. Soto was shivering. He pulled a dry undershirt and socks from his pack, changed clothes, ate a protein bar and washed it down with water. He saw his company's outpost below, across the open space, and realized this must be what it looked like to militants when they attacked. A distant call to prayer floated on the mountain air.

In early October, the Afghan war will be 17 years old, a milestone that has loomed with grim inevitability as the fighting has continued without a clear exit strategy across three presidential administrations. With this anniversary, prospective recruits born after the terrorist attacks of 2001 will be old enough to enlist. And Afghanistan is not the sole enduring American campaign. The war in Iraq, which started in 2003, has resumed and continues in a different form over the border in Syria, where the American military also has settled into a string of ground outposts without articulating a plan or schedule for a way out. The United States has at various times declared success in its many campaigns — in late 2001; in the spring of 2003; in 2008; in the short-lived withdrawal from Iraq late in 2011; and in its allies' recapture more recently of the ruins of Ramadi, Falluja, Mosul and Raqqa from the Islamic State, a terrorist organization, formed in the crucible of occupied Iraq, that did not even exist when the wars to defeat terrorism started. And still the wars grind on, with the

conflict in Afghanistan on track to be a destination for American soldiers born after it began.

More than three million Americans have served in uniform in these wars. Nearly 7,000 of them have died. Tens of thousands more have been wounded. More are killed or wounded each year, in smaller numbers but often in dreary circumstances, including the fatal attack in July on Cpl. Joseph Maciel by an Afghan soldier — a member of the very forces that the United States has underwritten, trained and equipped, and yet as a matter of necessity and practice now guards itself against.

On one matter there can be no argument: The policies that sent these men and women abroad, with their emphasis on military action and their visions of reordering nations and cultures, have not succeeded. It is beyond honest dispute that the wars did not achieve what their organizers promised, no matter the party in power or the generals in command. Astonishingly expensive, strategically incoherent, sold by a shifting slate of senior officers and politicians and editorial-page hawks, the wars have continued in varied forms and under different rationales each and every year since passenger jets struck the World Trade Center in 2001. They continue today without an end in sight, reauthorized in Pentagon budgets almost as if distant war is a presumed government action.



Public spaces must be planned with underprivileged in mind

Gurgaon includes several worlds one is of old villages, the second one is of urbanisation meant for the affluent, and the third one is that of the migrants in urban slums.

Public spaces are defined by the United Nations as “all spaces including streets, publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free, and without a profit motive”. This demand is based on the realisation that public spaces play a vital role in the socio-economic life of communities and are successful only if they include the diverse groups living in our cities. The aim is to create social spaces that encourage participation from every member of the society.

While we all understand the crisis of public spaces amid urbanisation, ‘I am Gurgaon’ has been fortunate to be working on two projects alongside the administration, with support from corporate institutions, through their CSR funding, in order to manage public places in the city. Such spaces are often misused

due to lack of proper mapping and demarcation by the administration, failure to restrict encroachments, and personal interests of people and developers.

It has been a very challenging experience, which has given us an insight into the mindset of citizens, the administration and the developers. We have come to realise that public places are quickly colonized by private interests. For example, before the Aravali Biodiversity Park or the Chakkarpur Bundh took shape, the lands were encroached upon, and interestingly not necessarily by the poor alone. The rich had turned these spaces into gardens for their private use. They fought the most to vacate and create obstacles in the development. This mindset is being seen throughout the city

and not limited to one area. We need to put some of our personal interests aside, and start being empathetic to one another in order to improve facilities for all strata of the society.

The administration has a huge role to play in saving our public spaces for meaningful development, or in other words, development that is inclusive. Here inclusive development means facilities that are accessible to all and used by all strata of the society. They should include spaces for nature as well — plants, birds, insects and even small animals. Once they are mapped, and a proper plan is put in place for those areas, it is the duty of the government to protect them and include all citizens in developing them. Fortunately, when public-private partnership works, the outcome is better than what

any party could have perhaps done on its own. Every party brings its own strength to the project.

I am quoting a social activist Krzysztof Wodiczko, who said public spaces exist for both: “the privileged and unwanted”. But unfortunately, very few of today’s public spaces adequately prioritise the mission. Developers in Gurugram had an opportunity to create a high-class city by just being more sensitive to the needs of the people at every level. A prime example is the 16-lane highway cutting across the city, which was constructed only with a view of making profits. It failed to account for the individuals who needed to cross or travel the road and do so at the risk of their own lives every day, due to poor pedestrian facilities. We have completely missed out on

creating a cohesive plan for everyone in the city.

Gurgaon includes several worlds — one is the world of villages that have existed for centuries and led a culture to this place, the second one is that of opportunities, which urbanisation has created for the affluent living in gated communities, and the third one is that of the migrant who work in support services and industries, and live largely in rental tenements in urban slums. The city has to make opportunities for all these worlds to meet in a creative way. Most of Gurgaon is out of bounds for the unprivileged. Accessible natural public spaces can offer both a habitat for nature as well as a space for equal access and interaction for all strata of the society.

An indulgent father, Karunanidhi a glue that kept family together

DMK chief M. Karunanidhi was the glue that kept the family together despite rifts that often seemed serious.

DMK patriarch Muthuvel Karunanidhi was a protective father who tried to guide his six children to greatness, though not always successfully.

His family had been his weak spot for which he had been criticised, notably by his arch-rival and former chief minister and AIADMK chief, Jayalalithaa during electoral battles. Karunanidhi was the glue that kept the family together despite rifts that often seemed serious. He was particular about attending marriages in the family and visiting all the members of the family during Pongal. Despite his efforts to keep his family

together, the rifts never completely disappeared and it was only his last bout of illness which ultimately proved fatal that seemed to unite his children, particularly two sons — M K Azhagiri and M K Stalin.

Except for Dayalu Ammal, Karunanidhi’s second wife, and M K Muthu, his the eldest son born to his first wife Padmavathi, everyone was present at Rajaji Hall where Karunanidhi’s body was kept to enable the public to pay their last respects. Dayalu Ammal, who is now 86, finds it hard to recognize people even within the family and chose to stay back at Gopalapuram

residence. She was taken to the hospital to see Karunanidhi only on Monday.

“Due to her age-related ailments, she did not come to Rajaji Hall. However, on seeing Karunanidhi’s body in Gopalapuram house, she broke into tears,” said a senior family member. M K Muthu (70) also did not come to Rajaji Hall due to health issues. Karunanidhi initially had wanted Muthu to be his political heir in the early 1970s, but later launched him into films as a counter to M G Ramachandran, founder of the AIADMK. But Muthu’s career in films never really took off.

Muthu then started to move

away from Karunanidhi. By the late 1980s when Muthu fell on hard times, it was Karunanidhi’s arch-rival and AIADMK supremo J Jayalalithaa who extended financial assistance to him, raising eyebrows in the state. But the differences between father and son that had lingered for over two decades, seemed to vanish in 2009 after Karunanidhi called on Muthu at a hospital where he was being treated.

Azhagiri, the elder son of Karunanidhi born to his second wife Dayalu Ammal, was brought into the party in the late 90s. After he fell out with

his brother Stalin, Azhagiri was expelled from the party in 2014. Karunanidhi’s illness and death brought him together with Stalin and half-sister Kanimozhi. The trio had gone to chief minister Edappadi Palaniswami’s house on Tuesday to urge the government to allocate space at the Marina beach to bury their father. Kanimozhi’s mother Rajathi Ammal was also present at Rajaji Hall. Two other children of Karunanidhi — daughter Selvi and youngest son, noted Tamil film producer M K Tamilarasu, both born to Dhayalu Ammal) — were also there.

Feds file new indictment against Edward, Linda Mangano

The additions involving Linda Mangano seem to respond to complaints made by some jurors after the first trial that they were unsure which of the remarks prosecutors said Linda Mangano made to FBI agents were allegedly lies. Linda Mangano's attorney often argued during the trial that he was unsure what statements made by his client were allegedly lies, and he underscored this argument during his summation. Several jurors said that they were close to acquitting Linda Mangano before Azrack declared a mistrial in the Mangano cases on May 31 after nine days of jury deliberations.

Federal prosecutors then immediately said they planned to retry the Manganos on all

counts against them. Defense attorneys staunchly maintained the items were just gifts based on friendship.

Among the alleged lies that Linda Mangano told agents, according to the superseding indictment, were that "she handled the menu changes and new color schemes for Singh's restaurants" and "that she met with Singh three or four times a week at her home to discuss her design ideas for the menus."

In other attempts by prosecutors to refine their case in the superseding indictment, Eastern District federal prosecutors Catherine Mirabile, Lara Treinis Gatz and Christopher Cafferone eliminated all mention of the name of former Oyster Bay

Supervisor John Venditto from the new indictment.

Instead they wrote of Mangano allegedly using "pressure" to get an unnamed Town of Oyster Bay supervisor to help Singh get millions of dollars in indirect loans from the town.

Venditto, who had been the Manganos' co-defendant, was acquitted of all 27 corruption- and securities-related charges against him by the jury before the judge declared a mistrial for the Manganos. Venditto still faces a possible state trial on corruption charges brought by the Nassau County district attorney's office.

In refining the new indictment, prosecutors also added specific predicate acts to bolster their case against

Mangano. In one Singh extortion and conspiracy to contract, the prosecutors added that after Superstorm Sandy: "On or about November 4, 2012, Singh provided food to the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management."

In reference to a contract to supply bread and rolls to the county jail, prosecutors wrote that "On or about May 7, 2012, a Nassau official whose name is known to the grand jury went to the Nassau County Office of Purchasing to discuss the awarding of a certain contract for which Singh submitted a bid." Trial testimony identified the official as Rob Walker, Mangano's chief deputy.

Edward Mangano, 56, faces seven felony counts, including federal program bribery, honest-services wire fraud,

obstruct justice.

Linda Mangano, 54, faces five felony counts, including conspiracy to obstruct justice, obstruction of justice and making false statements to the FBI. The Manganos declined to comment after the arraignment, as did Edward Mangano's attorney, Kevin Keating of Garden City, and Linda Mangano's attorney, John Carman, also of Garden City. A spokesman for the Eastern District U.S. Attorney's Office, John Marzulli, also declined to comment. Azrack said during a brief hearing that she was going to move jury selection for the Manganos' retrial on corruption charges from Oct. 9 to Oct. 11.

Toll in Indonesia earthquake rises to 131; rescuers intensify efforts to find people buried under rubble

(Contd from page 1) The governor of the province that includes Lombok where the quake was centered, the military, the national search and rescue agency and regent of North Lombok issued different tolls that ranged from 226 to 381. But disaster agency spokesperson Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said in a statement the information from those sources was incomplete and hadn't been cross-checked for duplication. He has said several times that the number of deaths will increase. An interagency meeting will be held Thursday to compare information, Nugroho said. As the aid effort stepped up, personnel erected more temporary shelters for the tens of thousands left homeless on Lombok by the magnitude 7.0 quake. Water, which has been in short supply due to a prolonged dry spell on the island, as well as food and medical supplies were being distributed from trucks.

The military said it sent five planes carrying food, medicine, blankets, field tents and water tankers. Still, government assistance was barely a trickle in the west Lombok village of Kekait where Zulas Triani, an elementary school teacher who was sharing a tent with 30 others, said they had received only a basket with three noodle packets, five eggs and a small ration of water. "My house was flattened. We are all frustrated to live like this — in a tent without certainty. Where should we go if we have no house anymore, nowhere to live?" said the mother of 15- and 9-year-old girls. "I don't know how to rebuild on my own. We're all relying on the government to help. I do hope the government can help," she said. Nearly 1,500 people have been hospitalized with serious injuries and more than 1,56,000 have been displaced due to the extensive damage to thousands of homes.

Thousands of people have been sleeping in makeshift shelters or out in the open.

At a collapsed mosque in Bangsal district, emergency workers in orange uniforms removed a woman's body from the ruins on Wednesday morning. A green and yellow dome rested on the pile of rubble, the only part of the structure still intact.


Authorities said all the tourists who wanted to be evacuated from three outlying vacation islands due to power blackouts and damage to hotels had left by boat, some 5,000 people in all.

The quake was the second in a week to hit Lombok. A magnitude 6.4 earthquake on 29 July killed 16 people and cracked and weakened many structures, amplifying the damage that occurred in Sunday's quake.

Like its famous neighbor Bali, Lombok is known for beaches, mountains and a lush

interior. Hotels and other buildings in both locations are not allowed to exceed the height of coconut trees.


Indonesia is prone to earthquakes because of its location on the "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines in the Pacific Basin. In December 2004, a massive magnitude 9.1 earthquake off Sumatra triggered a tsunami that killed 2,30,000 people in a dozen countries.



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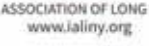

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(Agencies) The hullabaloo over the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the flames of Marathwada, political allies roaring like foes and the friendlier tones of political heavyweights who were spewing venom till now! The one common thread in all these contradictory developments has to be the elections. Without waiting for the Election Commission, our politicians have gone on the offensive. This is an illusory battle. Please don't be misled this time.

Much more is simmering in the political cauldron than is visible to you on the horizon.

The battle lines are drawn for 2019

Here's an example. One of the senior-most politicians in the country, Ramvilas Paswan gave an ultimatum to his own government on the amendments to the SC/ST Act. Many Dalit MPs including Ramdas Athavale joined him. Now that the government has announced that it will roll back the amendment they were protesting against, the question is: The government is your own and you have a majority in Parliament.

(Contd on page 22) Then why

discuss your internal matters in the public? The sole intention appeared to be to create some hype and take credit so that adversaries could be hurt.

This was one way of battle. On the contrary, the Shiv Sena, despite being entrenched in the power corridors of Mumbai and Delhi, doesn't miss any opportunity to attack the BJP and the top government leadership. Why do this? If you want to play the

Opposition, you should shun the fruits of power. The Shiv Sena is a large party, but even local regional outfits are behaving in a similar manner. From the north to south, east to west, the atmosphere is vitiating. The two national parties appear to be struggling to evolve strategies to stay above this morass.

If you want, you can call it political saudebaaji (bargaining).

The Congress, too, is

suffering owing to this bitter negotiation. The party has nominated Rahul Gandhi to decide on electoral alliances. Rahul knows he has to grapple with the party's internal and external affairs at the same time. He is making a Herculean effort, but when friends and foes join forces against you, the road ahead becomes arduous. Uttar Pradesh is a glaring example. Now that news is emerging that the Congress, SP, BSP and Lok Dal are close to finalising an electoral understanding, speculation is rife about who has got how much? The top leadership is silent on this. They know that any statement may cause dissent.

This unspoken agreement has given rise to another question: Are the Congress and the BSP also working in tandem for the Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh assembly elections? The BSP enjoys small pockets of support in these states. Similarly, Ajit Singh can be of marginal assistance in Haryana. Should they join forces with them in these states? From the outside, these alliances appear to be very promising. But the Congress has reasons to be anxious. In the past, it has lent support to the SP and the BSP in Uttar Pradesh and diluted its own mass base. The experiment in Karnataka is an example of this.

Politics moves forward on the fuel of courage and conviction. These days Rahul Gandhi appears to be living by this credo. He wants to stop the BJP's victory juggernaut in 2019 at any cost. For this he isn't hesitating to seek the help of old friends of the party. The meeting between Sharad Pawar and Mayawati, Omar Abdullah's Kolkata visit and Mamata Banerjee's trip to New Delhi and during her visit, touching LK Advani's feet. Leaders from a number of parties including the Shiv Sena met her with enthusiasm. Encouraged by this, Didi made her position clear with two important announcements: First, she wasn't the prime-ministerial candidate. And two, the BJP will face a united Opposition in 2019. Do you think all this just happened suddenly. Don't be under any misconception. Nothing happens overnight in politics.

The BJP knows this coalition is going to place

Delhi HC refuses interim relief to Rahul Gandhi in National Herald case

Rahul Gandhi and his mother Sonia Gandhi are major stakeholders in Young India which has acquired Associated Journals Limited (AJL). National Herald newspaper was published by AJL. Rahul Gandhi's counsel has requested the court to grant interim relief from any coercive steps related to recovery by I-T department. Additional solicitor general Tushar Mehta, who was representing the I-T department, told the court that the tax department has re-opened tax assessment against Rahul Gandhi as he has suppressed information that he was a director in Young India. Rahul Gandhi's counsel said there was no tax liability as he did not receive any income through

it. The bench has listed the matter for further hearing on August 14. Earlier in March, the company Young India requested the court to stay the recovery of tax and interest of Rs 249.15 crore raised in pursuance to a December 27 2017 notice issued under section 156 of the IT Act for the assessment year 2011-12. The company has submitted that it is a charitable firm and does not have any income and that Income Tax authorities have wrongly raised a demand of Rs 249 crore for the assessment year 2011-12. On March 19, the Delhi high court directed Young Indian to deposit Rs 10 crore in the Rs 249.15 crore income tax proceedings against the firm.

Bharatiya Janata Party leader Subramanian Swamy had filed a complaint about "cheating" in the acquisition of AJL, which published the National Herald newspaper, by Young Indian, "a firm in which Sonia and Rahul Gandhi each own a 38 per cent stake". Swamy had accused them of allegedly conspiring to cheat and misappropriate funds by paying only Rs 50 lakh, by which Young Indian Pvt Ltd obtained the right to recover Rs 90.25 crore which AJL owed to the Congress. Former Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul Gandhi, party leaders Motilal Vora, Oscar Fernandes, Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda and Young Indian are accused in the case.

Why India won't become a Hindu Pakistan

The Congress leaders forget that Pakistan was formed in denial of this liberal, all embracing, integral and holistic spiritual tradition. This is the result of un-Indianisation through education and the influence of un-Indian ideologies like Communism. As long as Bharat is embedded within Hindutva, it will never become Pakistan. It is only due to the rejection of Hindutva that Pakistan was born. The unity, independence and sovereignty of Bharat is its existence — "Astitva" — and the philosophical and cultural heritage based upon

spirituality of Bharat is its identity — "Asmita". Due to petty political interest, leaders of the Congress are denying the very identity of Bharat. This is a matter of deep concern. Don't they realise that the denial of its inherent identity can threaten the very existence of Bharat? The liberal Indian culture which celebrates diversity, and of which Dr Mukherjee spoke, and which was called as "Hindu view of life" by Dr Radhakrishnan and Tagore, was inherited even by Pakistan. But it became Pakistan because it snapped ties with this rich heritage. If it

reconnects itself to this heritage, then without leaving its Muslim way of worship it can remain Hindu. Innumerable people like MC Chagla, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam and the Pakistan-born Canadian resident Tarek Fatah, while continuing to follow the Muslim faith, connected themselves with this heritage. In this way, even while remaining Muslim, if Pakistan accepts this liberal and tolerant heritage, then it will become "Hindu Pakistan"; in other words, it will become "Bharat". It can do this even while retaining its separate political identity.

For Delhi's survival, let Yamuna be a river again

A flowing river not only cleanses itself naturally, it also carries along sediments, life forms and energy that conserve local biodiversity. A study by environmentalists Vikram Soni, Shashank Shekhar and Diwan Singh in 2014 found that to perform these functions and recharge the aquifers, the Yamuna in Delhi needed at least 50-60% of its natural flow throughout the year. However, only 32% of the natural annual flow was allowed in the river at the time of the study. During the non-monsoon months, it

dropped to a meagre 16%. While experts insist on a minimum perennial flow during all seasons, the government has proposed to build a dam upstream to store water during monsoon and release it during the lean months. While the court is examining the proposal, Misra points out that the monsoon is the only time when a river recharges the aquifers, which in turn feed the river for the rest of the year. The Yamuna with its sand aquifer that runs two km wide and nearly 40 metres deep along the 48-km stretch in Delhi

is the city's best non-invasive storage of fresh water. "As much as 100 MGD can be extracted from it sustainably if the floodplains are maintained well. So why would you need a dam?" asks Diwan Singh. Today, Delhi draws from the Yamuna to support over 40% of its 913 MGD water supply. No river can survive such extraction for too long. To channel more freshwater into the river, both Delhi and Haryana need to be on the same page, which will require a great deal of political will.



Apple insists iPhones are Not listening to your phone

(Agencies) Apple insists iPhones are NOT listening to your phone conversations after lawmakers accused the company of spying on users Apple has been forced to assure users that iPhones do not listen to phone conversations. The company insists the only way to activate voice recognition is by saying 'Hey Siri' or 'Okay Google', to 'trigger' the devices. It came in response to a letter from lawmakers in Oregon, who demanded clarification on whether smart speakers listened to or recorded users.

On Tuesday, Apple Inc hit back, insisting - in a thinly-veiled dig at Facebook's privacy scandal - that their business model does not depend on collecting vast amounts of personally identifiable information to enrich targeted profiles marketed to advertisers.' Fears over eavesdropping have intensified in recent years, as more and more people own devices with voice and personalized advertising get smarter. It has become something of a standard

joke that Instagram ads seem to pop up on a user's feed after they merely thought about a similar thing. However, Apple insists iPhones should not be feared. The firm told US lawmakers on Tuesday that its iPhones do not listen to users without their consent and do not allow third-party apps to do so either, after lawmakers asked the company if its devices were invading users' privacy. Last month, representatives Greg Walden, Marsha Blackburn, Gregg Harper

and Robert Latta wrote to Apple's chief executive Tim Cook citing concerns about reports that smartphones could 'collect non-triggered audio data from users' conversations near a smartphone in order to hear a 'trigger' phrase, such as 'Okay Google' or 'Hey Siri'.

They also wrote to Alphabet Inc chief executive Larry Page at the same time.

In a letter to Walden, an Oregon Republican who chairs the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Apple said iPhones do not record audio while listening for Siri wakeup commands and Siri does not share spoken words.

Apple said it requires users to explicitly approve microphone access and that apps must display a clear signal that they are listening.

The letters, in which

lawmakers cited reports suggesting third-party applications had access to and used 'non-triggered' data without users' knowledge, followed congressional hearings in April into Facebook Inc's privacy practices, which included testimony by its CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

Alphabet did not respond to questions about whether it had replied to lawmakers. Apple declined to comment beyond its letter, which was seen by Reuters.

A spokeswoman for the Republican majority on the House Energy and Commerce Committee said 'both companies have been cooperative thus far. The Committee looks forward to reviewing and analyzing the responses as we consider next steps.' Apple wrote that

it had removed apps from its App Store over privacy violations but declined to say whether it had ever banned a developer. It also said it was up to developers to notify users when an app was removed for privacy reasons. 'Apple does not and cannot monitor what developers do with the customer data they have collected, or prevent the onward transfer of that data, nor do we have the ability to ensure a developer's compliance with their own privacy policies or local law,' Apple wrote. The iPhone maker's App Store has generated \$100 billion in revenue for developers over the past decade. Apple told lawmakers in its letter that it rejected about 36,000 apps from among the 100,000 submitted each week for violations of its guidelines.

Indra Nooyi's Pepsi exit Another female CEO replaced by a man

The departure of Indra Nooyi drops the number of women CEOs in the S&P 500 to 23, according to Bloomberg analysis and data compiled by researcher Catalyst.



(Agencies) When a woman CEO steps down, there's usually a man waiting to fill her shoes. Of the at least 24 female chief executive officers of S&P 500 companies who've stepped down since 2009, all but three have been replaced by a man, according to an analysis of data on executive departures compiled quarterly by recruiter Spencer Stuart. That includes PepsiCo Inc. CEO Indra Nooyi, who announced Monday that she'll leave the post in October, and at least four other women this year.

The largest companies have struggled to elevate women, who hold only about 5 percent of CEO positions. Progress has stalled even amid the revelations of harassment or other misconduct brought to light by the #MeToo movement and pressure from investors such as State Street Corp. and BlackRock Inc. to get boards to add diversity. "Despite the advances that females have made over the last 10 years, and the big push that's going on to get them into executive positions, if you look at the talent pool of

available individuals, it's going to be mostly men," said Tom Flannery, who leads the global chief executive board services practice at Boyden, an executive recruiter. "Just from a pure odds standpoint, most of the time, when a CEO is replaced, it's going to be with a man."

he departure of Nooyi drops the number of women CEOs in the S&P 500 to 23, according to Bloomberg analysis and data compiled by researcher Catalyst. Kathy Warden is scheduled to become CEO of Northrop Grumman Corp. in January.

Nooyi, 62, who will stay on as chairman until early 2019, is being replaced as CEO by Ramon Laguarta, 54, who has been a candidate to take over since a promotion last year to president. In addition to being

PepsiCo's first woman leader, Nooyi, who is from India, is also the first foreign-born CEO of the company, whose revenue topped \$63 billion last year.

In the executive ranks, women tend to concentrate in positions such as chief financial officer, general counsel and head of human resources. Those roles are less likely to result in promotion to CEO than executives who serve as president or chief operating officer, jobs most often held by men, especially when there's a female at the helm. Kohl's Corp. is a rare exception because both its CEO, Michelle Gass, and its president, Sona Chawla, are women. 'Overbalanced' Boards The blame falls partly to corporate boards, which are "overbalanced by males," said Flannery at Boyden.

Trump's trade war is already leading to layoffs and pain for American businesses



(Agencies) President Donald Trump's tariffs on imports of steel, aluminum, and some Chinese products have started pushing up prices for many US companies that rely on those items to create final products, forcing many firms to make tough decisions about where to cut costs. Many large companies have for now decided to pass on those costs to consumers or absorb the losses into their profit margins. But some smaller US businesses have been forced to cut labor costs to offset the higher amounts they're paying for parts. From Wisconsin to South Carolina, small businesses are starting to lay off

employees, citing Trump's tariffs. Many firms have warned that the worst is yet to come. Some businesses, such as Moog Music, which manufactures electronic musical instruments, have not taken action but have warned that the tariffs could eventually lead to layoffs. Other small businesses have furloughed workers or paused expansion plans while they wait and see how the trade fights play out. Small operators in industries from lobster fishing to metal shapers have curtailed workers' hours. While the tariffs are causing acute pain for some companies, more widespread labor market issues have not yet appeared.

Too much age gap may take a toll on your marriage, finds study

The findings suggest that marriages with large age gaps are less resilient in the face of economic setbacks as compared to those in which the age difference between spouses is not much.

(News Agencies)Age may be no bar for most when it comes to love and matrimony, but a new study suggests that the contentment in such unions fades away over time.

The findings also suggest that marriages with large age gaps are less resilient in the face of economic downturns as compared to those in which the spouses are of the same age. Research from University of Colorado at Boulder, US,

revealed that men reported greater marital satisfaction when paired with a younger spouse, especially in the early years of marriage. Study author Terra McKinnish said that men who have younger wives are the most satisfied and men who are married to older wives are the least satisfied. "Women are also particularly dissatisfied when they're married to older husbands and particularly satisfied if they're married to younger

husbands," McKinnish added. That initial satisfaction erodes rapidly, however, after 6-10 years of marriage for the couples with a big age gap between the partners, say researchers. "Over time, McKinnish said. The people who are married to a much older or younger spouse tend to have larger declines in marital satisfaction over time compared to those who are married to spouses who are similar in age," McKinnish noted. One

mechanism for this decline could be how the age difference between spouses affects the couple's ability to respond to economic setbacks, such as a job loss, McKinnish said. The nationally representative sample was initially comprised of 7,682 households containing 19,914 individuals. The participants were re-surveyed every year with questions that measured various aspects of life

satisfaction. The results suggested that when similarly-aged couples are more in sync on life decisions that affect both partners (having children; general spending habits) and thus, may be better equipped to adjust to a negative financial shock. The research appears online in the Journal of



Quirky positions and scheduled orgasms 7 awesome things about married sex *Simultaneous orgasms, expertly scheduling your sessions and no more sexually transmitted diseases – read on to know about the benefits of married*



(Insider Bureau) Getting married is like trading in the adoration of many for the sarcasm of one - Mae West (1893- 1980), American actress

We keep hearing marriage jokes at family gatherings, parties, on WhatsApp, basically everywhere. But for a moment let's talk about one of the things where marriage trumps the rest – married sex!

Married sex means that you get the sex without going through the painful process of overpriced drinks, cheesy pick up lines and high heels. In other words, all those on Tinder and other dating apps should be jealous of married couples and their sex lives! Why, you ask? Read on and find out:

1. Expert knowledge on each other's bodies

You know where your hands should go and where they shouldn't. Your better half knows what you prefer in bed, and what you'd rather avoid.

2. Scheduled sex

Expert knowledge about each other also means that you can schedule

when you want to have sex even at the last minute and actually do it!

A quickie when you feel like it lets you get intimate and at the same time not waste a full 45 minutes for the act, especially when you need to get up early for office the next morning! Sex right after the matinee show on Sunday? Done! Don't be late!

3. Funny sex

There's no need to be afraid again while having sex! Trying and miserably failing at a new sex position or farting

by mistake during all that twisting and turning can be a secret joke between the both of you for the next few weeks.

4. One honey, so no worry

One of the best things about married sex? You won't be thinking does he/she really like me? Will they call back? Should I leave in the morning?

5. Say no to STDs!

Say goodbye to herpes, crabs and other deadly and familiar venereal diseases.

6. Arriving on time

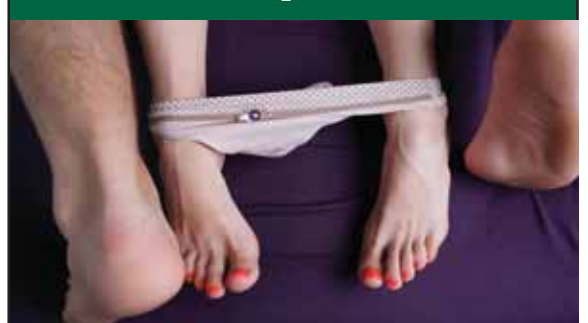
We're not saying this will happen every time, but at least the more you sleep with your partner, you get better at recognizing each other's timing and pace and hence you orgasm together more often.

7. You keep getting better

Don't they say practice makes perfect? Well, then you can certainly get better since you're having sex with the same person!



Population Economics.
Erotica: Here's how to give meaning to your sex life after marriage
According to psychotherapist and couples' sex expert Esther Perel, sex in the early stages of a relationship is often spontaneous, after marriage it becomes more of a 'creative enterprise.'



(News Agencies) According to a recent study, exciting sex doesn't end when you take your vows, rather that is when a new chapter in your sexual history begins to take shape. According to psychotherapist and couples' sex expert Esther Perel, sex in the early stages of a relationship is often spontaneous, after marriage it becomes more of a 'creative enterprise,' but that's no bad thing, reports the Independent. Many couples believe it's essential to try and rekindle the flame or recapture the magic of when they first got together, but Perel believes that's an error, even though "the romantic ideology is tenacious, but the fact of the matter is ,it's impossible to recreate the feelings you both had when first getting to know each other, so it's a waste of time trying." Instead, one should focus on the positives brought about by being in a stable, committed relationship. She even added that you must give meaning to sex. Rather than hoping spontaneous sex will just happen, you must consider both your marriage and sex life as something that demands focus and attention. If you know what turns you on and off, you can use that knowledge to shape your sex life and be in control and see the magic take over.

John Abraham and Manoj Bajpayee bromance at Satyameva Jayate promotion adds some spark

Many of our favourite stars like Vidya Balan, John Abraham, Manoj Bajpayee, Nushrat Bharucha among many others kept our interest in Bollywood live and

(Agencies) Our favourite folks in Bollywood had it easy on Tuesday. However, popular stars like Parineeti Chopra, Nushrat Bharucha among others ensured that our engagement with Bollywood stayed intact.

The Mumbai airport was the place to be with a number of stars making an appearance. Karisma Kapoor along with mother Babita (returning from Delhi perhaps after attending the prayer meet of Rajan Nanda), Sanjay Kapoor, Rakul Preet, Manish Paul among others were seen at the Mumbai airport.

Trailer launches of upcoming films, Laila Majnu and Raah De Maa, too, kept

many busy. The film promotions of upcoming films—Satyameva Jayate and Stree—too kept stars busy. The comfortable camaraderie between John Abraham and Manoj Bajpayee has to be seen.

Developments in Kollywood made news. The audio launch of Pyaar Prema Kaadhal, an upcoming rom-com starring Harish Kalyan and Raiza Wilson, saw a host of Kollywood A-listers such as Dhanush (who came with his wife Aishwarya), Vijay Sethupathi, Simbu, Ilaiyaraaja (with his son Yuvan Shankar Raja) making their presence felt.



Brad Pitt says he's paid Angelina Jolie over \$9 MILLION since split as he hits back at suggestion he's a deadbeat dad in bitter

(Agencies) Brad Pitt has fired back at Angelina Jolie's claims that he failed to pay 'meaningful' child support to the actress amid their bitter split. In documents obtained by Dailymail.com, lawyers for the 54-year-old heartthrob claim that Pitt has paid over \$9million to his 43-year-old ex.

Jolie's claim to the contrary was 'a thinly-veiled effort to manipulate media coverage' according to the filing. The filing by the Se7en star's lawyers say that he loaned his Maleficent star ex \$8million 'to assist her in purchasing her current residence'.

He has also paid 'over \$1.3million in bills for the benefit of [Jolie] and the

minor children.' Brad's lawyers say Angelina's claims that he's withheld child support are 'calculated to increase the conflict.'

Attorneys for the actress alleged on Tuesday that the actor hasn't paid 'meaningful' child support for 18 months, according to other court documents seen by DailyMail.com.

'As of present, [Pitt] has paid no meaningful child support since separation,' Jolie's attorney, Samantha Bley DeJean wrote.

The actress-turned-director alleged her third husband has not been meeting his financial obligations and has demanded the court force him to pay up.

'Given the informal arrangements around the payment of the children's expenses have not been regularly sustained by [Pitt] for over a year and a half, [Jolie] intends to file an RFO for the establishment of a retroactive child support order,' the filing says.

She has asked the judge to arrange a meeting to discuss the issue. 'Meaningful' support was not defined in the filing and Pitt's team are yet to formally respond.

A Pitt source familiar with the situation hinted to Dailymail.com that the actor would likely fight the allegations, commenting: 'Brad always fulfills his commitments'.

Later on in the day a spokesperson for

Angelina explained to People why the star had requested child support to 'provide closure to the marriage in a way that clears a path toward the next stage of their lives and allows her and Brad to recommit as devoted co-parents to their children.'

The documents also demand that the divorce be finalized this year, with Jolie seemingly in a hurry to bring the battle to an end.

Jolie's net worth has been estimated at \$160 million, according to Celebrity Net Worth and in 2014, she was ranked 74th highest-earning celebrity by Forbes. The same site puts Pitt's net worth at \$240million.

NewYork (By a staff reporter) After grand success of his last music video 'Gudd Nalon Ishq Mitha' that earned top spot in youtube and crossed 1 Million views, Philadelphia based Bollywood Singer/Songwriter Vicky Kohhli is set to release his new music video KAHANIYAAN. Vicky did a major rock concert in New Jersey to promote his new hip hop rock song where he unveiled the KANANIYAAN poster and made people dance to his new tune live with his rock band. Various community leader like Rajeev Bhambri from 8K miles media and India Abroad, Sunil Hali Exec. Director Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC), Col. Virendra Tavathia and Seema Jagtiani from Shradha Foundation came to grace the occasion. Vicky's plan is to do a multi-city tour within USA to promote his new song. The show was a great success and guests had a great time dancing to Bollywood tunes, Punjabi Challa and Jugni in Vicky's own Rock style as well as Vicky's original songs Gudd nalon ishq Mitha, Banjara Mann and KAHANIYAAN which has great potential to be the next hit song.

Music Video Kahaniyaan coming soon



'Just nominate Black Panther for Best Picture, you cowards!'

Backlash on social media over Oscars' plan to add popular film category and to limit the length of the show to three hours



(Agencies) John Bailey, presented during the newly re-elected president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and film Academy CEO Dawn Hudson said in an email to members Wednesday morning that the Board of Governors met Tuesday night to approve the changes.

Ratings for the 90th Academy Awards fell to an all-time low of 26.5 million viewers, down 19 percent from the previous year and the first time the glitzy awards ceremony had fewer than 30 million viewers since 2008 when Jon Stewart hosted and No Country For Old Men won best picture.

Hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, the 2018 ceremony also clocked it at nearly four hours, making it the longest show in over a decade. 'We have heard from many of you about improvements needed to keep the Oscars and our Academy relevant in a changing world,' Hudson and Bailey wrote.

In an effort to keep future ceremonies to three hours, the awards will be presented live and during commercial breaks. Specific categories will be determined at a later date, but the winning moments will be edited down and aired later in the program.

The airing of 'select' categories that will be

for the changes. 'I'm afraid this will end up being a little demeaning,' warned the member. 'It's a big thing for those of us "below the line" to get such an award. It makes a big difference in your life and career.' The film academy is also shifting the date for the 92nd Academy Awards to earlier in the year. The 2019 ceremony will

still air on Feb. 24, while the 2020 show will move to Feb. 9. The addition of a popular film category caused the most chatter Wednesday morning, as a clear effort to attract a larger audience by honoring bigger and more seen films. Bailey and Hudson said eligibility requirements will be determined at a

way of preemptively heading off criticism for not giving Black Panther a 'Best Picture' nomination. 'I want Black Panther nominated for **Best Film**, not whatever new Popular Trending Thing category they making up,' tweeted Evan Narcisse. Molly Freeman tweeted: 'Just nominate Black Panther for Best Picture you cowards.'

Jamie Righetti posted a tweet which read: 'I find it suspect that the Academy is adding a popular film category the same year BLACK PANTHER earned tons of Oscar/Best Picture buzz. F*** that.'

'So...does that mean that films like "Black Panther" and "Mission Impossible" can't compete for Best Picture?' tweeted Stuart Oldham of Variety.

There is speculation in the film industry that the Academy plans to shortchange categories like shorts, live action, and animated and documentary short. 'I definitely think the sound editing and mixing categories will be on the chopping block,' the member said.

'Maybe editing; maybe makeup.' The sound branch member said that the Academy is wrong to blame the 'non-celebrity' nominees and winners for the ceremony's sagging television ratings. 'Turning the show into a popular variety show is a mistake,' the member said.

'Most of us are played off pretty quickly; it's all the bloated stuff in between. They could do many things to streamline the show.'

Another film veteran who works on the editing side also expressed distaste

for the changes. 'I'm afraid this will end up being a little demeaning,' warned the member. 'It's a big thing for those of us "below the line" to get such an award. It makes a big difference in your life and career.'

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Akshay Kumar was asked about son Aarav's Bollywood entry, here's what he

At a recent event, Akshay Kumar was asked if his teenaged son, Aarav, is set for a Bollywood debut. The Gold actor, however, said that his son was too young and is concentrating on getting an education.

(Agencies) As is a standard practice with star kids, will Aarav Bhatia, son of Akshay Kumar and Twinkle Khanna, enter the movie industry? Well, that was the question that was posed to the Gold actor at a recent event. Now, Aarav is often spotted with his friend Ibrahim Ali Khan, son of Saif Ali Khan, by the paparazzi.

However, daddy Akshay feels he is way too young to become an actor. Answering questions about his son, Akshay was quoted by Times of India as saying that "he is interested only in his studies". Akshay revealed that once Aarav is done with his studies in

Mumbai, he intends to continue further studies in London. In fact, he has even identified the school in London that he wants to attend. Both Akshay and Twinkle have been very protective about their children. In fact, for the longest time, Aarav and his kid sister Nitara's pictures were nowhere to be seen, unlike many other star



kids'. That is because the couple wanted to give the children as normal a childhood as was possible. However, of late, both seem a lot more relaxed about putting out pictures of their children (though they are still careful not to show Nitara's face). In fact, a recent picture from their holiday in the US

in June, in which Nitara has a map in hand while her big brother looks on, was a big hit with fans. Meanwhile, Akshay remains as busy as ever with his work. On his return from the US, he has been busy promoting his new film, Gold, which also stars Mouni Roy (making her big screen debut), Karan Kapoor, Amit Sadh and Vineet Singh (of Mukkabaaz fame) in prominent roles. The film has been directed by Reema Kagti. Twinkle, who moonlights as a columnist and goes by the name Mrs Funnybones, recently launched her latest book, Pyjamas Are Forgiving.

Exclusive Interview Akshay Kumar



Gold is an upcoming Hindi-language historical sports drama film directed by Reema Kagti and produced by Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar under the Excel Entertainment banner. Starring Akshay Kumar, Mouni Roy, Kunal Kapoor, Vineet Kumar Singh, Amit Sadh, and Sunny Kaushal. The South Asian Insider got an exclusive chance to sit with the Gold man Akshay himself for an interview.

Q. Do you feel like you are at home in London?

A. Yes, I do feel at home in London! My mother was here one month ago and stayed here for 15 days. She thought that she would miss Indian food whilst she was here, but she was very happy to find out that everything is available here anyway!

Q. What led you towards your latest film Gold?

A. I am always open to new projects, which I believe are exciting and send out a particular message. This was one of the reasons I wanted to lend my name to 'Pad Man' and 'Toilet' and GOLD was no exception to this. The movie is a sports drama which showcases the dawn of a new era for India. It tackles subjects that are still relevant today. At some stage in life we have all been that underdog and some may even be currently experiencing it. I want it to create a connection with the audience and that team of 1948, who cemented their place in history.

Gold emphasises the fighting spirit you need to succeed and nothing is more magical when that success comes after the sheer blood, sweat and tears you have shed. I've always seen sports as the greatest platform for people to come together, fighting for one cause and that is victory in the true sense.

Q. How have you been able to find such unique subjects in recent years?

A. As I said, I wanted to make more

serious cinema, something that has an impact on the audience and suddenly some very well written scripts started coming my way. Those films have a special place in my heart, as they are real and raw, but that does not mean I'm staying away from other genres. For the longest time I was typecast as an action hero until I did Hera Pheri and things changed for the better. Hence I always like to mix it up like I'm doing a comedy, Housefull 4 as well as a war drama called Kesari, then there's a dramedy called Good News as well. So this way hopefully I get to entertain all sections of audience.

Q. Were you surprised a film hadn't been made on this amazing subject?

A. Absolutely, people should know what happened in 1948. Hockey is an important game and Gold is an

important film. Even though it is a sports drama, Gold lightly touches upon the birth of our nation. Youngsters should know about our history. Things are changing in the industry; we are coming out with good films now.

Q. What has the reaction been to the film so far?

A. Since the launch of the Stand Up For Gold unit was released even prior to the trailer there has been a sense of hype and excitement surrounding the film and that is always good to see. I can't tell people to go and see the film or force them to like it, but what has been important is that they are already showing respect to the film and the history-side of it. I strongly feel that it is important to see a positive response from your audiences as they are the decision makers at the end of the day and we hope they like the movie, and are inspired by it.

Q. Do you give a lot of importance to being no. 1 and getting the Gold Medal in sports?

A. To win a Gold medal is something to be proud of but it's also about hard work and not being disappointed if you don't win it. The most important thing is to enjoy playing sports on a daily basis and not feel the need to be the



best. You should associate yourself with it and have fun.

Q. You have changed many people's lives through your movies and the kind of choices and you are bringing some revolution.

A. I feel fortunate that I have been able to even be a part of the movement. I wanted to make movies such as Pad Man and Toilet before but back then I didn't have the resources and also the kind of acceptance we have now from the audience wasn't prevalent then. It's only very recently that I have become a producer and now I want to make films that make a difference to the society at large and spread a message.





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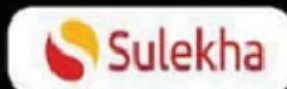
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