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India election 2019

Voting kicks off in world's largest election




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After arrest, Assange faces US federal "conspiracy charges"



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Terror Funding

Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front chief Yasin Malik arrested by India's National Investigation Agency in terror funding case

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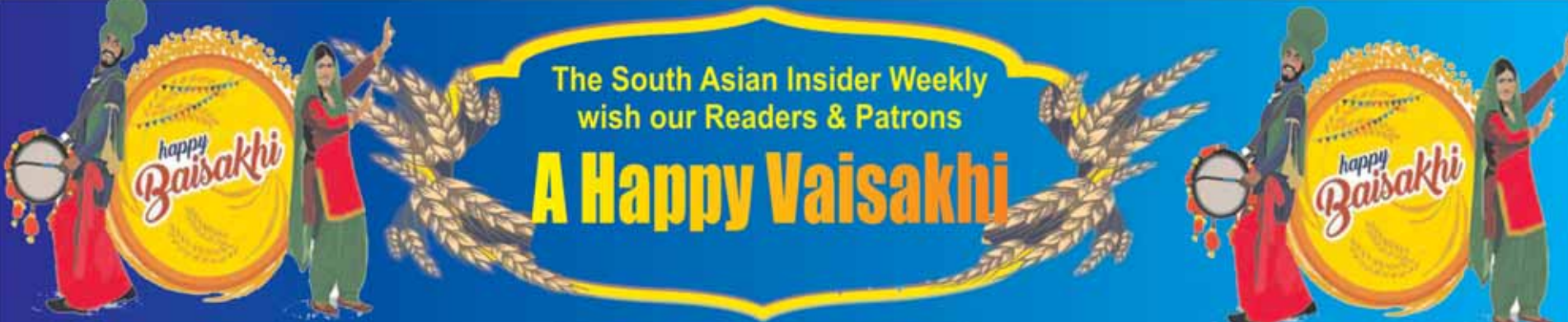
Trump threatens to send undocumented immigrants to sanctuary cities

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A Happy Vaisakhi

happy Baisakhi



Miss India Worldwide Recognized at The Global Beauty Awards Dharmatma Saran & Shree Saini wins

(Press Release) Seattle: Dharmatma Saran, Chairman and Founder of Miss/Mrs. India Worldwide and Shree Saini, the reigning Miss India Worldwide, won awards as Director/Producer and Best Title Holder respectively. The Second Global Beauty Awards was held on April 7 at Snoqualmie Casino in Seattle, Washington State. The Global Beauty Awards has been acclaimed as the Academy Award (Oscar) of beauty pageant industry. Dharmatma Saran who is pioneer in starting Indian beauty pageants in the USA and the world was honored for creating Miss India USA



thirty eight years ago and also the only international Indian pageant - Miss India Worldwide with affiliates in over 40 countries. "He provides exceptional opportunities to his winners," said the citation, "many of whom have gone to become bollywood celebrities and the Who's Who of the Indian community worldwide." Dharmatma Saran in his acceptance speech thanked Maureen Francisco and David Van Maren, Producers of the awards, for this honor. He also thanked Ekta Saini for nominating him and his wife Neelam Saran who has been a source of strength in his thirty eight years of pageant journey. Saran got this award out of 15 other influential nominees from around the world.

Vijay Mallya suffers another legal setback, fails to delay \$40 million Diageo claim

Justice Clare Moulder ruled against Vijay Mallya's application to seek a delay in the full hearing in the case scheduled for May 23 and additionally ordered him to pay legal costs of £34,000.

In an ongoing case at the Royal Court of Justice, Queens Bench -- Diageo plc and others vs Vijay Mallya and others -- an attempt by Vijay Mallya's legal team to push forward the date of trial May 23, 2019, has been rejected by Justice Moulders. While reading out the judgement, Justice Moulders said that Vijay Mallya is the author of his own misfortune.



In addition, he has been asked to pay £34,000 towards the legal cost of Diageo until now. It was also heard by the court that Vijay Mallya did not pay his solicitors on the case. The new team of solicitors argued that he could not pay because of the 'freezing order' due to which he could not access funds. The judge did not seem to buy the argument as she said that there was no evidence presented to the court to prove it. Even as Vijay Mallya renewed an appeal against his extradition to India, the liquor tycoon suffered another legal setback on Friday (April 12) in \$40 million claims case brought by British liquor giant Diageo plc

in the UK High Court. Justice Clare Moulder ruled against the 63-year-old businessman's application to seek a delay in the full hearing in the case scheduled for May 23 and additionally ordered him to pay legal costs of £34,000. While the judge agreed to a short extension until April 23 for Vijay Mallya's new lawyers to submit their evidence to the court, having missed an April 5 deadline, the judge ordered that meanwhile the businessman must pay additional legal costs of £34,000 for Diageo's lawyers within 28 days. Diageo, which had acquired Vijay Mallya's United Spirits nearly six years ago, is claiming USD 40 million paid to him as part of an alleged breach of agreement. The UK-based drinks giant is also claiming \$140 million from Vijay Mallya, his son Sidhartha and two companies linked to them for alleged questionable payments. Apart from this there are three other major legal battles that Vijay Mallya has to face.



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Harish Thakkar elected President of The Association of Indians in America (AIA), New York



(By our staff reporter) New York- The Association of Indians in America (AIA), New York Chapter recently held an Inauguration & Oath Ceremony of their newly elected President, Harish Thakkar and his Executive Committee at the "Consulate General of India, in NYC. The ceremony was attended by the Chief Guest Consul General of India, Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty, Deputy Consul General Shatrughna Sinha, Congresswoman Grace Meng, New York State Senator John Liu and Air India Regional Manager, Bhuvna Rao, Gobind Munjal, Ranju Batra and other Past Presidents of AIA, National Chapter Presidents, community leaders, Media and prominent guests from the tristate area.



BJP Campaign Kick off in New York "Modi Fever In America"



last Fifty Years. BJP Government under the leadership of Modi has given 70 millions gas cylinders to poor, constructed 80 millions toilets for poor, 19000 Villages have electricity. Sewhani further said that India has become Global Power under the Leadership Of Modi and it is part of top five economies in the world. Mr Sewhani further said that India is safe and secure under the Leadership Of Modi. He reminded the audience that when on 26/11 terrorists attacked Mumbai, then the weak leadership of congress didn't do much, but under the decisive leadership of Modiji when Terrorists attacked "Kashmir and killed our 40 Jawans, and relatives" and tell the Pakistan got the "befitting reply in a . He requested them to use "social media to reach out their friends in India . In this Maha Yagya they have to devote some time every day . Others who spoke at the gathering included Bobby Kumar Kalotee, Dr Yashpal Arya, Amba Sharma. Dr Dipak Nandi, Dr raj Bhayani, Anime's Gonenka, Urged the Indian American Community to call Jaggi and Jyoti Gupta.

(By our staff reporter) par, Josh very high If they they want decisive leadership I like Modi Ji or Leaderless Mahagathbandhan, "If they want dynasty or development we want Majboot Sarkar under the dynamic leadership of Narendra bhai Modi who in past five years have done so much for the country which Congress didn't do in

Hicksville, Long Island- Indian American Community for Narendra Modi recently organized an event in New York. This Campaign kickoff of BJP in New York and 39th Foundation day of BJP with community leaders in New York witnessed a large no of participants. Venue was in high spirits with Chants of Modi Bar Bar, Abki bar 400

par, Josh very high If they they want decisive leadership I like Modi Ji or Leaderless Mahagathbandhan, "If they want dynasty or development we want Majboot Sarkar under the dynamic leadership of Narendra bhai Modi who in past five years have done so much for the country which Congress didn't do in



Indian Couple In Germany Charged With Spying On Sikhs, Kashmiris

(Insider Bureau) - An Indian married couple accused of spying on Germany's Sikh community and Kashmir movement have been charged with espionage, German prosecutors announced on Tuesday. They named the suspects only as 50-year-old Manmohan S. and his wife Kanwal Jit K., 51, in keeping with German privacy rules for defendants. "Manmohan S. agreed by January 2015 at the latest to provide information about Germany's Sikh community and Kashmir movement and their relatives to an employee of the Indian foreign intelligence service Research & Analysis Wing," they said in a statement. His wife joined

him in monthly meetings with the Indian intelligence officer between July and December 2017, and in total the couple were paid 7,200 euros (\$8,100) for their work. The charges, which can carry up to 10 years' jail in serious cases, were laid on March 28 but only publicised Tuesday by the federal prosecution service in the city of Karlsruhe.



Trick or treat? EU, UK agree to delay Brexit until Halloween

The new October 31 cutoff date averts a precipitous and potentially calamitous Brexit that had been scheduled for Friday.

(Agencies)- As if Brexit hadn't spooked Britain and the European Union enough over the past three years, the two sides agreed early Thursday to extend the deadline to Halloween. The new October 31 cutoff date averts a precipitous and potentially calamitous Brexit that had been scheduled for Friday. "Please, do not waste this time," European Council President Donald Tusk pleaded. He said the EU was giving Britain six more months "to find the best possible solution" to its Brexit impasse. Like many things related to Brexit, the extension was a

messy compromise. May came to an emergency summit in Brussels seeking to postpone Britain's departure from the EU until June 30. Some European leaders favored a longer extension, while French President Emmanuel Macron was wary of anything but a very short delay. Leaders of the 27 remaining EU member states met for more than six hours over a dinner of scallop and cod before settling on the end of October, with the possibility of an earlier Brexit if Britain ratifies a withdrawal agreement. May said the possibility of leaving



before the deadline was a key request of hers. "I continue to believe we need to leave the EU, with a deal, as soon as possible," she told reporters. She noted that if U.K. lawmakers back her Brexit deal, Britain could still

leave by June 30 - the Brexit deadline she had requested from the bloc - and possibly as soon as May 22, which would release Britain from having to participate in elections for the European Parliament. May spoke to the 27 EU leaders for just over an hour, before they met for dinner without her to decide Britain's fate. In contrast to some testy recent summits, there were signs of warmth, even humor. May and German Chancellor Angela Merkel were filmed laughing over a tablet bearing an image showing the two of them speaking to their respective Parliaments on Wednesday while wearing similar blue jackets. While many leaders said they were inclined to grant a

Brexit delay, Macron expressed reservations, warning as he arrived at the summit that "nothing is decided." Afterward, the French president said he was satisfied with the outcome. "We did the best possible compromise to preserve the unity of the 27 (other EU members) because we have left the United Kingdom more time to deliver a deal," Macron said. Tusk said that during the extension Britain "will continue its sincere cooperation as a full member state, with all its rights, and as a close friend and trusted ally in the future." Several months have passed since May and the EU struck a deal laying out the terms of Britain's departure and the outline of future relations.

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Pakistan holds the key to the real F-16 story

The controversy over the Indian Air Force (IAF) killing a Pakistani F-16 during the February 27 aerial dogfight between the air forces of the two countries refuses to die. In order to quash all doubts, the IAF called a press briefing on Monday and released evidence supporting its claim. If one puts all the circumstantial evidence together, it does present a compelling narrative. To begin with, the Pakistani army spokesperson, Asif Ghafoor, spoke of two pilots captured on the day of the dogfight. Later he changed his statement to claim that Pakistan had just one Indian

pilot in custody. Pakistan also made the claim that F-16s were not at all used in the dogfight. The IAF has conclusively established that this was patently untrue. Now, did a Mig-21 Bison actually shoot down an F-16? On Monday, the IAF released radar images which show a Pakistani F-16 vanishing in a matter of eight seconds. The IAF also has telephone communications intercepts which corroborate the fact that two pilots were captured. Parachutes were sighted at two different locations. In normal course, this much evidence would have sealed the debate. However, a recent report in the

Foreign Policy magazine quoted two unnamed senior US defence officials, who revealed that an audit of F-16s in Pakistan has been conducted and no plane was found missing. If this report is accurate, then there is no question of an F-16 being shot down on February 27. Then, the US Defence department said it was unaware of any such count having been undertaken. Pakistan has also released an image of missiles retrieved from the Mig-21 Bison that fell in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The experts are divided on whether one of those missiles (as seen in the picture) actually hit an F-16. The IAF has released all the



evidence it could without matter and ask penetrating comprising confidential questions of the top armed forces information, but the key lies with officials in the country. Still, this the Pakistan army, which had is a good time for the IAF to claimed the capture of two pilots review the happenings of the day but went completely mum on the and introspect on its battlefield second pilot. It is for the capabilities and communication Pakistani media now to probe the strategy.

Identity politics shouldn't overshadow real issues

In this election, all parties must stay away from both shallow secularism, which seeks to treat minorities as a homogeneous votebank to be mobilised, and majoritarianism, which seeks to blur all the diversity within the Hindu fold. On Sunday, the Samajwadi Party (SP)-Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)-Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) alliance in Uttar Pradesh (UP) held its first rally in Saharanpur's Deoband. This was the first time that the three parties' leaders - Akhilesh Yadav, Mayawati and Ajit Singh - representing distinct political traditions and social groups, and with a long history of political rivalry, came together. The gathering was impressive in terms of both numerical strength

and organisational synergy. More substantively though, in terms of messaging, the rally, as expected, was marked by a rather robust critique of the Narendra Modi government. But what was as striking as Ms Mayawati's sharp attack against the Congress - she is understood to have been the most resistant to a wider alliance with the Congress. Apprehensive that Muslims will split between the two anti-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) forces in the fray, the BSP leader explicitly appealed to the community to not waste their votes on the Congress but consolidate fully behind the Gathbandhan (alliance). The quest for the Muslim vote

has been a feature of a rather distorted secular politics in India for long, and Ms Mayawati's appeal fits into that tradition. This is disturbing because mobilising votes on the basis of religion is playing with fire. If this call for Muslim votes constitutes one danger, the quest to construct a Hindu vote - by appealing to raw emotions, and stoking suspicion and hatred of the minorities - constitutes the other danger. The BJP and its ideological fellow travellers have been most guilty of this. The two tendencies feed into each other. India's history has enough instances to show that majority and minority



communalism have perilous consequences. In this election, all parties must stay away from both shallow secularism, which seeks to treat minorities as a homogeneous votebank to be mobilised, and majoritarianism, which seeks to blur all the diversity within the Hindu fold. Identity matters in electoral politics. But parties often use identity to divert the electorate from the real issues of livelihood, economy, governance, and escape the responsibility of providing a vision for the future.

Rahul in Wayanad may contribute to the Left's fall

When Congress president Rahul Gandhi announced his intention to also contest from Wayanad besides Amethi - a seat strategically chosen for its location on the tri-state border junction between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu - some of the sharpest attacks on the decision came not from the usual opponent, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), but from a nominal ally, the Left Front. They decried Rahul's decision as a betrayal of the unity of "secular forces". Never mind the fact that Wayanad has traditionally been a Congress stronghold and any candidate of the United Democratic

Front (UDF)-Congress-led alliance in Kerala would have won easily. The Left's angst is understandable. After being reduced to irrelevance across most parts of the country, the Left is heavily depending on the 20 seats in Kerala, the only state where it is ruling, to shore up its numbers in Parliament. If Gandhi's candidature has a ripple effect across neighbouring constituencies, as it is likely to, this might upset the Left's calculations. For the Indian Left, which, immediately after Independence, constituted the second most powerful block in Parliament after the Congress, the decline has

been precipitous. This has occurred even as its main opponent, the BJP (or Jana Sangh in its earlier avatar), has grown from strength to strength. If July 2008 represented the apogee of the Indian Left parties, when they collectively almost brought down the Union government on the Indo-US nuclear deal, the parliamentary elections this year may mark its nadir. Although the Left's appeal has geographically shrunk over the decades, till recently it could reliably count on its traditional citadels like West Bengal, Tripura and, of course, Kerala to return a healthy chunk of seats. The Left Front



(comprising the CPI(M), CPI, RSP and AIFB) commanded two of the 42 seats in West Bengal. With Tripura now largely being a fight between the Trinamool Congress and the BJP, the Left has become a fringe player in the state. In the 2014 parliamentary polls, it won only two of the 42 seats in West Bengal. With Tripura now hosting a saffron government, the Left's prospects in the state are not too bright. In any case, the state has just two seats in the Lok Sabha.

Yes, America needs walls. But the country is not 'full'

President Trump is 100 percent correct that there is a crisis on our southern border. And he is absolutely right when he says some migrants are abusing our asylum laws. But he is dead wrong when he declares, in what has become his favorite refrain, that "Our country is FULL." Sorry, our country is not full. Not by a long shot. The opposite is true. We need more immigrants, lots of them. In fact, no one needs immigrants more than Trump.

Today, thanks to Trump's leadership, the U.S. economy is strong. Unemployment recently reached its lowest level in 49 years. U.S. manufacturing employment is growing at the fastest pace in nearly a quarter-century. On Trump's watch, the unemployment rates for African Americans, Hispanics and Americans without a high school diploma have all reached the lowest points ever recorded.

The Wall Street Journal recently called this "the hottest job market in half a century," declaring that "Workers are so scarce that, in many parts of the country, low-skill jobs are being handed out to pretty much anyone willing to take them -- and high-skilled workers are in even shorter supply. All sorts of people who have previously had trouble landing a job are now finding work. Racial minorities, those with less education and people working in the lowest-paying jobs are getting bigger pay raises and, in many cases, experiencing the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded for their groups." In some places, unemployment is so low that employers can't find workers to fill the jobs. There are now a record 6.5 million job openings in the United States. According to the National Federation of Independent Business, 39 percent of small businesses say they have a job opening they can't fill, and 90 percent of business owners who hired or tried to hire workers reported few or no qualified applicants for the position. Nearly a quarter of all small-business owners report that finding qualified workers is their "single most important business problem." And the demand for seasonal workers is so big that, when the application window for H-2B visas opened up on Jan. 1, the Labor Department's electronic filing system for the visas crashed due to overwhelming demand. Employers requested three times as many visas as were available. To quote my American Enterprise Institute colleague Michael R. Strain, "this is a good problem to have." But it is a problem. If Trump wants to keep this strong

economy going, and achieve his stated goal of sustained 3 percent growth throughout his presidency, he needs more workers. The trouble is, the United States is not producing enough native-born workers. According to the Economic Innovation Group, 80 percent of U.S. counties lost prime working-age adults from 2007 through 2017. And the situation is not improving. According to Census Bureau data, our population growth rate for fiscal year 2017-2018 was 0.62 percent -- the lowest since 1937, during the Great Depression. The U.S. population is now growing at less than replacement levels.

The decline is driven in large part by millennials, who are marrying and having children at much lower rates than previous generations. It's ironic. Many millennials want socialism, but they are not producing the future workers and taxpayers needed to pay for it. The only thing stopping us from overall population decline is the arrival of immigrants, who account for about 48 percent of U.S. population growth. And immigration "is projected to be the primary contributor to national population growth after 2030," the Brookings Institution reported. So, we need more immigrants. Americans understand this. Eighty-four percent say legal immigration is good for the country, and only 29 percent believe it should be decreased -- the lowest level since 1965. Unfortunately, Sens. Tom Cotton, R.-Ark., David Perdue, R.-Ga., and Josh Hawley, R-Mo., have introduced legislation that would reduce legal immigration by 50 percent over 10 years. No doubt, our immigration system is in need of sensible reforms, such as eliminating the visa lottery system, ending chain migration and imposing a mandatory E-Verify process. But an overall reduction in immigration would be disastrous for the country. We need immigrants to stop population decline. We need immigrants to work and pay taxes that fund Social Security and Medicare for our aging population. And we need immigrants to provide the human capital for continued economic growth and prosperity. If the president wants to keep this economic boom going, he needs more people coming to the United States, not fewer. So, yes, our shining city on a hill needs walls -- because the world is a dangerous place, and we are a nation of laws. But, as President Ronald Reagan put in it his farewell address, those walls must also have doors. And the sign above those doors should read "Welcome to America" -- not "Sorry, we're full."

By Marc Thiessen
The Washington Post

India-US ties must be self-sustaining

Recently, President Trump again publicly derided India for "high tariffs". Withdrawal of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) benefits to Indian exports looms. Economic and trade discussions between the two countries continue to be difficult with persisting unresolved issues. However, after India's anti-satellite (ASAT) missile test on March 27, the United States spoke of its strong strategic partnership with India, and asserted that it "will continue to pursue shared interests in space and scientific and technical cooperation". This was a far cry from its pre-1998 criticism of India's missile and nuclear programmes. Earlier, following the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Muhammad organised terrorist attack in Pulwama in Jammu & Kashmir on February 14, there was widespread international support for India, and condemnation of terrorism. The US response, nevertheless, was the most supportive, recognising the link to Pakistan, which most others did not, and asserting India's "right to self-defence". This was publicly indicated by the US after the telephone conversation between India's National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, and John Bolton, his US counterpart. Following the Indian action on February 26, striking targets in Balakot in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa beyond not just the Line of Control but also the international boundary, the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, like India, described it as a "counter-terrorism" action. The US, along with others, worked on Pakistan for the quick release of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, and has since repeatedly reiterated the need for Pakistan to take

"credible and sustained" action against terrorist groups operating from territory under its control. French support for India closely followed the US. It took the lead, joined by the US and the UK in reintroducing a proposal at the United Nations Security Council for listing of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist. It has taken a similar initiative to get a European Union listing. Pakistan would have been a bit disappointed by the Chinese reaction, which spoke of support for sovereignty and territorial integrity (and could, by implication, be seen as critical of Indian action), but otherwise emphasised de-escalation and did not criticise India directly. Similarly, Russia's reaction should give us reason to ponder in India, because it did not expressly support India in the Pakistan context. It also articulated a willingness to enhance counterterrorism cooperation with both countries, which would seem in India to be out of place when there was an attack in India sponsored by a Pakistan-based group. In this background, as India heads into general elections starting April 11, and as manoeuvring for 2020 US Presidential elections picks up, it is worthwhile to assess how the India-US relationship has evolved over the past five years, and the portends for the future. This would be critical since India would continue to face some significant security challenges. Pakistan has taken only cosmetic action against terrorist groups, including the LeT and the JeM after Pulwama, and the February 26/27 cross border/LoC exchanges when it came under enhanced international scrutiny.

By Arun Singh, Hindustan Times



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

Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah
Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind

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

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

Phone: 917 612 3158 Tel Fax: 516-246 -9022
editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com
www.thesouthasianinsider.com

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Pakistan is under the military jackboot

The army has effectively ensured that Pakistan's fledgling democracy is not allowed to take root

After India's counter-terrorism air strikes at Balakot in February 2019 and the reactions that these evoked in the National Assembly, Pakistan appears to be headed towards an unpredictable denouement. Accused by India, Iran and Afghanistan of using terrorism as an instrument of State policy, Pakistan has been isolated in the region. With a seemingly uncontrollable insurgency in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK, erstwhile North West Frontier Province), a simmering freedom movement in Balochistan, growing unrest in Gilgit-Baltistan and rampant urban terrorism, the internal security environment is precariously unstable.

Pakistan's economy is in a shambles: the funds are low,

the debts are high, exports have dwindled to a trickle and the Pakistani currency has fallen to an all-time low of 140 rupees to a dollar. Pakistan has for long been dependent on the United States' largesse to meet its obligations for the repayment of its burgeoning debt. However, due to its intransigence in extending its cooperation in the war against the Afghan Taliban, that source has dried up and Imran Khan, the beleaguered Prime Minister and chairman of the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, has had to run to China, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for help.

Pakistan's deep state - the army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) - has also been facing insurmountable challenges. The army's

counter-insurgency operations in KPK and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have been floundering; its military camps have been repeatedly attacked with some attackers coming from within the rank and file; its relations with the US and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies have plummeted to an all-time low; defence preparedness is sub-optimal; and, the morale of the rank and file is low. The only saving grace is that a pliable prime minister, with whom the army's senior leadership is not at loggerheads, is now holding office.

The military jackboot has ridden roughshod over Pakistan's polity for most of the country's history since its independence. While

Generals Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Zia ul Haq and Pervez Musharraf ruled directly as Presidents or Chief Martial Law administrators, the other army chiefs achieved perfection in the fine art of backseat driving. The army repeatedly took over the reins of administration under the guise of the "doctrine of necessity" and, in complete disregard of international norms of jurisprudence, Pakistan's Supreme Court mostly played along.

The army has effectively ensured that Pakistan's fledgling democracy is not allowed to take deep root. The origins of authoritarianism can be traced back to General Ayub Khan, who promoted the idea of "guided" or "controlled"



democracy. The concept of the Troika emerged later as a power sharing arrangement between the president, the prime minister and the chief of the army staff (COAS). The "political militarism" of the Pakistan army imposed severe constraints on the institutionalisation of democratic norms in the civil society.

Some key national policies have always been dictated by the army. The army determines Pakistan's national security threats and challenges and decides

how to deal with them. Pakistan's policies on Afghanistan and Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) are guided by the army and the rapprochement process with India cannot proceed without its concurrence. The army controls Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme and the related research and development. The civilian government has no role to play in formulating the doctrine for nuclear deterrence, the force structures, the targeting policies and the command and control.

**By Gurmeet Kanwal ,
Hindustan Times**

Pollution a public health disaster, needs a concerted combat strategy

The air pollution conversation in India usually develops around the start of winter. This coincides with two episodic events, i.e., Diwali and crop burning. The conversation ends around the new year, which again coincides with the change in weather.

I am writing this article after starting a five-day course of antibiotics, as advised by my ENT specialist. The advice also includes wearing a mask. He was clear that this is nothing to do with the change of season or last Sunday's thunderstorm, but the level of air pollution, as the city air continues to remain toxic. While my ENT was precise with his advice and observation, I wonder, if we, including policy makers, have really understood the impact of air pollution on human health?

I, unfortunately, think not. The air pollution conversation in India usually develops around the start of winter. This coincides with two episodic events, i.e., Diwali and crop burning. The conversation ends around the new year,

which again coincides with the change in weather. However, pollution does not disappear for the rest of the year, as we often think. For example, Gurugram had only three good air quality days in all of 2018. Yes, three good air quality days out of 365 days!

So, while we may doubt the data or argue that there is no conclusive evidence of the impacts of air pollution on public health, the fact of the matter is that all new data and studies are suggesting that air pollution is a much bigger problem than we anticipated. Let me give three recent examples: The link to diabetes

India is the diabetes capital of the world, with over 5 crore people suffering from this chronic disease. It's a condition

wherein the body cannot produce insulin. Changing lifestyles and diets have often been blamed for this disease but air pollution could also be a reason. A research by the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences' Fuwai Hospital and Emory University from USA showed that for every 10 cubic metres of long-term exposure of PM2.5, the risk of diabetes increased by almost 16%. PM2.5 are particulate matter that are less than 2.5 microns and includes toxins such as sulphate black carbons and sulphates. These particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and have also been associated with lung cancer, chronic bronchitis, heart diseases but this new study also links them to diabetes. It is estimated

that by 2030, nearly 9% of the India's population is likely to suffer from diabetes. This is surely a large number to ignore.

The plight of employees So, before we doubt data, as we normally do, and, in this case, it is Chinese data, numerous empirical research and data shows that air pollution is a serious issue in India. According to recent data collected by an IT firm and a travel portal for their employees in Gurugram, about half the respondents in the survey of these two companies confirmed that someone in their families have suffered from air quality related diseases in the last one year. Around three-fourth of the employees suggested to move out of Delhi due to winter smog and an equal number of employees



preferred to skip the annual increment in lieu of better air.

What was even more surprising that on an average the family spends around ₹15,000 per annum for treating air quality related diseases. As per NASSCOM, there are 3.5 lakh IT/BPO jobs in Delhi-NCR and assuming the same rates are applicable, this means that Rs 260 crore is spent every year on air pollution related illnesses. This is only by the IT BPO companies. If one adds other employees, the number will be hugely significant. Also, the expenditure comes from the employees' pay, putting them on a huge financial

strain. Health & survival of children The World Health Organization's report on air pollution and child health highlights damaging impact of air pollution on health and survival of children. The report estimates that 180 crore or 93% of world's children breathe toxic air. A third of these are children are under the age of five.

The result is that around 7 lakh children under the age of five die every year due to air pollution. Also, the problem is much more acute in India as the WHO report indicates that 14 of the 15 most polluted cities in the world are in India.

**By Amit Bhatt,
Hindustan Times**

Scrap NSA, Manipur journalist demands after release from jail

The Manipur High Court quashed the NSA detention order on April 8 after journalist Kishorchandra Wangkhem had spent more than four months in jail.



my voice and keeping me behind bars," Wangkhem said.

Wangkhem was arrested ??on November 20 after he uploaded videos criticizing and abusing the BJP-led Manipur government for observing the birth anniversary of Rani of Jhansi. Wangkhem, in the videos said Rani of Jhansi had nothing do with Manipur and called Chief Minister N Biren Singh a puppet of the Centre and Hindutva.

He had been arrested once earlier in August for alleged communal posts on social media. In January Congress president Rahul Gandhi had written a letter to Wangkhem's family calling his arrest an attempt by the State machinery to silence dissent.

Wangkhem says he fears that he could be targeted again. "But after the support that I received in the last four months, they would certainly think twice," he said.

(Agencies)- The "draconian" National Security Act should be scrapped, journalist Kishorchandra Wangkhem said after he walked out of Manipur Central Jail in Sajiwa after spending around four and a half months in detention.

freedom of speech and expression. It was a manifestation of autocratic rule of the present government," he said. Wangkhem (39) who worked with a local news channel in Imphal was detained ??on November 27 under the NSA.

The Manipur High Court quashed the NSA detention order on April 8. "This kind of law has no place in a democracy. It should be scrapped," Wangkhem told HT on phone. "Slapping NSA on me was absolute misuse of power and suppression of my rights to

On November 26, a chief judicial magistrate had granted him bail after he was first arrested for sedition ?on November 20 saying that there was nothing seditious in his posts. "They slapped NSA even after the Court's order with the sole motive of suppressing

'Contempt of court': Sitharaman jabs Rahul Gandhi on SC's Rafale decision



(Agencies)- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday hit back at Congress president Rahul Gandhi, saying the latter's comments on Rafale review petition amount to contempt of the Supreme Court. Earlier in the day, Rahul Gandhi thanked the Supreme Court for rejecting the Centre's objections over the admissibility of the "leaked" documents cited by petitions seeking a review of the Rafale verdict of December 2018. Addressing mediapersons in Amethi, he said, "The Prime Minister has been claiming that the Supreme Court had given him a clean chit on the Rafale deal. The Supreme Court has clarified and has begun an investigation

into the Rafale deal." Mocking the Congress chief, Sitharaman, at a press conference, said the Congress party wants to "perpetrate their own lies". She further added that Gandhi's comments are not based on the facts.

The Defence Minister accused Rahul Gandhi of attributing words to the apex court. She also accused Gandhi of repeating half-truths which are told to him. "We all know Congress president probably doesn't even read even half a paragraph, but here, by saying that the court has accepted and by also saying that the court has said 'Chowkidaar chor hai,' these verge on contempt of court," said Sithatraman.

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SC rejects Centre's objection on leaked Rafale papers, opposition moves in

"I thank Supreme Court... Justice has been done", Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said soon after filing his nomination form for the Amethi seat in Uttar Pradesh.

(Agencies)- The Supreme Court on Wednesday set aside the Centre's objection that leaked Rafale papers could not be used to seek a review of the top court's December verdict. The top court ruling clears the decks for the judges to hold detailed hearings on merits of the review requested by former Union ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie, and lawyer-activist Prashant Bhushan. In its December verdict, the court had rejected demands for a court-monitored probe into the deal to buy 36 Rafale fighter jets Arun Shourie, who was in the Supreme Court when Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi read out the three-judge bench's unanimous decision, later told reporters he was "delighted". The former minister said if the ruling had gone against them, the review petition would have collapsed. "Our argument was that because the documents relate to defence and you must examine them. You asked for these evidence and we have provided it." Shourie said. But he wasn't the only one reacting to the top court's order.

The opposition moved in swiftly to use the court order to hammer away at the NDA government and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Congress's chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala was among the first to take a swipe. "Modiji, you can run and lie as much as you want, But sooner or later the truth comes out. The skeletons in #RafaleScam are tumbling out one by one. And now there is 'no official secrets act' to hide behind," Surjewala said in his tweet attack. Congress boss Rahul Gandhi picked up from where his party spokesperson had left. "I thank Supreme Court... Justice has been done", he said soon after filing his nomination form for the Amethi seat in Uttar Pradesh. The Congress president also dared PM Modi to a debate on corruption. If he does, Rahul Gandhi said, 'he will not be able to eye to eye with the people of country'. During the arguments in court earlier, the Centre's top lawyer KK Venugopal had accused the petitioners of jeopardizing India's national security by using secret papers



that at one point, he said, had been stolen from the defence ministry. After the opposition pummeled the government for its failure to secure official documents, the lawyer stressed that the document wasn't missing from its files but had been photocopied from the originals. The Centre had also argued that the three sets of documents presented a "selective and incomplete picture of internal secret deliberations" on Rafale deal. But the government's top lawyer faced many questions from the court that pointed to a clause in the RTI Act that overrides the

colonial-era Official Secrets Act and wondered if the government intended to "take shelter under national security when the allegation is of grave crime or corruption". At another hearing last month, the Centre had also urged the judges to "exercise restraint" in observations on the procurement of Rafale fighter jets, underlining that every statement by the Supreme Court will be used to target either the government or the opposition. Venugopal's cautionary note to the judges had come at a time the Rafale deal is at the heart of the opposition

campaign against government ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. The Congress-led opposition alleges malfeasance in the purchase to buy 36 fighter jets in an overpriced deal, a charge that the government denies. The Narendra Modi government signed an agreement with France in 2016 for the purchase of Rafale fighter jets. Under the Rs 59,000-crore deal, French firm, Dassault Aviation will supply 36 Rafale fighter jets to India in flyaway condition. The delivery will begin from September this year.

Rafale petitioners want to present selective picture of deal: Defence Ministry

The apex court on Wednesday rejected the government's contention that sensitive documents accessed by the media on the Rafale deal cannot be evidence and said it will examine the papers while reviewing its order of December 14 last year when a clean chit was given to the deal.

(Agencies)- The petitioners in the Rafale deal case are using certain documents with the intention of presenting a selective and incomplete picture of internal secret deliberations relating to national security, the Defence Ministry said, in its reaction to the Supreme Court's order on the contentious issue. The apex court on Wednesday rejected the government's contention that sensitive documents accessed by the media on the Rafale deal cannot be evidence and said it will examine the papers while reviewing its order of December 14 last year when a clean chit was given to the deal. The top court said review petitions

against its earlier verdict dismissing all petitions against procurement of Rafale jets will be decided on merit. "It is reiterated that the petitioners are using documents with the intention to present a selective and incomplete picture of internal secret deliberations on a matter relating to national security and defence," the ministry said. Classified documents were sourced by the media over the Rafale deal. Citing internal reports of the Defence Ministry, The Hindu daily had come out with a series of stories including one on how the Defence Ministry had objected to parallel negotiations carried out by the


Prime Minister's Office on the deal. Citing the sensitive documents, the petitioners in the case had sought a review of the Supreme Court's December 14 order in the case. The Centre had claimed privilege over the documents pertaining to the Rafale fighter jet deal with France and said those documents cannot be considered in evidence as per Section 123 of the Indian Evidence Act. In its reaction, the defence ministry said the documents presented by the petitioners are failing to bring out how the issues were addressed and resolved and necessary approvals of the competent authorities taken. "These are



selective and incomplete presentation of the facts and records by the petitioners," the ministry said. It said the government provided the requisite information as desired by the Supreme Court and also to the petitioners as per directions of the court. "The government also provided all records and files as required by CAG. The main concern of the government

is relating to availability of sensitive and classified information concerning national security in public domain," it added. The judgment makes it clear that during the hearing of the review petition the bench will look into not only the question of pricing of the jet but also selection of Indian offset partner of Dassault which manufactures Rafale.

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'Nautanki sarkar': RJD chief Lalu Prasad stings govt in letter from jail

RJD chief Lalu Prasad has posted a letter on Twitter targeting the Modi government making appeal to his supporters to vote against the BJP-led ruling coalition in the Lok Sabha elections.

(By Our Staff Reporter)- RJD president Lalu Prasad, serving jail term in fodder scam cases of 1990s, on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on the Narendra Modi government saying that it is pursuing a divisive agenda to stay in power. Prasad, who released a letter on Twitter from Ranchi jail, alleged that the Modi government "has tried to scrap reservation" in jobs. He said the Lok Sabha election is a "do or die" fight for those working to protect constitution. "This is a nautanki (pretentious) government. It wants to enslave you by saying that there is a threat to the nation, threat to Hindus or sometimes, there is threat to economy," he said.

Prasad's letter has come a day ahead of the first phase of the Lok Sabha polls beginning April 11. A total of 91 Lok Sabha constituencies across 20 states will vote in the first phase of the national election on Thursday. Prasad blamed the rival political forces acting with vested interest for his conviction in the fodder scam case. Prasad's Rashtriya Janata Dal is leading the grand-alliance in Bihar against the ruling coalition of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Janata Dal-United and Lok Janshakti Party. The RJD is in alliance with the Congress and the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party of Upendra Kushwaha, who had contested the Lok Sabha

polls in 2014 as NDA constituent. The NDA had won 31 seats in 2014 Lok Sabha polls in Bihar when the JD-U of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had snapped ties with the BJP. Later, Prasad and Kumar buried their differences to stitch a grand-alliance against the NDA, which suffered massive defeat in the assembly election in 2015. The victory of the grand-alliance was largely credited to Lalu Prasad, who revived his RJD in Bihar. In 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the RJD is being led by Prasad's younger son Tejashwi Yadav. Bihar votes in all seven phases of the Lok Sabha elections. In the first phase, four Lok Sabha seats - Aurangabad, Gaya, Nawada and Jamui -

go to polls in Bihar. Lok Sabha elections are being held in seven phases between April 11 and May 19. Counting of votes will take place on May 23.



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'We don't think we'll release you': Supreme Court rejects Lalu Yadav's bail plea

(By Our Staff Reporter)- The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed bail petition of Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Lalu Prasad Yadav who is serving jail term in connection with fodder scam cases. "We don't think we will release you on bail," the Supreme Court said. The bench rejected Lalu Yadav's arguments that he has been in jail for 24 months, saying in comparison to the 14-

year sentence awarded to him 24 months was nothing, PTI reported. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Yadav, said there were no recoveries and no demand and the only major offence under which he was convicted was conspiracy. The bench said merits of the case will be decided by the high court. "At present, we are only hearing the bail appeal," it said.



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10 workers buried alive as earth mound collapses in Telangana's Narayanpet

The local authorities rushed to the site and extricated 10 bodies with the help of villagers. Five other workers managed to escape. Some of them received severe injuries and are being treated at a local hospital.



The local authorities rushed to the site and extricated 10 bodies with the help of villagers. Five other workers managed to escape. Some of them received severe injuries and are being treated at a local hospital.

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy

expressed shock and anguish over the loss of lives of MNREGA workers. Describing the incident as most unfortunate, KCR said the deceased belonged to poor families working under scorching sun for wages.

He expressing deep condolences and instructed local minister Srinivas Goud to visit the spot and oversee the rescue operations.

(By Our Staff Reporter)- At least 10 labourers, all women, were killed on Wednesday after a mound of earth collapsed burying them alive in Telangana. They were employed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP) at Tileru village of Marikal block in Narayanpet district of the state.

According to Marikal police, more than a hundred labourers were engaged in digging earth for the construction of an irrigation channel at Edmartippa hillock in Tileru village. Some of the workers took shelter in the shadow of a mound of earth to protect themselves from the scorching sun. The mound suddenly collapsed on them.


Court frames defamation charge against Priya Ramani in case filed by MJ Akbar; journalist pleads not guilty



(Agencies) - A Delhi court Wednesday framed defamation charge against journalist Priya Ramani in a case filed by ex-Union minister M J Akbar after she levelled allegations of sexual misconduct against him. Ramani, who appeared before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal, however, pleaded not guilty and claimed trial. Akbar, who resigned as Union minister on October 17

last year, filed a private criminal defamation complaint against Ramani after his name cropped up on social media as the #MeToo campaign raged on in India. Ramani accused Akbar of sexual misconduct, a charge denied by him. The court listed the matter for hearing on May 4 and also granted permanent exemption to Ramani from personal appearance.


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Nepal's Mounting an Expedition to Discover if Everest Has Shrunk

The long history of measuring the world's highest point

(BY JONATHAN CAREY) Kathmandu- IN APRIL 2015, A 7.8 - M A G N I T U D E EARTHQUAKE rocked Nepal. The quake destroyed buildings and claimed lives, but it also reshaped the region's geology. It was large enough to cause many Himalayan peaks to drop slightly—including the world's tallest mountain. When satellites passed over Mount Everest, early readings suggested its peak appeared to have lost an inch. However, the initial measurements aren't quite accurate enough to know what actually happened—an inch isn't a lot on more than 29,000 feet of rock. Since the quake, the true height of Everest has been a

topic of discussion in the scientific community. Now Nepal's Survey Department is about to try to end those arguments by sending a specially trained team up to the summit to get a final, Nepal-approved height and quash rumors that the pride of the nation may have lost a little of its stature. This effort began back in 2017, when the department commissioned a team of climbers to begin training and conducting fieldwork for the perilous technical journey. Now the team is ready. "Nepal has never measured Everest on its own although the world's highest peak lies in its territory," Ganesh Prasad

Bhatta, head of the Survey Department, said to AFP in 2017. "So, we want to prove to our people that Nepal is capable of measuring Everest."

It seems like the height of a mountain—even if it shifts or changes—shouldn't be much cause for controversy, but measuring one with precision is easier said than done, and that can lead to disagreements. The first proper measurements of the mountain were taken during Britain's Great Trigonometrical Survey of India, under the direction of Sir George Everest. It was announced in 1856 that the mountain's highest point is 29,002 feet above sea level. An Indian survey team measured the

mountain at 29,029 feet in the 1950s, a number confirmed by Chinese surveyors—give or take a couple of inches—in the 1970s. An American team equipped with GPS came up with 29,035 in 1999, followed by another Chinese survey in 2005 that measured the bedrock without the ice and snow, and came up with 29,017. Over the years, different teams from different corners of the world have all come up with slightly different numbers. China and Nepal have been at odds end over the height for a few years now. Specifically, some in Nepal believe that China's 2005 height—slightly lower—diminished the mountain, and

that China then started using the higher number again when they realized that Nepal was drawing more climbers than Tibet. It's confusing, but at the very least, national pride is at stake. According to the Nepal Survey Department, the team will employ precise leveling, trigonometric leveling, gravity surveys, and the Trimble R10, a new Global Navigation Satellite System gifted to them by New Zealand. Even then, no measurement will be final. The mountain will continue to lose height from earthquakes, gain it between them, and inch up as the Indian Plate presses northward.

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Pakistan PM Khan: Kashmir issue 'cannot keep boiling'

(By a staff reporter)- Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has told the BBC that peace with India over the disputed territory of Kashmir would be "tremendous" for the wider region. Mr Khan, a former cricketer who became leader eight months ago, said the nuclear-armed neighbours could only settle their differences with dialogue. The comments come as India prepares to vote in a general election, weeks after an upsurge of violence in Kashmir. A suicide attack against Indian forces triggered cross-border air strikes. Asked what message he wanted to send to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his country, Mr Khan told the BBC's John Simpson that the Kashmir issue "has to be settled" and "cannot keep boiling like it is". "The number-one tasks of the two governments is how are we going to reduce poverty and the way we reduce poverty is by settling our differences through dialogue and there is only one difference - which is Kashmir," he said. India's prime minister has used anti-Pakistan rhetoric and stressed national-security themes during his re-election campaign.

also spoke about the dangers of confrontation between the two neighbours. "Once you respond, no-one can predict where it can go from there," he said. If India had "come back and then again attacked Pakistan, Pakistan would have no choice but to respond," he added. "So in that situation, two nuclear-armed countries, I just felt it was very irresponsible." Imran Khan has given very few interviews during his eight months in power. So when the BBC and a small group of British and American news organisations were invited to meet him, it was because he wanted to send a message to India on the eve of its general election. He was offering the hand of friendship: let's work together to solve our common problems. The fact is, Imran Khan needs to lighten the atmosphere. Pakistan's economy is in a bad way. Foreign investors are put off by the angry relationship with India, and by claims that Pakistan is allowing militant Islamic groups to operate from its territory - this he strongly denied. No previous Pakistani government had done more to clamp down on terrorist groups, he maintained. For him, everything depends on a solution to the Kashmir

problem. If India and Pakistan can find that, he said, everything else could be sorted out easily. Is there tension over Kashmir? Both India and Pakistan claim all of Muslim-majority Kashmir, but control only parts of it. The neighbors have fought two wars and a limited conflict over the Muslim-majority territory. In 2003 the two parties agreed a ceasefire along the province's de-facto border, known as the Line of Control (LoC), but internal unrest has continued. Many who live in India-administered Kashmir resent Indian rule, and Delhi has long accused Pakistan of backing separatist militants there. High unemployment and complaints of human rights abuses by security forces have also aggravated internal insurgency. What caused relations to flare this year? Pakistan-based militants killed 40 Indian troops in a suicide attack in Pulwama, in Indian-administered Kashmir, in February. India said the Pakistani state had a hand in the attack. India responded with air strikes against what it said was a militant training camp in Pakistani territory. Pakistan then shot down an Indian jet on the Pakistan-administered side of

Kashmir. The pilot from that plane was captured alive, but was safely returned to India in what Mr Khan called a "peace gesture". Tensions appeared to have eased since then, but earlier this week Pakistan's

foreign minister accused India of planning a fresh military attack. India has dismissed the claims as a "public gimmick" aimed at "whipping up war hysteria in the region". What else did

Mr Khan say? Mr Khan also spoke to the Reuters news agency on Tuesday. During that interview, he suggested there could be a better chance of peace if Mr Modi were re-elected.

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पुलवामा आतंकी हमले के बाद मोदी सरकार ने बड़ा कदम उठाते हुए पाकिस्तान को जवाब देने के लिए नई दिल्ली में एक विज्ञापन जारी किया है। इसमें मोदी जी का कहना है कि 'पाकिस्तान को जवाब देने के लिए हमें तैयार रहना होगा'।

नई दिल्ली ■ हम हिन्दुस्तानी
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भारतीय-अमेरिकन कम्प्यूटरी द्वारा घोर निंदा

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अमेरिकन ने मोदी जी के खिलाफ निंदा।

Many see the election as a referendum on the polarising politics of his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Mr Khan

Inside the Pakistani madrasa where India said it killed hundreds of 'terrorists'



(Agencies)- A madrasa, or Islamic school, on a remote hilltop in northeastern Pakistan that was the target of an Indian air strike just over six weeks ago is still not ready to give up its secrets. For the first time since the Indian government said it had killed hundreds of "terrorists" and their trainers and associates in the school's compound, Pakistani authorities on Wednesday allowed a group of journalists working for foreign news organisations and foreign diplomats based in Islamabad, access to the site. The expectation among some of the visitors was that it might help to settle a number of mysteries about the attack. In particular, whether, as India had said, it was a huge success and took out a major militant training camp or whether - as Pakistan says - India's warplanes missed the madrasa compound completely and hit surrounding hills instead. The difference - as many as 300 dead militants or no fatalities at all. There was also the question about whether the madrasa, one of more than 30,000 across Pakistan where children of all ages are taught to memorise and recite the Koran, was a cover for the Islamist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), which was allegedly using the site to train fighters to infiltrate Indian-controlled Kashmir. JeM claimed responsibility for a suicide car bomb attack in Kashmir that killed 40 Indian paramilitary police on Feb 14, triggering the Indian attack and the worst hostilities between the two nuclear-armed nations for many years. But the journalists and diplomats, most of whom spent well over an hour climbing steep slopes to get to the madrasa in the Jaba village area near the town of Balakot, didn't

get enough time to make any kind of informed assessment.

They were mostly restricted to looking around the madrasa's main building. They were hurried away by the army, which organised the trip, after less than half an hour. Those arriving by vehicle had even less time.

The interactions with teachers and about 100 children at the madrasa - from the very young to older teenagers - were limited. The visitors were shown a group of children learning passages from the Koran partly by rocking their heads back and forward in rhythm. One teacher said he had worked at the madrasa for six years.

TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

At least three of the diplomats, who were mainly from Western countries and the Middle East and included some military attaches, said it was very difficult to draw any firm conclusions because of the six-week delay in gaining access and the restricted time allowed to look around.

"I don't think the site was hit but I still can't be 100 percent after today," said one Western diplomat. "As to whether JeM were here - they may have been but I can't determine that from this either."

The diplomats declined to be named given the sensitivity of the subject.

When asked after the visit about

the limitations, armed forces chief spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor said Pakistan had nothing to hide and that if schedules allowed, journalists could in the future come and spend a night or even a month at the site.

He denied that the madrasa had recently been used by JeM. If there was a relationship it was a long time ago, he suggested.

On the trek up to the compound, past small sheep and goat farms and through pastoral scenery on a beautiful spring day, journalists and diplomats were shown craters that the allegedly wayward missiles had created on the surrounding hillsides.

Sri Lanka builds fastest railway line first time after independence with China's assistance

The project was financed by the Export-Import Bank of China (China Exim Bank) and the contract was awarded to the China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation

(News Agencies) Colombo- Sri Lanka finished the construction of first 26.75-km Matara-Beliatta railway extension first time after the island nation got independent in 1948. The Sri Lankan government on Monday inaugurated its fastest railway line, which has been built with the assistance of the Chinese government. Sri Lanka finished the construction of first 26.75-km Matara-Beliatta railway extension first time after the island nation got independent in 1948. The new railway line was inaugurated by Arjuna Ranatunga, Sri Lanka's Transport and Civil Aviation Minister, Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera, and other parliamentarians. The project was financed by the Export-Import Bank of China (China Exim Bank) and the contract was awarded to the China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation.

A major portion of the construction was carried out by the China Railway Group 5 (CR5) and Sri Lanka's Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau (CECB). According to Sri Lankan media reports, the cost of the rail project was \$278 million.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said, "The railway line is the first railway project contracted by the Chinese company in Sri Lanka under the BRI and it is indeed the first railway built after country's independence." The project will make regional transportation more convenient and facilitate local economic and social development, said Lu Kang. The construction of the rail track from Matara to Kataragama was started in 1991 by former president Ranasinghe Premadasa, reported Sri Lankan news portal.

Terror Funding

(By our staff reporter) New Delhi- The NIA (National Investigation Agency) of India on Wednesday arrested JKLF chief Yasin Malik in connection with a case related to the funding of terror. Yasin Malik was brought to the national capital Tuesday evening after a special NIA court in Jammu gave the go ahead for his custodial interrogation by the probe agency, agency said. A special court granted his 13-day custody to the probe agency. It also questioned Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq for the third consecutive day at its headquarters in New

Delhi. According to an NIA spokesman, Mr. Malik, chief of the banned group, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, and a constituent of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), was arrested on Wednesday in the alleged J&K "terror funding" case. "Malik was brought from Kot Bhalwal Jail, Jammu, where he had been detained under the Public Safety Act, and produced before the NIA special court on Wednesday against a production warrant. The court has granted the NIA 13 days of custody of the accused," said the spokesman.

Mr. Malik will now be produced before the NIA Special Court, Patiala House, New Delhi, on April 22. Malik was booked under the Public Safety Act on March 7 and shifted from Srinagar to a jail in Jammu. Earlier, the separatist leader was arrested on February 22 from his Maisuma residence, a week after the Pulwama attack. The NIA carried out searches of Malik's residence in Srinagar on February 26. "Jails are our second home. Malik's arrest in nothing but dictatorship. Irony is that the international community is watching it as a mute spectator.

The accusation of terror funding is a joke. The JKLF, after choosing the path of unarmed, non-violent and peaceful mode of struggle in 1994, has remained wedded to the decision," said JKLF acting chairman Abdul Hameed Butt in Srinagar. Meanwhile, the NIA also quizzed the Mirwaiz for the third straight day. Sources said the Mirwaiz was summoned in a "terror funding" case lodged in 2017. At least seven separatist leaders have been arrested in the case, including the Mirwaiz's spokesman, Shahid-ul-Islam.

Meanwhile, the Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL), comprising Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the Mirwaiz and Malik, has called for a total shutdown on April 11 against the NIA crackdown. "A complete shutdown will be observed against the so-called Indian parliamentary elections and against the NIA aggression against our leaders, besides sustained interrogation and repeated summoning of two sons of Mr. Geelani, Syed Naeem-uz-Zafar Geelani and Syed Naseem Geelani," said a JRL spokesman.

Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front chief Yasin Malik arrested by India's National Investigation Agency in terror funding case



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CEO STI Consultants

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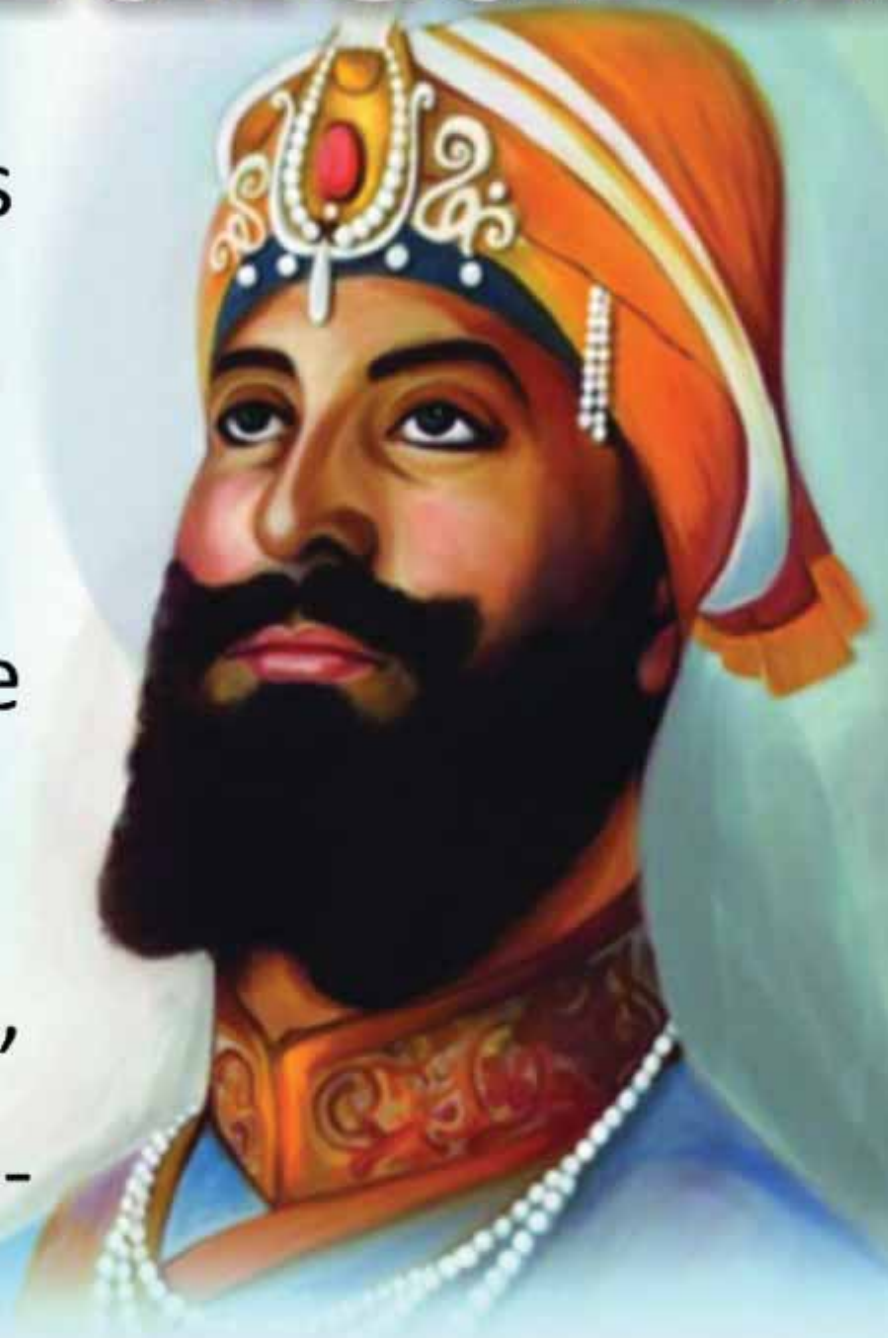
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Clashes, deaths, violence highlight Day 1 as electors turn out in big numbers in 91 seats

The first phase of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections kicked off on Thursday with over 14 crore eligible voters flocking to polling booths across 20 states and Union territories to cast their ballots in 91 constituencies. The mega exercise is the beginning of what will be the world's biggest democracy going out to vote to choose between Narendra Modi for a second term and Congress and a bunch of regional parties on the other side. Polling in India will continue till May 19 in six more phases and the results will be declared more than month from now on May 23. Phase 1 of the Lok Sabha election saw a mix response in

terms of voter turnout. In Bihar, the turnout was a mere 50 per cent but in Tripura as many as 81.80 per cent eligible electors voted in the Lok Sabha polls.

The state-wise voter turnout is as follows:

Andhra Pradesh: 66 per cent
Arunachal Pradesh: 66 per cent
Assam 68 per cent
Bihar: 50 per cent
Chhattisgarh: 56 per cent
J&K: 54.49 per cent
Maharashtra: 56 per cent
Manipur: 78.20 per cent
Meghalaya: 67.16 per cent
Mizoram: 60 per cent
Nagaland: 78 per cent
Odisha: 68 per cent
Sikkim: 69 per cent
Telangana: 60 per cent
Tripura: 81.80 per cent
Uttar

Pradesh: 63.69 per cent
Uttarakhand: 57.85 per cent
West Bengal: 81 per cent
Andaman and Nicobar Islands: 70.67 per cent
Lakshadweep: 66 per cent

Violence, deaths, vandalism and EVM malfunctioning marred the first phase of Lok Sabha elections on April 11. While 2 people died in a TDP versus YSR Congress clash in Andhra Pradesh, another BJP leader in Uttar Pradesh died after a cardiac arrest during campaigning.

Naxals triggered IED blasts at Maharashtra's Gadchiroli and Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur, which remained unsuccessful to

spread fear among voters who came out to vote in this areas.

Several complaints of EVM malfunctioning were also reported from different states such as Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

According to Election Commission officials, voter turnout at most constituencies was high.

The 91 Lok Sabha constituencies in the first phase, spread across 18 states and two union territories, have more than 14 crore voters -- about one-sixth of nearly 90 crore total electorate in India.

An estimated 1.5 crore young voters in the age group of 18-19 years would vote for the first time

across the seven phases.

In the last general elections in 2014, more than 55 crore Indians turned out to vote, in which PM Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged victorious with over 30 per cent votes. BJP alone had crossed the 272 majority mark while the NDA coalition had 336 seats to itself, which gave the government a rare clean majority after many years.

Prime Minister Modi is now seeking a re-election with a bunch of new promises driven by nationalism. Congress led by Rahul Gandhi, on the other hand, is the direct challenge Modi and BJP is facing in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

Trump threatens to send undocumented immigrants to sanctuary cities

(By REBECCA MORIN) Washington DC- President Donald Trump on Friday said that his administration is "strongly looking at" releasing detained undocumented immigrants into so-called sanctuary cities — contradicting a previous statement from the White House that the policy was no longer being considered. "Due to the fact that Democrats are unwilling to change our very dangerous immigration laws, we are indeed, as reported, giving strong considerations to placing Illegal Immigrants in Sanctuary Cities only," Trump wrote in a series of tweets. "The Radical Left always seems to have an Open Borders, Open Arms policy — so this should make them very happy!" The Washington Post reported Thursday that Trump administration officials proposed last November and again in February transporting undocumented immigrants to cities that shield

undocumented immigrants from deportation, including to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's district in San Francisco, to retaliate against the president's political opponents. The White House and Department of Homeland Security denied via statements to the Post that the proposal was still under consideration.

"This was just a suggestion that was floated and rejected, which ended any further discussion," the White House said in the statement.

But Trump revived the idea later Friday, blaming a court settlement known as the Flores agreement that bars the U.S. for detaining migrant children for more than 20 days. Framing his proposal as calling the bluff of leaders in sanctuary cities, he posed the idea as a potential motivating factor to get Democrats to strike a deal on immigration reform.

"We might as well do what

they always say they want," he said at the White House. "We will bring the illegal — I call them the illegals, they came across the border illegally — we will bring them to sanctuary city areas and let that particular area take care of it, whether it is a state or whatever it might be."

He continued: "California certainly is always saying, we want more people, and they want more people in their sanctuary cities, we will give them more people. We can give them an unlimited supply. And let's see if they are so happy. They always say they have open arms. Let's see if they have open arms."

Pelosi criticized the proposal, saying it demonizes migrants.

"The extent of this administration's cynicism and cruelty cannot be overstated," Pelosi spokeswoman Ashley Etienne said in a statement to the Post. "Using human beings — including little

children — as pawns in their warped game to perpetuate fear and demonize immigrants is despicable."

The new proposal comes during a widespread DHS shakeup by Trump and White House senior aide Stephen Miller to help enact

controversial new steps to curb illegal immigration.

Miller reportedly wants to create tent cities along the border to house migrants and has pushed for an updated version of the family separation policy.

Politico.com

Julian Assange: Wikileaks co-founder arrested in London

(Agencies)- Wikileaks co-founder Julian Assange has been arrested at the Ecuadorian embassy in London. Assange took refuge in the embassy in 2012 to avoid extradition to Sweden over a sexual assault case that has since been dropped. At Westminster Magistrates' Court on Thursday he was found guilty of failing to surrender to the court. He now faces US federal conspiracy charges related to one of the largest ever leaks of government secrets. The UK will decide whether to extradite Assange, in response to allegations by the Department for

Justice that he conspired with former US intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to download classified databases. He faces up to five years in US prison if convicted on the charges of conspiracy to commit computer intrusion. Assange's lawyer Jennifer Robinson said they would be fighting the extradition request. She said it set a "dangerous precedent" where any journalist could face US charges for "publishing truthful information about the United States".

She said she had visited Assange in the police cells where he thanked supporters and said: "I told you so. Assange had predicted that he would face extradition to the US if he left the embassy. After his arrest, the 47-year-old Australian national was initially taken to a central London police station before appearing in court.

Dressed in a black suit and black polo shirt, he waved to the public gallery and gave a thumbs up. He pleaded not guilty to the 2012 charge of failing to surrender to the court. Finding him guilty of that charge, District Judge Michael Snow said Assange's behaviour was "the behaviour of a narcissist who cannot get beyond his own selfish

Party of Exiled Former Maldives Leader Wins Historic Victory

(New Agencies) The party of exiled former Maldives president Mohamad Nasheed has won the country's first outright majority in parliament in its democratic history, officials results showed Wednesday.

The final count released by the Election Commission shows Nasheed's Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) won 65 of the 87 seats in parliament in elections held Saturday -- a more than two-thirds majority.

His party will rule without needed to form a coalition, an

unprecedented election outcome for the Indian Ocean archipelago nation. The MDP's closest rivals, the Jamhooree Party and Progressive Party of the Maldives, both won five seats. Two minor parties and independents secured 12 seats among them. Nasheed -- who until five months ago was still in exile -- has vowed to use his party's thumping mandate to usher in a new era of stability and democracy in the Maldives. The holiday destination popular with honeymooners is only just

emerging from years of strongman rule, political crises and corruption scandals miring the government and judiciary.

Nasheed's comprehensive victory was another rebuke for his rival Abdulla Yameen, who was dumped as president in a shock election defeat in September under a cloud of corruption and embezzlement allegations. Yameen did not run but his party -- the Progressive Party of Maldives -- only collective five seats.

www.voanews.com

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appears poised for record fifth term after close election

(Insider Bureau)-Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appears to be on the verge of clinching an historic fifth term in office.

With more than 97 percent of the vote counted, Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party looks poised to win 35 seats to the Knesset, according to CNN. Meanwhile, the incumbent's chief opponent, Benny Gantz's centrist Blue and White party, also looks on the cusp of winning 35 seats. While it may seem as though the two candidates are neck-and-neck, Israeli prime ministers are elected based on whether they can form governing coalitions in the 120-member Knesset. Because a simple majority is needed to attain power, and Netanyahu is expected to combine the seats won by the two ultra-orthodox religious parties with those of other conservative parties, political experts believe he will be able to cobble

together a coalition with 65 seats. Gantz's coalition, by contrast, is expected to only pick up 55 seats.

Netanyahu has already claimed victory, telling cheering supporters Tuesday night that "the right-wing bloc led by the Likud won a clear victory. I thank the citizens of Israel for the trust. I will start forming a right-wing government with our natural partners as soon as tonight."

This election cycle has been marked by its fair share of controversy. Netanyahu is immersed in a criminal investigation after Israeli Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit announced plans to indict the prime minister on charges of breach of trust, bribery and fraud. If officially reelected, the Israeli prime minister would begin his unprecedented fifth term under a cloud of scandal.

Additionally, Netanyahu courted more overtly racist elements of the Israeli far

right as he eyed reelection. The prime minister recently agreed to bring two fringe right-wing parties, the anti-Arab Otzma Yehudit party and the ultra-nationalist Jewish Home party, into his governing coalition. That decision prompted a rare condemnation from AIPAC, America's largest pro-Israel lobby, while the American Jewish Committee wrote that "the views of Otzma Yehudit are reprehensible. They do not reflect the core values that are the very foundation of the State of Israel. The party might conceivably gain enough votes to enter the next Knesset, and potentially even become part of the governing coalition."

On the path to victory, Netanyahu leveraged the support of President Donald Trump. In an apparent attempt to capitalize on his high popularity in Israel, the president hosted Netanyahu at the White House a mere two weeks

before Israeli voters headed to the ballot box. (Trump's approval rating last year stood at 69 percent, a boost fueled at least in part by his decision to move America's embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.) The prime minister even approved a billboard in Tel Aviv showing himself shaking hands with the president in order to tout their close relationship. Trump further aided Netanyahu politically by recognizing the contested Golan Heights as an Israeli territory and refusing to condemn Netanyahu's pledge to annex Jewish settlements in the West Bank in the election's home stretch.

Netanyahu also received a

boost from Russian President Vladimir Putin, who one week before the election surprised Israelis by returning the remains of Zechariah Baumel, a staff sergeant in the Israeli Army whose remains had been missing for 37 years after he was killed during the Lebanon War. Russia claimed their military, along with Syria, had found Baumel's body and decided to return it to the Israeli government.

In an unrelated development, there could be possible evidence of red flags in terms of the voting process itself. As Haaretz reported, "Turnout has been historically low in the Arab community, according to pollsters.

Netanyahu's Likud party provided activists with 1,200 hidden cameras 'to monitor' Arab polling stations - a move that prompted Israel's Central Elections Committee to file a police complaint."

The outlet also added, "The election committee said it made a mistake and accidentally entered voting eligibility data from 2015 to the website showing live election results. Earlier, it was reported that certain localities had a voter turnout higher than 100 percent. In the settlement of Brukhin, turnout appeared to be 167 percent, and in the Bedouin village of Bir Haj, turnout appeared to be 117 percent.



Attorney General William Barr to release redacted version of Robert Mueller's report "within a week"

The top law enforcement official demurred when asked if the White House had seen or been briefed on the report

(Insider Bureau)- Attorney General William Barr said he would release a redacted version of special counsel Robert Mueller's still-secret report "within a week," reiterating his earlier timetable of mid-April.

"My original timetable of being able to release this by mid-April stands. So I think that from my standpoint, by within a week, I will be in a position to release the report to the public," Barr told lawmakers Tuesday during a congressional hearing on the Department of Justice's budget.

The attorney general's comments marked the first time he testified publicly before Congress since releasing a four-page summary of Mueller's report into whether President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign colluded with Russia to influence the outcome of the election, and whether the president himself obstructed the investigation, last month. Barr appeared before the House Appropriations subcommittee, which oversees funding for the Commerce and Justice Departments, as well as for science-related agencies.

Barr, who was expected to face tough questions about his handling of Mueller's report from the Democratic-controlled panel, told lawmakers a redacted version of the report would be released, directly clashing with Democratic demands that he turn over the report "in complete and unredacted form" along with underlying evidence and material to Congress. The attorney general told the panel the redactions process was going "very well," and he vowed to be as transparent as possible about reasons for blacking out parts of the

roughly 400-page document. He identified four areas of information that would be redacted: grand jury information, information that would reveal intelligence sources and methods, information that could interfere with ongoing prosecution and information that implicates the privacy of "peripheral players." Still, Barr said he would not give in to requests from Democrats that he provide a copy of Mueller's entire report without redactions to Congress, arguing he cannot legally release evidence collected by the

grand jury. He also does not intend to ask the judge presiding over Mueller's grand jury to permit the release. "I don't intend at this stage to send the full, unredacted report to the committee," Barr said, noting Rep. Jerry Nadler, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, could make that request himself.

Nadler has threatened to subpoena the Justice Department to release Mueller's report and related documents, if he and Barr can't come to an agreement over redactions and the special counsel's

underlying evidence. Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee voted last week to authorize a subpoena for Mueller's full report and evidence, and Nadler said he is waiting to see what Barr turns over before moving forward. Barr, during his testimony, demurred when asked if the White House had seen or been briefed on the report, saying "I'm not going to say anything more about it."

Barr, in his opening statement, did not mention the Mueller report. Instead, he touched on the opioid crisis, immigration and cyber crime.



Christchurch shootings

New Zealand MPs vote to change gun laws

(Insider Bureau)- The gun reform bill passed 119-1 after the final reading in parliament.

It is expected to become law within the next few days after receiving royal assent from the governor general.

PM Jacinda Ardern announced changes to the law after 50 people were killed last month by a suspected lone gunman at two mosques in Christchurch.

Holding back tears, she told parliament on Wednesday that MPs were there "because of the victims and families". She said that when she had visited the injured in hospital none of them

had had just one gunshot wound. "They will carry disabilities for a lifetime and that's before you consider the psychological impact," she said.

"These weapons were designed to kill, and they were designed to maim and that is what they did on the 15th of March."

Australian Brenton Tarrant, a self-proclaimed white supremacist, faces 50 murder charges and 39 attempted murder charges.

What will change?

The new rules make changes to 1983 gun laws which have been the subject of several reform attempts.

They prohibit military-style semi-automatic weapons and parts that can be used to assemble prohibited firearms.

The gunman, armed with semi-automatic rifles including an AR-15, is believed to have modified his weapons with high-capacity magazines so they could hold more bullets. The magazine is the part of the gun which stores ammunition.

"How mass shootings have changed gun laws

"What are New Zealand's gun laws?

Those breaking the new laws will face between two and ten



years in jail. An amnesty will be in place until the end of September.

Who opposed the bill?

David Seymour, leader of the ACT party, was the only MP to come out against the bill, although he did not oppose the proposed changes to gun laws. He said the bill was "not an attempt to improve public safety"

but "an exercise in political theatre".

He said he believed the rush to put the bill through the house had made the law worse than doing nothing.

Jacinda Ardern said parliament was "almost entirely united". "I cannot imagine circumstances where that is more necessary than it is now," she added.

Republicans press Trump to drop Herman Cain's Fed nomination

The resistance comes amid Senate GOP opposition to Trump's DHS purge and potential auto tariffs.

Herman Cain is in deep trouble. And he hasn't yet even been formally nominated to the Federal Reserve.

Senate Republicans are warning the White House that the 2012 presidential candidate will face one of the most difficult confirmation fights of Donald Trump's presidency and are making a behind-the-scenes play to get the president to back off, two GOP senators said.

"There are concerns that are being voiced to the administrations about qualifications," said Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), the Republican whip. "They're probably going to hear from a number of our members about concerns that they have. Whether or not that gets them to make a course change or not, I don't know."

Republican senators have generally waved through Trump's nominees over the past two years, but they are reluctant to do the same for the Fed, amid fears that Trump's push to install interest-rate slashing allies will politicize the central bank.

The resistance comes as Senate Republicans also actively are pressing Trump to halt his purge at the Department of Homeland Security and reconsider economy-damaging auto tariffs. Some GOP senators said that Cain's difficult path might have eased Stephen Moore's

confirmation to the Fed, despite Moore's own problems with unpaid taxes and his partisan reputation. After all, Republicans might be hard-pressed to revolt against both of Trump's nominees.

"I think the chances of getting both through, I would say at the moment, are pretty steep," Thune said.

Neither Moore nor Cain has been officially nominated. A senator familiar with the nominations said Trump is "full speed" ahead on Cain even though FBI background checks and documentations of sexual harassment allegations have not yet been submitted to the Senate. A person familiar with the process expects the background check to raise more questions about Cain.

With that in mind, Republicans are trying to dissuade Trump from a brutal political fight that would highlight intraparty divisions; the nominations need a simple majority and no Democratic support can be counted on.

Trump's intent to nominate Cain marks one of his most brazen moves yet to take on his own party, coming on the heels of his emergency declaration at the southern border that went against the wishes of GOP senators who stood by Trump during the shutdown.

And once again, Republicans are sending the president clear

signals: Pick someone with less partisan credentials and less baggage. While Cain did serve on the Kansas City Federal Reserve Board, Senate Republicans say he now largely appears to be a Trump surrogate. "I don't think Herman Cain will be on the Federal Reserve Board, no. I'm reviewing [Moore's] writings and I'll make a determination when I have done so," said Sen. Mitt Romney (R-Utah), who ran against Cain in the 2012 presidential race and seems confident Cain will either be derailed or not officially nominated.

"I feel that we can't turn the Federal Reserve into a more partisan entity," Romney added. "I think that would be the wrong course." Cain later endorsed Romney in 2012, but one of Romney's colleagues said the Utah senator "is not fond of Herman." Cain also challenged Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) in a 2004 Senate primary race.

But more troubling to some in the Senate is that Cain founded pro-Trump group America Fighting Back. Do you seriously want a guy on the Fed that has a whole organization, the only purpose of it is to encourage Republicans to do whatever the president says he'd like you to do?" said one Republican senator distressed about the nomination. The senator said confirming Cain



would be "hard," but his nomination alone "might confirm Stephen Moore." Cain's group recently said in a fundraising request that Republicans who opposed the president's emergency declaration were "traitors." "Stephen Moore, I know well, worked with him. He does have a lot of experience in the area," said Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), a former Banking Committee chairman. "Mr. Cain ... [Trump] hadn't nominated him yet. That will be the more interesting nomination." "I don't know Mr. Cain, so I'll withhold judgment there. I know Stephen Moore," Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) said. The rosier reception for Moore comes in part because Republicans will be reluctant to reject two of Trump's Fed nominees, given their desire to protect their already shaky relationship with the president. In addition to their opposition to

Trump's tariff threats and his shake-up at the Homeland Security Department, Republicans also recently forced him to back off his demand for a new GOP health care bill.

Yet it's not clear at all that the president is keeping in mind the fact that he will need to get 50 of 53 Senate Republicans to vote for these nominees. Asked about Cain, Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) said only: "I was not aware it was that serious of a consideration." Stressing that he was not singling out Cain, Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas), a whip for six years, said the White House must simply do more to consult with Capitol Hill. "It's really important for the White House to work with us as they're contemplating nominees to make sure that both the White House has reasonable expectations about confirmations."



Why Donald Trump wants the Mueller report, and his taxes, kept secret

(Insider Bureau)- D That means that between Trump, when he was a private citizen, and a host of Russian criminals and a North Korean nuclear weapons materials trafficker there is only one degree of separation: Sater. For years beginning in late 2001 or 2002, Sater traveled widely looking to develop Trump Organization real estate projects. Sater had an office in Trump Tower, near Trump's own office.

Sater and Trump worked closely together on real estate projects in Florida, Colorado, Arizona and Moscow. Most of the projects failed or devolved into litigation by angry bankers and investors because huge sums of money were missing.

Trump and Sater's last project together was the largest: the 46-story Trump SoHo hotel and office tower in Manhattan.

Trump signed a letter authorizing a recapitalization of the troubled

project in which bankers and buyers lost money. Millions of profits for Trump, Sater and others vanished into an Icelandic bank under the thumb of a Russian oligarch - prompting extensive litigation, efforts by Trump and others to seal court files and eventually removal of the Trump name from the building. The newly unsealed documents reveal more specifics of what Sater was doing. In late 2004 and early 2005, Sater was engaged in "two long-term investigations into major criminal organizations," according to one of the newly unsealed documents.

"Sater has traveled to a foreign country," the document states, "along with FBI special agents in order to assist them in their investigations of in that country. Further travel is expected," the document revealed.

The unsealed court document

states that "Sater also taped target(s) in excess of 30 consensual recordings. Further taping is ongoing and is expected to be long-term." The letter does not indicate whether the recordings were audio or video.

The unnamed country is likely in the former Soviet Union, where Sater traveled often, ostensibly in search of Trump projects.

These revelations came in letters to Judge I. Leo Glasser of U.S. District Court in Brooklyn.

The letters, dated Aug. 31, 2004, and Feb. 3, 2005, were written by Miles H. Malman, an attorney in Hollywood, Florida, who was representing Sater after a second felony conviction.

Malman sought further delays in sentencing Sater for his admitted role as one of the owners of a criminal brokerage filled with New York mafiosi and Russian mobsters. The

Unsealed court documents reveal more of Trump's long, shady history with mobster and informant Felix Sater

indictments, unsealed in 2000, of 19 individuals charged that they swindled investors out of more than \$40 million.

Sater and two confederates flipped and became cooperating witnesses. The government continued to delay his sentencing while using him to pursue at least two criminal organizations in the unnamed countries.

What criminal activities the FBI and other federal agencies may have allowed Sater to pursue at home or abroad, perhaps to maintain his cover, are not publicly known.

However, a lawsuit filed March 25 by the city of Almaty, Kazakhstan, accuses Sater of laundering \$40 million of at least \$4 billion - note that B - which the Kazakh government says was stolen from its treasury and a state-owned bank. The allegation bolsters the claim of a civil RICO suit filed in 2010 that states that Sater's firm was a massive money-laundering operation for monies from the former Soviet Union, all while Sater was working with Trump.

The plaintiffs cite DCReport in their complaint. Sater has called the Almaty lawsuit a "cheap and desperate retaliation" for his seeking \$10 million in an arbitration claim. Donald Trump's desperate efforts to both hide special counsel Robert Mueller's findings, as well as his own tax

returns, take on new meaning in light of documents a federal judge unsealed at my request.

Together with a new lawsuit filed against Felix Sater, a Russian-born mobster and government informant who worked closely with Trump for years, the unsealed documents also help explain why Trump is so determined to discredit the FBI. The bureau should have intimate knowledge of business dealings between the mobster and Trump, who despite being cut off by every major bank except one, was flush with cash after a few years of working with Sater. The one bank that kept loaning Trump money was Deutsche Bank, which has been fined more than \$600 million for laundering money for Russians.

The Justice Department, long before Trump took office, credited Sater with "providing information crucial to national security."

Sater testified in secret before the House Intelligence Committee 16 months ago that he helped prevent financial crimes and terrorist attacks, including by obtaining Osama bin Laden's telephone number and locations of al-Qaida weapons caches, and providing photos and other information on a North Korean military operative trafficking in nuclear bomb materials.

How Stephen Miller tightened his grip over Trump's immigration and border policy

(Insider Bureau)- As President Donald Trump pushed his administration in recent weeks to take the drastic step of shutting down the US southern border, one key adviser fed Trump's impulse: Stephen Miller, the President's 33-year-old senior policy adviser and chief speechwriter who has long channeled Trump's hardline immigration views.

As most of the President's advisers sought to dissuade him from the idea, warning the economic consequences would be devastating, Miller encouraged the President to move forward with shutting down some ports of entry, two administration officials said.

While Trump was ultimately

convinced to back down, Miller's stance solidified his position in Trump's mind as the chief facilitator of the President's hardline instincts and appears to have won him more power.

In the wake of that debate, Trump has moved to more formally empower Miller, telling aides in a recent Oval Office meeting that he was putting Miller in charge of all immigration and border issues, according to a person familiar with the meeting.

In the days since, there has been a cascade of personnel moves inside the Department of Homeland Security. Last week, Miller convinced the President to pull the nomination of Ron Vitiello as the next director of Immigration and Customs

Enforcement, bluntly telling Trump that Vitiello was "soft" on closing the southern border. The decision blindsided department officials and Republican lawmakers, who initially thought it was a clerical error.

Two days later, Trump announced the forced resignation of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. Two days after that, Nielsen's deputy, Claire Grady, resigned under pressure to make room for the President's preferred pick for acting secretary, Kevin McAleenan, the Customs and Border Patrol Commissioner.

More turnover is anticipated -- giving Miller an expansive foothold to shape the

administration's immigration policies and attempt end-runs around current laws.

More than anyone in the West Wing, Miller has developed a mind-meld with the President on immigration, arguably his most important issue heading into the 2020 election. Where some advisers have sought to temper Trump's instincts, Miller has unabashedly stoked them, earning him a reputation around Washington as a radical and influential voice inside the White House.

Administration officials caution that Miller is not some all-powerful and invisible hand driving every one of Trump's actions on immigration, as he is sometimes made out to be. The reality, they

say, is more complex. While Miller goaded Trump on as he contemplated shutting down the US-Mexico border, the idea originated with Trump. And other advisers, including White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney as well as senior adviser and Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner, hold sway with Trump on immigration matters.

Asked Wednesday morning about Miller's role, the President praised Miller, but sought to dispel any questions about who is really driving his immigration policy.

"Frankly, there's only one person that's running it. You know who that is? It's me," he said, pointing to his head.

How Preet Bharara Defines Justice

In his new book, the former United States attorney reflects on his tenure.



"Doing Justice," Preet Bharara's first book, says almost nothing about Donald Trump or what led the president to dismiss Mr. Bharara as United States attorney for the powerful Southern District of New York, a position he held for seven and a half years.

Instead, Mr. Bharara, who now hosts the podcast "Stay Tuned With Preet," spends his 368-page book walking readers through the experience of being a federal prosecutor. The chapters correspond to phases of a criminal trial, and the lessons within them are culled from Mr. Bharara's work bringing high-profile cases like his crackdowns on insider trading, public corruption in Albany and terrorism.

In the Times Book Review, Jennifer Senior described "Doing Justice" as a memoir poured "into

the mold of an advice book."

In this conversation, which has been edited and condensed for clarity, Mr. Bharara discusses some of the philosophies that undergirded his work as a prosecutor.

Q. The Southern District of New York has been in the news a lot lately. Does part of you wish President Trump hadn't fired you so that you could be at the center of all the excitement?

A. (Laughs.) Yeah, of course I miss that place. I say in the dedication to my book, "For my family and for the women and men of the Southern District of New York, the best place I will ever work." Because whatever you think of them - sometimes people thought we were too tough, sometimes people thought we were too soft - but we tried at least to do the right thing. And everyone there tried

at least to do the right thing. Part of your job, especially as the leader of the office, is to figure out new and lawful ways to keep people safe and to give people their money back and to hold people who violated their oaths of office accountable. There's nothing more exhilarating than that. So I think any person would miss it.

Q. You write about the times when you decided to walk away from cases - including high-level executives who helped precipitate the 2008 financial crisis.

A. I spent a good amount of time in the book talking about how you make decisions and how you can't go beyond the law and go beyond the facts. And none of the hundreds of career agents, career prosecutors, career regulatory enforcers - who, by the way, before they have government

jobs, before they're government workers, they're American citizens and taxpayers and suffered as much as everyone else in the financial crisis - none of them saw a way, notwithstanding enormous amounts of work, energy spent, deep dives, that the law and facts supported charges.

That doesn't mean that people didn't do terrible things. People were reckless. People were negligent. Maybe some people broke the law. They were greedy. They cheated in various ways. But you can't bring a case against someone unless you have the law and facts on your side. And, frustratingly for a lot of people, including the people who did the investigations, there was no such case that they could bring.

Q. Was justice done in the aftermath of the financial crisis?

A. Justice and the law are two different things. And I try to point out that distinction in the book. When you're seeking relief from the court for having your constitutional rights trampled, but you file your brief one day late and they say, you're out of luck - that's the law. But that's not justice.

I think there are people who are angry at financial institutions because they were greedy and because they were reckless and because they put themselves first and because they haven't learned their lessons and because they have continued to take pay increases and they seem to not have learned their lesson about accountability to the public.

Yeah, I don't think justice was done. Overall justice - cosmic justice, as they say. There's a lot to be angry about and people have a lot to be sorry for. That is different from being able to prove in a particular case that a particular person committed a crime.

Q. What do you say to "armchair prosecutors," as you call them in your book, who say you should have brought the cases anyway, and if the cases fell apart later on, then at least you made your point and tried your best?

A. I'm trying to think what kind of prosecutors' offices those people would run. Because if that's how you handle everything - that's how you handle shootings, that's how you handle the drug war, that's how you handle robbery? This sort of rush to judgment, and not taking care to make sure you've dotted your I's and crossed your T's - and you barely have enough evidence to indict and take your shot and hope that you're going to use anger and public outrage to convict people? That's not a district I want to live in.

In the World of Game of Thrones, Mothers Have Power, but They Pay a Terrible Price for It



As the series nears its endgame, there are few women with children left to raise.

Game of Thrones, which returns for its final season on Sunday, has always been obsessed with the question of power-how you get it, how you wield it, how you hold onto it. And even in the violent patriarchy of Thrones, which kind of makes our own medieval times look like a Renaissance faire, a tremendous amount of that power is wielded by mothers.

Because Westeros is a primogeniture society where heirs-and daughters who marry heirs in order to cement alliances-are essential, having a child is

one of the central ways women gain power. The way mothers end up using that power, and how those decisions reverberate for them and their children, has been a riveting and troubling theme for seven seasons because no amount of power, no willingness to do terrible things, actually keeps anyone's children safe. Thrones amplifies the central tension of parenthood, which is that children make you both stronger and weaker. There's the strength of knowing you'd do anything to protect your child; there's the vulnerability of knowing that no matter what, you cannot guarantee their

safety.

When the show begins, Cersei Lannister is the queen of Westeros, married to King Robert Baratheon, and the most powerful woman in the Seven Kingdoms. But that power is precarious, because her children, passed off as the true heirs to Robert's throne, are actually the product of an affair with her twin brother, Jaime. In cuckolding the king, Cersei creates a huge risk for the ones she loves the most-her children would be killed if the truth came out-but the deception sharpens her sense of danger, making her ruthless and brutal. She has Robert killed, then outmaneuvers Ned Stark, the hand of the king, and has him beheaded.

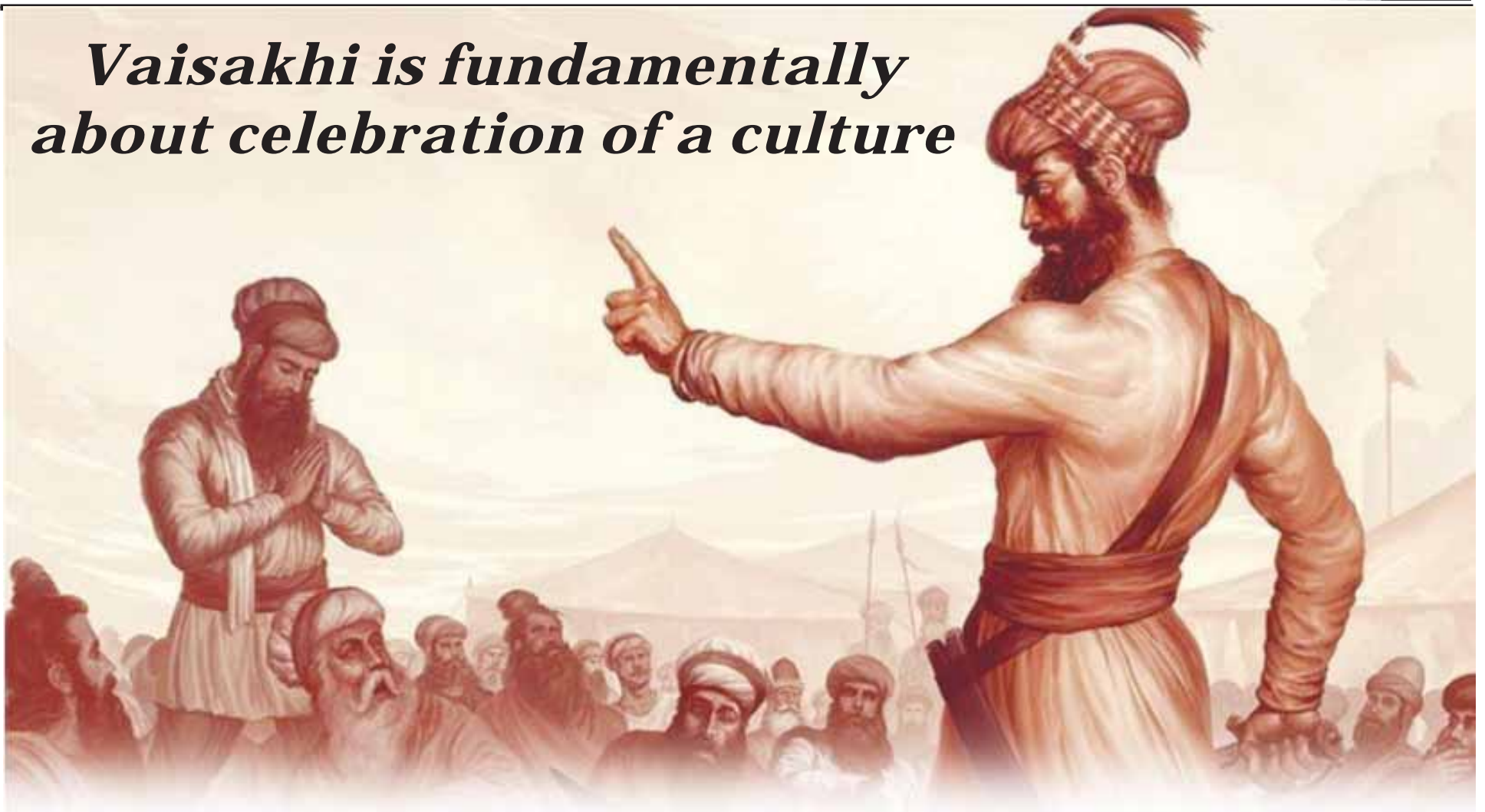
Motherhood makes women (more) vulnerable, but the focus on their families allows them, or gives them an excuse, to be utterly merciless. As Olenna Tyrell, the Queen of Thorns and de facto ruler of House Tyrell-a powerful family that evolves from a Lannister ally to a bitter enemy-puts it to Jaime: "I did unspeakable things to protect my family. Or watched them being

done on my orders. I never lost a night's sleep over them. But your sister has done things I wasn't capable of imagining."

And Olenna has imagined a lot. When her granddaughter Margaery is betrothed to Cersei's son Joffrey, who becomes king after Robert dies, Olenna goes on a quiet fact-finding mission about her future grandson-in-law. The results are so monstrous she arranges to have him poisoned at his own wedding. For a while, the move pays off-Margaery becomes engaged to Cersei's younger son Tommen, the new king, who has the benefit of being sweet, pliable, and not a sociopath.

But as with all things in Thrones, this act ricochets in unanticipated ways. Cersei goes into full apocalyptic mode, battling Margaery for control of Tommen, and when she loses that battle she blows up the Sept of Baelor, killing Margaery, Margaery's brother and father, and about a thousand other people. This act, meant in her mind to save her last child and preserve her influence over him, results in Tommen's suicide.

Vaisakhi is fundamentally about celebration of a culture



Surjit Singh Flora

Canadian Sikhs prepare for celebrations amid political encroachment on their faith

Vaisakhi is traditionally the beginning of the harvest season in India. Typically falling on April 13, since 1699, it has also been recognized as the origin of the Khalsa or commemoration of the beginning of Sikhism - hence Khalsa Day - that further added to the reverence and fervour for the festival.

In Canada, Ontario and B.C. will be the main centres of attraction for the local Punjabi community during this weekend's annual Vaisakhi festival. For Sikhs, Vaisakhi is the biggest annual celebration and a day of great significance because their 10th Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, laid down the foundation of Khalsa (the Order of the Pure Ones) on this day in 1699. Sikhism is a monotheistic faith founded on the prin-

ciples of equality, freedom of religion, and community service. As the fifth-largest religion in the world, one of the core teachings of the Sikh tradition is that all Sikhs must cultivate spirituality while also serving the world around us. Sikhs, both men and women, cover their uncut hair with a turban which represents a commitment to equality and justice.

But today Sikhs living in Quebec are worried because the Legault government has introduced draft legislation Bill 21 which would not allow those in "positions of authority" to wear their faith. These "positions of authority" would include judges, police officers, prosecutors, lawyers, court clerks, regulatory board members, school principals, teachers and others in similar job categories. And the ban on wearing their faith means they will be prohibited from wearing any visible religious symbols such as the hijab, turban, yarmulke, kippah skull cap, the crucifix, etc. while on duty. This is bad enough. But not to be outdone, Canada at the federal level has gone several steps further by effectively banning the entire Sikh community, by branding all Sikhs as Khalistani extremists. This is as per a terrorism assessment report, which has reached this conclusion without any evidence of recent violence or credible threats

in Canada. While the tragedy of the 1984 Air India bombing still weighs heavy in Canada, it cannot be used to continue to tarnish a community several decades later.

There is no explanation for this addition of "Sikh extremism" to the 2018 Public Report on the Terrorism Threat to Canada other than Public Safety Canada having tacitly accepted the false Indian rhetoric around rising extremism in the Sikh community. Sikhs in Canada have repeatedly denied these allegations and no evidence has ever been provided to substantiate them. "Sikh extremism" deeply maligns the reputation of the community and has a real impact on the everyday lives of Canadian Sikhs. NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh said "This law that is being proposed is something that divides the population, that divides the province, instead of bringing people together. That, to me, is something that is saddening." Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who represents a Quebec riding in the House of Commons, also criticized the proposed legislation. "I don't think a lot of people feel that in a free society we should be legitimizing discrimination of our citizens based on religion."

But until today, Sikhs are still seeking answers from Trudeau and Public Safety Minister Ralph Edward Goodale



about this issue and requesting they be removed from under the Sikh (Khalistani) Extremism banner - all to no avail. Many meetings have been conducted and letters been sent, but there's been no action on this front. According to StatsCan, Canada is home to over 450,000 people of Sikh faith, mainly concentrated in the Greater Toronto and Vancouver Metropolitan areas. The community celebrates Vaisakhi with much zeal and is driven by their pride and enthusiasm for sharing their rich culture and history. Vaisakhi or Khalsa Day Parades are organized across Ontario and BC and are attended by community members in large numbers.

Participants from other ethnicities and cultures are also welcome at this rich cultural event, which features floats, community performers, music and of course the highly popular Bhangra.

Vaisakhi celebrations are vibrant and have been full of cultural traditions and enthralling historic rituals. The day begins with families dressing in new, traditional clothes and participating in special prayers at the temple. Food is also a big part of the celebrations.

Sikhs mainly worship by singing from the scripture and reflecting on their Gurus' teachings as a way to model values and principles within

History of Baisakhi

Baisakhi or Vaisakhi Festival is celebrated as the Sikh New Year and the founding of the Khalsa Panth. History of Baisakhi traces its origin from the Baisakhi Day celebrations of 1699 organized by the Tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh to form Khalsa - Brotherhood of Saint Soldiers to fight against tyranny and

among his fellow men. To fulfil his dream, Guru Gobind Singh called on the historic Baisakhi Day congregation of Sikhs at Keshgarh Sahib near Anandpur on March 30, 1699. When thousands of people assembled for Guru's blessing, Guru Gobind Singh came out of the tent carrying an unsheathed sword.

These five men were called Panj Piara or 'Beloved Five' by the Guru. The Guru blessed them with a Pahul ceremony. In an iron vessel, the Guru stirred with a sword called Khanda Sahib, the batasha that his wife, Mata Sundari Ji had put into water. The congregation recited verses from scriptures as the Guru performed the sacred ceremony. The water was now considered the sacred nectar of immortality called amrit. It was first given to the five volunteers, then drunk by the guru and later distributed amongst the crowd. With this ceremony, all those present, irrespective of caste or creed, became members of the Khalsa Pantha (the Order of the Pure Ones). The Guru regarded the Panch Piaras as the first members of the Khalsa and the embodiment of the Guru himself. With the constitution of the Panj Pyare the high and low castes were amalgamated

into one as among the original Panj Pyare, there was one Khatri, shopkeeper; one Jat, farmer; one Chhimba, calico printer; one Ghumar, water-carrier; and one Nai, a barber. The Guru gave the surname of Singh (Lion) to every Sikh and also took the name for himself. From Guru Gobind Rai he became Guru Gobind Singh. This was seen as a great step in national integration because society at that time was divided on the basis of religion, caste and social status.

G u r u

Gobind Singh also bestowed on Khalsa, the unique Sikh identity. He directed Sikhs to wear five K's: Kesh or long hair, Kangha or comb, Kripan or dagger, Kachha or shorts and a Kara or bracelet. Guru Gobind Singh also discontinued the tradition of Gurus and asked all Sikhs to accept the Grantha Sahib as their eternal guide. He urged them to come to him with their hair and beard unshorn to get baptized by the sword.



oppression.

Story of Baisakhi

The story of Baisakhi Festival began with the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru who was publicly beheaded by the Aurungzeb, the Mughal ruler. Aurungzeb wanted to spread Islam in India and Guru Tegh Bahadur stood up for the rights of Hindus and Sikhs and the Mughals therefore saw him as a threat.

After the death of Guru Teg Bahadur, his son, Guru Gobind Singh became the next Guru of the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh wished to instill

courage
and
strength
to
sacrifice

He gave a powerful speech to infuse courage amongst fellowmen. At the end of the speech he said that every great deed was preceded by equally great sacrifice and demanded that anyone prepared to give his life come forward. On the Guru's third call, a young man offered himself. The Guru took the man inside a tent and reappeared alone with a bloodied sword. Guru Gobind Singh asked for another volunteer. This was repeated another four times until a total of five Sikhs had gone into the tent with the Guru. Everyone present was worried and though that Guru Gobind Singh has killed five Sikhs. At this point Guru presented all the five men before the people. Every one present was surprised to see all five men alive and wearing turbans and saffron-coloured garments.



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New research finds that bad parenting on part of the father may lead the eldest daughter to engage in risky sexual behaviour. Researchers have found that the bad behaviour of the father may increase the eldest daughter's likelihood of engaging in risky sexual behaviour more than the younger ones. The findings published in the journal *Developmental Psychology* suggest that genes alone are not responsible for a child's problem behaviour, including engaging in risky sex and affiliating with delinquent peers. By using pairs of sisters who spent differing amounts of time living with their fathers, the



quality fathering. The researchers believe that in divorced/separated families, a father – and how he behaved – was likely to have exerted a stronger influence on an older daughter than a younger daughter since older daughters systematically received larger “doses” of dad’s behaviour. The results suggest a causal relationship between a father’s behaviour and his daughters’ experiences. Different amounts of exposure to fathers of high or low quality changes daughters’ social environments – the monitoring they received and the peers with whom they affiliated – in ways that can impact their sexual behaviour.

Here's how parenting impacts risky sexual behaviour of daughters

study was able to control for inherited genes and environmental conditions, such as socioeconomic status or religious background, to isolate the effects of fathering quality on daughters. “It’s not enough for a dad to just be in the home,” said Danielle DelPriore, a post-doctoral fellow in the University of Utah in the US and lead author of the study. “The quality of a father’s relationship with his daughter has impli-

cations for both the overall monitoring she receives from her parents as well as her likelihood of affiliating with more promiscuous or more pro-social friends,” DelPriore said. The study compared the outcomes of older and younger full biological sisters who experienced the divorce or separation of their parents while growing up, and thus spent differing amounts of time living with their fathers. The study found that older

sisters with greater exposure to their fathers were strongly influenced by the quality of fathering they received. When fathering was high quality, parental monitoring was increased and older sisters were less likely to affiliate with sexually risky peers during adolescence compared to their younger sisters.

The opposite effects were found for older sisters who spent many years living with low-



Include green veggies, carrots in your diet. Vitamin A deficiency may raise TB risk



People with low levels of vitamin A living with individuals sick with tuberculosis (TB) may be 10 times more likely to develop the disease than people with high levels of the nutrient, new research has found.

The findings suggests that vitamin A supplementation might be an important part of controlling the spread of TB – one of the leading causes of death worldwide.

“If the link is affirmed in a clinical trial of vitamin A supplementation, it would make a powerful case for using this approach to prevent TB in people at high risk of disease,” said senior author Megan Murray, professor at Harvard Medical

School, at Boston in the US.

The findings, published in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, are based on an analysis of blood drawn from more than 6,000 household contacts of people diagnosed with TB in Lima, Peru. A 10-fold increase in risk is striking, the investigators said. More than 1.8 million people died from TB in 2015. TB strikes hardest in low and middle-income countries, where vitamin A deficiency can affect up to 30% of the population.

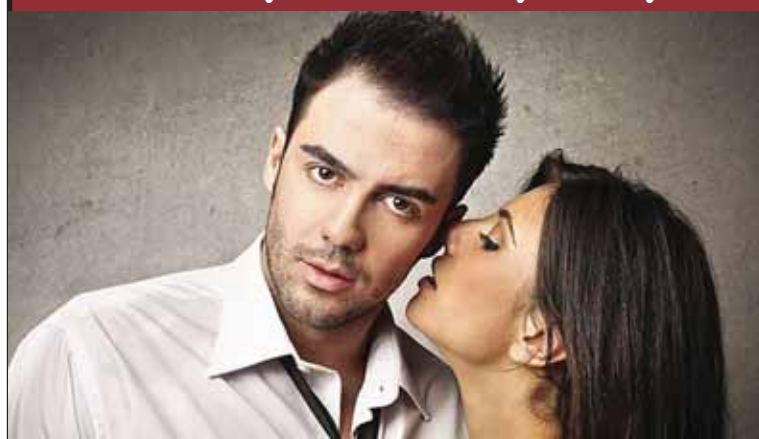
“It’s exciting to think that something as simple and inexpensive as supplementing people’s diets with vitamin A may be a powerful tool for preventing TB,” Murray said.

Vitamin A, also known as retinol, is best known among public health experts for its association with blindness. Healthy levels of the nutrient have been defined as those needed to prevent damage to eyesight.

Previous studies have suggested that vitamin A modulates the immune system and may ward off infection. However, just how vitamin A might affect the risk for TB has, up until now, remained unclear and a matter of debate. In this study, the researchers found that the protective effect of vitamin A grew stronger as levels of the nutrient increased. Protection continued to grow well above what has been considered the minimum healthy level.

Vitamin A deficiency – defined as less than 200 micrograms per litre of blood – fuelled the risk of developing TB disease 10-fold. That risk was 20 times higher among young people between the ages of 10 and 19. That finding, the researchers said, suggests that vitamin A may play an even greater role in immunity among younger people.

Sexual dissatisfaction, not porn, causes erectile dysfunction, says study



If you were wondering whether watching porn is unhealthy, the answer is no. A study recently warned that men, who regularly watch porn, are not sexually satisfied in their relationship with their partner and are more likely to suffer erectile dysfunction. It suggested males addicted to adult movies become disinterested in sex with their partners because their ‘sexual tolerance is higher’. Erectile dysfunction is an inability to get or keep an erection firm enough to have sexual intercourse. It’s also sometimes referred to as impotence. Porn is often blamed for turning men off sex with their partners, but one in five men watch X-rated films to avoid intimacy, it was found. It follows a recent study that discovered men who, regularly watch porn, are more likely to become disinterested in sex with their partners. Dr David Ley, a clinical psychologist specialising in sexual problems, said that men use masturbation to compensate for lack of sexual satisfaction in relationships. As this sexual behaviour is often accompanied by viewing pornography, it can be easily misunderstood, he told *The Sun*. A team from Los Angeles, California, studied 335 men in relationships. The findings revealed that 22 percent reported of viewing porn to having sex with their partner. They also found that 28 percent of respondents said that they opted for masturbation over intercourse.



Menu options shrink as Indians become more prone to allergies

(Agencies) Shirin Gadbadde can't remember what a rasgulla tastes like, and says she doesn't know where to look when dessert time rolls around and everyone helps themselves to ice-cream. Gadbadde, 37, a Mumbai-based communications manager, is lactose intolerant, which means no Indian sweets or paneer or chocolate with greater milk content.

"The only time I drank milk without throwing up was probably when I was breastfed," she says.

People with lactose intolerance can't digest this form of sugar, found in milk and dairy products, and experience bloating, stomach cramps, diarrhoea or nausea when they consume any.

It may not make Gadbadde feel any better, but she's among a growing number of Indians with food allergies.

A food allergy is a condition where the body's immune system reacts abnormally to certain chemicals in food, leading to redness, rashes, swelling and in extreme cases even anaphylactic shock and death.

"By rule of the thumb, about 5% to 8% of any population has some kind of food allergy, but most do not get tested

because of the cost involved, with the tests costing between Rs 7,000 and Rs 14,000," said Dr Shubnum Singh, clinical allergist at Delhi's Max hospital. The numbers have been rising in India.

"I have seen a two- to four-fold increase in the number of children coming in with food allergies over the past decade," says Dr Krishan Chugh, director of paediatrics at Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurgaon. "The rise in numbers is likely a result of more people getting tested, and the fact that our food habits are changing faster than our bodies can cope with."

Then, there is the hygiene hypothesis used to explain growing allergies across developed populations. "According to the hypothesis, when the body is not exposed to enough bacteria, the immune system starts fighting whatever it is exposed to, which, in this case, is food. This is highly likely because food allergies are higher in Indian children who have spent their initial years abroad — they account for half of my patients with food allergies," said Dr Chugh.

Faulty self-diagnosis is another probable cause.

Gadbadde, for instance, had not seen

a doctor or technically been diagnosed with lactose intolerance until two years ago. Instead, she had deduced from trial and error that she could not digest lactose, and along the way had also developed an aversion to white bread and potatoes too. "Perceiving a food allergy, people stop eating some foods and miss out on proper nutrition. For instance, one of my asthma patients looked very weak and when I asked her mother whether she was eating well, the mother said that she had stopped giving her rice, milk, curd, egg and banana because she thought she had an allergy. It turned out she didn't. It is best to go to a doctor and get it tested," says Dr Raj Kumar, head of the department of respiratory allergy and applied immunology at Delhi's Vallabhbai Patel Chest Institute. Unlike in the West, where peanut allergies are the most common, Indians tend to be allergic to pulses (mainly black gram), rice (odd but true), citrus fruits, bananas, eggs and shellfish, doctors say.



Consuming pure maple syrup can cut Alzheimer's, sclerosis risk



(Agencies) Consuming pure maple syrup extract may help protect against Alzheimer's disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a neurodegenerative disorder affecting motor neurons, claim researchers. Produced solely by concentrating the maple tree's sap by bringing it to boil, pure maple syrup that originates from Canada is 100 per cent natural and comprises of therapeutic compounds which have potential benefits against Alzheimer's disease and ALS, researchers said.

When cellular proteins fold improperly and clump together, they accumulate and form the plaque that is involved in the pathogenesis of Alzheimer's and other brain diseases.

A study conducted by D Weaver and colleagues from the University of Toronto in Canada showed that maple syrup extract decreases the misfolding and aggregation of two peptides (B-amyloid and tau) in vitro. These peptides are considered as the two pathological hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease. Another study led by researchers at the University of Rhode Island in the US showed that maple syrup extracts prevent the aggregation of the beta-amyloid peptide in rats, and also extended the lifespan of roundworms. Preliminary results of a recent study conducted at the University of Montreal in Canada also showed that maple syrup extends the lifespan of worms.

After a breakup, take your time before getting into a new relation-

(Agencies) On September 19, it was reported that Angelina Jolie filed for divorce from her husband Brad Pitt, citing irreconcilable differences. The duo had tied the knot in August 2014. It's been just over a couple of months since the divorce, and it's being reported that Pitt is already looking for love. A report said that the actor "is looking for someone to bring light into his life after all the drama". However, according to experts, getting into a new relationship immediately after a breakup is not advisable.

Dr Suyog V Jaiswal, assistant professor in psychiatry, HBT Medical College, says, "Such relationships, or

dating on a 'rebound' as it's called, can indirectly affect you and your new relationship. The emotional wounds that one sustains post a breakup need to be healed. Getting into a rebound relationship masks the old wounds and may create problems in the long run."

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However, waiting to get into another relationship after a breakup may be difficult for some, as people may want to fill the void that is created by the exit



of their partner. Jaiswal says, "This may happen with people who do not have friends with whom they can share their feelings. However, a relationship that starts soon after the end of serious relationship, may not last long."

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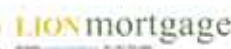


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Nishi Bahl of Panache Entertainment awarded by Sushmita Sen



During the recently held South Asian Empowerment Awards in New Jersey, Former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen, who was Chief Guest of the event, honored Nishi Bahl of Panache Entertainment with

“Fashion Director of the Year Award. Nishi was awarded for her organizing an amazing fashion show for the event. Event was organized by Natasha Sharma and Amit Jaitly.

Hungarian Roma designer fights stereotypes with fashion

Hungarian Roma fashion designer Erika Varga says her label is about stitching together cultural traditions and snipping through stereotypes as much as it's about dressmaking.

“Fashion is a branch of art that interests and connects people, non-Roma and Roma,” the founder of Romani Design said. Often blamed for

themselves,” the 47-year-old designer said.

Founded in 2010 by Varga to promote Roma fashion and identity, her Romani Design



petty crime, the Roma, Hungary's largest ethnic minority, face widespread discrimination, poverty and exclusion from mainstream society. “In most cases, Roma appear in a pejorative way in the media. “Many turn away from their own culture... But people need positive role models, not just the majority in society but also Roma people

studio brought out its first collection the same year.

Now, her evening dresses can sell for up to 1,000 euros (\$1,100). “As a Roma-run social enterprise, it's unique in the world,” Varga told AFP, ahead of International Roma Day on Monday. “We don't make mass-produced T-shirts but clothes that carry messages, like on minority rights and integration,” she

added.- ‘Rebel Spirit’ -

Varga's latest range, called Rebel Spirit, is inspired by strong female figures, including her mother, late grandmother and 20th century Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, a hero of hers. The small, long-haired designer said she asked “nonconforming women who have overcome challenges in their lives” to model the range. “It's

important to express openness in what you wear,” said one of the models, Adel Onodi, 23, who became the first transgender woman to appear on the front cover of a Hungarian fashion magazine last year. After leaving school in eastern Hungary, Varga soon set up her own jewellery-making business before branching out into fashion design.

Take inspiration from Hrithik Roshan, Akshay Kumar, Kartik Aaryan to level-up your work wear

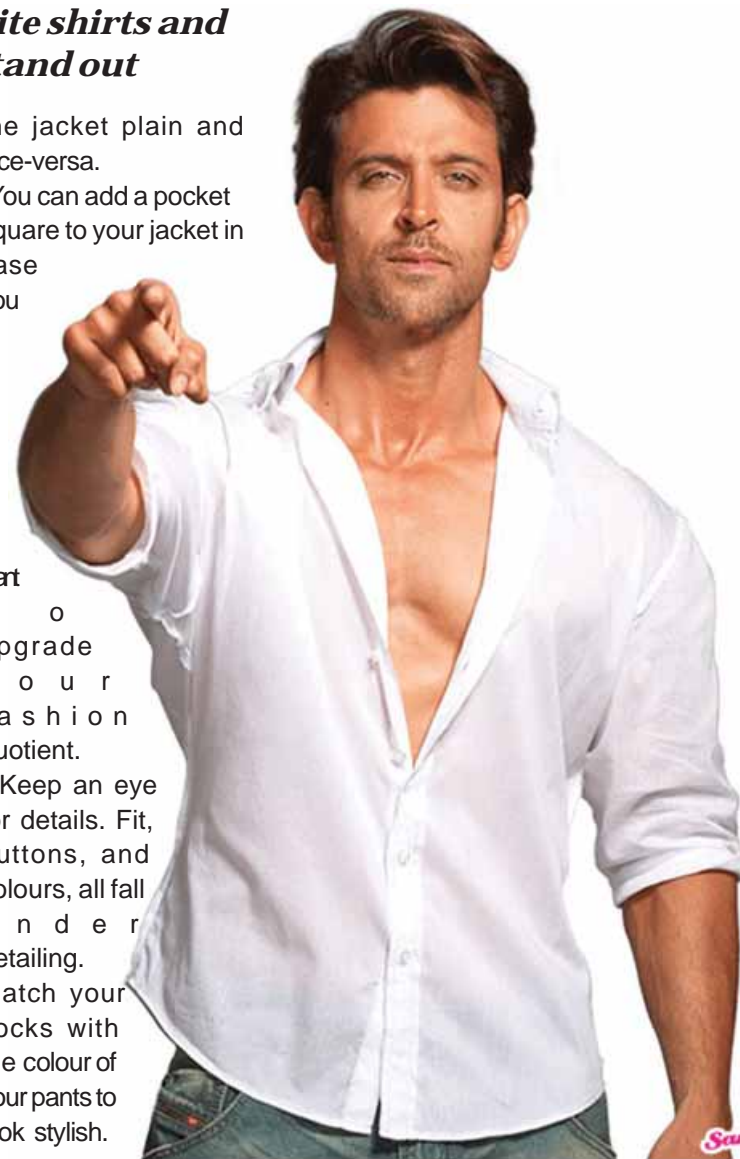
Mix up your workwear and take a break from the usual boring white shirts and black pants. Here's how you can revamp your ensembles to stand out

It goes without saying that appearances do matter and people get judged on a daily basis for what they wear, especially at their workplaces. And although all men say, 'our options are limited', it's not totally true. There are a lot of options out there but most guys usually stick to the basics. So, to all the men out there, stop being lazy and try out these tips if you are bored of your everyday

wardrobe. Shirts Everyone opts for a basic formal shirt, but it also gets lost in the crowd easily. Go for various prints and patterns such as checks and stripes to stand out. You can also go for Mandala or herringbone weave shirts. Pants There are many who have their pants stitched one inch tighter and think that it looks good. Bad

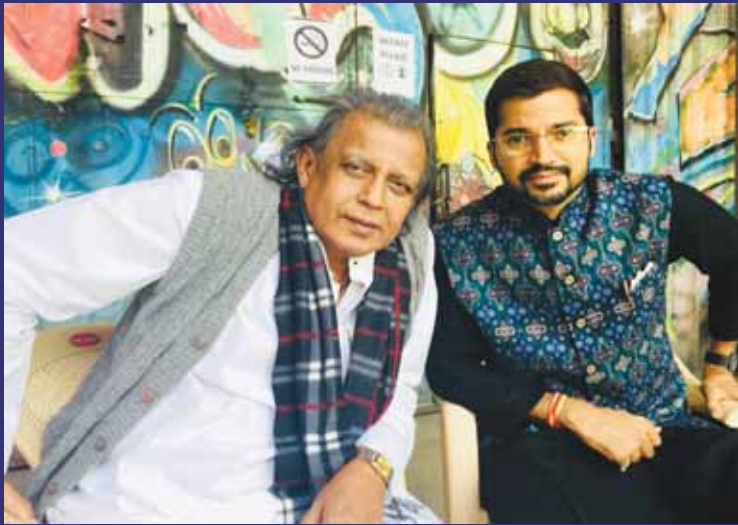
idea. Make sure that your pants are comfortable and not too tight. Colours of the pants play a significant role in your overall appearance. Khaki, navy, charcoal grey and relaxed brown are some of the best shades for work wear. Shoes The saying, 'a man is judged by his shoes' stands true even today. So, make sure your shoes aren't scuffed or fluffed. Applying petroleum jelly can save your shoes from damage. One great tip that most stylish men follow is that they try to match their shoes with the belt they are wearing. Derby shoes are the best suited for the office. Jackets Suits can be a bit overwhelming but jackets, not really. It is a much needed apparel for someone who works at a senior post. That's a stylish yet smart way to stand out from the crowd. You can ditch the formal trousers and go for a pair of stylish denim. Tips- Fits are extremely important. Don't buy if it is not your size.-A wristwatch is much classier than picking out your phone each time you have to check the time.- If you are opting for a patterned shirt then keep

the jacket plain and vice-versa. -You can add a pocket square to your jacket in case you want to upgrade your fashion quotient. - Keep an eye for details. Fit, buttons, and colours, all fall under detailing. Match your socks with the colour of your pants to look stylish.



"FROM MADISON SQUARE GARDEN to MUMBAI"

Actor Prashantt Gupta goes from fanboy to co-star with screen icon Mithun Chakraborty in the upcoming THE TASHKENT FILES



and I would do a movie with him. When asked about the experience, Prashantt reflects that working with 'dada' (as everyone fondly calls him) was great fun and deep learning. About the icon he says, "he treated me with so much affection, never once made me feel like a new kid or nobody." The conversations included politics, an area where the senior actor is passionate, as opposed to Prashantt self-claiming his ignorance. Beyond that, they spoke about the struggles of Mumbai, family, and

(Insider Bureau) - This young actor who has previously impressed in hit films like NEERJA and ISSAQ, and recently cast in a Hollywood film called A NEW CHRISTMAS, was born and raised in New York. Circa 1988, he recalls his first concert experience wherein he walked into a stadium full of screaming fans to watch his idol Mithun Chakraborty perform to his chartbusters. It was around the time Disco Dancer and a stream of his releases had become hits and he had become a dancing sensation. 'Mithun da became a superstar

with Disco Dancer, and I the 6 year old went to see him perform live at Madison Square Garden in New York, same place where Michael Jackson had performed a few weeks earlier. I walked into a stadium of 20,000 people and he was dancing to Krishna Dharti Pe Aaja Tu. I didn't know then that 30 years later the moment would still be vivid in my head,



Prashantt proudly remembers the first day of the shoot when after a particular scene, the legend came up to him and showered praise in front of everyone. "That moment especially felt good because I got it all wrong the first time around (laughs)." The Tashkent Files is a present day political



investigation into the yet mysterious death of India's 2nd Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. The stellar cast features stalwarts like Mithun Chakraborty, Naseeruddin Shah, Pankaj Tripathi, Mandira Bedi, Pallavi Joshi, Shweta Basu Prasad, and directed by Vivek Agnihotri

who himself is a very prominent political speaker, author and filmmaker. Apart from this, Prashantt will soon be seen in two shorts films, A BIT OF A LONER and GIRL IN AMBER, and is currently shooting a feature in the Jammu territory of India.

It is finally acche din for Vivek Oberoi

Why EC stalling Modi biopic is a win-win situation for the actor

(Insider Bureau) - It is finally acche din for Vivek Oberoi. His promising Bollywood career has never lived up to its great potential. But this Modi biopic was a master stroke. He should not worry about the Election Commission. It's a paper tiger. In the long run how can it ever stop the lion of Gujarat? Look at it this way. If his Modi bio-pic had caught fire at the box office before the elections, he could have preened in its afterglow. He could have even claimed, humbly of course, that his "little" film did its bit to create the second Modi wave. A Padma award, at least, was guaranteed. But now that the Election Commission has

decided to delay its release till after the polls, he can go around donning the mantle of victimhood, the brave artistic David fighting the Goliaths arrayed against him. Why should only the liberal Anand Patwardhan and Amol Palekar types get to be freedom of expression martyrs? He can be the new poster boy in the censorship whataboutery debates. This is win-win for Vivek Oberoi. Of course we know no one censored PM Narendra Modi. Who has that himmat to be a chowkidar to the chowkidar-in-chief? Its release has merely been delayed till after the polls. But if Narendra Modi (the real one) wins, the biopic can be released as part of the victory lap. If he does not, Oberoi can say that

was the secret ingredient, the X-factor that was missing in the campaign. After all Modi-ji has everything else. As stand-up comic Vir Das tweeted, "So the PM has a movie, a radio show, a web series, a live tour, a TV channel. If he does a Tik Tok video... we're out of mediums." The film was the last medium pending. If the film is a blockbuster hit when it releases Oberoi can take all the credit, of course after dutifully sharing it with the great man himself. The PM might even come to the premiere. If it tanks like the Accidental Prime Minister, Oberoi can blame the Election Commission whereas Anupam Kher had no one to blame but



himself. Vivek Oberoi should not let the haters detract him from his mahaan mission. Haters will hate and the tukde tukde gang will tear everything patriotic into pieces. Some are even calling it propaganda. But how smilingly he deflected those charges in that interview on #ToughTalk on Quint, never wavering in that unflappable smile. But that does not make him a propaganda-maker. It just makes him the thinking man's Vivek

Agnihotri, suave, smiling albeit a little smug. But then why should smugness be the monopoly of liberals? Propaganda, after all, is just a point of view, it's not necessarily a slur. Was Leni Riefenstahl not an acclaimed filmmaker just because she made a few propaganda film about the Nazis? Her 1934 Triumph of the Will about the party rally in Nuremberg is even considered the greatest propaganda film ever made.

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