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Fake News Could Lead to Real War

We think of false information as a domestic problem. It's much more dangerous than that.

Who really bombed the oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman three weeks ago? Was it Iran, as the Trump administration assured us? Or was it Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates or Israel-or some combination of the three?



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Staking a claim to the moon

Who owns the moon, and why are so many lunatics trying to sell you a piece of it?



up a real-estate agency, Lunar Embassy, and began to sell bits of it to others. He claims to have sold 611 million acres so far, for an estimated \$29.95 (about Rs 2,000) per acre.

Others have followed suit. Lunar Land calls itself "Earth's oldest, most recognised celestial real estate agency" and packages come complete with 'deed' and 'map'. In the UK, Francis Williams, owner of MoonEstates, calls himself the Lunar Ambassador to the United Kingdom and claims to have sold more than 3 lakh acres of moon land since 2000. Another firm, The Lunar Registry, has this catchy slogan: Nothing Could Be Greater Than To Own Your Own Crater!

The UN isn't worried. Its treaty applies to countries as well as citizens. And there's no governing body to enforce property rights. So if man ever does colonise the moon, the bits of paper issued by Hope and others will be worthless - a souvenir, at best, of a time when truly anything was possible.

(News Agencies)- In 1967, eight years after Neil Armstrong became the first human to set foot on the moon, came another giant leap for mankind. The US, UK and USSR signed the UN Outer Space Treaty, setting down laws on how nations could use and explore new worlds in space.

The law states that no government can own extra-terrestrial property or use

celestial bodies for anything other than peaceful purposes, and that space materials are man's shared heritage. Thus far 109 countries have ratified this treaty, including India.

But in 1980, an enterprising American, Dennis Hope, announced that he'd found a loophole. The treaty does not prohibit ownership by individuals and corporations, he claimed. So he claimed it for himself and set

'Immigration raids to start Sunday,' says Donald Trump



(News Agencies)- enforcement operation, saying President Donald Trump said his he wanted to give lawmakers administration will carry out more time to change existing nationwide raids starting on immigration laws.

Sunday to remove those in the But members of Trump's country illegally. administration, including acting

"I have an obligation to do it," Homeland Security Secretary Trump told reporters at the White Kevin McAleenan, have also House on Friday. "We'll be taking objected to initial plans for the them out by the thousands." raids, the New York Times Trump said the raids would focus reported, arguing their sweeping on criminals. nature could result in family

Trump previously postponed the separations.

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US House to vote on fate of thousands of Indians waiting for Green Cards

"Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019" is being fast-tracked because of the overwhelming support it enjoys among the lawmakers in the US House of Representatives.

(News Agencies)- The US House of Representatives is scheduled to vote Wednesday on a legislation that seeks to remove country-limits on Green Cards to end the waiting period for more than 300,000 Indians and their dependents, some of whom could theoretically be in the queue for more than 100 years otherwise.

"Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019", as the bill is called, is being fast-tracked because of the overwhelming support it enjoys among the lawmakers; it has been co-sponsored by more than 290 of the House's 435 members, more than the two-thirds needed. "We expect the bill to pass, and once the bill passes, we are hopeful that the momentum from a strong House vote will convince the Senate to work out a way to pass the bill," said Leon Fresco, counsel to Immigration Voice, an advocacy group that has been

arguing for country-cap removal for years. A variation of the legislation is before the senate. The bill which was introduced jointly by a Democrat and Republican Congresspersons in February, seeks to remove the limit of 7% on the number of employment-related Green Cards that can be issued to nationals of any one country annually and raise the family-related limit from 7% to 15%. Indians stand to benefit from the change because they are the worst sufferers of the existing country-limit that annually moves all those left behind to the backlog queue, which grows longer every year. Theoretically, the waiting time for anyone entering the line now is an astonishing 119 years. These are all H-1B holders whose employers are sponsoring their Green Cards. While they wait, their spouses are allowed to work under an authorization that the

Trump administration is determined to terminate and their children "age out" after they turn 21, when they can no longer stay on as dependents. The US Citizenship and Immigration Services has said there are 306,601 Indians waiting for their Green Cards. But these are only the primary applicants. Immigration voice estimates that along with their dependents and those starting the process the number is much higher, at around 1.5 million. Their case has enjoyed widespread, bipartisan support on Capitol Hill, home to federal

US legislature, and for years. But they have also faces opposition from critics who say these foreign-born men and women are taking away American jobs, citing lay-offs caused by outsourcing. There is an army of opponents and critics who have argued their case aggressively, making it all about Indians. Paul Gosar, a Republican member of the



House of Representatives, introduced a rival bill in the House earlier this month and called it the "Fairness for High-Skilled Americans Act". It was to counter, he said, Democratic Senator Kamala Harris's "Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act", a variation of the house bill the half-Indian-American lawmaker moved in the senate.

'US should not play with fire on Taiwan issue': China

During a visit to Hungary, Wang said that no foreign force could stop the reunification of China and no foreign force should try to intervene.



(News Agencies)- China's top diplomat Wang Yi warned the United States on Friday that it should "not play with fire" on the question of Taiwan, expressing anger about a planned U.S. arms sale. During a visit to Hungary, Wang said that no foreign force could stop the reunification of China and no foreign force should try to intervene. The U.S. State Department has approved the possible sale to Taiwan of M1A2T Abrams tanks,

Stinger missiles and related equipment at an estimated value of \$2.2 billion, the Pentagon said on Monday, despite Chinese criticism of the deal. China claims self-ruled and democratic Taiwan as its own and views it as a wayward province. "We urge the U.S. to fully recognise the gravity of the Taiwan question ... (and) not to play with fire on the question of Taiwan," Wang told a news conference via an interpreter.

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'Chandrababu Naidu left Andhra bankrupt', says white paper on finance



Andhra Pradesh finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy said the previous TDP government had pushed the state into dark ages with its mis-governance, financial mismanagement and corruption

(News Agencies)- The YSR Congress party government on Wednesday accused the previous Telugu Desam Party regime headed by N Chandrababu Naidu of pushing the state into an unprecedented financial crisis and leaving it bankrupt. "In the last five years after bifurcation of combined Andhra Pradesh, the TDP government had pushed the state into dark ages with its mis-governance, financial mismanagement and complete neglect of investment in human and

physical capital, coupled with corruption," state finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy told reporters while releasing the white paper on the state's financial position. Reddy said the new government had inherited a bankrupt exchequer with a deficit of Rs 3.62 lakh crore, including outstanding debt of Rs 2.58 lakh crore, off-budget borrowings (contingent liabilities) of Rs 58,000 crore and outstanding dues of Rs 18,375 crore to power sector, Rs 10,000 crore to

civil supplies department and Rs 18,000 crore to other departments. He said the previous TDP regime had shown the worst performance on the financial front. The total tax revenues from the states' own sources in the last five years were far below the expectations made by 14th Finance Commission which projected 10 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). With respect to non-tax revenues, the State's collection on per capita basis is one of the lowest in the country. "The fiscal deficit which was 2.11 per cent in 2013-14 ballooned to 4.42 per cent in 2016-17 and

reached an unsustainable level of 27.87 per cent of GSDP by 2016-17. Similarly, the revenue deficit which was Rs 16,078 crore during 2014-15 was supposed to be offset by the grants from the Centre, but the state could get only Rs. 3,979 crore. Now, post devolution of central grants, the revenue deficit stood at a whopping Rs 66,362 crore," he said. Reddy pointed out that the debt of Andhra Pradesh at the time of bifurcation was Rs 97,000 crore and it had reached a whopping Rs. 2,58,928 crore by 2018-19. The interest on the debt alone is projected to be

over Rs. 20,000 crore per annum, in addition to the repayment of principal to the tune of another Rs. 20,000 crore. "Further, there are huge contingent liabilities in the form of guarantees given for loans availed by the state government entities," he said. The minister rejected the theory that the state had registered compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.36% in the past five years. "This growth was on the back of only two subsectors - livestock and fisheries. In fact, agriculture sector registered negative CAGR of 4.12 per cent, reflecting the deep crisis that has engulfed the farm families, leading to suicides and chronic rural distress," he said. Andhra Pradesh had registered negative growth rate in the manufacturing and service sectors as well, indicating that under-employment and unemployment reached its heights during the past five years. "At a time when inflation at the national level had fallen from 9% to 4.5% on account of good monsoon and low global fuel prices, Andhra Pradesh recorded an average inflation was around 7.6%. The human development had fallen sharply owing to neglect of education, nutrition, health care, skills, employment, etc," he said.

Dubai imposes dirham 500 fine on residents for leaving dirty cars

Owners who leave unkempt vehicles in public parking places in Dubai will have to shell out dirham 500 as fine if caught by the city's image-conscious authorities, according to a media report.

(News Agencies)- Owners who leave unkempt vehicles in public parking places in Dubai will have to shell out dirham 500 as fine if caught by the city's image-conscious authorities, according to a media report.

Dubai Municipality explained that leaving their vehicle parked on public

parking spaces can "tarnish the aesthetic appearance of the city," and issued the reminder to residents who might be planning a long trip abroad during their summer holiday, The Gulf News reported.

According to a rule issued by the municipality, residents will be issued

with a dirham 500 (approx Rs 10,000) fine if they leave their vehicle parked on public parking spaces, and leave it unwashed for a long period of time, the report said.

The municipal inspectors will target such vehicles that may look damaged, vandalised or have been stationary for a long time,

and then a violation notice will be issued by putting a warning sticker on the car. Once the unkempt car has been identified, inspectors will stick a notice on the vehicle's windshield.

Drivers will then have 15 days to clean the vehicle; otherwise, the car will be impounded by authorities.



"If motorists fail to respond within this period, the vehicle will be sold at auction," said Al Saifaie, director of Dubai Municipality's waste management department.

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UK ambassador to US quits days after leaked cables on Donald Trump

Kim Darroch, who was branded "a very stupid guy" by Trump in Twitter tirades, said he wanted to put an end to speculation. The row raised questions over the ability of diplomats to report candidly to their capitals.



(News Agencies)-Kim Darroch, Britain's ambassador to the US who termed President Donald Trump's administration "inept, insecure and incompetent" in leaked emails and was in turn branded by the latter as "a very stupid guy", resigned on Wednesday. The envoy's emails dated 2017 were leaked to the Mail on Sunday, sparking an unseemly diplomatic row between the two countries that often highlight their 'special relationship'. The row raised questions over the ability of diplomats to report candidly about their host countries to their capitals. Prime Minister Theresa May and foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt backed Darroch, as Trump launched Twitter tirades against him, but the failure of prime ministerial candidate Boris Johnson to

back him during a TV debate on Tuesday is said to have been the tipping point. Darroch wrote to the Foreign Office: "Since the leak of official documents from this Embassy there has been a great deal of speculation surrounding my position and the duration of my remaining term as ambassador". "I want to put an end to that speculation. The current situation is making it impossible for me to carry out my role as I would like. Although my posting is not due to end until the end of this year, I believe in the current circumstances, the responsible course is to allow the appointment of a new ambassador". May informed MPs in the House of Commons that said she had spoken to Darroch and told him it was "a matter

of great regret that he has felt it necessary to leave his position...Good government depends on public servants being able to give full and frank advice". Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn called the treatment of Darroch "beyond unfair and wrong," adding, "the whole house should join together in deeply regretting the feeling he's got that he must resign at this moment". Foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt said: "I am deeply saddened...(he) served his country with the utmost dedication and distinction...I am sure that our ambassadors worldwide will continue to provide the objective and rigorous reporting that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has always prized". In the widely published emails, Darroch

called the White House under Trump "dysfunctional" and "divided", but also informed the London headquarters that the US President should not be written off. He wrote that to get through to Trump "you need to make your points simple, even blunt", wondering whether the Trump White House "will ever look competent". "We don't really believe this administration is going to become substantially more normal; less dysfunctional; less unpredictable; less faction-riven; less diplomatically clumsy and inept," Darroch wrote. According to him, Trump's presidency could "crash and burn" and "end in disgrace", the tabloid reported, adding the cables were dated early 2017.



H. Ross Perot rose from poverty to self-made billionaire

Perot recorded the highest percentage for an independent or third-party candidate since President Theodore Roosevelt's second-place showing in 1912.

(News Agencies)- H. Ross Perot rose from a childhood of Depression-era poverty to become a self-made billionaire who twice ran for president with a mixture of folksy sayings and simple solutions to America's problems. His 19% of the vote in 1992 stands among the best showings by an independent candidate in the last century. Perot died of leukemia Tuesday at his home in Dallas surrounded by his family, family spokesman James Fuller said. He was 89. As a boy in Texarkana, Texas, Perot delivered newspapers from the back of a pony. He earned his billions in a more modern way, however. After attending the U.S. Naval Academy and becoming a salesman for IBM, he set out on his own - creating and building Electronic Data Systems Corp., which helped other companies manage their computer networks. The most famous event in his storied business career didn't involve sales or earnings. In 1979, Perot financed a private commando raid to free two EDS employees who were being held in a prison in Iran. The tale was turned into a book and a movie.

"I always thought of him as stepping out of a Norman Rockwell painting and living the American dream," said Tom Luce, who was a young lawyer when Perot hired him to handle his business and personal legal work. "A newspaper boy, a midshipman, shaking Dwight Eisenhower's hand at his graduation, and he really built the computer-services industry at EDS." "He had the vision and the tenacity to make it happen," Luce said. "He was a great communicator. He never employed a speechwriter - he wrote all his own speeches. He was a great storyteller." Perot first attracted attention beyond business circles by claiming that the U.S. government left behind hundreds of American soldiers who were missing or imprisoned at the end of the Vietnam War. Perot fanned the issue at home and discussed it privately with Vietnamese officials in the 1980s, angering the Reagan administration, which was formally negotiating with Vietnam's government. Looking out for the health care needs of veterans became a long-time concern of Perot. Perot's wealth, fame and confident

prescription for the nation's economic ills propelled his 1992 campaign against President George H.W. Bush and Democratic challenger Bill Clinton. In June of that year, a Gallup poll showed Perot leading his major-party rivals. Perot dropped out in July, however, saying later that he did so to prevent Republicans from sabotaging his daughter's wedding. He rejoined the race less than five weeks before the election, but his popularity had fallen. Critics said he had a penchant for embracing conspiracy theories. He finished third in the popular vote and was shut out in the Electoral College. Still, Perot recorded the highest percentage for an independent or third-party candidate since President Theodore Roosevelt's second-place showing in 1912. Some Republicans blamed Perot for causing Bush's defeat by splitting the anti-Clinton vote, although exit polls were inconclusive. During the campaign, Perot spent \$63.5 million of his own money. He bought 30-minute television spots during which he used charts and graphs to make his points, summarizing them with a line that became a national catch phrase: "It's just

that simple." Perot's second campaign four years later was far less successful. He was shut out of presidential debates when organizers said he lacked sufficient support. He got just 8% of the vote, and the Reform Party that he founded and hoped to build into a national political force began to fall apart. However, Perot's ideas on trade and deficit reduction remained part of the political landscape. He blamed both major parties for running up a huge federal budget deficit and supporting trade deals that allowed American jobs to be sent to other countries. The movement of U.S. jobs to Mexico, he said, created a "giant sucking sound." Perot continued to speak out about federal spending for many years. In 2008, he launched a website to highlight the nation's debt with a ticker that tracked the rising total, a blog and a chart presentation. Perot's themes - that Washington is corrupt, wastes taxpayer money and ignores the working class - have been repeated by other candidates since and helped Donald Trump win the presidency in 2016.

Does the G20 still matter ?

When the G20 leaders held their first summit in late 2008, many welcomed what looked like a diverse, highly representative new forum for crafting common solutions to global problems. The group acquitted itself well in responding to the global financial crisis, and, for a while, its emergence as a forum for international policy coordination seemed like one of the only silver linings of that mess.

I was certainly among those applauding the G20's initial achievements. Since 2001, when I identified the rise of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) as a key feature of the 21st century world economy, I had been calling for a major overhaul of global governance structures. As I argued at the time, the continued dominance of the G7 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) was increasingly out of step with the complex world of the early 2000s. To this day, the G7's exclusion of China is a glaring omission, made worse by the presence of so many European countries, most of which share a currency and abide by the same fiscal- and monetary-policy rules.

Unfortunately, following the G20's summit in Osaka, Japan, last month, I cannot help but wonder whether that gathering, too, has lost its purpose. Indeed, the only relevant development to come from the summit was an agreement on the sidelines between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, who brokered yet another "truce" in their countries' trade war.

Part of the problem, of course, is that global governance in general has been marginalised, now that the US has abdicated its role as the custodian of the international order. But there are also issues with the G20 itself. On one hand, the group looks like an appropriate vehicle for facilitating global dialogue. Its membership represents around 85% of global GDP and comprises most of the leading emerging economies, including those that have not adopted Western-style liberal democracy. With the exception of Nigeria, Africa's largest economy and most populous country, the countries that one would expect to have a seat at the table do. And in the future, one could imagine Vietnam and a few others joining them. On the other hand, while the G20 has been good at issuing grandiose communiqués to acknowledge the existence of global challenges, it has proven utterly incapable of advancing any solutions to them. To be sure, one could argue that it isn't realistic to expect a bunch of

bureaucrats to fix everything that is broken in the world. If anything, it is the duty of activists, entrepreneurs, and other creative thinkers to pressure and persuade political leaders on the need for change. And yet, when it comes to problems that can be addressed only cooperatively at the global level, there is no alternative to bodies like the G20. Even if political leaders have adopted all the right ideas, they still need a forum for turning those ideas into coordinated policies.

To my mind, there are two barriers standing in the G20's way. First, though it is representative, it is also far too large. As I have argued since 2001, what the world needs is a more representative G7, comprising the US, Japan, the European Union, and the BRIC countries. This new grouping would reside within the G20 and represent three-quarters of global GDP. While Canada and a post-Brexit UK would lose some of their current influence, they would have no less of it than similarly situated countries such as Australia. At any rate, they need not worry: there is no reason to expect a diplomatic overhaul of this scale anytime soon.

The G20's second deficiency is that it (as well as the G7) lacks an objective framework through which to set goals and measure progress toward them. Since the group's initial success a decade ago, its agenda has been fluid, with each host country adding something new to the mix at every annual gathering. In the case of the Osaka summit, the Japanese government introduced the goal of universal health care.

No one doubts that universal health care is a worthy cause. But the G20 has actually done nothing to help individual member states expand the provision of health care. Worse, the time spent paying lip service to this new objective could have been used to discuss outstanding issues such as antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which was added to the G20 agenda in 2016. The language about AMR in the latest communiqué was notably similar to that of previous summits, which suggests that little progress has been made.

Meanwhile, the market for new antibiotics is deteriorating rapidly. Without a concerted international response, drug-resistant superbugs could take 10 million lives per year by 2050, resulting in a cumulative loss of around \$100 trillion in global output. What the world needs now is action, not empty words.

Hong Kong protests have dented China's image of invincibility

Hong Kong (HK) has seen unprecedented anti-China protests in recent weeks, posing the most serious challenge to Chinese rule over the territory since Beijing resumed sovereignty over it in 1997. The trigger for the current protests was a proposed legislation that allows the extradition of HK residents who face criminal charges to China. Till now, China has been able to pick up HK residents it regards as inimical to its interests by kidnapping them or apprehending them in third countries. The proposed legislation would have rendered such unconventional methods unnecessary. In the face of the protests, the Hong Kong CEO, Carrie Lam, announced on Monday that the extradition legislation is "effectively dead". But this has not satisfied the protesters who want the legislation withdrawn and insist that Lam resigns. On July 1 (the anniversary of the 1997 handover of HK to China), protesters broke into the territory's Legislative Council chamber and vandalised it. In an action that can be described as provocative and defiant, they tore down the current official insignia of HK (a pink Bauhinia flower), and put in its place the pre-handover colonial flag. The protests have been severely criticised by Beijing. The State-controlled media have called for "zero tolerance" of the protesters, and warned that any failure to punish the perpetrators would open a "Pandora's Box" with dangerous consequences. It would be unlike China and its powerful leader Xi Jinping to let this incident pass and if, in course of re-establishing control, the one country-two-system mechanism has to be

abandoned, it would be done without question. The parallel with the Tiananmen incident of June 1989 should not be forgotten. Despite the international political isolation it entailed, the Chinese government had no hesitation in using indiscriminate and brutal force to drive the demonstrators out from the historic square. Should the current demonstrations go beyond a certain threshold, one should expect a similar treatment. Hong Kong is no longer as important as it once was in providing China with its most useful channel for its external economic dealings. In 1997, nearly 50% of China's external trade was channelled through HK. Now it is only 12%. Nevertheless, there are other important aspects in which HK continues to be of significant importance to China, particularly at a time of US-China trade tensions. Thanks to the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, the territory is accorded separate economic treatment beyond 1997. This enables Chinese companies to evade US trade sanctions by routing exports through HK. Similarly, HK-based entities do not face the same technology-related restrictions from the US as China-based companies on the mainland do. In case of a violent crackdown on the protests, this special treatment of HK will almost certainly be withdrawn and this will only ratchet up both trade and political tensions with the US.



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Give Indo-US relations a real name now

The India-US relationship has no officially affirmed designation such as a NATO ally or a non-NATO ally. It's a relationship with no name, in fact

United States president Donald Trump's daughter and adviser Ivanka Trump got trolled by pundits last week for calling India a "critical ally" in a video commentary on her father's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Osaka G-20. India is neither a US ally, nor a "critical ally", they scolded her, remotely, and counselled her to stay in her lane. They were right. India and the United States were never and are not allies, neither treaty allies, nor non-treaty allies. But Ivanka Trump was not the first person to use that phrase for India and won't be the last. Senators John Cornyn and Mark Warner, the Republican and Democratic co-chairs of the India

Caucus, urged Defence Secretary Ashton Carter in a joint letter in March 2015 to "place a special emphasis on India as a critical ally". They were fine, it seems, and the first daughter wasn't. That's not the point though. The India-US relationship has no officially affirmed designation such as a NATO ally or a non-NATO ally. It's a relationship with no name, in fact. Leaders, academics and think-tankers from both countries have had to coin their own terms, as result, underscoring both the lack of it and, by the same token, the need for one. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, architect of the post-cold war realignment of India's ties with the

United States, set up the hunt with a landmark speech at Asia Society in New York in September 1998, his first US visit as prime minister. "India and the United States are natural allies in the quest for a better future for the world in the 21st century," he said. President Bill Clinton, a contemporary, agreed, and used that description to open his speech to Indian Parliament in March 2000, with a nod to Vajpayee. Six years later, President George W Bush tweaked it by replacing "allies" with "partner", perhaps to put his own stamp on it. "India in the 21st century is a natural partner of the United States because we are brothers in the cause of human liberty,"



he said in a speech at Purana Qila, New Delhi in March 2006. President Barack Obama opted for a complete overhaul. "The relationship between our two countries has never been stronger -- a reminder that it will be one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century," Obama said, as he received Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as his administration's first state guest in November 2009. The phrase - "one of the defining partnerships of the

21st century" - found instant support bilaterally, and has since been used a countless times since. But the quest for a defining name continued. Canvassing Indian-Americans ahead of the 2016 elections, Donald Trump promised India and the United States will be "best friends" with him in the White House. Setting up Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's visit recently, the state department coined a new one, scrabbling old definitions - "natural

strategic partners". And, in a Bollywood-ish swoon, it said ties between the two countries were "unbreakable". Ashley Tellis, the dean of US experts on ties with India, acknowledged the impossible situation Ivanka Trump was in. "The critics are making a mountain out of a molehill! The terms will be elusive because there are few templates to define the US-India relationship," he wrote in an email.

What the quest for a \$5 trillion economy entails

Did the inertia of the budgetary process sabotage the claimed novelty of the budget? Did it miss a trick?



Following the Economic Survey, which turned it into a hashtag, it was only to be expected that the finance minister would say "it is well within our capacity to reach the \$5 trillion [economy] in the next few years". And well it is. In 2000, India's dollar GDP

was a little less than half a trillion. By 2014, when Narendra Modi came to power, it was a little over 2 trillion dollars - it had risen over four times in 15 years. Indeed, if India continued growing at the same rate it did during the previous NDA regime and 'dysfunctional' UPA

decade, our date with \$5 trillion would have been 2023, just before the next elections. So, will we still get almost there, by almost then, if we just manage to replicate what we did before? What's true of income is also true of taxes. The minister informed us that

direct tax collections rose from Rs 6.38 lakh crore in 2013-14 to Rs 11.37 lakh crore in 2018-19 - an annual increase of 10.3%, "growing at a double digit rate". Of course, the Economic Survey also reminds us that in the eighties, it grew at 16%, in the nineties, at 13.3%, and 15.3% in the 2000s. Indeed, we might pleasantly surprise ourselves. The \$5 trillion discourse is a consequence of compounded growth and the fact the exchange rates have not fully adjusted to inflation differentials, especially in emerging economies where foreign capital likes to invest. The capital inflows prevent the rupee from depreciating as much as it should, given domestic inflation (the budget implicitly assumes it to be 5%) - which actually makes Indian products costlier in dollars than they

should be, which could - possibly - affect our push to grow by exporting. What's good for \$5 trillion is not necessarily good for exports, though it is possible to get real GDP growth, even if export prices face some headwind. We can hope, just like savings is not responsive to interest rates, that our buyers are not that responsive to prices either. Is the budget shifting gears? If so, we are not doing so very abruptly. If we compare the budget shares for outlays on major schemes, it appears that the big expenditures, on PM-Kisan, for example, have been financed largely through redistributing growth in overall expenditure, from Rs 8 lakh crore to over Rs 11 lakh crore. The shares of many older major schemes

has been reduced, even as their absolute allocations have risen. While the minister spoke about gaon, garib and kisan and the common man, the umbrella schemes for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities, has taken a hit, relatively for the first two, and an absolute fall from Rs 3,948 crore in expenditure in 2017-18 to an allocation of Rs 1,590 crore in this budget, a reduction in share from 0.5% to a little over 0.1%. MGNREGS remains substantial, with an allocation of Rs 60,000 crore, more than the actual Rs 55,166 crore spent in 2017-18 and Rs 55,000 crore allocated last year, but its share has dropped by over 20%, from 6.9% to 5.3%. In this budget, at least, MGNREGS is not paying for PM-Kisan.

Why an escalation in US-Iran tensions should worry Delhi

Last week, Britain impounded an Iranian oil tanker in Gibraltar, claiming that the vessel was carrying oil to Syria in violation of the European Union's (EU) sanctions. A senior adviser to the Iranian government responded that if Britain failed to release the vessel, Iran would be forced to seize a British tanker. Coming on the heels of Iran shooting down an American drone that had allegedly violated its airspace, and US President Donald Trump's subsequent revelations about his administration's unimplemented plans for retaliation, the latest incident underscores the risks that lurk in the mounting confrontation between the United States (US) and Iran. India has, so far, focused on coping with American sanctions on importing oil from Iran. The Narendra Modi government should, however, look ahead at potential challenges, especially if the stand-off escalates in the Persian Gulf and threatens larger flows of oil. At a time when the Indian economy is slowing down, this could have significant consequences. To understand the various situations that could unfold, we should look back at the "tanker war" in the 1980s - a conflict that few seem to recall today. The "tanker war" began as the naval dimension of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88). During the war, both sides sought to protect their oil production and distribution while disrupting the other's. In a bid to undermine Iran's oil economy, Iraq attacked oil tankers in the Persian Gulf - attacks that went up significantly from 1984 after the Iraqis acquired French Exocet missiles. The Iranians responded in kind, but initially with restraint. For one thing, Iran was rather more dependent on the sea for its oil exports than Iraq. A major disruption of the maritime traffic in the Persian Gulf would hurt Iran much more. A corollary to this was that Iran did not have suitable targets for retaliating against Iraqi attacks on its vessels. As Iraq stepped up its strikes, Iran responded by attacking neutral shipping. These attacks began in April 1984 with the shelling of an Indian freighter. Iran's main targets were the oil tankers of Iraq's key allies: Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Iran's actions stoked international concerns about the possible closure of the Strait of Hormuz - a vital passage for oil exports from the Arab states. From late 1986, the attacks on Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian vessels grew more potent owing to Iran's acquisition of the Silkworm anti-ship missile. In January 1987, Kuwait, with the backing of other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, formally requested the US for assistance in escorting its oil tankers through the Persian Gulf. At this time, the US was keen to contain the fall-out of the Iran-Contra affair, which stemmed from the Reagan administration's furtive arms sales to Iran.

Congress must take a call on leadership, urgently



As an elder statesman of the Congress, who has worked with four generations of party leaders right from Jawaharlal Nehru, Karan Singh's views carry political weight. In a public statement on Monday, an exasperated Mr Singh said he was "aghast" to see the "confusion and disorientation" in

the Congress since Rahul Gandhi decided to step down as president after the election results. Mr Singh recommended that a Congress Working Committee (CWC) be called urgently, an interim president be appointed, and younger leaders be given an opportunity by picking them as four working

presidents/vice presidents in-charge of north, south, east and west India.

His public intervention comes at a time when there is utter uncertainty within the party ranks about who is in-charge, and rumours abound in New Delhi about the possible alternatives to Mr Gandhi. Three problems are visible, which perhaps is making a decision difficult. The first is there is no clarity on who will indeed take the decision. Formally, it has to be the CWC - but whether it will serve as a rubber stamp or will indeed have a frank and open discussion is not certain. Mr Gandhi said he will not be a part of the process and has empowered a group of senior leaders. But whether these senior leaders can indeed

take a decision autonomously and enforce it is not clear because everyone in the party believes that the next president must have the support of the Nehru-Gandhi family - and therefore are spending time second-guessing their choices. It is also unclear if the next president is a mere interim measure till, say, Priyanka Gandhi takes over or will actually be able to exercise power.

The second issue is whether it should be a senior leader or whether the generational transition effected with Mr Gandhi's elevation should persist. If it is the former, can the leader actually inspire the rank and file and bring the Congress out of the present crisis? If it is the latter, will the senior leaders accept

someone who is still in their 40s or early 50s? The third issue is whether it should be someone from the north or south. The party has done well in the south - so it will be tempting to pick someone from the region - but the challenge is in reviving the party in the north and west, among social groups, which have deserted the Congress - and so it is perhaps more prudent to pick a leader from the heartland. An electoral shock of this magnitude can unsettle any party. But the Congress must get out of its self-induced stupor and decide on the question of leadership urgently. Otherwise it stares at the prospect of large-scale desertions, factional wars, a demoralised cadre, and more electoral setbacks.

As the Opposition struggles, the BJP leverages its win

It has just been six weeks since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) stormed to power for a second time. It would have been understandable if the party, flush with victory, decided to step back. Leaders and the cadre could have easily slid into complacency, enjoying the privileges of power and rested easy till the next round of the elections. It was the Opposition which, one assumed, would be driven to action - introspecting, understanding reasons for their failure, going back to the ground, strengthening their organisation, reaching out to social groups and individuals, and selecting new leaders. What is happening in Indian politics is, however, just the

reverse. On Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi kicked off a fresh membership drive for the BJP in Varanasi. In 2014, soon after Amit Shah took over as the party president, the BJP embarked on a similar exercise. What could have just turned out to be a customary process ended up as a mega campaign. That led to the formal enrolment in the party hitting close to 100 million members - prompting Mr Shah to claim that the BJP was the world's largest party. Many doubted the veracity of the figure, but there was little doubt that the campaign kept the party machine active, swelled its ranks, and gave it access to formidable data - mobile numbers, addresses, and demographic profile of its

entire structure. This data was then used for the various campaigns the party did over the past five years and in elections. After the 2019 victory, the party has started another similar drive. The moment is ripe, for given, Mr Modi's popularity and the sheer dominance it enjoys in Indian politics at the moment, many are sure to gravitate towards the party.

This will then be followed by a process of internal elections. The BJP's claims of democracy here however can be questioned - most office bearers from the national level to the district level are selected by consensus rather than internal polls. But nonetheless, this will create a



pool of new leaders, generate political opportunities for many, and culminate in the election of a new party president by early next year. Working president JP Nadda is most likely to

succeed Mr Shah. The BJP clearly has its eyes set on both strengthening the organisation, and preparing for upcoming polls. The Opposition would do well to learn.

The challenges Congress faces in its future without a Gandhi at the helm

The leaders crowding the anti-BJP space lack the conviction or the political heft to fight the saffron surge. The communists, the socialists, the syndicate which fought Indira Gandhi, have passed into history or are in disarray.

For decades, the Congress hadn't planned for life without the Gandhi-Nehru family. It did live without them after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination and Sonia Gandhi's refusal to take up the mantle. That was the period when, under PV Narasimha Rao, the party weakened, withered and splintered, despite governmental power at the Centre. Things turned from bad to worse when Sitaram Kesari became president. The odds the party now faces are greater. Its main rival, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has today the popular appeal and presence matching the Congress of the Indira Gandhi era. In the Opposition ranks, including the Congress, there's no Jayaprakash Narayan, Chandrashekhar, Atal Bihar Vajpayee, Charan Singh, Raj Narain, Jagjivan Ram, Madhu

Limaye, George Fernandes, EMS Nambooridpad, Jyoti Basu or LK Advani to weave a counter-narrative, let alone turning the tide. The leaders crowding the anti-BJP space lack the conviction or the political heft to fight the saffron surge. The communists, the socialists, the syndicate which fought Indira Gandhi, have passed into history or are in disarray. It was their decline and the weakening of the Congress that gave rise to regional forces and faces who guarded their turfs without a national vision. Some among them, such as the Samajwadi Party, and, to some extent, the Bahujan Samaj Party, were swept aside by the BJP in the recent Lok Sabha polls.

Can the Congress, shorn of the dynasty tag, reinvent itself and be relevant in a contemporary

India that's centrally unitary and provincially federal? The contrast is inherent in the BJP's massive parliamentary mandate and the variety of parties voted to state legislatures in the south and in the east. The Centre-state pattern in the political landscape is hard to miss. The numerically formidable BJP-ruled Delhi is balanced by strongly mandated non-BJP regimes in Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Chattisgarh. Had it not been for the deep saffron inroads in the parliamentary polls, the Trinamool Congress (TMC)-ruled West Bengal could also have been included in the list. An acceptance of this situation is at the root of Narendra Modi's National Ambition, Regional Aspiration (NARA) outreach. At least in words, he recognises the many



hues of the mandate while promising to work with his (regional) allies for even those who voted against the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The Opposition is in tatters and the BJP raring to further expand its reach. Will the impending polls in Delhi, Haryana, Jharkhand and Maharashtra reinforce or alter this unitary-federal distribution of power? Early snapshots from these states, nevertheless, show that the Congress has its task cut out for itself under a non-Gandhi.

A dispirited, moribund principal Opposition could end up

strengthening the unitary against the federal. It's here that Rahul Gandhi's hurry to quit without a successor in place might irreparably hurt the party. Regardless of the dispensation under which it works, the Congress's immediate goals include dousing factionalism and keeping power in the five states where it has governments. A good performance, if at all, in any of the poll-bound states could be the cherry on the cake. There, too, it has grave fault lines within, be it Haryana, Delhi or Maharashtra.

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The crisis in India's regional parties

The post 1989 normal is broken. The rise of the BJP system - much like the Congress system of the early decades after Independence - has thrown regional parties off-gear.

(News Agencies)-If a week is a long time in politics, 30 years is an eternity. It was in 1989 when Indian politics saw a decisive shift. At the centre, the era of Congress hegemony ended - not to be replaced by another large national formation but a constellation of forces, where parties with strong regional roots played a key role. In the states, specific regional parties, often rooted in movements of marginalised castes, became ascendant. The 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2009 general elections all confirmed the trend. The Union could only be run with the support of regional parties. Coalitions, it seemed, were here to stay - and be it the Congress or the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), they could only form the government if they showed a willingness to accommodate smaller parties from across the country.

The 2014 election overturned this thesis - with the BJP winning a majority on its own. But it felt like

a one-off event. Indian politics would return to the old normal, predicted most observers. But the 2019 election saw Narendra Modi return with a bigger majority. This, then, must prompt the question: Is there a new normal emerging, where the era of regional parties being the swing force at the Centre is ending?

While significant attention has been paid to the crisis in the Congress after the election results of May 23, there needs to be more focus on the state of the rest of the Opposition. Both the results, and developments since then, show that those regional parties are now fighting a real battle for survival.

Take the south. In Andhra Pradesh, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) is imploding. N Chandrababu Naidu saw himself as a man who could select the next prime minister till six weeks ago, active in bringing together non-BJP forces. Now, he is struggling to keep his own party intact, with four Rajya Sabha

MPs defecting to the BJP and a steady stream of state leaders crossing over. With the BJP targeting Andhra Pradesh (which sends 25 MPs to the Lok Sabha) for the next election, if this trend continues, do not be surprised if the saffron outfit becomes a key player and turns the politics of the state genuinely triangular. In Karnataka, the Janata Dal (Secular) is in government. But the defeat of party patriarch HD Deve Gowda, the fragility of its coalition with the Congress, and the major inroads made by the BJP in the state, is sounding alarm bells in the party.

In the east, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) protected its citadel of Odisha and Naveen Patnaik returned to power for the fifth time. But the state voted differently in the Lok Sabha polls, with the BJP winning eight seats. The saffron outfit is now biding its time, for it realises that after Patnaik, the BJD, in the absence of any second-rung leader, may well crumble. In



West Bengal, the Trinamool Congress remains a dominant player. But with the BJP making major gains in the state, emerging as the principal opposition, weaning away a substantial segment of leaders and voters from the rest of the political field, and posing a formidable challenge in the 2021 assembly polls, Mamata Banerjee can no longer rest easy.

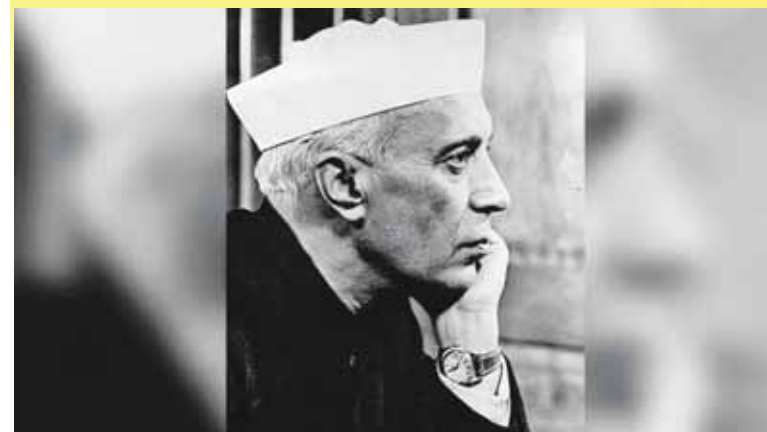
In the west, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in Maharashtra faced a severe drubbing, with a member of Sharad Pawar's own family losing for the first time. The state government's decision to grant reservations to Marathas, now upheld by the Bombay High

Court, will also have an electoral impact, and could well see a swing of Maratha votes - considered the NCP's base - towards the BJP in the upcoming assembly polls.

But the real churn is happening in the north. In Bihar, not only did the Rashtriya Janata Dal fail to win a single seat, it faces a crisis of relevance. The party's supreme leader, Lalu Prasad, is in jail, and unwell; his son, Tejaswi, is perceived as inadequate to the task and his disappearing act since the election has eroded his credibility severely. The party's own Yadav vote base has seen a dent with a section of the community moving to the BJP.

Did Jawaharlal Nehru mishandle

Many believe Nehru's judgment was clouded by his personal attachment to Kashmir. That could be his biggest lapse. But isn't the BJP raking up all this and also exaggerating it for political purposes?



(News Agencies)- It's odd that 50 years after his death, the question 'Did Nehru mishandle Kashmir or is he being unfairly blamed?' is being asked. But since Amit Shah has raised the issue, let me attempt an answer. However, I shall only focus on the issues that are conflict points between the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). First, Amit Shah has claimed Nehru wrongly declared a ceasefire in 1948 and, as a result, one-third of the state was lost to India. This is arguably

corroborated by unverified reports that Gen Cariappa, who was the commander in charge of the fighting, disagreed with the ceasefire decision. He felt India could regain all of Jammu and Kashmir if the Army was given three weeks more. However, a decision to ceasefire is not determined by generals alone. In 1948, Nehru had three good reasons for ordering one. He faced international pressure - specifically from the US - which a one-year-old country would have found hard to resist. Equally importantly, beyond the ceasefire

line, the terrain and logistics were increasingly in Pakistan's favour whilst the forces our Army would have confronted would be the Pakistan army and not the Pathan Lashkars. The second charge is: Nehru referred the Kashmir issue to the United Nations (UN). Few would disagree that time has proved this to be a bad decision. Even contemporaneously, Sardar Patel, the deputy prime minister, advised against it. There is, however, another way of looking at the matter. Mridula Mukherjee, a former director of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, says if India hadn't gone to the UN, there was every likelihood Pakistan would have

as "victims" and not as alleged "aggressors". Also, in the late 1940s, referring Kashmir to the UN was viewed as a high-minded and noble gesture. It was before the Cold War started and, therefore, impossible to perceive India would get bogged down in divisive politics. The third charge is Nehru linked Kashmir to the Indian Union by way of Article 370 and did not fully merge the state in the way all the other princely states were merged. His supporters defend this on the grounds of the special circumstances of Kashmir's accession. They point out that Kashmir only acceded in terms of three issues, defence, foreign affairs and communications. But that's also true of every other state. After all,

the Instrument of Accession was the same. Secondly, accession happened in 1947 whilst Article 370 was incorporated into the Constitution in 1949. So can you really justify the latter in terms of the former? The truth is 370 was intended to be temporary and transitional but because the Kashmiri constituent assembly failed to recommend its abrogation before its own dissolution it's now deemed permanent.

Surely it was incumbent on Nehru, who served as prime minister for 17 years after Kashmir's accession, to ensure 370 was revoked and Kashmir fully merged rather than let this special status continue? I, at least, haven't found a convincing answer to that question.

Is it a crime? asks BJP MLA caught on camera dancing, brandishing guns



(News Agencies)-After in both his hands and his suspended Uttarakhand BJP mouth, the lawmaker said he MLA Pranav Champion was seen was being needlessly targeted in a video dancing to Bollywood by media. tunes while brandishing guns Champion who is under

Champion who is under suspension from his party for indiscipline was caught on camera dancing to Bollywood item songs while holding guns in both his hands and one in his mouth.

suspension from his party for indiscipline was caught on camera dancing to Bollywood item songs while holding guns in both his hands and one in his mouth. The video of the incident was widely shared on social media.

"This is a conspiracy. They are licensed weapons and not loaded. I have been targeted by

the press and they are putting false allegations," Champion said. "I'm not pointing towards anyone or threatening anyone. What is my crime? Is drinking alcohol and keeping a licensed gun a crime?" he further asked.

Champion was also found using abusive and foul language in the clip while

shaking a leg on the song from the famous Bollywood movie 'Karan Arjun.'

His supporters were also seen supporting him in the shameful act. BJP national media in-charge Anil Baluni condemned the act by Champion and said that he will hold discussion with Uttarakhand unit on the same.

Former minister Gayatri Prajapati, 4 IAS officers booked by CBI in UP mining scam

The Uttar Pradesh government mandated e-tendering for renewal and award of fresh lease for sand mining in the state on May, 2012, which the Allahabad High Court upheld on January, 2013.

(News Agencies)-The CBI has registered two fresh cases in Uttar Pradesh mining scam naming four IAS officers and former minister Gayatri Prajapati as accused and carried out searches at 12 locations in the state, officials said Wednesday. The agency's FIR names Prajapati, a former minister in the Samajwadi Party government, and then principal secretary Jiwesh Nandan, special secretary Santosh Kumar, then district magistrates Abhay and Vivek, they said.

The Uttar Pradesh government had mandated e-tendering for renewal and award of fresh lease for sand mining in the state on May 31, 2012, which was upheld by the Allahabad High Court on January 29, 2013. In the case involving Prajapati, the agency has alleged that beneficiaries Shiv Singh and Sukhraj used the influence of the minister to get their lease renewed. The agency has alleged that Nandan Kumar and then district magistrate of Fatehpur Abhay allegedly conspired with the minister to get the lease renewed in the matter of Sukhraj in 2014 while Singh managed to get his lease renewed in 2012. The lease were allegedly renewed in violation of e-tendering policy of the state

government. In the second case, the agency has alleged that Vivek while posted as the DM in Deoria allowed renewal of lease of one Sharda Yadav. Yadav, whose petition for renewal of lease was dismissed by the Allahabad High Court on April 5, 2013, managed to get it renewed next day in conspiracy with Vivek and other officials of the district, the CBI alleged. The agency teams descended at 12 locations in the state, including in the premises of 2007-batch IAS officer Abhay, presently the district magistrate of Bulandshahr, and 2009-batch IAS officer Vivek, the mission director of Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission to carry out searches after registering the FIRs, they said. The searches are spread at 12 locations including Bulandshahr, Lucknow, Fatehpur, Azamgarh, Allahabad, Noida, Gorakhpur, Deoria among others. The officials said cash of around Rs 47 lakh was recovered from the premises of Abhay while around Rs 10 lakh was recovered from the residence of Devi Sharan Upadhyay, the then ADM of Deoria.

Upadhyay is presently posted as the CDO in Azamgarh, which was also searched. The agency also seized some documents related to properties from the premises of Vivek. PTI ABS DPB



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Wrong placing of height barrier blamed for Dubai bus crash that killed 12 Indians

The Dubai Police blamed the 53-year-old Omani driver, who was moderately injured, for the accident, saying at times a small mistake or negligence can lead to adverse consequences.

(News Agencies)- The placing of the height barrier in which a passenger bus crashed in Dubai, killing 17 people including 12 Indians, was in violation of the safety guidelines, a court in the UAE was told.

Twelve Indians were among the 17 people killed in the horrific bus accident on Jun 7 when the bus, coming from Oman, wrongly entered a road not designated for buses and crashed into a height barrier that cut the left side of the bus and killed passengers sitting on that side.

The other deceased include two Pakistanis, one Omani and one Filipina.

Mohammad Al Tamimi, one of the two lawyers representing the driver, told the Dubai Traffic Court that the distance between the warning signboard and the height barrier was only 12 metres, the Gulf News reported Tuesday.

"The mistake is in the place of the height barrier according to the pictures in the accident scene. The GCC guideline for positioning advance warning signs states that if the road's speed limit is 60km/h, then the distance between the signboard or height restriction chain and the height barrier should be 60 metres, not 12 metres in our case," Al Tamimi told the court.

According to Traffic Prosecution, the speed limit on that road is 40 km/h.

The Dubai Police blamed the 53-year-old Omani driver, who was moderately injured, for the accident, saying "at times a small mistake or negligence can lead to adverse consequences". "It was too short a distance to stop the vehicle. It is not the defendant's mistake and not his negligence. Putting the height barrier in a wrong place caused the accident," Al Tamimi said. Al Tamimi claimed there is no proof that the defendant was driving the bus at 94kph when the crash happened.

He asked the court to assign a specialised engineer from the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) to inspect the crash site and make a report of the positioning of warning



signboards and the height barrier, the report said.

Meanwhile, the second defence lawyer Mohammed Al Sabri accused the RTA of eight "mistakes" found by a report prepared by the company that owns the bus. He submitted a copy of the report to the court and requested the appointment of an expert to examine the accident location and check if the "mistakes" were committed by the RTA. "The reason behind the accident was the solid height barrier and its positioning. The sun at the time of the accident [5pm] blurred the signboards to

the driver. The confession of the driver is not enough to convict him," Al Sabri told the judge.

Last week, prosecutor Salah Bu Farousha Al Felasi, director of Traffic Prosecution, said the driver couldn't follow the signboards as the sun shade had obstructed his view. "He admitted to lowering the sun shade and didn't notice the signboards or warning signs, despite having used the road several times before the accident," said Al Felasi. "His reckless driving, not paying attention to the road and his speeding, caused the disaster," he added.

NIA attaches top Kashmiri women's separatist leader's house in terror case



(News Agencies)-The National Investigative Agency (NIA) has attached the house of Dukhtaran-e-Millat chief Asiya Andrabi. She along with other separatists leaders are being probed for funding terror incidents by the federal anti-terror probe agency.

Asiya Andrabi and Shabir Shah, another separatist leader, are currently lodged in Tihar jail.

The NIA has attached a house belonging to Asiya Andrabi situated at 90 Feet Road Saura, Srinagar. "Asiya Andrabi is the chairperson of Dukhtaran-E-Millat (a proscribed terrorist organisation under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act)," the NIA said.

Earlier, the NIA had also attached the property of Shabir Shah.

Once a property is attached, it cannot be sold, transferred with the permission of the authorities. The move is part of the Centre's two-pronged strategy to deal with Kashmir situation.

First, the security forces have increased the tempo of counter-terror operations within the Kashmir Valley. Security forces have killed 125 terrorists in the first six months alone - much higher than previous years. Along the borders with Pakistan, India has maintained an aggressive posture.

Secondly, the Home Ministry is also engaging the newly-elected local bodies such as sarpanches or village heads rather than only focusing on the mainstream political parties. The govt has allocated Rs 3,700 crore for local bodies and small to medium developmental works to be carried by local bodies. Of this, Rs 1800 crore will be spent in the valley. In addition, the Home Ministry has also rejected any engagement with separatist leaders. "Our focus is the common man, providing relief to people-at-large and not political parties," a senior official who didn't want to be named said.

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Out to catch crabs, woman dragged away by tiger in Bengal's Sundarbans



(News Agencies)- Banalata Tarafdar, a middle-aged woman, was dragged away by a tiger in Pirkhali in the core area of the Sundarbans, where she had gone to catch crabs on Monday. Three other women who had accompanied Tarafdar on a boat, managed to return safely and

informed the forest department and police station about the incident. "They had valid permission for going into the forest area to catch fish. We are conducting searches for the woman who was taken away by the tiger," said Tripti Saha, divisional forest officer (south) in South 24

Parganas district. According to the local people, 50-year-old Banalata, who is a resident of Gosaba area, about 87 km to the south of Kolkata, was on a boat when a tiger suddenly attacked the boat. Though the three somehow managed to jump into the river, the tiger caught hold of Tarafdar

Three other women who had accompanied Tarafdar on a boat, managed to return safely and informed the forest department and police station about the incident.

and dragged her away. "Those who accompanied my wife told me that a tiger dragged her away from the boat," Gour Tarafdar, the husband of the victim said. Incidentally, Tarafdar is the eighth person to be taken away by a tiger in the Sundarbans since December 2018. They had ventured into the core area of the forest either to catch fish and crabs or collect honey. In 2018, at least 12 people were killed in tiger attacks in the Sundarbans. Rivers and narrow creeks criss-cross the Sundarbans -- often not more than 15-20 feet wide -- these contain a lot of fish and crabs. Those who venture out to catch fish in these creeks often

fall prey to such attacks. Many of the villagers who go to fish in the core areas don't have permits to enter these areas. While the tigers sometimes attack fishermen who step on the land, the animals also jump onto the boats that are often within their range since the channels are narrow. In a separate incident on Monday, seven forest department employees including a beat officer and a range officer were seriously injured when forest personnel were attacked in Ramganga of South 24 Parganas district. The incident took place when forest officers seized four boats of villagers who went fishing in the core area of the forest.

Man with fake government ID held for trying to siphon off money from ministries

Noor Mohammad, a resident of Moregaon in Assam, was arrested earlier by Delhi police for a similar offence, in which over Rs 3.8 crore was fraudulently withdrawn from the accounts of the Health Ministry, Anyesh Roy, DCP (cyber crime), said.

(News Agencies)- A 21-year-old man has been arrested for creating a fake identity card of a Pay and Accounts Officer of the central government to siphon off money from the bank accounts of various ministries through bogus bills, police said. Noor Mohammad, a resident of Moregaon in Assam, was arrested earlier by Delhi police for a similar offence, in which over Rs 3.8 crore was fraudulently withdrawn from the accounts of the Health Ministry, Anyesh Roy, DCP (cyber crime), said. He was released on bail a few

weeks ago and he hatched another conspiracy. In the latest case, the Ministry of Labour and Employment complained to Delhi police on June 25 about an e-mail from "Lalit Dagar", who claimed he was appointed as the new Pay & Accounts Officer of the ministry's Directorate General of Employment in Chennai. The accused requested the approval of his user-ID on the Public Financial Management System and also mentioned a mobile number and a landline number.

But because of the alert officials in the ministry, he was nabbed. "The accused, identified as Noor Mohammad, a resident of Moregaon in Assam, along with his associates, had earlier managed to successfully create and get approved a fake ID of PAO officer in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and managed to fraudulently create bills and thus, transfer money to the tune of Rs 3.86 crore to multiple bank accounts," Roy said Tuesday. Similar complaints have been received from other ministries including



Coal, Civil Aviation and Law, in to get a fake and bogus PFMS which Mohammad had attempted IDs approved, the DCP said.

Cabinet nod to POCSO Act amendment that includes death penalty



(News Agencies)-The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved amendments in the POCSO Act, which deals with crime against children, and included death penalty for sexual assault on minors, officials said. The amendments in the Protection of Children from

Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act also provide for fines and imprisonment to curb child pornography. The changes are expected to discourage the trend of child sexual abuse by acting as a deterrent due to strong penal provisions incorporated in the Act, the

government said. "It intends to protect the interest of vulnerable children in times of distress and ensures their safety and dignity. The amendment is aimed to establish clarity regarding the aspects of child abuse and punishment thereof," it said.

What's Worth Noting In Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget

(News Agencies)- The first hour of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's budget speech presenting had one significant omission: any actual budgeting. There were barely any numbers in it. Instead, it was a lengthy medley of policy priorities, praise of the government's record, and quotes from Mahatma Gandhi and various spiritual leaders. But she didn't bother to tell parliament or the watching nation - not to mention investors - how much she intended to spend, and on what. Even more oddly, the single most watched number of any budget presentation - the Finance Ministry's target for the fiscal deficit as a proportion of gross domestic product - was tacked in almost as an afterthought, after the budget speech had formally concluded. I'm not sure whether this is a sign of great confidence, or of the lack

thereof. Perhaps Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, fresh off a resounding re-election victory, feels it owes less than ever to the kind of person who cares about budgetary allocations or deficit projections. Or perhaps, in keeping with its attitude to data and statistics more generally, it doesn't want to make it easy for people to evaluate how well its actually doing its job. The annual budget exercise in India is far more consequential than its equivalents elsewhere. It's true, however, that this is because it is more than a mere statement of accounts. The Indian government's ability to influence the broader economy, for good or ill, is so vast that the budget speech sets the tenor for market sentiment; it serves also as a general statement of what the government's priorities are, and how it intends to go about them. So from that point of view, I guess

I understand Sitharaman's decision - why not just drop all that pesky accounting and those boring numbers altogether and focus on the good stuff? Marketing is the government's forte, after all. But even judged purely on its ability to message the Modi government's intent, I am not sure it succeeded. Many hoped that now that he was re-elected, Modi would finally unleash "big-bang" structural reform. There were many welcome policy initiatives announced through the speech - but what it failed to provide was a coherent message of how the government views the Indian economy's current slowdown - and its way out of it. This is a pity, particularly because the government's own Economic Survey, released as is traditional the day before the budget speech, did indeed provide a coherent roadmap. The survey



argued that the government had to focus on re-energising private investment above all, and that a pre-requisite for that was administrative reform and an "aggressive exports strategy". But this sensible advice was ignored in the budget - which instead furthered India's recent turn to protectionism and autarky by raising tariffs on a range of goods, including some intermediate goods. Interestingly, this is one of the few budget speeches to not begin with a long list of promises and disbursements to farmers. Of course farmers were in there - but they were third

on the list, behind the transport and financial sector. That's an interesting choice - the interim budget was entirely about farmers and the poor, and this one front-loaded measures to shore up troubled finance and invest in infrastructure. It's possible the fact that there's been an election in between those two speeches has something to do with the change. That section on financial sector measures was interesting: it showed a level of competence and domain expertise that few generally associate with the Modi government in this realm.

All in a day: Karnataka crisis explained in 10 points

(News Agencies)- The Karnataka political drama played out in three locations - Mumbai, Bengaluru and New Delhi - on an action-packed Wednesday when Congress leader DK Shivakumar landed in Mumbai to meet rebel MLAs who had resigned last week, waited for close to five hours in rain and was eventually detained, almost pulled out by police while he was being interviewed by a TV channel. The crisis, precipitated by 13 MLAs - 10 of the Congress, 3 of JD(S) - sending their resignations to Speaker threatening the government's slim majority in the 224-member assembly. Two independent MLAs withdrew their support to the state's Congress-JD(S) coalition government on Monday. A suspended lawmaker separately confirmed he would quit. Earlier, 12 lawmakers put in their papers on Saturday. The strength of Karnataka's 224-member assembly will be reduced to 211 if their resignations are accepted. A party or a coalition would need 106 seats to form a government in such a scenario. The Speaker, who holds the key now, rejected 8 resignations and asked five others to meet and convince him that their letters offering to demit membership of the House were indeed genuine. Here's all that happened during the day:

1. As soon as the news came in that Karnataka leaders may visit rebel MLAs

in a Mumbai hotel, the holed up lawmakers wrote to Mumbai police saying they felt "threatened" as some leaders from their state would "storm" the Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel in Powai. Karnataka Congress leader DK Shivakumar landed at Mumbai's Renaissance hotel, was unable to cross the police ring around the hotel that cancelled his booking citing 'emergency in the hotel'. He decided to wait saying: "I'll not go without meeting my friends ... They'll call me. Their heart will break. I'm in touch with them already, hearts of both of us are beating," he said, according to news agency ANI.

3. After cancelling his booking, Mumbai hotel served Shivakumar tea, doughnuts during his stake-out.

Meanwhile, the rebels moved the Supreme Court complaining that Karnataka Speaker KR Ramesh Kumar was not performing his constitutional mandate and delaying acceptance of their letters.

5. In Bengaluru, Ghulam Nabi Azad and other Congress leaders protested outside Governor's house and are detained.

6. BJP leader BS Yeddyurappa, after meeting Karnataka Governor, said: I requested the Governor to convey to Speaker that he should take necessary action immediately. Kumaraswamy has no moral right to continue as Chief Minister, they don't have the numbers.

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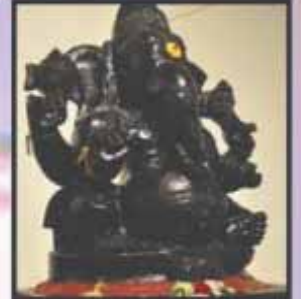
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Fake News Could Lead to Real War

Here's a confession from two former senior government officials: For days after the attacks, we weren't sure. Both of us believed in all sincerity there was a good chance these actions were part of a false flag operation, an effort by outsiders to trigger a war between the United States and Iran. Even the film of Iranians hauling in an unexploded limpet mine from near the side of tanker, we reasoned, might be a fabrication-deep fake footage just like the clip of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi staggering around drunkenly. Perhaps you felt that way too. But for the two of us, with 30 years of government service and almost 20 more as think tankers between us, this was shocking. Yes, we are card-carrying members of the "Blob," the all-too-conventionally minded Washington foreign policy establishment, but we weren't sure whether to believe our government. This was more than a little disconcerting. Imagine waking up one morning and catching yourself thinking that alt-right conspiracy theorist Alex Jones was making good sense, that perhaps the Sandy Hook shooting was faked or that the 9/11 attacks were really an inside job? Imagine what it might be like to be in the grip of a conspiracy theory, when you've spent your whole professional life being one of those policy mandarins who could smell a conspiracy theory a mile away?

And we weren't alone. In conversations with former colleagues-ambassadors, undersecretaries and the like-we found that plenty of others also bought the notion that the tanker attacks were a false flag op. To these eminences, it seemed plausible the Saudis or others had staged the bombings. After all, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has practically been cheerleading for a conflict, and the idea that the Iranians would risk a U.S. attack seemed risible. It wasn't obvious why Iran would court humiliation in a military showdown, or, for that matter, attack a Japanese tanker while the Japanese prime minister was visiting Tehran.

After conversations with other colleagues still in the government whom we trust and who attested that beyond a doubt, the Iranians were behind it, we came around to the official position. The narrative that Iran was, through the attacks, trying to prod other countries to pressure the U.S. to relax its sanctions makes sense-it is not far from the kind of stunts North Korea has pulled in the past. But the whole unsettling episode opened our eyes to a deeply troubling reality: The current fake news epidemic isn't just shaking up U.S. politics, it might

end up causing a war, or just as consequentially, impeding a national response to a genuine threat.

Thus far, public discussion of deep fakes-and fake news more broadly-has focused on domestic politics and particularly elections. That was inevitable after the Russian interference on President Donald Trump's behalf in 2016-the dimensions of which were laid out both in the unprecedented joint assessment of the NSA, CIA and FBI in February 2017 and the Mueller report in April 2019.

But fake news' implications for foreign and security policy might be as far-reaching-and even more dangerous. Misinformation in geopolitics could lead not only to the continued weakening of our institutions but also to combat deaths. Sure, fake news has been a feature of international relations for a long time, but it's different now: Advancing technology that can fabricate convincing images and videos combined with the chronic, exuberant dishonesty of the commander in chief and his minions have meant that no one can feel confident in assessing life-or-death choices in foreign policy crisis. For a democracy-one with global interests-this is a disaster.

The history of falsified or manufactured pretexts for war is a long one-and even implicates our heroes. Paul Revere, in his famous engraving of the 1770 Boston Massacre, depicted an organized line of British soldiers firing point blank into a crowd of Bostonians, portraying the scene as more of a mass execution than the confused and inadvertent shooting it actually was. In the 1840s, the not-so-heroic Polk administration wanted to expand slave-holding territory and sought to expand the borders of the United States in the southwest at Mexico's expense. Mobilizing an army for this purpose proved difficult, despite lavish incentives for recruits. President James K. Polk reckoned he would have to whip up war fever by engineering a Mexican attack, so he had General Zachary Taylor-who would later ride his war record to the White House-deploy a force into territory claimed by both the U.S. and Mexico between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande, effectively daring the Mexicans to attack the Americans. The Mexicans took the bait, starting a war that ended up costing them their foothold in what is today the United States. Skeptical citizens pushed back against such gambits. A first-term congressman named Abraham Lincoln introduced a series of resolutions demanding Polk declare whether the "particular spot of soil on which the blood of our citizens was so shed" was

American. His fervent efforts earned him the nickname "Spotty Lincoln," which remained with him until he was elected president. But the deception didn't stop with Polk. In 1898, the McKinley administration exploited the sinking of the USS Maine in Havana Harbor to justify war with Spain and America's first imperial thrust. The Cubans had been seeking independence from Spain since 1895; the USS Maine had been sent to Cuba to underscore Washington's interest in the conflict and safeguard American lives and property. After an explosion sent the ship to the bottom of the harbor along with 260 sailors, a naval commission of inquiry determined that a Spanish mine was to blame; but two of the Navy's own leading experts, who thought the fatal detonation was due to an accidental internal explosion, were not consulted. Today, experts agree that the explosion was accidental and not due to a mine. President William McKinley, to be fair, had been working to restrain Spanish repression in Cuba-Madrid had established reconcentradocamps where ordinary Cubans were penned up to prevent collaboration with Cuban rebels-and was making diplomatic progress. But given the commercial pressure to protect U.S. business interests in Cuba and war fever ignited by the yellow journalism of William Randolph Hearst's newspapers, the Navy's erroneous determination that the USS Maine was destroyed by a Spanish mine made war all but inevitable. The modern history of the fraudulent *casus belli* begins in 1964, on the cusp of the Johnson administration's initial escalation of the Vietnam War. During a tense period off the North Vietnamese coast, North Vietnamese patrol boats in the Gulf of Tonkin attacked the USS Maddox, a destroyer quietly gathering intelligence from international waters.

Ambassador Daniel Benjamin is director of the John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth College and served as coordinator for counterterrorism at the State Department 2009-2012.

Steven Simon is visiting professor of history at Amherst College. He served as the National Security Council senior director for counterterrorism and for the Middle East and North Africa, respectively, in the Clinton and Obama administrations.

The North Vietnamese mistakenly believed the Maddox was there to support South Vietnamese commandos raiding nearby island installations. Two days later, amid a storm, the crews of the Maddox and another destroyer, the USS

Turner Joy, thought they were under attack, mistaking the sound of their own propellers for incoming torpedoes and charging patrol boats amid the crashing waves and high winds.

After unleashing a barrage of hundreds of shells into empty seas, the commanders concluded that they might well not have been targeted. But the incident was manipulated by Washington officials to appear as though a battle had taken place, with intelligence falsified to support this conclusion. Congress gave President Lyndon B. Johnson what he wanted, which was broad authorization to use force. This in turn enabled the Johnson administration to build up the U.S. presence in South Vietnam and expand the scope of U.S. combat operations without having to return to Congress for authorization. Gloating about the resolution, Johnson said: "It's like grandmother's nightshirt. It covers everything."

In 2003, it was George W. Bush's turn, as his administration used flawed intelligence assessments about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and imagined links between Saddam Hussein's regime and al-Qaida to justify a war with Iraq that was essentially unrelated to the crisis surrounding the 9/11 attacks. In that case, the administration went so far as to set up a parallel intelligence operation within the Pentagon to put the right spin on the information the CIA had deemed unreliable and left on the cutting room floor.

Starting wars under false pretenses is bad business, but the corrosive belief that the government habitually lies to the public on issues of war and peace poses its own set of dangers. We also have some direct experience here. In August 1998, we were working on counterterrorism at the National Security Council when two U.S. embassies in Africa were bombed by al-Qaida. The Clinton administration acted on the basis of credible intelligence and targeted terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and the al-Shifa chemical plant in Khartoum, Sudan, where it was believed Osama bin Laden's organization was developing chemical weapons.

The attacks were controversial because of contradictory information about the targeted plant, public skepticism about the terrorist threat and the Monica Lewinsky scandal. President Bill Clinton was accused of trying to distract from his troubles at home by attacking abroad. But in the aftermath of 9/11, the strikes look like a prudent action in the face of worrisome intelligence.

Then, in December of that year, Clinton again took a thrashing in the

media for allegedly "wagging the dog" to distract voters from his political troubles once again by launching a four-day intensive air campaign against Iraqi WMD sites. Today the question of when and whether to trust the government is becoming exponentially more difficult. Sure, the U.S. has always exploited or contrived pretexts for war, and we are hardly alone in that regard. But right now, we are dealing with emerging technology and a leader for whom truth is not a meaningful discursive category that taken together will profoundly complicate judgments relating to the commitment of military force.

The scope for manipulation is enormous. One can easily imagine the havoc caused by falsified video that depicts foreign Iranian officials collaborating with terrorists to target the U.S. Or by something as simple as invented news reports about Iranian or North Korean military plans for preemptive strikes on any number of targets. The universe of possible counterfeiters is large and growing: The Russians are not the sole purveyors of such corrosive material-the New Yorker, for example, has reported on an Israeli firm hired by California businessmen to deploy computer-generated lies about candidates for local office. The defense and intelligence establishments of numerous countries, as well as plenty of private entities, are likely able to do this kind of deception now.

Governments, if they so choose, could rely on one fabrication upon another to provide the pretext for war and the confirmation of the rectitude of their actions. Imagine living in virtual reality game, and you're not far off. In the aftermath of the Gulf of Tonkin incident, intercepted North Vietnamese communications were cut, pasted, combined and falsely dated to provide "evidence" of the nonexistent attacks on the Turner Joy. With techniques now available, experts could combine these forgeries with vivid images of ships carrying out attacks and voice recordings to mesh with the rigged intercept transcripts. Leaders of other countries could be falsely portrayed in tangible ways to be discussing plans to attack U.S. interests. Or opponents of a president's belligerent policies could be similarly "caught" in treasonous discussions with adversaries. Advances in lip-syncing and manipulating physiognomic contours to match speech patterns and content will make such videos extremely compelling, especially when viewed on the small, comparatively low-resolution displays on most telephones and tablets.

(Contd on page 20)

Inside Jeffrey Epstein's New York mansion: 'Vast trove' of lewd photos, a life-size doll and other oddities

its sex trafficking allegations against Epstein but also "hundreds - and perhaps thousands - of sexually suggestive photographs of fully - or partially - nude females."

While investigators were still reviewing the material, the memo said one of the girls, according to her attorney, "was underage at the time the relevant photographs were taken."

It noted that other photographs

were found in a locked safe that included CDs with handwritten labels including the descriptions "'Young [Name] + [Name]," "Misc nudes 1," and "Girl pics nude."

In calling for Epstein to remain in jail, the memo noted that he is a registered sex offender after a 2008 conviction in Florida and "is not reformed, he is not chastened, he is not repentant, rather he is a continuing danger to the community and an individual who faces devastating evidence

supporting deeply serious charges."

Epstein, 66, has pleaded not guilty to one federal count of sex trafficking and one count of sex trafficking conspiracy for allegedly sexually exploiting minor girls at his homes in Manhattan, Palm Beach, Florida, and other locations, according to the federal indictment.

In a report on the mansion, valued at more than \$55 million, The New York Times noted that

its artwork includes, on the second floor, a commissioned mural of a "photorealistic prison scene that included barbed wire, corrections officers and a guard station, with Mr. Epstein portrayed in the middle."

The Times quotes R. Couri Hay, a public relations specialist who recently met with Epstein at his home, as saying, "(Epstein) said, 'That's me, and I had this painted because there is always the possibility that could be me

again."

The home also includes such oddities as a hallway covered with artificial eyeballs originally made for wounded soldiers, a life-size female doll hanging from a chandelier, and a chess board with custom figures, many dressed suggestively and modeled after one of Epstein's staffers, The Times reported.

Federal prosecutors said in the indictment that they were moving to seize the mansion as part of the proceedings against Epstein.

Cyrus Vance's Office Sought Reduced Sex-Offender Status for Epstein

to the public, and would have kept him from being listed on a registry of sex offenders for life.

Justice Ruth Pickholz vehemently denied the request and expressed incredulity that the district attorney's office would argue in support of a man accused of sexually molesting dozens of teenage girls in Florida.

"I have to tell you, I'm a little overwhelmed because I have never seen a prosecutor's office do anything like this," the judge told Ms. Gaffney.

Mr. Vance has said the request was a mistake and had been

made by Ms. Gaffney without his knowledge.

Still, his office's decision to take Mr. Epstein's side in the hearing drew renewed criticism this week, as federal prosecutors in Manhattan brought new charges against Mr. Epstein, a wealthy financier whose social circle has included President Trump and former President Bill Clinton.

He was arrested on Saturday after his plane landed at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey. An indictment unveiled on Monday said he "sexually exploited and abused dozens of minor girls" from 2002 to 2005 in his palatial homes in Manhattan and Palm

Beach, Fla.

It is not the first time Mr. Vance has been harshly criticized for his office's handling of allegations against rich and influential men. He drew fire for declining to prosecute the Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein in 2015 on charges that he groped an Italian model in his TriBeCa office. His office later charged Mr. Weinstein with sex crimes involving two other women.

Mr. Vance had also found himself under attack for declining to pursue charges against two of Mr. Trump's children, Ivanka and Donald Jr.,

in 2015, after they were accused of misleading investors in a condo-hotel project.

Mr. Vance's critics have said his office's support of Mr. Epstein's motion was yet another example of Mr. Vance's office giving preferential treatment to wealthy defendants - this time to a man accused of being a serial predator who targeted minors.

In Florida, Mr. Epstein hired a cadre of high-powered lawyers to fight the charges against him. The team eventually negotiated a lenient plea bargain with federal prosecutors that allowed him to plead guilty to state prostitution charges. He spent 13 months at

a Palm Beach jail and was permitted to leave the facility six days a week, 12 hours a day, for work. One of those lawyers, Jay Lefkowitz, also lobbied Mr. Vance's office to have Mr. Epstein's sex-offender status knocked down. "Was it preferential treatment at the highest level, or is it that the Manhattan district attorney's office is not run well enough to ensure that sex crimes are investigated and taken seriously?" said Sonia Ossorio, the president of the New York City arm of the National Organization for Women. "Either way it's unacceptable."

A Sharp Drop in Migrant Arrivals on the Border: What's Happening?

outcome of their asylum or deportation cases in American immigration courts. More than 18,000 migrants, including asylum seekers, have been returned to Tijuana and other Mexican cities since the policy was put into place, according to Mexico's National Migration Institute.

"These initiatives are making an impact," the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement. At the nonprofit shelter here in San Diego, the effects have been drastic. On Friday of last week, not a single migrant arrived - a first for the facility since it opened in October. "We have been startled by the stark decline that happened virtually overnight," said Kate Clark, senior director of immigration services at the shelter. "U.S. immigration authorities are not bringing families who have been

processed to the shelter because they are returning them to Mexico." [Sign up for our daily newsletter about news from California here. Tijuana, by contrast, is still full of migrants - many of them turned back at the border under the Trump administration's "Remain in Mexico" program. "The United States policy to return people to Mexico and the pressure on Mexico to stop the migration are having a big impact," said Daniel Bribiescas, an immigration lawyer in Tijuana. The Instituto Madre Asunta, a shelter for migrant families just south of the border, has for several weeks packed in more than three times the number of people it is designed to accommodate. Mothers and children from Central America and Haiti have been sleeping in a classroom converted into a dormitory, many atop mattresses on the floor. "We're doing our best

to sleep 140 people but we only have 44 beds," said Adelia Contini, the nun who runs the facility, which is in a residential neighborhood with a shelter for fathers and children that was also over capacity. Some families have been at the Madre Asunta shelter for months, after American immigration authorities sent them to Mexico with instructions to show up at the San Ysidro, Calif., port of entry at dawn on the day of their immigration hearing to be transported to court. Mexico's own heightened border security is also having an effect. To make good on a deal struck with Mr. Trump last month to avert trade tariffs, more than 20,000 Mexican security forces, including members of the newly formed National Guard, have been deployed throughout the country's southern and northern border states.

Pro-Khalistani Group Sikhs for Justice Banned Over 'Anti-National' Activities, Punjab CM Lauds Move

Home Ministry officials said 8 to 10 people comprise the SFJ. However, its online support is close to 2 lakh. "Present government is very clear that anything which might simmer in future needs to be contained," a senior MHA official said. Punjab Police has registered 10 different cases against the SFJ and it's members, while the NIA is also probing the group in one case. "In all 11 cases, investigators have found that the SFJ was providing money and logistical support to local terrorists in Punjab to carry out subversive activities," a senior MHA official dealing with the matter told CNN News18. Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has welcomed the ban, but also said that Punjab government would have preferred if the SFJ was labelled as a terror organisation and not just under Section 3 which makes membership of the SFJ unlawful. He termed the

move as the first step towards protecting the nation from "anti-India or secessionist designs" of the ISI-backed organisation. Explaining the decision of not labelling the SFJ as a terror organisation, MHA officials said, "As of now the activities of the SFJ fitted the definition under Section 3 and not under Schedule 1 for declaring a terror organisation. We have to keep a standard of proof since the matter will go to a tribunal." Pakistan had, in April this year, claimed that it has also banned the SFJ. But India's Ministry of Home Affairs said they haven't received any formal communication from Pakistan in this regard. The government's decision comes just ahead of the next meeting on Kartarpur. Indian intelligence agencies have warned that Sikh fundamental organisations like SFJ plan to use the Kartarpur corridor to further their secessionist agenda by radicalising pilgrims who travel to Pakistan.

Don't Just Uninstall Old Apps-Delete Your Accounts As Well

So you've grown bored of the latest photo filtering tool, or the newest anonymous question app, or whatever the flavor of the month in the app charts happens to be. Just remove the app from your phone and get on with your life, right? Well, not quite.

Excising apps, sites, and services from your life can seem pretty simple-just drag an app icon to the trash, or tap the little cross on its corner-but think about what you're leaving behind: a registered account with an email address, maybe a date of birth, a connection to your Google or Facebook account, or even an entire web server.

If you're serious about protecting your important digital assets, and care about how much of a digital footprint you leave behind, you need to take the extra time to delete accounts (and the data inside them) when you say goodbye. What apps leave

behind

Removing an app from your phone (or indeed your laptop) won't leave much if anything behind-in terms of data actually on your device, at least. But unless you shut down the account associated with the app, it lives on, gathering virtual dust in the cloud somewhere.

Not every app comes with an account, of course. If you haven't registered an email address, or any other personal information, then you can safely delete the app from your phone without worrying any more about it.

Other apps will be more data hungry, both in terms of what they want from you (date of birth, current location, the movies you're interested in, and so on). App developers will most likely hang on to this information unless you specifically tell them not to. Remember that apps can be gathering information on you

without you actually doing anything-if an app has access to your phone's location data, for example, it can log the places you visit. If you want to know exactly what app developers are doing with this data, you need to visit the official privacy policy for the app-this should tell you, albeit in a roundabout way, what a particular app is collecting and how long it'll keep your data for.

Even after deleting your account, the digital remains might stick around. Facebook can take up to 90 days to get rid of the data it's collected on you after you've decided you no longer want to be in a relationship with it-if something isn't clear in a particular privacy policy then you can always ask directly.

This is another reason, by the way, to avoid installing sketchy or suspicious apps on your



phone-while the big names in software know they have to be reasonably transparent about data use, or at least pretend to be, lesser-known apps often try and fly under the radar in terms of what they collect and how.

Why it matters

Here's why it matters that all your data is wiped clean from whatever apps and services you've been using: First, it means you won't get bombarded by targeted emails and advertising, whether

that's from the app itself asking that you give it another try, or from one of the app's "marketing partners" looking to sell you something else. By the time you take action, it might already be too late to stop your purchasing tendencies leaking out to marketers, but at least your details won't be getting shared or sold on an ongoing basis. You can do something to limit the damage. Second, there's security.

How American Corporations Are Policing Online Speech Worldwide

In the winter of 2010, a 19-year-old Moroccan man named Kacem Ghazzali logged into his email to find a message from Facebook informing him that a group he had created just a few days prior had been removed from the platform without explanation. The group, entitled "Jeunes pour la séparation entre Religion et Enseignement" (or "Youth for the separation of religion and education"), was an attempt by

Ghazzali to organize with other secularist youth in the pious North African kingdom, but it was quickly thwarted. When Ghazzali wrote to Facebook to complain about the censorship, he found his personal profile taken down as well.

Back then, there was no appeals system, but after I wrote about the story, Ghazzali was able to get his accounts back. Others haven't been so lucky. In the years since, I've heard from

hundreds of activists, artists, and average folks who found their social media posts or accounts deleted-sometimes for violating some arcane proprietary rule, sometimes at the order of a government or court, other times for no discernible reason at all. The architects of Silicon Valley's big social media platforms never imagined they'd someday be the global speech police. And yet, as their market share and global user bases have increased over

the years, that's exactly what they've become. Today, the number of people who tweet is nearly the population of the United States. About a quarter of the internet's total users watch YouTube videos, and nearly one-third of the entire world uses Facebook. Regardless of the intent of their founders, none of these platforms were ever merely a means of connecting people; from their early days, they fulfilled greater needs. They are

the newspaper, the marketplace, the television. They are the billboard, the community newsletter, and the town square. And yet, they are corporations, with their own speech rights and ability to set the rules as they like-rules that more often than not reflect the beliefs, however misguided, of their founders. Mark Zuckerberg has long professed beliefs that representing oneself through more than one identity indicates a lack of integrity, and that conversations held under one's real name are more civil-despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. As such, Facebook users are forced to use their "authentic identity"-a name found on some form of written ID-regardless of whether it puts them in danger, or at risk of exposing a piece of themselves that could put them in harm's way. It prevents youth from exploring their sexuality freely for fear of being outed; people with chronic illnesses from engaging with support groups out of concern that insurance companies or employers might learn of their plight; and activists living under repressive regimes from organizing online. In some instances, it is a combination of personal beliefs and other factors that leads to seemingly arbitrary policies.

Fake News Could Lead to Real War

Computer-generated images of large military formations could be woven into aerial photographs of open spaces on contested borders, raising the risk of wars that would benefit the party disseminating the graphics. The seamless construction of such images is already business as usual for Hollywood productions. Remember the January 2018 false alarm of an imminent ballistic-missile strike against the Hawaiian Islands? In the 38 minutes it took for authorities to disavow the alert and reassure the public, life on Oahu was thoroughly disrupted by the large scale movement of a panicked population. Suppose the civil defense network was hacked to reproduce this chaos by enhancing the automated alert message with a generated image of a senior government official warning of an attack? Even if such mischievous warnings could be falsified within a few days, their effect would nonetheless be immediate and difficult to reverse. Complicating matters is the very real artificial intelligence arms race already underway pitting the fakers against detectors, each developing increasingly subtle and complex ways to thwart the other. As in other strategic settings, offense

and defense will alternate as front-runners. At the moment, computer scientists give the edge to the offense, but the competition between fakers and detectors is bound to be volatile. Counting on the dominance of defensive capabilities would therefore be deeply imprudent.

All of this would be challenging enough in the best of times. What makes the current situation so ominous is that the technology of confusion is being augmented by the human-generated falsehoods of Trump. The relentless dishonesty of the commander in chief is bound to undercut belief in the "official version" coming out of Washington-as we found out with the tanker attacks-and it also has a disorienting effect. Even for people who are well grounded in reality and immune to conspiracy thinking, it is increasingly difficult to find one's way toward a reasonable understanding of current events.

In their new book *A Lot of People Are Saying: The New Conspiracism and the Assault on Democracy*, political scientists Russell Muirhead and Nancy Rosenblum speak of "the radical disorientation most people feel when confronted with a steady stream of ungrounded conspiracist

claims." Now, wielding the massive capacity of artificial intelligence to propagate shocking but concocted images to mobilize public opinion and stigmatize adversaries, unprincipled actors like Trump can move beyond the verbal scene-setting of a contrived conflict. They can steer the nation into conflict if they think it will advance their political fortunes-and the media, and possibly our own intelligence agencies, would be challenged to find the fraud. With Trump's base now believing him against all contradictory reporting, the public opinion effect would be assured.

Most have already recognized the danger to the constitutional order posed by the combination of technological advances and dirty politics. The strategic order is in serious danger as well. Trump's deliberate, programmatic subversion of the public trust in national security institutions, especially the intelligence community, has undermined confidence in the accessibility of truth itself and has crucial implications for our security. The more our leaders in the White House and Congress dedicate themselves to dismantling this trust, the more we will be hostage to technologies that no one knows how to control.

Walmart Got A \$10 Billion (Happy) Surprise After Buying Flipkart



When Walmart Inc. paid \$16 billion for control of country's e-commerce pioneer Flipkart Online Services last year, the American retail giant got a little-noticed digital payments subsidiary as part of the deal. Now the business is emerging as one of the country's top startups, a surprise benefit for Walmart from its largest-ever acquisition. (Also read: Walmart's Flipkart, Startup GOQii Settle Dispute Over Sharp Discounting) Flipkart's board recently authorized the PhonePe unit to become a new entity and explore raising \$1

PhonePe -- which means "on the phone" in Hindi and is pronounced "phone pay" -- has grown into one of country's leading digital payments companies. Its volume and value of transactions have roughly quadrupled over the past year as the country's consumers adopt the technology to transfer money digitally to businesses and each other. PhonePe is gaining ground on Paytm, which leads the field and is backed by Warren Buffett. PhonePe is an "underappreciated asset," Edward Yruma, an analyst from KeyBanc Capital Markets, wrote in a recent research note. He estimated the business may be worth \$14 billion to \$15 billion, separate from Flipkart's e-commerce operation. The startup was founded in December 2015 by three friends who left Flipkart to get it off the ground.

IndiGo CEO tells employees issues between promoters have nothing to do with airline's functioning

Issues between promoters have nothing to do with IndiGo and its functioning, the CEO of the airline said in a letter to his employees, a day after a spat between the promoters of the country's largest carrier became public.



"The issues between them will eventually get sorted out but I want to stress that these issues have nothing to do with the airline and its functioning," Ronjoy Dutta said. He said the airline's mission, direction and growth strategy remains unchanged, and firmly in place. "As much it is very important that we all remain focused on running high performance airline," he said in the letter, asking the employees to continue their work as usual. "Absolutely nothing has really changed for any of us, I will just go about doing my job to the best of my

abilities, and I know I can address the problems. count on you to do the same. Thank you for your dedication and efforts towards delivering our promise of on-time, courteous and hassle free experience," he said. Rakesh Gangwal, one of the promoters of IndiGo, on Tuesday alleged serious governance lapses by its co-founder Rahul Bhatia, who had earlier termed his demands as unreasonable. With the issues brewing for nearly a year, Gangwal sought markets regulator Sebi's intervention to

address the problems. Alleging that the company has "started veering off" from the core principles and values of governance, Gangwal said that even a "paan ki dukaan" (betel shop) would have managed matters with more grace. Flagging concerns about certain questionable Related Party Transactions (RPTs), Gangwal said the shareholders' agreement provides his long-time friend Bhatia unusual controlling rights over IndiGo.

ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾਨ

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

Since April 2005 Editor: Sharni Singh Thind PUNJABI DUNIYA Weekly

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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ... (Text continues with details about migration costs and trends)

ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖੇਗਾ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ... (Text continues with news about a man named Sajjan Kumar)

ਨਵੇਂ ਸਾਲ ਮੌਕੇ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਫੌਜ ਨੇ ਬੇਬ ਦਾ ਟਵੀਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੰਗੀ ਮੁਆਫੀ... (Text continues with news about a tweet during the New Year period)

ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਖਾਨਿਸ਼ਰਾਨ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਫੌਜ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਛੇ ਨਾ... (Text continues with news about military operations in Khanisharan)

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ICE Plans To Launch Nationwide Raids And Arrest Thousands This Weekend

Immigration officials reportedly expect to detain around 2,000 people in at least 10 cities.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials plan to launch nationwide raids and arrest thousands of undocumented immigrants as soon as this weekend, The New York Times reported early Thursday. Citing two current and one former official at the Department of Homeland Security, the Times said around 2,000 immigrants who have been ordered deported by the federal government will be targeted. Agents will also reportedly arrest people who happen to be on the scene, even if they weren't the target of the raids. These so-called "collateral" deportations could include entire families. Officials said they will be held in detention centers together,

where possible. In a statement to HuffPost, an ICE spokeswoman said that "the agency will not offer specific details related to enforcement operations," citing security issues. "As always, ICE prioritizes the arrest and removal of unlawfully present aliens who pose a threat to national security, public safety and border security," the statement continued. "All of those in violation of the immigration laws may be subject to immigration arrest, detention and ? if found removable by final order ? removal from the United States." President Donald Trump delayed the raids that were scheduled to take place last month in 10 major cities, including Miami, Los

Angeles and Chicago. He said he had hoped to work with Democrats to craft a "solution to the Asylum and Loophole problems at the Southern Border": Congress passed a \$4.6 billion humanitarian aid bill just days after that tweet, despite complaints from some Democrats and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) that the legislation didn't do enough to protect migrant children. The Trump administration has faced heavy criticism for its immigration and refugee detention procedures in the past. In the past two years, thousands of children were separated from their parents under the president's controversial "zero tolerance" immigration policy.



Just this week, the UN's Human Rights chief decried the "alarming" conditions at U.S. migrant detention centers along the border, saying she was "deeply shocked" by a lack of beds, filthy conditions and the spread of disease. Immigrant enclaves have been rattled for weeks at the prospect of government officials knocking on their doors. In preparation of the expected raids, civil rights groups have been encouraging

immigrant communities to study up on their legal rights. The ACLU reminded undocumented immigrants that they were not legally required to grant ICE agents access to their homes without certain kinds of warrants. And upon arrest, everyone was entitled to the right to remain silent and access to a government-appointed lawyer. Since January, the Trump administration has been operating under the president's

Elizabeth Warren Wants To Dramatically Reshape Immigration Enforcement

Decriminalization of border violations and deprivatization of the immigrant detention system are rapidly becoming Democratic consensus positions.



Presidential hopeful Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) would decriminalize border-crossing violations, dramatically scale back detention and use executive action to skirt congressional deadlock on comprehensive immigration reform if elected, according to a detailed plan her campaign released Thursday.

Warren's plan, made available ahead of a candidate forum with Latino civic leaders in Milwaukee, would roll back the Trump administration's hard-line policies and embrace a set of more progressive policies that have gained traction in a highly competitive primary. And though Warren casts President Donald Trump as uniquely hostile to immigrants, she implied that both parties share blame for America's immigration dysfunction.

"While Trump may have taken the system to its most punitive extreme, his racist policies build on a broken immigration system and an enforcement infrastructure already primed for abuse," Warren's plan reads.

The plan leads with her previously expressed aim to decriminalize border-crossing violations by championing the repeal of a pair of laws used to jail migrants who cross without authorization or get arrested after a deportation. Under U.S. law, those infractions already violate civil law, under which deportations are carried out.

For most of recent history, the civil system had almost exclusive authority over such immigration violations.

"This obsessive focus ties up federal prosecutors and overwhelms federal courts,"

Warren's plan reads. "It's costly and unnecessary. And under Trump, it has become increasingly abusive."

When President Bill Clinton took office in 1993, prosecutions for immigration violations accounted for about 4 percent of the federal criminal caseload, with about 3,200 cases. Last year, the Trump administration prosecuted 94,000 criminal immigration cases, taking up well over half the federal criminal docket. Meanwhile, prosecutions for white-collar crime hit a 20-year low last year, according to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse database at Syracuse University.

Instead, Warren would have the Justice Department focus on crimes that aren't already policed and punished by a separate and much larger system, like organized crime, hate crimes and financial fraud.

In April, former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julián Castro became the first Democratic presidential candidate to champion decriminalizing migration, and challenged others to follow his lead during the debates. Immigrant rights activists and

criminal justice reformers have long supported the idea.

The Warren campaign says her administration would also dramatically scale back the migrant detention system, which currently houses more than 52,000 people awaiting deportation. Contending that alternatives to detention like community supervision, case management and periodic check-ins would cost pennies on the dollar compared to privatized lockups, Warren pledged to cancel contracts with private prison companies, like CoreCivic and Geo Group, that control about two-thirds of the detention system. "President Trump has weaponized deportation in ways that are costly, ineffective, and designed to maximize pain," the plan reads. "It's time to end this cruelty ? and refocus on true threats to public safety and national security instead."

Warren's plan embraces a spate of immigration principles that are becoming standard among Democrats vying for the opportunity to oust Trump. She supports undocumented immigrants

having ample opportunity to access a pathway to citizenship.

She would scrap the three- and 10-year bars that require many unauthorized immigrants to go back to the country of their birth for those time periods before adjusting their status.

Warren would also make immigration courts independent, something former U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-Texas), another 2020 presidential contender, has likewise called for. Immigration courts operate as an administrative branch of the Justice Department, and the attorney general has the power to overturn judges' rulings. The Warren plan would create a public defender program to guarantee migrants access to lawyers in immigration court, which are not currently provided at government expense.

Warren says she would expand the eligibility for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, the Obama-era program that shields undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as youths from deportation ? though she would not use executive authority to provide a pathway to citizenship, as Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) has promised.

A Burger King manager was told to 'go back to Mexico' for speaking Spanish in a Florida fast food restaurant

The general manager of a Burger King restaurant in Florida was told by a customer to "go back to Mexico" if he wanted to keep speaking Spanish.

The exchange, captured in a video that was later posted on social media, shows Ricardo Castillo, who is of Puerto Rican descent, being berated by two unidentified women as they are eating in the restaurant in Eustis, 40 miles north of Orlando. "You're in America, you should speak American English," one woman can be heard saying, to which Castillo replies "No ma'am, I don't." Yeah, yeah, go back to Mexico if you want to keep speaking Spanish, go back to your Mexican country, your state, your country," the woman goes on. Customer Neyzha Borrero, who recorded the heated exchange on July 6 and posted

it on Facebook, told CNN the women complained to the manager because he spoke Spanish in front of them.

Before Borrero started recording the video, Castillo was doing some paperwork on a table when one of his employees came in and spoke with him in Spanish, Borrero said. "The two ladies were next to the manager, and after the employee left, they told Castillo they wanted to complain." Thinking it was about the meal, the manager offered to give them credit or a free dessert, Borrero said. But instead, they said that he shouldn't be speaking Spanish in public because "we are in the USA." Borrero, who was at the Burger King with her boyfriend Oni Martinez, started recording from her seat before moving closer to the three. After being told to go

back to Mexico, Castillo can be heard saying, "Guess what ma'am, I'm not Mexican, I'm not Mexican but you're being very prejudiced and I want you out of my restaurant, right now." He threatened to call police when one woman said she would only leave after finishing her meal. "People like you, so ignorant and disrespectful," the manager goes on. The video ends with the two women leaving the restaurant. CNN has not been able to identify the women in order to seek comment from them. The Eustis Police Department told CNN in an emailed statement that it was not involved with the incident. "No officers responded and we were not notified," a police spokeswoman said. When contacted for comment, Castillo referred CNN to Burger King. A spokeswoman for Burger King said in a statement to CNN:



"There is no place for discrimination in our restaurants. We expect employees and guests to treat each other with respect. This incident took place at a franchised restaurant and the owner is looking into the matter." Borrero said the women didn't come back and the manager was calm after the exchange. "We applauded him

because he never disrespected them at all. He was very professional," Borrero said. She added that it's not the first time she has witnessed this kind of episode. "Sadly, it's something that happens every single day," she said. "I have witnessed many similar situations. It's even happened to me," Borrero, who is from Puerto Rico, said.

A California officer fatally shot a 17-year-old girl. Days later, the teen's family still doesn't know why



Hannah Williams' father still has no idea why a police officer shot and killed his 17-year-old daughter. "We just need to know what happened that night because they haven't told us anything, nothing. Everything I've learned is from media or on Twitter, like everything. No one come to talk to us," Hannah's sister, Nyla, 19, told reporters Thursday. It's been almost a week since the California teen encountered a Fullerton police officer while driving in the nearby city of Anaheim. At some point, Hannah's car and the officer's police SUV "made physical contact," the Orange County District Attorney's office said. "An officer-involved shooting occurred and a replica Beretta 92 FS handgun was recovered at the scene next to" the teen, the prosecutor's office said. "The gun

was later identified as a replica handgun designed to look like a real Beretta 92 FS." Hannah was taken to a hospital, where she later died. That was Friday. Authorities have not provided any more details about what prompted the shooting. The replica gun found near Hannah did not have a bright orange tip, as required by federal law, that would indicate it was fake gun. "We believe that to be a red herring," attorney Lee Merritt said of the reports of the fake gun. "More importantly, this is not a case where we have to guess at what happened."

The attorney demanded that the officer's body camera footage be released, if not to the public then at least to the family. Although state law gives police 45 days to release the video, the Fullerton Police Department said it would

release the footage and other information "in coming days." The family said through Merritt that Hannah had no history with weapons, nor did she have any known issues with drugs or alcohol. The teen was an inexperienced driver, he said, and may never have been on the freeway before.

It started with a trip to the veterinarian

The Fullerton officer, who was not publicly identified, was driving in Anaheim to take his police dog to the veterinarian, the district attorney's office said.

"He observed a 17-year-old female driver, who was also eastbound on the 91 Freeway at a high rate of speed, near Glassell Avenue," the DA's office said.

"At some point, the two vehicles made physical contact. An officer-involved shooting occurred and a replica Beretta 92 FS handgun was recovered at the scene next to the female." The family believes Hannah was shot three times, Merritt said, but they can't be sure. He said he expected her body to be turned over to the family Thursday. Anaheim police, along with the county district attorney's office, are investigating the shooting because it happened within

Anaheim city limits.

Fullerton police are investigating whether its officer may have violated department policy. The officer is on paid administrative leave while authorities investigate.

It's unclear when authorities will tell the public what prompted the shooting.

"The circumstances that led to the shooting are under investigation and are not immediately available," Anaheim police said Saturday.

The family wants the governor to get involved

Nyla Williams, who serves in the military and was stationed in New Mexico at the time of the shooting, said her sister worked as a lifeguard because she loved helping people.

"My sister, Hannah, she was very kind, very supportive. She was silly, you name it. She could

make you smile no matter what you were feeling that day," she said.

Hannah, who had just finished her junior year of high school, was in "a particularly joyous mood" before the shooting, Merritt said. She had her family in town from Houston and had made them pancakes that morning.

Later, she was pulling pranks on her relatives, dropping Mentos candies in their sodas to make them explode, the lawyer said. The family was planning a trip to Hollywood that evening to take in the tourist attractions, Merritt said.

"We still do not have clear answers about what happened," her family said in a statement.

"Hannah was a beloved daughter, sister, niece, granddaughter, friend. She had her whole life ahead of her."



The Great Race to Rule Streaming

In their rush to match Netflix, competitors like HBO, Hulu and Amazon are ordering a slew of content - ushering out the age of "prestige TV" and ushering in an age of anything goes.

When Nick Weidenfeld heard what happened at HBO last summer, he was thrilled. "Everyone I knew was texting that article around, saying, 'What the [expletive]!'" Weidenfeld, an independent TV producer, recently recalled. A lot of people who work in Hollywood were spooked by the news, but not him: "I thought it was amazing." Weidenfeld was discussing the events of June 19, 2018, as reported in The Times: Around

noon that day, Richard Plepler, then HBO's chief executive officer, met with his new boss, John Stankey, at the network's Manhattan headquarters. AT&T had recently completed its \$85.4 billion purchase of Time Warner - whose holdings included Warner Bros. and HBO - and chose Stankey to head up the resulting umbrella company, WarnerMedia. Plepler's conversation with Stankey, framed as a company town hall,

unfolded before some 150 HBO employees, who soon discovered that the new guy had big changes in mind. "It's going to be a tough year," Stankey told Plepler. HBO's tightly curated cluster of shows, released seasonally and in weekly batches, no longer amounted to a tenable strategy. "It's not hours a week, and it's not hours a month," he said. "We need hours a day. You are competing with devices that sit



in people's hands that capture their attention every 15 minutes." Ever more hours of overall watch-time were necessary to generate ever more data on viewing habits to help AT&T drive ever more

lucrative "models of advertising" and subscriptions, Stankey declared. What was required of Plepler was a reconsidered network, "broad enough to make that happen," as Stankey put it - because "we've got to make money at the end of the day, right?" When Plepler pointed out that HBO was already profitable, Stankey agreed, but then he added, "Just not enough."

"It's so good he said it," Weidenfeld told me, sinking into a booth at Mama Shelter, a hotel in Hollywood where he likes to take working lunches and rough out deals. Weidenfeld, who is 39, sported a full beard and wore a color-blocked fleece pullover. His business lies in helping creators devise and develop shows, then in selling them to networks and platforms - and thanks to the industrywide hunger for "hours a day," business is booming.

Jerome Powell: Facebook's Libra poses potential risk to financial system

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell on Wednesday said Facebook's planned Libra digital currency raises "many serious concerns" including potential risks to the stability of the financial system because of the huge user-base of the social media giant. At a House Financial Services Committee hearing, Powell said the central bank has a working group that's looking at Libra. He added that the Financial Stability Oversight Council - a group that includes top financial regulators across the government - convened a staff-level meeting last week on Facebook's plans. "While the project's sponsors

hold out the possibility of public benefits, including improved financial access for consumers, Libra raises many serious concerns regarding privacy, money laundering, consumer protection and financial stability," he said. "These are concerns that should be thoroughly and publicly addressed before proceeding."

Powell's comments illustrate the growing concern in Washington about Facebook's sweeping plans to become a force in the financial system. The company will face questions about Libra in back-to-back House Financial Services and Senate Banking Committee

hearings next week. Powell said the Fed was coordinating with colleagues not only in the U.S. government but with central banks and governments around the world. He said the process of addressing concerns around Libra "should be a patient and careful one and not a sprint to implementation." Fed officials met with Facebook about two months before Libra was announced, he said. Powell said he expected the Treasury Department-led Financial Stability Oversight Council, which is responsible for addressing large-scale risks across the financial system, "will

be taking this on in a serious way." The council has the power to designate financial firms as "systemically important" and subject them to stricter Fed oversight.

Libra, he said, was a financial stability concern because of the possibility of its "quite broad adoption," given Facebook's user base of more than 2 billion.

"If there were problems there associated with money laundering, terrorist financing, any of the things that we're all focused on, including the company, they would arise to systemically important levels just because of the mere size of the Facebook network," he said.



Stationed near Chang La pass which is perched at a height of 5,360 metres (17,590 feet), the 13 men, whose home is the low-lying eastern state of Jharkhand, have little experience of cold climates. Hundreds of miles from their homes, a group of labourers are toiling in a cold Indian Himalayan desert to repair some of the world's highest roads. Stationed near Chang La pass

which is perched at a height of 5,360 metres (17,590 feet), the 13 men, whose home is the low-lying eastern state of Jharkhand, have little experience of cold climates. They have been hired for four months in the Tangtse district of Ladakh, where blizzards can rage throughout the year, to ensure that the key tourist route to the picturesque Nubra Valley and Pangong lake

How one of world's highest roads is being built in Ladakh

is in good condition. Their back-breaking stint will fetch them 40,000 rupees (\$572) each -- a considerable sum in a country where more than 21 percent of the 1.3 billion population lived on less than two dollars a day in 2011.

"There is not much work there (back home). I don't find any work difficult," said Sunil Tutu, 30. They toil six days a week, using only their bare hands, shovels and old sacks to move rocks and sand, with the help of local Ladakhi workers, some of them women. Sundays are the only days they can do their

laundry as well as bathe and shave. Each morning the group hops on a truck to reach the work site after a breakfast of tea and bread. They return to their basic housing tents after sunset and have a meal of rice and lentils. The tents do not have electricity and workers rely on kerosene stoves to cook and heat up the icy water. But they are undaunted. "If given a chance I will come back here again," said Sushil Tutu, 35. "I like the road work.... I like it anywhere." Another worker Rajshekhar, 33, said the inhospitable conditions helped him save more for the

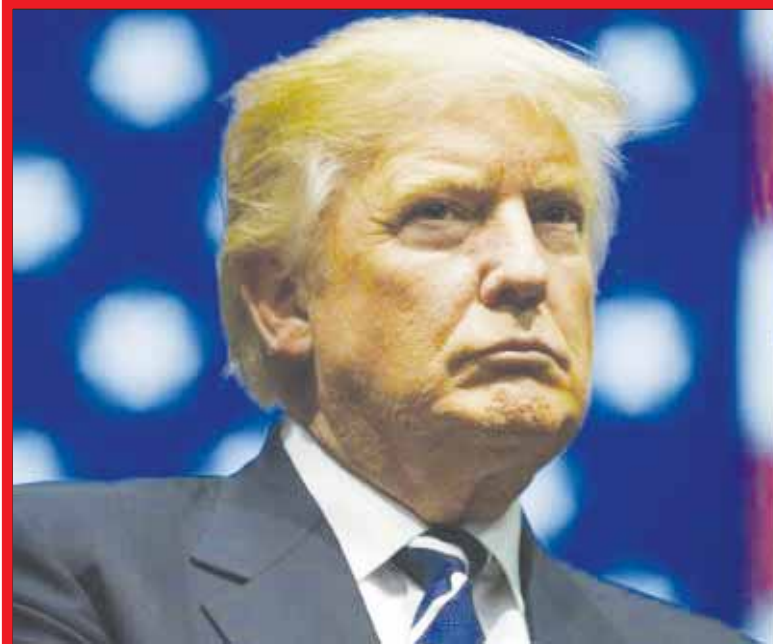
future. "Back home we are unable to save money, we eat and drink and the money gets over. The work is good (here), I like the snow and the mountains. I don't like the cold though." Migration for work is common in rural India. According to the non-government Aajeevika Bureau agency, millions work in hazardous conditions with little legal or social protection. India's unemployment rate has been worsening. In 2017-2018 it was 6.1 percent, the worst since the 1970s, posing a major challenge for newly re-elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

There is an old joke that in Washington "the definition of a gaffe is telling the truth in public." Sir Kim Darroch, the UK ambassador to the US, has brilliantly -- if inadvertently -- demonstrated the truth of this dictum, with cables that he wrote to senior officials in London that have since leaked. In them, he described the Trump White House as "uniquely dysfunctional" and "inept." This is hardly news. Authors Bob Woodward and Michael Wolff have comprehensively covered the dysfunction at the Trump White House in their best-selling books.

The conservative military historian and CNN analyst Max Boot writes a column in the Washington Post that makes pretty much the same point on a regular basis.

Characteristically, Trump has reacted to the leak of the cables with an all-out attack on Darroch, whom he called "a very stupid guy."

But the real issue is not the embarrassment caused by the cables, but the true state of the connection between the United



UK and US is crumbling

States and the UK -- which has been called the "special relationship" ever since former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill used the phrase in his famous "Iron Curtain" speech in 1946. By almost any measure, that special relationship is now defunct -- politically, militarily and

economically, even if it still lives on at a vestigial, cultural level. Sure, Trump may extol the virtues of Queen Elizabeth II, which is all part of his long fascination with the royal family. In the 1980s, Trump reportedly circulated a rumor that Prince Charles and Princess Diana

were considering buying an apartment in Trump Tower. Shortly after Diana died in a car accident in Paris in 1997, Trump told an interviewer he would have had a "shot" at dating her. Nice! But beyond his affection for the royals, Trump has no hesitation in dumping on British leaders. He has repeatedly denigrated the outgoing UK Prime Minister Theresa May. On Monday, Trump tweeted, "I have been very critical about the way the UK and Prime Minister Theresa May handled Brexit. What a mess she and her representatives have created."

On Tuesday, Trump described

May's handling of Brexit as "foolish."

For the moment, Trump treats former British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, the front-runner to replace May as Prime Minister, with a measure of respect, but that can change on a dime.

Recall that Trump described incoming US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson as a "world-class player." After Trump fired Tillerson, he called him "dumb as a rock." Beyond all that, Britain itself is simply no longer one of the great powers upon which the "special relationship" was in part predicated.

Trump will leave office in either January 2021 or January 2025, and his impact will eventually recede -- but however Brexit goes down, it will inflict lasting damage on the British economy. Since the Brexit vote three years ago, the pound has lost around 20% of its value against the dollar. A "hard" Brexit from the European Union in October, which Johnson has left open as a possibility, would likely be a catastrophe for the British economy. On Tuesday, the pound fell to a two-year low because of fears of such a "hard" Brexit. Meanwhile the British military, which used to "rule the waves," has decreased in size every year since 1952 and now numbers less than 150,000 personnel, which is smaller than the size of the US Marine Corps.

The accused criminals and miscreants Trump doesn't seem to mind

During a week in which the nation's biggest news story is the arrest of the shady financier and pal of President Trump Jeffrey Epstein on charges of operating a sex trafficking ring in which he abused underage girls, (Epstein has pleaded not guilty), Trump is sending quite a message. Let's recall, first, what Trump told New York magazine in 2002. "I've known Jeff for 15 years. Terrific guy. He's a lot of fun to be with. It is even said that he likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side. No doubt about it -- Jeffrey enjoys his social life." Trump, too, enjoys a social life. At the same time Epstein's arrest was dominating headlines, the President invited Robert Kraft, the owner of the New England Patriots, to a Treasury Department dinner, and

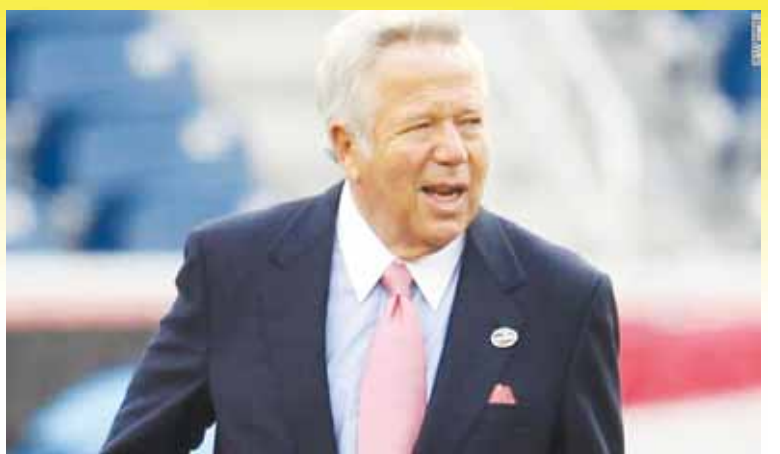
sat him in a seat of honor, at the President's own table. Kraft was recently charged with soliciting a woman in connection with prostitution while visiting a Florida massage parlor. Kraft has pleaded not guilty.

Kraft's case is mild compared with what other Trump cronies have done. But with that dinner invitation on that particular night, Trump signaled loud and clear he doesn't mind being around an accused sex criminal.

Trump's labor secretary, Alex Acosta, is in trouble in Florida for his role in helping Epstein avoid accountability -- Acosta, then a prosecutor, gave Epstein a lenient plea deal that was kept secret from his victims. A federal judge found that Acosta and his team broke the law, but that hasn't meant any consequences for Acosta in his current job thus far. These are just the latest in a

string of shady characters -- accused predators, predator-enablers and misogynists -- embraced by the President. The dinner Kraft attended was a formal meeting with the Qatari Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, a 39-year-old leader with two wives who rules over a wealthy nation that is a human rights nightmare. Migrant workers in Qatar are treated like slaves, homosexuality there is punishable by prison or even death, and women are second-class citizens, having fewer rights than men in everything from citizenship to marriage, to child custody, to divorce and physical safety.

Here in the United States, Trump backed a candidate for United States Senate, Roy Moore, who was accused of sexually preying on teenage girls. Moore has denied these allegations.



Andrew Puzder, who was the President's first choice for labor secretary, didn't take the job after allegations of domestic abuse leveled by his ex-wife in the 1980s -- and later withdrawn -- came to light. Puzder has denied the allegations.

White House aide Rob Porter resigned in disgrace after both of his ex-wives came forward to say he abused them "He threw me down on the bed and punched

me in the face," one told The Intercept. Porter denied the allegations. Steve Bannon, who ran Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, faced charges of misdemeanor domestic violence and battery against his wife in 1996. He denied these allegations and the charges were ultimately dismissed. The couple are now divorced. He was later elevated to a seat on Trump's National Security Council.

Paris Couture Week 2019 *Plush plumes preen at couture week*

The statement-making feathers make a splash in Paris.

The recently concluded Paris Couture Week saw plumage-centric offerings with the likes of Givenchy, Chanel and Zuhair Murad presenting head-to-toe feathered ensembles. Model Kaia Gerber looked like a bird of paradise in a tuft-accented ensemble at Givenchy and Chanel sent out a halter noir creation, which had cascading feathers at the hem reflecting the



couture house's signature savoir-faire. Besides the global runways, quills have enjoyed great popularity in India, too, as seen on the likes of Gauri Khan and Katrina Kaif, who were spotted cutting a dash on the red carpet in Falguni and Shane Peacock's fluttery numbers on several occasions. Designer Suneet Varma, who's toyed with plumes many times in his

offerings observes that feathers were once seen as an accessory or a part of embellishments. "Nothing moves as beautifully as a feathered ensemble and the way it catches light adds drama to the ensemble. Last few seasons have seen a tremendous resurgence of quills with designers showcasing hand-painted versions of them," says Suneet. Designer Falguni Peacock points out that feathers have sort of replaced lace in couture world.

"It lends a touch of romanticism and makes the whole look so easy breezy. India is now feather ready given its incredible exposure to international trend via Instagram and other social media apps. While we've been doing it for many seasons in India and internationally, we always think



of new ways to showcase it," says Peacock. Over the past two seasons, feathers have out-froked the ubiquitous sequins and emerged as most important form of surface ornamentation irrespective of people screaming for animal cruelty. Designer Aniket Satam quips, "Couture houses should

be more ethical and focus on using synthetic faux feathers over real plumes being plucked out of exotic birds."

This fall winter couture season has again shown the power of plumes. Designer Nachiket Barve says, "The extravagance of the feathers makes it a special occasion outfit."

Stella McCartney launches collection named after The Beatles' famous song, All Together Now

The line, ranging from \$295 to \$6,840, features the film's psychedelic graphics including yellow submarines and Lucy (in the sky with diamonds, natch) as well as song lyrics such as All You Need Is Love on a sweater and All Together Now embroidered on a denim jacket.



Ace fashion designer Stella McCartney made a proper usage of the Beatles band musical messages of peace, love and understanding in her latest collection of apparel and accessories for men, women and

children. On Monday, the designer launched her 85-piece collection of clothes and accessories, which she named after the band's famous song All Together Now. According to The Hollywood Reporter, for the first

time in her career McCartney has drawn directly on those messages in her musical heritage for her fall 2019 menswear and pre-fall 2019 women's wear collections. Her website refers to the collection

as "a fun, uplifting and hopeful statement of unity at a time when it feels more important than ever."

The line, ranging from \$295 to \$6,840, features the film's psychedelic graphics including yellow submarines and Lucy (in the sky with diamonds, natch) as well as song lyrics such as All You Need Is Love on a sweater and All Together Now embroidered on a denim jacket. In an exclusive interview to The Hollywood Reporter, McCartney said: "Last summer I went to a screening of Yellow Submarine and seeing it for the first time since I was young affected me deeply; it blew my mind."

"I started looking at it from a fashion perspective. I felt like it was so modern, and it was for everyone. In my career, in a way, I've tried to distance myself from my personal relationship with The Beatles; with it being family, it felt important to do that for many reasons. But it really felt like the time to come together, it was the right time to use that excellent wealth of extraordinary expression," she added.

Continuing, she said, "The colors,



psychedelia, patterns and prints all hit me hard creatively. There are extreme pieces that are more obvious, brazen and in your face -- taking the idea of being in a fan club, having an absolute passion, and translating it into high fashion. And [there are] moments of it [communicated] in a very subtle way, so you would never know it came from Yellow Submarine."

Several Hollywood A-listers wore the Beatles-themed pieces in advance for Monday's official debut of the collection. Pop star Billie Eilish, Ellie Goulding and Malone and Diplo were a few stars to name who wore the showcased the collection earlier during their various public appearance.

Left untreated, arthritis can affect organs, lower life expectancy

Urban lifestyle fuels unhealthy eating patterns and inactivity, and is leading to nutritional deficiencies and obesity, which causes and aggravates bone and joint diseases.

and rheumatoid arthritis are common in India, especially among the overweight and people above 50-60 years," said Dr RK Arya, director, Sports Injury Centre, Safdarjung Hospital.

"Rheumatoid arthritis is an inflammatory disease that starts appearing in the 40s, usually in women with a family history of the disease. The symptoms of both, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, are similar-painful and swollen joints. But, rheumatoid arthritis causes more disability in the smaller joints such as fingers and toes," Dr Arya said.

Pain from osteoarthritis, caused by joint overuse injuries, is usually milder in the mornings but becomes acute with continued use of the affected joint. People with rheumatoid arthritis wake up with stiff and painful joints, but experience an easing of pain as the day progresses.

Treatment focuses on a combination of therapies to relieve symptoms, improve joint function and preserve bone and joint health. "At least 30% of general physician consultations in the UK relate to musculoskeletal

problems, which account for 41% of work-related ill health. People are living in debilitating pain, even when the pain and lost productivity is largely preventable. This impacts their quality of life, productivity," Dr Mahmud said.

Treating arthritis and rheumatic conditions not only alleviates the symptoms, but also reduces bone damage and subsequent need for surgery. "In many cases, lifestyle changes, such as diet and exercise, are all that's needed to alleviate arthritic and rheumatic symptoms. For those who need it, a range of other medical options, such as injections, disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs)

to slow or stop the immune system from attacking joints, can treat and reverse the conditions," said Dr Mahmud.

If the pain persists, painkillers such as paracetamol, tramadol and oxycodone, and hydrocodone preparations help relieve pain, while non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) lower, both, pain and inflammation.

"As a result of better treatment options, the number of people with rheumatoid arthritis needing joint repair, joint replacement or joint fusion surgeries have gone down over the past decade," said Dr Yash Gulati, consultant orthopaedic surgeon, Indraprastha Apollo Hospital. "Losing weight is a must, as is doing gentle exercises to improve range of motion of the joint and strengthen the muscles surrounding the joints. These, however, must be done under medical supervision," said Dr Gulati.



At least one in four men and women in India have varying degrees of bone and joint degeneration after 50, with age-related wear and tear, injury, obesity, osteoporosis and rheumatism being the leading causes of pain and restricted movement.

Living with pain is not inevitable, said experts. "Many people think arthritis and related conditions, such as rheumatism and osteoarthritis, are an inevitable consequence of getting older, especially if there is a family history. This misconception is not only outdated, but dangerous. With modern medicine and techniques, one does not have to put up with the symptoms of

arthritis," said UK-based consultant rheumatologist Dr Taher Mahmud, who calls the failure to treat arthritis and osteoporosis effectively a medical emergency.

"Left untreated, arthritis can severely impact the quality of life, causing irreversible damage to muscles and bone structure. Severe symptoms can even affect the functioning of organs and lower life expectancy," said Dr Mahmud, co-founder of The London Osteoporosis Clinic.

Urban lifestyle fuels unhealthy eating patterns and inactivity, and is leading to nutritional deficiencies and obesity, which causes and aggravates bone and joint diseases. "Osteoarthritis

Take a rain check: Dos and don'ts for a healthy monsoon

Load up on Vitamin C, drink more water, and focus on your feet, doctors say.

Stay hydrated

The cool of a rainy day can be deceptive. High humidity levels leach the water from your system more slowly than high temperatures, but cause dehydration nonetheless. So don't wait till you feel thirsty to drink water, and be sure to get your minimum of eight glasses a day.

Boost your immunity

Raise your Vitamin C intake to boost immunity against cold and flu. Also load up on repellent plants like citronella and essential oils that can help keep bugs away. Clear away any stagnant water in and around your living spaces, to lower risk of dengue and malaria infections.

Focus on your feet

Your feet bear the real brunt of the monsoon, and are exposed to possible infections from everyday muck as well as leptospirosis-causing contaminated water in puddles. So focus on feet hygiene in the rains. And ensure your feet and footwear are dry as far as possible, to keep fungal infections at bay.

Avoid fish and non-seasonal vegetables

Leafy vegetables like spinach, cabbage and cauliflower are harder to clean when they're harvested in the churned, wet earth of the monsoon; they also rot more easily in this weather. So opt instead for seasonal vegetables like bitter



gourd or tinda. Monsoon is also breeding season for many fish species, so keep away and let nature replenish its reserves. Iron all your clothes

Damp clothes can become breeding grounds for fungus when you fold them and put them in your cupboard. Make sure you iron all your clothes

before you put them away, to avoid mold. You can also add a few neem leaves to the water while washing clothes, for a natural mold-repellent.

Cyrus Broacha's relationship advice: When it comes to marriage, don't behave like a monkey

Are you having relationship troubles? Are you looking for someone to talk your heart out about these problems? From how to approach your crush to how to handle a break up, shoot your questions to Cyrus and he will answer them.

Are you having relationship troubles? Is the long distance bothering you or do you have trust issues? Are you looking for someone to talk your heart out about these problems?

Worry not. TV anchor, theatre personality, comedian, political satirist, columnist and author, Cyrus Broacha is here to help you: From navigating relationship trouble to helping your love life go the distance, he's got all the dating advice you'll ever need from your first date to a commitment to even something that you can't find a solution to. From how to approach your crush to how to handle a break up, shoot your questions to Cyrus and he will answer them.

I am a 25-year-old woman and I've been dating a senior in office for the last 6 months. However, now, since I don't feel the same way for him, how can I end this relationship without making it

awkward for both of us? - DT
DT Details. I want details. How old is this senior? If he's 71 years old to your 25, then the finger of suspicion for a completely, 'Matalbi', relationship falls on you. Secondly, is he directly overseeing your career? Can he affect your career? Thirdly what is the nature of your arrangement? If you both order from Scootsy, who will pay? Finally today's office (except for the serial office starring Mukul Chadda and Gopal Datt, and available on Hotstar), culture is very strict about dating within the employee circle. So it's amazing you got away with it in the first place. To save your career, maybe both your careers, please be frank and straight forward with him. Don't hedge, ask for the pink slip. Pink slip for the romance only. Maybe have a witness you can trust, so matters don't escalate. I am a 32-year-old man

and I've been married for the last 3 years. We stay with my family, but she wants to move out. How do I make her understand that we would have to stay with my family? - TA
Congratulations TA, you are the 4,00000th person to ask this questions. It's explained in a book by Steve McQuah, called "The Great Escape" The modern version is more clear with the title 'The Great Escape from the In-laws'. The sequel to that is, 'Surviving Tragedy', which outlines life if you don't escape. I'll put it this way, its bad news and worse news for you. If you leave, the old family is upset. If you stay, the new family is upset. But when push comes to shove, from a practical point of view, you will spend more of your remaining years with your wife. Right now in Mumbai flats are selling faster than pot holes. So if you can afford it that would be my painful choice. (If you want sea facing,



let's talk offline, I know someone who knows someone. I am a 27-year-old woman and I've been single for a while now. However my parents want me to get settled. I don't think I'm ready for it now. How should I put this across to my parents? - GM
GM, why don't we learn from the Animal Kingdom? When two red tailed Baboon's parents feel it's time to get their young daughter married, they don't put ads in papers or websites. And, they don't pressurize their young daughter, (let's call her say Laila), to go find a suitable match in such and such a time. No they don't. In fact Laila goes about picking nuts and berries,

and fleas until she finds the right baboon, who then shares his nuts and berries and fleas with her thus cementing their union. Please explain all this to your parents with corresponding pictures of baboons, sharing holy matrimony without parent interference. When it comes to marriage, don't behave like a monkey. Behave like a baboon. I am a 23-year-old guy and I've been dating a girl for the last 2 years. The issue is that she wants to pursue her higher studies and move abroad and is not ready to be in a long distance relationship. Should I convince her or is it time to end this relationship? - BH

Popular scents don't always make best perfumes, here's why

Perfumes are described in terms of 'notes', which can be single odour ingredients, such as vanilla, musk or jasmine, as well as more generic smells like 'floral notes'.

Perfumes that use the most common scents do not always obtain the highest number of ratings, according to an analysis of 10,000 perfumes and their online ratings. The study, published in the journal PLOS ONE, reveals which odours are likely to bring success, with some surprising combinations providing a boost to ratings.

Perfumes are described in terms of 'notes', which can be single odour ingredients, such as vanilla, musk or jasmine, as well as more generic smells like 'floral notes'. Perfume smell is then described in terms of a combination of these notes. Combinations of several notes that are commonly used in perfumes are called 'accords'.

Researchers from Imperial College London in the UK used complex network analysis to determine the most popular notes and accords. The researchers analysed 1,000 notes in over 10,000 perfumes and their success in online shops. They found that some notes and accords are 'over-represented' in the dataset, meaning they appear more often than by chance, but that these are not necessarily the ones that are present in perfumes with the highest number of ratings. While some common accords, like lavender and geranium, are often present in 'successful' perfumes, some less-common notes and accords have an even stronger link with perfume popularity, for example jasmine plus mint, or musk plus vetiver



and vanilla. The researchers said this could be a new avenue for perfumers to discover scent combinations that are likely to be successful but are not yet widespread. "Our work provides insights into factors that play a role in the success of perfumes. It also sets up a framework for a statistical analysis of fragrances based on simple properties and customer reviews," said Vaiva Vasiliauskaite, from Imperial College London. "It could be a beneficial tool for systematic ingredient selection and act as

an artificial 'Nose' -- a traditional craft-master of perfumery," Vasiliauskaite said. The team acknowledged that brand influences perfume popularity but found no correlation between perfume price or time since release and success. The smell itself did have a large relation to perfume success. Their mathematical analysis also allowed them to determine which notes had particularly high 'enhancement' effects -- those that played a significant role in improving the rating of the accord they were added to.



Malaal movie review

Meezaan, Sharmin Sehgal and a film you've watched before

Malaal movie review: Meezaan, Sharmin Sehgal debut in a virginal romance about a rough diamond and the dream girl who will set him straight, all set in 90s Mumbai.

Malaal

Cast: Meezaan, Sharmin Sehgal

Director: Mangesh Hadawale

Rating: 2/5

He is the uncouth diamond-in-the-rough, she is the pretty princess placed on the wrong side of the tracks by circumstances. Love - in the time-honoured Bollywood tradition -- will happen in Malaal but not before the two fight a little, sing a little and suffer a little.

Sanjay Leela Bhansali gives us two newcomers in Malaal - his niece Sharmin Segal and Javed Jaffery's son Meezaan - in Bollywood's go-to format for launching new faces, a virginal romance. Set in late '90s Mumbai with its seedy dance bars, crashing stock market and bonhomie in chawls, Malaal comes with innocence we rarely see today.

Malaal begins with the meet-cute in a narrow chawl passage. Meezaan's Shiva is celebrating his win in a gully cricket match and finding favour with a local political leader for roughing up the umpire; Sharmin's Astha - clearly more privileged - is moving to the chawl with her family. There is instant electricity but the class divide is too vast for the two to breach.

They keep on meeting, under hoardings promoting Titanic and Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam - two films about star-crossed lovers - and at BEST bus stands. There is a rich fiancée on the sidelines but we all know how it will end. Song, dance and family's opposition later, a twist that we see coming from a mile off ends the film.

Malaal harks back to the innocent coming-of-age romances where desire is set

against duty, and love has the power to change your destiny. The film embraces the genre and era without avoiding any of its cliches. While offering little that is new, it sure is a change from the cynicism that we see from romances today. Perhaps, the reason why the filmmakers had to take their setting, film et al to the pre-Tinder era where romancing through eyes can carry off an entire film.

A few good themes, once introduced, are allowed to fritter away though. Shiva's political boss who offers him patronage, the hero's nativist thought process and the push against north Indians are established early in the film, only to be forgotten soon after.

And then there is the length - it spends an inordinate time establishing Shiva and Astha love each other. The second half especially is so stretched that



you can go buy popcorn without missing out anything other than how many steps they walk everyday or how many holes Shiva's vest has.

Director Mangesh Hadawale (Tingya), adapts Tamil director K Selvaraghavan's original story to fit a Marathi narrative but add little that's new. The film is loosely based on director's hit 7G Rainbow Colony - made by the

director in Tamil and Telugu over a decade and half back, which was adapted in other languages over the years.

Astha's role is tailor-made for Sharmin - as the coy heroine, she says little, and smiles almost all through the film. Meezaan shows spark in certain scenes but needs some more work, the hammy climax being a case in point.

Spider-Man Far From Home movie review

A passable postscript to Avengers Endgame, but a marvellous ode to Iron Man



Spider-Man Far From Home movie review: Even in death, Robert Downey Jr's Tony Stark looms large in Tom Holland and Jake Gyllenhaal's a passable postscript to Avengers Endgame. Rating: 3/5.

Spider-Man: Far From Home
Director - Jon Watts

Cast - Tom Holland, Jake Gyllenhaal, Samuel L Jackson, Zendaya, Jon Favreau, Jacob Batalon

Rating - 3/5

You'd imagine that the reputation of the two Ant-Man movies as the most inconsequential entries in the Marvel Cinematic Universe would remain unchallenged, but Spider-Man: Far From Home would like you to hold its beer. Spidey's second solo adventure in the MCU is a passable postscript to the 23-movie long

Infinity Saga and the filmmaking is above reproach, as usual, but positioning it as a direct follow-up to Avengers: Endgame certainly magnifies its faults.

For instance, the stakes simply aren't as high as you'd expect - the film exists solely to teach Peter Parker lessons he should have already learned, considering what he's been through. These characters have just survived the ultimate threat; half the world's population was literally resurrected without warning or explanation mere months ago, and Peter was instrumental in

defeating Thanos. Everyone should be losing their minds, or at the very least, questioning the fabric of reality. But instead, they're planning a summer vacation.

Spider-Man: Far From Home is basically EuroTrip, but with occasional diversions into superhero movie territory. In fact, it leans more heavily on innocent themes such as first love and friendship than even its predecessor, the refreshingly light Spider-Man: Homecoming. But Peter lost his innocence years ago; being thrust into intergalactic adventures with the Earth's Mightiest Heroes meant that he had to sacrifice a normal childhood, much like Harry Potter - and it is that very experience that he is trying to reclaim in this film. But Peter cannot shake off

the presence of the man who pulled him away from a regular life. Without ever appearing in the flesh, Tony Stark is essentially a strong supporting character in Spider-Man: Far From Home. He has taken on the role of Uncle Ben in the MCU's retelling of the Spider-Man story; a spectre of morality whose wisdom lingers even after they have passed. "I don't think Tony would've done what he did, if he didn't know that you were going to be here after he was gone," a grieving Happy Hogan tells Peter in the most enjoyable scene of the film. Experienced without context, the scene perfectly captures the surprisingly emotional journey the MCU has taken us on in the last decade. It's a bittersweet handshake between the series' past and future; a passing of the

baton, if you will. Like Tobey Maguire's Spider-Man 2, Tom Holland's second film as the iconic superhero finds Peter struggling to maintain a work-life balance. While his knee-jerk reaction to the demands of superhero life in this film isn't as emo as the last time (when Maguire trashed his Spider-Man suit in a rainy alleyway) there is a similar scene in Far From Home in which a reluctant Peter rebels by refusing to pack his suit for the school trip. He goes through a few different versions of the Spidey suit in this film, and each of them has been spoiled by the trailer, which is unusual for the otherwise very paranoid Marvel. But then again, there are bigger secrets to protect in Far From Home than Peter's evolving fashion.

This Independence Day will witness the year's biggest clash at the box office with three much-anticipated films, Saaho, Mission Mangal and Batla House set to lock horns. To add to the stakes, the second season of hit Netflix's superhit show, Sacred Games will be released on the streaming service on the same day, as well. This means the August 15 weekend will see Akshay Kumar's film on India's Mars Mission clashing with John Abraham's movie on Batla House encounter and Prabhas' next release after Baahubali 2 as well as the highly popular show with an ensemble cast of Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Saif Ali Khan and Pankaj Tripathi. While there is a lot for the audience to choose from on the August 15 holiday, trade analysts are not in favour of the clash. Trade analyst Girish Johar says, "The screens are limited and showcasing three films according to their respective durations becomes tough. The audience can watch a maximum of two films in a week but definitely not three. All three films will have to make a lot of noise in terms of marketing to get the attention of the audience. Since it's a holiday weekend, the prices of the tickets are also higher which will discourage the

Can Sacred Games 2 spoil the party for Mission Mangal, Batla House, Saaho?



With Netflix show Sacred Games releasing on Independence Day, the three-way box office clash between Akshay Kumar's Mission Mangal, Prabhas' Saaho and John Abraham's Batla House has become so much more intense.



audience to watch more than one film. This will increase the cut-throat competition between them." Talking about the disadvantages of such a clash, he adds, "When three films release together, the weakest film falls faster. And the film which emerges to be the best doesn't get repeat audience. The audience prefers to go for another option rather than watching a good film again. For example, there are many who are watching Kabir Singh again which adds to the box office of the film." Looking demographically, Saaho can be huge in South whereas Mission Mangal and Batla House can dominate the box office in North. But since Shraddha Kapoor also stars in Saaho, you never know if it may overtake them in the North. "The second season of Netflix show, Sacred Games is one the most-awaited web series of the year and may be preferred by the laid-back audience. The first season was a runaway hit among the global audience as 2 out of 3 people who watched the show were

outside of India: Akshay Kumar's Mission Mangal revolves around India's ambitious Mars Orbiter Mission and is expected to cater to the patriotic mood on August 15. The film will highlight the contribution of female scientists in India's space project and boasts of a celebrated star cast of Vidya Balan, Taapsee Pannu, Sonakshi Sinha, Kirti Kulhari and Nithya Menen. However, John Abraham's encounter drama, Batla House also falls in a similar category and be preferred by

those looking for some thrill and action. The film will revisit the infamous controversial encounter and may ride high on the curiosity quotient. Apart from these two, Prabhas' big budget action film promises some never seen before action and stunts. The actor has a dedicated fan base of his own after the success of his debut film Baahubali: The Beginning, followed by its prequel Baahubali: The Conclusion that remains unbeaten as the biggest Indian grosser till date.



Ciara and Gabrielle Union hit a fashion home run with their plunging frocks while

Elle Fanning showcases her winning eye for style in silver as the stars lead the red carpet glamour at the 2019 ESPYS

The accomplishments of the sports world are being celebrated at the 2019 ESPYS in Los Angeles tonight, and in style.

Ciara, Gabrielle Union, and Elle Fanning were among the stars hitting a fashion home run as they arrived to the big show, held at the Microsoft Theater on Wednesday.

The Level Up songstress, 33, arrived to the ceremony with her teammate for life, Seattle Seahawks player Russell Wilson, and threatened to completely steal the spotlight thanks to her very sexy slashed dress. Ciara showed off her curves and cleavage while wearing a plunging black dress with thigh-high slit and cut-

outs along the waist.

Though the dress fell modestly floor length, it complimented her fabulous figure, clinging to her backside. She softened the va va voom vibe however with her hair, which cascaded past her chest in long, romantic waves. Accentuating her naturally radiant complexion, Ciara polished on a tint of lip gloss, bronze blush, and smoky eye

shadow. Ciara and her husband of three years opted to match for the occasion.

Russell kept it smart and sharp in a glossy black jacket, matching trousers, a pair of Loriblu velvet shoes, along with an Alex Soldier brooch to top off



the look.

While Ciara opted for a classic, all-black style, Elle brought the glamour in a dazzling gown.

The actress was the picture of elegance in a glittering, off-the-shoulder metallic dress, along with a sleek and straight hairstyle. Gabrielle, meanwhile, looked ready to dance the night away in a playful floral print mini.

The Bring It On actress worked her magic in a plunging blue

frock, silver heels, and even brought along a cocktail themed purse for an added fun touch.

Nominees for Best Male Athlete are Patrick Mahomes from the Kansas City Chiefs, Mookie Betts from the Boston Red Sox, Giannis Antetokounmpo from the Milwaukee Bucks, and golfer Brooks Koepka.

The nominees for this year's Best Female Athlete are Breanna Stewart from the Seattle Storm, gymnast Simone Biles, USWNT player Alex Morgan, and skier Mikaela Shiffrin.

This year's show is hosted by Tracy Morgan, and was in no shortage of celebrities and sports stars alike.

New England Patriots player Rob Gronkowski couldn't resist kissing his stunning girlfriend Camille Kostek while striking a pose ahead of the show.

Rocking a curve-clinging maroon dress with thigh-high slit, Camille looked absolutely irresistible as she worked the red carpet alongside her other half.

Lindsey had heads turning as she made her entrance alongside her boyfriend, P.K. Subban.



Inside Jeffrey Epstein's New York mansion: 'Vast trove' of lewd photos, a life-size doll and other oddities



(News Agencies)- Federal agents who searched the East Side Manhattan mansion of wealthy sex offender Jeffrey Epstein turned up a "vast trove of lewd photographs" of young-looking girls, including hundreds of meticulously labeled nude pictures locked in a safe,

according to federal court documents. The description, laid out in a memo by prosecutors from the Southern District of New York, was aimed at convincing a federal judge that Epstein, who was arrested July 6 upon return from Paris on his

private jet, should not be freed pending trial on charges of sex trafficking. Agents used crowbars to force open the front door of the seven-story Upper East Side mansion. The memo said the search turned up not only evidence supporting

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Cyrus Vance's Office Sought Reduced Sex-Offender Status for Epstein



The arrest of Jeffrey Epstein has renewed scrutiny of how he was treated by the office of Mr. Vance, the Manhattan district attorney. The arrest of Jeffrey E. Epstein on federal sex-trafficking charges has focused attention on the lenient plea bargain that state and federal prosecutors reached with him in Florida over similar charges more than a decade ago. But the new indictment has also unexpectedly renewed scrutiny of another prosecutor's treatment of Mr. Epstein: the Manhattan district attorney, Cyrus R. Vance Jr. During a hearing in 2011, a seasoned sex-crimes prosecutor from Mr. Vance's office argued forcefully in court that Mr. Epstein, who had been convicted in Florida of soliciting an underage prostitute, should not be registered as a top-level sex offender in New York. Instead, the prosecutor, Jennifer Gaffney, asked a judge to reduce Mr. Epstein's sex-offender status to the lowest possible classification, which would have limited the personal information available

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Pro-Khalistani Group Sikhs for Justice Banned Over 'Anti-National' Activities, Punjab CM Lauds Move



(News Agencies) - The Union Cabinet on Wednesday announced to ban Sikh fundamentalist organisation Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) under Section 3 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act for its alleged anti-national activities, officials said.

Elaborating on the reasons for the ban, the gazette notification by the government said, "Whereas the Sikhs for Justice has been indulging in activities prejudicial to the internal security of India and public order and have the potential

of disturbing peace and unity and integrity of the country."

The SFJ, headed by Avtar Singh Pannun and Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, was formed in 2007, but has come to prominence only in the last 5 years as it started advocating a separate Khalistan state. It also started an online secessionist campaign, the 'Sikh Referendum 2020'. The group's primary objective is to establish an 'independent and sovereign country' in Punjab.

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A Sharp Drop in Migrant Arrivals on the Border: What's Happening?



(News Agencies) - A migrant shelter in San Diego that a month ago was crowded with arrivals was nearly empty this week as migrant apprehensions have dropped sharply. At its peak, the nonprofit shelter run by Jewish Family Service of San Diego held more than 300 migrants dropped off by United States immigration authorities after they crossed the border from Mexico. Some days this spring were so busy that new arrivals had to be sent to overflow sites. Now, the shelter is almost eerily empty. The number of people arriving there has plunged in recent weeks amid a precipitous decline in arrivals along the southern border, where the Department of Homeland Security said that

apprehensions dropped 28 percent in June. While migrant arrivals typically decline as the hot, hazardous summer months set in, the Department of Homeland Security said the drop in June was much larger than the 11 percent drop in June of last year. The difference suggested that the

Trump administration's long push to curtail the arrival of migrants at the southern border is finally showing results. Since he took office, President Trump has made it a cornerstone of his administration to halt the flow of undocumented migrants, expanding security fencing, slowing processing at ports of entry and locking up record numbers of migrants.

The administration's latest policies have gone a step further. The threat of tariffs helped push Mexico to deploy security forces on its own southern border, curtailing the flow of migrants from neighboring Guatemala.

A second initiative has forced many migrants to return to Mexico to await the

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