

# The South Asian INSIDER

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## A Global Recession is Almost Here

**A global recession may be coming a lot sooner than anyone thought. Fears of another global recession grew this week when a reliable economic indicator suggested the U.S. may be heading toward an economic slowdown. But it's not limited to the U.S. Countries like Germany, China, UK, Italy and Japan with some of the biggest economies in the world appear to be teetering on the brink of a recession.**

(SAI Bureau) New York: Warning signs pointing to a deepening global economic slowdown—and the risk of recession—are flashing more brightly. “I think the trade war, it affects companies in the U.S., but it affects people outside — the countries outside the U.S. a lot more, especially smaller countries outside the U.S.,” St. Louis Federal Reserve President James Bullard told FOX Business on Thursday.

Many of the biggest troubles are showing up overseas. But stock and bond markets are signaling that the threat of a downturn is spreading to the U.S., the world's largest economy, now in its longest expansion on record.

Economic output in Germany, the world's fourth-largest economy, contracted in the second quarter, according to a report Wednesday, while a report on factory output in China, the second-largest economy, came in lower than expected.

“It's almost like we're starting to see a textbook version of a pre-recessionary period,” Nicholas Akins, chief executive of Ohio-based American Electric Power Co., said in an interview Wednesday. The company provides electricity to industrial, commercial and residential customers in 11 states.

The good news is that the U.S. isn't confronted with severe

excesses to unwind, as it was in the mid-2000s with the housing boom or the late 1990s with tech-stock gains. Because of that, some economists said any downturn might be mild.

Many past recessions were traced to high interest rates instituted by the Federal Reserve, as in the early 1980s; to bubbles bursting such as the dot-com bust of 2000 and 2001; to financial instabilities as in 2007, 2008 and 2009; or some combination of the above.

Some experts predict that if a recession comes, this time it will be driven by lower business investment.

Allen Sinai, a forecaster at

Decision Economics, said that if corporate earnings slip, that could lead to less investment and then less hiring, creating a self-fulfilling process of contraction. Mr. Sinai has nudged his recession risk estimate up for the first time in years.

Already, both corporate earnings and investment are sliding. U.S. corporate profits before taxes were down 2.2% in the first quarter compared with a year earlier, according to the Commerce Department. And U.S. business investment fell at a 0.6% annual rate in the second quarter, after achieving quarterly growth rates exceeding 8% in late 2017 and early 2018.

“I think the trade thing is a big policy error,” Mr. Sinai said. He agrees with President Trump that China hasn't been playing by the rules of global trade and needs to be confronted. But he said the tariffs the U.S. is using against China are hurting back home. “There has got to be a better way to do it,” he said.

The Fed cut short-term interest rates in July, partly in response to slower global growth, and investors widely expect it to continue with rate reductions. Lower rates could help spur investment and spending by encouraging households and business to borrow more.

(Contd on page 19)

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# Indian flag hoisting at Hicksville, Long Island



Indian flag hoisting at Hicksville Community Center with South Asian Advisory Board and TOB Officials. Those who attended included Town of Oyster Bay Supervisor Joseph Saladino, Laura Maier Vicki Walsh Rose Walker Lionel Chitty Brian Nevin Jim McCaffrey Deepak Bansal Jay Singh (Jasbir) (IDP Parade President) Sharanjit Singh Thind (Former Human Rights Commissioner) Steve Labriola Jeff Pravato Laura Schaefer MOHINDER Taneja Bobby K. Kalotee Shan Shaheen Angel Cepeda Nipun Marwaha for beautiful rendition of American National Anthem Beena Kothari Nisha Diler And Kiran Gupta and group for Indian National Anthem Paresh B Shah Amita Karwal NYSACOC and all who attended

## IDA USA Post Parade Gala held



IDP USA organized Post GALA Dinner for India Day Parade on 5th August, 2019 at a beautiful place The Standard At North Shore Synagogue at Syosset. Program was very well organized by the committee and started at 6:30 p.m. and ended at 11:30 p.m. There were four Honorees Mr. Naveen C. Shah (Jewel of India, USA), Mr. Chintu Patel (Jewel of India, USA), Mrs. Ranju Narang (Lifetime Achievement), Ranju & Ravi Batra (Life time Achievement), and were awarded with plaque by IDP committee.

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# South Asian Indians gathered to celebrate the 73rd Anniversary of India's Independence Day in Hicksville New York



(By our Staff Reporter)- Under the banner of India Day Parade USA the entire community of South Asian Indians gathered to celebrate the 73rd Anniversary of India's Independence Day in Hicksville New York. Parade's slogan this year was Jai Jawan- Jai Kisan to salute our soldiers and farmers and to celebrate the community, unity, heritage and cultural diversity of South Asian Indians. IDP USA organized the 7th Parade in Hicksville NY on August 4th, 2019 starting from Patel Brothers on Broadway and ending with festivities at E Barclays Street. They had celebrity Grand Marshalls, Honorable Consul General of India in New York Mr. Sandeep Chakravorty, Bollywood Actor Raj Kummar Rao, Mr. Naveen Shah - Navika Capital, Businessman Mr. Chintu Patel, distinguished Elected Officials Congressman Tom Suozzi and from Nassau and Suffolk NY State Senators Kevin Thomas and Senator Anna Kaplan, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran, Supervisor of North Hempstead Judy Bosworth, Supervisor of

Oyster Bay Joseph Saladino, Supervisor of Hempstead Laura Gillen, Legislators Laura Schaefer and Rose Marie Walker, Minority Affairs E D Farrah Mozawalla, Suffolk County Human Rights Commissioner and 3 times Past President of IDP Beena Kothari, Nassau Human Rights Commissioner Zahid Syed and others along with the President of the parade Mr. Jasbir (Jay) Singh, Mr. Kamlesh C Mehta, and several community leaders and invited guest Ms. Arti Patel, Co-Chief Executive Officer at Vass Pipe & Steel Co. Mr. Sunil Jain, Mrs. Chanchal Shah, who is the mother of Navika Group chief Naveen Shah, Advisors on stage, Indu Jaiswal, Sir Peter Beddah,

Beena Kothari, Mukesh Modi and other Committee members Mohinder Taneja, Bina Sabapathy, Shashi Malik, Gautam Sanghvi to name a few for the inauguration and initiation of the parade at Patel Brothers. Satbir Bedi was the MC for the day. Breakfast was hosted by Patel Brothers and HAB Bank before the flag off. The South Asian Community has become an integral part and changed the face of Long island and made Hicksville a prominent, ever developing multicultural home for all Indians sharing pride, passion, presence and social bond as patriotic American Indians. A beautiful warm day with the whole crowd holding India's Flag

tricolor umbrellas sponsored by Mohinder Singh Miglani of Aero World marked Patel Brothers parking grounds. It was a sight to see as the parade later got flagged off with countless organizations from long island displaying pride and honor with marching groups and tricolor decorated festive floats sponsored by local organizations. The parade was led by IDP USA Indian National Flag bearers, Grand Marshalls and the IDP USA Committee in the biggest float in the parade as lead. The flowers were showered by helicopter on the full parade which mesmerized the local community and all Indian Community. At festivity grounds cultural

dances by children and students of local dance schools performed at the beginning and other celebrities were invited to perform on stage after the parade reached E Barclays Street. Bollywood singer Mr. Deepak Kumar of Satellite India and Punjabi stage artist and singer Ms. Pooja had the crowd cheering, taking videos and pictures and joining the mood. A fashion Show by Nishi Behl and sponsored by Bhavna Sharma of Sarashiva gave a special romantic touch to the stage with upbeat music and beautiful clothes and glamorous ladies. BMW SUV sponsored by Mr. Naveen Shah of Navika Capital was the super prize of the raffle which had several other prizes





# Pakistan's response to Kashmir is only helping Modi. It should stay out of this

(News Agencies)- Pakistan has been in a state of apoplectic hysteria ever since India scrapped Article 370, a part of the Indian constitution that gave constitutional autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir. Prime Minister Imran Khan has compared Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government to Hitler and Nazism and has spoken, entirely without evidence or context, of an "impending genocide." A minister in his cabinet has even gone so far as to call for a mutiny in the Indian army.

The hyperbole has been accompanied by drastic action: India's envoy to Pakistan has been sent home; diplomatic relations have been downgraded; trade, such it was, has been halted; and Bollywood (without

which no Pakistani wedding is complete) has been banned from domestic screens.

Pakistan has painted itself into a corner, with no road map to make its way back. It says it will reconsider the decision to downgrade diplomatic ties if India reverts its Kashmir move. Since that is not about to happen - short of a legal ruling by India's Supreme Court - how will Pakistan backpedal its way from the dead end?

Its response has been knee-jerk, unfathomable - and, above all, ironic. Every outburst and flailing against India only validates the Modi government and rallies Indian public opinion behind it. In other words, while claiming to lash out at him, Pakistan is only making Modi look better, even among those Indians who do not

agree with the prime minister's handling of Kashmir.

First, there is the mystery of why Pakistan would get so publicly agitated over a provision of the Indian constitution. For decades, its deep state has run "training camps" for Kashmiri militant groups like the Hizbul Mujahideen and nurtured terrorist groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed.

Before 9/11, when the world was still more indulgent of such nomenclatures, Pakistan called them "freedom fighters." Pakistan's entire Kashmir policy is based on the patronage of those who want secession from India and are prepared to kill or die for it. That it is now tying itself in knots over Article 370 would mean that it intrinsically accepts the terms on which Jammu and



Kashmir negotiated its accession to India. Is Pakistan really fighting for Indian constitutionalism? In that case, even the parts of the erstwhile kingdom that it holds in its control since its raiders invaded India in 1947 - the area that India calls Pakistan-occupied Kashmir

- should be looked at through the prism of the same constitutional framework.

Global Opinions

Pakistan's response to Kashmir is only helping Modi. It should stay out of this. Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan in Washington in July.

## India-China Ties Have Global Dimensions, Must Respect Each Other's Core Concerns: Jaishankar



(News Agencies)- India and China should find stronger convergences, respect each other's core concerns and manage differences, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said as he underlined that the

relationship between the two Asian giants has become "so big" that it has acquired a "global dimension".

Jaishankar, who concluded his three-day visit to Beijing on Monday, held extensive and in-

depth talks with his counterpart Wang Yi on the entire gamut of the India-China ties.

During his visit, he also met Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan, a close confidant of President Xi Jinping.

As the two largest developing countries and emerging economies, cooperation between India and China is of great importance to the world, Jaishankar told state-run Xinhua news agency here in an interview on Sunday.

"Our relationship is so big that it is no longer a bilateral relationship. It has global dimensions," the report quoted Jaishankar as saying.

Describing the world as "more multi-polar" with changing global

order, he said India and China need to enhance communication and coordination to contribute to world peace, stability and development.

The two countries should find stronger areas of convergence, respect each other's core concerns, find ways of managing differences and keep a strategic view of the direction of bilateral ties, he said.

The minister said the two neighbours have a long history that goes back to thousands of years and the two countries' civilisations are among the oldest that represent two pillars of the civilisation of the East.

"A lot of people, including young people of both countries, really don't have a good understanding

of how much our two cultures of civilisations have affected each other," Jaishankar said, underlining that "promoting a greater awareness of that history" through more cultural exchanges is an important task for the two countries.

India and China have agreed to establish a high-level people-to-people exchanges mechanism in April last year and the first meeting was held in New Delhi in December.

Describing the move as "taking the bilateral relationship from the narrow diplomatic field to a larger societal interaction", Jaishankar said the more people of the two nations interact face-to-face, the more their sense of relating to each other will grow.

## Pakistan's Imran Khan faces limited options on Kashmir

(News Agencies)- As Pakistani anger mounts over an Indian clampdown on Kashmir, Imran Khan, the cricket-star-turned-prime-minister, boarded a helicopter for the picturesque Himalayan region that both New Delhi and Islamabad claim as their own. In the small town of Muzaffarabad, which was overrun by Pakistani irregulars in October 1947 and has been controlled by Islamabad ever since, Mr Khan vowed to support Kashmiris' quest for self-determination, and angrily denounced India for its repressive lockdown of the Kashmir Valley over the past 10

days. "Narendra Modi has committed a strategic blunder - he has played his last card," Mr Khan said of his Indian counterpart in remarks broadcast on Pakistani television. "This will prove to be a mistake for Modi, as he has internationalised Kashmir. Now people globally will learn about Kashmir." His fiery denunciation of neighbouring India - and his hints about the risks of war - came after Pakistan on Tuesday urged the UN Security Council to meet to discuss New Delhi's decision on August to scrap Kashmir's longstanding legal autonomy. But, if anything, Mr

Khan's heated rhetoric highlights the challenges Islamabad faces in placating the Pakistani public, after New Delhi revoked Jammu and Kashmir's right to make its own laws, and brought the erstwhile kingdom under its direct control. The Pakistani leader is "caught between a rock and a hard place", said a senior leader of Mr Khan's ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party. For decades, Pakistan's political and military elite have promoted the idea that the breathtakingly beautiful Kashmir Valley, with its Muslim majority, rightfully belongs to them - an article of faith for many ordinary

Pakistanis. But New Delhi's nullification of the territory's legal autonomy - and the opening of its long-closed property market to outsiders - has effectively buried Islamabad's moribund dream of a Kashmiri plebiscite to determine the future of the region. India has defended its severance of Kashmir's communication links, restrictions on public movement and detentions of hundreds of Kashmiri leaders as necessary precautions to prevent troublemakers from stoking potentially deadly violence. For its part, Islamabad has downgraded diplomatic relations with New Delhi, and suspended bus and train

services to India. In fiery tweets, Mr Khan has accused Mr Modi's government of seeking to "change [ the] demography of Kashmir through ethnic cleansing". But for all the sabre-rattling, analysts say Islamabad has little international sympathy and few strategic options. "Imran Khan recognises he has a very weak hand," said Ashley Tellis, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "A lot of what they are doing now is an exercise in public diplomacy. These guys are realistic enough to know that nothing is going to change on the ground."





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## Govt's shift in nuclear posture shows this is a new New Delhi

**Pakistan's nuclear blackmail is a concern, but the Indian move is diplomatically questionable, strategically unsound.**

In what would be considered a signal moment in the evolution of India's nuclear weapons policy, defence minister Rajnath Singh said, and then tweeted, on Friday, that while New Delhi remains committed to nuclear no-first-use (NFU) till "today"; what the country may or may not do tomorrow is a different story.

This is not the first time that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has cast grave doubts over India's NFU commitment since it has been in power. Recall the then defence minister Manohar Parrikar's 2017 musings at a book launch, where he refused to accept why India as a "responsible" nuclear power would bind itself to an NFU posture, though he later claimed this was his "personal view". Could Singh's statement then indicate a further shift in this direction?

This chipping away at India's nuclear-weapons use posture is strategically unsound and diplomatically questionable. It plays into the hands of Pakistan, which has forever sought a notional parity with India in terms of intransigent nuclear behaviour; it provides no additional security to this country in so far as what our nuclear deterrent already fetches; and it alarms China — the fact that this happened hours before Beijing was scheduled to open an "informal consultation" about Kashmir at the United Nations Security Council is hard to miss. This also arms critics of India's nuclear-weapons policy (including in the United States). It is also timed with a nation facing a serious internal security challenge, with the defence minister's statement coming just 11 days after breaking the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union territories in the middle of a rather unprecedented security crackdown. While the defence minister's posture may or may not have anything to do with the ongoing crisis in Kashmir, one thing is clear. This is, indeed, a new New Delhi.

Pakistan's facilitation of jihadists under the cover of its nuclear umbrella has been a long-standing concern to India. By introducing battlefield nukes, Rawalpindi felt it foreclosed Indian conventional military options as Kashmir (and Mumbai) bled. At the same time, Delhi sought to ever expand its options in fits and starts. It never quite mustered the courage to do what many thought — and still think — was/is needed: Teach the Islamic Republic of Pakistan a hard lesson.

Enter Narendra Modi. Witness the "surgical strike" of 2016, or the Balakot air strike of February 2019. A duel is the subject of all strategy, the great Prussian military thinker Carl von Clausewitz once told us. This one, between Pakistan's perfidy and Indian prevarication, was of half-finished businesses, New Delhi having neither deterred nor cautioned the generals in Rawalpindi about its intentions. Simply put: We were not duelling with a state, but with a shadow, whose threats and entreaties came simultaneously. That suite of cards finally stands flipped today.

The fear of annihilation, and blackmail, is not one-sided, the Modi government seems to be re-assuring us. Do we have what it needs to follow through this? As a specialist on nuclear weapons, I have two thoughts on this. A "first use posture" requires a hair-trigger alert, the ability to strike the enemy's missile before it can do the same to us. It requires the ability to have 24/7 nuclear bombers in the sky, much like how things were between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It requires the ability — when it comes to Pakistan — to take out mobile batteries of Pakistani Haft missiles in the event of a war, knowing well that we are the ones staring at a nuclear war.

At the same time, it requires courage and moral certitude which I am not so sure we possess as a nation. We remain uncertain about who we are, who we consider our enemies, and what price we are willing to bear to know both. It is, and this is a reminder of the early days of the Cold War in the United States, a comfort to fight knowing you may not see another day.

The defence minister is one of the most thoughtful members of the Union Cabinet — his statement, thus, is no accident. It is neither braggadocio nor a threat, simply an expression of a nation tired of all time-worn certitudes. The matter at the end is not a technical clarification of a weapon's use — and nuclear bombs are weapons, no matter what people may have told you. It is of a young nation, looking beyond. Nuclear weapons policy, as the defence minister obliquely reminded us in his tweet, is not static, subject to some unknown shibboleth. It reflects us, as the existential deterrent, binding our lives to those we thought were different.

## Kashmir: Play cards right

The world has decided to wait and watch when it comes to Kashmir. A good chunk of the international system could even be said to be paying no attention. Pakistan's hopes of creating a global storm over the Indian government's ending of Jammu and Kashmir's special status have fallen flat. China, unsurprisingly, has made the most noise but most of it has been about Ladakh. Now even President Donald Trump's mediation offer is reportedly "off the table". The United Nations Security Council told Islamabad it would not allow a discussion on Kashmir. The Islamic world has been silent. The overwhelming sense: a world that has other priorities, does not see Pakistan as a credible complainant and is prepared to take the Modi government at its word when it says both democracy and statehood will be restored.

There has been ample evidence that the world long ago become tired of Kashmir and largely endorsed India's view that this was a bilateral concern. Pakistan's own brinkmanship has steadily undermined the credibility of its own arguments, whether through its support for terrorist activity or its willingness to provoke border wars a la Kargil. The decline in militancy in the Kashmir Valley from its height in the late 1980s and the contemporaneous rise in India's economic and strategic significance has made it all that much harder for Pakistan to find an external audience. This was evident in the aftermath of India's airstrike on Balakot. The lack of sympathy for a Pakistan that had, ultimately, been bombed on its own soil, was striking.

New Delhi cannot afford to rest on its laurels. Quite a bit of the present



international acceptance of events is because Kashmir is relatively quiet. While odd protests can be expected, bloodshed should be avoided as much as possible as that, more than anything else, could swing the international mood from passivity to activism. The government must not lose sight of the need to lift prohibitory orders at the first opportune moment and initiate Kashmir along the complex path to new elections and statehood as soon as possible. Holding to these requirements will be made doubly difficult by Rawalpindi's recognition that violence is the best method to undermine the Modi programme.

Terrorist activity, Line of Control fireworks and the funding of mobs are all expected. India should begin the process of vaccinating world opinion to this likelihood even as it continues to wrestle with how to ease the Valley back to a state of quasi normalcy. India took two decades to persuade the world to treat Kashmir as a bilateral issue. If it plays its cards right today, it can ensure Kashmir is treated as a domestic issue within two years.

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

**Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah**

**Photographers: Hamad**

**Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind**

**Special Correspondent :**

**Gagandeep Singh (INDIA)**

**Web Coordinator : Harpreet Singh**

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**REGD & MAILING OFFICE :**

**P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801**

**Phone: 917 612 3158 TelFax : 516 342 1076**

**editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com**  
**www.thesouthasianinsider.com**

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# The secret to BJP's 'all are welcome' mode

*The lesson that Modi delivered to the BJP in 2013 remained an effective tool for the party's during the 2019 parliamentary polls and, even, afterwards.*

It was a bright sunny morning in the winter of 2013 when Narendra Modi, then prime ministerial candidate of the BJP, told his party leaders what was missing in the campaign for 2014 national election.

"During Atal Bihari Vajpayee's days in power, we used to hear that so and so has joined the BJP," Modi told a small group of BJP leaders over a cup of tea. "We haven't heard any such news in last 10 years."

Over the next several weeks, Bollywood personalities, bureaucrats, political rivals, poets and others joined the BJP, creating a buzz around the party that finally stormed into Raisina Hills, giving India its first majority government after 1989.

The lesson that Modi

delivered to the BJP in 2013 remained an effective tool for the party's during the 2019 parliamentary polls and, even, afterwards. Three months into Modi's return as the Prime Minister with greater numbers has seen the BJP in states where it aims to leave a bolder footprint.

People have changed party affiliations in West Bengal, Maharashtra, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and the northeast. Many others crossed over to the treasury benches in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of Parliament, where the BJP lacks a majority.

What has the BJP tried to achieve with such tactics. The answer has three angles - strategical, tactical and psychological.

First, the ruling party wants to keep alive the buzz around the BJP with influential personalities joining the party. Being in and returning to power has its own risks, the gravest of them being that the party may slip into an 'inactive' mode. The strategy is to keep the cadre energized with small doses of enthusiasm that emanates from a sentiment that BJP has not reached its prime and remains an attractive destination for many people, including sworn political enemies. This is tactical.

Second, every joining adds muscle to the BJP's structure. This is a strategic move to import talent in areas where the BJP lacks it. The tactic to create buzz around the party helps this strategy as



well. An impressive show in the Lok Sabha election in states such as West Bengal and Telangana, and the BJP's ability to survive a a Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party alliance in Uttar Pradesh, has attracted several rival leaders who switched loyalties for a secured future. In return, the BJP benefits from the critical mass these leaders bring in.

Third, and the last, the

tactical and strategic move of the BJP is intended to leave a deep psychological impact on its rivals who are already down after a drubbing in the parliamentary election. The vertical split in the parliamentary party of Telugu Desam Party prompted its chief N Chandrababu Naidu to cut short his trip abroad and return. The merger of 10 out of 13 MLAs of the Sikkim Democratic Front

with the BJP made it the biggest opposition party in the hill state. The desertion in the Congress camp has helped the BJP create a narrative that the principal opposition is in complete disarray.

The big challenge before the opposition parties is to not only to regroup themselves but also find a counter to the three-pronged attack from the BJP. It will be easier said than done.

## Pakistan continues to seek outside mediation on Kashmir as rebuffs pile up



Pakistan continues to seek third-party mediation and intervention on Kashmir despite repeated rebuffs, with Poland, the current president of UN Security Council, being the latest. Pakistan's ambassador to the United States appealed for American intervention in an op-ed and interview in a leading news publication, seeking to transactionally leverage its continued cooperation in the Afghanistan peace process. These efforts have found no

traction so far as demonstrated Monday when the Polish foreign minister Jacek Czaputowicz summarily rejected a direct appeal for a UNSC discussion of the Kashmir developments made to him by Pakistan's Shah Mehmood Qureshi in a phone call.

"The dispute between the countries could only be solved through dialogue, as also called for by the European Union," the Polish foreign ministry said in a readout of their phone

call. As a rotating UNSC chair for August, the minister added, "Poland would closely monitor developments in the region and maintain regular contact with the partners." Qureshi's direct and personal appeal to his Polish counterpart followed outreach to the Poland permanent mission to the United Nations in New York last week in which Pakistani Permanent Representative Maleeha Lodhi met Polish Permanent Representative

**Only China, among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, has responded harshly to the change in the status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir**

Joanna Wronecka and handed over a copy of a letter Qureshi had written to UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres.

Pakistan's appeal to both the UN secretary general and the UNSC chair now stand rejected by both. Guterres, in fact, raised the Simla Agreement of 1972 in his response, pointing to an undertaking from India and Pakistan as part of that pact to resolve all their disputes bilaterally.

But Pakistan plowed on. The Polish foreign ministry said that in the Monday phone call, which was initiated by Pakistan, Qureshi "presented Pakistan's negative position on the decision adopted by India's parliament on August 5 to change the status of the state of Jammu and

Kashmir. The chief of Pakistani diplomacy underlined the lack of legal legitimacy for the status change and the difficult situation of the local population. He expressed his hope that the situation in Kashmir would be the subject of discussion at the UNSC, which Poland chairs in August."

Pakistan's frustration at these continued rebuffs was voiced eloquently by Qureshi at a recent news conference in Pakistan. "Giving vent to emotions is easy and raising objections is much easier. However, it is difficult to understand the issue and move forward. They are not waiting for you with garlands in their hands. Any members out of the P-5 nations can be a hurdle... Do not live in the fools' paradise."

That was on Sunday, the day before he called Czaputowicz. Only China, among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, has responded harshly to the change in the status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and because, among other reasons, it believes itself to be a stakeholder on account of areas of the state it grabbed after the 1962 war. Russia, also a P-5 country, has in fact supported India on the status change, and said last weekend, "We proceed from fact that the changes associated with the change in the status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and its division into two union territories are carried out within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of India."



# The supremacy of the Indian State and Parliament



Climate change is the new normal

After the devastating floods in Bihar and Assam, it's now the turn of five other states - Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Uttarakhand - to be battered by unrelenting rain and floods. At least 200 people have been

killed, and 1.2 million affected in these five states. According to the weather website, El Dorado, out of the 15 places that have received most rainfall across the globe in the last 24 hours (Sunday-Monday), eight are in India. While such extreme weather conditions these days

are usually attributed to climate change, there is no point blaming merely that phenomenon any more for the fallout; instead, it's best to accept such extreme climate episodes as the new normal and find out ways to minimise their impact.

One of the key reasons why floods have a devastating impact on cities and towns is because the excess water does not have enough space to drain. This is because the stormwater channels are clogged with plastic, and water sinks, such as wetlands, floodplains, or riverbeds have been destroyed by encroachments and excessive construction. The impact of such unplanned

development was seen in the floods of Mumbai (2005 and 2017), Uttarakhand (2013), Srinagar (2014), Chennai (2015), and Kerala (2018). As for how plastic increases the threat of floods, one needs to just see the photograph from Palakkad, Kerala, that went viral last week. The photograph showed an area in the district full of plastic bottles and other waste materials that were brought back by the floods. While many cities have banned plastic, the implementation of the law has been very weak.

The recent round of floods has also raised questions about dam management in India. This issue has come to the fore after reports said that despite early warnings

about heavy rainfall in the states, Maharashtra and Karnataka failed to release water from the dams on time. An August 2019 report, Krishna Basin Floods in Maharashtra - Karnataka: How dams harming rather than helping of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers, and People has said that the dam operators could have acted prudently by releasing the dam water in July. The report further says that the government hasn't learned any lessons from the past incidents and that the capacity of the catchment areas to hold and absorb and store the rainwater is reducing with time. All these issues need to be tackled if India wants to weather the climate storm.

## Not Just J&K, Even Congress Lost Its 'Special Status' in Opposition Within 48 Hours

The Gandhi family appears to be losing its grip on the party with the continuing delay in choosing a successor to Rahul Gandhi.

The party has been headless for more than two-and-a-half months. In the meantime though, the Congress Working Committee, the highest policy-making body of the party met twice -- once to finalise about Rajiv Gandhi's 75th birth anniversary celebrations and on Tuesday about coming up with the party's stand on the scrapping of provisions in Article 370 and Article 35A, and the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir.

There seems to be no hurry in choosing the next Congress

president. Day by day, things are drifting with the party workers confused and the leaders having no clue about what the Gandhi family is thinking about the leadership. State-level leaders, particularly in poll-bound states like Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand, are at their wits' end on how to fight elections and win when the party has no leadership in the state.

Though Sonia Gandhi is the chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party, the just-concluded Parliament session proved that the Congress has lost the plot. Rahul Gandhi continues to be taking selective decisions, but did not play any active role

in the House. Many expected him to speak on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bold move to scrap provisions of the controversial Article 370. Instead, he was seen sitting in the House in his seat in the second row, surfing his mobile phone. He took to Twitter to criticise Modi on Kashmir. His critics say that he speaks more outside Parliament than inside.

The just-concluded Parliament session also showed that the Gandhi family grip is loosening in both the Houses and as is its standing in the Opposition. The Congress MPs had no clue on many controversial issues, which were discussed in the House.

The Congress failed to mobilise the opposition parties on important legislations, resulting in the government getting away with even difficult legislations like RTI amendments and Triple Talaq bill as well as scrapping special status to Jammu and Kashmir. There was division in the opposition ranks, which the BJP utilised to the full extent and the Congress remained isolated in the House along with some smaller parties. No doubt Sonia Gandhi called a meeting of opposition leaders, but could not unite the opposition on issues. Even within the party, murmurs are increasing with even senior leaders admitting that things

were getting worse day by day. For instance, many MPs did not know what the party line was even on Article 370. When Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad opposed the scrapping of J&K special status with a fiery speech, there were others who wanted to support the measure. Similarly in the Lok Sabha, party leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury left the Gandhis red-faced while speaking on the Kashmir issue by asking, "If Indira Gandhi did the Shimla agreement and Vajpayee did the Lahore agreement, then how is Article 370 an internal issue?" while the party had an opposite view.

## Naya Kashmir: It's not a new idea

After his government voided Article 370, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that "a new age has begun in Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh". In fact, the quest for a new beginning is not all that novel in the history of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Indira Gandhi, too, wanted to alter the status quo in Kashmir. In explaining its decision to abolish the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, the Modi government has emphasised the developmental and political benefits that are expected to flow from these arrangements. These moves have indeed wrought a radical change in the constitutional relationship between the Indian Union and

the erstwhile state of J&K. As we ponder how these arrangements will work out, it may be useful to look back to Indira Gandhi's attempt at a new beginning.

"We will build a new Kashmir, quickly if you help, slowly if you don't, but build it we will!" Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had said while addressing a public rally in Srinagar in June 1970. Indeed, important changes were already underway.

Then J&K chief minister, GM Sadiq, had been in office since 1964. A year into his tenure, he had merged his splinter group, the Democratic National Conference, with the Congress. What's more, Sadiq had enabled the erosion of the state's special

status by accepting more provisions of the Indian Constitution (including Article 356, which caters for President's rule) and amending the state's constitution to convert the elected Sadr-e-Riyasat into a governor appointed by the central government. Following assembly elections in 1967, Sadiq returned with a comfortable majority. New Delhi was poised to tighten its grip over the state.

Yet the government struggled to create jobs or promote investments in Kashmir. Sadiq noted that the educated young people of the state were increasingly drawn to the secessionist groups. Indira Gandhi deputed her confidante,



IK Gujral, to mobilise investments in the state. But Gujral reported that industries were not prepared to invest in a conflict zone and the best he could do was to get two public sector units to open factories in the state.

The central challenge, however, was posed by the stalwart leader of Kashmiris: Sheikh Abdullah. Although Abdullah had been in and out of prison since his dismissal and arrest in 1953, his standing in the Kashmir Valley was unrivalled.



# After Centre scraps Art 370, Shyama Prasad Mookerjee resurfaces in Bengal

*Shyama Prasad Mookerjee is being hailed in pamphlets and newspaper columns in his home state where, in the recent decades, he found mention mostly in political speeches, plaques, road signs and books.*

Three days after the Centre scrapped Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370, a far-Right group in Bengal, Hindu Samhati, began collecting signatures from people at 40 railway stations for a petition to ask the Centre to rename Kolkata's Sealdah station after Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, the founder president of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the forerunner of the BJP.

"Only now we are discussing how Shyama Prasad vehemently opposed a separate constitution for Kashmir and died in the state while in detention. But people have forgotten that West Bengal would not have come into existence without his struggle. We want Seladah station to be named after him since a large number of Hindu refugees from East Pakistan arrived here," members of the Hindutva group were heard telling passengers

and passersby. As the social media is getting clouded with conflicting opinions, Mookerjee and his critics appear to be silently resurfacing in public space in his home state where, in the recent decades, he found mention mostly in political speeches, plaques, road signs and books.

Surprisingly, most Bengalis seem to remember the son of the legendary jurist and educator Sir Asutosh Mookerjee as a brilliant student who acquired several university degrees in quick succession, followed the footsteps of his father and became the vice-chancellor of Calcutta University when he was only 33.

Mookerjee started his political career as a Congress legislator in 1929 but left the party a year later when it boycotted the legislature. He continued as an independent. The British

Parliament ordered provincial elections in 1937. Mookerjee eventually became the finance minister of the Bengal province in 1941 in Fazlul Huq's short-lived Progressive Coalition government.

The real conversation starter in Bengal is the fact that in the intervening years Mookerjee embraced the Hindu Mahasabha headed by V D Savarkar and took part in the party's 1939 Calcutta session. This made Mookerjee a target of the communists and a section of Congress leaders for the rest of his life although he became a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1946 and served as minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet after Independence.

Mookerjee was reported to have said at a public meeting in 1941 that if Muslims wanted a state of their own they would have to leave India lock, stock and barrel. He



became president of the Hindu Mahasabha after two years, succeeding Savarkar. In 1946, while he was still leading the party, Mookerjee demanded Bengal to be divided in such a way that Muslim-dominated areas remained in the proposed state of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The August 1946 communal riots in Noakhali (now in Bangladesh) and Kolkata claimed more than a thousand lives. When Viceroy Lord Mountbatten was overseeing the Partition in 1947, Mookerjee wrote to him, saying Bengal must be divided even if India was not and opposed a proposal from Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's elder brother Sarat Bose and

prominent Muslim League leader Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy to have an undivided free state of Bengal. Suhrawardy had two major handicaps. Hindus accused him of masterminding the 1946 killings and his plan did not clarify how the state he had proposed would be part of the Commonwealth. Mookerjee succeeded and West Bengal was born out of the Partition.

This part of Bengal's history has now come under maximum focus. Singha Bahini, another Hindutva group has launched a video depicting the life of Gopal Chandra Mukherjee who armed and led Hindus against the Muslims of Kolkata in 1946.

# Maharashtra tried to get optics right, bumbled its way through flood crisis



*From day one, the Fadnavis government has, in a bid to get the optics right, stumbled from one mistake to another over the flood situation in the state. For the first time also, the BJP's and Chief Minister Fadnavis' otherwise astute political management has gone awry.*

As the water started receding from one of Maharashtra's worst-affected districts Kolhapur, the district administration imposed orders prohibiting public gathering of four or more persons here. The orders were issued by district administration on Monday to ostensibly avoid confusion and chaos during rehabilitation work. The Opposition, however, termed the prohibition orders as draconian with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) comparing the BJP-led government with that of General Dyer of the Jallianwalla Bagh infamy. The prohibition orders on a populace that has suffered

trauma of floods - losing their homes, belongings and loved ones - by the district administration is the latest in a series of controversies that the Devendra Fadnavis-led government has courted while tackling the floods in Western Maharashtra. The orders were withdrawn on Tuesday.

From day one, the Fadnavis government has, in a bid to get the optics right, stumbled from one mistake to another over the flood situation in the state.

For the first time also, the BJP's and Chief Minister Fadnavis' otherwise astute political management has gone awry and delivered to a defeated

Opposition, a readymade issue to hit the government with ahead of the assembly polls in October.

The many controversies include among others, insensitive footage of senior water resources minister Girish Mahajan taking smiling selfies while sitting in a boat amid rescue operations, disbursing food packets with stickers of Fadnavis and other BJP politicians, issuing orders that compensation be only given to those whose homes have been under water for two days etc.

In Sangli, even as floods wrecked havoc, the guardian minister Subhash Deshmukh was away in Pune conducting the party's organisational workshops.

The nearly week-long floods in western Maharashtra have left over 40 dead and about 5 lakh displaced mainly in the two districts of Kolhapur and Sangli, 370 km from Mumbai. But the controversies also point to the

larger administration and governance deficit of this government.

The BJP-led government, perhaps, started tackling the disaster on the wrong foot.

Devendra Fadnavis was busy with his Mahajanadesh Yatra - to seek people's blessings ahead of assembly polls - in Vidarbha when the first spell of bad news came in. By the time Fadnavis called off his Yatra last Wednesday and came around to review the flood situation from Mantralaya, the rescue operations already appeared to have been delayed by a day. "For starters, the government did not take this situation seriously. The local officials underestimated the extent of the floods and the right information did not reach the top brass. Neither the chief minister nor his senior ministers reacted soon enough. The delayed response angered people," said

political commentator Prakash Bal. A senior bureaucrat also told HT that trust deficit between the chief minister and some of his cabinet colleagues as well as officials also may have contributed to the state's poor handling of the floods.

"As revenue minister, Chandrakant Patil should have handled the situation from day one especially because Fadnavis was away. But, the CM appointed Sena minister Eknath Shinde when he was in the yatra to handle co-ordination," the bureaucrat added. But, he explained, district collectors and divisional commissioner report to revenue minister Patil, not Shinde. CM's close aide Girish Mahajan, who was asked to coordinate rescue efforts instead of focusing on backroom job, chose to go and be a part of the rescue to get footage," added the bureaucrat.



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# Priyanka's 'Aide' Booked for Assaulting Journalist During Visit to Sonbhadra

*The journalist covering the Congress leader's visit for a regional TV channel had complained that her personal secretary Sandeep Singh had assaulted and threatened him.*

(News Agencies)- The police have lodged an FIR against an aide of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra after a journalist complained that he was assaulted during the Congress leader's visit to the village where 10 people were shot dead last month. A day after the Congress general secretary visited Umbha village in Sonbhadra district, the state government on Wednesday also accused her of distorting facts. Ghorawal police station in-charge C P Pandey confirmed that an FIR has been filed based on the journalist Nitish Kumar Pandey's complaint. The journalist covering the

Congress leader's visit for a regional TV channel had complained that her personal secretary Sandeep Singh had assaulted and threatened him. A purported video of the aide misbehaving with a journalist during her visit had also surfaced on social media. It showed the reporter asking the Congress leader a question on the scrapping of special status for Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370. He was pushed back and an argument started. The aide is heard accusing the reporter of being pro-BJP and asking questions for money at the behest of that party. Attacking Priyanka Gandhi, Chief

Minister Yogi Adityanath's media advisor on Wednesday asked her not to shed crocodile tears, echoing the remarks made by UP Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma.

The spokesperson blamed the Congress for the land dispute over which the killings took place. "Your party MLC Maheshwar Prasad Narain Singh constituted Adarsh Krishi Sahkari Samiti, Umbha with 12 of his relatives and usurped 1300 bigha land," Mirtyunjay Kumar tweeted in Hindi.

Stop shedding fake and crocodile tears and seek pardon from the victims," he added. He said the Congress leader should update her information as a police outpost has already been set up in Umbha village.

"No case has been lodged against any villager after the



incident and no Goonda act has been invoked against anyone. For hiding the sins of the Congress, don't distort facts," he said.

Chief Minister Adityanath himself has announced that land rights will be given to the poor, he added.

"The job of grabbing land cannot be done better than by you (Congress) and if you don't believe it, you can ask Robert Vadra," Kumar said, in an apparent reference to accusations faced by the

Congress leader's husband. On Tuesday, the media advisor had on Tuesday tagged the video which showed the journalist being pushed by the man described as Priyanka Gandhi's aide.

"Priyanka Gandhiji, please stop the theatrics of wiping the tears of the poor," he had then tweeted. He asked where were those who claim to be on the side of press freedom when Gandhi's secretary misbehaved with a journalist, and she did not say anything to him.

## 2 policemen posed as Maoists to loot people in Bastar, arrested: Cops



Two policemen and a civilian disguised as Maoists were arrested on Wednesday in Chhattisgarh for looting traders and passengers in Narayanpur district. Another policeman, also part of the gang, is on the run and police are raiding various spots to nab him.

The accused constables, Hirdu Ram Kumeti and Madhav Kuldeep, were arrested along with one civilian Dolendera Kumeti. The third one, Omkar Kumeti is on run. All the accused are from Kondagaon district and were active in the Bastar region for last one month.

The police in Narayanpur said that the accused were involved in more than six cases of loot in the region and in all of them they looted the residents and traders by posing as Maoist leaders. Two weapons, mobiles and a motorbike were also recovered

from the accused. The accused were also involved in setting ablaze a bus on August 12 and looting the passengers. "We started investigating the case and found some mobile locations in Kondagaon. We raided several spots and arrested the accused constable and one civilian in the case," said SP Narayanpur Mohit Garg. "They use to stop the traders coming from Bazars of jungles and greet them with 'Laal Salaam' and then used to loot the money. They told the traders that they are facing financial crisis due to demonetisation hence they need money," said the SP.

"Most of the people who were looted by these constables did not report to the police out of fear. They did loot in Bastar district on August 5 and got about Rs 18,000. Then we sensed that a gang is operating," the SP added.

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# Chinese Influence on Southeast Asia began with 'Boots of Soldiers', India's with Monks, Says Ram Madhav

**The BJP general secretary said former prime minister P V Narasimha Rao should be credited with formulating the 'Look East Policy' in the early 1990s and engaging with the region.**

(News Agencies)- Chinese influence over Southeast Asia began with "boots of soldiers", while India's initial connect with the region was through its monks, senior BJP leader Ram Madhav said on Wednesday.

Speaking at a seminar here, Madhav stressed that culture and religion have been the major aspect of ties between India and Southeast Asia, but due to the "problem of secularist agenda", India could not decide on how to use these tools effectively for diplomacy.

The BJP general secretary said former prime minister P V Narasimha Rao should be credited with formulating the 'Look East Policy' in the early 1990s and engaging with the region.

"A major difference existed between the two efforts (of India's and China's), migrations. In the case of the Chinese, it

was the soldiers who travelled to those lands first, followed by the traders. It was the boots of the soldiers on the soil that took the Chinese influence to these lands," he said at the seminar on 'India and Southeast Asia: The Cultural Connect'.

"That was followed by trade, commerce and other contact with those lands. The result was that the Chinese influence remained limited to the areas where their army could reach, for example north Vietnam. Whereas in our case, it was the priests and the monks who travelled first, followed by the traders, sailors, and others," he added.

Recalling the historical links with the region, Madhav said there was major trade activity between the Guptas and Cholas, whose reign spanned between the 3rd C and 5th C AD and 8th C and 12 C AD respectively, and the present day ASEAN region.

With seats of learning at Sanchi

and Nalanda, ancient India attracted many students from the ASEAN region.

He said today the trade between ASEAN countries and India stands at around USD 90 billion.

The recent relationship with the region, he noted, has also evolved around migration of Indian labourers to some of these countries during the British regime as tree plantation workers or as mining workers.

He said countries like Myanmar and Malaysia have a good number of Indian origin population.

"Major aspect of this relationship has been cultural and religion... we never recognised importance of these things... whether culture and religion can become tools of our diplomacy has never been fully explored.

"We had this problem of secularist agenda. We do not



know whether we should consider this relationship as something which state should invest, our state has to remain secular," Madhav said.

The BJP leader said the Bali government in Indonesia had sought Indian support for teachers in the areas of astrology and temple architecture some decades back but bureaucracy was in a state of confusion.

The idea was that these were not "secular sciences", he said. Bali has considerable Hindu population. Madhav said culture as an important tool in diplomacy, in building strong

bilateral relations has to be appreciated first by India before embarking on strengthening cultural ties with countries.

He said after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over, a decision was taken to make culture as one of the five pillars of diplomacy.

Listing out the steps taken by India to increase cultural ties with the region, Vikram Doraiswami, Joint Secretary (Bangladesh, Myanmar and Indo-Pacific divisions), Ministry of External Affairs, said in October, a civilisational connect conference is being organised in Hanoi.

## Playing God: 400-year-old Japan Temple Puts Faith in Robot Priest to 'Hot-wire' Interest in Buddhism

**The android Kannon preaches sermons at Kodaiji temple in Kyoto, and its human colleagues predict that with artificial intelligence it could one day acquire unlimited wisdom.**

(News Agencies)- A 400-year-old temple in Japan is attempting to hot-wire interest in Buddhism with a robotic priest it believes will change the face of the religion -- despite critics comparing the android to "Frankenstein's monster."

The android Kannon, based on the Buddhist deity of mercy, preaches sermons at Kodaiji temple in Kyoto, and its human colleagues predict that with artificial intelligence it could one day acquire unlimited wisdom. "This robot will never die, it will just keep updating itself and evolving," priest Tensho Goto told AFP.

"That's the beauty of a robot. It can store knowledge forever and limitlessly.

"With AI we hope it will grow in

wisdom to help people overcome even the most difficult troubles. It's changing Buddhism," added Goto.

The adult-sized robot began service earlier this year and is able to move its torso, arms and head.

But only its hands, face and shoulders are covered in silicone to replicate human skin.

Clasping its hands together in prayer and speaking in soothing tones, the rest of the droid's mechanical parts are clearly visible.

Wiring and blinking lights fill the cranial cavity of its open-top head and snake around its gender-neutral, aluminium body.

A tiny video camera installed in the left eye completes an eerie, cyborg-like frame seemingly

lifted straight out of a dystopian Hollywood sci-fi thriller.

Developed at a cost of almost \$1m in a joint project between the Zen temple and renowned robotics professor Hiroshi Ishiguro at Osaka University, the humanoid -- called Mindar -- teaches about compassion and of the dangers of desire, anger and ego.

"You cling to a sense of selfish ego," it warns worshippers. "Worldly desires are nothing other than a mind lost at sea."

No 'fuddy-duddy' priest

With religion's influence on daily life flat-lining in Japan, Goto hopes Kodaiji's robot priest will be able to reach younger generations in a way traditional monks can't.

"Young people probably think a



temple is a place for funerals or weddings," he said, trying to explain the disconnect with religion.

"It might be difficult to relate to fuddy-duddy priests like me, but hopefully the robot is a fun way to bridge that gap. We want people to see the robot and think about the essence of Buddhism." Goto insisted, however, that Mindar was no gimmick to boost income from tourists.

"This robot teaches us ways to overcome pain," he said. "It is here to save anyone who seeks

help."The pious droid delivers sermons from the Heart Sutras in Japanese, with translations in English and Chinese projected onto a screen for foreign visitors.

"The goal of Buddhism is to ease suffering," said Goto. "Modern society brings other kinds of stress, but the goal hasn't really changed for over 2,000 years."

A recent Osaka University survey showed a wide range of feedback from those who have seen the android at work, with many expressing surprise at how "human" it looked.



# Sacred Games: Anger Still Bubbling in Delhi Locality After Temple Razing While Politics Takes Centre Stage

(News Agencies)- A cocktail of anguish and anger is brewing in Delhi's Tughlakabad area. "This act is a devious plan by the central government to further marginalise the Dalits," said a resident of the neighbourhood who, like many others from the locality, did not wish to disclose his name. Men and women rushed out of their homes in Tughlakabad when a mason, on orders of the police, began sealing shut the main entrance to the historic Shri Guru Ravidas temple on August 9. The Delhi Development Authority, a central government agency, was carrying out the action following orders from the Supreme Court to pull down the structure on a petition against alleged encroachment. A volunteer at the shrine recalled that fateful evening with marked distress. "The police began sealing the main gate of the temple at around 4pm. Male and female officers were present in

large numbers; all were equipped with firepower. Some of us women who worked in the temple entered through another route at around 4.30pm. Unaware of what was to come, we began preparations for the langar (communal meal) and even got together for a satsang (sacred gathering)," she told News18. "Brick by brick the structure was demolished while a sea of worshippers witnessed it. But, before they (central government and police) did it, they shattered our sense of belief." According to folklore, poet-saint, social reformer and spiritual figure Guru Ravidas visited the sacred place around 1509 during the reign of Sikandar Lodhi. His followers formed the Ravidassia religion, a spin-off from Sikhism, in the 21st century. By dawn on August 10, the entire temple area was sealed shut. Authorities had even arrested 10 protesting women who, locals said, had never been near a police station before.

"We were shouting, we were crying, but they heard none of our voices," said another volunteer. "We saw our temple being reduced to ruins in front of our eyes. And then they pushed us out of the compound," she added. According to the women who were arrested, the police "snuck us out of a back route and dumped us inside a bus". One of them said the bus was strategically parked in such a way that in the event of arrests it remained sequestered from the place of action and went unnoticed by all. Another volunteer said they were forced to sit in the bus for two hours. "After the demolition of the temple, the police slipped us out quietly. All of us went to jail that night - for the first time - protecting our belief," she added. Legal Battle The Supreme Court order for demolition of the temple came after a long-drawn legal battle between the Guru Ravidas Jayanti Samaroh Samiti and the



Delhi Development Authority. The DDA argued that the holy site was unlawfully built inside the 'green belt' (a government designation aimed at retaining wild or agricultural land adjoining urban areas), while the Samiti cried foul over historical negligence and documentation. However, when the top court directed that the temple be razed on August 9, nowhere was 'green

member of the temple committee. "The matter then is about how law has failed its people and history has become irrelevant," he told News18. According to him, the temple was inaugurated by the then railways minister, Jagjivan Ram, under the Congress government on March 1, 1959, four years before the DDA was officially formed in 1963 (it was created in 1957).

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संघर्षविपन्नता दर्शन का परिणाम है। पाकिस्तान को सेना ने जम्मू-कश्मीर के कुछ हिस्से में नियंत्रण रखने के लिए सैनिकों को भेजा है। पाकिस्तान को सेना ने जम्मू-कश्मीर के कुछ हिस्से में नियंत्रण रखने के लिए सैनिकों को भेजा है।

**भारतीय-अमेरिकन कम्युनिटी द्वारा घोर निंदा**

वॉशिंगटन ■ हम हिंदुस्तानी

अमेरिका ने मोदीगंगा में इस्लामिक स्टेट (आईएस) के खिलाफ होने वाली अंतर्विषयक को एक संदेश के रूप में देखा है। अमेरिका को अंतर्विषयक से इनकार कर दिया है। अमेरिका का कहना है कि अब यह अमेरिकी नागरिक नहीं है। अमेरिका के अंतर्विषयक को अंतर्विषयक के रूप में देखा है। अमेरिका के अंतर्विषयक को अंतर्विषयक के रूप में देखा है।

**आईएस ने शामिल हुई महिला को अमेरिका ने एंटी देने से किया इंकार**

वॉशिंगटन ■ हम हिंदुस्तानी

आईएस ने शामिल हुई महिला को अमेरिका ने एंटी देने से किया इंकार। अमेरिका ने एंटी देने से किया इंकार। अमेरिका ने एंटी देने से किया इंकार।



## Madhya Pradesh Police Arrests Arms Dealer for Plotting Against Senior State Leaders

**The police however claimed that the arrested criminal Haider Ali had said something regarding the 'said assassination plot' to his friend Arif but both had consumed drugs and could not substantiate what they had discussed that day**

(News Agencies)- After the arrest of Burdwan blast accused from Indore days ago, MP police has arrested a criminal charged with dealing in illegal arms. The accused was also said to be plotting to eliminate senior leaders of Madhya Pradesh.

The police however claimed that

the arrested criminal Haider Ali had said something regarding the 'said assassination plot' to his friend Arif but both had consumed drugs and could not substantiate what they had discussed that day. Reports also said that the accused during a chat with his friend had revealed the plan of eliminating three senior leaders

of the state including a former Chief Minister.

The Special Task Force (STF) had given an input regarding possible involvement of Haider in illicit arms trade. Later in a joint operation, we arrested him on Wednesday, Deputy Inspector General of Police Bhopal Irashad Wali told media.

On being asked about the leaders the criminal was plotting against, the DIG claimed that during integration the hardened criminal accepted saying few things to his friend Arif but he couldn't recall as he had consumed drugs.

Arif who was also arrested by the police couldn't recall the plan, claimed the DIG.

"The plot to kill leaders had also come to our knowledge but as we could not substantiate the



details after quizzing the two criminals, so taking any names won't be appropriate," said the senior cop on the suspected leader to be targeted. On Aug 11, the National Investigation Agency had arrested Jahirul Shaikh, an accused in Burdwan blast case of West Bengal, from Indore.

Shaikh was hiding in the city while working as a labourer. Madhya Pradesh is turning into a safe haven for wanted criminals. Saurabh Shukla, a native of Sidhi in MP is accused of raising funds for terror outfit Lashkar-e-Toiba was arrested in July.

### Nitish Felicitates Farmers who Discovered a Suspected Meteorite Recently in Madhubani



been kept for public display. The trio had discovered the object, which looks like an ordinary piece of rock but has magnetic properties, at their village Mahadeva in Laukahi police station area of Madhubani district on July 22. The object was extracted from a five feet deep hole in the ground after

(News Agencies)- Three Bihar farmers, who had recently discovered a suspected meteorite while working in the fields at their village, were on Wednesday felicitated here by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. Rajkumar Prasad, Bihari Yadav and Rajkumar Khatwe were presented with Angavastram and mementos by the Chief Minister at the Bihar Museum where the celestial object, weighing 13 kgs, has

the trio rushed to the spot hearing a loud thud. The district officials were informed about the discovery following which the suspected meteorite was brought to the state capital and kept at the museum.

A cherished project of the Chief Minister who is known to have a keen interest in archaeology and many other branches of science, the Bihar Museum was thrown open to the public on Gandhi Jayanti two years ago.

### Restrictions in Jammu Lifted, Curbs to Continue in Some Places in Kashmir, Says J&K ADG

(News Agencies)- Restrictions imposed in Jammu have been completely lifted but curbs will continue in some places in Kashmir for a while longer, a senior Jammu and Kashmir police officer said on Wednesday.

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir is totally under control and there

have been no major injuries to anyone, Additional Director General of Police Munir Khan said.

"Restrictions imposed in Jammu have been completely removed.



They will continue in some places of Kashmir for sometime," he said at a press conference here.

There have been only a few pellet injuries that have been treated, he said.

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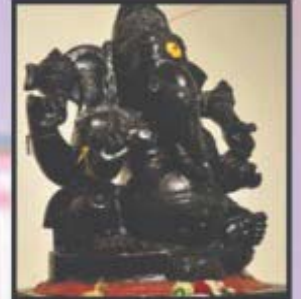
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## Narendra Modi and Amit Shah Tick Another Box in BJP Manifesto With Kashmir Move. What's Next?

and bold and innovative decision-making. The move also showcases the Congress' utter helplessness in the face of the BJP's determination to carry forward its agenda and gives pause even to those who are optimistic about the party's revival. Conversely, it may open a face-saving doorway for the Gandhis to return and take charge of the flailing party. Never has the Congress missed former president Sonia Gandhi more, for in the absence of a unifying force, the Opposition took diametric views. The Congress is in near-isolation, with ideologically contiguous parties like the AAP, TDP, BSP, BJP and YSR Congress openly backing the NDA and others taking the line of least resistance by staging a walkout. Having felt the public pulse, they could not be seen to stand against the move. Even within the Congress, opinion is sharply divided, as evidenced by the resignation

of its Rajya Sabha MP and chief whip Bhubaneshwar Kalita. Other Congressmen, too, admitted to being on board with the government's decision, albeit off the record.

The timing for the dramatic step is perfect: the US is inclined to a hands-off approach, the NDA is in its honeymoon phase, the Opposition is at its weakest and most divided, the Supreme Court is manifestly not in an activist mode and the electorate needs a confidence booster in the face of a failing economy.

Already, the positives are being celebrated in and outside the Kashmir Valley. Kashmiri women are thrilled with the restoration of their rights to property, while real estate in the newly formed Union Territory looks forward to an unprecedented boom and businessmen anticipate a flood of investment. The negatives have to do with the legality of abrogating provisions in articles 370 and 35A, the potential for bloodshed

sparked by Kashmiri sub-nationalists and the diplomatic repercussions vis-à-vis China and Pakistan.

In addition, the fallout in the global media may well be radioactive; while Indian intellectuals have described the move as 'repressive' and a failure of democracy, the western media is predicting an escalation in violence.

Insofar as the legality is concerned, the ball is squarely in the apex court. It has the power of judicial review and can strike down the J&K Restructuring Act (once it receives presidential assent) if it deems fit.

The Supreme Court has already been hearing petitions against Article 370 and, in April of 2018, ruled that the provision had acquired "permanent" status. However, that didn't stop the Union government from declaring it "inoperative" (as opposed to eliminating it outright, which would have needed a

constitutional amendment).

As for containing dissent, the precise administrative mechanism that will be instituted to govern J&K and Ladakh is not yet known. But the precautionary measures, such as enhancing military presence in the Valley and jailing political leaders, indicates that the Union government means business. This was not an off-the-cuff decision. Extensive preparations, legal and military, were made, although very few individuals were privy to them.

The result: yet another box in the BJP's election manifesto has been ticked. Triple Talaq is a decisive step towards a Uniform Civil Code, Jammu & Kashmir's special status is history. Next up, presumably, is the Ram Temple at Ayodhya.

A significant aspect of the decision is that it puts Home Minister Amit Shah front and centre.

Hard-edged, uncompromising and ruthless though he may be, he has

emerged from his mentor's shadow and may well become a contender in future.

For now, the message to the electorate is that the Modi-Shah partnership has the potential for transformative change. They are determined to break the shackles of status quo-ism and shape 'NayaIndia'.

Former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee had once considered the trifurcation of J&K, but backed off in the absence of a majority. The Modi-Shah duo faces no such hurdles and is unafraid of controversy and undeterred by 'what ifs'.

The PM's visceral understanding of human behaviour renders him a master of Game Theory as applied to politics (the study of strategy, decisions and outcomes in competitive situations). This enables him to repeatedly confound his critics by taking hair-raising and seemingly foolhardy decisions, which enhance rather than diminish his popularity.

## 5 of the world's biggest economies are at risk of recession

China's massive economy is growing at the slowest pace in nearly three decades as the country wages a prolonged trade war with the United States, which will impose new taxes on Chinese exports in September and December.

"The common feature is the weak global backdrop," said Neil Shearing, group chief economist at Capital Economics.

The International Monetary Fund last month cut its forecast for global growth this year to 3.2%, the weakest rate of expansion since 2009. It also downgraded

its expectations for 2020 to 3.5%. Investors are increasingly worried. The bond market is flashing warning signs and more than a third of asset managers surveyed by Bank of America expect a global recession in the next 12 months.

5 economies at risk

Germany relies heavily on exporters that sell a disproportionate amount of goods to China and the United States. Lackluster global auto sales have also hit its carmakers.

"Today's GDP report definitely marks the end of a golden decade

for the German economy," said Carsten Brzeski, chief economist in Germany at the Dutch bank ING.

While fears of a chaotic Brexit are helping to drag down the German economy, that issue is causing the most pain in the United Kingdom, where the economy is shrinking for the first time since 2012.

The British economy should rebound in the third quarter and avoid an immediate recession.

But if Prime Minister Boris Johnson pulls the country out of the European Union without a

deal to protect trade on October 31, a recession would likely be unavoidable. In Italy, weak productivity, high youth unemployment, huge debt and political turmoil are to blame for its continued malaise. Investment has dropped in Mexico and the country's services sector is under pressure. Brazil, the largest economy in Latin America, is suffering from weak industrial production and high unemployment. Data due in the coming weeks will confirm whether it has fallen into recession.

Storm clouds

Shearing argues that some of the gloom and doom is unjustified.

At a global level, he says, spending by companies on assets such as equipment have stabilized. The labor market is resilient. "While there are pockets of extreme weakness in the world economy - particularly in manufacturing - other parts are holding up relatively well," he said. "All of this is consistent with our view that global growth is slowing rather than collapsing.

Yet he also points to three big risks. The first is the trade war. If Beijing and Washington continue to ratchet tensions higher, business confidence could plummet. The International Monetary Fund has warned that growth in 2020 would be slashed by half a percentage point if the dispute escalates further. Another big risk is that central banks fail to act, causing a negative reaction in financial markets that feeds through to the real economy. The US Federal Reserve cut rates last month for the first time in 11 years, and the European Central Bank has hinted that it will unleash more stimulus in September. Pressure is building on China to cut its main interest rate for the first time in four years.

## IAF Pilot Abhinandan Varthaman, Captured by Pak, to Be Awarded Vir Chakra on Independence Day

shot down in a dogfight with Pakistani jets during the aerial combat. Before his jet was hit, he downed an F-16 fighter of Pakistan. Varthaman was released on the night of March 1 by Pakistan after being held captive for more than 60 hours.

After he was captured, Varthaman showed immense courage and grace in handling the most testing circumstances. His valiance was praised by politicians, strategic affairs experts,

celebrities and the general public. Vir Chakra is India's third-highest wartime gallantry award, after the Param Vir Chakra and the Maha Vir Chakra. The Mirage pilots struck targets in Balakot with Israeli-origin Spice 2000 bombs with penetrator warheads that allowed them to pierce through the rooftops before exploding inside to cause maximum damage.

Varthaman is currently recovering from ejection-

related injuries and is likely to undergo a series of tests in the coming months at the Bengaluru-based Institute of Aerospace Medicine that will have to give him final clearance for flying again, sources said. He was earlier posted at the Srinagar air base with the air force's No 51 squadron, also known as 'Sword Arms', but was then shifted to another base a few months ago for security reasons.

Tensions between India and

Pakistan escalated after Indian fighters bombed terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed's biggest training camp near Balakot, deep inside Pakistan on February 26. Pakistan retaliated by attempting to target Indian military installations the next day.

The Indian strike on the JeM camp came 12 days after the terror outfit claimed responsibility for a suicide attack on a CRPF convoy in Kashmir, killing 40 soldiers.



"I think that the U.S. economy has enough strength to avoid [a recession]," Janet Yellen, the former Fed chairwoman, said in a taped interview to be aired Friday on Fox Business Network's "WSJ at Large." "But the odds have clearly risen and they are higher than I'm frankly comfortable with."

One big factor behind the latest troubles is a downturn in global trade. The duties have driven up the price of hundreds of billions of dollars in goods made by the world's two largest economies, hitting farmers, manufacturers, retailers and others. For export-dependent economies like China and Germany, trade disruptions mean immediate trouble. The U.S. is less dependent on exports, somewhat insulating its economy.

Still, because American multinationals have spent the past two decades building vast global supply networks, uncertainty about trade and the changing cost of doing business are leading to trepidation about investment.

Analysts have been peppering U.S. business executives—especially manufacturers—in conference calls in recent weeks about whether they see activity softening and are prepared for a downturn.

"It's no secret that, given the level of uncertainty right now around [a] number of issues globally that—from the standpoint of business tentativeness that we're certainly seeing more of that right now," E. Scott Santi, chief executive of Illinois Toolworks Inc., a Glenview, Ill., manufacturer, said when asked about recession risks in a call last week. In a Wall Street Journal poll released last week, economists on average saw a 33.6% probability of a recession in the next 12 months, up from 30.1% in July and the highest level in the Journal survey going back to 2011. The average probability was 18.3% a year ago.

But with unemployment low, incomes rising and household saving rates higher than in the late 1990s or mid-2000s, many consumers are in better shape to weather a storm.

For now, slow growth is the concern of many analysts. Forecasting firm Macroeconomic Advisers estimates the economy is growing at a 1.7% annual rate in the current quarter, well below the 3% rate the Trump administration has said it hopes to achieve in the long run. An economy expanding at a sub-2% rate is prone to descend into negative territory in the face of an unforeseen shock. But the domestic economy—largely driven by consumers, rather than exporters—might be able to carry the day.

Michael Uffner, chief executive of AutoTeam Delaware, which owns three car dealerships, said

sales have risen modestly this year despite higher prices for new vehicles. He said his customers appear unfazed, in large part because interest rates remain low, making it easy for households to borrow for new cars. "Even though the average transaction price has gone up, most consumers look at their budgets and can see that they can afford an automobile or a truck that's a little more expensive today than it was a year ago," he said.

#### CHINA AND GERMANY

On Wednesday, bad news came from China and Germany—Beijing's industrial output fell to a 17-year low, and the latter revealed its export-led economy shrank 0.1 percent in the spring—pushed markets down globally. In part, the turbulence has been driven by the year-long trade a New Window between the U.S. and China, which is impacting the global exchange of goods and hurting some countries' exports. Meanwhile, growth has essentially stopped in Italy. At the end of 2018, strapped with debt and high unemployment, it slipped into recession, lagging behind the other members of the European Union. It has since recovered.

#### UNITED KINGDOM

A third European country, and a backbone of the 28-member bloc, is also struggling economically. The United Kingdom is inching closer to a recession. In the second quarter, its economy contracted for the first time—a side-effect of the possibility of a "no-deal" Brexit in the upcoming months.

#### JAPAN

Japan also faces the possibility of a slowdown, or recession, amid a nasty trade fight with South Korea.

In April, the International Monetary Fund cut its global growth outlook to the lowest pace since the financial crisis began 12 years ago. "This is a delicate moment" for the global economy, the IMF's chief economist warned during a press conference, citing precarious trade negotiations between the U.S. and China, as well as uncertainty surrounding Britain's planned departure from the European Union, which is slated to happen in October. On Tuesday, equity markets across the globe jumped at the news that the Trump administration would delay some of the new tariffs on China it had announced earlier this month. But just one day later, global stock markets sold off hard due to ever-weakening economic data in Europe and Asia and further yield curve inversions.

Call it a major hangover. The reversal in tariffs did not come from a position of strength. It came as a result of global economic reality sinking in and crushing US markets.

Turns out trade wars are not easy to win and the global growth picture is not looking good. Last

week, the UK announced negative GDP growth for the past quarter. This week, it's Germany announcing shrinking GDP with its 10-year bond hitting a record negative 0.62% yield. Then there's Europe seeing negative industrial production, and China announcing its lowest industrial production growth in 17 years.

The collapse in global bond yields has been a theme since October of last year, with 10-year US Treasury bonds dropping to 1.6% from their October 2018 high of 3.23%. Now that the two-year/10-year Treasury yield curve has inverted, the recession alarm bells are ringing. Why? Because every single recession in the past 45 years has seen a yield curve inversion preceding it. History suggests that on average a recession begins 22 months after a yield curve inversion. It's not until about 18 months after an inversion that the stock market turns negative.

Yet Bank of America Merrill Lynch numbers indicate that we have less time. For the 10 yield curve inversions since 1956, the S&P 500 peaked within approximately three months of the inversion six times. Following the other four, the S&P 500 took 11 to 22 months to peak.

Twenty-two months of growth vs. three months? That's quite a big gap. Both of these historical studies suggest there is room for markets to make new highs in the next few months. In fact, one can imagine several scenarios on how these new highs could come about.

Central banks could embark on emergency interest rate cuts and reintroduce quantitative easing programs to force more cash into equities again. A sudden end to a trade war, with an attempt to save face by both sides, could certainly spark a sustained global relief rally that may end up averting or delaying a recession. Indeed, the Trump administration, eager to avoid a recession ahead of the 2020 election, may find itself in a position to end the trade war sooner rather than later. But the administration is still faced with several historic miscalculations of its own making. The massive tax cuts of 2017 have produced little in the form of growth other than a temporary sugar high. Growth is slowing. Long gone are the promises of 4% GDP growth. In fact, growth is looking to drop below 2% in lieu of a trade deal. The only thing that has been growing are deficits, which are on pace to hit \$1 trillion this year already. All of these are signs that the risk of a global recession is a clear and present danger.

This is a very tricky environment for investors to navigate through. History suggests there is time to take advantage of future

rallies to prepare for the next recession and raise cash before a major market downturn does unfold. But global economic data suggests a global recession may come a lot sooner than anyone anticipated.

And this reveals an uncomfortable truth: We've never faced a recession with so much debt and so little Fed ammunition available and with negative rates still in effect in many countries. There's no playbook for this. Historic data may be of little predictive use.

A sudden end to the trade deal may be imperative—without it we don't have much time before the next recession begins.

A dash to safety meant the US bond yield curve inverted for the second day running. Not since 2007 has the 10-year Treasury bond traded at a lower interest rate than two-year loans, indicating that investors believe a US recession is imminent. Gold, which has rallied when worries about the global economy have grown, also proved attractive, adding 40 cents to \$1,528.20 per ounce.

While the economic news was universally bad earlier in the week, with figures showing Germany heading into recession and China slowing faster than expected, the latest figures from the US released on Thursday contained enough good news to lift investors. Although US industrial production shrank last month and jobless benefits claims rose, they were offset by strong consumer spending in the world's largest economy.

The mixed messages from the US economy appeared to strengthen the stance of analysts who dismissed concerns of an imminent recession. Andrew Feltus, high yield co-director at the Boston-based investment manager Amundi Pioneer, said the corporate sector in the US was growing strongly but the worrying signs of weak growth could be found in a broader global slowdown.

"The US is still in pretty good shape but the rest of the world is teetering," he said. US investors paused for breath on Thursday after the midweek sell-off, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average,

which lost 800 points as it declined 3% on Wednesday, edging up 99 points by the close of trading and the S&P 500, which fell 2.9% on Wednesday, rising 0.2%.

US markets were buoyed by consumer spending figures released on Thursday that showed Americans spending more at retail stores and restaurants in July, in a sign that consumer confidence remains positive, despite falling business confidence.

Retail sales in the US rose a healthy 0.7% last month after a 0.3% gain in June, the commerce department said. Walmart, the world's largest retailer and a bellwether of US retail confidence, reported sales gains, lifted in part by brisk online grocery deliveries.

The retail figures may allay some concerns about the potential for a recession that would end the 10-year US recovery, the longest on record. Consumer spending makes up the bulk of US economic growth and consumers have been carrying the world's largest economy recently amid worries that businesses will pull back on their spending because of all the uncertainty created by the trade war.

Other economies are slowing as the dispute between the US and China puts the brakes on manufacturers around the world. Markets have been hit by weak data from China and Germany this week, driven by poor industrial numbers, while the threat of a no-deal Brexit also threatens to destabilize the global economy further.

Despite the strong US data on Thursday, the yield curve inversion has disturbed investors, nonetheless, because such a bond market move has presaged every US recession in the past 50 years. "The countdown to a recession has just started," said Hussein Sayed, the chief market strategist at FXTM, a currency trading platform.

Fiona Cincotta, a senior analyst at City Index, which bets on market movements, said: "The fact is that no one actually knows what is next for the markets. However, the signs flashing from the markets are not great."

## Trek undertaken by PM on Man vs Wild show to be developed as 'Modi trail'

"The visitors of the park would surely be excited to visit the Modi Trail also. The move will make it more popular which is already world famous for its rich wildlife, especially the tigers."

Earlier on Tuesday evening, chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat also congratulated PM Modi for the Man Vs Wild episode shot in state's Jim Corbett National Park.

"The episode was seen by people of more than 150 countries. That means they are now aware of the popular park. It has helped in increasing its popularity across the world," he said.

He further added, "Also, after this show, it would attract more tourists and visitors towards it which in turn would help in generating employment for the residents of the area."



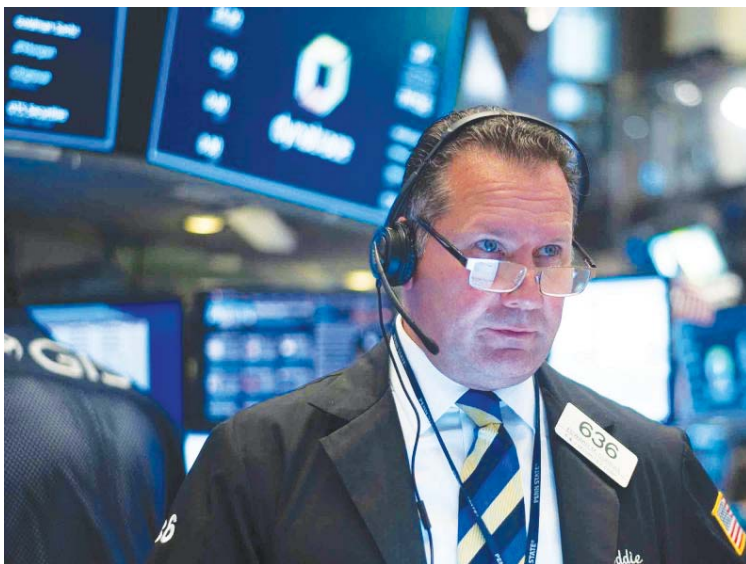
# Dow tumbles 800 points after bond market flashes a recession warning

The Dow fell 800 points Wednesday after the bond market, for the first time in over a decade, flashed a warning signal that has an eerily accurate track record for predicting recessions. Here's what happened: The 10-year Treasury bond yield fell below 1.6% Wednesday morning, dropping just below the yield of the 2-year Treasury bond. It marked the first time since 2007 that 10-year bond yields fell below 2-year yields. US stocks fell as investors sold stock in companies and moved it into bonds. The Dow (INDU) fell as many as 808 points and was nearly 3.1% lower at the close. The broader S&P 500 (SPX) closed down 2.9% and the Nasdaq (COMP) sank 3% Wednesday. It was

are riskier assets that tend to be more volatile during economic slowdowns. Here's what this all means: Normally, long-term bonds pay out more than short-term bonds because investors demand to be paid more to tie up their money for a long time. But that key "yield curve" inverted on Wednesday. That means investors are nervous about the near-term prospects for the US economy. Bonds and yields trade in opposite directions, so yields sink when investors buy bonds. Part of the yield curve has been inverted for several months. In March, the yield on the 3-month Treasury bill rose above the rate on the 10-year Treasury note for the first time since 2007. It inverted again on July 24 and has



now, we see few signs of danger with the Dow plunging and rising collapse. The S&P 500 has ahead," said John Lynch, LPL more than 350 points in each rallied 22% on average between Research chief investment session this week. But the yield the first time a yield curve inverts strategist, in a blog post. curve inversion doesn't mean the and the start of a recession, Stocks have grown volatile lately, stock market is about to Lynch noted.



the worst day for stocks of 2019. CNN Business' Fear and Greed Index signaled investors were extremely fearful. The VIX (VIX) volatility index spiked 27%. Investors are on edge because the German economy shrank in the second quarter, and the US-China trade war still looms large over markets despite the latest truce. Industrial production in China grew at the weakest rate in 17 years in July. As the global economy sputters, investors are plowing money into long-term US bonds. The 30-year Treasury yield fell to 2.03%, the lowest rate on record. Government bonds - particularly US Treasuries - are classic "safe-haven" assets that investors like to hold in their portfolios when they're nervous about the economy. Stocks, by contrast,

remained negative. But Wednesday marked the first time in over a decade that the "main" yield curve - the 2-year / 10-year ratio - had inverted. That spooked Wall Street, because an inversion of the 2/10 curve has preceded every recession in modern history. That doesn't mean a recession is imminent, however: The Great Recession started nearly two years after the December 2005 yield-curve inversion. William Foster, Moody's lead US analyst, predicts the US economy will avoid a recession in 2019 and in 2020, despite the yield curve inversion's warning sign. He expects growth to slow in the second half this year into 2020. The US economy remains strong: Unemployment is historically low, consumer spending is booming, and the financial system is healthy. "Even though we're discouraged by the yield curve's shape right

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# German economy shrinks as 'golden decade' comes to an end

Germany's economy shrank in the second quarter as global uncertainty and the trade war took a toll on its manufacturers.

GDP for the three months ended June contracted 0.1% compared to the previous quarter, in line with analyst expectations. That's down from 0.4% growth in the first three months of the year.

"Today's GDP report definitely marks the end of a golden decade for the German economy," said Carsten Brzeski, chief economist in Germany at the Dutch bank ING.

The world's fourth largest economy, and Europe's biggest, has been hit by what analysts have described as a "perfect storm" of negative factors. Germany relies heavily on exporters that sell a large amount of goods to China and the United States, which are locked in a bitter

trade dispute. Weak global auto sales have also hit the country's carmakers, and fears of a disorderly Brexit remain a drag.

A challenging backdrop The German economy has helped support growth in Europe following the global financial crisis.

But industrial output for June dropped over 5% compared to the previous year. And the ZEW indicator of economic sentiment for August plunged sharply, hitting its lowest level since December 2011.

Brzeski said the uncertain climate was a top negative factor.

"Increased uncertainty, rather than direct effects from the trade conflicts, have dented sentiment and hence economic activity," he said. Another core issue is the global decline in demand for autos - especially in

China, where new car sales have dropped 13

months in a row. That's a huge problem for German carmakers such as BMW (BAMXF), Daimler (DDAIF) and Volkswagen (VLKAF), which have come to depend on the world's largest market for vehicles. It's particularly damaging at a moment when Germany's automakers have to make big investments to build cleaner cars, said Oliver Rakau, chief German economist at Oxford Economics.

Throw Brexit into the mix, and the outlook for Germany's economy looks grim. Even so, Rakau said he expects a return to "modest" growth in the current quarter, helped by "resilient" domestic demand.

"The main question really is how exports and industry are going to fare," he said.

What happens next The weak data bolsters the



case for the German government to spend more to stimulate the economy next year, Rakau said. But that's far from a sure bet in a country that's notoriously wary about borrowing.

The government could face more pressure to intervene if the trade war between the United States and China drags on.

"The bottom line is that the

German economy is teetering on the edge of recession," said Andrew Kenningham, chief economist at Capital Economics.

The Trump administration said Monday it would delay tariffs on some consumer goods exported from China, including cell phones, toys and video game consoles. But both

sides look no closer to striking a deal that would eliminate existing tariffs. A fresh round of taxes on Chinese exports is still set to go into effect in September.

Germany's contracting economy also bolsters the case for the European Central Bank to take action when it meets in September.

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# 'Articles 370, 35(A) were like chains... let's give development a chance': PM Narendra Modi

**PM Narendra Modi said that from children's safety to Chandrayaan-II, from action against corruption to freeing Muslim women from the scourge of Triple Talaq, from Kashmir to Kisan, we have shown what a resolute government with a strong mandate of the people can achieve.**



(News Agencies)- In the first 75 days of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second term, the government has acted on some of the most crucial issues like abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and carving out two Union Territories from it. In a record-setting session of Parliament, Modi government managed to clear several laws. Speaking to news agency IANS, the prime minister said that the government's achievements are the result of "Spasht Neeti, Sahi Disha (Right Intentions, Clear Policy)".

**You complete 75 days of your government today. Every government passes through such milestone numbers and talks about steps taken. Why**

**should we think your government is any different?**

We have set an unprecedented pace within just the first few days of our government. What we have been able to achieve is the result of 'Spasht Neeti, Sahi Disha (Right Intentions, Clear Policy)'. In just the first 75 days of our government, a lot has happened. From children's safety to Chandrayaan-II, from action against corruption to freeing Muslim women from the scourge of Triple Talaq, from Kashmir to Kisan, we have shown what a resolute government with a strong mandate of the people can achieve. We have taken a head-start in tackling the most pressing issue of our times, with the formation of Jal Shakti

Ministry for a mission mode and integrated approach to improve water supply and augment water conservation.

**Did the unprecedented mandate help you firm up your commitment to the people of India with an unstinting resolve that reform has to percolate down? And you have used your political heft by going beyond the executive and using the mandate in the legislature?**

In a way, it is also the result of the government coming back with a stronger mandate. What we were able to achieve in the first 75 days was the outcome of the robust base we were able to build in the last 5 years. Hundreds of reforms in the last 5 years have

ensured the country is now ready to take off, powered by the aspirations of the people. The first session of the 17th Lok Sabha has been a record-creating one - it was the most productive session since 1952. This is not a minor achievement but, in my view, a historic turn for the better and one which will make our Parliament much more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people. Many momentous initiatives have been taken such as pension schemes for farmers and traders, reform of the medical sector, important amendments in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy code, beginning of labour reforms I could go on and on. But the gist of the matter is that when the intentions are right, there is clarity of purpose and implementation, and there is people's support, then there's no limit to what we can do.

**There has been some noise on the medical reforms front from various quarters. Do you think the changes you have brought in are well thought through?**

When we formed the government in 2014, there were many concerns about the existing system of medical education. Earlier, courts have used strong words for the institution overseeing medical education in India, calling it a "den of corruption". A parliamentary committee did rigorous study and took a very dull view of the state of affairs in medical education. It pointed out mismanagement, lack of transparency and arbitrariness.

Earlier governments too had given a thought to reforming this sector but could not go through with it. We decided to go through with it because this is not a matter that can be taken lightly, as it concerns the health of our people and future of our youth. So, we set up an expert group to look into what is plaguing it. The expert group studied the system carefully and brought out the problems and improvement areas. It is based on the suggestions from experts that we came to the current bill.

**Why is there so many hullabaloo about the bill then?**

The National Medical Commission is a far-reaching reform in this space and seeks to correct the prevalent problems. It contains multiple reforms that curb avenues of corruption and boost transparency. At a time when nations are looking at India to power the next wave of growth in the world, we realise that this can happen only with a healthy populace. Freeing the poor from the vicious cycle of poverty that lack of health perpetuates is very important. The NMC serves this purpose well too. It will ensure transparency, accountability and quality in the governance of medical education in the country. It aims to lessen the burden on students, increase the number of medical seats and reduce cost of medical education. This means more talented youth can take up medicine as a profession and this will help us increase the number of medical professionals.

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Hicksville, NY 11801



Ayushman Bharat is bringing about a revolution in the healthcare sector. It is increasing awareness as well as affordability of quality healthcare, especially in tier-2 and tier-3 towns. We are also working to ensure that there is at least one medical college between every 3 districts. With rising awareness about healthcare, rising incomes and greater focus on aspirational goals among people, we will need thousands and thousands of doctors to fulfil the demand, especially in rural and urban areas. The NMC seeks to address these issues for a better outcome for all stakeholders. You must have also read that the academic year 2019-20 will see the biggest addition of medical seats in government colleges in a single year with the creation of around 2 dozen new government medical colleges. Our roadmap is clear? a transparent, accessible and affordable medical education system leading to better healthcare outcomes.

**Education is critical for a young nation. However, in the conversations surrounding your government, education seems missing. What is the government doing on this?**

Education is not just critical but the most important component in the overall spectrum of skilled human resource for a technology-oriented, inclusive, people-centric and people-driven growth model. It not only has to the potential to positively transform lives but also has a bearing on the future of the nation.

We are working on all aspects of education. At the school level, special focus is being paid to improving quality of education, improving learning outcomes, giving a boost to innovation and scientific temper, improving infrastructure, using technology to improve understanding among the students. We are trying to leverage technology like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning to improve school education.

In higher education, we are constantly striving to increase seats, increase presence of premier institutions across the country, give more autonomy to institutions, and while boosting research and innovation. We set up a Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) with an aim to provide funds upto Rs one lakh crore by 2022. Rs 21,000 crore has already been sanctioned till now. 60 Higher Educational Institutions, including 52

Universities have been granted autonomy. These universities will remain within the ambit of UGC but will have the freedom to start new courses, off campus centres, skill development courses, research parks and any other new academic programs. They will also have the freedom to hire foreign faculty, enrol foreign students, give incentive-based emoluments to the faculty, enter into academic collaborations and run open distance learning programmes. Progress has been also made in taking forward the mission of National Education Policy. The first draft of National Education Policy (NEP) got lakhs of inputs and suggestions right from the block and panchayat level. Looking at the response and the interest of various stakeholders, the committee went for another round of consultations.

The latest draft of the Education Policy, drawn after such extensive consultations, has again been put in the public domain for a final round of inputs. All stakeholders in education the states, parents, teachers, students, counselors, have been heard a multiple number of times. Our focus is that the National Education Policy should be driven by educationists, experts and stakeholders so that it does not remain a policy but is adopted in practice at the earliest. India with its huge demographic dividend, has the potential to become a leading knowledge economy in the world.

**A couple of important decisions related to corruption sent shock waves in the bureaucracy what message were you intending to send?**

Since India's independence, one of the biggest things holding us back was corruption. Corruption spared no one, neither the rich nor the poor. People resorted to corruption either due to some greed or to make a quick buck or due to some compulsion. But even these people wanted corruption to stop. The question in everyone's mind was that who will start the fight against corruption and from where. The fight against corruption always had the support of people, media, institutions, because everyone agreed that corruption was a major obstacle in India's development journey. And this was not only an issue related to money. Corruption eroded trust in the society, be it a government office or the market. A person

going to the police station would think whether he will get justice and similarly a person buying something from the market will fear adulteration.

We decided, right from day one, to attack the menace of corruption. Someone had to make a start somewhere, we decided to do this, without caring for political consequences. The results show that we are succeeding. Not only is corruption coming down, but trust in society is increasing. The number of people filing income tax returns almost doubled in the last 5 years. We have systematically clamped down on corruption and made tax filing and refund process online. Already, refunds are being credited directly to bank accounts of income-tax payers, without any human intervention.

Going a few steps further, we aim to make faceless assessment of income tax return a reality. This would be a game-changer in ushering a new era of transparency in the tax system. We are firm in our commitment that neither will we allow corruption nor will we tolerate any form of undue harassment. Hence, we took tough steps and compulsorily retired some tax officials in the last few weeks. In the previous term also, hundreds of government officials were removed from service when there were reasons to do so. We have also leveraged the power of technology through DBT which has resulted in a savings of more than Rs 1.4 lakh crore.

**Your decision on Article 370 has been welcomed by many and also been opposed by a few. There seems to be an uneasy calm at the moment.**

**Why do you think the people of J&K will stand with you?**

Please see the list of people who have opposed the decisions about Kashmir- the usual vested interest groups, political dynasties, those who sympathise with terror and some friends in the Opposition.

The people of India, irrespective of what their political preference is, have supported the steps taken in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. This is about the nation, not politics. The people of India are seeing that tough but essential decisions that were earlier assumed to be impossible are becoming a reality. It is now clear to everyone how Articles 370 and 35(A) fully isolated Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The status quo of seven long

decades clearly could not fulfill people's aspirations. Citizens were kept away from the fruits of development. The greatest casualty was the lack of any proper economic avenues to increase earnings. Our approach is different- instead of the vicious cycle of poverty, the people need more economic opportunities.

**What is your message for the people of J&K in the new dispensation, unshackled and unfettered to reap the future of reform in India, one replete with jobs and a better life?**

For years, intimidation ruled the roost. Let us now give development a chance. My sisters and brothers of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh always wanted a better future for them but Article 370 did not enable it. There was injustice against women and children, ST as well as SC communities. And, most importantly, the innovative zeal of the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh was not harnessed. Now, from BPOs to startups, from food processing to tourism, many industries can avail investment and create opportunities for the local youth. Education and skill development will also bloom. I want to clearly assure my sisters and brothers of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh that these regions will develop as per the wishes of local people, their dreams and ambitions. The growth of these regions will first and foremost be powered by those belonging to these regions. Articles 370 and 35(A) were like chains that kept people tied. These chains are now broken, people have been unshackled from such dominance and they will now shape their own destiny. Those who are opposing the decisions on Jammu and Kashmir should answer one basic question- what is their defence for Articles 370 and 35(A) remaining? They would have no answer to this question. And, these are the same people who are used to protesting when it comes to anything that helps common people. There is a project to provide water to people, they will oppose it. There is a railway track being built, they will oppose that. Their heart only beats for Maoists and terrorists who have only bullied common citizens.

Today, every Indian is fully standing with the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh and I am confident they will stand with us in the aim to boost development and bring peace.

**But aren't there concerns about democracy? Will the voice of the people of Kashmir be heard?**

Kashmir has never witnessed such a strong commitment in favour of democracy. Remember the turnout during the Panchayat elections? The people voted in large numbers and did not get cowed down by bullying. In November and December of 2018, there were 35,000 Sarpanches elected and the turnout in the Panchayat elections was a record 74 per cent. There was no violence during the Panchayat elections. Not a drop of blood was shed in poll violence. This, when the main parties there were lukewarm to this entire exercise. It is very satisfying that now Panchayats are back at the forefront of furthering development and human empowerment.

Imagine, for so many years those in power did not find it prudent to work towards strengthening Panchayats. And remember, they gave great sermons on democracy but the words never led to action. It surprised and saddened me that 73 rd Amendment did not apply to Jammu and Kashmir. How could such injustice be tolerated? It was in the last few years that Panchayats in Jammu and Kashmir got more powers to work towards people's progress and various subjects transferred to Panchayats under the 73 rd amendment were transferred to Panchayats of Jammu and Kashmir.

Now, I have requested the Honourable Governor to work towards organising Block Panchayat elections too.

Recently, the Jammu and Kashmir administration did the 'Back to Village' programme, where the entire government machinery went to the people instead of vice versa. They went just to mitigate people's problems. The common citizens appreciated the programme. The results of these efforts are for all to see. Swachh Bharat, rural electrification and other such initiatives are reaching the grassroots. This is what democracy truly is. In any case, I have assured people that elections in Jammu, Kashmir will continue and it is the people of these regions only who will represent the larger public. Yes, those who ruled Kashmir thinking it is their divine right to do so will dislike democratisation and peddle incorrect narratives.



# What's next for Kashmir? Concerns on 3 key issues mark local discourse

*Since the early hours of August 5, politics has been operating in a vacuum in the Valley - with three former CMs, prominent leaders of the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party, and at least 500 political workers detained.*

Two events six months apart have shaken Nazir Ahmad Magrey's life: The suicide bombing on February 14 that killed 40 paramilitary troopers barely 100 metres from his two-storey house overlooking the Jhelum; and the revoking of Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu & Kashmir, on August 5. The bomb attack - he initially thought it was a plane crash - blew out his windows and shook the frame of his house, bringing the spectre of terror to his doorstep. He was questioned by the local police and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) after the strike that brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war.

ninth day on Tuesday, there is much consternation about what lies ahead for the Valley's five million people on three fronts - politics, economy and security. **POLITICS**

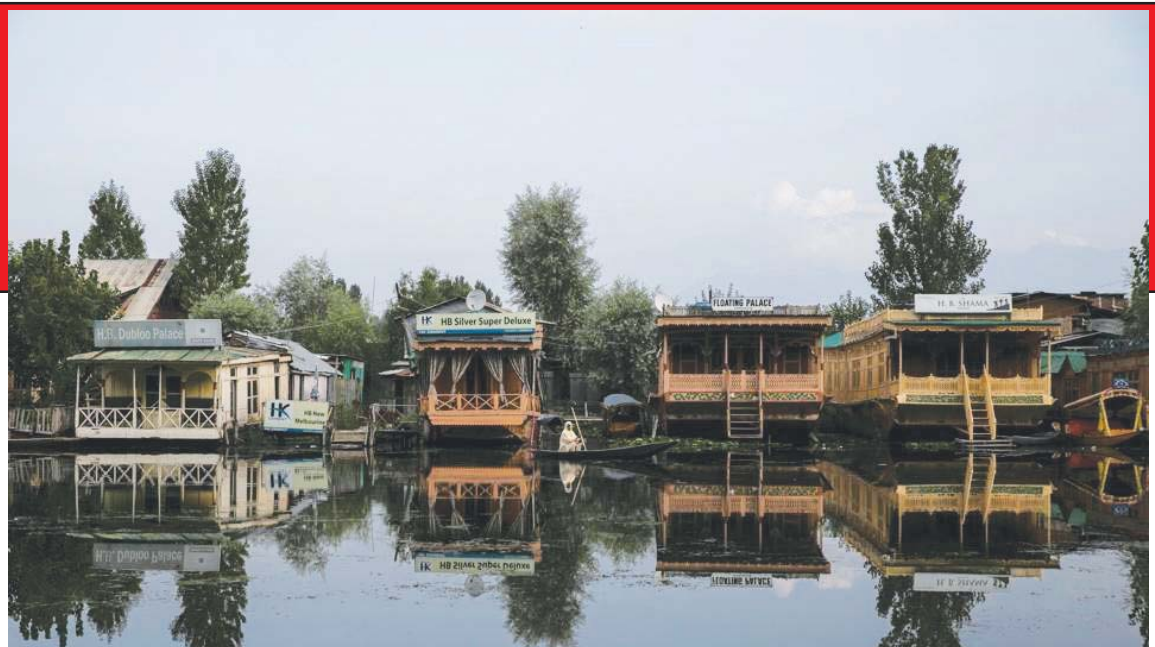
Since the early hours of August 5, politics has been operating in a vacuum in the Valley - with three former chief ministers, prominent leaders of the National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and at least 500 political workers detained at unspecified locations. But among many locals, there is little sympathy for mainstream politicians, who are seen to have failed to safeguard Kashmir's interests. "These politicians have failed us,



The nullification of Article 370, too, ratcheted up bilateral tensions. But Magrey fears it can have very personal ramifications: the pulverisation of his fledgling timber business and the bottoming out of the local economy that has the potential to hurt young men and women like his son, who is pursuing an undergraduate degree in business administration. "I fear that in 20 years big industries will take over my business by procuring cheaper raw material from India and selling at lower rates. And, if there is increased competition for jobs, it will only increase despondency among young boys like my son. It may trigger a spike in militancy," he said, venting his disappointment with the mainstream politicians from the Valley who failed to secure the "gift" of Article 370. As Kashmir reels from an unprecedented lockdown for a

betrayed us. What was their use?" asked Bashir Ahmed, a businessman in Anantnag district's Bijbehara town, considered a stronghold of the Mufti party that controls the PDP. Other voices in Pulwama and Awantipora underlined disappointment in elected leadership and growing support for "Azaadi".

The biggest mass protest since India clamped curfew-like restrictions last week in old Srinagar's Soura last Friday had people chanting Azadi slogans, waving black flags and shouting "India go back" - and the sentiment is carried by a section of those aligned with the administration. "My job is to follow orders and I am doing that. But that doesn't mean I am not angry or hurt. Kashmir doesn't seem like ours anymore," said a J&K police constable on condition of anonymity. "The move has hurt those who



used to carry India's flag in the Valley, their space has been squeezed," said Altaf Hussain, a Srinagar-based political commentator. What is adding to this sentiment is the widely held view that the redrawing of constituency boundaries - necessitated because the erstwhile state will be broken up into two Union Territories, Jammu & Kashmir with a legislative assembly and Ladakh without one - may hurt Muslim-majority Kashmir, which currently holds 46 of 87 seats, compared to 37 in Hindu dominated Jammu. "This is a ploy to hurt our autonomy and power," said Muzaffar Wani, a resident of Anantnag. "The NC PDP have no credibility anymore," said Mukammal Wani in Pulwama.

Mohsin Alam Bhat, executive director of the Center for Public Interest Law at the Jindal Global Law School, said mainstream parties understood that Article 370, and its existence, was key to their relevance in the Valley. "A lot will depend on what the Supreme Court finally decides," he added. **SECURITY**

The nerve centre of the Indian government's security response in the Valley is Srinagar's Badami Bagh Cantonment, the army's heavily guarded headquarters of the 15 Corps where officials say there is no fixed time frame for the communications blackout and movement restrictions. "It is important for the Kashmiris to realise that the abrogation of Article 370 is irreversible. Our deployment across the Valley has inherent flexibility to deal with all possible scenarios," a senior army officer said,

requesting anonymity. "The restrictions are there for a specific purpose and they are likely to stay in place for as long as required if it helps saves lives," he said.

But security experts worry that this is not a sustainable long term arrangement.

"For how long can you keep the restrictions imposed? They will have to be lifted at some stage. The security establishment must prepare for the worst-case scenario. The most important thing will be how mass protests are handled because such protests are bound to happen," said Lieutenant General DS Hooda (retd), a former Northern Army commander.

The challenge before the security forces once the restrictions are lifted and communications are restored will be stiff, given the mood of local people. "What you are seeing now is government action, a clampdown on our freedom. What will follow is a full-fledged public agitation. This is the lull before the storm," said Pervez Yaqoob, a college student in Anantnag town.

There has been no significant backlash so far as the government has denied "troublemakers" space for their

operations by increasing troop-to-ground density and imposing restrictions, said former Northern Army commander Lieutenant General BS Jaswal (retd). "How long will the restrictions last? No one can crystal gaze. The government will have to recalibrate its strategy based on how the situation unfolds in Kashmir," he said.

Jaswal cautioned against a surge in militancy in the coming months for two reasons: Pakistan will definitely not want Kashmir to be stable and political leaders with vested interests will make sure that the dissatisfaction arising from the removal of Article 370 accrues.

## ECONOMY

Kashmir has a home-grown network of industrialists and businesses that mushroomed owing to special privileges for local residents on property, land and setting up factories and industrial units - as part of a broader bouquet of autonomy that was accorded to the region until last week. But now, many residents fear that local wealth will flow out of the Valley.

For example, Magrey thinks he will find it tough to compete with Indian businesses with superior supply chains and facilities, and lower rates.





## After \$140 billion wipeout, China's two largest companies bid for comeback



**Alibaba and Tencent's businesses are largely domestic, having little to do with the US or trade. Tencent is back on track after a horrendous 2018, with revenue growth projected to rebound to 27% in the June quarter thanks to hits like Peacekeeper Elite and durable titles like Honour of Kings.**

China's two largest companies have lost a combined \$140 billion in market value since the escalation of the trade war in May. As Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. and Tencent Holdings Ltd. report earnings this week back-to-back, they'll try to show the punishment is overdone.

The brutal market selloff began three months ago as Donald

Trump's administration slapped restrictions on Chinese national champion Huawei Technologies Co., drawing the ire of Beijing. The Hong Kong benchmark has slid more than 10%, with the two giants dropping by similar amounts.

Yet Alibaba and Tencent's businesses are largely domestic, having little to do with

the US or trade. Tencent is back on track after a horrendous 2018, with revenue growth projected to rebound to 27% in the June quarter thanks to hits like Peacekeeper Elite and durable titles like Honour of Kings. Alibaba, coming off a record June online promotional blitz, is expected to report revenue growth of 38%.

'Despite growth concerns, a few China internet companies have performed quite well recently, especially in e-commerce and gaming,' said Jerry Liu, a Hong Kong-based analyst at UBS.

Alibaba, in particular, needs a

strong quarter when it reports on Thursday. The e-commerce giant is weighing a secondary listing in Hong Kong that could raise as much as \$20 billion, though the target is in flux. Shares are down by about 12% over the last year, while its price to earnings ratio, based on financial estimates for the next 12 months, is about 24, compared with Amazon's roughly 70.

Raising capital could help replenish ammunition for the e-commerce giant, currently engaged in a cash burning battle for on-demand and food delivery services with Meituan. It's one of

the areas where Alibaba is struggling. Alibaba's Ele.me's market share may have lost another 2 percentage points in food delivery to 36% in the second quarter compared with three months ago, according to David Dai, a Hong Kong-based Bernstein analyst.

The worst seems to be behind for Tencent, which reports on Wednesday. After a year of not being able to monetize its most popular gaming genre, the social media giant has finally won regulatory approval to make money from its latest title, Peacekeeper Elite.

## Amazon nears deal for up to 10% of India's second-largest retailer

**Amazon has been acquiring tiny stakes in other Indian brick-and-mortar chains such as Shoppers Stop Ltd. and a grocery chain from the Aditya Birla Group in the past couple of years.**

Amazon.com Inc. is in late-stage talks to acquire as much as 10% of India's Future Retail Ltd., people familiar with the negotiations said, as the U.S. company moves to bolster its brick-and-mortar presence in one of the world's fastest-growing retail markets.

India's No. 2 retailer by turnover, Future is seeking a valuation of about 20 billion rupees (\$281 million) from Amazon for the stake, according to the people, who asked not to be identified as the discussions are private. The sale is likely to be routed through a holding company, they said, and will give Amazon the option

to buy more shares from Kishore Biyani, Future Retail's founder and chairman.

The deal with the Mumbai-based company, which operates its flagship "Big Bazaar" grocery store chain, will give Amazon more exposure to the business after it bought Whole Foods Market Inc. for \$13.7 billion in 2017 and secured a foothold in the U.S. food retailing segment. The proposed investment in Future Retail offers some parallels, enabling Amazon to tap into India's rising demand for household products and home-delivered fresh produce and vegetables.

Discussions are yet to be finalized, and the deal could still falter or be delayed. Representatives for parent company Future Group and Amazon in India said they don't comment on market speculation.

Last Market The potential deal underlines the American online giant's ambitions to dominate the last sizable market yet to be conquered by large networks of hypermarkets and supermarkets, after losing ground in China. It'll also give the Jeff Bezos-controlled firm an edge over rival Walmart Inc. and the planned e-commerce venture



of Mukesh Ambani, Asia's richest man, that plans to combine the online and offline retail formats in India. Walmart, which spent \$16 billion last year to acquire Indian e-tailer Flipkart Online Services Pvt. Ltd., has a local unit that is allowed to sell goods to smaller grocery stores but not directly to consumers. Amazon has been acquiring tiny stakes in other Indian brick-and-mortar chains

such as Shoppers Stop Ltd. and a grocery chain from the Aditya Birla Group in the past couple of years. That's on top of directly plowing in \$5.5 billion into its own operations in a bid to grab a bigger slice of India's modern retail market which, according to consultant Technopak Advisors, will more than double to \$188 billion by 2023, up from \$79 billion last year.

## Realty firm Jaypee fined Rs 14 cr for imposing arbitrary conditions on buyers

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 13.82 crore on Jaiprakash Associates Limited (JAL) for abusing its dominant position in the market of independent residential units such as villas, estate homes in their integrated township through unfair and discriminatory conditions on the allottees in Wish Town, Jaypee Greens project, in Noida and Greater Noida.

"The final order was passed on an information filed by a buyer

who alleged that conditions imposed by JAL were arbitrary and heavily tilted in favour of it," an official statement said.

Based on the investigation, the Commission found that the standard terms and conditions imposed by JAL were one-sided and couched in a manner so as to unilaterally favour itself and be unfavourable to the consumers, it said.

"Moreover, terms were vague and did not confer any substantive rights on the buyers. The conduct of JAL, such as

collecting money/charges from the buyers without delivering the residential/dwelling unit on time, adding additional construction and amending /altering the layout plans, imposition of various charges, right to raise finance from any bank/financial institution/body corporate without consulting buyers was held to be abusive," it said.

Therefore, the Commission concluded such conduct of JAL to be in violation of Section 4(2)(a)(i) of the Act, it added. Resultantly, the Commission



imposed a penalty of Rs. 13.82 crore (Rupees Thirteen Crore Eighty Two Lakh) on JAL, it said. The penalty was calculated @ 5% of the average revenue of JAL

from sale of independent residential units in the relevant market. Besides, a cease and desist order has also been issued to JAL.



# RIL unveils blockbuster \$15 billion Aramco deal

**42nd AGM Reliance Industries to sell 20% in refining, chemicals business in a bid to become a zero-debt firm in next 18 months**

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) is in the process of selling a 20% stake in the company's flagship chemicals and refining business to Saudi Aramco in a deal valued at \$15 billion, as the Indian company seeks to cut its massive debt and secure an assured supply of crude oil to its refineries.

Chairman Mukesh Ambani, Asia's richest man, announced the proposed transaction at the company's 42nd annual general meeting on Monday, although the terms of the deal have not been finalized.

The deal, which values the oil-to-chemicals (O2C) business at \$75 billion, is part of a plan to make RIL a zero-debt company in the next 18 months, Ambani said in a speech at the annual meeting.

"Saudi Aramco will invest in

Reliance for a 20% stake in oil-to-chemicals division at an enterprise value of \$75 billion for the O2C division, which will be demerged into a separate subsidiary in the next five years," Ambani told shareholders.

In addition to the stake sale to Aramco, RIL will raise \$1 billion from BP Plc, which will acquire a 49% stake in RIL's petro-retailing business for Rs.7,000 crore, said Ambani.

The investments are subject to due diligence, definitive agreements, regulatory and other approvals, Ambani said, adding that the Saudi Aramco partnership will cover all of RIL's refining and petrochemicals assets, including its 51% stake in the fuel retailing joint venture with BP.

RIL and BP announced a joint venture to open a nationwide

network of fuel retail outlets last week.

Ambani is aiming to slash RIL's ballooning debt after spending as much as \$50 billion to propel its telecom business to the top position in India within three years of starting operations, surpassing Bharti Airtel Ltd and Vodafone Idea Ltd.

As part of the proposed deal, Saudi Aramco will also supply 500,000 barrels per day of crude oil on a long-term basis to RIL's Jamnagar refinery.

Saudi Aramco, the most profitable company in the world, controls the world's second-largest proven crude reserves at more than 270 billion barrels, and the partnership will go a long way in insulating RIL from any future oil shocks and volatility in crude prices, said industry experts.

"This deal could not only ensure



continuous crude oil supply to RIL's twin refineries but also bring in pricing advantages and give RIL cushion from the uncertain global crude oil market," an analyst with a domestic brokerage said on condition of anonymity.

"For Saudi Aramco, this deal gives a much sought-after foothold in India, the third-largest consumer of crude oil in the world."

The proposed deal, once completed, is expected to significantly improve RIL's debt profile.

The company's total financial

liabilities rose to \$65 billion as of March 31 from \$19 billion at the end of March 2015, resulting in interest cost rising almost fourfold to \$4 billion during the period.

"This programme to aggressively pursue deleveraging in businesses and emerge as a zerodebt company in the next 18 months will strengthen the consolidated balance sheet leading to strong valuation re-rating of the stock," said Ajay Bodke, chief executive officer of portfolio management services at Prabhudas Lilladher.

## India never sold foreign debt. Its first attempt is failing



India's foray into international debt markets may consist of little more than sound and fury, as the nation struggles to shed decades of trepidation about borrowing in foreign currencies.

A fanfare announcement in the July budget has been followed by the removal of the official driving the sale, objections from the Prime Minister's office, and finally an admission from Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman that no work has been done on the mooted \$10 billion offering. India's first venture into the overseas bond market would shift part of its 7-trillion-rupee (\$100 billion) borrowing abroad, and enable it tap a wider pool of funds. But fears that it may increase the nation's reliance on foreign borrowing has brought

together an array of opponents arguing that currency volatility and elevated debt costs would ruin the country.

"India has a historical aversion to issuing in foreign currency, and this has been institutionalized over time," said Bryan Carter, London-based head of emerging-market debt at BNP Paribas Asset Management. Policymakers "see it as an unnecessary risk to open up to foreign capital flows and subject themselves to the mercy and whims of international investors."

The fear is that India may tread the well-worn paths of other developing countries such as Argentina and Greece who were saddled with sizable foreign borrowings after they failed to balance their budgets.

"The biggest benefit of the sale is the confidence that it signals to the world at large about India being confident of opening its economy," said Duvvuri Subbarao, a former governor of the Reserve Bank of India. "But the fear and concern that strike me are that this will become a

thin end of the wedge. Once we see that it has become very successful, we might keep on doing it and get into pressure situations needlessly."

While India has enjoyed average annual growth of 7.5% in the past decade, it has a combined fiscal deficit of about 8% of gross

domestic product. The federal government spends about 20% of its annual budget servicing domestic debt.

All of that means former central bank officials and a key political ally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi have spent the past weeks criticizing the debt sale

plan. Borrowing from overseas will not only increase the risk of higher inflation and currency volatility, but also boost debt costs on dollar bonds when the rupee weakens, they argued.

The rupee has depreciated in seven of the past 10 years.

### FTC Obtains Telemarketing Injunctions against Recidivist Do Not Call Violators Jasjit "Jay" Gotra and His Company, Alliance Security Inc.

**Defendants responsible for more than one million illegal calls**

(By our staff reporter) Washington D.C.: The Federal Trade Commission obtained a stipulated final order that permanently bans Alliance Security Inc. from telemarketing. The FTC also obtained a preliminary injunction barring Alliance's founder and CEO, Jasit "Jay" Gotra, from telemarketing until the final resolution of the case against him. Gotra is the sole remaining defendant in a 2018 FTC case against Alliance, Gotra, and their telemarketers for calling more than one million consumers whose numbers are on the National Do Not Call (DNC) Registry.

According to the FTC's complaint, Alliance and Gotra are repeat violators of the Telemarketing Sales Rule (TSR), which prohibits calls to numbers on the DNC Registry.

Alliance installed home security systems, and its employees allegedly made outbound calls to solicit the sale of the systems and associated security monitoring services. Gotra and Alliance (then known as Versatile Marketing Solutions, Inc.), previously settled similar FTC allegations against them in a 2014 court order.

The 2018 complaint alleges that Alliance and Gotra never complied with the 2014 court order. Instead, Alliance and Gotra violated the TSR again by making one million additional illegal calls. The complaint also alleges that Alliance and Gotra obtained consumers' credit scores without consumers' knowledge or permission, and without having a permissible purpose, in violation of the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

The U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts has now issued orders against Alliance and Gotra. The stipulated final order against Alliance, to which it has agreed, resolves the FTC's allegations against the company. The order permanently bans the company from all telemarketing and from obtaining or using consumer credit reports without written authorization. It also prohibits Alliance from misrepresenting its affiliation or association with other alarm companies, and imposes a suspended \$9,845,021 judgment against the company, based upon its inability to pay. The judgment will become due in full if it is later determined that Alliance misrepresented its financial condition to the Commission.



# How nutritious is your diet?

***Maintaining a good diet and keeping a check on your nutritional intake is easy now with cool apps and gadgets***



One of the key factors of staying healthy is maintaining a good diet and keeping a check on your nutritional intake. Most people just focus on their workout routines or opt for self-

researched crash diet programs, but thankfully, like with most things these days, there are smarter and seamless ways to go about it now. If you use a Fitbit or Apple Watch

or similar wearables, you can keep a tab on your calorie count by logging your food intake on their companion apps. But that's that. If you are in the market for a new

one, you might want to consider GOQii, a fitness tracker that is backed by an ecosystem of nutritionists, personal trainers, and wellness experts. GOQii aims to tap the otherwise meaningless stream of data that fitness wearables throw at you and make it useful for you via intervention of qualified experts remotely.

An easy way to get started with diet management is via smartphone apps that help you with logging your food intake and keeping a tab on your diet, with additional features like customized diet plans, nutrition charts, weight tracking, et al. Calorie Counter by FatSecret is a basic, and completely free, dietary diary to keep a record of the food that you eat and the calories that you burn. It also features a diet calendar and a reference guide to check nutritional value of a variety of foods. Then there's Fooducate that goes beyond diet and weight loss management by not just counting your calories but also helping you analyze the value of the calories consumed to improve your diet.

If you use other fitness apps already to track your runs or workouts, you should look at apps like Lose It!, Lifesum, MyFitnessPal, or MyNetDiary which sync with RunKeeper, Endomondo, Strava, et al as well as Apple HealthKit, Google Fit, and Samsung Health.

LifeSum is actually very good and includes meal plans for several popular diets like keto, low carb, and others. You can also try MyNetDiary if you want to keep a track of things like your blood glucose, heart rate, cholesterol, and more. MyFitnessPal is one of the more popular and older ones in this segment and is easily one of the most well-rounded fitness and nutrition app.

There's also HealthifyMe which is quite popular in India since as a homegrown service, it has the broadest catalogue of Indian food items.

These apps also connect to your Fitbit, Misfit, and Garmin wearables so that your workouts and everything else are also integrated for comprehensive health management.

## New drug to treat deadliest TB approved by US drug regulator

***Pretamonid, a novel compound developed by the non-profit organization TB Alliance, was approved by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) on August 14.***

The US drug regulator has approved a new tuberculosis (TB) drug for treating hard-to-treat drug-resistant TB that makes the treatment regimen shorter and simpler.

Pretamonid, a novel compound developed by the non-profit organization TB Alliance, was approved by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) on August 14.

TB is the leading infectious cause of death worldwide, killing at least 1.6 million people annually. There are more than half a million cases of multi drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) annually, with about 6% of those cases being extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) cases. India accounts for nearly a quarter of the global TB cases.

The new drug was approved under the Limited Population Pathway for Antibacterial and

Antifungal Drugs (LPAD pathway) as part of a three-drug, six-month, all-oral regimen for the treatment of people with XDR-TB or MDR-TB, who are treatment-intolerant or non-responsive.

The LPAD pathway was established by FDA as a tool to encourage further development of antibacterial and antifungal drugs to treat serious, life-threatening infections that affect a limited population of patients with unmet needs.

"FDA approval of this treatment represents a victory for the people suffering from these highly drug-resistant forms of the world's deadliest infectious disease," said Mel Spigelman, MD, president and CEO of TB Alliance. "The associated novel regimen will hopefully provide a shorter, more easily manageable and highly efficacious treatment for those in need."

The three-drug regimen consisting of bedaquiline, pretomanid and linezolid - collectively referred to as the BPaL regimen - was studied in the pivotal Nix-TB trial across three sites in South Africa. The trial enrolled 109 people with XDR-TB and also MDR-TB.

Nix-TB data demonstrated a successful outcome in 95 of the first 107 patients after six months of treatment with BPaL and six months of post-treatment follow-up. For two patients, treatment was extended to nine months.

TB, in all forms, is treated with a combination of drugs; the most drug-sensitive forms of TB require six months of treatment using four anti-TB drugs. Treatment of XDR-TB or MDR-TB takes longer and is more expensive, with patients currently taking a combination of as many as eight antibiotics,



some involving daily injections, for 18 months or longer.

"Until very recently, people infected with highly drug-resistant TB had poor treatment options and a poor prognosis," said Dr. Francesca Conradie, principal investigator of the Nix-TB trial.

"This new regimen provides hope with 9 out of 10 patients achieving culture negative status at 6 months post-treatment with this short, all-oral regimen."

The drug is likely to be available in the US markets by the end of 2019.

TB activists want the drug to be made affordable so that poor

patients could also access it.

"As the third new drug developed for TB in over half a century, and the first to be developed as part of a ready-to-use treatment regimen, pretomanid's approval represents another potent tool for tackling difficult-to-treat drug-resistant forms of TB," said Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), in a statement.

"However, it must be made affordable to everyone who needs it, especially considering the substantial taxpayer and philanthropic contributions that went into its development," it added.



# From suits, to pink, to anti-fits, here's a complete sibling style swap guide

*Raksha Bandhan 2019: This Raksha Bandhan, we show you how siblings can share each other's wardrobe and create stylish looks to give off a cool androgynous vibe.*



relaxed fit linen pants for a comfy look.

**Power of a suit**

If you are in a mood to rock a pantsuit, you don't necessarily need to buy one. Raid your brother's closet and pick a coloured suit. Wearing it without a shirt or top underneath or a knotted shirt is the cool way to go about it for girls. From snakeskin print to zebra print, options abound for stylish men. Guys can take a break from those boring plain suits and pull off a printed one picked from their sister's closet.

**Traditional twist**

Dhoti may be a tricky outfit to pull off, but it's undoubtedly the coolest. You don't really need to buy a dhoti if you are planning to wear it for any occasion. Your sister's sari can be of great help. Choose the sari colour creatively. You can either do colour-blocking, tonal dressing (dress up head to toe in the same tone) or go

monochromatic.

**Think pink**

Men are wearing pink like never before. Make a cool statement with this colour. Your sister's sheer pink shacket can be a part of your wardrobe. Style it with a white tee. Girls can look for a boxy and oversized blazer from their brother's closet for that slouchy, anti-fit look. Team the jacket with drawstring pants. Coloured jackets can keep the quirk element intact.

**Handy handloom**

Have you ever thought of wearing your brother's kurta-pajama set? If not then you should give it a try. While the silhouette is very boxy, you can add that extra quirk by rolling up your sleeves and unbuttoning few buttons from the top.

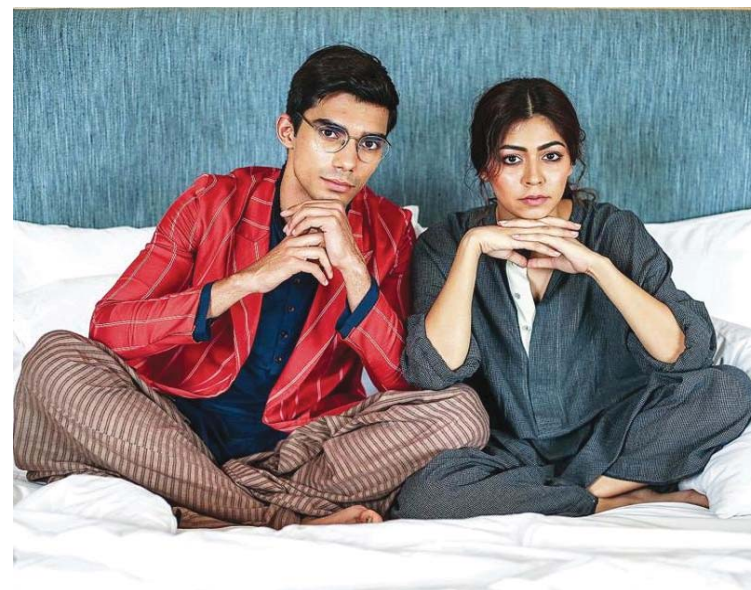
Patiala pyjamas are not just meant for women. They look like harem pants which are unisex. You can wear your sister's Patiala salwar with a trendy blazer to look spiffy.



Remember raiding your sibling's closet as a kid? Your brother's distressed denims were your favourite and you would make it look sassier by teaming with pussy bow shirts. While sisters had a lot of options to choose from when they browsed through their brother's wardrobe, boys couldn't explore much from their sister's collection. But with androgyny foraying in fashion and girls investing in pantsuits, kimonos and oversized shirts, boys can now make the most of their sister's closet. With smart styling and the right mix and match, you can cement your style credentials. Why not have some fun and experiment like you have never done before this Raksha Bandhan.

**Flower power**

Every stylish guy owns a few floral shirts. Florals for men are a rage in the fashion world, globally. You can borrow your brother's floral shirt and style it with a slip dress. A neatly done top bun with wet strands on the forehead goes well with this look. Guys can also celebrate flower power by opting for their sister's floral hoodie and teaming it with





## Sacred Games 2 review

Addictive and aggressive, Netflix India's greatest show finds Nawazuddin Siddiqui in nuclear form

**Sacred Games season 2 review: Saif Ali Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Pankaj Tripathi's Netflix India show is even better than season one. Rating: 4.5/5.**

Sacred Games Season 2  
Cast - Saif Ali Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Pankaj Tripathi, Kalki Koechlin, Ranvir Shorey  
Rating - 4.5/5  
Unfolding like a pulpy retelling of a mythological epic, the second season of Netflix's Sacred Games is a more complex experience than the first, without ever compromising on the populism that made it such a phenomenon in the first place. It is dense without ever feeling overwhelming, controversial but never sleazy; a thoroughly entertaining example of a television series operating at the peak of its potential. Three episodes of Sacred Games 2 were provided for preview -- make of that what you will -- and this should be read as a review of those three episodes only. Sacred Games, right out of the gate, returns with

a swagger that could put even Ganesh Gaitonde to shame - a sign of confidence for a show that is equally adept at 'dialoguebaazi' and quoting the Epic of Gilgamesh. There is, in fact, a scene that combines both, and perfectly captures the essence of season two. "What do we learn from Gilgamesh?" Kalki Koechlin's character, Batya Abelman, asks a bunch of devotees. Met not with raised hands but with devout silence, Batya proceeds to answer her own question. "The pursuit of power and control is as futile as the pursuit of immortality." Her manner isn't all that different from that of her former mentor, Pankaj Tripathi's Guruji, who speaks with the mellifluous musicality of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, peppering his sermons with the occasional smutty word. She's an enigmatic woman who appears in both the Gaitonde and the Sartaj

timelines, and is a brand new addition, not to be found in the book, neither in flesh nor as a facsimile. While on paper she is to Guruji what Maa Anand Sheela was to Rajneesh, there is perhaps more to her than meets the eye. There is, of course, a reason why the show is invoking the Epic of Gilgamesh. In addition to being perhaps the oldest surviving work of literature, whose themes are just as relevant today as they were thousands of years ago, it is also a giant metaphor for the journey on which the formidable gangster Ganesh Gaitonde finds himself. When we saw him last, he was breaking out of a jail. Having suffered terribly during his stay, he emerges into the sunlight in the first episode of Sacred Games 2, lit by the fire of revenge. The new season finds Gaitonde in direct confrontation with his own legend, having come to the



crippling realisation that he isn't the 'sarva shaktishaali eklauta bhagwan' that he thought he was. He is stripped of his power; his vast empire, built off the back of violence and vengeance, has been wrenched from his hands. But most distressingly for him, he has been uprooted from his beloved Bombay and sent to the faraway shores of Mombasa, Kenya, with not even his buddy Bunty by his side. This is one of the many examples of how showrunner Vikramaditya Motwane is continuing the process of deviating from the text, perhaps in preparation of a future in which he doesn't have Vikram Chandra's source novel to draw from. In the book, Gaitonde literally finds himself at sea. It is in Kenya that the always agnostic Gaitonde is offered his first whiff of faith. Of course, he is no stranger to the divisive power of religion - like season one, fear-mongering is an important theme this time around as well - but this is certainly the first time he is seeing religion through the prism of a vulnerable man, looking, like everyone else, for a crutch to rely upon. And like any spiritual leader worth his salt, Guruji lures him into his world like a saucy seductress beckoning a bereaved businessman.

## Jabariya Jodi movie review

Sidharth Malhotra, Parineeti Chopra film has a serious case of identity crisis



**Jabariya Jodi movie review: Like Sidharth Malhotra and Parineeti Chopra's characters, this film can't make up its mind whether it wants to be a social satire, a love story or a masala entertainer.**

Jabariya Jodi  
Cast: Sidharth Malhotra, Parineeti Chopra, Sanjay Mishra, Jaaved Jaaferi, Aparshakti Khurana, Chandan Roy Sanyal  
Director: Prashant Singh  
Rating: 1.5/5  
Jabariya Jodi could have been a lot of things; a scathing indictment of the evil of dowry, a social drama on the novel but illegal solution to that ill which only a state as 'jugaadu' as Bihar could have come up with - pakadwa vivaah - or a satire about what such a forced

coupling can do to a man, a woman and the society. Instead, Jabariya Jodi regurgitates the boy-meets-girl, boy is not sure that he should marry girl, boy realises at the absolute last moment that he needs to say 'I do' trope, which is all set in a kind of antiseptic Bihar that could only exist in Film City, Mumbai. Sidharth Malhotra is the local tough - Baahubali, if you will - whose idea of social service is to marry off deserving women to unsuspecting men whose family wants half of Bihar as dowry. He

might look at it as 'samaj seva' but his wannabe politician dad (played by a poker-faced Jaaved Jaaferi) charges a fancy dime for it. He also holds his son's strings. Sidharth's Abhay has his modus operandi and life sorted. He wants to be an MLA come election time, and goes about disrupting Valentine's Day celebrations and offering the option of 'shaadi aur shraadh' to suitable boys. Other than for him, marriage seems to be the end-all and be-all for everyone else, including the women who are marrying men who are crying while taking 'pheras', their parents, and film's leading lady, Babli (Parineeti Chopra). A firebrand and a rebel in all other aspects, Babli wants to eventually get married because, well, that is what women do. A woman who has been branded

'Bomb' for her feistiness and quick temper, she is okay if consent doesn't factor into it. Abhay and Babli meet and the film soon goes off the rails. He is clear that 'kursi', and not 'bistar' is what he is aiming for. He also believes he is his philandering father's son. So, no marriage for him. She is happy to leave her future in his inept hands after her own clumsy attempt at 'pakadwa vivaah'. Both Parineeti and Sidharth look too urban to fit into the milieu. Despite the loud shirts and aviator shades and an attempt at getting his Bihari accent right, it is hard to buy Sidharth as a Baahubali. The spunky Parineeti also pales into her one-dimensional role. You only remember her hair in an atrocious shade of red, her green eyeliner and her penchant for crop tops. Somebody please find the

favourite Bollywood couturier of the day and organise some clothes for her that real people wear! The film gets its zing from the language that you'd only hear in this part of India. Raaj Shandilya's dialogues give the film its few hilarious moments as Jaaferi explains why Audis are better than a Mercedes: "Usme teen taala hota hai, ye chaar choodi waali hai. Isme zyaada hai," or a man complaining about paan: "Ye paan banaye ho ya Japan banaye ho?" Sanjay Mishra as Parineeti's father, Duniyaram, and Neeraj Sood as his world-wise sidekick chew up the scenery. Chandan Roy Sanyal as Sidharth's confidante Guddu also adds to the film's credibility. However, it is Aparshakti Khurana who is the collateral damage of the Jabariya Jodi enterprise.



## Aishwarya Rai-Abhishek, Amitabh Bachchan-Jaya, Aaradhya pose for rare family pic after Raksha Bandhan celebrations with Shweta



**Aishwarya Rai and Aaradhya Bachchan celebrated Raksha Bandhan at the Bachchan household as well as at her mother's home**



The Bachchan family celebrated Raksha Bandhan with great enthusiasm on Thursday. Aishwarya Rai took to Instagram to share a bunch of pictures from her rakhi celebrations with daughter Aaradhya at her mom as well. In one of the pictures, Aaradhya can be seen applying a tika on her cousin, Agastya Nanda's forehead (son of Shweta Bachchan Nanda) as Aishwarya looks on. Agastya has all attention his attention on his little cousin as she does the ritual. Wearing a cream lehenga-choli with a striking red dupatta, Aaradhya cuts a pretty picture. Both Aishwarya and Agastya are seen twinning with Aaradhya in cream-coloured outfits.

Aishwarya shared other pictures in which Aaradhya posed with Agastya and elder cousin, Navya Naveli Nanda (Shweta's daughter). Aishwarya also shared many pictures from rakhi celebrations at her mother's home. One picture shows Aishwarya with her brother Aditya. In another, Aaradhya stands with Aditya's two sons. In a third picture, Aishwarya's sister-in-law Srma does a ritual with the entire family sitting together. In many pictures posted by Aishwarya, she is wishing all on Raksha Bandhan. Sharing two pictures, she wrote 'mine'. Abhishek Bachchan, too, shared a picture with his sisters -- Shweta and Amitabh Bachchan's brother, Ajitabh's

daughter Naina. Naina is married to Rang De Basanti actor Kunal Kapoor. He also wished his other sisters, Namrata and Nilima, on the occasion. We don't see them in the picture. Shweta also shared many pictures with her parents, Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan, children -- Navya and Agastya -- cousin, Naina, brother Abhishek and

niece Aaradhya in several posts. Both Aishwarya and Shweta had shared one photo each with their respective brothers. Rakhi was celebrated with great fervour by many other celebrities as well. Actor Alia Bhatt tied rakhi on the wrist of filmmaker Karan Johar's son Yash and both posted pictures. As Kareena Kapoor and her son Taimur are

in London, Soha Ali Khan shared a throwback picture from last year's celebration. Sara Ali Khan, too, is away in Thailand, shooting for her next with Varun Dhawan, a remake of '90s hit Coolie No 1. On the occasion, she shared an adorable picture with her brother, around the time when he was just a few months old.

## John Abraham says Batla House cuts won't affect story, but film will be delayed in some centres

John Abraham is happy that Batla House will not miss its Independence Day release date with the Delhi High Court giving it a go ahead with some changes. The filmmakers and an Ariz Khan, an accused in the 2008 encounter case, reached a consensus on the changes. Khan was earlier seeking the postponement of the release of the film on the grounds that it would affect his trial. Abraham, speaking at a press meet after the order on Tuesday, said some people complain about movies being a soft target but that thought never crossed his mind. "There are responsible filmmakers but some of them, I must say, aren't very responsible

also. I don't think we fall in that bracket. That's what democracy is about -- if you have a point of view and want to raise a question, you must. It's absolutely OK," he said. John said since the film deals with a contentious topic, those involved in its making should be available to answer the questions of the public. "If people want to question us, we should be ready with answers. I wouldn't look at myself or us as the victim here... Every time we say, 'we are being victimised', it doesn't happen like this, it isn't that bad. Except for faceless trolls on social media. Besides that everything is fine," he said. Director Nikkhil Advani said he

was overjoyed that the film will release on August 15 as planned though there will be some delay. "The courts had directed us to make five cuts which we have done. From evening till early this morning, we have been making those cuts. The prints have been sent out. In some centres in the rest of India, the prints will reach by 3pm, evening or even late at night. As a result there will be some cities where it'll take time for the prints to reach. We just want people to bear with us. We have tried our best to send this to everyone in time but there will be some centres which won't open till Thursday evening," Advani said. John said the cuts have not affected the story they are



presenting in any way. "We have seen it from before and after. From a normal audience point of view, it shouldn't make that big a difference. I'm not worried," the actor said. The postponement of the film's release was also sought by Shahzad Ahmed, who

has been sentenced to life imprisonment in the Batla House case and has challenged the verdict in the High Court. Both Khan and Ahmad are also facing trial in the 2008 Delhi serial bomb blasts case.



# Megan Barton Hanson shows off her toned physique in a white bikini

*As she hits the beach in Crete after confirming romance with Demi Sims*

Megan Barton Hanson's successful quest for love took a rather welcome detour as she let her hair down during a recent trip to Greece.

The *Celebs Go Dating* star caught the eye in a simple white bikini after stepping out for a coastal walk on the picturesque island of Crete, shortly before filming commitments for the reality show came to an end.

Revealing her nicely toned physique, Megan, 25, looked beach ready as she made her way towards a waiting sun-lounger.

The reality star was without new girlfriend Demi Sims as she

settled down in the shade during a short break away from her busy work commitments in the UK. Megan confirmed her relationship with *The Only Way Is Essex* star Demi after attending the *Celebs Go Dating* wrap party in August. Giving the crowd a treat, the pair were filmed 'snogging like teenagers' beneath a heart shaped balloon arch.

A source told *The Sun*: 'Megan and Demi are really happy together and a proper good match. 'At the party they couldn't keep their hands off each other and were snogging like teenagers. They made it official last night and picked each other and not their dates.' Rumours

surrounding Megan and Demi's romance began swirling when they left ITV's annual summer party hand in hand in July. The pair - who both recently came out as bisexual - and are said to be the 'real deal' and couldn't resist packing on the PDA at the star-studded bash. A source said at the time: 'Megan and Demi met on the show and have been dating ever since. It's really serious. They like each other a lot and it's the real deal.'

'Of course it's not the ideal scenario for the *Celebs Go Dating* bosses as the celebrities aren't meant to date each other, but it's happened and they're not hiding it.' Earlier this month, Megan was asked about her budding relationship with Demi during an appearance on ITV's *Loose Women*. She explained to the panel: 'We were just holding hands on a night out. She was pulling me along, I had one too many by that point.' However she remained coy over who she was dating as she told Andrea McLean: 'It's gone really, really well. I'm dating someone from the show. I've dated both men and women on the show.' Asked if she still talks to her ex-boyfriend Wes Nelson, 21, the reality star responded: 'No that was a lifetime ago, I'm a different person now.'



## *The Lion King India box office: Disney blockbuster makes Rs 150 crore, is 7th biggest film of 2019*

**Disney's *The Lion King* remake has crossed the Rs 150 crore mark in India, making it the seventh biggest film of 2019.**

Disney's remake of *The Lion King* has crossed the Rs 150 crore mark at the India box office. The film made over Rs 6 crore in its fourth weekend, taking its nett total to Rs 150.09 crore. Its gross earnings in India stand at Rs 178 crore.

Trade analyst Taran Adarsh shared the figures on Twitter on Monday. He wrote that the film crossed the Rs 150 crore milestone on its 24th day of release. *The Lion King* is the

second highest Hollywood earner in India this year, behind *Avengers: Endgame*, which has grossed over Rs 400 crore, and is the biggest film of the year.

Worldwide, *The Lion King* has made over \$1.3 billion, making it the highest grossing animated film of all time, as well as the highest grossing film in Disney's slate of remakes, which also includes the billion-dollar success, *Aladdin*.

*The Lion King* has been

classified as an animated film because of its state-of-the-art photorealistic technology. It has overtaken the \$1.2 billion *Frozen* to claim the title. Director Jon Favreau's previous film, the live-action/animation hybrid, *The Jungle Book*, concluded its worldwide run with just under \$1 billion. It made almost Rs 200 crore in India, thanks to the story's familiarity among local audiences.

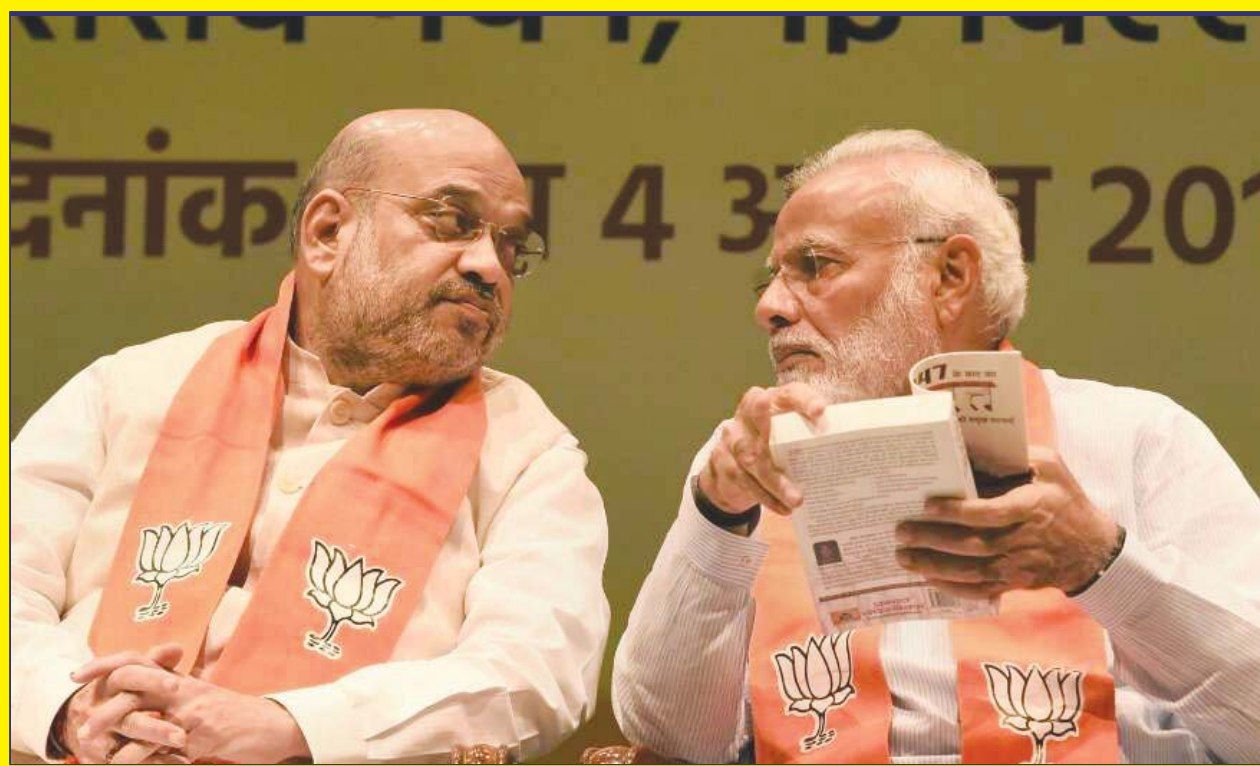
Disney utilised a similar release



strategy for *The Lion King*, getting actor Shah Rukh Khan to voice Mufasa in the Hindi version of the film, alongside his real-life son Aryan, who voiced Simba. The original English version features the voices of Donald Glover, Beyonce, Seth Rogen, Chiwetel Ejiofor and others.



# Narendra Modi and Amit Shah Tick Another Box in BJP Manifesto With Kashmir Move. What's Next?



(News Agencies) - Prime Minister Narendra Modi has pulled off a major political coup in effectively scrapping provisions of Articles 370 and 35A. The widespread support for the suspension of Jammu & Kashmir's statehood gives the BJP an edge in the upcoming Assembly elections in Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Haryana, Delhi and Arunachal Pradesh, while dealing a critical blow to the Congress. Winning public endorsement for highly contentious policies is the PM's speciality. Defanging Article 370 is one such counterintuitive measure and demonstrates his appetite for big risks,

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## Trek undertaken by PM on Man vs Wild show to be developed as 'Modi trail'



(News Agencies) - The Uttarakhand tourism department, in an effort to attract more tourists, would develop the trekking route taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and adventurer Bear Grylls as Modi Trail, said officials of tourism department on Tuesday evening. The trekking route in the famous national park was the one which was visited by PM Modi and Grylls during the shoot of Discovery channel's popular TV show Man Vs Wild. The episode was telecast on August 12. "The trek where PM Modi and Grylls visited during the episode inside Jim Corbett National Park would be developed as Modi Trail. The trekking route will be publicised as a separate identity in the famous national park," said Satpal Maharaj, minister of tourism, Uttarakhand while speaking to mediapersons on it. He added, "During the episode, PM Modi displayed courage in the wilderness of the park. The trekking route would help in attracting more tourists and wildlife enthusiasts towards it."

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## 5 of the world's biggest economies are at risk of recession



(News Agencies) - Five big economies are at risk of recession. It won't take much to push them over the edge. The British economy shrunk in the second quarter, and growth flat lined in Italy. Data published Wednesday show Germany's economy, the world's fourth largest, contracted in the three months to June. "The bottom line is that the German economy is teetering on the edge of recession," said Andrew Kenningham, chief Europe economist at Capital Economics. Mexico just dodged a recession- usually defined as two consecutive quarters of contraction - and its economy is expected to remain weak this year. And data suggest that Brazil slipped into recession in the second quarter. Germany, Britain, Italy, Brazil and Mexico each rank among the world's largest 20 economies. Singapore and Hong Kong, which are smaller but still serve as vital hubs for finance and trade, are also suffering. While growth has been dragged lower in each country by a specific cocktail of factors, a global manufacturing slump and a sharp drop in business confidence have made matters worse.

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## IAF Pilot Abhinandan Varthaman, Captured by Pak, to Be Awarded Vir Chakra on Independence Day



(News Agencies) - Indian Air Force (IAF) Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, who became the face of the tense military confrontation between India and Pakistan, will be awarded the Vir Chakra, the coveted wartime gallantry medal, for shooting down a Pakistani F-16 during a dogfight over the Line of Control on February 27. Earlier, reports said the five Mirage-2000 fighter aces, who dropped precision bombs on the terror camps of the Jaish-e-Mohammed, are also likely to be felicitated with the Vayu Sena Medal for gallantry.

Varthaman was captured by the Pakistani Army on February 27 after his MiG-21 Bison jet was

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## 12 Snake Charmers Called to UP Jail After Snake Bite Three Prisoners, One Dead



(News Agencies) - Three prisoners in the Lucknow district jail were bitten by snakes that had entered the premises following water-logging in the area after the city was lashed by rain for two days. The snakes bit three inmates on Monday, one of whom, Babbu, later died. He was serving a life sentence. The other two, Dilip and Raj Kumar, were admitted to the hospital and are now better. Jailor Satish Chandra said that more than 12 snake charmers were called in on Tuesday who caught four snakes from the jail premises. The new district jail in Lucknow is located on the outskirts of the city and is surrounded by fields where a large number of snakes can be seen.