

# A 'Moment of Reckoning'



(Agencies) Philadelphia — Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton, who sacrificed personal ambition for her husband's political career and then rose to be a Democratic senator and secretary of state, became the first woman to accept a major party's presidential nomination on Thursday night, a prize that generations of American women have dreamed about for one of their own.

Declaring that the nation was at "a moment of reckoning," Mrs. Clinton, 68, urged voters to unite against the divisive policy ideas and combative politics of the Republican nominee, Donald J. Trump. "Powerful forces are threatening to pull us apart, bonds of trust and respect are fraying," Mrs. Clinton said. "And just as with our founders there are no guarantees. It truly is up to us. We have to decide whether we're going to work together so we can all rise together."

If elected, Mrs. Clinton would become the 45th president of the United States, as well as the first to be married to a former president, Bill Clinton, the

nation's 42nd. She would be the latest in a long line of Yale graduates and accomplished lawyers to lead the country, but she would also be the first mother and grandmother to be commander in chief, decades after women became heads of state elsewhere. Mrs. Clinton chose her daughter, Chelsea, to introduce her, and the 36-year-old Ms. Clinton described how her mother grappled with personal and professional choices that defined generations of women.

Then Mrs. Clinton, who has given only a few major speeches in her life, was to deliver her biggest yet. She sketched out a positive portrait of America that stood in sharp contrast with the grimmer vision of Mr. Trump, and of many voters who feel deeply unsettled by terrorism at home and abroad and the growing gap between rich and poor. "We are cleareyed about what our country is up against, but we are not afraid," Mrs. Clinton said. "We will rise to the challenge, just as we always have. Her convention speech

comes 47 years after the young Hillary Rodham wound up on the cover of Life magazine when she used her commencement address at Wellesley College to reckon with that era's civic unrest and clashes between protesters and police officers. "Fear is always with us, but we just don't have time for it," she said. "Not now." Her message to the millions of people watching her speech on television Thursday night was similar, as she planned to implore Americans to look past fear and tumult and to choose harmony over hatred. But this time, Mrs. Clinton was to speak to an audience that is deeply distrustful of her. Some 67 percent of all voters and 74 percent of independents said they do not trust Mrs. Clinton, in the latest New York Times/CBS News poll.

Mrs. Clinton's mission — to rally Democrats behind her and urge Republicans and independents to consider giving her a chance — came after decades of political controversies and partisan attacks. She carries "chains the Clintons have forged in life, like Jacob Marley in 'A Christmas Carol,'" said Barbara Perry,

director of presidential studies at the University of Virginia's Miller Center.

In the past, Mrs. Clinton has given speeches intended to change the country's mind, to varying degrees of success. After the debacle of her health care effort, in 1995 Mrs. Clinton, against the advice of the West Wing, traveled to Beijing and declared, in a powder pink suit, that "women's rights are human rights." In 2008, after she had lost a brutal nominating battle to Barack Obama, Mrs. Clinton, who had shied away from discussions of gender in that race, declared, as her mother and daughter watched, "Although we were not able to shatter that highest, hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you it's got about 18 million cracks in it." Aides suggested that the convention speech would not end up in that pantheon. "Stark, plain-spoken, but heartfelt," was how Jennifer Palmieri, the campaign's communications director, described Mrs. Clinton's "best voice" during an interview on Thursday after working with the speechwriting team until 4 a.m. (Contd on page 21)



# How PIOs acquired political clout in US



(Agencies) Washington : They are America's best-educated+ and wealthiest+ ethnic groups bar none. They have acquired a degree of political savvy and clout that has led to comparisons with the so-called "Jewish Israeli lobby." But how do Indian-Americans go about political networking?

They are present on both sides of the political spectrum, but the Wikileaks emails for now relate only to the Democratic Party. In one exchange, Shefali Razdan Duggal+ , a leading Democratic donor from California, asks a staff member at the Democratic National Committee whether the money she has raised for President Obama and the party (\$679,650), qualifies her for the premium package of hotel rooms and VIP invitations at the Philadelphia convention. And by the way, could she have an extra ticket to Vice-president Biden's holiday party, so she could bring her children?

Duggal, a long time party loyalist, also gives a head's up to someone she refers to as

"Bhai" about the possibility of hosting President Obama at his home."Bhai, I spoke with our amazing Erik a few days back about the potential of having a small event at your home with President Obama (much like the one which you just attended... except at your GORGEOUS home!). Erik would love to talk with you about it, at your convenience. I would suggest you speaking to one another potentially soon, as the President may be coming out to the West Coast in the near term," she says in an email.

The email trove also shows party operatives struggling to determine the authenticity and legality of donors and supporters. One set of emails relate to Nara Lokesh+ , son of Andhra CM

Chandrababu Naidu and grandson of NTR. The exchange starts with an email from a party official asking, "What's the citizenship status of an individual who came through the photo line in Portland, name below ... Nara Lokesh. Another official responds: "I got one name hit in Lexis and there is no voter record." The first party official then wants to know if he has a green card or some type of visa, and whether he has a social security number. It is finally determined that he is an Indian citizen (which means campaign contributions cannot be entertained).

Another series of exchanges scrutinise the record and political contributions of Niranjana Shah, a Chicago-based Indian-American entrepreneur.

## Indian-Origin Doctor Gets 8-Year Jail For Sexually Assaulting Patients In UK



(Agencies) London : An Indian-origin gynaecologist was today sentenced to eight years in prison in the UK for sexual assault against his female patients. Dr Mahesh Patwardhan was sentenced at Woolwich Crown Court for four counts of sexual assault between July 31, 2008 and September 24, 2012. Judge Alice Robinson told the court in south London that the impact statement from one of his victims was "one of the most harrowing I've ever read". "You knew about the serious sexual abuse she suffered as a child," she told the 53-year-old medic, who was in court with his anaesthetist wife, son and daughter. Dr Patwardhan was also convicted of two counts of fraud relating to falsely billing private medical insurers for work he did not perform. The doctor had already been struck off by the UK's General Medical Council (GMC) in October 2014 and publicity from that case prompted more victims to come forward, local newspaper 'News Shopper' reports. One of his victims had attempted suicide and said Dr Patwardhan ruined her life, Judge Robinson told the court. The assaults took place at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich and Blackheath Hospital in Lewisham, south-east London, between 2008 and 2012. The day before one complainant was due to have a hysterectomy, Patwardhan conducted a breast exam, despite the patient telling him she had recently had a mammogram. During his trial, the jury was told he even asked one woman to reveal her tattooed bottom. The India-born gynaecologist had denied all charges of sexual assault as well as the two counts of fraud.

## 4 Indians Held In Malaysia For Possessing Exotic Turtles

(Agencies) Kuala Lumpur : Four Indians have been detained by Malaysian authorities here for investigation after seizing more than 1,000 exotic turtles worth Rs. 99 lakh during a sting operation here. Natural Resources and Environment Minister Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said the four Indian nationals had been detained to assist in investigations.

The seizure by the Wildlife Crime Unit was worth an estimated RM600,000 (99 lakh rupees). Wan Junaidi said two suspects were detained in the first raid at a house in the suburb of Petaling Jaya yesterday. "A total of 1,011 Star tortoises and 23 Indian Roofed turtles were seized," the minister said. Two other suspected were picked from a budget hotel here today, he added. Wan Junaidi said the enforcement officers found 36 Black



Pond turtles in four bags. Checks showed all the four suspects did not possess any licence from the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) to keep the reptiles. The suspects will be investigated under

Section 68 of Malaysia's Wildlife Protection Act 2010 for keeping wildlife without a special permit. The offence carries a jail term of up to three years, a maximum fine of RM100,000, or both upon conviction.

## FBI chief: Success against ISIS means more terror

(Agencies) Battlefield success against ISIS may produce more terrorism for the West, FBI Director James Comey warned this week. Speaking to a cybersecurity conference at Fordham University Wednesday, Comey predicted that eventually crushing ISIS in its self-proclaimed caliphate in Syria and Iraq will likely result in dispersing terrorists elsewhere. "At some point there is going to be a terrorist diaspora out of Syria like we've never seen before," Comey said. "Not all of the Islamic State killers are going to die on the battlefield."

The FBI director's warning that the collapse of the caliphate will mean increased attacks in Western Europe and the United States mirrors a consensus among intelligence officials. Comey compared it to the

formation of al Qaeda, which drew from fighters who had been hardened and radicalized fighting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s and early 1990s.

"This is an order of magnitude greater than anything we've seen before" Comey said. "A lot of terrorists fled out of Afghanistan... this is 10 times that or more."

"We saw the future of this threat in Brussels and in Paris (attacks earlier this year)."

And just not in the West. There have recently been stepped up ISIS attacks worldwide, including in countries near its home base territory that has been shrinking due to military losses in Iraq and Syria. In the last several weeks, there have been mass casualty killings at a nightclub in Orlando,

Florida; the Istanbul airport in Turkey, a café in Bangladesh, a market in Baghdad, the Bastille Day celebration in Nice, France; a protest in Afghanistan and on Tuesday, the murder of an elderly priest in Normandy, France, all carried out by ISIS fighters or in the name of ISIS.

CNN national security analyst Peter Bergen blames a more complex regional breakdown for sowing the attacks.

He notes that the fracturing of authority in Iraq, Syria and Yemen has produced a massive migration of Muslims from those regions to Europe, which prompted reactionary political parties there to rail against them. In France they live in largely segregated communities where youth unemployment can run as high as 45%.

# This sapling season, let's not forget the standing trees



coming years. But one wishes there was also a plan to resuscitate the existing ones.

Trees have been the worst casualty in Delhi's urbanisation. More than one lakh trees were cut between 2006 and 2014 to make way for the metro, roads, flyovers and government buildings, the Delhi high court was informed last year. Proposals to cut more are awaiting approvals.

Freeing up roadside trees from concrete has been another battle. There have been at least three court cases — the latest one in the National Green Tribunal. There are government guidelines against harming trees, a tree preservation law, and numerous affidavits filed by public utilities swearing "compliance".

Harming a tree attracts prison term of up to one year or a fine of up to ₹1,000 or both. Still, at least 200 full-grown trees die every year due to water scarcity, excessive concretisation and diseases. A large number of New Delhi's neglected avenue trees are 80-100 years old, planted at

the time the British built the Capital. Many cities across the world treat trees of such vintage as they treat heritage buildings.

It is mandatory to leave 6x6 feet open space around each tree while paving footpaths. But most city trees are sealed with cement or impaled, lopped and hammered to put metal boards. Wheel traffic, overflowing wastewater and construction rubble have such compacting effect on the top soil that nutrients and water do not reach the roots. The result is stunted, drought-stressed trees even in the best of monsoon.

The Delhi Preservation of Trees Act, notified in 1994, calls for a tree count but the first city-wide survey is yet to be conducted. In 2005-06, the New Delhi Municipal Council did count the roadside trees in the VIP zone, studied their health and also got itself a tree ambulance, the only such facility in Delhi.

Having long waited for the government, residents of Sarvodaya Enclave were the first

to conduct a tree census in 2013. Gulmohar Park and Vasant Vihar are following suit. More than numbers, the health of the trees is the priority of these residents. But elsewhere in Delhi, the roadside trees are still waiting for a medical check-up.

Trees are an asset. They deal with atmospheric pollution, a dire problem in Delhi that houses nine million vehicles. Studies show that a single tree releases enough oxygen to sustain two people. Trees also replenish groundwater, which could be a boon in a city like Delhi that has already been sucked dry.

A hundred mature trees can reduce runoff caused by rainfall by up to 100,000 gallons, says the US Department of Agriculture. Delhi spends ₹500 crore annually on waterlogging and flood control measures. Yet, one downpour turns Delhi's streets into streams.

One of the world's greenest capitals, Delhi has been lucky to have an enviable tree density. With its river and air turning noxious, the last thing the city can afford today is to lose that insurance.

(Agencies) Monsoon is a celebration of the green. So every year, the city authorities dedicate the season to planting saplings.

This time, though, Delhi's greening drive is getting a bigger push and higher targets. The Delhi government, which started its annual plantation exercise on Friday, aims to plant at least one million new trees and half a million shrubs by next spring.

In the past, government's plantation drives favoured non-native varieties because of their pretty looks. But the exotic ones grew up to be resource-hungry bullies and often edged out the native species. The authorities are wiser now. So this time, the plan is to plant only native

species such as Amaltas, Kadam, Sakar, Peepal and Shahtoot.

For any plantation drive to be successful, the authorities have to ensure that the saplings survive. But no more than 20%-30% live to see the next season. After failing to enforce a third-party audit last year, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has promised tougher inspections at all plantation sites this monsoon.

As an old Chinese proverb goes, the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time, of course, is now. If the past mistakes have been a lesson, Delhi should have many more saplings growing up to become robust trees in the

## Kargil War history

### A new account could change how we view Indo-Pak conflict

(Agencies) Much has been written about the Kargil war. And much needs to be written about this conflict which was unique in its nature. Apparently the limited theatre of the war imposed unilateral restrictions on India though Pakistan had been prosecuting the war on the sly. There is little doubt that the project undertaken by a noted military-historian Srinath Raghvan to write the official history of the Kargil conflict is expected to throw new light on the hitherto hidden aspects of the war. Now the question arises — will the refusal of top army brass to part with operational details prove to be an impediment?

Of course war creates not only a history but also mythology. Seventeen years ago, Kargil happened in the backdrop of an outstanding peace initiative by the then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee who went to Lahore and held talks with his counterpart Nawaz Sharif. The apparent bonhomie between the two leaders could hardly conceal the underlying rancor of the Pakistani Army which

had launched a secret operation to occupy glacial heights and cut off the Indian supply route after Zozilla pass in the Himalayan hill.

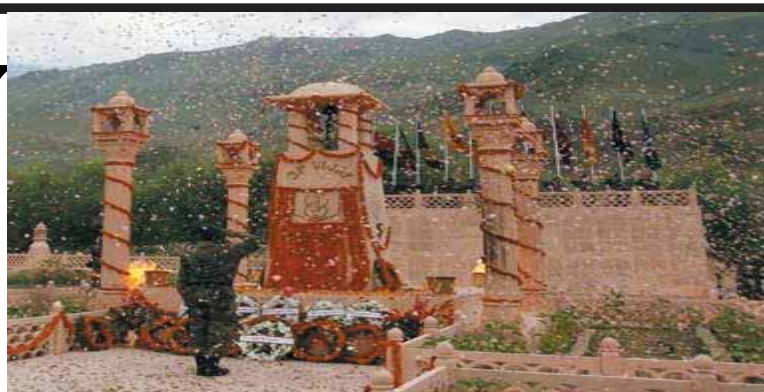
The story of Indian valour and Pakistan's perfidy is the usual stuff that the Kargil narrative is made of. Yet there is serious scope of official historiography which has not been covered in the written material on the conflict. Though there are voluminous accounts of the war contained in the review committee on Kargil war headed by noted strategic expert K Subrahmanyam, a candid official narrative remained elusive.

For instance there is no official word on the fact whether or not the Air Force insisted on going across the border to attack Pakistani positions. As a reporter who covered the conflict in Kargil and interacted with policy-makers at the top at that time, I was convinced that prime minister Vajpayee was singularly responsible for not allowing the India Air Force to go across Pakistan and escalate the tension.

However, of late, versions have appeared which are at variance with established beliefs. New

reports have come in about the Air Force's insistence on allowing scope to go across the border to operational efficacy. Of course, the decision to exercise restraints in face of grave provocation paid rich dividends as the international forced Pakistan to blink and withdraw its regulars who occupied certain peaks and could not militarily evicted.

Though Vajpayee took a tough stand in refusing the mediation efforts by United States and declined president Bill Clinton's request to visit Washington and sort out the issue with Sharif, it remained mystery till date as to why did India agree to allow Pakistan to withdraw its soldiers. Apparently Pakistan's position was quite precarious at that point of time and India could have easily followed hot-pursuit to neutralise intruders. But sagacity of Vajpayee did not allow the defence forces to take that route. In the cabinet, a strong section was in favour of not letting Pakistan go without serious cost. India had already accounted for 474-odd soldiers killed and 1,109 wounded. Pakistan's loss was much more as compared to



India. Yet any keen student of war history would like to know — was it the case of a wasted opportunity to settle the issue once and for all with a recalcitrant neighbor Pakistan? At the same time, it is still in the domain of ambiguity as to how Pakistan had played its nuclear card.

In the Kargil review committee, it has been clarified that Pakistan's confidence emanated from the assessment that India would hesitate to attack Pakistan for fear of escalation of war into a nuclear conflagration. But they did not factor in Vajpayee's resolve to fight the battle within a limited theatre and win on its own term. But there is little evidence and official record to reveal about the assessment of the defence establishment if Kargil conflict would have escalated into a full-fledged war. Were we prepared for that?

Obviously the inability of the army leadership to part with the operational details for the recorded history of what is called

India's fourth war with Pakistan would add a degree of opaqueness to the effort. But there is a strong conviction in the defence establishment that the revelation of operational details in official history would compromise India's bargaining position in border areas where international borders are still not clearly defined.

This is the precise reason that the Hendersen Brooks-Bhagar report that analyses the reasons for Indian military's fiasco in war with China in 1962 is still shrouded in secrecy. None of the defence ministers had ever tried to reveal its contents even though they may have demanded transparency in their earlier role as opposition leaders. By all indications, a certain part of Kargil operation details would remain secret. But the official history of Kargil by Raghvan promises to be one of the most interesting war-chronicle of the recent times.

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# No substitute to accountability

**Any decision on mob-dispersal techniques to replace pellets needs to be carefully thought through**

Ever since the evolution of the police as an organised apparatus of the modern state, one fundamental issue has come to be intertwined with their field operations: how much force can they use to serve the ends of public order? Associated with this are other questions: is it possible to define limits to the police's overall authority and, if yes, how do we ensure that the exercise of such authority does not transgress the set boundaries? Unfortunately, these are subjective issues and hence difficult to resolve. What we are now witnessing in the Kashmir Valley is a part of this debate on how to oversee the police so that they are conscious of the risk of overstepping their powers and committing human rights violations.

Misgivings about the police are not about whether they can use force while discharging duties; there is near consensus that they can and should use sufficient force to make sure that law-abiding citizens are not obstructed from going about their daily tasks. What, however, divides opinion is whether the techniques of such force should be so regulated that they achieve the objective of maintaining public order without transgressing human rights. It is in this context that the use of pellets to disperse mobs in Kashmir has triggered protests as well as demands for the withdrawal of this mode of handling violent mobs. This is not just a routine human rights discussion; it has unmistakably assumed some political overtones too.

The use of pellets as ammunition were introduced recently in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) in reaction to complaints of excesses in 2010 by the security forces, who were using rubber bullets to disperse stone-pelting mobs. Contrary to popular belief, even the rubber bullets caused a few deaths, and so began the current experiment with pellets.

It was hoped that pellets, which are lead balls resembling ball bearings, would be less lethal than rubber bullets and conventional bullets but would carry no less deterrence to anti-social elements. The truth, unfortunately, is that while pellets may not kill the person they hit, they penetrate skin tissues and cause serious injuries. Further, they travel from the cartridge at high speed and disperse in unpredictable trajectories. The

complaint from J&K is that pellets have not only caused bodily harm, but have also injured the eyes of many demonstrators, leading to loss of sight. Also, according to some specialists who had examined the eyes of the injured persons, the pellets used in the State by security forces were not all round. Some were irregular and sharp-edged, capable of causing serious injuries. Having said this, it is also important to examine the credibility of the complaint before taking any decision to give up pellets in favour of less injurious ammunition. Any abrupt discontinuance of pellets has serious implications for the effectiveness of law enforcement in handling mobs.

The Home Ministry has responded swiftly to these complaints by rushing eye specialists to J&K. This gesture needs to be applauded. The Home Minister also visited Srinagar a few days ago and reportedly advised against excesses while dispersing mobs. A committee, he said, would be set up to examine other non-lethal alternatives to pellets.

Assessing police action

There are two important

aspects to this controversy, which have relevance to the criminal justice system. First, since it is difficult to quantify the amount of force that the police can legitimately employ when order is threatened, the state has a huge responsibility to quickly assess police action and punish policemen in cases of wanton violence. Many governments fight shy of this duty and invite odium upon themselves. Such failure to fix responsibility is invariably attributed to the need to preserve police morale. We have seen this happening over and over again in J&K. This is why opposition to the use of pellets is symbolic of the overall dislike of the police in the Valley.

Second, any action to whittle down the operational autonomy of the police in disturbed areas should be taken only after great deliberation on the likely impact on police effectiveness and the morale of the forces. Otherwise there could be problems that may adversely affect the image of the government itself. No government can afford to be soft on lawbreakers nor can it permit arbitrary police conduct in the field.

Criminal justice scholars



across the world, especially in U.S. universities, have conducted serious research in this area. Their broad conclusions converge on the inevitability of the police resorting to force and the need to simultaneously bridle police hands so that there are no excesses. In the U.S., the police have also been accused in the recent past of biases while using force. While it is fortunate that in J&K there are only mild overtones of prejudice, a controversy over pellet use could always degenerate into accusations of prejudice and political motivation. This is why we need serious introspection and quick corrective action.

The objective should be to find out whether there is any other non-lethal method to handle demonstrations. Indian police

use tear gas, lathis, and sometimes water cannons before resorting to the use of firearms to break up violent crowds. Police firing was a rare occurrence until about two decades ago, but with growing violence in India it has become distressingly frequent. Judicial probes into such action have seldom ended in adverse findings against the police.

The administrative response to mob violence will need to blend firmness with moderation. A trained force under professional police leadership combined with an understanding ruling class can do a lot to steer through the dilemma. This is possible only if our polity succeeds in insulating the police from constant political pressures. As things stand now, this seems a pipe dream.

## Brexit: The return of boundaries

**Nativist sentiments and a growing tendency towards looking inwards imperil globalisation.**

The Brexit vote may not be the last nail in globalisation's coffin, but it has ensured that the pallbearers have been set on high alert. Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, a despondent America considers a vision of the country modelled on a gilt-edged and inaccessible penthouse apartment on New York's Fifth Avenue. After all, the promise comes from the owner of such a penthouse; Donald Trump intends to impose punitive tariffs, deny entry to Muslims and others deemed undesirable, while dismantling trade deals and security alliances. What is more, his rhetoric has struck a chord in America and beyond. Nativist sentiments, growing inequalities and a sense of insecurity about the disappearing middle-class dream is a dangerous mix when there are politicians who — to use my favourite example of madly mixed metaphors — are prepared to lead their countries off the edge of a precipice with their heads in the sand.

Is globalisation giving way to global-tribalisation aided by



opportunistic leaders? The nativist sentiments are not limited to the UK and the US. China is rattling sabres along its maritime borders. Russia has settled into its role as the world's outcaste. Japan and Europe have become the world's standstill societies, hostile to immigrants. Even emerging markets that once offered the world dynamism are slowing; recessions and horrendous governance across Brazil, Russia and South Africa and Turkey's failed coup followed by repression have cooled the enthusiasm of global investors. The so-called "last frontier", Africa,

that only recently enjoyed a short-lived "Africa rising" moment, now struggles with drought, dropping demand for its commodities and multinationals headed for the exits: Nestlé is cutting 15 per cent of its workforce, while Barclays is out altogether.

On the geopolitical front, the ISIS is intent on driving a wedge between the Muslim world and the world, and even among Muslims themselves. On the technological front, the angels of automation in Silicon Valley and Cambridge, Massachusetts, are talking up the "second

machine age", where technology will displace the helping hands from overseas. Across the world, social media algorithms are tracking our past and feeding us what they think we like based on our click-trails — a self-reinforcing closed loop.

Troubled by this giant "selfie" moment for human civilisation, I have been spending the summer looking for signs of hope. I note, with some pleasure, that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a standout among the world's politicians. Despite several contradictory actions — running an internationally respected RBI governor out of town — he has made international outreach a key policy pillar. As of July 2016, he has hop-scotched across over 40 countries. Most other political leaders are struggling to juggle domestic priorities that keep overtaking global agendas.

With the intelligentsia generally is a reliable booster of globalisation and seamless connectivity,

(Contd on page 23)

## India still needs to go the distance

Macroeconomic compulsions and preconditions of multilateral institutions triggered the first wave of reforms in the '90s. The onus is now on Narendra Modi to finish the unfinished agenda

Analysing 25 years of India's reforms presents an enigma. Why was India such a latecomer to embracing economic changes? If the Asian Tigers had course-corrected earlier and China commenced significant changes in 1974, why did we wait till 1991?

In seeking an explanation, I came across an interesting comment in I.G. Patel's book, *India still needs to go the distance*. In this he describes how the U.S. and multilateral institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF), succeeded in persuading Indira Gandhi to undertake what was distinctly an unpopular devaluation decision on June 6, 1966. There were many important promises which had been made by way of enhanced economic assistance programmes and significant structural adjustment loans from the World Bank. These never materialised. Dr. Patel says in his book: "The much advertised non-project assistance of a billion dollars did not materialize and there was the usual wrangling about projects and denial by delaying. The hoped-for liberalization of imports could not be attempted, with the result that there was no spurt on growth from greater utilization of capacity... President [Lyndon] Johnson's 'ship-to-mouth' policy on food aid created considerable resentment. All this created a climate for despair for Mrs Gandhi, her first test of popular disenchantment."

It is a matter of conjecture if India would have embarked on an altered strategy had the promises been kept, but this was a watershed moment in many ways. Indira Gandhi never trusted the West again and instead moved towards an even more regulated economy by way of nationalising banks, populist measures like abolishing privy purses and managing agency houses.

It was much later that Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee took the major initiative of building a strategic economic and political partnership with the U.S. The disintegration of the Soviet Empire had anyway circumscribed options in a transition to the altered economic considerations.

Recourse to borrowings from the IMF was not new to India. We had borrowed over SDR 500 million in the seventies and around \$5.8 billion in the eighties. However, during the period of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, recourse was taken to substantial borrowing to support development programmes, prompted in no small measure by S. Venkitaramanan, earlier Power Secretary and later Finance Secretary. It is another matter that these very problems gave him sleepless nights when somewhat later as Governor of the Reserve Bank he was forced to arrange short-term liquidity accommodation for preventing debt default almost on a day-to-day basis. The immediate impact of the extended borrowings of the eighties was a significant deterioration in our macro fundamentals. The fiscal deficit crept up (from 8 per cent in 1984-85 to 10.4 per cent in 1991) with a yawning Current Account Deficit (3.1 per cent of GDP), the Soviet Union broke up, the Gulf War broke out and there was a sharp fall in inward remittances — which became the more proximate reasons for the balance of payments crisis which surfaced during the period of Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar with Yashwant Sinha as Finance Minister. Earlier borrowings by Madhu Dandavate of \$550 million (from the IMF in September 1990) during Prime Minister V.P. Singh's time proved inadequate to stem the deterioration. Given political uncertainties, members of the Aid India Consortium and the IMF had hesitation in making deeper commitments. Many of the deeper commitments sought by multilateral entities were contained in the Budget which never got presented by Mr. Sinha in March 1991. In substance, many of the changes were no different from the Budget presented by Manmohan Singh on July 24, 1991. Mr. Sinha, in a recent interview, attributed this to the common authorship of the then Chief Economic Adviser Deepak Nayyar. This perhaps is a somewhat simplistic explanation; the deeper one is that these changes were necessitated by the macro compulsions but more importantly by the preconditions sought by the IMF and the World Bank for additional financial accommodation for the upper credit tranche and the structural adjustment loan respectively.

This also addresses somewhat the oft-repeated question on whether the economic reforms of 1991 were an act of choice or a fait accompli because of the compulsions of the time. It is important to recognise that the far-reaching changes of 1991 were embedded in strong bipartisan support. Dr. Singh had the fullest support of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, who sagaciously kept major Opposition leaders — particularly Mr. Vajpayee and L.K. Advani — in the loop on the proposed changes.

-Editor

## Why It's Still Hard for Women to Break Through

The historian Annette Gordon-Reed said recently that she thinks it was easier for a black man to win the presidency than it will be for a white woman. It was Ms. Gordon-Reed's research that erased any doubt that Thomas Jefferson was the father of the children of his slave Sally Hemings. Her magisterial book, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*, won the Pulitzer Prize for history in 2009 and made her the first African-American woman to win that prize. Of course, that was also the year Barack Obama became the first black president of the United States.

Ms. Gordon-Reed believes it was easier for Mr. Obama to become the first black president than it will be for Hillary Clinton to become the first female one. She said that she didn't think when the book was published in 2008 "there was any doubt about who most black people were going to vote for. But the gender thing is different. You can never get women to vote as a monolith — this is a deep cultural thing. "Black men got the vote before women, which caused great dissension. Feminists supported abolition, but didn't get the vote."

The data bears her out — white women are often the second or third group to break through the glass ceiling, usually after a black or Hispanic man has done it first. For female candidates, she said: "If you're too motherly that's a problem, if you're too young or sexual or pretty that's a problem. Getting there, persuading people to love you, to trust you — how does a woman do that across a wide swath of the nation?"

Political analysts once thought a black presidential candidate would face a comparable, complicated challenge: For example, some thought that the first black president had to be a Republican, like Colin Powell. But along came Barack Obama, whose win blew away those notions — and suggested that Americans were more ready to embrace a minority president than a female one. Now Mrs. Clinton is pitted against Donald Trump, a candidate who has a record of insulting women. Her candidacy, Ms. Gordon-Reed says, "is a test of the character of the American people. She should not underestimate the power of the forces aligned with Trump. She should continue to run an inclusive campaign, tell people what she's for and focus on the positive things rather than trying to out-negative him."

Convincing people to vote out of optimism, rather than fear, she said, was what John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan were about, as was Bill Clinton in the 1990s. "Jefferson said you should not try to change people's beliefs about things, because it will harden them in their stance. You're better off sticking to your story, and maybe, in the fullness of time, people will be persuaded.

-Editor



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# Sisterhood Across Parties

## Jayalalithaa and Mamata defend Mayawati, recast politics on gender lines.

The outrage OVER former BJP leader Dayashankar Singh's sexist slur against Mayawati is significant because it brought together three powerful women leaders, who otherwise plough a lonely furrow as potential rivals. Jayalalithaa and Mamata Banerjee closed ranks with the BSP chief to defend her honour, not just as a Dalit icon but as a woman functioning in a competitive male-dominated environment. It was interesting to see how the narratives varied. The men thundered on about caste but the women bonded on another level as well to shape the beginnings of a sisterhood that will hopefully recast the gender dynamics in politics.

Mayawati herself took the issue beyond caste to gender. "What that BJP leader has said, he said it not to me but to his sister and daughter," she declared and went on to say a special thank you to "women politicians across party lines" for their support.

The men must have felt a tad left out at this display of female camaraderie. What is

noteworthy is that Mayawati deliberately made a calculated outreach to women politicians although her male colleagues had defended her equally vociferously. The woman-to-woman empathy that the incident has generated is hardly surprising. Most women politicians have faced physical and/or verbal abuse at some point in their career. Jayalalithaa, Mamata and Mayawati are no exception, which is why it was easy for them to make common cause.

Mayawati was almost physically attacked and killed by a mob supporting the Samajwadi Party (SP) when she pulled support from the Mulayam Singh Yadav government in UP in 1995. She had to hide inside a state guest house while goons bayed for her blood. She has not forgotten that trauma; nor will she ever forgive the SP for turning her vulnerability as a woman against her to humiliate and frighten her.

Jayalalithaa's statement in defence of Mayawati was not just strongly worded, it was unusually emotional and personal. The

Tamil Nadu chief minister has built a formidable reputation as a leader who is aloof and reserved. But Singh's abuse obviously touched a chord. Jayalalithaa does not like to talk about the past but she did mention in the statement that she too has been "at the receiving end" of similar attacks as Mayawati. One particularly condemnable incident occurred in the Tamil Nadu assembly some years ago when she was physically assaulted and her clothes nearly torn. "My heart goes out to sister Mayawati," she said.

Unlike Jayalalithaa, Mamata Banerjee has been silent so far. But her man Friday in Parliament, Derek O'Brien, was at the forefront of the opposition charge against the BJP and Singh in Parliament. In fact, O'Brien received the first flash on WhatsApp, a video recording of the derogatory comments. He alerted Mayawati and then rallied other opposition leaders to corner the BJP. The command and control structure in the Trinamool Congress is such that



O'Brien could not have done all this without Mamata's total backing, probably under her direction as well.

Mamata too has been a victim of filthy abuse from her CPM opponents in West Bengal. Even as recently as 2011, during the assembly election campaign, prominent CPM leader Anil Basu was caught on camera hurling abuses similar to what Singh fired at Mayawati.

Most male politicians come from deeply conservative backgrounds where misogyny is a common failing and anti-women comments are quite normal. It didn't matter earlier for two reasons. One, their profanities remained under the radar. Today, they go viral over social media, and become instant controversies. The other reason is that women are no longer ready to remain silent. The outcry in defence of Mayawati was both an assertion of caste and gender

equality. Four states currently have women chief ministers and if Mayawati wins the 2017 UP assembly polls, the number will go up to five.

The coming together of Mayawati, Jayalalithaa and Mamata on a common platform may or may not be significant for the politics leading up to the 2019 general election. But it is very definitely a sign of things to come as women develop a new sense of self. Even Sharad Yadav, who has acquired a reputation for making disrespectful remarks against women, bowed to peer pressure and launched a strong defence of Mayawati.

Contrast this to what happened in 1997 when Mayawati was knocking at every door, including that of the National Commission for Women, to seek action against Mulayam Singh Yadav. No one spoke up for her then, unlike today. You've come a long way, baby!

# Crimes Against The Future

Peaceful acts - peace being a word that, even rhetorically, has gone out of style in "wartime" Washington — are still possible in this world.

I recently dug my mother's childhood photo album out of the depths of my bedroom closet. When I opened it, I found that the glue she had used as a girl to paste her life in place had given way, and on many pages the photos were now in a jumble.

My mother was born early in the last century. Today, for most of that ancient collection of photos and memorabilia — drawings (undoubtedly hers), a Caruthers School of Piano program, a Camp Weewan-Eeta brochure, a Hyde Park High School junior prom "senior ticket," and photos of unknown boys, girls, and adults there's no one left to tell me who was who or what was what.

In some of them, I can still recognize my mother's youthful face, and that of her brother who died so long ago but remains quite recognizable (even so many decades before I knew him). As for the rest — the girl

in what looks like a gym outfit doing a headstand, all those young women lined up on a beach in what must then have been risqué bathing suits, the boy kneeling with his arms outstretched toward my perhaps nine-year-old mother — they've all been swept away by the tides of time.

And so it goes, of course. For all of us, sooner or later.

My mother was never much for talking about the past. Intent on becoming a professional caricaturist, she lit out from her hometown, Chicago, for the city of her dreams, New York, and essentially never looked back. For whatever reason, looking back frightened her.

And in all those years when I might have pressed her for so much more about herself, her family, her youthful years, I was too young to give a damn. Now, I can't tell you what I'd give to ask those questions and find out what I can never know. Her mother and

father, my grandparents who died before I was born, her sister whom I met once at perhaps age six, her friends and neighbors, swains and sidekicks, they're all now the dust of history in an album that is disintegrating into a pile of black flakes at the slightest touch. Even for me, most of the photos in it are as meaningless (if strangely moving) as ones you'd pick up in an antique store or at a garage sale.

Lost Children on a Destabilizing Planet

I just had — I won't say celebrated — my 72nd birthday. It was a natural moment to think about both the past that stretches behind me and the truncated future ahead. Recently, in fact, I've had the dead on my mind. I'm about to recopy my ancient address book for what undoubtedly will be the last time. (Yes, I'm old enough to prefer all that information on paper, not in the ether.) And of course when I flip through those fading pages, I



see, as befits my age, something like a book of the dead and realize that the next iteration will be so much shorter.

It's sometimes said of the dead that they've "crossed over." In the context of our present world, I've started thinking of them as refugees of a sort — every one of them uprooted from their lives (as we all will be one day) and sent across some unknown frontier into a truly foreign land. But if our fate is, in the end, to be the ultimate refugees, heading into a place where there will be no resettlement camps, assumedly nothing at all, I wonder, too, about the world after me, the one I'll leave behind when I finally cross that border.

I wonder, too — how could I

not with my future life as a "refugee" in mind? — about the 65 million human beings uprooted from their homes in 2015 alone, largely in places where we Americans have been fighting our wars for this last decade and a half. And it's hard not to notice how many more have followed in their path this year, including at least 80,000 of the Sunni inhabitants of Iraq's recently "liberated" and partially destroyed city of Fallujah. In the process, tens of millions of them have remained internal exiles in their own country (or what is left of it), while tens of millions have officially become refugees by crossing borders into Turkey, Lebanon, or Jordan, by taking to the seas in flimsy,

(Contd on page 23)



# The Catechism Of Control

*How an autonomous TV channel created to project vox populi from the ranked benches of Lok Sabha was brought under the govt's thumb*

On my posting news of my exit from Lok Sabha Television on Facebook, many friends expressed shades of cynicism that have now become synonymous with our times. "What did you expect?" some asked. "C'mon what were you hoping for..." said someone else. Most of these reactions, I believe, were based on the events of the past two years, during which many exceptional men and women have been unceremoniously dumped or hounded out of institutions using dirty tricks of the worst kind. And when along comes a person whose credentials seem difficult to question, the dirty tricks department gets creative on a scale that we have recently seen in the case of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Raghuram Rajan. On the other hand, political appointees with questionable merit such as FTII chairman Gajendra Chauhan and CBFC head Pahlaj Nihalani have become textbook cases of how to push institutions off the edge.

I joined Lok Sabha TV (LSTV) in 2010 as programming

consultant to help improve the content of what was then the only parliamentary channel of the country, Rajya Sabha TV (RSTV) not having been launched yet. At that time, I was in fact pleasantly surprised to find that the debates and discussions on LSTV were wholesome and unbiased, so much so that they put the more glamorous private TV channels to shame. Several people who came to LSTV's discussions at that time were all praise for its programming and content, which allowed them to actually get airtime and argue their case without being browbeaten and harangued by TV anchors. The channel was also lauded for its fair content by political parties across the spectrum. Since its inception in 2006, LSTV had grown into an institution of credible content that sought to mould public opinion based on facts and figures rather than cleverly swaying public perception to suit an editorial line. It had built its own dedicated following, and people tuned in even when Parliament wasn't in session, which is to say that

LSTV was distinct in its identity as a programming channel rather than as a TRP-chasing news channel.

Following the election of the 16th Lok Sabha in 2014, four vacancies were advertised for the channel. These were for CEO-cum-editor-in-chief, executive director (programmes), executive director (marketing and promotion) and senior technical manager. I applied for the post of ED (programmes) and was awarded the highest marks in the interview, based on which I was selected to the post. At that time, I felt assured that qualification and experience had been respected even after a change in dispensation. But I was to be proved wrong.

For the post of CEO-cum-editor-in-chief, Seema Gupta's name appeared out of the blue, as the person topping the list. She managed to beat notables such as a former AIR director-general and a former executive director (of LSTV), both of whom had years of public broadcasting experience as well as administrative practice. Even



before the interview results were out, there were strong rumours that Gupta would be taking over as CEO-cum-editor-in-chief. However, one question remained. Who exactly was Seema Gupta? Because she was neither a bureaucrat nor a known journalist. All that could be gleaned out from the glorious confusion surrounding her appointment was that she was close to the Sangh.

In the first few months of Gupta's joining in November 2014, it became amply clear what the real intent behind her recruitment was. She began to block programme ideas that had content critical of the government. A discussion in December 2014 on sterilisation deaths in Chhattisgarh, by Paranjay Guha-Thakurta, was stopped mid-telecast. Anchors were pulled up for being hard on the government. Instead of following the business of Lok

Sabha, disproportionate attention began to be given to airing the prime minister's programmes live. The government or the prime minister had until then never been the focus of LSTV. As a channel, it was never mandated to be a government mouthpiece; rather, its role was similar to that of the House, that is, to make the executive accountable to the legislature, essentially the Lok Sabha. During Dr Manmohan Singh's prime ministership, there were often critical discussions around his key initiatives, foreign visits and the policy takeaways from them. Never was the channel wholly mobilised in his service. Today, LSTV has become more Catholic than the Pope, the Pope being the information and broadcast ministry. In private conversations, Gupta often invokes the PMO. She once told me that the PMO didn't like me appearing on screen. (Contd on page 22)

## The crisis of Indian democracy

*India has failed to nurture individual and collective capabilities. There has been far too little effort in public policy to create spaces where citizens interact freely and peacefully*

While India's economy has received periodic attention, mostly during critical moments defined by food shortages and foreign exchange outages, the workings of its democracy have received next to none. This reflects a complacency.

Interestingly, the neglect is evident in every angle from which the country has been approached, applying to observers located both within and without its society. Thus while the rulers of the western world berate India for its deviance from the apparently superior norms of a free-market architecture, India's nationalist elite traces her pathologies to western hegemony. Both lose the narrative by refusing to see that its condition is related to the failings of its democracy, which in one dimension has remained more or less unchanged since 1947. This dimension is that the majority of the population has been left with weak capabilities.

### Unfree after Independence

Capabilities are what enable individuals to pursue the lives that they value. This, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has suggested, is true freedom and should therefore be the focus of all developmental effort. The idea is foundational in that it vaults over narrow economic or political definitions of development. It is irrelevant to it whether we have more or less of the state or the market or whether we insert 'socialist' and 'secular' into the Constitution so long as large sections of our people are unfree in the sense that they cannot lead lives that they value. Jawaharlal Nehru, though perhaps elliptically, had expressed this in his famous speech on August 14, 1947.

He had seen Indian Independence as an opportunity to build a "prosperous, democratic and progressive nation and to create social, economic and political institutions which will ensure justice and fullness of life

to every man and woman". B.R. Ambedkar, with legal acumen and a practical bent of mind, had defined democracy as a means to bring about a significant change in the living conditions of the depressed without resorting to bloodshed. These ambitious programmes and the hard work they would have entailed fell by the wayside in the practices of India's political class and in the discourse of its intellectuals.

Whatever may have been the vision of India's founding fathers, Indian democracy has not lived up to their expectations. As a matter of fact, it has done far worse. In the past year it appears to have added heightened violence towards the marginalised to its sedentary character. The incident of four Dalit youth being beaten in full public view in Gujarat is only the most recent instance of this. Parliament reportedly heard accusations and defences the next day but it is not yet clear what impact it will have and how

civil society will respond. India's middle classes are quick to be hurt when news of Indians subjected to racial indignity in the West is beamed into our living rooms. No one could have missed the irony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier this month travelling by train in South Africa where about a century ago M.K. Gandhi was thrown out of a first class carriage because of the colour of his skin.

The scenes from India come a full century later. And the Dalit youths had, going by public sources, only skinned a dead cow, a task to which Indian society historically confined them. By assaulting them for undertaking it, not only has their dignity been denied but their livelihood snatched away. In any civilised society the perpetrators of this crime would not just be grasped by the long arm of the law but publicly shamed.

Gujarat is of course only one of the sites of violence against



Dalits. It is important to recognise that it has been widespread across northern India and not absent from the south either, with Tamil Nadu featuring prominently. It is also important to recognise that acts of violence against Dalits are not of recent origin. Their oppression is systemic and deeply rooted in India. Non-Congress parties with leadership drawn from the middle castes have long ruled Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, among India's most populous States, all of which have witnessed violence against the Dalits for some time. When in power, middle caste-based parties have replaced their invective towards the top of the caste pyramid with suppression of those at its bottom.

(Contd on page 22)

# Out on bail, woman accused of desecrating Guru Granth Sahib killed in Ludhiana

(Agencies) Two Kaur, the men — later identified from the security-camera footage as Gurpreet Singh Jagowal of Amargarh of Sangrur and Nihal Singh of Patiala — engaged the woman and her son in conversation for about 15 minutes outside the shrine, which suggests that they knew her. The Dehlon police registered a murder case against Jagowal and Nihal, who are linked to a Sikh radical group.

“They called the woman to the gurdwara on the pretext of helping her out with money,” said police commissioner Jatinder Singh Aulakh. “When she got in at 8am, Jagowal and Nihal, who had been waiting for 30 minutes, sat in Ranjoth’s three-wheeler. After a while, they took out what

pistols and shot the woman in the chest and got away on a white motorcycle parked a few metres away.”

After the sacrilege incident, the woman and her son had taken shelter with her daughter, Rajwant Kaur of Jawaddi, and sister, Amarjit Kaur of Dholewal. The accused had given her some money two months ago and promised to rehabilitate her. Rajwant Kaur, daughter of shooting victim Balwinder Kaur, said Ghawaddi’s sarpanch had framed her mother in the sacrilege case. “My mother was a baptised Sikh. How can a woman who spent seven years serving the gurdwara disrespect Guru Granth Sahib?” she said. “Police arrest her to avoid investigation, and after she got out on bail, the sarpanch barred her from the village.”



## THE CASE FILE

- On October 19, 2015, baptised Sikh woman Balwinder Kaur and granthi (priest) Sikandar Singh were arrested over sacrilege at the gurdwara of Ludhiana’s Ghawaddi village.
- Earlier, her elder son, Ranjit Singh, was gurdwara committee president and priest. After new committee took over, it appointed a new priest and

the family income from the gurdwara stopped. Police say it was then that she plotted to tear the pages of a copy of the holy book to get the priest sacked and her son reinstated.

- When police took her to the village for recovering case evidence from her place, the villagers attacked her. She secured bail last December after two months in jail.



# Will Sidhu indeed join AAP? He will clear air in 10 days, says wife



(Agencies) A day after Navjot Singh Sidhu panned the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) but stayed mum on reports of joining the Aam Aadmi party (AAP), the former MP’s wife, Amritsar-East

MLA Dr Navjot Kaur Sidhu, said he will “clear the air in the next 10 days”.

She also repeated that “leaving the Rajya Sabha seat means leaving the BJP; he will not go back to the BJP”. Asked which party Sidhu will join, she said, “Let him say that.”

Dr Sidhu was back in her constituency after meeting her husband in Delhi. She stressed that Sidhu was sidelined by the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the BJP. “This was the only reason that he was unhappy and criticised

the BJP on Monday,” she said.

“I know that people want to know; and lots of speculations are done. But let’s wait for Sidhu himself to announce his future course. He will do it in the next 10 days,” she added. Asked about her earlier statement that she will follow Sidhu wherever he goes, she repeated the stand and said, “Let him announce... then only I will do something.”

To a question why Sidhu accepted the Rajya Sabha nomination if he wanted to

work in Punjab, Dr Sidhu said, “In the very first interview after the nomination, Sidhu had said that through Rajya Sabha he will work for Punjab. But if it took him away from Punjab, he will opt not going to the Rajya Sabha. That’s what happened when he was asked to stay away from Punjab — he opted to leave it.”

She took a dig at the SAD saying, “Akalis are saying so much about the AAP and him (Sidhu), that I will like to ask if the Akalis in constant touch with the AAP.”

# Is it sacrilege for upper castes to clean toilets?

(Agencies) In urban India some imagine that caste demarcations have become history. We need to only check the caste identity of those employed to clean the toilets in our offices and homes to recognise how wrong they are. For centuries we have thrust chores we regard to be unclean and socially humiliating on people of the lowest, most oppressed castes. They alone carry the burdens of disposing of animal carcasses, skinning animals, and scavenging and disposing of human excreta. Today, although not written, there’s virtually 100% reservation for the lowest castes in jobs as cleaners and sweepers. Young people born into these disadvantaged castes battle formidable barriers to enter and stay in school. Research demonstrates that they frequently endure humiliating caste discrimination in classrooms. However,

even for many who persevere with their studies, and nearly all of those who cannot, their caste destiny forces them to clean toilets as the only employment available to them. Can we imagine an India in which cleaning toilets becomes an employment open to people of all castes? A progressive social service institute in Ahmedabad did it. It issued a job advertisement for a sanitation worker, stating that preference would be given to candidates of higher castes. The institute knew that the notification would be controversial: They issued it to stimulate public debate and soul-searching about embedded social inequalities. What they didn’t anticipate was violence and threats, forcing its director Prasad Chacko to go into hiding. The advertisement was issued by the Human Development and Research Centre (formerly Behavioural Science Centre), established in the

seventies by a group of Jesuit priests. These St Xavier’s College teachers were moved by the caste discrimination, untouchability and violence which they encountered across Gujarat. The institute tried to organise Dalit and tribal people, and promote gender equity. In 2002, it also became a hub for activists working with survivors of the communal carnage.

Some years ago, the position of a sanitation worker fell vacant in their Ahmedabad office. It was advertised, and as invariably happens, only people from the lowest-caste, Valmiki community, applied. Mukesh, a ‘tenth-fail’ Valmiki youth was appointed, but Chacko and his colleagues felt it would be unjust for him to be trapped for a lifetime in only cleaning floors and toilets. They helped him learn computers and office errands and



promoted him as an office assistant.

This spring the position of sanitation worker fell vacant again. It was certain that if they issued a job call, only Valmiki candidates would apply. The audacious idea of stating in the advertisement that preference would be given to applicants of higher castes came up. They mentioned that Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Baniyas and Patels among Hindus; Syeds and Pathans among Muslims (priestly and warrior castes); Syrian Christians; Parsis; and Jains, would be preferred.

# Manipur's 'Iron Lady' Irom Sharmila to end 16-year fast, fight elections, marry

(Agencies) Irom Sharmila, whose 16-year hunger strike thrust rights abuses by Indian armed forces into public imagination, is set to end her fast, contest elections and, if everything goes to plan, also marry her Goan-British boyfriend.

The 43-year-old has been campaigning to scrap a law that shields troops from prosecution, but on Tuesday she said her struggle had been lonely and unfruitful. This left her with little choice but to "change my approach as I want to see success".

"In my 16 year of journey, I see no visible change except the routine detention," said Sharmila, speaking with her nose tube on that the authorities have used for years to force-feed her a sludgy mix of nutrients.

She told reporters that she would eat again on August 9 — ending probably what is the world's longest hunger strike — and contest assembly polls due next year as an independent candidate. Sharmila stopped eating and drinking in 2000 after allegedly witnessing the army kill 10 people at a bus stop near her home in Manipur, which is subject to the controversial law that gives Indian forces sweeping powers to search, enter property and shoot on sight. "My fight so far has been all alone and so I have decided to wage a war against the Act democratically by becoming a lawmaker instead of continuing with my fast," she told reporters, referring to the Armed Forces

(Special Powers) Act (AFSPA).

From the days of Mahatma Gandhi to the more recent anti-corruption protests of Anna Hazare, India has a long history of activists using hunger strikes as a tool of protest. But Sharmila's fast caught global attention for its sheer duration. Almost immediately after she began her fast she was arrested under a law that makes attempting suicide a crime, leading Amnesty International to call her a "prisoner of conscience".

She has been confined to a hospital ward in Manipur's capital, Imphal, and is force-fed via a plastic nasal drip several times a day.

The controversial law, which traces its origins to a British-era ordinance used to suppress the Quit India Movement of 1942, is blamed by human rights groups for illegal killings and arbitrary detentions by security forces. The military denies misusing the law.

Earlier this month, the Supreme Court dealt a blow to the army's immunity under a the law, saying it can't use "excessive or retaliatory force" even in troubled places, and agreed to an investigation into hundreds of alleged illegal killings by security forces in Manipur. Some of Sharmila's aides said her decision to call off her fast might have been influenced by her boyfriend, who is also an activist. She told a court, where she appeared on Tuesday in connection with her attempted suicide case, that she would like

to marry. Sharmila's brother, Singhajit, said her family backed her new fight. "Whatever she does

we will support her as a family. Even our mother is hoping for the day when the act is abolished and

Sharmila wins the cause she has been fighting for," Singhajit, who uses one name, said.

## HER STRUGGLE

Irom Sharmila's marathon hunger strike had put the spotlight on AFSPA, which gives extraordinary powers to armed forces in strife-torn areas

**Nov 2, 2000** Assam Rifles personnel gun down 10 persons at Malom near Imphal

**Nov 5, 2000** Irom Sharmila, then 28, begins her indefinite fast and vows not to comb hair or look into a mirror until AFSPA is repealed

**Nov 9, 2000** She is arrested and charged with "attempt to commit suicide", a crime under IPC then; subsequent release and re-arrest becomes a routine affair

**Nov 21, 2000** Authorities begin forcefeeding her through nasal tubes while in custody

**July 11, 2004** Bullet-ridden body of alleged rebel Thangjam Manorama, 34, found a day after Assam Rifles personnel picked her up

**Aug 12, 2004** AFSPA withdrawn from seven assembly constituencies in Imphal after Manorama's death triggers violent protests

**Nov 2004** PM Manmohan Singh constitutes five-member Jeevan Reddy Committee to study AFSPA

**June 2005** Reddy panel recommends withdrawal of AFSPA in 147-page report but centre takes no action

**Oct 2, 2006** Sharmila takes stir to New Delhi and is arrested

**Jan 2013** Supreme Court constitutes Santosh Hegde Commission to probe Manipur fake encounters after PIL lists 1,528 cases



**April 4, 2013** Hegde panel finds six cases to be fake-encounter killings

**Dec 10, 2014** Centre decides to decriminalise "attempt to suicide" by deleting section 309 from IPC, queering Sharmila's case

**May 2015** Tripura's Left Front government decides to lift AFSPA after 18 years of imposition but Meghalaya wants the act

**July 26, 2016** She announces that she would end her fast-unto-death protest on August 9 and would fight elections to resolve issues

# Amazon unveils Prime for free, quick delivery

(Agencies) Bengaluru : Amazon has launched in India its globally popular membership service, Prime, that offers a range of benefits to subscribers, including free delivery irrespective of the order value and the promise of delivery within a day or two. Amazon India country head Amit Agarwal said the service will initially be subsidized with the investments from the parent company. The annual subscription fee will be Rs 499 now, but this is expected to be raised to about Rs 1,000 in course of time. TOI had reported in May that Prime would be launched soon in India.

Rival Flipkart had launched a similar service called Flipkart First in India in 2014 but it was discontinued. But

the e-tailer may be in the process of reinstating the product in a new avatar called F-Assured, The Economic Times reported on July 19.

It is estimated that almost 50% of the 100 million Amazon users in the US are Prime customers. The service was launched in that country in 2005. "Prime has been a success in every country we launched. Prime continues to evolve as we add millions of additional items," Greg Greeley, vice-president of Worldwide Prime in Amazon, said.

For the \$107-billion e-commerce company, Prime may help to gain a leg up over Flipkart and Snapdeal in India. The service will offer one- or two-day free delivery on more than 1.4 million products in 100

cities. Users can have a free trial for 60 days. Non-users of Prime have to pay delivery charges for low-value transactions and have to pay extra for one- or two-day delivery. Members will be able to access deals 30 minutes prior to others. In the US, the Prime annual subscription fee is \$99 (or Rs 6,600). It gives users access to other offerings like free photo storage, music and video services. Amazon is said to be in talks with Indian content developers for local video services.

"We are making a high promise to our customers. It required us to work on improving our supply chain efficiency because we have to do it at scale and get it right every single time. We have noticed that a good percentage



of our customers from the 100 cities are already paying up for faster delivery," Agarwal told TOI.

He added that Amazon has been building the infrastructure that will enable the company to offer Prime from day one. Amazon's India e-commerce platform was launched three years ago and has been the most rapidly growing platform on the strength of the massive investments committed by the parent company — \$2 billion

initially and an additional \$3 billion recently.

In India, Prime will be offered on products "fulfilled by Amazon" and will be marked Prime. For returns and exchanges, there is no preference or priority given to Prime members. However, Agarwal said the company will over time increase the number of cities and products that are eligible for Amazon Prime.

## No annual increment for non-performing employees: Government



(Agencies) New Delhi: Non-performing Central government employees will not get annual increment if their performance is not up to the mark, the Centre has said. The benchmark for performance appraisal for promotion and financial upgradation has been enhanced to "very good" from "good" level, the finance ministry said in an order notifying implementation of Seventh Central Pay Commission's recommendations. The Modified Assured Career Progression (MACP) scheme will continue to be administered at 10, 20 and 30 years of service as before, the ministry said as it "accepted" the pay panel's recommendations. The recommendation of "withholding of annual increments in the case of those employees who are not able to meet the benchmark either for MACP or a regular promotion within the first 20 years of their service" has been "accepted", it said. The pay panel had in its report to the Centre said that there is a widespread perception that increments as well as upward movement in the hierarchy happen as a matter of course. "The perception is that grant of MACP, although subject to the employee attaining the laid down threshold of performance, is taken for granted. This commission believes that employees who do not meet the laid down performance criterion should not be allowed to earn future annual increments." The Commission is therefore proposing withholding of annual increments in the case of those employees who are not able to meet the benchmark either for MACP or a regular promotion within the first 20 years of their service. This will act as a deterrent for complacent and inefficient employees," it had said. There are about 50 lakh Central government employees.

## AAP MP Mann: PM too guilty of safety breach

(Agencies) New Delhi: AAP MP Bhagwant Mann has said the Lok Sabha panel investigating his controversial video of the Parliament House complex should also summon PM Modi for inviting ISI to the Pathankot airbase "at the cost of national security". Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan has set up a nine member committee to investigate a video-streamed live by Mann -showing the first time MP pass through all the security checks at the complex on his way in. In a letter to Mahajan on Tuesday, Mann argued that the PM was "100 times more guilty" than him for endangering the country's security. "In 2001, ISI attacked the Parliament complex. And in 2016, it launched an

attack on the Pathankot airbase. The PM invited the same ISI and took them around the airbase. ISI made maps of the airbase and left," Mann said in the letter, adding, "Does this not threaten the security of the country? Is my video a threat to the security of the nation, or PM inviting ISI and taking them around the airbase is a bigger threat?" On Monday, the panel had given the Sangrur MP time till July 28 to respond to the charge that his action had compromised the security of Parliament House. Mamata bats for embattled AAP MP Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee has come out in support of AAP MP Bhagwant Mann in the video controversy. Mamata, who was in



Parliament House on Tuesday, said the first-time MP may not be well versed in the rules of the House. "However, he has made a mistake for which he has apologised and he should be pardoned," she said. Later, she instructed TMC MP Ratna Dey Nag, a member of the panel investigating the matter, to defend Mann at its meeting on Tuesday.

## Pakistan has 'direct role' in fuelling terrorism in J&K: Army

(Agencies) Drass (Kargil): Asserting that Pakistan has "direct role" in fuelling terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir, Army on Tuesday warned of more infiltration bids along the LoC in the coming weeks in view of the volatile situation in the valley.

"Pakistan is interfering in Kashmir and has direct role in what we call as proxy war in Kashmir and there is absolutely no doubt in it," General Officer Commanding in Chief (GoC-in-C), Northern Command, Lt Gen DS Hooda told reporters here.

He was paying homage to the martyrs of Operation Vijay on the 17th Kargil Vijay Diwas at the historic War Memorial here.

"We have seen it everywhere ... along the borders. We have seen it in the matter in which the support is given to infiltrating groups.

"We have seen how ceasefire violations have been used as a support to the people infiltrating into this side," Hooda said while replying to a question about Pakistan's role in current unrest and terrorism in Kashmir.

"In short, if there is an internal disturbance here, they will directly take advantage of it.

"You have heard the statements of Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba, trying to say that they are supporting whatever is happening in Kashmir," the Northern Command Chief said.

He said "the support (from Pakistan) is not only moral but it is absolute physical and there is no doubt about it".

He also expressed concern over the increasing radicalisation of youth in Kashmir Valley.

"We have seen there is an

increase in radicalization mostly driven by social media and people are quite active on it," Hooda said, adding everyone at all levels has to put their heads together to reduce this trend.

The Army official warned of more infiltration bids in the coming weeks along the LoC.

Hooda said, "We are seeing regular attempts to infiltrate groups into this side." "We have foiled some infiltration bids. One group which had infiltrated two or three days back and we have neutralised four terrorists inside the hinterland. We are seeing repeated attempts. We recently lost two soldiers during this infiltration bids. "I don't see a slow down in this (level of infiltration). During this internal disturbance they will try and push in more and more infiltrators and we are well prepared to deal with it," he said

## Andaman tribes may have a new human ancestor

(Agencies) Two tribal communities of the Andaman Islands, Jarawas and Onges, may have evolved from an as yet unknown human ancestor, according to latest genetic analysis done by a joint team of Indian and Spanish scientists. This claim, although not yet backed by any fossil evidence, is sensational for it will add a new, unknown branch to human ancestry. Scientists at the National Institute of Bio-Medical Genetics (NIBMG), Kalyani, West Bengal, working with those from the Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, Spain made this discovery after analysing ten genetic samples derived from Jarawas and Onges in the Andamans along with 60 samples drawn from different

ethnic groups across India. The study has been published in the scientific journal Nature Genetics. Why is this claim of a new ancestor + startling? From what is known of human evolution, an ancestor of modern humans arose in Africa and migrated west towards Europe and east towards China and India about 400,000 years ago. Those that went west evolved into the Neanderthals while those that migrated east formed the Denisovans. Meanwhile, ancestral humans continued to evolve in Africa and about 50,000 years ago modern humans too started spreading out of Africa. As they spread to all corners of the world, they encountered earlier species like Neanderthals and Denisovans and interbred

with them. All this shuffled up the genomes considerably but modern technology can tease out the intermingling. This is what the research team has done. "In addition to the Neanderthal and the Denisovan, an extinct hominid also contributed to the ancestry of the Jarawas and the Onges," Partha Majumder, NIBMG director and a co-author of the research told TOI. Earlier research by different scientists has shown that most people outside Africa have 1-4% of their genetic material derived from Neanderthals, except in communities in Pacific Islands and Australian aborigines, which instead have up to 6% genetic contribution from Denisovans. But the new discovery is being questioned by



other genetic historians. Harvard professor David Reich, one of the leading scientists in the field who has also researched Indian genomes, told TOI that the new ancestor theory of Majumder and his team is "unlikely to be correct", attributing the error to statistical

methods. "When we and others have computed similar statistics, we obtained results that are statistically inconsistent with Mondal (the lead author) and colleagues, and that do not require the surprising hypothesis of new archaic admixture," he said.

## Child labour bill passed, Unicef voices concern



(Agencies) New Delhi : Unicef+, along with various other childright activists, has raised concerns about the provision in the Child Labour Amendment Bill+, 2016 — passed in Parliament+ on Tuesday — allowing a child to help out in family enterprises after school hours. The UN agency said the provision will impact children+ from poorer families and legitimize family work, thus causing further disadvantage to them as there is a lot of outsourced work carried out from home. The bill makes employing a child+ below 14 years of age in any occupation or process, except where the child helps his or her family, punishable by a jail term of up to two years and even provides for a penalty for parents. “Under the new Child Labour Act, the more invisible forms of child labour+ and exploitation may go unseen and the most vulnerable and marginalized children may end up with irregular school attendance, lower levels of learning,” said Euphrates Gobina, UNICEF chief of education in India. Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) founder and Nobel Peace prize winner Kailash Satyarthi+ had earlier told TOI that the changes would lead to further “victimisation of children” in their every.

## Cong asks Chidambaram to stick to party line on Kashmir

New Delhi : Congress has asked senior member P Chidambaram to stick to the “party line” on Kashmir, in what appeared to be a rebuttal of his recent suggestion that the Centre extend greater autonomy to win over people in the Valley. “We urge all leaders to stick to the party line on Kashmir,” leader of the opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said when asked about Chidambaram’s recent statement that successive governments had ignored the “grand bargain” struck before Jammu & Kashmir’s accession to India. Azad did not spell out the “party line”. Chidambaram had made the “grand

bargain” remark in an interview he gave amid protests in Kashmir over Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani’s killing. “I think we broke faith, we broke promises and as a result we have paid a heavy price,” said Chidambaram, who was part of the leadership team during UPA’s decade in power. That the Manmohan Singh government did not move on any of his suggestions indicates that Congress prefers a more conservative approach. In fact, the former home minister said his views ran into resistance from the Army, adding that his successor in the MHA, Sushilkumar Shinde, dropped the ball. BJP seized upon his remarks to allege



Congress was playing partisan politics at the cost of national security.

## Pune man pays Rs 10 lakh, settles rape case

(Agencies) Mumbai : The Bombay high court on Tuesday quashed rape charges against a 30-year-old Pune resident after he deposited Rs 10 lakh in favour of the 23-year-old complainant, who is now seven months pregnant.

A division bench of Justices Abhay Oka and Amjad Sayed considered the “special circumstances” in the case after Geeta Patil filed an undertaking in the court consenting to the setting aside of criminal proceedings against Sameer Shinde, who is already married.

The court said that from the records it appeared that it was a consensual relationship and moved to “secure the future” of the complainant and her unborn child. The HC directed that the money be put in a fixed deposit in a nationalized bank for 10 years. The interest would be paid to the complainant. At the end of the term, she can apply to withdraw the amount.

The Bund Garden police had booked

Sameer under provisions of the India Penal Code relating to rape (Sec 376) and causing hurt (Sec 323) on June 6, 2016, on the basis of a complaint filed by Geeta. The FIR said Sameer had raped Geeta after falsely promising

a settlement.

Geeta filed an affidavit through her lawyer Sachin Chandan, claiming that the FIR was a result of a misunderstanding. The affidavit said she had approached the police initially to register a missing complaint as Sameer was not traceable. She knew Sameer was married. Geeta appeared before the HC bench and said she had no objection to the FIR being quashed.

Sameer agreed to deposit Rs 10 lakh in favour of Geeta and undertook to bear the expenses for the pregnancy as well as care of the child. At an earlier hearing, after Sameer deposited the first installment of Rs 5 lakh, the HC said: “In view of the deposit of the said amount, in view of peculiar facts, without going into the merits, we direct that coercive action shall not be taken against (Sameer) till the next date of hearing.” On Tuesday, his lawyer informed the court that he had deposited the remaining amount as well with the HC registrar.





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# Dreaming of Kashmir? Worry about Karachi...

(Agencies) Washington: Police and Secret Service personnel had to intervene to physically separate Mohajir protesters and Pakistan military loyalists after a demonstration in front of the White House on Saturday by the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), which mostly represents ethnic Pakistani migrants from India, turned into a fracas. A large demonstration of MQM workers from all across US marched in front of the White House after a party convention held in Washington DC that was addressed via video link by MQM chief Altaf Hussain, who has been in exile in London for nearly two decades. Hussain and his followers exhorted the Obama administration to

intervene to stop the "rampant killing" of Mohajirs in Karachi by the Punjabi-dominated Pakistani military. Hussain, who is completely blacked out in the Pakistani media and is considered a fugitive by the Pakistani establishment, urged the "mother of all democracies" to take note of the excesses of the Pakistani army that has resulted in the "cold-blooded murder" of thousands of party activists. Maintaining that MQM was the only liberal, secular political party in Pakistan, he urged the Obama administration to send observers to Karachi to monitor the human rights violations, arguing if Washington can do it for other countries, it should do so for

Pakistan too. Hussain promised to visit the US in October after heightened MQM activity here, amid speculation that he might shift base after difficulties in London, where Pakistani establishment loyalists and his followers have clashed violently. Key MQM leaders like Farooq Sattar and Babar Ghauri have been visiting the US lately to sensitise Pakistan experts in Washington (many of whom see the Army as a stabilising force) of the developments in Karachi. But, supporters of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and Pakistan Tehrik-Ilssaaf (Imran Khan's party) see Mohajirs as traitors and fifth columnists, and allege they are controlled by Indian intelligence

agency RAW. They forcefully countered the MQM protest, and slogans and counterslogans ensued as the two sides advanced towards each other before police intervened. The demonstrations were far larger than the ones by Khalistani activists and Kashmiri separatists, who Indian activists say are backed by Pakistan's intelligence agency ISI. While India has had its share of embarrassment overseas arising from the situation in Kashmir, it appears Pakistan has even greater problems, with both Mohajirs and Baloch groups overseas indicating that all is not well in the fractious country.

## When BBC error helped India in 1971 war



(Agencies) Major Gen (retired) Ian Cardozo, a hero of the 1971 war that led to the creation of Bangladesh, paid tribute to BBC's coverage of the hostilities on Monday but recalled its one mistake that benefited India in taking on numerically superior Pakistani forces.

At the time, Cardozo was a major in a 5 Gorkha Rifles battalion, comprising about 750 soldiers, that was tasked with capturing Atgram near Sylhet.

It was short of artillery and food supplies, but ultimately managed the surrender of two Pakistan Army brigades, including three brigadiers, a colonel, 107 officers, 219 JCOs and 7,000 troops in one of the most incredible successes of the war.

Speaking at a book release event here, he said: "Today I would like to use this platform to pay tributes to the BBC. They were the only reliable broadcasting station at that time, giving news as it happened. The Indian Army had nothing to hide, so the British war correspondents were going along with our troops.

"They were reporting minute-to-minute the progress of the battle. But they made a mistake. They announced that a 'brigade' of Gurkhas had landed at Sylhet. We heard it, as well as the Pakistanis. So we decided to pretend that we were a brigade."

Taking advantage of the misinformation, Cardozo's battalion built on small victories

and created a situation where the Pakistani troops offered to surrender on December 15, 1971. Until it happened, Cardozo and others believed a Pakistani brigade was in the area, but they were surprised to discover the final number was more than twice the strength of a brigade.

One of the most decorated

officers of the Indian Army, Cardozo recalled the vital operation to capture Sylhet during a packed invitation-only event to celebrate the life of Lt Gen FN Bilimoria, former head of the central command and father of Karan Bilimoria, a member of the House of Lords.

Cardozo, a contemporary of Lt Gen Bilimoria, penned the book "Lieutenant General Bilimoria: His Life and Times", which was recently presented to Indian Army chief Gen Dalbir Singh in New Delhi. The book release event here was attended by leading lights of the British Army, including former chief of general staff, Field Marshal John Chapple, and several Bangladesh citizens, who became emotional on meeting the man who played a defining

role in their country's formation. One Bangladeshi member of the audience thanked Cardozo for the "great job you have done for us". Cardozo is expected to receive an enthusiastic reception at the Bangladesh high commission here on Tuesday. Answering questions, Cardozo said calmly but firmly: "I do not like to use this platform to denigrate Pakistan. I think everybody knows what they are up to, what they have been up to and what they continue to do. I don't have to elaborate. "But India believes in peace, people, progress, development, not in war. But if war is forced upon us, as it was in 1965, in 1971 and in Kargil, we were the victors in every war," he added to much applause. Retired British Army officers recalled their interaction with Lt Gen Bilimoria, who was the

Indian Army's liaison officer in the School of Infantry in Warminster in the 1970s. A popular soldier, he saw action in the 1971 war and held several key posts, including GOC of the central command. Karan Bilimoria recalled the values passed on to him by his father, who died at the age of 72 in 2005. Cardozo's remarkable military career saw him losing a leg when he stepped on a landmine in the 1971 war. He cut off his mangled leg with his own khukri and told his Gurkha batman: "Now go and bury it." Determined not to let the disability affect his career as a soldier, he later became the first disabled officer in the Indian Army to command an infantry brigade. He has penned books on war heroes and the sinking of INS Khukri in the 1971 war.

## The Long, Hard Fight To Finally Get A Woman At The Top Of The Ticket

(Agencies) In 1952, when Nancy D'Alesandro was 12, her father then the mayor of Baltimore brought her with him to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. They had to leave the festivities early, but as a consolation prize, he bought little Nancy a stuffed donkey. "Whoever gets nominated, we're going to name the stuffed animal" after him, Thomas D'Alesandro Jr. told his daughter. Among the potential nominees that year were Adlai, Estes and Averell not names she said she'd heard much in her neighborhood of Little Italy. But the Democratic nominee and thus the stuffed donkey became Adlai Stevenson. Young Nancy D'Alesandro grew up to be Nancy Pelosi, the first female speaker of the House. And the 1952 gathering kicked off a lifetime of Democratic conventions.

At the 1960 convention in Los Angeles, the then-20-year-old convinced her parents to go to the glamorous Hollywood restaurant Romanoff's on the night that John F. Kennedy accepted the nomination. As they ate dinner with her father grumbling about the high price of the food Kennedy himself strolled into the restaurant, stopping by their table to ask

how they liked the speech he had just delivered. "We were like we had died and gone to heaven," Pelosi remembered. Her father suddenly had no more complaints about the cost of the meal. By 1984, Pelosi had married, moved to California and started her own career in politics, rising to chair the state's Democratic Party. That year, she led the host committee for the Democrats' convention in San Francisco, where Geraldine Ferraro became the first woman ever picked as the vice presidential nominee of a major American political party. "It would be really hard to explain the thunderous response that happened when Geraldine came on to the stage," Pelosi recalled. "It was something so spectacular and thrilling ... I'll never forget." This year's Democratic convention which will be Pelosi's 14th will mark another political milestone, as the Democrats officially nominate the first woman to the top of a major party ticket. While more than 200 women have pursued the presidency since 1872, the year Victoria Woodhull became the first woman to run for the highest office in the land, no one has come as close as Hillary

Clinton. "Hillary Clinton, when she goes into the Oval Office, she will do so with more experience, more judgment, more eloquence in terms of the issues she cares about than many presidents have in our past. She'll be great," Pelosi said. "She happens to be a woman that's an enhancement but it is a strong message about how far we've come." The Huffington Post spoke with Pelosi and other Democratic women who have fought their whole lives to make this moment possible from shifting the conventions' decision making out of those male-only smoke-filled backrooms to electing female candidates to political offices across the country. These women have waited their whole lives to see a woman in the White House. And they'll be in Philadelphia later this month to see Clinton accept the nomination. "On my grave, I want it to say that I was a good mother and that I helped Hillary Clinton become president of the United States in 2016," said Roz Wyman, who in 1984 was the first woman to chair a major-party convention and has missed only one convention since 1952. "I'll tell you, I want Hillary so much that it hurts. And I got shingles, I think, from the aggravation of it."

# China's main concern in Nepal isn't India, it is western powers: Prachanda

(Agencies) Maoist chairman and the man slated to become Nepal's next prime minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda", has said he would strive for balanced foreign relations with neighbours India and China. He added that Beijing too wants Nepal to have good ties with India, and China's main concern was the role of western powers.

In an exclusive interview to Hindustan Times at his Kathmandu residence — his first to any media outlet since the process of government change began — he made a clear commitment that Nepal would not use one country against the other.

The 61-year-old leader emphasised the unique nature of Nepal-India relations, saying the

southern neighbour is a stakeholder in the post-2006 political process of the Himalayan nation. But he warned New Delhi against political micromanagement, and underscored a perception that India took up development projects, but its delivery was weak.

His remarks came in the backdrop of contentions that the outgoing KP Oli government tilted strongly towards Beijing to counter Delhi.

He said his priority would be concluding the peace process, especially the question of war-time cases; making the Constitution as widely acceptable as possible; and accommodating Madhesis and other communities. Competitive democracy

Prachanda first became PM two years after ending a decade-long Maoist insurgency from 1996 to 2006. His party emerged as the single largest force in the 2008 elections; but within nine months of wresting power, he had to resign when other parties — and India — opposed his move to dismiss the army chief.

So how is the second stint going to be different?

The Maoist chairman said he made mistakes in the past, and there were now four major differences.

"Last time, I was inexperienced in the ways of competitive democracy. We still had a war mindset from the insurgency years. It took us 10 years of war to understand the nature and rules of war. Now, after 10 years in open politics, I have learnt the rules of competitive democracy. I have more experience and maturity."

Second, at that point, the Maoist alliance with its key peace process partner, the Nepali Congress, had broken. "I could not take all parties along, especially NC and its late leader, Girija Prasad Koirala, who had signed the peace agreement with me."

Prachanda recalled Koirala's advice that if you lose your way



in a jungle, it is best to go back to the starting point. "We got diverted, but I returned to the point of origin and roots now, and am in partnership with Nepali Congress."

Three, Prachanda admitted that in his first stint, there was "lack of ideological clarity" in his party. The Maoists were torn between factions committed to the peace process and those who believed in protracted people's war. This time, the leader said, there is fundamental unity and maturity in the party.

The fourth area of correction, for Prachanda, is ensuring good relations with neighbours. Back in 2009, it was a rift with India that eventually knocked down his government.

Prachanda said Nepal-India


ties were unique, but in the past 10 years, ever since the peace process began which was facilitated by India, both sides had shown some weaknesses.

"It is for the Indian establishment to think about its record. But I can say from Nepal's side, there is a need for balance. We have to take the transitional process to a logical conclusion. And for this, all stakeholders have to come together."

Asked if this included India, his answer is a strong "Yes".

When the Constitution was promulgated last year, Prachanda had disregarded Indian advice to pause the process to bring displeased parties on board. Instead, he resorted to a strong language on nationalism.





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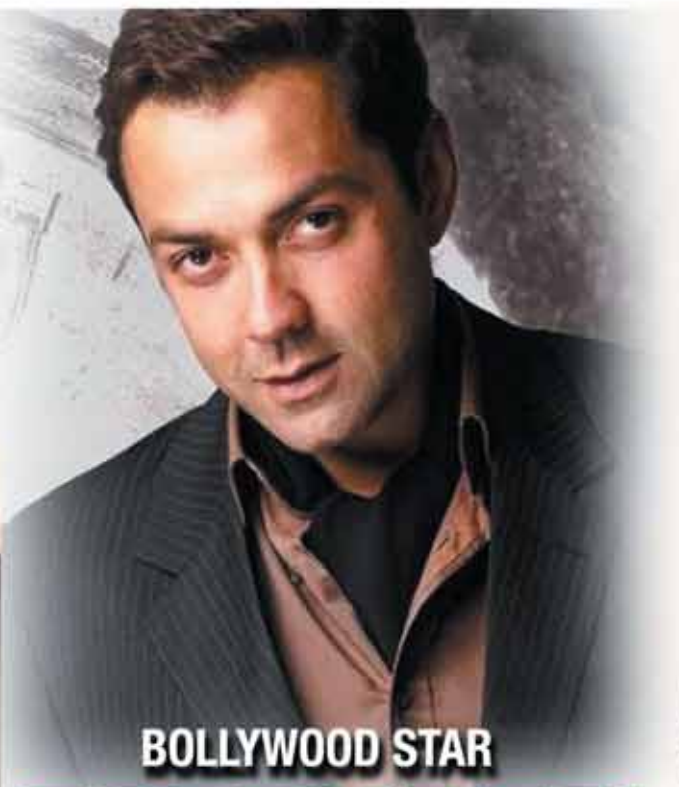
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# Afghanistan: The war the world forgot

On Saturday, a suicide attack killed more than 85 people and wounded more than 200 during a peaceful protest march by Shia Hazaras in Kabul, Afghanistan. Afghanistan, which has been fighting the Pakistan-based and supported Taliban, is now also facing terror from Islamic State, which claimed responsibility for the attack. Sadly, Afghanistan, which was once portrayed as United States President Barack Obama's good war, is now his forgotten war. He would rather contemplate sending 1,000 troops to Poland against a prospective, maybe imagined, threat from Russia. This is safer than having to bolster forces in Afghanistan, where Americans increasingly say they have no interest.

The suggestion by Zalmay Khalilzad, former US ambassador to Afghanistan that the US should ignore Pakistan, cut off aid and military supplies to that country, will not be accepted in Washington DC, despite Pakistan's dubious record as a US ally. The drone attack in May that killed Mullah Mansour was a surprise — but that he was killed a few kilometres away from Quetta inside Pakistani territory was not. Mansour was not even the first

malcontent to be found on Pakistani soil. It was simply the sort of action that the US should have begun a decade ago. Up until 2005 Pakistan pretended to help the US in its global war on terror by periodically handing over inconvenient al Qaeda operatives like Abu Zubeidah and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed to the US for a ransom.

Only time will tell if the attack was just a warning that US patience with Pakistan, for its support for Taliban and its attitude toward Afghanistan, was running out or a serious rerun of the "Are you with us or against us?" line. The chances are that this will not be a game-changer even though the Taliban accounted for 1,093 terror attacks in 2015, the largest number in the world. The US has far too many distractions in its election year and the world is otherwise occupied with multiple crises. The chances are that Pakistan will carefully calibrate its actions till the next president takes office and not pressure the Taliban in any substantial way. It will also use this window of opportunity to try to extend its control in Afghanistan and to exacerbate the situation in Kashmir.

Wars against international

terror have to be fought by nations cooperating with each other. A major component of this is intelligence cooperation on the ground where all the hard work is done. The killing of Mansour without informing the Pakistanis, as in the case of Osama bin Laden, underscores the abysmal nature of the relationship between US and Pakistani intelligence agencies, wholly based on opportunism and acute mistrust. This has been a major problem on the ground that has hindered US ability to assert itself in Pakistan or to force a change in attitude, enabling Pakistan to extricate itself from many awkward situations.

At the time of the Afghan jihad in the 1980s the Americans had outsourced the jihad to the ISI, who as the sole recipients of money and material, controlled the destiny of the various mujahedeen groups. Pakistan was looking for strategic depth against India after 1971 but the US was looking to defeat the Soviet Union. Their goals were different but relations between the two intelligence agencies were generally not strained. Pakistan was left free to pursue its quest for the nuclear bomb and abet Sikh terrorism. The cooperation in the present phase started off



badly because the first Pakistani emissary to Mullah Omar in 2001, the DG ISI Lt General Mahmood Ahmed sent on US insistence, gave the exact contrary advice to Omar. He urged the Taliban to fight on. Pervez Musharraf was at that time on a weak wicket and was unable to resist angry American demands that Ahmed be replaced. His successor, Lt General Ehsan ul Haq was the embodiment of cooperation. His replacement in 2004, the future army chief Lt General Ashfaq Kayani reverted to form, viciously. The CIA-ISI relations plummeted and Kayani's successor in 2007, Lt General Nadeem Taj made this worse. By then, the CIA became increasingly wary of the Pakistani establishment and its propensity to leak and double-cross, and stopped sharing vital intelligence. The only aspect that

is new in the latest US drone attack is that this was in restive Balochistan where the situation on the ground remains volatile. Continued instability worries Islamabad fearing that the Chinese may walk away from the province along with their mega-billion projects.

This is happening at a time when India's future in the region looks brighter following the tripartite Afghanistan-Iran-India deal on Chabahar. India's stock has risen further with the inauguration of the Salma Dam in Herat and the Agriculture University in Kandahar. It is in India's and Afghanistan's interest that the Afghan National Security Forces be strengthened. India could be the bridge between the US and Afghanistan. India could help establish contacts among regional leaders.

## A death foretold

**Qandeel Baloch's murder is yet another reminder that men craft, interpret and adjudicate over family laws in the subcontinent.**



Most of us, who googled Qandeel Baloch's name after learning of her gruesome honour killing, have been wondering how this outspoken young woman was allowed to live long enough to scandalise, titillate and create murderous rage in this subcontinent.

Born Fauzia Azeem, we learn she was one of 12 siblings from a traditional middle-class family in a small town in Pakistan Punjab. She had walked out of an abusive marriage, had a child and at the time of her death, according to her father, was supporting her entire family, including the brother who throttled her. Her father and brother could not have been unaware that her income, which sustained them, came from Qandeel marketing herself as a bold sex icon (with a following of a million on Facebook), and as a frequently-invited guest for sharply

subversive discussions on TV and other social groupings. In the male-dominated society of Pakistan, where (according to 2014 data released by the NGO, Aurat Fund), six women are abducted, four are murdered, another four are raped and three commit suicide each day, one wonders how could a semi-clad young woman, who posted herself to cricket stars, threatened politicians on both sides of Wagah, and uploaded a provocative selfie with a mufti, have lived to be 26? According to data with the Honour Based Violence Awareness Network, some 5,000 such murders take place worldwide. Of these, 1,000 each occur in India and Pakistan and the 12 in the UK takes place mostly among Indian and Pakistani-origin families. As per UN figures, one in five of the honour killings takes place in India but non-governmental

organisations put the real tally at three times the reported figure. For humans, sexuality can be a way of bonding, of giving and receiving pleasure, communicating emotion and discovering sameness. But in countries like ours, the question that is never asked is the one that would define sexuality from a truly feminine perspective: Who does what to whom and gets away with it? The answer: It is always the men who lay down the rules. In our time, social media has emerged as the most popular arena where sexuality is socially constructed and exercised; as a subdivision of pornographic sites, it helps define women that men would desperately want to see and possess. Perhaps Qandeel is a somewhat extreme example of a half-baked understanding of

clever jumlas being increasingly used to provoke young girls into acting out male fantasies under the guise of "doing your own thing" and "my body is mine to do what I wish to do with it". Like fish living in water, all women, in India, Pakistan or even in the West, must live surrounded by such visuals today, where women are being sexually objectified and defined to satisfy the male gaze. Many women cope with this situation by receding into outright denial or fear. But some, like poor Qandeel, decide to meet the male standards and consider themselves successful by the degree to which they succeed in arousing male interest. Their strategy seems to be that by doing that before actually being told to do so, a woman may acquire a certain self respect

and pride as a free agent and become a subversive media sensation. "It was I that chose to do it, so there!" they will say repeatedly; as though any woman on this subcontinent can have some meaningfully determining part in presenting her sex life publicly on a platform and attract eyeballs without turning into some kind of a universal dirty joke!

There are also more questions arising out of the so-called laws against violence, mostly sexual violence within homes, that is being perpetrated against women all over the subcontinent. Who crafts, amends, interprets and adjudicates over these family laws? Don't family and kinship rules and sexual mores from Haryana (where a Dalit girl is raped by the same group of men twice) to Gaya (where a woman is stripped and paraded naked on charges of promiscuity) to Pakistan Punjab (where Qandeel was murdered) or Sindh (where hundreds of raped women are jailed because their authority as a witness, even to their own humiliation, is half that of the perpetrator's) eventually go on to guarantee reproductive ownership, sexual access and control to men as a group?

# Melania Trump's website disappears completely

But speculation has focused on questions about a line in her now-dormant online biography that appears to have inflated her academic credentials. The Trump campaign did not respond to emails, but Mrs. Trump's statement appeared online shortly after DailyMail.com asked a spokesperson for comment.

'At the age of eighteen, she signed with a modeling agency in Milan,' the bio read until Wednesday. 'After obtaining a degree in design and architecture at University in Slovenia, Melania was jetting between photo shoots in Paris and Milan, finally settling in New York in 1996.'

It appears, however, that she left college after a single year when she caught the modeling bug. Bojan Pozar and Igor Omerza, a pair of Slovenian journalists who published a biography of Donald Trump's third wife, wrote that the then-named Melanija Knavs spent one year at the the University of Ljubljana's architecture school.

From there, they wrote, she 'became – and remained – a college dropout.'

'In her freshman year, the 19-year old Melanija Knavs attended lectures on the following subjects: elements of architecture, fine arts, fundamentals of technical mechanics, architectural construction,

descriptive geometry, mathematics, and an ideological (read "communist") elective credit called "General Partisan Resistance and Social Self-protection," they wrote. The book, 'Melania Trump The Inside Story: From a Slovenian Communist Village to the White House,' was published in February.

The Huffington Post focused its anti-Trump guns on the billionaire's wife after last week's brief kerfuffle over lines in Melania's Republican National Convention speech that were lifted – without her knowledge – from a 2008 Michelle Obama speech. Along with

the contested biography, Mrs. Trump's website included pitches for her caviar-infused line of skin care products and her ladies watches and jewelry – along with three dozen images of magazine covers and other photo spreads featuring her fashion poses. The product promotions are likely the 'business and professional interests' that Mrs. Trump said Thursday are no longer active. QVC, which once sold her jewelry line, no longer offers it on its website. And Lord & Taylor shoppers, who until last year could buy Melania's 'Luxe Moisture with Caviar Complexe C6,' find it's no longer on shelves.

So far, the RBI has not approved of any change in the currency's design to replace or remove Gandhi. The last redesign was in 2013-14, when an RBI committee submitted its design to the government, vetted by the RBI board. Although there were numerous petitions for inclusion of other icons, the board did not clear them. Most proposed design changes accepted by the finance ministry were simply better security features, and part of a regular redesign every five years to beat counterfeiters.

The RBI, under Raghuram Rajan, has resisted demands to a change of icon from Gandhiji. "There are many great Indians we can get on notes," Rajan said in 2014, "but I sense that almost everybody else would be controversial." The reason, says a source, is that Gandhi is considered a "consensus icon", unlike many proposed replacements. To replace Gandhiji with a lesser figure would thus diminish the symbolic value of featuring a national icon.

The RBI and the finance ministry, which jointly regulate features of notes, regularly receive petitions seeking Gandhi's removal or replacement. An official in the finance ministry and a former RBI official, both responsible for overseeing currency-related matters, say they receive "hundreds" of suggestions and requests under the RTI Act, asking why Gandhi was included on the notes in the first place. Requests to remove Gandhi's picture are frequent too. But not all such requests are from the right.

"Many people write to us about the currency design, asking to feature other icons.... People want personal or community idols featured on currency," says the finance ministry official. The former RBI official says the proposed alternatives are diverse, from the Rani of Jhansi to B.R. Ambedkar, from Shivaji to A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

So far, the government, which has the final call, has chosen not to change the Gandhi image. One factor is the RBI's reluctance, though the Union finance ministry had in 2015 overruled RBI objections to

## Noteworthy Spoken

continuing with the Re 1 note (which bears the finance secretary's signature, QED). "Anybody else on the rupee notes would invariably be a lesser icon, potentially divisive and politically tough to handle," says the former RBI official. Despite repeated queries from Outlook, the RBI did not respond to a questionnaire on the subject.

"Right now, everything is being questioned, especially recent history and the Congress' hegemonic control over our past," explains economic historian Raman Mahadevan. "It's not wrong to question, but the timing is important," he says, referring to PM Modi's absolute majority, which eliminates the NDA government's need to manage constituents with different views.

Mahadevan points out how the ongoing questioning is not solely from the BJP or RSS. "Even others are starting to see, for instance, Nehru as a 'superficial secularist'." The right, accordingly, asks why Jan Sangh figures like Shyama Prasad Mookerjee or ideologue Savarkar cannot be featured in our currency," he says.

Last year, the Akhil Bharat Hindu Maha-sabha sought removal of Gandhi's

image from the rupee notes in a letter to PM Modi. "Why do we need an icon at all on the currency," asks its spokesperson, Gyan Swamy. "Gandhi, in our worldview, is neither nationalist nor a good Bharat-iyā—he was anti-Hindu and anti-nation," he says. The letter got no response. "Even this government is only interested in power. They have also succumbed to appeasement," Gyan Swami complains.

The perceived soft power of these hard-line Hindu groups has the Opposition on the back foot. Last year, Maharashtra Congress leader Shehzad Poonawala campaigned to feature A.P.J. Kalam on currency notes. He wrote to the RBI, the finance ministry and the PM, and got no response. Though he still wishes Kalam were on the notes, he's more concerned that one change will open a floodgate, through which right-wing icons will overwhelm the currency. "The manner in which history is being rewritten in text books... the manner in which Patel and Netaji are being misinterpreted to suit a right-wing agenda—this government may misuse the idea to promote illegitimate icons like Savarkar through currency notes at the cost of Gandhiji," he says.

## A 'Moment of Reckoning'

Nomination acceptance speeches are often the most personal that politicians ever make, a goal that Clinton advisers strived to meet by mining the early abandonment and abuse suffered by Mrs. Clinton's mother, Dorothy Rodham. Her life provides "the context" and "the values that underpin" Mrs. Clinton's message on Thursday night, said John D. Podesta, her campaign's chairman.

While a primary goal of the convention had been to improve Mrs. Clinton's trust and likability, there had also been an acute awareness that she could not make her own remarks too much about herself and her own

story, or voters who already dislike her could further recoil. "When she actually tells you a story about her life, there's an overlay of cynicism," said Neera Tanden, a longtime policy adviser.

Instead, the campaign largely left Mrs. Clinton's biographical story to her daughter and to a five-minute video produced by the TV writer Shonda Rhimes.

The origin story portrayed in the film largely centered on Mrs. Clinton's mother, who was born into poverty and neglect on the day the Congress approved the right of women to vote, and went on to raise the woman who could become the first president.

Indeed, last year, Sakshi Maharaj, a BJP MP, called Nathuram Godse, Gandhi's killer, a "patriot" and Kailash Vija-yvargiya questioned Gandhi's contribution towards independence. "I don't want to run the risk of being asked to bear notes with Godse's pictures on them. I would burn up such notes even if it's a crime," says Poonawala.

Of course, many countries redesign currency to accommodate new icons, but India is conservative. Lord Meghnad Desai says, "India has a rich history not just of kings and political leaders (who are divisive figures) but of poets, mathematicians, scientists, who can all be represented. There should be no one from the last three centuries. For example, why not Bhakti poets of South and North India? Or pioneers such as Charak, for his contribution to medicine. Aryabhatta is another example." The US recently put an African-American icon, Harriet Tubman, on the \$20 bill. The back of the \$5 bill is being redesigned to feature African-American activist Martin Luther King and former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt. "There is no reason," says Desai, "to have the same face on notes of every denomination as at present." Sure. In a country of argumentative Indians, this could open up a Pandora's box of demands. All eyes are now on the new Reserve Bank governor, who signs most Rupee notes.

About six weeks ago, Mrs. Clinton started sketching down rough notes about what she wanted to say on the eve she accepts her party's nomination. A month ago, discussions with her top policy adviser, Jake Sullivan, and the speechwriters Dan Schwerin and Megan Rooney, began to shape the speech, with advice from a variety of friends and former speechwriters.

After Mr. Trump accepted the nomination in Cleveland, she told aides she wanted to deliver a speech that would be a "reckoning of which path are we going to go down," Ms. Palmieri said.

# AAP legislators more likely to be on the receiving end of police action

The investigative agencies have not even questioned him. So is the case with independent MLA Jasbir Deswal from the state's Jind district. He is facing murder charges related to the death of two youths during February's Jat agitation. Police have not arrested him, saying investigations were still on.

UP police also seem to drag their feet when it comes to dealing with elected peoples' representatives. Six MLAs of the state have faced serious criminal accusations since 2015, the year the AAP came to power in Delhi and the procession of MLAs being whisked away by cops began.

Only two – Ajay Rai of the Congress and Rampal Yadav of the SP have been

arrested. Rai was accused of instigating communal tension in Varanasi while Yadav was charged with assaulting government officials and land grab.

The four others are yet to face punitive action, though the charges they face are no less serious. Veer Singh of Samajwadi Party is accused of demolishing the house of a widow, Ram Singh Patel of house grabbing, Shyam Sunder Sharma of forgery and Ram Murti Singh Verma of abetting the death of a social media journalist. West Bengal's record in dealing with suspected errant legislators is also patchy.

Six-time Congress MLA Manas Bhunia had an arrest warrant issued against him over a murder of a ruling TMC support in April. The day the warrant was issued,

Bhunia had a long meeting with the CM Mamata Banerjee, soon after which he was named the chairman of the influential Public Accounts Committee of the state assembly.

Even his own Congress party alleged that the veteran legislator had entered into an "understanding" with the ruling party. A Tmc MLA Dipak Halder was arrested in September 2015 for his alleged involvement in a factional feud. He was suspended from the party for a while, but was given a ticket in the 2016 assembly elections. Communist-ruled Kerala fares no better. CPI legislator ES Bijimol was accused of assaulting the additional district magistrate of Idukki, but the police took no action, prompting the high court

to censure the force. "Everyone should be treated equally before law and the police should not be submissive towards the accused," the court had said.

That is something that AAP and its leaders have also been asking the police – are its MLAs being treated equally? Jagdeep Singh, AAP's MLA from Delhi's Hari Nagar who was arrested on May 29 for alleged criminal intimidation and wrongful restraint of the manager of a waste-management company, has reasons to be suspicious of police motives. Experts say his arrest was not illegal, but the investigative officer did have the option of not arresting him and send the case to the court directly. Singh was after all an MLA and did not have a criminal past.

## Hand-In-Hand... If Not Hand-In-Glove

It was seen as a move to benefit the BJP (which eventually did not happen) by forging a division of the Muslim vote. It is said that Mulayam's U-turn was attributed to the pressure of the CBI sword dangling over him in the disproportionate assets case pending against him and his family.

A few months ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, ordinarily mindful of the rules, went out of his way to 'oblige' Mulayam's younger brother and UP's most powerful multi-portfolio minister Shivpal Yadav. His son-in-law Ajay Yadav, a 2010 batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, was allowed a convenient deputation to UP in utter violation of all rules through an unusual order of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), headed by the PM.

The prime minister intervened to bend all rules after Ajay's repeated requests were turned down by the Department of

Personnel and Training (DOPT) three times in a row on the ground that the officer had not completed nine years of service in the parent cadre, which is mandatory for seeking inter-state deputation.

Ajay Yadav moved his first application for deputation barely four years into service and less than two years after getting married into UP's ruling Yadav clan. In his application dated November 7, 2014, Ajay sought a "short-term deputation" to UP on the plea that his one-year-old child was under some special treatment (unspecified) at AIIMS, New Delhi, and that he had to look after his mother who lived alone in Saharanpur.

The application went as follows: "On April 1, 2013, I was blessed with a baby named Aviraj in a hospital in Lucknow, which is the hometown of my wife. Immediately after birth, the child faced serious health complications and was referred to AIIMS, New Delhi. The child was admitted and

treated at AIIMS and is presently being regularly monitored and examined by doctors at AIIMS, New Delhi from time to time."

He went on to add, "Recently, my father, Late Mr Satish Yadav, passed away on September 13, 2014. In the present circumstances I am duty-bound to take/give proper medical attention to my one-year-3-month-old child and take care of my mother who is staying alone in my hometown of Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh. Therefore, if I am granted a short-term deputation to my home state of Uttar Pradesh I will be able to discharge my duty towards my family." The matter came up for discussion before the DOPT secretary on January 14, 2015, but was rejected on the ground that, "the officer, being of the 2010 batch, has not completed minimum nine years in his parent cadre. As such, the proposal for

his inter-cadre deputation to Uttar Pradesh cadre is not covered under the policy." The committee went on to add, "The grounds quoted by the officer were very general in nature, which does not justify for consideration of his request in relaxation of guidelines and also the request for inter-cadre deputation is at too early a stage of his service."

Shortly after his request was turned down, Ajay moved a fresh application with the same plea on June 4, 2015, but it was rejected by the DOPT once again on the same ground as before. No sooner than the DOPT order dated July 14, 2015, reached Ajay, his father-in-law Shivpal Yadav got into action. On July 23, 2015, Shivpal sent a letter directly to Modi, seeking his intervention in the matter. This was followed by a personal call from Mulayam, which did the magic. The PMO instantly directed the DOPT to reconsider Ajay's case and even went to the extent of urging the department to hold its next meeting for considering deputation cases at an early date.

Accordingly, the next meeting was convened on August 31, 2015. However, DOPT secretary Sanjay Kothari stuck to his earlier stand and turned down Ajay's application for a third time. Several other similar cases in which officers had not fulfilled the basic criterion for allowing inter-state deputations were rejected as well.

However, what followed was a diktat from the top. Through its order No. 37/32/2015-EO(SM-1), dated October 22, 2015, the ACC, headed by the PM, overruled the DOPT. The order stated, "The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal for inter-cadre deputation of Shri Ajay Yadav, IAS (TN-10) from Tamil Nadu cadre to Uttar Pradesh cadre for a period of three years on personal grounds, in relaxation of policy, as a special case." Every other request for similar inter-state deputation was turned down. But sure enough, once on home ground fully controlled by the Yadav clan, Ajay got a prized job as the district magistrate of Barabanki. Only, Barabanki is barely 32 km from the state capital and more than 500 km from Delhi, where his child was stated to be undergoing regular monitoring and treatment.

And, it is not as if reforms didn't change rural India. Anurag Kashyap's *Gangs of Wasseypur* (2012) takes us through decades of tumult in a suburb of the Bihar mining town of Dhanbad, taking in its sweep the nationalisation of coal mines and the emergence of rugged private steel traders and transport operators.

India, the land of Buddha, Gandhi and Jayaprakash Narayan, whose austere ways shaped values, decidedly became more materialistic after reforms started.

The title of the 2006 blockbuster *Apna Sapna Money Money* (All I dream is money) says it all.

Saas Bahu Aur Sensex released two years later is the story of a young woman who works in a call centre, with a single mother who watches CNBC and invests in stocks. The market economy increasingly finds its voice in Bollywood.

After weathering a financial crisis that hit the world in 2008, the market economy trundles on. India copes with the ups and downs of a new world order in which globalisation is a tale that increasingly sounds like the title of Karan Johar's 2001 saga of a business family — *Kabhi Khushi, Kabhie Gham* (Sometimes Joy, Sometimes Sorrow).

## The changing script

After a fiscally profligate 1980s that led to a balance of payments crisis, in the 1990s, we find the optimism of the economic reforms unleashed by finance minister Manmohan Singh under Prime Minister Narasimha Rao reflected in the movies, songs and popular culture.

Enter Rahul

By 1997, the leading icon of the Hindi cinema was not the Angry Young Man but a Clever Romantic played by Shah Rukh Khan. In *Yes, Boss*, by Aziz Mirza, SRK plays an ambitious corporate executive going that extra mile to please his boss. Here is an opportunistic corporate yuppie. His girlfriend, played by Juhi Chawla, is a perfect match. She is an aspiring model.

And the hero mouths Javed Akhtar's lyrics that willy-nilly became an anthem for India's economic globalisation: Two years later, in 1999, Infosys became the first Indian firm to list on the technology-heavy Nasdaq exchange and turned as iconic as SRK in tapping economic opportunities.

SRK's screen name in *Yes, Boss* is Rahul (same as Aamir's in *Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke*). 'Rahul' has emerged

as the GenX screen icon – urban, global, clever, pragmatic and ambitious but in an easygoing way. Shah Rukh is called Rahul in no less than 15 movies. In Subhash Ghai's *Yaadein* (2001), Hrithik Roshan, though the son of a tycoon, is an internet entrepreneur, and we know something has changed in India. If more proof was needed, it came in *Dil Chahta Hai*. Released later the same year, it reflected male bonding with a free spiritedness in a travel-meets-self-discovery flick. The three lead characters are on different quests with adventurous spirits that symbolise a global attitude. Their cultural baggage is light. Mahato still haunts

This is the same industry that gave us a struggling Nargis in *Mother India* (1957). Indebted rural farmers continue to commit suicide well into 21st century — a rude reminder that Shambu Mahato and *Mother India* are still real. But, what the post-reform movies show is that economic growth and prosperity, even in islands, are large enough to fire the imagination of the world's most frenetic film industry and shape popular culture.

*Mera Gaon Mera Desh*

## The Catechism Of Control

Needless to say, after that, she promptly went ahead and stopped a popular show by me called Fairs of India. My other show, Know Your MP, was on her nixing list, but she didn't know how to go about it. So she waited.

Next, when the government began its crackdown on Greenpeace, Gupta decreed that there would be a blanket ban on coverage of NGOs. Here, it needs to be said that NGOs have always been an important part of LSTV discussions as they provided key perspectives for discussions on policy and law. Banning them proved to be a self-goal. Instead, greater airtime began to be gifted to Sangh affiliates like Bharatiya Yog Sansthan, that does Yog Nirog for LSTV. This when there is a fully functioning Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, run by the government under its Ayush ministry. LSTV has a policy of not giving programmes to private production houses. It is only allowed to outsource from government agencies such as NFDC, Public Service Broadcasting Trust, Films Division, Vigyan Prasar etc. This rule was also tweaked to allow Atul Jain of Narad Communications to make a 13-

part series called Ekatam Manavad on the life of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay. Narad Communications is associated with Deendayal Shodh Sansthan, an outfit of the Sangh parivar.

Over the past one and a half years, LSTV, under the eagle eye of Gupta, has been slowly changing its DNA and becoming a single-party news provider instead of being the balanced Parliament channel that it was originally intended to be. This would obviously serve the government well in highlighting every aspect of its policies while simultaneously brushing aside any criticism of them. For example, on the day the votes were being counted for the 2015 Delhi assembly elections, it was decided that the declaration of the results would be shown till the very end. But when it was clear that AAP was getting an absolute majority, the live election show was abruptly wound up on the CEO-cum-editor-in-chief's orders and regular programming resumed. I am yet to fully fathom why Gupta took such a pathological dislike of me. But yes, it was pathological, and it sometimes made me feel I was up against someone who was either

delusional or was really, really powerful. Right from the beginning, she began to paint me as a person who was not willing to work under the new regime. Programme ideas proposed by me were dismissed for not being up to the mark. When asked what it was that she wanted in the channel, there were no answers given. Barely two months since Gupta joined, I was called by a senior journalist and family friend of LS Speaker Sumitra Mahajan's for a talk. He said Gupta had complained to Mahajan that I was not cooperating with her. I was stunned to hear this. It seemed a deliberate ploy: on the one hand she would reject all my suggestions and stop sending files to me, and on the other, she would complain that I had launched a non-cooperation movement. She also began to target people who were close to me, threatening them with dismissal if they continued to have anything to do with me. Those who didn't pay heed to her threats were shown the door. She also used staffers to snoop around in my room, record conversations with me and make false complaints against me. Other colleagues also confided in me of similar tactics. One woman anchor who asked for better security on her late night drops was punished with more late night duties. Another

production assistant was denied leave to tend to her ailing child. The most tragic case was a female audio executive who had to hide her illness because she was too scared to ask for sick leave: Nabamita Pradhan died due to multiple organ failure a few days after she collapsed while on duty. In the past two years, 20-odd people have been removed or forced to resign from the channel since Gupta's taking over.

As the head of programming, I was number two in the channel. Understandably, aware of her own lack of experience, she made it her mission to stop at absolutely nothing to get me to quit. When she had decided to stop my show Know Your MP, the unedited tape of one of its episodes was made to disappear on her orders. It was only when I wrote to Harsimrat Kaur, whose interview was on that tape, asking for a re-interview did the tape mysteriously resurface. Subsequently, Know Your MP was taken away from me without giving any reasons. Last year, there were serious complaints of extortion and corruption against LSTV anchor Anurag Dixit from people in his hometown, Bulandshahar. But Gupta hushed up the case as Dixit had earned his keep by secretly taping conversations with colleagues and playing them out to her. And thus, from a professionally run

channel, LSTV became an infestation of rats and moles who were ready to outdo each other in order to be in the boss-lady's good books. In all of this, Gupta never lost an opportunity to keep me firmly placed in her crosshairs. Her desperation came to the fore when she arm-twisted three women colleagues to make false complaints against me. While all the trumped-up charges mentioned mental harassment, Gupta wrote a covering letter calling these cases of sexual harassment and they were sent to an internal committee based on the Vishakha guidelines. Much to my relief, her recommendation was rejected outright by the committee. Those women colleagues were horrified to learn how their own complaints were twisted by Gupta to suit her motive. But one of them, with Gupta's support, went a step further. Nutan Mishrah took her fake charges against me to the PMO. She was given a major dressing down by Sumitra Mahajan herself for escalating a false complaint which was at that given time still sub judice with the Lok Sabha Secretariat internal committee.

Having worked at various places in the private media (including Outlook magazine), I have had the opportunity of working with many women colleagues and bosses, but none of that experience had prepared me to deal with Gupta's brand of office politics. It was straight out of the pages of a bad movie script.

A month back, I was summoned by Dr D. Bhalla, secretary, Lok Sabha, known to be close to Mahajan. Bhalla told me I must quit because Gupta wanted to 'cleanse' the channel. It was surprising, for my three-year contract was till November 2017. But I was told that if I didn't quit, a file prepared by Gupta in October 2015, kept in the backburner because of the nature of its motivated contents against me, would be used as a basis for my termination. I said I had replied to all allegations in that file and if it really did contain such conclusive proof against me, why was action not taken in October itself. Bhalla told me he knew how unfair it all was, but that he was helpless. Orders had come from the highest possible level.

After my experience, I feel Prime Minister Narendra Modi's slogans, like 'Swachh Bharat' and 'Congress-mukt Bharat' have a more insidious intent than on the surface level. They seem to be acting like a dog-whistle for people installed in various institutions to get down to their real mission of cleaning out all opposition.

## The crisis of Indian democracy

### The socialist chimera

So what can we do now? For those outside the corridors of power the task is to shape the discourse on Indian democracy. Its goal must now be redirected towards human development while ensuring the security of all vulnerable groups. This need not in any way conflict with growing a strong economy. In fact, a strong economy, including a vigorous market, is one element in furthering development as the expansion of freedoms. Opposition to the market, which has in certain contexts come equally from the Right and the Left in India, misses this point entirely. Restriction of private enterprise does nothing to empower the marginalised in a society. Their empowerment can come about only via direct public action to build their capabilities.

In fact, a genuine commitment to socialism should have helped here. Karl Marx had defended communism as the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". Instead, socialism as the official ideology of the Indian state for close to three decades got trapped into expanding a public

sector producing goods regardless of outcome and independent of its consequences for the historically outcast. The state prided itself in being interventionist in the economy and laissez faire in the social sphere. The task, envisaged by Nehru, of creating the institutions necessary to support individual freedom, did not materialise. The historically outcast were left to fend for themselves, a stance morally equivalent to allowing the devil to take the hindmost.

### Reorienting public policy

The chickens have finally come to home to roost. India today hosts the world's largest number of the poorly educated and prone to poor health, a development disaster in spite of being the world's third-largest economy in purchasing power terms. One need only occasionally travel third class on the Indian Railways in most parts of the country, which, recall, Gandhi did, to comprehend the scale of the deprivation and estimate how close public policy today comes to addressing it. As a quarter century has been spent focussing on India's economic architecture in the name of

'economic reforms', it would be profitable to now devote the next decade to mounting an assault on human deprivation. The development of the capabilities of India's women and Dalits, by virtue of their being the most deprived, would merit the first draft of attention and resources thus expended. For a democracy to be complete, however, something more than just focus on the individual, however deserving they may be, is necessary as members of a democracy must engage with one another lest we remain equal but separated. Here public goods come into the reckoning. Public policy should engineer spaces where Indians meet on the basis of a participatory parity. Widespread public services from schools and hospitals to parks and crematoria are one way to bring individuals together as they struggle from birth to death in this country. Repeated interaction in public spaces would make us realise our common humanity and enable us to see any residual identity for what it really is. There has been far too little effort in Indian public policy to create spaces where citizens may interact freely and

peacefully. Many other countries have done so. For instance, the provision of public housing in 'capitalist' Singapore comes with the proviso that it should be shared between people of all 'races', namely Chinese, Indian and Malay. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has often spoken in global fora of the unacceptability of terrorism. He is right to do so. Now the incidents of assault on Dalits in Gujarat, rape of women across the country and intimidation of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh bring home to us the presence of terrorism among us. While some of this predates his arrival in Delhi, there is reason to believe that fascist forces have been encouraged to act with impunity since then. In its inability to contain these forces, India's democracy can be seen to be flailing. Bertrand Russell had remarked that we can never guarantee our own security if we cannot assure that of others. Tired of oppression the Dalits have finally risen in what was once the land of Gandhi. They at least have recognised our common humanity. They only dumped dead cattle at the collectorate. They did not poison the water supply.

# Crimes Against The Future

overcrowded craft heading for Greece (from Turkey) or Italy (from Libya) moving onward in waves of desperation, hope, and despair, and drowning in alarming numbers. At the end of their journeys, they have sometimes found help and succor, but often enough only hostility and loathing, as if they were the ones who had committed a crime, done something wrong. I think as well about the nearly 10% of Iraqi children, 1.5 million of them in a country gripped by chaos, war, ethnic conflict, insurgency, and terror who, according to a recent UNICEF report, have had to flee their homes since 2014, or the 20% of Iraqi kids (kids!) who are "at serious risk of death, injury, sexual violence, and recruitment into armed groups." I think about the 51% of all those refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and elsewhere who were children, many separated from their parents and alone on Planet Earth. No child deserves such a fate. Ever. Each uprooted child who has lost his or her parents, and perhaps access to education or any childhood at all, represents a crime against the future. And I think often enough about our response to all

this, the one we've practiced for the last 15 years: more bombs, more missiles, more drone strikes, more advisers, more special ops raids, more weapons deals, and with it all not success or victory by any imaginable standard, but only the further destabilization of increasing regions of the planet, the further spread of terror movements, and the generation of yet more uprooted human beings, lost children, refugees — ever more, that is, of the terrorized and the terrorists. If this represents the formula from hell, it's also been a proven one over this last decade and a half. It works, as long as what you mean to do is bring chaos to significant swathes of the planet and force yet more children in ever more unimaginable situations.

If you live in the United States, it's easy enough to be shocked (unless, of course, you're a supporter) when Donald Trump calls for the banning of Muslims from this country, or Newt Gingrich advocates the testing of "every person here who is of a Muslim background and if they believe in sharia they should be deported," or various Republican governors fight to keep a pitiful few

Syrian refugees out of their states. It's easy enough to tsk-tsk over such sentiments, cite a long tradition of American xenophobia and racism, and so on. In truth, however, most of this (however hair-raising) remains bluster at this point. The real "xenophobic" action has taken place in distant lands where the U.S. Air Force reigns supreme, where a country that once created the Marshall Plan to raise a continent leveled by war can no longer imagine investing in or creating anything but further vistas of destruction and destabilization. The Muslims that Donald Trump wants to ban are, after all, the very ones his country has played such a part in uprooting and setting in motion. And how can the few who might ever make it to this country compare to the millions who have flooded Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon, among other places, further destabilizing the Middle East (which, in case you forgot, remains the oil heartland of the planet)? Where is the Marshall Plan for them or for the rest of a region that the U.S. and its allies are now in the process of dismantling (with the eager assistance of the Islamic State, various extremist outfits,

Bashar al-Assad, and quite a crew of others)?

What Bombs Can't Build

We Americans think well of ourselves. From our presidents on down, we seldom hesitate to imagine our country as a singularly "exceptional" nation — and also as an exceptionally generous one. In recent years, however, that generosity has been little in evidence at home or abroad (except where the U.S. military is concerned). Domestically, the country has split between a rising 1% (and their handlers and enablers) and parts of the other 99% who feel themselves on the path to hell. Helped along by Donald Trump's political circus, this has given the U.S. the look of a land spinning into something like Third World-ism, even though it remains the globe's "sole superpower" and wealthiest country. Meanwhile, our professed streak of generosity hasn't extended to our own infrastructure, which — speaking of worlds swept away by the tides of time — would have boggled the minds of my parents and other Americans of their era. The idea that the country's highways, byways, bridges, levees, pipelines, and so on could be decaying in significant ways and starved for dollars without a response from the political class would have been inconceivable to

them. And it does represent a strikingly ungenerous message sent from that class to the children of some future America: you and the world you'll inhabit aren't worth our investment.

In these years—thank you, Osama bin Laden, ISIS, and endless American politicians, officials, military figures, and terror "experts" — fear has gripped the body politic over a phenomenon, terrorism, that, while dangerous, represents one of the lesser perils of American life. No matter. There's a constant drumbeat of discussion about how to keep ourselves "safe" from terrorism in a world in which freelance lunatics with an assault rifle or a truck can indeed kill startling numbers of people in suicidal acts. The problem is that, in this era, preserving our "safety" always turns out to involve yet more bombs and missiles dropped in distant lands, more troops and special operators sent into action, greater surveillance of ourselves and everyone else. In other words, we're talking about everything that further militarizes American foreign policy, puts the national security state in command, and assures the continued demobilization of a scared and rattled citizenry, even as, elsewhere, it creates yet more uprooted souls, more children without childhoods, more refugees. Our leaders — and we, too — have grown accustomed to our particular version of eternal "wartime," and to wars without end, wars guaranteed to go on and on as more parts of the planet plunge into hell. In all of this, any sense of American generosity, either of the spirit or of funds, seems to be missing in action. There isn't the faintest understanding here that if you really don't want to create generations of terrorists amid a growing population loosed from all the boundaries of normal life, you'd better have a Marshall Plan for the Greater Middle East. It should be obvious (but isn't in our American world) that bombs, whatever they may do, can never build anything. You'd better be ready instead to lend a genuine hand, a major one, in making half-decent lives possible for millions and millions of people now in turmoil. You'd better know that war isn't actually the answer to any of this, that if ISIS is destroyed in a region reduced to rubble and without hope of better, a few years from now that brutal organization could look good in comparison to whatever comes down the pike. You'd better know that peaceful acts — peace being a word that, even rhetorically, has gone out of style in "wartime" Washington — are still possible in this world.

# Brexit: The return of boundaries

I checked to see where they stood in the midst of this globalisation wave. I am happy to report that despite being ignored by the Brexiteers, Trumpeteers and exiteers of all stripes their high-minded commentaries fill airport bookstores, opinion columns and digital soapboxes. I picked up three recent books that have a common theme: The importance and inevitability of global connectivity.

Singapore-based intellectual, Parag Khanna's new book, *Connectography*, argues: "Competitive connectivity is the arms race of the twenty-first century". I agree. As if sensing that the global citizenry is not buying this for now, Khanna goes to great lengths to drive the point home. Consider: "Globalisation has become a multidirectional series of tsunamis that surges across the oceans and undertows continents

into the collective currents." I am left practically speechless by that one. But here is a recommendation I would repeat: "We expend huge effort to measure the value of activity within borders; it is time to devote equal effort to the benefits of connectivity across them."

A second book, by *Wired* magazine's founding executive editor, Kevin Kelly, *The Inevitable*, pushes back against the promoters of the second machine age, who suggest that technology will displace human hands, Kelly says. "This is not a race against the machines. This is a race with the machines." This ode to connectivity is both perfectly zen and apt for tweetability. Consider three favourite samples: "Everything had to flow into the stream of now." "Once something, like music, becomes digitised, it becomes a liquid that can be flexed and linked." "Soon a book outside the universal library of all will be like a web page outside the web, gasping for air."

The third book on my list is by Joshua Cooper Ramo, CEO of Kissinger Associates. Ramo finds a single thread running through disparate rising phenomena: ISIS, China, Airbnb. He calls for a need to invoke the "seventh sense" — also the title of his book — the ability to look at any object and see the way it is changed by connection. He claims this sense will divide those who master the age ahead from those who will be mastered by it.

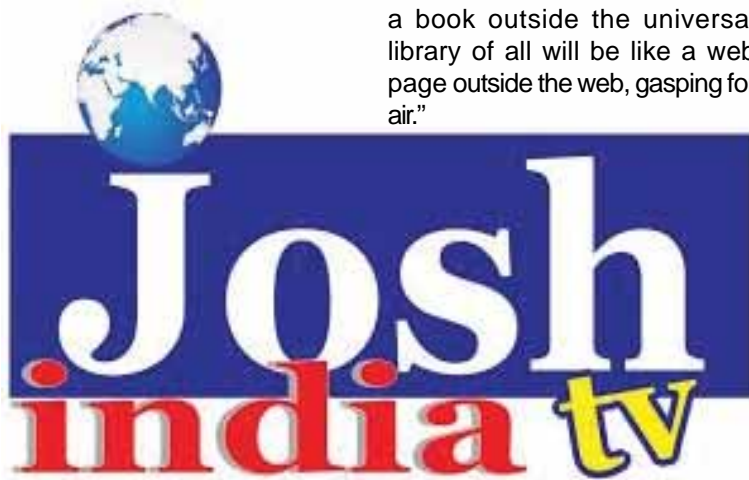
What about the globa-tribalists, who feel they are losing out? NYU's Nouriel Roubini suggests that winners must find ways to compensate the losers. I agree; abstract welfare theorems from neo-classical economics cannot compensate for lost jobs. The problem is that Roubini's solutions, such as schemes to replace income foregone because of jobs displaced feel like band-aids on much deeper wounds. Princeton's Harold James offers a solution goes further in quirkiness. Is there a political equivalent to Airbnb, he asks? Could world leaders live and work for an extended period in a foreign country instead of dashing in and out? He cites the example of Winston Churchill camping out in the White House for 24 days, after World War II, presumably bonding with Roosevelt, while

cementing Britain's trans-Atlantic alliance.

Now that's an idea for Modi's travel planners. A few weeks immersed in Nairobi's slums, iHub and outlying areas,

interrupted by a few days off to witness the migration of the wildebeest in Masai Mara? I wonder if the citizens of India would see the value of immersive foreign relations. The citizens of the UK, US and elsewhere, may not object to their own politicians exiled to the Masai Mara for an extended period of time. One thing these politicians might learn is that even ostriches — of which there are many in the Mara — contrary to belief, do not spend their time with their heads in the sand.

Saving globalisation from the globa-tribals requires leaders with courage to emote with and yet challenge populist sentiment, vision to connect the theory with the reality and pragmatic ideas to help those who have lost jobs due to globalisation. Today's adversities present opportunities to re-use fallow resources and under-employed human capital to start-up the next industry, with the whole world as its marketplace.



# Before the change: When austerity, simplicity ruled everyday middle class life

**When the story of liberalisation is written, its chroniclers will tell us that it wasn't an event but a process. Disregard them. This is the sort of throat-clearing noise historians are trained to make, a professional trick that patronisingly suggests countries change too slowly for ordinary people to notice. It isn't true. India before 1991 was so different, it was another country.**

There are many ways of pointing up the difference: the dotted line between then and now could (for example) be written in diapers. My older child was born in 1992 and spent his infancy in cotton nappies that were squares of cloth folded and fastened with giant safety pins. Only those who have shoved sharp pins—while the world slept—through fabric tightly wrapped round first-born bums can appreciate the revolution in child-rearing heralded by the disposable diaper. (Also, given the pointless pedalling favoured by non-walking babies, these were moving targets.).

My daughter, born two years later, lived snug and dry and safe in pampers, spared both the home-made pothra and the plastic knickers that contained its sodden rankness. Nostalgia is impossible to dredge up for this aspect of infancy before the Change, though there is ecological virtue to be found if you look for it: my son's carbon footprint was certainly smaller than my daughter's. Modern childhood is built on the bedrock of diaper landfill. And there was nothing subtle about the change the diaper wrought; it was night and day.

Nights, while we're on the subject, were darker before liberalisation. When I went to England in the early Eighties, I was disconcerted by the absence of darkness; an orange haze always muddled the night sky. Not so in India. Indian nights were inky black; they filled our heads with occult foreboding and made churails and bhoots seem plausible, even imminent. Now, thanks to sodium vapour street lighting, the haze has travelled east to us and our young will never believe in ghosts again.

But to list the world before

to the republican project of self-reliance. Not consuming the world promiscuously was a form of civic sacrifice in the cause of economic independence without which the political freedom of 1947 was meaningless. Autarky, even if we didn't know the word, was the state of grace to which we collectively aspired. Scarcity was ideologically sexy because it was the price we paid for self-sufficiency and inconvenience was a hair shirt worn for the greater common good.

The individual craving for foreign things and the collective



liberalisation like a menu of discrete experiences quaintly different from the normalcy of now, is to do it an injustice. For the middle-class desi, life in India before 1991 was an ideologically coherent experience. It was a world where the absence of things — Wrigley's Juicy Fruit, Seiko watches, Parker Pens — was experienced not just as scarcity but as a superior form of austerity.

Superior because the absence of this and that and the other, taken together added up

self-righteousness born of not having them, spawned generations of yearning prigs. In 1972 my brother and I went to Iran for a winter holiday because my father was being paid by the UN to set up a documentation centre in Tehran. The Shah's Tehran was a temple to consumption. Less than a mile from our flat was a departmental store called Furushga Kourush that in its opulence seemed like Alladin's cave. Khul ja sim-sim, I said, waving wads of rials, and proceeded to buy cans of tennis balls and quantities of Bic ballpoint pens, two Butterfly table tennis bats and enough Juicy Fruit to see out my youth...and yet when I told the tale of my Iranian travels to my class mates, it always ended with contempt. They import everything, I'd say with the perfect disdain only a fifteen-year-old can muster. Even their butter. The butter in their supermarket comes from Denmark! Amul, in that heroic time, wasn't just a brand of butter, it was a national

remember was the sense of wonder stirred in us by a direct marketing pitch on the back of comic books. This guaranteed that American children could acquire Daisy air guns and three-speed bicycles if they sold a certain number of seed packets. Seed packets! A world where kids could turn seed packets into consumer durables was so fantastical that we marvelled at this heaven without the slightest rancour at being excluded from it.

Our pleasures were simple and centred, quite often, on air-conditioning. To walk into the frigid darkness of Odeon or Plaza or Rivoli was to rent three hours of luxe living; the film was almost a bonus. For my generation the smell of sophistication was that blend of air-conditioning, cigarette smoke and vanilla ice-cream that filled restaurants in Connaught Place like a promise. Homes and cars were never air-conditioned. The very idea of air-conditioned private spaces was faintly troubling; for years I believed that men who wore dark



champion. For the most part the unavailability of Staedtler geometry boxes and ink cartridges wasn't a problem: it was hard to miss things you had never had. The best example of painless envy that I can

glasses and drove air-conditioned cars were likely corrupt and possibly villainous. It was a massively stable world where shops never died and brands lived forever. Mahattas, Empire Stores, Cottage Emporium, Khadi Gramodyog, Bata, Wenger's, Handloom House, India Hobby Centre and Uberoi Sports had been around so long that they had gone from being shops, to becoming landmarks and assignations. And when a place did disappear as Cellar, a discothèque, did, there was nothing matter-of-fact about its going; it left a kind of melancholy behind.

All make-up, as far as I can tell, was manufactured by Lakmé while the business of making boiled sweets was shared out between Parry's and Daurala, though there was a third brand, Dalima, a misspelling of Dalmia that had been allowed to stand. Lakmé was Tata's frenchification of Lakshmi. There's something endearing about the story of JRD Tata being nudged into founding a cosmetics business by Nehru because the prime minister was concerned about foreign exchange being frittered away on something as frippery as make-up. Everything, even make-up manufacturers, served republican purposes.

Life in the university was frugal and intense. We were all jholawalas out of necessity, regardless of our politics, because zippered rucksacks didn't exist. Women wore white kurta-churidars and magnificent tie-and-dye chunnis (with chopsticks in their hair) while men wore vile Jean Junction bell-bottoms that faded in the way a feeble watercolour blue might run.

Our colloquialisms, though, were our own. Where we said 'yaar', our children say 'dude' and 'bro' like stupid, tone-deaf mimic men. To think of the non-specific, native genius of 'Avoid, yaar, don't give it those ones' is to mourn the derivative second-rate-ness of contemporary student idiom. Many other things were improved beyond recognition by liberalisation.





# If Dalits bore you, are you a bad person?

Before it is forgotten and they can deny it was never this way I wish to place on record a behavioural trait of Tamil Brahmin men that was prevalent when I was growing up in Madras. When they wished to convey an insult they would hedge the risk by making it look like an ambiguous compliment or goodnatured joke. In this deceit lie the origins of the present universal appeal of Rajinikanth.



The celebration of his superhuman abilities began as a cautious brahminical insult to the clown-deity of the masses, and it was a masked affront even at the inception of 'internet jokes'. But the insult became a meme, the meme became tribute, the tribute became sacred until even its creators forgot its true nature. Many of the hip fans of Rajinikanth are fake fans, but many really do believe they love him.

Rajinikanth is rare. The bottom to top transmission of a cultural phenomenon almost never occurs in India. That is in the heart of the reason why news that involves Dalits almost never interests you. You turn the page, flip the channel. We know. Even if editors use brute journalistic force to sustain the news, your interest is often so faint the news soon dissolves unless the Dalit response to an event escalates so much that it collides with what interests you, like Narendra Modi.

If Dalits bore you, are you a bad person?

You may wish to say that you do manage to absorb some Dalit news. Isn't it true after all that in the past few days you did get to know about yet another atrocity against Dalits.

It began with a viral video. A disturbing graphic video that captures an assault is what marks our modern age. It is captivating. Even if you did not get to watch the video, journalists did and they knew instantly it was news, at least for a day. Also, it was in Gujarat, the most newsworthy state in India. In the film some malnourished bare-chested Dalit boys are methodically beaten by cow-devouts in Gujarat as a swift punishment for skinning dead cows. The attackers had posted the film online as an

advertisement of their valour though they claimed it was a warning to others who skinned the sacred Mother Cow. Then something significant happened. Dalits started leaving cow carcasses outside government buildings in Gujarat. They began to gather in large numbers to protest. Some attempted suicide. But somewhere along the way you got bored, as journalists know, especially online and television journalists who have ways to measure your interest.

The mainstream media is

under enormous moral pressure to dig deeper into Dalit atrocities. News channels and newspapers are criticised by humanitarians for not investing in stories about the poor, which naturally include Dalits. The criticism is absurd.

There is a reason why the humanitarians are not content with the coverage in niche leftist publications that only carry the type of the news they think is fringe. Mainstream media, on the other hand, has an enormous reach, hence clout. But then the

media derives its clout from being relevant to its consumers. This relevance does considerable collateral social good but the objective of the media, and it is a correct objective, is to be interesting to its core audience, which includes not boring them. Such an objective is not corrupt. Editors and reporters do try to push important stories but important so often is no match for interesting. That is the way of the world. Mainstream media that does not respect

human nature are doomed.

So are you the problem? Should you not, as an Indian, be more involved in the misery of the miserable? But then you probably are not insensitive. It is just that all your life you have heard those grim tragic stories and wish to seek relief from them. But, it appears, you cannot escape them completely. That is not only because journalists think those stories are important, but also because increasingly Dalit stories contain elements that interest you immensely, like Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party.

Over the past few months, Modi and the BJP have proven to be the greatest marketers of Dalit issues. For instance, the thrashing of the cow-skinners was in Modi's fiefdom, Gujarat. Also, the Dalit leader Mayawati found media attention when a major BJP functionary compared her to a prostitute. A few months ago, after the Dalit student, Rohith Vemula committed suicide, his death captured your interest, partly because his suicide note was in English and chiefly because activists interpreted his death successfully as a response to the politics of a Hindu cultural cartel, whose deity Modi is.

## 25 years of change: Why India's farm sector needs a new deal

In chasing higher and higher GDP growth rates, India tends to gloss over two vital facts. One, farm growth cuts poverty twice as fast as industrial growth. Two, a 1% rise in agricultural output raises industrial production by 0.5% and national income by 0.7%, according to one calculation. In other words, the country's fortunes are structurally tied to its farmers.

Two-thirds of Indians rely on a farm-based income. A back-to-back drought last year led to a challenging farm duress. Rural incomes fell. Food prices soared. Farmers fretted. Yet, these effects are mild and nothing compared to a previous era.

During 1965-66, a similar consecutive drought had put India on a knife's edge. Food output dropped 36% in those two years, data shows. All through the 40s, 50s and 60s, famines were common. Millions died. Many predicted another killer famine. Economists Paul and William Paddock prophesied a Malthusian horror of population rising faster than food output, declaring countries like India "foredoomed".

India signed off on an agreement with the US called the "Public Law 480" to qualify for food aid. It was not just humiliating. With a Cold War on, food assistance was a political hazard because aid came tied with conditionalities. A taste of this came when the US stopped desperate wheat shipments for 48 hours right in the middle of the drought. To end this dependence, India began putting together a policy framework, led by then farm minister C Subramaniam.

A breakthrough came when the country got hold of a fertiliser-responding high-yielding spring wheat variety from CIMMYT, an international farm research organisation. A similar variety of "Indica" rice came from the Philippines-based International Rice Research Institute. Nearly 18,000 tonnes of their seeds were dispatched to food-bowl states of Punjab, Haryana and western UP. Along with minimum support prices, fertilizer subsidies and irrigation cover in these pockets, an incredible green revolution took off. Within years, the results showed. India became self-sufficient in food grains.

But that's about all India's agriculture has been able to achieve. While subsidies were critical, overdependence on subsidies over investment was to be a costly mistake.

"The Green Revolution was actually only a wheat revolution. The technology was limited, the areas to which it was applied were limited, the crops were limited and the farmers who benefited were limited," said Uma Kapila, an economic historian who taught at Delhi's Miranda House college. "We all know growth requires investment. Over a period of time, we focused on subsidies at the cost of investment."

Policymakers basked in the glory of the Green Revolution for too long, without realising the technology had run its course. The first signs of the Green Revolution diminishing emerged in the mid-1980s, when yields began falling. Today, India exhibits the lowest yields globally. Overall, the lowest returns from public subsidies

were in agriculture, whereas investment was low. The rate of investment in agriculture in the 80s and 90s was between 8-12%. These years roughly coincide with the 6th and 10th five-year plans. With such low spending in agriculture, except for input subsidies, farm growth hobbled at 2.4% or so. In contrast, public investments, along with reforms, in other sectors were over 35%. This low-investment phase in agriculture was reversed only with the 10th and 11th five year plans (2002-07 and 2007-12).

Even today, irrigated lands make up only 40% of the country's arable land, making 60% of the net sown area vulnerable to monsoon failure.

Higher farm output, the solution for more incomes with less farmhands, hinges on area and yields. The government has already tapped the easy areas, the ones most fertile and better irrigated. Area expansion has its limitations. "We can no longer expand the area. The only way to go is to raise yields," says Kapila. Farm investment has now reached 20% or so of the GDP, but most of it comes from the private sector. While experts recommend more private participation, they say public investment must also go up.

The consequences of a fading Green Revolution and a skewed farm policy are now showing up in politics. The violent agitations by Jats in Haryana and Gujjars for a sliver of India's reservation pie are instances.

# The thick and thin of it

**Why gaining weight or losing it are not always matters within our control**

(Agencies) Do you know that the toughest task in the world is not climbing Mount Everest, but facing unfavourable comments about one's weight? You can cross-check this fact from any person who weighs at least one kilogram more than what he or she ideally should. Being an obese person I get exposed to such comments so frequently. And my son hardly calls me "Amma"; instead he calls me "Dinamma", for "Dinosaur Amma".

The problem gets aggravated when your spouse is as thin as a bamboo pole. I used to feel uneasy with comments such as, "look at that elephant and her mahout!" during the initial days of our marriage. But my happy-go-lucky hubby used to pacify me saying: "See, when an elephant goes with the mahout, who do we look at? The elephant indeed... The mahout remains unnoticed."

I was slow to catch the sarcasm. By that time he would be "out of coverage area", escaping a possible thrashing and winking playfully.

However, this taught me always to stay at a safe distance from my husband, at least a few yards behind him, whenever we went out together. This served two purposes. One was that nobody knew we were partners. The other one was that my mother-in-law was immensely happy to see a daughter-in-law who always walked behind her son, never trying to overpower him.

But it really hurt whenever I went to purchase clothes. The sales staff would invariably comment,

"Ma'm, it will be very difficult to find a ready-wear that suits you. It's better that you purchase some clothing and get it stitched to your size."

I used to fume upon hearing such rude comments – what kind of a business development model was these people up to? Would they be able to get customers if they annoy them? But the big crowd in all the textile shops always mocked me.

I, who was a fan of glossy women's magazines, started hating them! How can one tolerate pictures of models with pencil-thin figures who will match any colour, any dress, any hairstyle? And above all, how can one tolerate one's husband ogling at them?

I used to wonder how I was gaining so much weight, even after twice-a-week fasting and a strict vegetarian diet. (I can hear my son saying: "Amma, elephant is also a vegetarian.")

It might be the steroid that I have to gulp regularly to ease my breathing; yes, it might be the reason. But the doctors never believed me. They went on advising me, "You must reduce your intake." I didn't know how to reduce it any further.

Anyway I started once again to subscribe to the glossy magazines, but took special care that all the pages featuring the snazzy pictures of hour-glass figures disappeared on the pretext of some packing or kitchen-shelf covering... I made sure no male member of the household noticed those pictures. The only pages that remained were the ones with articles such as: "How to lose 10 kilograms overnight"; "How to lose calories without burning them"; "How to look slim even when you are as fat as a hippo!"

Both my husband and my son found this out quickly but maintained a dignified silence, just giggling at each other...

At last I found a place where I could stay and reduce. They offered to slim me down in 10 days, but the cost seemed too high. Seeing my desperate urge to get thin, my husband offered sponsorship. But he was apprehensive about my absence from home for 10 days. But my son was as sarcastic as ever:

"Mom, you are going to lose weight! Oh, God! It will be easier to find a white crow flying upside down in the backward direction."

I stared at him, my eyes bulging. I took it as a challenge: if at all I would return home, it would be with a pencil-thin figure.

So I ventured out for my slimming regime. The day before my going there was hectic, in instructing my son and husband about what to do and what not to. They were so confused that my son started saying he will hand over the vessel to the dhobi and the used clothes to the milkman.

"Mom! Do you really want to go, putting papa and me in such trouble?"

I raised my neck like a proud swan and announced: "You people hardly acknowledge my hard work. Now find out yourself what a mom means." My

conscience was pricking me but I deliberately turned a blind eye to it.

And the D-day dawned. I was off with my bags and could hear my son yelling behind: "Mom, did you pack the needle and thread? You will have to downsize your dresses in 10 days!"

As I entered the centre I was greeted warmly by the staff and was led to the room of the doctor-cum-dietician. She gave me the strangest grin I had ever faced in my life. Then started a lecture on the necessity of eating less to keep the figure thin! I tried to drag her attention to the doses of steroids I was taking, but failed miserably.

Then she handed me over to a helper who appeared to be a pleasant lady with a warm smile. She gave me the food chart. As per the chart I could take in twice as much as I was normally having. This made me immensely happy. My smile broadened as I read my son's message on my mobile: "Mom, come back soon after 10 days!"



The feeling of being wanted gives one immense pleasure.

The next day they started thinning me! But whenever I wanted to reveal my steroid intake nobody gave me an ear. Slowly I too forgot to talk about it.

The doctors and helpers were puzzled to see me as chirpy as ever before with the 'meagre' food I was having. They were in a puzzled state on seeing that my weight did not come down by even a single gram.

My son called me at least twice a day, including to find out how to differentiate between salt and sugar and why the curd was so awfully sour. They never knew that the curd should be preserved in the refrigerator! It was the last day. The doctor desperately weighed me. She was keeping her mouth shut for the first time.

So I could tell her about my medicine. She got excited: "Ah, you didn't tell me about this! Then we should follow a different diet for another 10 days!"

I was really annoyed by her accusation of 'not telling the truth'. That made me threaten her that unless she gave me back my money, I would approach her rival firm and be a model myself against her centre. The rivals would start reaping the benefit by featuring me in their advertisements. That worked, and I got my money back. My family was waiting outside to take me home. They both had reduced considerably.

Suddenly I saw that my long-lost very thin college-mate was marching in. She was thrilled to meet me there: "Oh, you look so nice.... I am also here on a fattening programme!"

## Aspirin lifeline for end-stage cancer?

(Agencies) Kolkata: The little white headache pill that costs less than Rs 1.5 per tablet could catalyse one of the biggest breakthroughs in cancer treatment. A study by researchers in Kolkata says aspirin may not only block the growth of cancer cells but also give a lifeline to Stage IV patients by making them respond to chemotherapy.

The study, by the Institute of Post-Graduate Medical Education and Research (IPGMR) and Bose Institute, has tasted success on animals and even human tissues. Aspirin is being researched the world over as a low-cost preventive for many types of GI cancers, but the Kolkata study takes it a few steps higher -to prove its potential in combating malignant cells. The research team has proved that it can shrink cancer stem cells -the principal cause of the disease and the reason behind its spread -and turn them 'chemo-sensitive', or reactive to chemo. The finding, which holds out hope for 1.5 lakh chemo-resistant patients in the country, is in the human trial stage.

IPGMR started the study in 2010 to explore aspirin's preventive role, but the aim took new dimensions as the research progressed. It's now in its fourth and final phase. The initial studies, held on breast cancer patients, revealed that the pill indeed checked the proliferation of cancerous cells. This was seen in 80% of the patients in the study. "At this juncture, we came to know that Bose Institute, too, was working to establish a link between aspirin and chemo-sensitivity. Since we were working on the same lines, we decided to merge our studies," said Diptendra Sarkar, head of the department of breast cancer,



IPGMR. A joint research took off and the results left the research team stunned. An analysis of cancerous cells and tissues revealed that aspirin indeed altered the nature of cancer stem cells and made them respond to chemotherapy.

"Cancer stem cells are responsible for the disease. Chemotherapy that kills cancer cells fails to eliminate these highly resistant cancer stem cells. They proliferate and turn more aggressive. Often, they hide in tissues and cause a relapse, spreading the disease to other parts of the body. Aspirin inhibits chemotherapy-induced increase in cancer stem cells and sensitizes them to chemotherapy by decreasing the levels of resistance-giving proteins in these cells.

Therefore, although aspirin itself cannot kill cancer stem cells, but it can make chemotherapy effective and check the spread of the disease in the body," said Tanya Das, senior professor at Bose Institute, who led the study on behalf of the institute.

**A**PPS like Tinder were designed to make the process of dating quicker and more efficient, by only matching people with other who are interested in them to save people from rejection. But new evidence suggests the apps have created a different kind of problem — men play Tinder like a game, swiping right to everyone just to see who has 'liked' them. This can be frustrating for women, who are pickier about who they match with, since men they are paired with are less likely to reply to their messages, a new study has found.

The study, led by Dr Gareth Tyson, from Queen Mary University London, highlights the different styles men and women have using Tinder. "Online dating has become extremely popular, with 38 per cent of American adults who are 'single or looking' having experimented with it," the authors wrote.

Tinder changed the way online dating works. Until the app started in 2012, most dating services had found matches using a range of factors such as shared interests and future plans. But on Tinder, the only thing that matters is first impressions. "By focusing on first impressions, Tinder constitutes a cut-down version of online dating, without any of the features that make it possible to understand the deeper characteristics of potential mates," the authors said.

To investigate how this changes human behaviour, researchers looked at how men and women



# WOMEN'S TINDER WOES

tend to act using Tinder. What they found backs up anecdotal evidence. Men are more likely to swipe right but then not send a message, whereas women are much pickier but will message first more often than men. But possibly the most striking finding was how rarely users will express an interest by talking to their matches first.

**B**OTH men and women were still unlikely to message first, with only seven per cent of men and 21 per cent of women sending a message after matching. "Each person is different," Dr Gareth Tyson, lead author of the study, told *MailOnline*. But he says the app encompasses many game-like qualities.

"If somebody does not feel particularly invested in a given match, they may feel casual about following up on it later on," he said. "An alternative theory is that many people post-filter their matches. Instead of clicking like for people they really find attractive, they click like for lots of people and then decide after the match has

*DR TYSON set up 14 fake Tinder profiles in London, half were female and half male. They automatically liked everyone within a 100 mile (160km) radius, and noted how many they matched with, and then how many sent messages.*

*Although men were less likely to send a message first, many more men sent messages since the overwhelming majority of matches came*

occurred whether or not they want to follow it up with a conversation."

Dr Tyson set up 14 fake Tinder profiles in London, half were female and half male. They automatically liked everyone within a 100 mile (160km) radius, and noted how many they matched with, and then how many sent messages. Although men were less likely to send a message first, many more men sent messages since the overwhelming majority of matches came from men. The vast propor-

## Revelatory research

tion of matches came from men, whether for the team's male or female profiles.

Another study used data collected from Baihe, one of the largest dating websites in China, where researchers from Binghamton University, University of Massachusetts

Lowell and Northeastern University analysed the messages and how suitable each person actually was. The study found that men are far more aggressive on online dating sites but often 'mass mail' women that are out of their league in the hope of a response.

tion of matches came from men, whether for the team's male or female profiles.

"Even though the male:female ratio in our dataset is roughly even, on average, 86 per cent of all the matches our male profiles receive come from other men," the authors said. "Overall, we received 8248 male matches, most of whom do not pursue interaction. In contrast, we garnered only 532 female matches, suggesting that they are more careful with whom they like

and therefore consider it more worthwhile to send a message."

Women took their time over writing a message. Almost two thirds of messages sent by men were sent within five minutes of the match taking place, while only 18 per cent of those sent by women were this fast.

This research was followed-up survey of Tinder users, which confirmed the findings. About one third of men said they regularly 'casually like most profiles', while

no women said they do this. An overwhelming 93 per cent of women said that they only swiped right on profiles they were actually attracted to. Men also use Tinder to look for 'one night stands' much more than women.

**B**UT a separate study led by Jennie Zhang from Oxford University found when women message first, men only reply 42 per cent of the time. The researchers looked at the conversations people had after they matched, using about 2 million conversations involving 400,000 heterosexual users of an unknown dating site, all from the US. In around half of the conversations, the other person did not respond. When there was a mutual conversation, people exchanged phone numbers less than one fifth of the time.

When men messaged first, women wrote back about 53 per cent of the time. When women messaged first, men wrote back only 42 per cent of the time.

— *Daily Mail*

# BABY TALK COULD WORK WONDERS

**TO ANYONE** else, it is incredibly annoying — but the singsong of baby talk really does work — and could actually help adults as well. Researchers have long debated the merits of speaking to a child as an adult, claiming adult sounds, cadence and tone of voice are what the child is eventually supposed to learn. Now, they say a mother's natural instinct to use a singsong voice is the better option.

"Our intuitions are surprisingly right," says Patrick Shafto, an associate professor of mathematics and computer science at Rutgers, who led the study, published in *Psychological Review*. "Why do we speak funny to children? It's actually to help them learn the relevant properties of language."

With postdoctoral fellow Baxter Eaves, the researchers deconstructed vowel sounds in adult speech. They then created a mathematical model that predicted understandable speech pat-



terns from scratch, 'to show what it might look like if speech were designed to actually teach children.' They then compared their invented teaching pattern with the differing speech methods that adults direct at each other and at

infants, and found that infant-directed speech was the closer match.

"The sounds that are selected exaggerate the important properties that babies need to attend to and learn about," Shafto says. "If you exaggerate in the correct way, what you get is a learner who learns more quickly from less data."

## The singsong voice can help the child learn languages

American adults don't only speak in exaggerated ways to infants. They also distort their speech with pets and with foreign language speakers — but they do it differently for each.

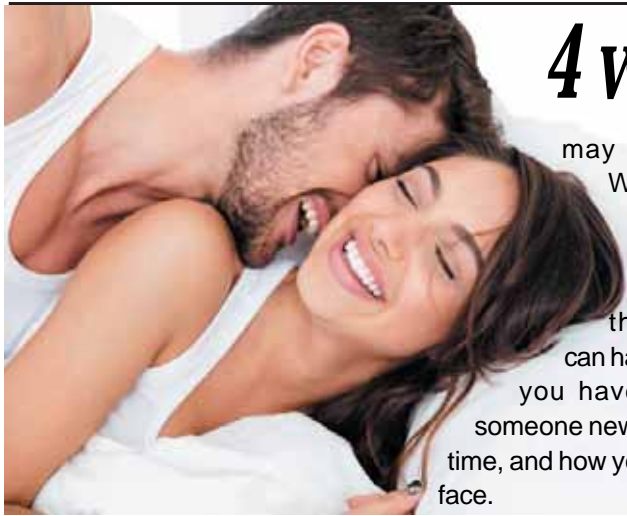
Because foreign language speakers' learning of English can be measured, Shafto says it might be possible to use mathematics to fine tune the speech

patterns of instructors in ways that enhance the teaching of English as a second language.

"By manipulating only the things that are important and highlighting the meaningful distinctions in the language," he says, "we might be able to make English more learnable for someone who speaks a different language natively."

According to Shafto, the bottom line of this new study, and of the work he is doing, is that math and the study of language learning go extremely well together.

"Learning these vowel categories is a complicated problem," he says. "There are lots of moving parts, so it's not the sort of thing that one can easily intuit. I think it's a nice example of why mathematical rigor is important in areas where you least expect it," Shafto adds, "such as understanding why we talk silly to children."



# 4 ways sex can get awkward with a new partner

may get weird. We've rounded up four such awkward things that can happen when you have sex with someone new for the first time, and how you can save face.

### The awkward kiss

The first kiss with a new partner can be kind of odd. After all, it is uncharted territory and you're yet to find your rhythm with him. Classic examples of the awkward first kiss are teeth clashing, too much tongue, and slobbering kisses that make you feel like you're being smooched by a dog.

Do it right: Just calm down and start off with soft kisses all over his face, except the lips. When you've found your pace, give him a light peck on his mouth before turning it into a full-on smooch-fest.

### The fumbling touches

You don't know if you're supposed to put your arms round his neck, or keep them hovering on his back. Hugs and caresses are strange with both of you wondering whether you're doing it right or if it's off-limits. Finally, you end up in an uncomfortable tangle of arms and legs that is just not what you thought sex would be with him.

Do it right: Why not just cuddle in bed for a while? Better yet, the first time, indulge in a hot make-

out session without going all the way. This will help you understand what he likes and give him a chance to get to know you better. Soon enough, the fumbling touches will turn into expert manoeuvres that will leave you breathless!

### Toothy oral sex

Imagine your plight if he goes down on you and doesn't know what to do. You will be left wondering if you should say something or let him figure it out on his own. Similarly, what if you go down on him and treat him with your teeth and gags?

Do it right: Oral sex is more of a trial and error activity. No two people are alike and you never know if your partner is actually enjoying the downtime. All you

can do is hope for the best!

### The endless wait

So, things have got all heated up and you've finally got the courage to let him undress you. Then he goes off in search of condoms and all you can do is wait... and wait some more. For some funny reason, waiting for your partner to turn up after he leaves you lying buck naked in bed is the longest wait there is.

Do it right: Let your confidence and sex appeal shine! There's no reason to feel embarrassed. But if you do, cover yourself up strategically with a bed sheet and leave just enough uncovered to make his eyes glitter in anticipation when he returns.

(Agencies) It's just plain terrifying when you are in bed with someone for the first time and he gets a good look at you naked. You start wondering if he likes what he sees or not. And just when you start feeling a little comfortable around him, you let out a burp and he hears it. He will either laugh it off or things

## Debunking notions about teenage love



(Agencies) They say, love doesn't change the world around you, it just makes the journey worthwhile. However, for teenagers, love is exhilarating emotion and the equations between couples are far more different than that shared by a matured couple. For a generation that supposedly falls in-and-out of love in a jiffy, teenage love is full of myths and generalisations that it can do without...

### Guys are seldom serious

Teenage girls usually tend to think that boys can never be serious about relationships. They believe them to be generally frivolous and carefree in life. Contrary to this preconceived notion, most guys can be quite serious about relationships. In fact, they are serious and responsible enough to inform families about the developments in their lives. They are just not vocal as they feel it might make them look like fools.

### Break-ups are the end of the world

teenagers take break-ups seriously, so much so that it gets extremely fatal and hampers their personal development. "What they fail to understand is that break-ups are an integral part of growing up and not the end of the world. There are extreme cases where teenagers have made self-destructive attempts after break-ups. It is important to make them understand the importance of life, career, their parents, etc. They must be told that love is not something that one should put everything at stake at such a young age," says counsellor Rekha Sharma.

### Find it hard to get over your first love

Who said so? Life moves on. "If people continue to lead a normal life after losing their near and dear ones to death, then letting go of your first love is not at all difficult," says Nisha Patel, a clinical psychologist. It is true that we all get emotionally charged when in love for the first time, so it is quite difficult to forget that experience. However, while you move ahead in life, meet new people and finally fall in love for good, you will eventually forget your first love, as there are better things that await you.

### Spending more time than needed with each other

Teenagers fail to understand that giving each other enough space is as important. "They try their best to spend as much time as possible together and think this would strengthen their bond.

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# Tulip Pants Romance-Pole to Pole



and comfort. Same goes , for the much famous Dhotti Salwar of yesteryear's ,which is the founding inspiration for "Tulip Pants" . They were the most sorted, statement pants from runaway's in Milan, NY, London to Indian Sub-Continent street wear.

Tulip Pants are billowing (loose) on the top and tapered on the lower end. Less Voluminous than typical salwar, cut and streamlined in such a way they mimic pleated pants. Tulip Pants have its own variations from Tulip Palazzo's , Culottes, Cropped capri's depending what is your preference . Traditional Dhotti Salwar is the most voluminous version best suited for tall and slim woman.

Tulip Pants overlay/draped cloth has 3 versions. First being wrapped around and left loose. This adds a lot of flow to the material while walking and moving around. The only restraint, is sitting crossed leg (like in lotus pose) , where your legs are exposed till upper thigh. Sitting on chair needs an art, like that of a model, to know what part and



**The Lawn Muse  
by Komal Bindra**

angle of leg to expose and you are comfortable with.

In second option the overlay layer is fully stitched. This adds stiffness to the front crease and the seam becomes visible. Flow is obstructed. The stand up look is chic and smart, sitting crossed legged is as comfortable as in any other regular trouser. Sitting on chair does push your inverted "V" further up to mid calves.

Third option, being my favorite one, in which the overlay layer is stitched till lower thigh and rest left loose to find its natural drape.

So this is a combination of other

two extreme option with flow and still avoiding too much exposure of legs.

Tulips pants when paired with super short or short tunics/ kurtis Indian or western look sharp . Tulip Plazzo's/ Culotte's look good with Tank tops . Be careful for your body type. Pear shaped woman should go for streamlined pants with less volume at top . Apple shaped woman's ,best go would be high waisted Plazzo's. Hour Glass shaped woman always steal the look of the hour with their versatile wearing options... which includes all. I personally recommend Pants in solids and small prints. Delicate detailing like the dainty pearls , laces and contrast edging adds to the grace of the overlay drape.

Not a huge fan of heavy embroidered Tulips . They add unnecessary volume to the the drape and it becomes challenging to pair them up with worthy tops . They look super cool when paired with flats and Punjabi juttis. Avoid kitten and wedge heels. For a more sharp look, you can never go wrong with High Heels.

Since its a Pole to Pole wearable item. All international



retail stores from H&M, Zara, Mango, M&S had it in India and at all their international chains. Nordstrom, Anthropologie, ASOS, Macy's all had them . Hi-End original designer pants available at Bluefly.com, Farfetch.com with international shipping. To end the note, credits to Gorgio Armani , who with 40 years in designing made a rage with his tulip pants in Fall/Winter 2015-16 collection.

Salwars made a lethal fight-back, with all designers showcasing them as staple lowers in S/S 2016 collections. Any style, revived is accompanied with contemporary influence of style

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# Would you dare to stand on it?



Jinmao Tower, a 88-storey skyscraper in Shanghai, has built a glass-bottom walkway on the top floor. The vertigo-inducing attraction, to open to the public on Friday, is situated at 1,115 feet above the ground. Protruding out from the 88th floor, the transparent deck lets visitors enjoy sweeping views of sprawling city.

**T**HIS might be the most thrilling way to view one of the world's largest cities: on a glass-bottomed walkway at 1,115 feet above the ground. Jinmao Tower, a super-tall skyscraper in Shanghai, has built a see-through platform which allows daredevil tourists to dangle on the side of the edifice and gain sweeping views of the sprawling city, reported Huanqiu.com, an affiliation to the People's Daily Online.

Just last month, a skyscraper in downtown Los Angeles opened a giant all-glass slide at around 1,000 feet high. The vertigo-inducing deck in Shanghai protrudes out from the 88th floor of Jinmao Tower and will be opened to the public from Friday. The impressive walkway measures 197 feet long and four feet wide.

More incredibly, the attraction does not have hand rails, a deliberate feature from the designers. This means visitors will be able to stand on the very edge of the deck to gain a maximum level of adrenaline rush. Pictures emerged on Chinese media show a number of lucky tourists, strapped in safety harnesses, happily stretching their arms and legs near the edge as if they were walking in the air. A member of staff who works at the ticket office of Jinmao Tower told MainOnline that admission to the platform is 120 Yuan (£14).

However, in order to get to the platform, tourists will also need to pay the entrance fee for Jinmao's observation deck on the 88th floor, which costs 288 Yuan (£33).



# Sultan crosses Rs 550 crores in BO collections, Kabali follows closely



(Agencies) After PK (Rs 792 crore), Bajrangi Bhaijaan (Rs 626 crore) and Bahubali: The Beginning (Rs 586.45 crore), filmmaker Ali Abbas Zafar's Salman Khan-Anushka Sharma starrer, Sultan, has crossed the Rs 550 crore mark .

Trade analyst Taran Adarsh confirms "The figure includes overseas and domestic collections." The film, which released on July 6, has so far earned Rs 405 crore in the domestic market and Rs 151 crore in the international market. The film's production house, Yash Raj Films, confirmed this. The first weekend collections of the film were Rs 105.50 crore.

However, giving stiff competition to Salman's film is actor Rajinikanth's film Kabali, which released on July 22. The film earned Rs 109.25 crore in the first three days of its release, which is Rs 4 crore more than Sultan. Though Kabali released thirteen days after Sultan, comparisons between the two films are inevitable because of the star power and the big bucks both films are raking in. However, trade analysts do not think it is a

# spotted at Airport

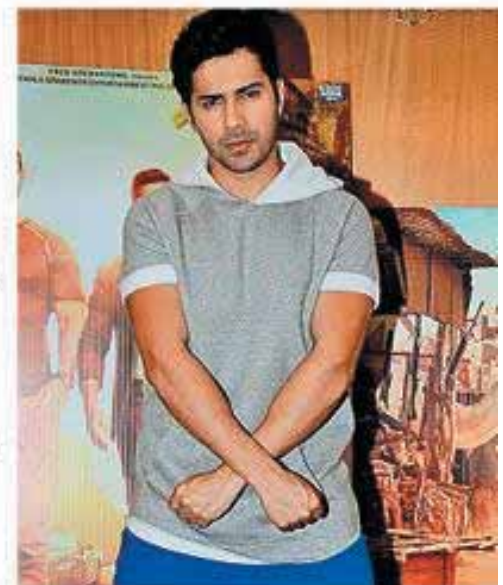


Though shutterbugs didn't get much to capture at Mumbai airport on Saturday, the sporty look of Sushant Singh Rajput and the cool appearance of Katrina Kaif definitely made their day. Also, spotted at the airport was actor Arjun Rampal along with his mother.



# MADNESS overloaded

Bollywood actors Varun Dhawan, Jacqueline Fernandez and John Abraham are busy in promoting their forthcoming flick Dishoom. But, out of their hectic schedule of promotions, the actors don't forget to steal the moments of fun. The same happened during a promotional event of the film in Mumbai on Friday, where all three of them spent moments of madness with each other.



# AAP legislators more likely to be on the receiving end of police action



(Agencies) The arrest of 11 AAP MLAs one after another on charges ranging from outraging the modesty of a woman to religious sacrilege raises a pertinent question: Do legislators of other political parties in other states also face such quick

action? A quick check suggests that police elsewhere in the country do not necessarily act with similar degree of alacrity. Take the case of former Haryana chief minister and MLA, Bhopinder Singh Hooda, accused

by the CBI in May of irregularities in allotting 14 industrial plots. On July 22, he was also charged by the Enforcement Directorate with money laundering. That Hooda denies the charges and alleges political witch hunt is besides the point. (Contd on page 32)

# Melania Trump's website disappears completely



(Agencies) Melania Trump could soon be America's first lady, leveraging power of the White House's East Wing to manicure her public image. But for now, she no longer has a website to call her own.

MelaniaTrump.com went dark sometime Wednesday morning, redirecting visitors to Trump.com,

the family business's main brand portal.

'The website in question was created in 2012 and has been removed because it does not accurately reflect my current business and professional interests,' Mrs. Trump wrote Thursday on Facebook.

(Contd on page 20)



# Hand-In-Hand... If Not Hand-In-Glove

## When it comes to personal favours, rival politicians have a 'mutual understanding'

(Agencies) Ideologically, the BJP and the Samajwadi Party (SP) might appear to be antithetical, but on several occasions, they seem to be complementing each other's interests—be it in playing a politics of polarisation that serves both electorally or on more -personal fronts.

Whenever the BJP has risen to power, the SP has thrived. And just

as the Sangh's rabble-rousers raise heat and dust in the name of Hindutva, the SP finds it convenient to consolidate its Muslim vote bank. Sure enough, SP supremo Mulayam Singh Yadav makes it a point to periodically rem-ind Muslims that they owe their safety and security from the onslaught of rabid Hindutva only to him and his party. And quite systematically,

BJP leaders do not forget to publicly accuse Mulayam and his party of playing "the politics of Muslim appeasement". Besides religious polarisation, other factors too have come into play to bring the SP and the BJP on a discreet common footing. Mulayam's sudden U-turn from the 'grand alliance' in Bihar was one such occasion.

(Contd on page 21)

# The changing script Noteworthily Spoken

## How economic growth has transformed Bollywood

## Right-wingers lead a crowd who want Gandhiji out of rupee notes. They have their icons ready.

(Agencies) In Mahesh Bhatt's Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke (1993), actor Aamir Khan plays Rahul Malhotra, a garment exporter, teased and wooed in equal measure by his woman factory employees. In both gender equality and professional change, the movie overturned stereotypes of cinematic iconography in Bollywood.

To get an idea of the journey, travel four decades back. In 1953, Balraj Sahni played the role of Shambu Mahato, a famine-stricken farmer trying in vain to get back a mortgaged parcel of land in Do Bigha Zameen directed by Bimal Roy.

The contrast between the two protagonists is symbolic of India's journey — from an impoverished post-colonial economy creaking under many burdens to a liberalised democracy trying to face a brave new world of opportunities.

Bollywood cinema, as popular art often does, reflects the times it lives in and lives through. The Amitabh Bachchan-starred Angry Young Man era of the 1970s reflected the spirit of the Emergency days and the tyranny of a half-urbanised economy plagued by shortages, unemployment and injustice.

(Contd on page 21)

(Agencies) For nearly 20 years, a picture of Mahatma Gandhi has featured on all Indian rupee notes printed by the Reserve Bank. Now, there are whispers that this feature may become a contentious issue between the central bank and its political overlord, the Union finance ministry headed by Arun Jaitley. It comes soon after Raghuram Rajan's shock exit as RBI governor.

It is no secret that ever since the half-smiling face of the Mahatma was placed on currency notes, it has been an eyesore for many right-wing



politicians and supporters. They have kept up a strident demand to scrub Gandhi off the notes and replace him with other icons more palatable to their worldview. Many Hindutva groups hold Gandhi res-p-o-nsible for Partition

and accuse him of minority 'appeasement'. This is the basis for pushing for the change, though they are far from building a consensus around any alternative.

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