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Decoding Modi's Pakistan policy *From shawl and birthday diplomacy to surgical strike*

Ever since Modi government came to power on May 26, 2014, India's relations with Pakistan can be categorised in three phases. While India had a clear-cut upper hand over Pakistan in the first and the last phase, it faltered in the middle phase.

(Agencies) India conducted surgical strikes against Pakistan and Indian social media burst into joy. #ModiPunishesPak started trending on top on Twitter. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rivals started praising the government and the Indian Army's unprecedented move.

But till recently, Modi was being mocked by his detractors with jibes like '56-inch chest' and 'getting 10 heads for one beheading'. He was under attack from a section of intelligentsia and social media. They accused him of having formulated a flawed Pakistan policy or for not having any policy at all. Hence, when analysed minutely, it may be inferred that the BJP-led NDA government's Pakistan policy has been



strategically planned, albeit with a few aberrations. Ever since Modi government came to power on May 26, 2014, India's relations with Pakistan can be categorised in three phases. While India had a clear-cut upper hand over Pakistan in the first and the last phase, it faltered in the middle phase. Modi started his relations with Pakistan on a clean slate. He ignored the turbulent past not of the previous UPA government headed by

Manmohan Singh when 26/11 Mumbai terror attack took place in 2008. He also chose to leave behind Pakistan's stabbing in the back with the Kargil war soon after the then BJP prime minister AB Vajpayee's 'bus diplomacy' to Lahore in 1999. The first phase of NDA's Pakistan policy got off to a pleasant start on the very day Modi was sworn as Prime Minister. He invited his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif along with heads of other South Asian

Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations. It remained the high point of the oath-taking ceremony and was not just discussed but praised world over.

While Modi gifted a shawl to Sharif's mother, the latter reciprocated with a sari for the Indian PM's mother. This is now being mocked as 'sari-shawl diplomacy'. Modi received the first jolt when despite extending a hand of friendship, Pakistan

indulged in more than a dozen cease fire violations on the Indo-Pak borders just two months later in July 2014. In August 2014, the Modi government received another jolt when the Pakistani High Commissioner met the Hurriyat leaders before the official talks. Pakistan had chosen to ignore a pre-condition imposed by India to talks with Pakistan.

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Queens Businessman in feud over a homeless shelter project

(Agencies) An Indian-American businessman in Queens has been facing the wrath of the community over a controversial proposal to turn a hotel he owns into a city homeless shelter, which residents fear, would create many problems, real or perceived, including decrease in property values in the neighborhood.

The month long protest by area residents against the proposal to convert a Holiday Inn Express in Maspeth, owned by Harshad Patel, is also fueled by allegations that Patel was involved in a 2011 bribery scandal. News reports said that State Senator Tony Avella (D-Queens) has asked U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Preet Bharara, to investigate the bribery issue.

"Mr. Patel openly admitted to

paying a former state elected official more than \$20,000 to get that official to effect a zoning change in his favor," Avella wrote to Bharara in a letter earlier this month, according to a PIX 11 news report.

"I find it shocking that Mayor Bill de Blasio and the New York City Department of Homeless Services would seek to enter into an agreement with an individual who has openly admitted to what appears to be a lengthy bribery scheme seeking action from a city agency for a prior hotel property he owned," PIX 11 quoted him as saying in an interview.

News NY reported that on Sept. 24 more than 200 people protested in front of two of Patel's businesses. Dozens of Bellerose, Floral Park and Long Island residents also joined in

when the group marched to his home.

CBS said quoting unidentified City officials as saying that with nearly 60,000 people currently in homeless shelters across the city, they must turn to hotels, like the Holiday Inn in Maspeth as an alternative and they want to use the 110-room facility as an adult-only shelter. However, the Mayor's office said nothing has been finalized yet, and the city will consider any alternate locations the Community Board comes up with.

Earlier this month Patel said in the face of protests that he has decided not to go against the wishes of the masses who have protested the plan. "We plead to the community to stop this protest. It has hurt our business drastically over the last few weeks," a letter from hotel



management read," PIX 11 News quoted him as saying in a letter issued by the hotel management. The embattled entrepreneur also said that he ultimately realized it is bad for business.

Such statements

notwithstanding, there seemed to be no letup in protests. Residents said last week that they will not only continue to protest in front of the Holiday Inn Express, but they also planned a protest at City Hall.

Indian-Origin Lawyer With Nazi Symbol Shoots 9 In US



(Agencies) New York : An Indian-origin lawyer in military style clothing emblazoned with a swastika pointing to his Nazi sympathies went on an early morning shooting rampage injuring nine persons in Houston city of the US on Monday, before he was killed by police, authorities said. Nathan Desai was armed with a handgun and submachine gun during the 20-minute shooting spree when he fired at passing cars and the police, according to ABC13's Eyewitness News. Citing sources, the Eyewitness News said Desai used his car to stockpile ammunition and a tree for cover when he was shooting, right outside his condominium complex on Law Street. The police said they did not know why Desai went on the rampage hitting people at random.

Desai's name was written with the 'S' capitalised in media reports in Houston, making it sound European, but his father was identified as Prakash Desai. All of his victims survived but one person was critically wounded

and five others were hospitalised, Houston Police acting chief Martha Montalvo said. Montalvo described the shooter as a lawyer who was having problems at his law firm. When the police responded to the shooting, he shot at them and was killed when cops returned fire, she said. The shooter's father, 80-year-old Prakash Desai told Eyewitness News that his son was "upset about the law practice not going well". He didn't believe his son was the shooter as the two were said to have had dinner only 12 hours before the shooting. John Elmore, the property manager for The Oaks at West University, where Desai lived, said Desai's

behaviour had been erratic for the last two months. He seemed paranoid and thought someone was "out to get him", Elmore said. Desai, 46, had no active civil or criminal cases, according to Harris county court records, accessed by the Eyewitness. He had only two new criminal cases since 2013. In February, he and his law partner Kenneth McDaniel of 12 years parted ways and neighbours believed he was doing law work out of his condo.

We made a mutual decision, roughly in February, to simply no longer operate as a partnership for economic reasons," said McDaniel. "I feel very sorry for

him and for those people." Desai owned several guns to protect himself against his clients, some of whom were "funny people and criminally-minded people", his father said. Houston Chronicle said that Prakash Desai is a retired geologist. The daily reported that the police found in his flat several military items that went back to the Civil War. Police found a Thompson submachine gun in his Porsche and a 0.45 caliber handgun that he used against the police. The Chronicle said that the police used a robot to examine his car and his flat for explosives. This is the second mass shooting in 13 years by a person of Indian descent in the US. In

2003, at the Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Biswanath Halder went on a rampage, taking hostages, killing a graduate student and wounding another and a professor.

A graduate of the university's business school, he unsuccessfully sued a university administrator. He was captured alive and sentenced to life after a trial. Although it was not a mass shooting incident, in January 2016 Mainak Sarkar caused a lock-down at University of California - Los Angeles when he killed a professor there. He had also killed his wife and committed suicide.

As America Sleeps, Donald Trump Seethes on Twitter

(Agencies) The tweets started around 3:20 a.m. on Friday. Inside Trump Tower, a restless figure stirred in the predawn darkness, nursing his grievances and grabbing a device that often lands him in hot water. On his Android phone, Donald J. Trump began to tap out bursts of digital fury: He mocked Alicia Machado, a former Miss Universe and a popular Latin American actress, as a "con," the "worst" and "disgusting." In a final flourish, before the sun came up, the Republican presidential nominee claimed — without offering any evidence — that she had appeared in a "sex tape." The tirade fit a pattern. It is when Mr. Trump is alone with his thoughts, and untethered from his campaign staff, that he has seemed to commit his most self-destructive acts. "There has always been this dangerous part of him that will go too far and do something that backfires," said

Michael D'Antonio, the author of "The Truth About Trump," a new biography of the real estate mogul. "His worst impulses," he added, "are self-defeating." Over the past few days, those instincts have been on vivid display. In quick succession, Mr. Trump has repeated his critique that Ms. Machado gained a "massive amount of weight" after she won the Miss Universe crown in 1996; suggested that former President Bill Clinton's infidelities are fair game for campaign attacks; and urged his followers to "check out" a sex tape that may not exist. (Ms. Machado appeared in a risqué scene on a reality television show, but fact-checkers have discovered no sex tape.)

The eruptions could further damage Mr. Trump's reputation with women and Latino voters at a time when he can scarcely afford to alienate either group, five and half weeks before

Election Day. Yet for close students of Mr. Trump's career and campaign, it all has a familiar ring. Over the years, he has issued a stream of needlessly cruel and seemingly off-the-cuff insults — both on and off social media — that have inflamed the public. He declared on Twitter that Kim Novak, a reclusive 81-year-old actress at the time, "should sue her plastic surgeon," sending her into hiding. He derided the appearance of a rival, Carly Fiorina, angering female voters by asking: "Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?" And he criticized the mother of a slain American soldier, musing that as a Muslim woman, she was not "allowed" to speak. Such fulminations have almost always arisen from Mr. Trump's wounded pride, after he has been attacked or has suffered a setback. And they have frequently played out on Twitter, at hours of the day when much of America is asleep.

Two Indian-Americans Arrested In US For H1B Visa Fraud



(Agencies) Two Indian-Americans, who recruited foreign workers mainly from India with purported IT expertise, were arrested today on charges of H-

1B visa fraud, the New Jersey Department of Justice said. Sowrabh Sharma, 31, of New York, along with Shikha Mohta, 33, of Jersey City, New Jersey,

head of finance for the companies, SCM Data and MMC Systems have been charged with one count of conspiracy to commit visa fraud and to obstruct justice and one count of conspiracy to harbor aliens. The Justice Department said Mr Sharma is scheduled to make his initial appearance later in the day before US Magistrate Judge Cathy L Waldor in Newark federal court. Ms Mohta was previously arrested in May 2015 on a criminal complaint and was released on a \$100,000 bond. Prosecutors said SCM Data, MMC

Systems, Mr Sharma, Ms Mohta and other conspirators recruited foreign workers with purported IT expertise who sought work in the United States. They then sponsored foreign workers' H-1B visas with the stated purpose of working for SCM Data and MMC Systems' clients throughout the United States. "When submitting the visa paperwork to USCIS, the conspirators falsely represented that the foreign workers had full-time positions and were paid an annual salary, as required to secure the H-1B visas," prosecutors said. They alleged that contrary to these representations and in violation of the H-1B program, SCM Data, MMC Systems, Mr Sharma, Ms Mohta and others paid the foreign workers only when they were placed at a third-party client who entered into a contract with SCM Data or MMC Systems. The visa fraud and obstruction of justice conspiracy charge carries a maximum potential penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The alien harboring conspiracy charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Russia Plans Electronic Visas, Direct Flights To Attract More Indian Tourists

(Agencies) Moscow : Russia is considering the launch of e-visas for Indian tourists and direct flights between Mumbai and Moscow as part of its new aggressive measures to attract more visitors to the country. "We are planning to start offering e-visas to Indian tourists to ease travel norms for those visiting our country. We expect a positive development on this in the next few months," head of the Russian Federal Agency for Tourism, Valery Korvokin said.

As part of the move to attract more tourists, Russia is also planning to increase the number of flights between the two countries, including a direct flight from Mumbai

barrier while visiting Russia.

The new thrust to attract travelers comes as Russia readies to host the 2018 football world-cup, and expects the event to be a huge draw for Indian tourists.



"Russia is hosting the 2018 FIFA world-cup, and this even can be a big pull factor for Indian tourists, as Indian's are catching onto the global football craze," Mr Korvokin said.

Out of the 18 million Indians who travel abroad every year, only 30,000 visit Russia for tourism.

"We are working on increasing the visibility of Russia in India. We are also working with university officials here to formulate more tourist friendly measures," Mr Korvokin said.

to Moscow and Mumbai to St Petersburg.

The Russian tourism ministry is also planning on organizing certificate programs for Indian tour operators specializing in tours to Russia. Such certificate programs will also train translators to help tourists overcome the language

requirement to attract more and more Indians.

"Russia has a lot to offer to Indian tourists besides the beautiful nature and cultural heritage. Indians should visit Russia and experience the warmth of the Russian 'chai' and Russian people," Paresh Navani of the Russian Information Centre said.

Indian-American Doctor Charged With \$9.5 Million Fraud

(Agencies) Washington : A 48-year-old Indian-American doctor in Alabama has been charged with a health care fraud of USD 9.5 million through illegally conducted tests, and prescribing controlled substances for illegitimate purposes.

Shelinder Aggarwal simultaneously filed guilty plea to the charges. In the plea, he agreed to forfeit his former clinic on Turner Street Southwest in Huntsville, along with USD 6.7 million, the Justice Department said yesterday.

Dr Aggarwal had earlier repaid USD 2.8 million to Medicare and USD 45,843 to Blue Cross after audits, according to his plea agreement. The agreement

stipulates a 15-year prison sentence. A federal judge must accept the terms of the agreement before it is final. The doctor has been charged with one count of distributing a controlled substance outside the scope of professional practice and not for a legitimate medical purpose in July 2012 and with one count of conspiring to execute a health care fraud scheme against Medicare and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama.

According to the Justice Department, Dr Aggarwal surrendered his medical license in 2013, along with his federal Drug Enforcement Administration certificates to prescribe controlled substances, after the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners initiated an investigation.

"Shelinder Aggarwal treated his medical license like a license to deal opiate drugs," US Attorney White Vance said. "He also defrauded Medicare and Blue Cross Blue Shield of more than USD 9 million by performing drug tests he never used to treat his patients. Thanks to this prosecution, Dr Aggarwal is no longer a drug dealer masquerading as a doctor," he said. "His pill mill is closed, he must repay the money he stole from health insurers and he will serve time for his crimes," Vance added. According to the court papers, Dr Aggarwal was a pain management doctor who operated chronic pain care services in Huntsville. The documents state that in 2012, about 80 to 145 patients a day visited Dr Aggarwal's clinic.

Some British Indian Men Consider Their Wives As 'Disposable Women': Report

(Agencies) London: Some British Indian men are among a broader South Asian group in the UK who are guilty of mistreating and abandoning their wives in their countries of origin, a new report by a UK University has found. Lincoln University's 'Disposable Women: Abuse, Violence and Abandonment in Transnational Marriages' described the practice as an emerging form of violence against women, "especially in the context spanning the UK and the Indian sub-continent".

"Abandonment of wives by non-resident Indian (NRI) men in transnational marriages has become a widespread phenomenon. Although the focus of this report is on the specific experience of abandoned women in India experience shows that their appalling accounts of abuse and abandonment are also echoed by women from Pakistan, Bangladesh and elsewhere," the report said. "Ongoing demands for dowry, and escalating violence where such demands could not be met, were significant contexts for abuse for the majority of the women. Inability to meet dowry demands eventually triggered abandonment for most of the women left with their in-laws," it added.

The academics behind the report are now calling on the UK government to recognise the abuse of these so-called "disposable women" to be treated as domestic violence. As part of its recommendations, the report concluded: "Women who once resided in the UK (no matter how briefly) should be treated in all respects as domestic violence victims Transnationally abandoned women should be issued with temporary visas to avail the UK's Domestic Violence Rule.

"At the point of their visa application, British embassies abroad should give women a leaflet setting out their rights and entitlements under the UK immigration and family law." As most women tend to hide the fact that they have been abandoned by NRI husbands based in the UK, the academics spent more than a year finding 57 women in India who had experienced the phenomenon and were willing to share their stories. Sundari Anitha, from the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Lincoln, spoke to women personally affected on a number of trips to Punjab, Delhi and Gujarat.

Met, Ministry of Culture renew MoU



(By Prakash M Swamy) New York —Thomas P. Campbell, Director and CEO of The Metropolitan Museum of Art announced that The Met and the Ministry of Culture of the Government of India have reaffirmed their long-term cooperative relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which renews for five ad-

ditional years the two-way partnerships for sharing knowledge and expertise that have been established between the Museum and cultural institutions in India. The MOU was signed in June by Shefali Shah, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, and Mr. Campbell.

Through the agreement, the

Ministry of Culture and The Met will continue to cooperate in the areas of conservation, exhibitions, academic research, information-sharing, public education, publications, museum management, and short- and long-term loans."This agreement is a wide-ranging reaffirmation of The Met's close relationship with India and

its rich cultural heritage," said Mr. Campbell. "The Indian Conservation Fellowship Program, in particular, has forged important professional relationships between colleagues internationally and has provided critical experience that can be built upon in the future. By generously continuing its support of this program, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has once again demonstrated its commitment to providing educational support for museum professionals around the world."

The launch of the next phase of the Indian Conservation Fellowship Program marks the beginning of the new agreement. This major initiative—undertaken beginning in 2012 by The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (SRAL), with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Government of India and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation—

awards up to seven fellowships a year to conservators currently working in art and cultural heritage museums and institutions in India. The current phase reinforces and expands upon the program's goals and essential structure. Two new partners are now joining the program: the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, Brussels; and the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, The Smithsonian Museums of Asian Art, Washington, D.C.

The components of the program over the next five years are: 35 new fellowships; annual seminars and workshops in India; follow-up visits by host supervisors at fellows' home institutions; visits by the directors of the participating Indian museums to the fellows' host institutions; and meetings of the advisory committee to organize and plan seminars, workshops, and interviews.

American Tamil School kids attended UN Peace Summit



(By Prakash M Swamy) UNITED NATIONS, New York: The US based volunteers run Tamil Schools' students voiced the "Yadhum Oore Yavarum Kelir" (Every city is our city, everyone is our kin) message at the UN during its 71st session on the International Day of Peace. Valar Tamil Iyakkam (VTI), a non-profit organization -that undertakes several visionary projects in the field of Tamil Language and Cultural Education for the younger generation in US - organized the participation of students from the Tri-State (NY, NJ, and CT) Tamil Schools in the UN's 71st session inauguration and the International Day of Peace event held in the sidelines of General Assembly session.

The students who attended this conference heard presentations from the U.N Secretary-General and interacted with UN Messengers of Peace, Goodwill Ambassadors, and young leaders that aim to inspire youth to become more involved in creating a more

peaceful world for all. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon detailed in his address the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to the young students' community. The theme for the 2016 International Day of Peace, The Sustainable Development Goals—Building Blocks for Peace, aims to draw attention to the 17 global goals that will guide our world toward peace and prosperity from now until 2030.

On this particular day, the students also had the opportunity to listen to many, important, influential people talking about the 17 sustainable development goals. These include Tawakkoll Karman (Nobel Peace Laureate), Leyma Gbowee (Nobel Peace Laureate), Shirin Ebadi (Nobel Peace Laureate), Leonardo DiCaprio (Hollywood Actor-Hero of the movie Titanic), Dr. Jane Goodall (UN messenger of peace), Stevie Wonder (UN messenger of peace), Michael Douglas (UN messenger of

peace), Midori Goto (UN messenger of peace), and representatives of UN organizations from Rome, Liberia, and Cyprus. "As part of our efforts to give our students community more exposure to the global leadership and policy making process, we took a team of 30 high school students and teaching volunteers from our New York, New Jersey and Connecticut Tamil Schools to attend the UN's 71st General

Assembly on the International Day of Peace" day. They carried our cultural heritage message of Yadhum Oore Yavarum Kelir (Every city is our city, everyone is our kin)" said Dr. Arul Veerappan, an Ivy League academician and the President of Valar Tamil Iyakkam.

He said: "We hope to get an opportunity to include other Tamil schools in the east coast region for this program in 2017 and even nationwide in later years".

Gnanasekaran, Coordinator of the event said, "The event helped us in creating interest among our Middle and High School students by sharing the UN event participation among the parents and teachers. Valar Tamil Iyakkam is exploring all possible opportunities and programs to prepare our Tamil students community to gain skills not just in our language but also in leadership and policy making process with the global perspective," he said.

Hoboken train crash victims ready to let lawsuits fly

(Agencies) The lawsuits are already set to roll in against NJ Transit after Thursday's crash and will center on the train's lack of automatic braking technology, attorneys told The Post. Adam Cahn of Sakkas, Cahn & Weiss said victims have already been calling him to get started on personal injury lawsuits against the transportation agency. The suits will likely center around the fact that NJ Transit has not installed Positive Train Control, which uses GPS to make sure trains aren't going too



fast and are stopping when they should. The technology, which the feds have been asking train companies to install for years, likely would have prevented Thursday's fatal crash. "These are usually strong cases because this technology has been out there for quite a while and they haven't installed it," Cahn said. One of the victims who contacted Cahn after the crash was a 26-year-old investment banker who was in the third car when the locomotive slammed into the barrier at full speed.

Visit of Mr. Raghubar Das, Honorable Chief Minister of Jharkhand to New York



(By Ruth Alvarez Insider Bureau)
Mr. Raghubar Das, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Jharkhand, visited New York from September 29-30, 2016. During the 2 days in New York following a national tour of investment promotion, Hon'ble Minister held meetings with investors and interacted with the Indian community. The visit is part of the effort to attract potential investors and companies to participate in the Global Investors Meet in Ranchi on 16-17 February 2016. During this investment promotion, the delegation also hoped to learn about the latest and best practices in various sectors and adopt them in Jharkhand, a resource-rich state.

On 29th September 2016, the Honorable Minister addressed a gathering of investors at a roadshow organized by the Govt. of Jharkhand with support from its National partner, the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), in association with the US- India Business Council (USIBC). At this session, the Chief Minister raised awareness about the investment opportunities in Jharkhand as a powerhouse of India's Manufacturing Sector (Make in India) and priority areas like food processing, metal sector, Automotive sector, film industry, textile & apparels, tourism and others. Hon'ble Chief Minister also elucidated various investment opportunities

and key business reforms carried out in the recent past by his government. The Summit was aimed at establishing Jharkhand as a premier investment destination for both foreign as well as domestic investors. Shri Sunil Kumar Burnwal, Secretary, Dept. of Industries, Mines and Geology made a detailed sectoral presentation on the investment opportunities in Jharkhand. The Chief Minister had a series of one-one meetings with investors and interacted with entrepreneurs from Clutch Group, Medtronic, Gilead Sciences, etc. who are looking for high growth consumer markets. He also met with members of the

American Association of Physician of Indian origin (AAPI). Shri P.P. Hinduja Chairman Hinduja Group expressed interest to set up a commercial vehicle assembly unit in Jharkhand and representatives of the group will visit Jharkhand in October 2016 to explore further in this proposal. Smile Train, a NGO that works in the health sector, also met with the delegation and assured that they will further strengthen their presence in Jharkhand. Hon'able Chief Minister also met the president and other officer bearers of the Bihar Jharkhand Association of North America.

Price Salman at khalifa Award Given to Tibaijuka

(By PRAKASH M SWAMY)
UNITED NATIONS, New York: His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa Award for Sustainable Development that was presented to Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, former Minister of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements, Tanzania and former UN- Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations at a gala celebrations at the UN.



The award was presented during a ceremony held at the UN Headquarters on the sidelines of the 71st UN General Assembly (UNGA) session. They emphasized that the award reflected the extent to which the leadership of the Kingdom of Bahrain supported the efforts of the international community on sustainable development, and motivated people and institutions who offered noble service to humanity. They praised the initiatives of His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, in support of sustainable development actions, both locally and regionally, as well as his vision in this area and the standards of developments in Bahrain in various sectors under his leadership.

the Millennium Development Goals, and of its transition to achieve sustainable development goals.

Tanzania's Foreign Affairs and East African Coopera-

tion Minister, Augustine Mahiga said Bahrain and Tanzania had convergent views on the significance of the UN-Habitat and the efforts of Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka for

years to promote its goals, adding that the occasion was a special opportunity to strengthen relations between the two countries. He also lauded the development sta-

tus of Bahrain as one of the countries that had embraced a successful model for sustainable development, saying that it is a pearl among Arab countries.

No Exception On Helmet Rules For Sikh Workers In Canada: Quebec Court



(Agencies) Toronto : Three Sikh truck drivers have been ordered to wear hard hats at work by a Canadian court which ruled that no exception can be made for them as the men lost a 10-year-long legal battle against religious discrimination.

Three Sikh men who drove con-

tainer trucks at the Port of Montreal had argued they had a right to wear a turban instead of a helmet based on Quebec and Canadian charter rights protecting freedom of religion.

In a ruling released Wednesday, Quebec Superior Court Justice Andre Prevost recognised that the requirement to wear helmets violated the mens' charter rights but ruled that safety should trump religion in this case, the Canadian Press reported.

He ruled the port's rules were justified because they protect workers against head injuries.

"The risks are not lower because the claimants are Sikh and wear turbans," he wrote in his decision.

"The safety obligations of the defendants are not less stringent, either, towards the claimants than towards other workers," the judge was quoted as saying.

In a case dating back to 2006, the

men had argued they were victims of religious discrimination after they were no longer allowed to enter the port's terminals without protective headgear. The safety measures were put in place in 2005.

Originally an accommodation was put in place allowing the drivers to stay in their trucks while containers were loaded, but that was eventually deemed not commercially viable because it increased the loading time.

Julius Gray, the lawyer representing the three men, said he was disappointed by the decision but was encouraged that the judge recognised his client's charter rights had been violated.

Gray said he would meet with his clients next week to decide whether to appeal the decision. "I personally believe it's a case that can be very easily and effectively appealed, so I hope that's what they'll do," he said.

Why Indus Waters Treaty Should Be Used Against Pak

Yashwant Sinha

My recent suggestion that India should consider abrogating the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan as one of the strategic responses to the continued recalcitrance on its part and the attack on Uri has drawn flak from some expected and some unexpected quarters. I am not surprised.

India has been at the receiving end of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism for over 25 years by now. During this period, we have seen many governments in India and many Prime Ministers. But India has not yet been able to work out a policy on how to respond to these attacks. So every time an attack takes place, big or small, a debate starts in the country on how we should respond. Those who call for action, like me, are dismissed as hawks and their advice is quickly disregarded. Those who keep warning against any hasty action go on discussing the various alternatives until the people forget the outrage or until a new terrorist attack takes place.

The discussion today is on our response to Uri; Pathankot has been forgotten. When Pathankot had taken place, we started discussing it and forgot all about Gurdaspur. The list can go on endlessly. Apart from liquidating the terrorists or in some cases apprehending them, we have not taken any action against the masterminds sitting in Pakistan despite overwhelming evidence of their involvement. We have been submitting dossier after dossier to Pakistan, allowed its team of investigators to even visit Pathankot in the hope that it will at last act but it never has. The people who planned the attack on Mumbai, the most dastardly in recent memory, remain safe in Pakistan. Should we allow this to go on forever?

The terrorists keep attacking us, we keep discussing options. This is the unending story.

I am in favour of action and all that I am saying is that this time India should act and not just go on discussing how to handle these attacks.

What is our problem? Our

problem is that we are too conscious of our international image; like good schoolboys, we would not like to do anything that will affect our image, or besmirch our clean school uniform. To me, this represents nothing more than a massive inferiority complex. China did not bat an eyelid while rejecting the international court's order on the South China Sea. The noted strategic affairs expert Bramha Chellaney has listed various issues and occasions on all of which the major powers have been guilty of violation of bilateral and international treaties and commitments. The US, with the "coalition of the willing", attacked Iraq in 2003 on the ground that that it possessed weapons of mass destruction. None was found after Iraq was over run. What happened to the reputation of the US or UK? So those who are likely to throw stones at us are themselves full of the stains of their own sins.

Pakistan has already indicated that any violation of

its territory either on land or by air is going to invite massive retaliation. We should expect nothing less. Our inability to act over the years has convinced Pakistan that India is incapable of acting and therefore a mere threat is sufficient to deter us even if we are contemplating any action. Our planning therefore must include responses to the steps that Pakistan may take, the manner in which it may escalate the conflict and how we would manage the various fronts. But planning does not mean inaction. It will be a great tragedy if we do not act after the Uri outrage.

The Simla Agreement was concluded in 1972 after the Bangladesh war. It is now well known that Indira Gandhi wanted to settle the issue of Jammu and Kashmir by recognizing the well-defined Line Of Control as the international border between the two countries. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was not in its favour. So the talks collapsed. In a last-ditch effort, Bhutto begged Indira Gandhi to give

him some time to prepare public opinion in Pakistan to accept this arrangement. Indira Gandhi made the historic mistake of taking pity on Bhutto and agreeing. The Simla agreement therefore talks only of "the final settlement" of the issue of J&K, without defining what the "final settlement" would be. Bhutto of course went back on this understanding as soon as he reached Pakistani territory and in fact instigated his friends to start opposing it to help him go back on it.

The Simla Agreement, however, had another very important provision. India and Pakistan agreed that both countries would "settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations." Through this provision, the UN resolutions of 1947 and 1948 were buried for good. What is the position today? Pakistan has forgotten the Simla Agreement and talks only of the UN resolutions as the basis for the settlement of the J&K issue. It also conceals

the fact that it was Pakistan which refused to adhere to the basic condition of those resolutions, namely to withdraw its forces and its "non-state actors" from the territory of that state before any step could be taken to arrange for a plebiscite. Pakistan remembers only what suits it and suffers from amnesia as far as the rest are concerned. Like all liars, it believes that continuous lying will turn a lie into truth. The basic point is that if Pakistan is not prepared to honour any of its commitments, why should it be incumbent on us to honour all of them? Because we are the good boys in the eyes of the international community and want to stay that way? Nawaz Sharif and Raheel Sharif may be sharif only in name; we in India are the real sharifs.

It is well known that India is a soft state and unfortunately for us, Pakistan knows it as well. It knows that India will hum and haw, will indulge in rhetoric, will discuss all options but will never act. Let us surprise it for once.

Saarc is dead. Press on with connectivity



We are seeing an extraordinary reset of India-Pakistan ties. Each day is marked by public recriminations from both sides and New Delhi is constantly exploring newer avenues of piling the pressure on Islamabad to retaliate against the attack at Uri. The latest is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to pull out of the Saarc summit due at Islamabad in November. It is a dramatic decision intended to signal that India will no longer countenance any pretence in India-Pakistan ties. For a long time both sides were content to keep up appearances in the hope that

routinised contact can over time yield better understanding of the other's position and influence behaviour. The Modi government has given short shrift to such an approach in an effort to unsettle the context in which bilateral ties operate in — which the NDA reckons imposes no costs on Pakistan and allows it to wage proxy war against India.

The PM's decision effectively ends Saarc as we know it. Bhutan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan have joined the boycott, adding to Pakistan's isolation in the region. Few will be shedding tears for the regional grouping

though. Saarc has become a byword for institutional dysfunction; South Asia remains the least integrated region in the world as the regional cooperation agenda was constantly hostage to India-Pakistan clashes. It may be time to rethink what regional cooperation will look like with India and like-minded countries joining together in creative ways rather than be constrained by consensus-based institutional frameworks.

India has called for a BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) meeting next month. The grouping comprises neighbours in South Asia and Southeast Asia. The agenda of isolating Pakistan makes sense only if India manages to be a driver of regional growth that leaves out its errant neighbour. For years, authoritative voices like former foreign secretary Shyam Saran have been urging New Delhi to open

unilaterally its market to smaller neighbours as a goodwill gesture (which does not threaten India's economic interests). He has called for according transit rights to other countries so that they can build economic links with each other through the Indian land mass. Others have called for cross-border energy grids and road rail, shipping and air networks to consolidate connectivity. This is grand project that now need political attention, particularly since China is pressing on with its impressive connectivity enterprises. This is the front that New Delhi needs to focus on since retaliatory measures using water and trade are either reputationally risky or yield little. For instance, revoking the most favoured nation status to Pakistan will likely be mostly symbolic as the volume of official trade is only \$2.2 billion. Indian diplomacy is moving into uncharted waters. A serious cost-benefit analysis, not populist measures, must guide policy.

To revive an old friendship Rescuing the Syrian truce deal

The Russia-Pakistan joint exercises raise many questions. New Delhi has to rebuild ties on its strengths and common concerns with Moscow.

The Russian Embassy announced that their first-ever joint military exercises with Pakistan, that were initially to be held in the sensitive Gilgit-Baltistan area this week, would be shifted with due respect to Indian sensitivities. Why is India's time-tested strategic partner engaging with Pakistan at this juncture? Is there a shift in Russian geostrategy and linkage with China that is impacting Moscow's relations with India? Have India's own foreign policy shifts and new relations set off a reaction in Russia? The Russia-Pakistan joint exercises raise many questions.

A Russia on the move

Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia has shown assertiveness in international affairs. It has taken a clear position on opposing Western intervention and militarist regime-change policies in Iraq and Libya and now in Syria. Russia has used counter-force in the fight against the Islamic State in backing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. It retook the province of Crimea that it had gifted Ukraine in 1954 due to (Soviet) historical reasons. This invited unilateral sanctions on Russia from the U.S. and the European Union. Demonised by the West, Russia has become a strategic partner of China and they have significant convergence of interests.

India as an emerging power has developed a strategic partnership with the U.S. There are real and perceived shifts in Indian armament policies where Russia dominated for years. India has opened up to the U.S., France, Israel, all of whom are gradually edging out the Russians in some sectors. Russia-India trade has not grown to great heights despite the encouragement of both states. Yet India has been supportive of Russian positions and has a careful and calibrated response to all Russian actions — in Chechnya, Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere, India has supported Russia.

The Russians, on their part, have dutifully backed the Indian position on Kashmir; they share Indian concerns on terrorism; they continue with deep collaborations, providing sensitive technologies, military equipment, nuclear power engines and much more to India. They have a partnership in energy. Yet a Russia dependent on arms and energy exports is constantly looking for new markets and Pakistan is a potential one. The planned exercises were an extension of this search.

Moscow's Chinese concerns

The reality is that the world situation is one of multipolarity and consequent interdependency, contradictions, compromises and pressures. Countries across the spectrum are building multiple alliances. There is scope for both linkages and dependency. So China, who we think the U.S. is trying to 'contain' (and India could get a role in this), has got its yuan accepted as world currency by the International Monetary Fund and the New York branch of Bank of China has been designated as the clearing house for the Chinese official currency, the renminbi. China is leveraging its economy and relationships to build a hegemony (G-2) with the U.S. where both can share international financial domination.

Russia is well aware of this, and has its own concerns about the Chinese dominating Russian markets, exploiting Russian resources, and not backing Russian security concerns. China is enticing countries, including Russia, with its One Belt, One Road plan that will develop huge new linkages and develop trade routes. Pakistan is a satellite state for China. Russia has concerns about Central Asia vis-à-vis China and Pakistan.

In these circumstances, India has to rebuild on its strengths and common concerns with the Russians. They have to revitalise their earlier agreement on sharing intelligence for a joint strategy on terrorism. If India is concerned with state-sponsored terrorism from Pakistan, Russia is concerned with the backing that states are directly or indirectly giving to terror groups in West Asia and Central Asia. India will have to be more forthright in condemning states that on the pretext of regime change or local geopolitics are allowing the growth of terror groups in West Asia.

Balancing new and old allies

Russia and India have common positions and concerns in Afghanistan. Last week the Afghans, in a peace deal backed and welcomed by the U.S. and Pakistan, rehabilitated the mujahideen "butcher of Kabul" and India hater Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. This snubs the Indian and Russian policy of isolating all terrorists and instead has accommodated and compromised with who they wish to label 'good Taliban'. This policy is an extension of using terrorists for strategic use. Indian and Russian anxieties on terrorism need to converge and bring about some positive outcome.

India has its own military exercises with the U.S. and has signed logistics agreements which can eventually give the U.S. access to Indian naval bases. Is India willing to do the same with Russia? Given the growing U.S.-Russia hostility, has India reassured Russia that this access will not jeopardise Russian interests? If not, it should do so.

Over the past five and a half years, every international effort to bring violence in Syria to an end has collapsed. The UN has largely been a spectator since what began as civil strife spiralled into a deadly war between the regime and a group of rebel groups supported by outside powers. In this time, half a million people have been killed. The Geneva I and II peace plans did not even take off. Russia and the U.S. had earlier agreed to cease hostilities, but the agreement did not hold. When Moscow and Washington, which support the regime and the rebels, respectively, decided to go ahead with talks despite the initial setback and finally came up with a proper ceasefire agreement earlier this month, hopes were high about bringing at least some temporary relief to Syrians. But within a week of reaching the agreement, the Syrian regime and the rebels are back fighting each other, erasing the advances made through months of negotiations. It is immaterial to ask who has violated the terms of the agreement, given the hostility and the contradictory accounts of who did what. The Syrians blame the U.S. for violating the terms first with airstrikes, killing more than 60 Syrian soldiers in Jebel Tharda on September 17, a few days into the deal. The U.S. says the strike was a mistake. It, in turn, blames Russian jets for attacking a UN aid convoy in Aleppo a few days later, which Moscow denies. Amid the allegations and counter-allegations, the war drags on, creating more havoc, especially in Aleppo that has witnessed heavy regime bombardment and where 2.5 lakh people are believed to be trapped.

There are two key impediments to achieving truce. First, President Bashar al-Assad is now making advances in the battlefield. Recapturing Aleppo, once Syria's largest city, has always been high on his agenda, and he may be less keen to compromise at a time when he is winning. But the problem is that while trying to recapture the city his forces might commit another massacre, which the world should not let happen. Being Mr. Assad's greatest supporter, Russia has a moral responsibility to end the siege of Aleppo. But Russia has its own concerns. It wants the rebels to isolate the jihadists among themselves, particularly Jabhat Fateh al-Sham, and has been asking the West to target such groups. Though the U.S. has said it is fighting all jihadist groups in Syria, it is now focussed only on the Islamic State, which is in retreat. The U.S. and Russia need to stay engaged in talks. The word truce may appear to be a cliché in today's Syria, but an international ceasefire deal between the U.S. and Russia still seems to be the best option to turn around the Syrian situation.



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Why I Took WhatsApp To Court - By A 19-Year-Old Student

Karmanya Singh Sareen

It was a warm Friday morning in my home in Delhi where I was spending my summer break. I woke up late and opened my phone, looking at the notifications. When I opened WhatsApp, I saw that they had updated their Privacy Policy.

I did not tap 'Agree'. I clicked 'Not Now' and decided to look at it later. Since time was in abundance, I read the Policy to see as to what were the changes WhatsApp had made.

The policy started with something like "Respect for your Privacy is coded into our DNA" that sounded assuring but as I kept reading, I found out that the Policy had completely changed from its previous and only version.

- It now sought to share information (including messages) with Facebook and its family of companies.

- It also sought to send users advertisements and banners based on their messaging history.

- It could also retain 'popular' videos and photos for an indefinite period of time. This policy also granted WhatsApp a "worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free, sublicensable, and transferable license to use, reproduce, distribute, create derivative works of, display, and perform the information (including the content)" that users upload, submit, store, send, or receive on or through their Services.

- The minimum user age was now changed from 16 years to 13 years.

Facebook's acquisition of WhatsApp in 2014 immediately came to my mind. According to WhatsApp's official blog, the Facebook acquisition would not change the core fundamentals that WhatsApp was based on and WhatsApp would function separately and autonomously even after acquisition. To quote their blog from 2014:

"If partnering with Facebook meant that we had to change our values, we wouldn't have done it. Instead, we are forming a partnership that would allow us to continue operating independently and autonomously. Our fundamental values and beliefs will not change. Our principles will not change. Everything that has made WhatsApp the leader in personal messaging will still be in place."

But what had happened was far from this sentiment. Facebook had decided to severely compromise the integrity of its users.

What I saw on the screen was according to me a very cleverly worded, misleading and vague Privacy Policy. I knew at that moment that something was wrong. My gut feeling told me that when something is hard to understand in contracts, it generally means something is wrong. The section in the old policy namely "The Information WhatsApp Does Not Collect" was completely deleted.

WhatsApp had, in my opinion, unilaterally, without the consent of its users, completely changed their Privacy Policy, and the users were unknowingly agreeing to it, without knowing its consequences. I believed this was a breach of the users' trust. User information (including messages) was going to be shared with the Facebook Family of Companies for extremely vague purposes, including ads and banners. But this is what they said in their official blog:

"When we sat down to start our own thing together three years ago we wanted to make something that wasn't just another ad clearinghouse. We wanted to spend our time building a service people wanted to use because it worked and saved them money and made their lives better in a small way."

- WhatsApp's CEO

I checked around and found that my cousin who was a doctor, several lawyers who work with my parents and other educated professionals had unknowingly agreed to the new Policy. Several of my friends had also clicked 'Agree'.

With a bit of navigating, I found an OPT-OUT option. Even this option was actually not an OPT-OUT as it only provided for an opt-out from receiving commercials etc. They would continue to share information (including messages) with Facebook irrespective of the user opting out or in. It was just a psychological effect given to the average user that they had opted out of the data-sharing with Facebook. I decided to challenge this, after consulting with my lawyer friend Prabhas Bajaj, along with Shreya Sethi, who is also a law student.

We prepared a Writ Petition in a PIL (Public Interest Litigation) to present before the Delhi High Court with my mom's help. We wanted the Government to act according to their jurisdiction, and if not, the court to deliver justice to all WhatsApp users, including us.

At the first hearing, the Hon'ble Court issued notice to TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) and UOI (Union

of India) to file a response.

On the next date, they replied that they did not have any jurisdiction on Internet based messaging services. The Hon'ble Court then heard arguments from our side and was reserving the matter for orders when the lawyer for appeared and said that WhatsApp did not share data and that the only data they had access to was phone numbers and names. This was even though; their Privacy Policy said that they shared messages as well with Facebook.

The court asked WhatsApp to file an affidavit in order to clear out the facts, in which they completely somersaulted from what they said in Court. They simply copied and pasted their Privacy Policy and put it into the affidavit.

The court decided the matter two days after the final hearing, directing WhatsApp to delete all data belonging to users who delete WhatsApp before September 25. WhatsApp was also directed not to share information before 25 September 2016 with Facebook, even if users continued use of WhatsApp.

This gave the users the opportunity to decide whether they want to continue to use WhatsApp or not. And if they will

be using WhatsApp, they will now make a consented and informed choice on what messages they exchange with their loved ones, friends, families etc.

There are still several outstanding issues in this case. For example, users create the content and if so, do they not have a say in the Privacy policy of such services? Users are the asset base for these applications but they are completely ignored and are sometimes misled too.

With the internet being open to the world and the market being so competitive, I believe that the users should own their data and should make the choice on using the best and most secure services possible. And at this point, there are several alternatives in sight. The users' privacy should not be compromised at any point.

As of last night, there are reports that consumer groups have petitioned the US Federal Trade Commission to look into the matter and have relied upon the order of the Delhi High Court.

Lastly I ask - Is it fair for the postman to read your letter? I don't think so.

Also would it be fair for the postman to give your letter to someone else, not knowing what they would do with it? I wouldn't risk it. Would you?

Modi's Pak Policy Lies Completely in tatters

Sushma Swaraj took to the UN General Assembly podium and demanded that "if any nation refuses to join this global strategy" - she was referring to the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism that India introduced in the UN 20 years ago - "then we must isolate it." Very good - except that if she had Pakistan in mind, I am very sorry but their position is the same as that of several member-states: that, despite the passage of two decades, much work still needs to be done on producing a consensual draft of the Convention acceptable to all. Indeed, as veteran Indian diplomat at the UN Hardeep Puri, now with the BJP, pointed out in the Left, Right & Centre programme on NDTV, the main nay-sayer has been the United States of America (he also added Syria). Not Pakistan. It is all very well for our External Affairs Minister to say that "such countries should have no place in the comity of nations" - but who is going to bell the American cat?

The last reported statement of Pakistan in the Ad Hoc

Committee that is trying to draft the Convention under the chairmanship of Sri Lanka's Rohan Perera is that of Masood Khan on October 7, 2014 saying Pakistan regrets that "the monster of terrorism seems to be getting bigger" and was being used as an "instrument of asymmetric warfare." He was far from being alone - the Arab nations, NAM and OIC backed him - in insisting that the CCIT "must clearly differentiate between acts of terrorism and legitimate struggles for self-determination of people living under foreign occupation". Indeed, when I, as Joint Secretary (UN) in 1983, was representing India in the UN Sixth Committee, my instructions were to say much the same thing.

To achieve our goals as spelt out by Sushma Swaraj, we would, at a minimum, require the support of the US, Russia, and China as Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, and the unstinted backing of the Nonaligned Movement and the member-states of South Asia in the UN General Assembly.

Where do we stand with each

of them in the aftermath of Modi raking up Balochistan on 15 August, Gilgit and Baltistan the same day, and the Uri attack on 18 September - against the background of the continuing agitation in the streets of Kashmir since July 8?

As far as the United States is concerned, notwithstanding Modi's heroic efforts to impress Obama with his ten-lakh rupee bandhgala and his repeated invocation of "Barak" so that TV conveys his closeness to the US president, and Obama having designated India, during Modi's State visit to Washington in June, as a "Major Defense Partner", the US reaction to Modi's remarks on Balochistan was conveyed to the world by the US State department spokesman, John Kirby, in response to a pointed question from an Indian journalist about a month later, on September 13: "The government policy," he said disarmingly, "is that we support the territorial integrity of Pakistan". He added, for good measure, "We do not support independence for Balochistan".

Thus, in one sentence, he not

only put paid to India's interference in Pakistan's internal affairs but also sloughed off Modi's bear hug (don't forget his 56-inch chest) for poor Barak Obama. He also made clear the United States' total lack of sympathy for Brahmdag Bugti and Hyrbayir Marri, both of whom have sought asylum/refuge in India in order to continue their campaign to prise Balochistan out of Pakistan's grip.

Unfazed, the Indian correspondent persisted with a supplementary, "So, do you have any reaction to the Indian Prime Minister's statements on that particular subject?" Kirby socked it back to him: "I think I just gave our reaction to events there" - and moved on to the next question.

Well, the Uri attack on 18 September came five days later than Kirby's statement, so that should have changed the US position. Instead, on 22 September, four days after Uri, US Secretary of State John Kerry met with Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif and underlined their "strong, long-term bilateral partnership" (Contd on page 20)

Sushma Swaraj's Speech Outwitted And Outshone Nawaz Sharif's



Ashok Malik

Speeches at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), especially by subcontinental political leaders, have generally been made for a television audience back home. Many of the issues and themes raised have little meaning for those in the room or for a truly global audience, but are meant to make a point to the individual politician's voters and constituents in his or her home country.

It is important to see both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's speeches at UNGA in that broader context. Of course, there is one telling difference - Sharif was much more conscious of his home constituency, reflecting Pakistan's unifocal obsession with India. His speech was entirely limited to India. Frankly, it was targeted at a set of listeners in Rawalpindi and not beyond.

Sushma Swaraj's speech was conscious of the fact that she was expected to rebut Sharif's arguments, but was also careful to present India as a credible and responsible international actor with a greater agenda than just Pakistan-backed terrorism. That is why the first half of her address made expansive references to the global challenge of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

She linked these to government initiatives in India - from sanitation access to financial inclusion - that mirror the motivations of the SDGs. In particular, she emphasised India's upcoming ratification of the Paris Climate Agreement. This is important because it acknowledges India's role as a problem solver and as a country willing to shoulder the burden of fighting climate change as an integral part of its own efforts to modernise its economy and society. It is a departure from a negotiating stance that complained - often with

substance - about legacy issues and the emissions record of the West but without offering solutions for the future. In this, the Narendra Modi government has moved forward with enlightenment - and Swaraj made that point.

The meat of the External Affairs Minister's speech was, of course, on terrorism. She was careful to locate the threat to India - including most recently in Uri - within a worldwide battle against Islamist terrorism that has stretched from Bangkok to Mogadishu and New York to Kabul. She also added to an Indian foreign policy argument

that is increasingly gaining currency about the footprints of a vast majority of terrorist attacks being traced back to Pakistan. This is not to suggest that all terrorists are Pakistanis, not at all. Yet, the fact is in so many cases, terrorists - even so-called lone-wolf terrorists - have connections with Pakistan: training, funding, logistical support, inspiration, propaganda and so on. Pakistan-backed terror infrastructure may have begun as an anti-India enterprise but now hurts the entire planet.

The "isolation" of Pakistan that both Swaraj and Modi have hinted at or explicitly mentioned in recent days is a reflection of this. It aims at convincing prominent stakeholders in the global community, including every major victim of terrorism, that Pakistan's role, direct or indirect, planned or inadvertent, in promoting terrorism is denied nowhere - except in Pakistan. Pakistan is alone in that it is the planet's Jihad Central. It is also alone in being in denial about being Jihad

Central.

From Pakistan's complicity, Swaraj carefully turned attention to the Pakistani government and its agencies and their complicity. She was stating the commonsensical when she asked that cutting, rhetorical question: "Terrorists do not own banks or weapons factories, so let us ask the real question: who finances these terrorists, who arms them and provides sanctuaries? We heard similar questions being asked by Afghanistan from this podium." Subtly, Swaraj was demolishing and debunking the idea of the terrorist as a "non-state actor". This is a phrase heard so often in Pakistan, right from the time its then president Asif Ali Zardar used it after the Mumbai terror attacks of November 2008. Pakistan seems to insist that random evil networks exploit its territory, target India and other countries (and sometimes ordinary Pakistani citizens too) and mysteriously disappear into secret sanctuaries without the hapless government knowing anything. Swaraj made

the case that the government and the state in Pakistan - with its many black-ops agencies and militia - is not innocent of this process. The compromising of weapons and ammunition facilities of the Pakistani military and of the financial system in Pakistan not just nourishes terrorism but occurs with the knowledge and backing of (sections of the) state.

Indeed, even the slaughter of goats on Id-ul-Zuha (Bakrid) in cities such as Lahore has been numerically much too high in comparison to the local population. This is seen as a mechanism to pour funds into organisations such as Lashkar-e-Toiba, which take the dead goat's hide as "charity" and sell it to the leather industry. A simple act of religious obligation by the devout has been so thoroughly ravaged by terror groups and their fronts. Does the Pakistani state not know - or does it not care?

Sushma Swaraj obliquely raised that question. India will need to do so over and over again in the coming months.

Why Hasn't India Ended Most Favoured Nation Status For Pak?

"Those who live in glass houses don't throw stones on each other's homes." What I missed in this statement was the "Chinoy Seth" as a prefix to the speech given at the United Nations General Assembly by the Indian Foreign Minister. This dialogue had attained a mythical status in the Indian film industry and reminds us of the actor Raaj Kumar with his unique style of dialogue delivery. He utters this dialogue and breaks the glass in the cult film of the early 60s - "Waqt." When I heard Sushma Swaraj speaking these words, I immediately thought she is going to break the glass but she did not and my imagination was insanely foolish. I forgot that "Waqt" was a movie and UNGA was reality.

But unfortunately, the Modi government has not been able to break the glass ceiling between the film and the reality. The whole RSS brass including Modi has lived all his life with false imagery of Muslims, Pakistan and the partition. This has a very powerful reflection in their utterances. If 18 soldiers had been killed by the terrorists during the Congress government or any government other than the BJP, it would have buried them under avalanche of criticism and accused them of being the

most toothless and the weakest ever.

But bad luck to BJP and Mr Modi that is now he who is leading the government as the country asks what strong action he is going to take to teach Pakistan a permanent lesson. Alas, nothing of that sort is happening. Let me remind our readers what was said during the UPA regime about terrorist attacks on India. When two soldiers were decapitated by Pakistani troops in the most cowardly act, Sushma Swaraj herself demanded the heads of ten Pakistani soldiers in revenge. Now 18 soldiers have been massacred in Uri but the government has only talked about human rights violations in Baluchistan.

Since Uri, I was also reminded, along with many other nationalists, of the famous dialogue which Mr Modi had delivered on a TV show stating that the UPA government should stop writing "love letters" to Pakistan. He had also insinuated that "Indian Prime Minister instead of running to America after every terrorist attack should go to Pakistan". He tangentially hinted that India should attack Pakistan instead of

complaining to international big powers about Pakistan's unholy acts. At the time, he was Chief Minister of Gujarat and had nurtured his image as a tough-talking, strong, decisive leader. He was successful in presenting a contrast to Manmohan Singh who was perceived to be a weak Prime Minister. Modi's logic was simple: Pakistan triggered terrorists attacks in India because India was led by a meek and weak Prime Minister.

The country bought his logic and he was elected Prime Minister. But we have not moved an inch on our Pakistan policy. Pakistan is still continuing attacks with the same audacity. Kashmir is boiling so thoroughly that the unrest is being compared with that of the early 90s. The Pathankot air base and the Uri army camp have been targeted by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists. Lives are being lost every day. And the government's Pakistan policy seems to be inherently confused.

Instead of taking strong visible action, the Modi government in March invited an ISI delegation to visit the Pathankot air base to investigate

the terror attack. The perpetrators were asked to investigate their own acts! It's a proven fact that every act of terror in India has a robust ISI signature. The government of India had given enough proof in the past of this, but a nationalist government in the most surprising manner invited the same ISI which defies all logic of diplomacy. Does it mean that the Modi government has given a clean hit to ISI? Does it believe that earlier governments were wrong in blaming the ISI?

The leader and the party which had said time and again that terrorism and talks can't go together invited Nawaz Sharif for Mr Modi's swearing-in ceremony. Then, in the most outrageous fashion, it cancelled Secretary-level talks just because the Pakistani High Commissioner in India consulted with Hurriyat leaders. And without taking the country and his cabinet in confidence, the Prime Minister landed in Lahore while returning from Afghanistan to wish Nawaz Sharif a happy birthday and feed him cake. Think of how the BJP would have reacted if a similar act had been performed by a Congress Prime Minister and followed within a week with the Pathankot attack.

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Nations should Isolate Pak: Sushma's war cry at UN



(By Prakash M. Swamy) UNITED NATIONS: Terrorism is undoubtedly the biggest violation of human rights. It targets the innocent and kills indiscriminately and has gone way beyond affecting individuals or nations – it is a crime against humanity itself, said India's Minister for External Affairs Sushma Swaraj. Addressing the United Nations General Assembly Monday, she said it is important to ask - who is behind this and who benefits from it? Terrorists do not own banks or weapons factories, so let us ask the real question: who finances these terrorists, who arms them and provides sanctuaries? Swaraj said the world has been battling this scourge for long. However, despite the blood and tears of innocent victims, attacks this year alone in Kabul and Dhaka, Istanbul and Mogadishu, Brussels and Bangkok, Paris, Pathankot and Uri as well as daily barbaric tragedies in Syria and Iraq, remind us that these malevolent forces are yet to be defeated.

"If we want to defeat terrorism, there is only one way – that we unite across our differences, add steel to our resolve and inject urgency in our response. We need to forget our prejudices and join hands together to script an effective strategy against terror. This is not an impossible task provided we have the will. Otherwise our future generations will forever hold us to account. And if any nation refuses to join this global strategy, then we must isolate it," she said. This month we marked the 15th Anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks on this city. Tragically, less than 15 days ago, another attempt at killing innocents was made through an act of terror in this same city. We, who have suffered in Uri recently, understand the pain inflicted by the same forces. The Minister said on Sept. 21 the Prime Minister

of Pakistan used this podium to make baseless allegations about human rights violations in my country. I can only say that those accusing others of human rights violations would do well to introspect and see what egregious abuses they are perpetrating in their own country, including in Balochistan. The brutality against the Baloch people represents the worst form of State oppression. The Prime Minister of Pakistan also said that India has placed pre-conditions for talks which are not acceptable to him. What pre-conditions? Did we impose any precondition before extending an invitation for the oath-taking ceremony of our Government? Did we impose any pre-condition when I went to Islamabad for the Heart of Asia conference and agreed to begin the Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue? Did we impose any pre-condition when Prime Minister Modi traveled from Kabul to Lahore? What pre-conditions? We took the initiative to resolve issues not on the basis of conditions, but on the basis of friendship, she asked.

"We have in fact attempted a paradigm of friendship in the last two years which is without precedent. We conveyed Eid greetings to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, wished success to his cricket team, extended good wishes for his health and wellbeing. Did all this come with pre-conditions attached? What did we get in return? Pathankot, Bahadur Ali, and Uri. Bahadur Ali is a terrorist in our custody, whose confession is a living proof of Pakistan's complicity in cross-border terror. But when confronted with such evidence, Pakistan remains in denial. It persists in the belief that such attacks will enable it to obtain the territory it covets. My firm advice to Pakistan is: abandon this dream. Jammu and

Kashmir is an integral part of India and will always remain so. "The CCIT was proposed by India in 1996. In 2016, despite the passage of two decades, we are yet to come to a conclusion. As a result, we are unable to develop a norm under which terrorists shall be prosecuted or extradited. Therefore it is my appeal that this General Assembly acts with fresh resolve and urgency to adopt this critical Convention.

History proves that those who seed extremist ideologies, reap a bitter harvest. The germ of evil has grown into a hydra-headed monster, backed by technological sophistication that threatens the peace and harmony of our world. We will not be able to win against terrorism by making specious distinctions between your problems and mine, between terrorists who attack you and those who attack me. In our midst, there are nations that still speak the language of terrorism, that nurture it, peddle it, and export it. To shelter terrorists has become their calling card. We must identify these nations and hold them to

account. These nations, in which UN designated terrorists roam freely, lead processions and deliver their poisonous sermons of hate with impunity, are as culpable as the very terrorists they harbor. Such countries should have no place in the comity of nations, she said. Just as we need a more contemporary approach to combating terrorism, we also need a less outdated Security Council that continues to reflect the world order of an earlier era. The vast majority of nations share the belief that the UN should not remain frozen in 1945, just to serve the interests of a few. Whether it is institutions or issues, we must come to terms with present day realities and the challenges that confront us. An expansion in the Permanent and non-Permanent membership of the Council to reflect contemporary realities is therefore, an urgent necessity. "Climate change is yet another serious challenge confronting us. There are enough resources on this planet to fulfil everyone's needs, but not enough to fulfill anyone's greed, for greed is limitless. In this

context Modi has championed a new concept – Climate Justice. If we respect nature, nature will respect and nurture us and future generations. But, if we exploit nature mindlessly, then we must be mindful that nature will unleash its fury upon us. In different parts of the world, we have already seen nature drift towards the unnatural – from torrential rain to excessive heat, from tsunamis to storms and cloudbursts.

We must curb reckless consumption, and adopt lifestyles in harmony with nature. Yoga, the storehouse of India's ancient wisdom, epitomizes a sustainable lifestyle. Let me record our gratitude for the unprecedented global response to the International Day of Yoga." India has launched an ambitious domestic effort to transform our energy mix to achieve 40 percent energy from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030. The massive investments required entail a predictable and stable environment towards which we are working actively. Our path-breaking initiative for an International Solar Alliance is intended to make

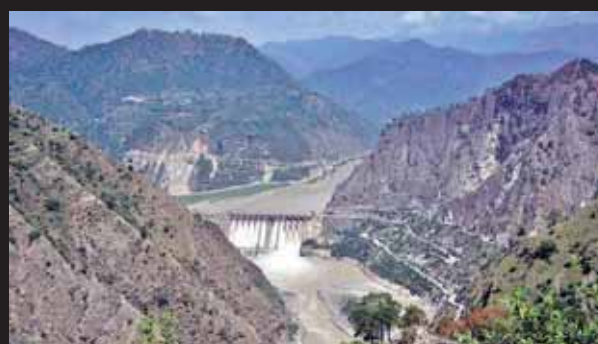
efficient solar technology available for all. India will continue to play a leading role in combating climate change, she added. The 17 goals adopted by UN General Assembly are matched by the development vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi which is geared towards the achievement of these same objectives. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, more than 400,000 toilets have been constructed in schools. The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (Educate the Girl Child, Save the Girl Child) program has become a nation-wide mission. The Make in India brand is receiving international acclaim. Almost 250 million bank accounts have been opened for the poor under the Jan Dhan Yojana, the largest financial inclusion program the world has ever seen. Digital India is transforming the country. Under the Skill India initiative, a number of programs are underway to enable youth to reap the demographic dividend. These initiatives have added a new dimension to India's growth story, making it the fastest growing major economy in the world at a time of slow global growth. We are all aware that 1/6th of humanity lives in India, she said.

Focus on 3 hydel projects to supply water to J-K as govt reviews Indus treaty

(Agencies) The government wants to expedite work on three hydro power projects in Sawalkote, Pakal Dul and Bursar on the Chenab and its tributary in Jammu and Kashmir after it reviewed the Indus Waters Treaty on Monday following the Uri attack and deterioration of ties with Pakistan.

The three projects can potentially generate 3656 MW of energy which experts say will give a huge boost to the power-deficit state. HT spoke to government officials and assessed the status of the three projects, all of which fall in the Jammu region of the state. The officials also added that the work on the projects would not violate the principles of IWT or hamper the flow of water to Pakistan. The biggest of three is

the Sawalkote project in Ramban district on the Chenab river with a 192.5-metre dam and an expected power generation capacity of 1856



included in the priority projects monitored by CEA on regular basis. The necessary techno economic clearance is expected soon."

A top government official in the project told HT: "Of the 30 clearances necessary for the project, 20 have been received. The ultimate clearance will be given by CEA. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 18,560 crores."

MW. The project is being constructed by Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation (JKSPDC).

JKSPDC Limited says on its website: "The project is under appraisal by Central Electricity Authority (CEA). The project is

obtaining clearances in 2014 and it is expected that by the end of this year we will get all the clearances." He said that the pre-construction stage of the project is underway with work going on for developing roads, bridges and staff colony at the site.

I'm Shakuni Mama of Biharis, Katju says after Nitish's outburst

(Agencies) Former Supreme Court judge Markandey Katju called himself the "Shakuni Mama of Biharis" on Wednesday, a riposte to Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's outburst against the well-known jurist's unflattering Facebook post on the state.

Shakuni, the maternal uncle of the Kauravas, is a negative character in the epic Mahabharat.

"Nitish Kumar says that I regard myself as the 'mai baap' (guardian) of Bihar. No Nitishji, I am not the 'mai baap' of Biharis but their Shakuni Mama," he wrote on

Facebook. That was in response to chief minister Kumar's public outburst against him on Tuesday, calling him Bihar's "mai baap".

Kumar was reacting to Katju's sarcastic post on Sunday, suggesting that Pakistan could get Kashmir if it agrees to take Bihar as part of a "package deal".

The sarcasm didn't go down well as JD(U) legislator and spokesperson Neeraj Kumar on Tuesday evening lodged a police case against Katju for his utterances against Bihar. The case was registered under provisions in

law that governs sedition — section 124(a) — and "assertion prejudicial to national integration".

Bihar BJP chief spokesperson Vinod Narayan Jha demanded his arrest on charges of sedition. Terming the comments as serious, he demanded an inquiry to ascertain if Katju was "entrapped among anti-nationals out to destroy India's sovereignty and integrity".

The sharp attacks, prompted the jurist to say he was only joking.

"Do you think I will seriously ask Pakistan to take the offer? I joke about many communities. Do you



think I will seriously offer Bihar with Kashmir to Pakistan? It was just a joke and people should develop a sense of humour."

Though he made light of his September 25 comments, he was not to be browbeaten by litigation.

Katju retaliated on Facebook on Wednesday: "I suggest Biharis should take their complaint against me to the U.N. When 'cheer haran'

(stripping) of Draupadi was being done, she appealed to Lord Krishna to save her honour."

Katju, also a former chairman of the Press Council of India, was lambasted on social media, with netizens hurling invectives. Some even suggested Pakistan should take him instead of Bihar.

Amit Kumar Tiwari, a netizen, wrote: "Sir, if u r a brahman... cow is your mother and bull is our father, admit it..."

Katju was prompt with an uncanny reply: "And bhainsa (buffalo) is my chacha (uncle)."

The jurist seems to have developed a knack for controversial comments, sparing not even Mahatma Gandhi when he called the father of nation in a 2015 Facebook post "a British agent who did great harm to India". He also called Rabindranath Tagore a "loyal British stooge" and Subhas Chandra Bose "an agent of the Japanese fascist imperialists". He eventually apologised. In a blog, he called Mother Teresa a fanatic and fraud, and then in a series of tweets last year, he said former AAP convener Shazia Ilmi should have been BJP's candidate for the chief minister's post in Delhi because she's "much more beautiful than Kiran Bedi".

Back in 2012, he wrote "90 per cent of Indians are fools" and that this was "the unpleasant truth" while a year later, he called Pakistan a "fake country".

Fall in line or we'll make you do it: Supreme court tells defiant BCCI

(Agencies) The Supreme Court said on Wednesday it will not allow the BCCI to defy orders, reacting to a status report submitted by the RM Lodha Committee that sought the ouster of the Indian cricket board's top brass, including president Anurag Thakur. The panel for cricket reforms requested the apex court to declare ineffective decisions taken by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) that violates an earlier order. In its annual general meeting on September 21, the board flouted the panel's guidelines in several decisions, including the formation of a new cricketer selection committee. "SC will not allow BCCI to defy court orders. We will pass appropriate orders to set you right," Chief Justice TS Thakur told senior counsel Arvind Dattar, who represented BCCI during earlier hearings. Dattar was present in the court for another matter.

"You (BCCI) are not a law unto yourself. Fall in line otherwise we will make you fall



in line," the bench said, giving the board time till October 6 to respond to report. A bench headed by Thakur was hearing the matter, and became livid when told of the BCCI's stand. If it could defy the Supreme Court, then allegations of irregularity in the board could be true, the court said, rebuking the board. The Lodha panel was formed by the court after the 2013 Indian Premier League (IPL) spot-fixing scandal. Headed by former Chief Justice RM Lodha, the panel suggested several changes in reforming the world's richest cricket body. The Supreme

Court approved of the recommendations on July 18, and directed the BCCI to implement them. The cricket board filed a review petition against the order, which is still under scrutiny in the top court. The board called an emergency meeting on September 30 to discuss the implementation of the recommendations. Lodha Committee had set the BCCI two deadlines: September 30 to make constitutional changes and December 15 to form a nine-member apex committee that will replace the working committee.



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As Saamna cartoon triggers controversy, Shiv Sena jumps into firefighting



(Agencies) The Shiv Sena sought to make amends on Wednesday after it riled some of its leaders with a recent cartoon in its mouthpiece over the ongoing Maratha protests. The party also tried to veer focus away from the controversy by directing anger against the Muslims.

On Wednesday, party president Uddhav Thackeray convened a meeting of upset Sena leaders. The meeting held at Thackeray's residence, Matoshree, was also attended by Sena ministers in

the Maharashtra government. The discussion focused on pacifying the Maratha community.

The move came a day after the Sena resorted to damage-control by issuing a clarification over the Saamna caricature, but that met with little acceptance. It prompted the party to go for a diversionary tactic, as the party mouthpiece on Wednesday published an editorial that spoke of the Muslims. "It is surprising that Muslim leaders give a call saying 'even we will protest, heat up the

atmosphere' at a time when there is trust being shown (by the government) towards the Muslims," the editorial said.

A Sena leader said the party was supporting the Maratha protests in districts where it has a hold. "All those protests were disciplined," he said. "Now people were really angry with the cartoon Saamna published; it has hurt the protestors' sentiments. We got many calls expressing resentment."

The Saamna cartoon on Sunday was a three-panelled caricature showing different types of protesters, including a man kissing a woman, playing on the words 'muk morcha' (silent protests) as 'muka morcha' (kissing protest).

Marathas have been demanding reservations in education and government jobs. The community also wants a review and amendments to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, saying its provisions were being misused.

A page-one "clarification" Saamna carried on Tuesday said rumours were being spread on social media over the cartoon when the intention of the artist was not to hurt the sentiments of the Maratha community.

The newspaper also published a clarification by the caricaturist, Srinivas Prabhudesai. "My cartoon has hurt sentiments of the Maratha community but that was not the intention behind it in any way," he said. "There has been an attempt to politicize the issue and draw Sena and Saamna into it."

At least three leaders from Buldhana district in Marathwada — MP Prataprao Jadhav and legislators Sanjay Raimulkar and Shashikant Khedkar — threatened to resign over the cartoon, but they were pacified, according to sources.

Marathwada or central Maharashtra is considered the state's caste cauldron. It is here that the first Maratha silent protests were held even though it was a July 13 rape of a teenager in Ahmednagar district that triggered the protests. The Sena made inroads into Marathwada two decades ago when the state witnessed a bout of caste polarisation and violence in a big way over the renaming of the Marathwada University after Dalit icon Babasaheb Ambedkar. The party opposed the renaming, and won support from the upper castes here, including the Marathas.

Were you in slumber till Shahabuddin got bail? On October 1, Chhotepur to launch APP to counter AAP



(Agencies) New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday came down heavily on Bihar government+ for not placing facts before the Patna High Court which granted bail to controversial RJD leader Mohd Shahabuddin+ in a murder case.

The counsel for Nitish Kumar government, which has RJD as its coalition partner in the state, faced searching questions in the apex court which rebuked it for not being serious in pursuing the case against Shahabuddin.

"Why have you approached the court only after his release? Were you in slumber till he got bail? This is a peculiar case. But the question is this peculiarity has been done at whose instance and who is behind this.

"Why you did not challenge bail granted to Shahabuddin+ in 45 cases? Why did you realize only when he came out of jail? If

everything was fair, why would this case come to us," a bench comprising Justices PC Ghose and Amitava Roy said while clarifying that by peculiarity, it meant negligence.

The observations came after senior advocate Dinesh Dwivedi, appearing for Bihar, sought cancellation of Shahabuddin's bail+ and said the decision to enlarge the RJD leader was improper as the high court had ignored the relevant material in the case.

He said the high court could not have granted him bail unless there was any special reason or any medical urgency. The senior lawyer admitted there were "anomalies" by the state government in the case.

To this, the bench said, "we can understand your difficulty and the only thing we can say is that we understand everything."

Dwivedi said "I admit the

anomalies. I am not in any way justifying the actions of the state government. We were handicapped at that time. But my submission is that the relevant material has been ignored in the case."

The bench then asked him "Why should you be handicapped? You are the state. It was the duty of your lawyer to inform the high court about the correct facts of the case. It was your duty to inform the high court that a revision petition has been filed in the session court by Shahabuddin. Why didn't you tell the high court at that point of time?"

"We are just trying to find out what kind of person he is by looking at the background and circumstances of the case.

"How many cases are pending against him, who is a four time Member of Parliament and two times MLA. We are just thinking what is the common man's thought. There are so many cases against him and there are so many bail orders. You did challenge those bail orders," the bench said.

The hearing remained inconclusive and will continue on Thursday.

Dwivedi said Shahabuddin was first sent to jail in 2005 and since then he has been committing crimes from inside the prison. He said the RJD leader was acquitted in most of the cases as many witnesses refused to testify against him.

(Agencies) The acronym underlines the acrimony. Sacked Punjab convener of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Sucha Singh Chhotepur will launch his new political outfit on October 1. The party — Apna Punjab Party (APP) — will be registered as a state party with the Election Commission and will either file or support candidates on all 117 seats in the forthcoming assembly polls in the state.



Chhotepur will head the party and is expected to resign from the AAP on Wednesday. To begin with, the party is collaborating with the fourth front of suspended AAP MP Dr Dharamvira Gandhi. "Apna Punjab will not subsume Dr Gandhi's group, but bind with it as an alliance," Chhotepur told HT. Chhotepur met Dr Gandhi in Jalandhar on Tuesday and the modalities of the collaboration were worked out. "Candidates will be chosen keeping in view the wishes of alliance partners," he added. Gandhi's umbrella front includes the Volunteer front Punjab, Democratic Swaraj Party as also some Left-oriented and Dalit groups. Chhotepur said he was not sure if cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu will be joining him. "Anyone who wants to work for a solely Punjab-centric party is welcome to join us. It is for Sidhu, Pargat Singh and the Bains brothers to decide what they have to do," he said. When contacted, Pargat said he could not comment at this stage if he along with the others will join Chhotepur. "We are yet to decide on this matter," he said. During his talks with Pargat, Chhotepur is said to have even offered Sidhu to be the chief ministerial face of his party. "We have done the best we could during our talks. No the ball is in their court," said Chhotepur.

Forget New York or London

Vancouver's rapidly soaring real estate market places it at 'greatest risk' of a housing bubble

(Agencies) The riskiest city in the world to own real estate is not London, New York, or San Francisco, where overvalued properties abound due to a surge in foreign demand and a dearth of supply.

No, it's Vancouver, British Columbia, according to the Swiss-based financial giant UBS.

The banking multinational issued a new report titled Global Real Estate Bubble in which it gauges the housing markets that are at greatest risk of 'price corrections.'

Vancouver came in first place because the value of properties

there have been in 'overdrive', according to UBS. Foreign investors have been attracted to Vancouver by the combination of the weak Canadian currency as well as low interest rates.

The government in British Columbia has been so alarmed by the real estate market in Vancouver, where house prices have doubled in the past decade, that it felt compelled to slap a 15 percent transfer tax on foreign buyers of property.

The tax was reported this past July by Bloomberg. Other governments, including that of Great Britain, Singapore, and Australia, have also levied taxes

on foreign buyers of real estate in order to allow for their own citizens to have a chance at purchasing an affordable property.

The province hopes that the tax will lead to a drop in housing prices.

UBS, however, foresees that 'the risk of a substantial price correction appears very elevated.'

London, Stockholm, Sydney, Munich, and Hong Kong are also at risk of seeing its bubble burst.

According to UBS, house prices in these cities have jumped 50 percent in just the last five years. The skyrocketing prices in London fuelled by buyers from abroad has



compelled its new mayor, Sadiq Khan, to initiate his own inquiry to gauge the scope of the problem. 'It's clear we need to better understand the different roles that overseas money plays in London's housing market, the scale of what's going on, and what action we can take to support development and help Londoners find a home,' Khan told the Guardian. Another city

that has seen an alarmingly high percentage increase in the value of property is San Francisco. While incomes there are high, the rate at which real estate prices have increased compelled UBS to determine that homes there are significantly overvalued. The housing market in New York, meanwhile, was determined to have prices that were fairly valued, UBS said.

Decorated Ex-Army lieutenant Colonel, and doctor, 57, shot his wife & Son

(Agencies) A decorated ex-Army lieutenant colonel and doctor murdered his wife in their family home before driving to their son's university more than an hour away to shoot him and then kill himself.

Nasir Siddique shot his 58-year-old wife Zarqa in the head in their home in Bel Air, Maryland, on Wednesday afternoon. Her body was found in the bathtub hours later.

The 57-year-old, who retired from the military in 2010 after 30 years of service in medical branches, then drove some 60 miles to the University of Maryland where his son, Farhad,

was a student.

He killed the 19-year-old, who would have been 20 on Thursday, in his beloved red jeep before turning the gun on himself to take his own life.

Police recovered their bodies in Siddique's car at around 10.30pm in the parking lot of Farhad's student accommodation. Zarqa's body was found around 15 minutes earlier at the family home. Their daughter Laila was studying at Penn State College of Medicine in Pennsylvania at the time.

'She is doing about as well as can be imagined,' Hartford County Sheriff's Office Major



William Davis said on Thursday during a press conference.

It's not yet clear what drove Siddique to murder his wife and son but police have suggested notes found in their home may indicate his motive.

'The contents of those notes are still part of the active investigation.

'While detectives continue to work to determine a motive, the details of those notes will not be released,' a spokesman for Hartford County Sheriff's Office said on Friday.

Officers from the sheriff's office were called to the family's Bel Air home on Wednesday after receiving two calls raising concerns for the family's wellbeing.

One was from the University of Maryland's police which had received a missing report from Farhad's friends when he did not show up for class.

They found Zarqa's body in the bathtub at 10.14pm. The 58-year-

old is understood to have worked for the schools system helping students with severe disabilities.

Minutes later officers from Prince George's County Police Department near the university found her son and husband.

Friends of Farhad, who has been described as 'gentle' and 'kind' in tributes since his death, said he often visited home but never spoke of his family.

Brent McGuire, who shared a room with the victim in his freshman year, told the university's student newspaper, *The Diamondback*: 'I thought it was a good relationship.'

The university shared its grief in a statement which read: 'This is a tragedy that will be felt by our entire community.

'During this time of loss, we extend our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the victims.'

A prayer will be held for Farhad by the Muslim Student Association of which he was a member.

Our hearts are saddened by the loss of Farhad Siddique, a dear friend and brother to many in the University of Maryland community.

'He is remembered as a hardworking, compassionate individual who helped others in any way he could,' the association said in a statement on Thursday.

Farhad was majoring in physiology and neurobiology and was in his junior year. During his time at the university he helped other students study before exams.

The student's parents had been married for 26 years. They celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary in 2014 in gushing social media posts and appeared to have a happy relationship.

Between 2005 and 2010, Siddique was assigned to work in Washington DC. During these years he rubbed shoulders with Vice President Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi.

He even attended President Obama's with his wife.

A proud father, regularly commented on his son and daughter's social media accounts.

He served in the Preventative Medicine and Medical Service Corps branches.

His military record reveals he was a decorated member of the US Army with 16 awards.

Amity University Buys 170-Acre University Campus in New York for \$22.4M



(Agencies) OAKDALE, N.Y. — Amity University, a non-profit international educational organization, has acquired St. John's University's 170-acre campus, located at 500 Montauk Highway in Oakdale for \$22.4 million. The campus includes 11 buildings totaling 260,000 square feet. The acquisition enables the seller, St. John's, to continue offering its existing academic programs under a lease agreement through June 2017 as Amity University assumes control of the property immediately. Helen Hwang and Karen Wiedenmann, formerly of Cushman & Wakefield, along with Andrew Merin, David Bernhaut, Gary Gabriel, Brian Whitmer, Ryan Dowd and David Pennetta of Cushman's Metropolitan Area Capital Markets group, represented St. John's in the transaction.



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12,225 chikungunya cases reported across the country

According to National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), as many as 12,255 cases of chikungunya have been reported across India till August 31

(Agencies) Chikungunya and dengue diseases are rampant in Delhi and a few other cities across the country, with nearly 10 deaths due to vector-borne disease reported in the city in the past two days. While chikungunya cases have risen to more than 1,000 in Delhi, dengue cases have shot up to 1,158 in the capital with 390 of them being recorded in the first 10 days of September. According to National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), as many as

12,255 cases of chikungunya have been reported across India till August 31. Karnataka has recorded 8,941 cases, Maharashtra 839 and Andhra Pradesh 492.

Doctors say chikungunya was not a life-threatening disease, but in rare cases leads to complications that could prove fatal, especially for children and senior citizens. Incidentally, Isha of Kabir Nagar died at Hindu Rao Hospital, one of the biggest civic hospitals in Delhi, due to "complications triggered

by chikungunya."

One more suspected chikungunya death has also been reported at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, but hospital authorities are yet to confirm it. According to reports, the death took place sometime in September.

At AIIMS laboratories, 1,360 chikungunya blood test samples have tested positive till September 11, as per data. Authorities at the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital said, "One more person suffering

from chikungunya has been admitted to the ICU." In the past 10 days, the hospital has tested 524 samples each for dengue and chikungunya, out of which five and 293 cases respectively have tested positive, he said. Out of the 1,057 total cases of chikungunya, this season in Delhi, 497 were reported in the past week, reflecting a rise of 90 percent.

Meanwhile, Union Health Minister JP Nadda on September 14 said there were no complaints regarding the shortage of medicine or doctors.



Narendra Modi isn't talking of war because internal security lapses are at an all-time high

(Agencies) Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not talking of war even after the Uri attacks. Rather he is speaking his trademark jargons on growth, development and peace as eloquently as he used to. It might be because a thundering statement on war, threatening the neighbouring trouble monger may sound hollow at a time when internal security lapses stand at all-time high, due to apathy through decades.

The attack on a military camp at Uri by four terrorists is not the only exemplifier of India's lacking in security. In fact, there are many.

The Uri incident was followed by the arrest of six Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh militants from Assam and West Bengal. Three out of six were Bangladeshi nationals camping in Indian territory and planning subversive attacks in northeast and south India. On the very same day that these terrorists were arrested, Ulfa threatened an organisation in Assam for appealing the people to boycott Chinese products as a retaliation to China's support to Pakistan. It was certainly seen as a measure to appease China, the country that is presently hosting Paresh Baruah the commander-in-chief of Ulfa.

Paresh Baruah, once a close associate with ISI, now continues to run his terror business in the northeastern states of India from a secret base in Yunan province in China.

These are some examples, other than the Uri attacks, that point

towards the security lapses and threats the country faces. Perhaps these lapses in India's internal security, built through years of apathy, prevent the prime minister from speaking of a war.

Both JMB and Ulfa share close links with the Pakistani intelligence agency, ISI, and both have access to India through the porous international borders northeast that India shares with the nations adjacent to it.

Ghanashyam Murari Srivastava, IPS, who has served as a cop in Assam and Tripura for a considerable long period, says that presence of ISI-linked Islamic terrorists is not a new phenomenon in northeast India. They have been in prowl in Assam for more than a decade.

"In the late nineties itself Assam Police made 13 Islamic militants surrender with their sophisticated weapons," he says. "It would be naïve to say that they never existed in Assam," he adds.

Northeast India has always been an easy target for Islamic terrorists given the region's porous border with neighbouring Bangladesh.

The international border that the northeastern region shares with Bangladesh stand as fenceless and as unmanned now, when recently JMB militants camped in various parts of India sneaking through it, as it did when the first set of Islamic militants entered the state in the nineties.

Sources in the Assam Police say that now terrorist groups have an even safer jungle route from Bangladesh to



Guwahati in Assam through Garo hills in Meghalaya. This route that is now guarded by Garo Nationalist Liberation Army which stands unchecked by Indian security forces.

Similarly, the insurgency by Ulfa (Independent) heavily depends on the India's inadequacy to deal with cross-border terrorism in India. A top cop in Assam police on condition of anonymity said that Paresh Baruah was based in Bangladesh before moving to China, but Indian government failed to nab him there.

"Paresh Baruah has been playing hide and seek with the Government of India for a long time now. He shifted his base to Myanmar from Bangladesh when India's relationship got better with Bangladesh. He again shifted to China as soon as India's terms got better with Myanmar. But on every occasion it was the Indian government that failed to nab him," said the source.

Tantrik Who Tortured Children, 'Disco Baba' Arrested From Hyderabad's 'Occult Dens'



(Agencies) A child is tortured with scalding hot water, another is in pain as his ears are poked and a third is nude, tied to a chair and kneeling down in a series of disturbing videos found in Hyderabad after police raided dens of "black magic" and arrested at least 16 con artistes on Tuesday.

Self-proclaimed tantrik Faiyaz Mehmood Ansari, 38, was arrested on the complaint of a man who alleged that his 12-year-old boy was kidnapped and tortured with the consent of his mother, who was allegedly misled.

The father has said that Ansari tried to kill the boy. In one of the many incriminating videos found on a laptop at his home, the fake healer is seen pouring what appears to be boiling water on the legs of the child as he screams in pain.

The boy's mother was allegedly present when he was pierced with a blade at multiple places on his body, physically abused and kept nude for hours. Ansari, the police said, had convinced her that evil spirits had possessed her son. "There are about 30 videos of Ansari torturing naked children including a girl child. The videos show children tied up, pricked with needles...molten wax is poured on private parts and he is seen violating them," senior police officer V Satyanarayana said.



A Crucial PM Modi Plan On Indian Defense Is Faltering: Foreign Media

(Agencies) Two years after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office, his plan to transform India from the world's top weapons buyer into an arms exporter remains unfulfilled.

A key plank of Modi's plan has been requiring foreign manufacturers to route some defense orders through Indian companies to boost local industry. But with an estimated \$15 billion in outstanding investment in military technology at stake, the program -- started under a prior government -- is faltering.

The risk is the shortfall, caused by foreign companies skirting their "defense offset" requirement or by local industry lacking the capacity to handle increased orders, puts in doubt Modi's plan to spend up to \$250 billion on military modernization

over the next 10 years.

Defence ministry figures on the offset obligations on 25 contracts signed since 2008 show a shortfall in implementation in 13, according to data examined by Bloomberg. India imposed penalties in 12 cases.

"Of the approximately \$5 billion offset obligations, only about \$2 billion have been accounted for by the global companies," said K. V. Kuber, an independent analyst and former army colonel who served in the section of the ministry that monitored the offset policy. "Of these, only about \$250 million worth of offsets has been approved by the Ministry of Defence as implemented."

Limited Benefit

One issue, he says, is that the kinds of offsets being offered

to local companies don't necessarily involve a transfer of technology or expansion in manufacturing capacity. Rather, the technical standard of work required can be low and of limited benefit.

In the last decade, contracts signed with global arms companies have fetched about \$5 billion worth of offsets, where at least 30 per cent of the contract amount was invested in India's defense industry, Secretary for Defence Production Ashok Kumar Gupta said in New Delhi on Sept. 16.

"There is another \$15 billion of offset that is likely to accrue in the next 15 years," Gupta said at an industry event. "This means an average of \$1 billion offset every year. A lot of foreign original equipment manufacturers are keen to tie-up with Indian vendors. This provides an opportunity to the Indian companies to be part of the global supply chain."

However industry representatives and analysts say it is difficult to quantify the

domestic benefit, with major companies stating it had not helped their industrial capability. The defense ministry did not respond to four calls requesting comment.

Mumbai-based Larsen and Toubro Ltd.'s Mohan Nair, the head of its international defense and aerospace business, said L&T had not profited from the policy. "The quality of the manufacturing work that were offset our way by foreign companies were of low technology," Nair said at an industry event in New Delhi on Aug. 31. "It was not worthwhile for us."

Mahindra Aerospace Pvt Ltd. chairman S. P. Shukla echoed those concerns, saying at the same event his company had not received much defense offset work since the policy was introduced a decade ago. L&T and Mahindra did not respond to requests for further comment.

The ministry data showed India imposed a cumulative total penalty of about \$35 million on 11 global companies -- four from

Israel, two each from Italy and Russia, and one each from France, Switzerland and the U.S. Efforts to contact some of the companies for comment were unsuccessful or they declined comment.

Israel's Elbit Systems Ltd. completed all its offset obligations for its contract, Vice President Dalia Rosen said by e-mail.

'Sorry State'

Still, with some foreign companies opting to pay a fine, the current policy is a "sorry state of affairs," according to Kuber.

"The global companies have been finding ways of not doing offset, and the Ministry of Defence has not been engaging with them in a more proactive manner," he said. "Indian industry has also been slow to gear up to the global standards in quality and processes and certifications."

"Even the direct buys are in the form of nuts and bolts," he said. "Hence, no industrial capability as such is being developed."

NIA gets custody of PoK duo who facilitated Uri attack

(Agencies) AMMU/NEW DELHI: The NIA on Wednesday secured 10 days' remand of two "guides" from Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir who allegedly facilitated infiltration by Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists responsible for the brazen attack on an Army camp in Uri earlier this month. The two — Faisal Hussain Awan and Ahsaan Khursheed — both residents of Muzaffarabad in PoK, were produced before a designated court in Jammu which remanded them in NIA's custody.

The duo has since been brought to the national capital where they would be interrogated by a joint team of officials of various security agencies besides being subjected to scientific tests. During their preliminary interrogation, the two were claimed to have admitted to having facilitated infiltration by a group of four JeM militants who carried out the Uri army camp attack. On being shown the photographs of the four terrorists killed in retaliatory action, accused Faisal Hussain Awan identified one of them as Hafeez Ahmed, a resident of village Dharbang, Muzaffarabad, in PoK.

Former SC Judge Katju booked on sedition charge by Patna Police

(Agencies) PATNA: Former Supreme Court judge Markandey Katju has been booked on sedition charge by Patna Police after a complaint by a ruling JD(U) legislator citing his Facebook post that Kashmir should be offered to Pakistan on the condition that it takes Bihar too.

Katju has been booked under 124-A (sedition) and other sections of IPC, the state house officer (SHO) Shashtrinagar (Patna) police station Virendra Yadav said here on Wednesday.

JD(U) legislator Neeraj Kumar, who is also spokesperson of the party, lodged a complaint with Shashtrinagar police station here against Katju seeking his prosecution for alleged sedition. Meanwhile, a lawyer Arvind Kumar on Wednesday filed another case (a complaint petition) against Katju in the court of chief judicial magistrate (CJM), Patna, seeking registration of a criminal case under sections 124 (A) (sedition), 500 (Punishment for defamation), 501 (Printing or engraving matter known to be defamatory) and 505 (Statements conducting to public mischief) of the IPC. However, the CJM is yet to decide on a



date for hearing on the complaint petition. Undeterred by widespread criticism on social media, Katju on Wednesday made more critical remarks against Bihar politicians including CM Nitish Kumar who had on Tuesday ridiculed the former judge for trying to become 'Mai-Baap' (guardian) of the state. Katju's comments had also invited criticism from Deputy CM Tejaswi Prasad Yadav, former CM Jitan Ram Manjhi and JD(U) seniors like K C Tyagi and Shyam

Rajak. "I suggest Biharis should take their complaint against me to the UN. When 'cheer haran' of Draupadi was being done, she appealed to Lord Krishna to save her honour," Katju wrote on his Facebook post on Wednesday, inviting widespread protest from netizens. "Nitish Kumar says that I regard myself as the 'mai baap' of Bihar. No Nitishji, I am not the 'mai baap' of Biharis but their Shakuni Mama," former judge wrote in another post on his Facebook wall.

Do Driverless Cars Favor Urban or Suburban Life?

Two op-eds published Thursday make the case one way and the other for the driverless car and the American settlement. In Bloomberg View, the economist Tyler Cowen argues that new technology—not just cars, but also virtual reality and the Internet of Things—has advantages that favor the suburbs. In the Wall Street Journal, Uber CEO Travis Kalanick posits that new technology will create “a more livable and less congested” city.

Cohen’s argument is in some ways convincing. He’s right that driverless cars and on-demand delivery could bring perks to the suburbs—a commute spent reading a book, say, or the quick purchase of that one-percent pint—that have traditionally belonged to urbanites. It’s also true that new technologies, like a smart home heating system, are more readily installed in the modern, spacious suburban home than the older urban apartment. (Ask a New Yorker if she’s ever had a garbage disposal.)

But how much weight do these inventions put on the scale? The services that Cowen awaits at his Virginia home will still be subject to the same low-density distribution costs that have restrained taxis from roaming suburban streets, and currently limit Amazon from offering two-hour delivery beyond

cities. Even with drones, greater distances will keep delivery marginally less efficient, slower and more expensive.

Futurists have been peddling some iteration of the “death of distance” theory—the idea that tech is making proximity irrelevant—since the invention of the telephone. Yet people are still drawn to work, eat and socialize in company. Videoconferencing hasn’t killed the office; online universities haven’t discouraged kids from shipping off to college.

Kalanick, meanwhile, is at the helm of a company that has infiltrated virtually every possible mode of mobility: long-distance trucking, package delivery, food delivery, and of course, personal travel in shared and/or autonomous cars. He and his peers have striking visions for what a city freed from private automobile ownership might be capable of.

Lyft president John Zimmer envisioned such a city in a post on Medium earlier this month. Imagine a world (in your best movie trailer voice), “A world where we need less parking?—where streets can be narrowed and sidewalks widened. It’s a world where we can construct new housing and small businesses on parking lots across the country?—or turn them into green spaces and parks. That’s a world built around

people, not cars.”

We at Slate are frankly intrigued by the possibility that autonomous vehicles might have such an effect, and we’ll be dedicating a Futurography segment to ownership next month that will have a cool video on this future city.

But Kalanick makes a great point in his piece: autonomous transportation is actually the less important component in creating “a city that lives and breathes more easily.” The more important concept is... sharing. Not the bullshit low-paid menial labor that has long characterized the sharing economy, but actual sharing, where two people get in the same car together.

The most radical future is one where self-driving cars are shared, both on a single trip and between trips. A slightly less radical future is one in which individuals are willing to use a car someone else has just used, but prefer to ride alone.

But what if most people want their own autonomous car, all the time—a car in which you can leave your suitcase while you have lunch, where there is no camera watching because nobody uses it but you, where the air freshener and the radio station are the ones you chose? That, as Clive Thompson pointed out in Mother Jones, would hardly produce the de-congested, parkified city of the future. That’s more of a Cowen future than a Kalanick future. That’s a future basically recognizable as our present, albeit with higher car payments, more traffic, and more time to watch TV on the way to work.

Some companies, like Uber and Lyft, are interested in selling rides. They will want to keep their fleets as small as possible, because cars cost their companies money, and rides produce it. A model where people share rides would be generally preferable, because a high

customer-to-inventory ratio would be better. A denser population will be a more efficient market for them. But what about the companies that build autonomous cars? They will want to sell as many as possible. Whether that’s to individual owners or to collectivized fleets, well, who knows? But either way, sharing isn’t good for their business model. When have we ever shared something when it has been feasible for each of us to have one of our own?

Regulation could be one way to tip the scale towards sharing or away from it; towards the urban-utopia model and away from the suburban pattern of today. But another factor will simply be consumer choice: How much is it worth to have a car of one’s own, an extra space that belongs to you, that smells like you? How much is it worth to ride across town alone, in silence? How much does it cost us if that’s what everyone wants?

Modi's Pak Policy Lies Completely in tatters

and their mutual desire to “build upon the US-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue”, then went on to “commend recent efforts by Pakistani security forces to counter extremist violence.” One would have thought “recent” would include the Pak-sponsored terrorist attack on an Indian army base just four days earlier. Instead, Pakistan’s actions to “counter extremist violence” were lauded. Was this the “unkindest cut of all?”

No. More followed. Virtually anticipating Modi’s challenge to see who between India and Pakistan would win the “War on Poverty and Illiteracy” and the Indian media’s desperate attempts to portray the Pakistani economy as on the verge of collapse, Kerry actually “commended the (Pak) Prime Minister for restoring macroeconomic stability to Pakistan” (emphasis added). So is Modi’s economics lesson to

Pakistan cutting any ice at Foggy Bottom (where the US State Department offices are located in Washington, DC)?

The joint statement then turned to Kashmir. At this point, the joint statement stops talking of Kerry and Sharif separately and conjoins both to say that the two of them together “expressed strong concern with recent violence in Kashmir!” Nothing about Pakistan stoking that violence. Nothing about the violence in PoK. At the very best, India and Pakistan are lumped together in the reference to “recent violence”. Cheekily, Nawaz gets Kerry to include in this joint sentence “the army base attack”, which Nawaz actually pretends to condemn—and the US, at the level of the US Secretary of State, acquiesces in with the Pakistanis that Pakistan is not responsible for “particularly the army base attack”!

U.S. to open new vetting agency for 'secret' security clearances

The bureau will replace an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) clearance system that was hit by hackers who stole potentially sensitive personal data on as many as 22 million people, including government employees and job applicants.

Phalen and OPM Director Beth Cobert said a top priority for the bureau will be shortening delays in the clearance process, which can hold up the hiring of government employees for months.

Cobert said that OPM figures show on average the time required to complete an investigation for a “secret” level security clearance is now 120 days; for a “top secret clearance, it is 170 days on average. “These timelines are well too long,”

Phelan acknowledged. Cobert said the new agency’s goal would be to reduce the time for completing a “secret” clearance to 40 days and to cut the time for a “top secret” investigation to 80 days.

Officials said that individual government agencies, rather than the new central investigations bureau, would be responsible for social media checks of security clearance applicants. Officials said that the new bureau would still depend on outside contractors, especially for hiring field investigators. The new agency will employ 2,500 government workers and 6,000 contract employees, officials said.

Decoding Modi's Pakistan policy

In a knee-jerk reaction, India cancelled the foreign secretary meet. This did raise tensions between the two neighbouring countries. Modi and Sharif met in Kathmandu in November 2014 at the SAARC summit. They shook hands but did not hold any bilateral talks. The next meeting between the two leaders took place in July 2015 in the Russian town of Ufa on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit. There was a step backward when Sartaj Aziz, member of Pakistan’s National Security Agency, cancelled his visit to New Delhi in August 2015, blaming India’s refusal to allow a meeting with the Hurriyat leaders.

However, Modi and Sharif met again in November in Paris on the sidelines of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference. This was followed by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj travelling to Islamabad. The highest point of the first phase of India’s Pakistan policy came thereafter. In an unscheduled visit during his return journey from Afghanistan, Modi made a brief stopover at Lahore to personally wish Sharif on his birthday on December 25, 2015. Modi had pulled off a coup of sorts. His unprecedented gesture had taken South Asia by storm. This ‘birthday diplomacy’ was again an attempt by Modi to build a

personal rapport with Sharif and, through him, with the Pakistani establishment. The motive was to ease age-old tensions between the two countries and try to find a solution to the vexed Kashmir problem and the terror attacks from across the border.

However, amid this euphoria, there also was a lurking fear of Pakistan stabbing India in the back. There was a background to it. Vajpayee’s bus to Lahore was reciprocated by Kargil misadventure. Coincidentally, Sharif was the PM then too. Hence, the apprehensions of Modi meeting the same fate were also quite strong.

Modi had not paid heed to the age old adage of ‘once bitten is twice shy’. He paid for it. Pakistan, and particularly Sharif, proved untrustworthy forever when, within a week of Modi’s walking extra mile, the Indian Air Force base in Pathankot was attacked on January 2, 2016 allegedly by Pakistani terrorists in which six Indian military personnel were killed. With the Pathankot attack, the Indo-Pak relations entered the second phase.

Though the bonhomie between Modi and Sharif had dissipated into thin air by then, the Indian PM still wanted to give peace one last chance. He agreed to a joint India-Pakistan investigation team to inspect the Pathankot terror attack.

Good looks, money, education? Nope. All it takes is a happy person



(Agencies) It is person to keep you fit and important to have a life healthy in your middle age partner who is a happy and later years, say

researchers. Having a happy spouse may affect your health more than you trying to keep yourself happy, claims the study.

"This finding significantly broadens assumptions about the relationship between happiness and health, suggesting a unique social link," said William Chopik, assistant Professor of Psychology at Michigan

State University.

In the study of 1,981 middle-age couples, researchers found that people with happy spouses were much more likely to report better health over time. This occurred above and beyond the person's own happiness.

Previous research suggests happy people are generally healthy people but Chopik wanted to take it one step further by exploring the health effects of interpersonal relationships.

According to him, happy partners likely provide stronger social

support such as care-taking, as compared to unhappy partners who are more likely to be focused on their own stressors.

"Happy partners may get unhappy people involved with activities and environments that promote good health, such as maintaining regular sleep cycles, eating nutritious food and exercising," Chopik added. Being with a happy partner should make a person's life easier even if not explicitly happier.

"Simply knowing that one's partner is satisfied with his or her individual circumstances may

temper a person's need to seek self-destructive outlets, such as drinking or drugs, and may more generally offer contentment in ways that afford health benefits down the road," Chopik pointed out. The study examined the survey information of couples age 50 to 94, including happiness, self-rated health and physical activity over a six-year period.

The results showed no difference between husbands and wives in the study. The study was published by the American Psychological Association in the journal Health Psychology.

Hormonal changes during periods may impact a woman's decision making

(Agencies) The hormonal changes that women and girls experience through their menstrual cycle may significantly affect their decision-making and problem-solving sensibilities, say researchers. Women have sometimes reported that their memory works differently depending on which phase of the menstrual cycle they are in — even during and following pregnancy, or following menopause, the study said. "Our research shows that, rather than impairing memory in general, oestrogen and progesterone — female sex hormones — may instead cause the brain to favour one memory system or strategy over another," said Wayne



Brake, Professor at Concordia University in Quebec, Canada.

For the study, researchers tested 45 women who had regular menstrual cycles. First, participants responded to a 'hormonal profile' questionnaire that gathered detailed information on their periods, past pregnancies, contraceptive and synthetic hormone intake history and general life habits.

The participants were then given a verbal memory task, such as remembering a list of words, as well as a virtual navigation task, such as finding their way through a maze in a video game, that could be solved in several

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About 40% of Delhi's workforce suffers from hypertension



(Agencies) About 40% of Delhi's working population is suffering from hypertension and diabetes, claims a new report released by Indus Health Plus.

The study, carried out to mark World Heart Day, had a sample size of 14,483 people, who underwent the preventive health check-up during January 2015 to August 2016.

10% of the urban population and almost 7% of the rural population in Delhi suffers from diabetes-induced heart diseases.

Cases of heart diseases from semi-urban and rural parts of Delhi have seen a rise of 6% since last year.

The study found that 40% of

the population is unaware of the silent symptoms of heart diseases and that diabetes is one of its major causes.

Due to heavy traffic and industrialisation, the population in Delhi is exposed to smoke and an increased risk of heart-related problems. The risk increases 5% for people working in industrial areas and smoke-emitting factories.

Amol Naikawadi, Preventive Healthcare Specialist and JMD Indus Health Plus said, "20% women in the age bracket of 35-50 years and 16% men in the age bracket of 30-50 years have been observed with Vitamin B12 deficiency which increases the risk of heart diseases.

Stress is one of the key factors contributing to heart diseases among working population."

"This is a serious concern and so this World Heart Day our aim is to educate people to keep heart healthy through regular exercise, playing outdoor sports, eating balanced diet and maintaining ideal body weight. Besides lifestyle modification, preventive health check-ups and timely screenings are very useful in early detection of illnesses and

risk factors" added Naikawadi. The diet intake in Delhi with oil, butter and other fatty eatables with lack of exercise has increased the number of obesity cases in women as compared to last year. Delhi was seen to have the highest level of cholesterol, this surely has increased the risk factors of heart strokes.

Pollution, smoking and high stress level with sedentary lifestyle, consuming alcohol, improper diet are contributing factors for heart diseases.

People below 30 years were not aware of symptoms related to heart diseases and therefore they had a tendency to ignore chest pain and uneasiness due to stress which increases the risk of heart ailments. The night life in Delhi is majorly to be blamed for youngsters getting affected by lifestyle ailments.

Late night parties, junk food, excessive intake of alcohol and tobacco in the form of cigarettes, hukka, gutkha etc, are affecting youngster's health.

Women account for less than a third of the world's wealthiest 10%

(Agencies) Women account for only a minor fraction of the richest people in eight of the world's wealthiest countries, claimed researchers from the London School of Economics showed on Tuesday, adding that the gender gap gets wider the higher the income bracket.

Using tax data from Spain, Denmark, Italy, Canada, New Zealand, Britain, Australia and Norway, researchers found that women account for less than a third of the wealthiest 10% of society.

They make up less than a quarter of the wealthiest 1% and less than a sixth of the top-earning 0.1%, the report said.

Alessandra Casarico, a professor at Bocconi

University in Italy and co-author of the report, said although more women were working, few of them reach the top in terms of income.

"Women now make up more of the top income groups," Casarico said in a statement. "But they still are a distinct minority and they become rarer the higher one climbs."

Almost a third of Spain's wealthiest 10% are women — the highest proportion among the countries analysed in the report. Spain also had the most women in the wealthiest 1% and 0.1%. By contrast, Norway had the widest gender gap with women making up only about a fifth of the wealthiest 10%.



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Like Shakespeare's early play *The Comedy of Errors*, touted as one of the most farcical comedies, the Aam Aadmi Party — which until last month had been the party to watch — has rendered itself as a party of comedians! Gurpreet Ghuggi, well-known comedian-turned-politician, has been made its convener and Bhagwant Mann, comedian-turned-MP, has become the poster boy for Punjab, that goes to polls in early 2017.

AAP's pitch for power had strengthened with the induction of former resident editor, Indian Express and Hindustan Times Kanwar Sandhu, Congress leaders, Sukhpal Singh Khaira and Aman Arora, while hopes hinged on former BJP MP Navjot Singh Sidhu coming on board. Today, AAP is not only left with comedian-turned-leaders (with due respect to Arvind Kejriwal, national convener and Delhi Chief Minister who is also known for his antics) at the helm of affairs but it faces an imminent split that threatens to derail its ambitions for the forthcoming election in Punjab. The party is amidst a political upheaval following removal of Punjab AAP convener Sucha Singh Chhotepur on the basis of a sting into his corrupt deals. Ever since, Chhotepur has been up in arms against the AAP leadership and fomenting a revolt within the Punjab unit and outside. Five of AAP's 13 zonal coordinators belonging to the politically sensitive districts of Amritsar, Bathinda, Gurdaspur and Jalandhar had served an ultimatum on AAP demanding immediate reinstatement of Chhotepur as AAP convener in Punjab. The later assembly of AAP volunteers at Golden Temple in Amritsar on 3 September reposed full faith in the ousted leader. Support for Chhotepur got further momentum at a 'Punjab Parivartan' rally organised in Gurdaspur, which was nothing short of a revolt against the leadership of Kejriwal.

Besides being plagued by charges of corruption, AAP made a goof-up on the cover page of its manifesto, showing a picture of the party's broom in the backdrop of the Golden Temple. This irked the

community and evoked strong protests. However, the mother of all controversies ensued when Chhotepur protested against two lists of AAP candidates for the elections slated in February 2017. Not finding his chosen candidates in the first list released by the party, Chhotepur boycotted the event where party leader Sanjay Singh announced the names. The last nail in the coffin was the announcement of 13 more names which again did not have a single candidate of his choice. The protest against candidates has actually not only been restricted to Chhotepur but out of 32 nominees, 25 have faced protests from different volunteers to the extent of burning effigies of the candidates, including Baljinder Kaur, AAP's women's wing president,



nominated from Talwandi Sabo. As if all this were not enough, an audio sting surfaced on social media. Hardip Singh Kingra, who quit AAP after not getting the ticket from Faridkot, showed a sting clip in which a person allegedly close to Durgesh Pathak (AAP's national executive member) demanded Rs 5 lakh from a volunteer for fixing a meeting with him. Kingra also accused Sanjay Singh of pocketing Rs 5 lakh out of Rs 30 lakh collected from volunteers during the Maghi Mela early this year. Pathak and Singh are observer and Punjab in-charge for AAP respectively.

Later, in a video uploaded on social media, Kejriwal commented, "I am sad that a number of leaders of my party have been found involved in corruption or moral turpitude. It is not acceptable. AAP was not founded to protect such persons. If tomorrow Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia or anyone else, including me, is found indulging in corruption, he will face immediate removal." Amid the controversies, AAP made a major faux pas by inducting Harmail Singh Tohra,

'The Comedy of Errors' may nip AAP in the bud

The party that rose like a phoenix on the anti-corruption plank faces an imminent split that might derail its ambitions for the forthcoming Assembly elections in Punjab

son-in-law of veteran Shiromani Akali Dal leader Gurcharan Singh Tohra. It sparked fresh dissent, with Kanwar Sandhu expressing his displeasure on Facebook. Little doubt that the party is not only facing a split but is staring at rebellion at several places where it has declared

e-Punjab front, taking Kejriwal head-on.

The party's popular face in Punjab, Bhagwant Mann, too has proved to be a liability as he first got into trouble for making a video of Parliament functioning and more recently was booked for insulting mediapersons during a rally at Bassi Pathana in Fatehgarh Sahib. Not only that, the indecisiveness on AAP's part in not projecting a CM face is also going against the party. The delay has led the Opposition to claim that Kejriwal himself is eyeing the top position, giving the Opposition a slogan on a platter to reject Delhi CM, being an outsider.

Faced with such a situation, at a make or break rally, Arvind Kejriwal rolled out the party's farmers' manifesto at Baghapurana in Moga on 11 September. The large crowds that this rally attracted might help the party check the slide in its fortunes. If the aim of the rally was to mobilise crowds for a "show of strength" to bring the party back in the game, then the purpose has partly been met. The 31-point 'Kisan Manifesto' — promising to make farmers debt

free by December 2018, re-enacting Sir Chhotu Ram Act of 1934 (Moneylenders' Debt) under which the sum of interest payable would not be allowed to exceed the principal amount, full implementation of Swaminathan Commission Report on crop pricing by December 2020 — seems to be a desperate attempt to woo farmers, who account for a majority of voters.

The party has painfully discovered that masses may be willing to experiment with it, but whims and fancies of its leaders have to resonate with the people. Today, the party that rose like phoenix on the slogan of corruption-free governance and being run by volunteers, finds both its tenets under attack. To again quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, it's like "that one may smile and smile and be a villain". The Aam Aadmi Party has to act fast to live up to the expectations that it had aroused amongst common people before it is too late!



Gulbuddin Hekmatyar

Will the Afghanistan warlord turn out to be Pakistan's wild card against India?



Notorious warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is back to centre stage in Afghanistan and could play a pivotal role in the future political arrangement of the country. Hekmatyar is rumoured to be hiding somewhere in Pakistan but with last week's deal signed between his party the Hezb-i-Islami and the National Unity Government, it will not be long before the butcher of Kabul resurfaces. Hekmatyar, a former Mujahideen leader was a favourite of the Americans when he was fighting the Russians. He was also close to the Pakistani military and virulently anti-Indian. Pakistan is hoping to use the Hekmatyar card against India. Whether it will work remains to be seen.

Last week's agreement will give Hekmatyar and his supporters immunity for killing thousands of Afghan civilians in the civil war that wracked the country soon after the Russian soldiers left. Hekmatyar, who is a US and UN-designated global terrorist, has also been promised that his name will be deleted from the global terror list. Washington, desperate to have a political settlement in Afghanistan has promised to help. In return, Hekmatyar has promised to give up violence and abide by the Afghan Constitution.

His entry will shake up the political situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan is hoping he will be in a position to ensure that President Ashraf Ghani

cools down his enthusiasm for India. Soon after becoming president, Ghani had vowed to reset ties with Pakistan which remained bitter during his successor Hamid Karzai's tenure. Karzai had excellent relations with India, and Islamabad had often charged New Delhi and Kabul of destabilising Baluchistan through Indian operatives posted in Jalalabad. Ghani started his tenure by wooing Pakistan's military, breaking protocol to call on then army chief General Ashfaq Kayani at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. Ghani had hoped that Pakistan would get the Taliban to negotiate a peace deal with the new government. Ghani had campaigned for getting all Afghans on the table for a political solution to the current impasse. The hopes were belied, with the President now accusing Pakistan's military of using the Haqqani network and allowing the use of its territory to launch attacks in Afghanistan.

Will Hekmatyar be in a position to change the President's approach to India remains to be seen. Pakistan will hope to use the Hekmatyar to its advantage, but it is too early to predict anything in the complicated tribal intrigues of Afghanistan.

For one, the Hezb-i-Islami is no longer the force it once was. Many of them have

long split from Hekmatyar and joined the Taliban others have now joined Daesh. The Hezb have been attacking foreign soldiers and like the Taliban wants all foreign troops out of Afghanistan. The Hezb can claim to be as nationalistic as the Taliban as they had never played footsie with the US or any other Western power. Having these fierce nationalists come overground may encourage many of the Taliban to do so. Moreover, Hekmatyar is a Pashtun, and the majority of the Taliban also come from the Pashtun heartland.

They are the largest group among the various tribes in the country and without Pashtuns involved no peace settlement can be meaningful. Negotiations between the government and the Hezb has been on the for last two years. President Ashraf Ghani's government of technocrats have been unable to deliver. It came to power with the grand promise of reconciliation and peace with the Taliban. But each successive day the Taliban is growing in strength and is in control of large swathes of territory in the countryside. It has also carried out daring terror strikes under the very nose of the government in the capital. The government is hoping that Hekmatyar's decision to give up violence may encourage many within the Taliban to do the same.

Whether the expectations are justified

is hard to tell. But Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is a shrewd and ambitious politician besides being a ruthless warrior. Some believe he has set his eyes on the presidency and will be playing his cards right. There are reports from Afghanistan quoting a senior Hezb leader that the former warlord will throw his hat in the ring for the 2019 presidential elections.

Given Hekmatyar's anti-Indian stand, his resurrection will be a plus for Pakistan's deep state, unhappy with Ghani's current close ties with New Delhi. Pakistan can now rely not just on the Taliban but also the Hizb to ensure that a final settlement of the Afghan problem will ensure a friendly Pashtun dominated government in power in Kabul. Rawalpindi's long-term strategic goal is to minimise India's presence in its backyard and if possible get India completely out of Afghanistan as it was during the Taliban rule. The Modi government's open support for the Baluch cause is disquieting for General Raheel Sharif and his men. A pro-India government in Kabul will help both Afghanistan and India to stir the Baloch cauldron even more. Taking all this into consideration Pakistan must be relieved that Hekmatyar is back in the centre stage of Afghanistan's politics. How this will eventually pan out will be worth watching.

Murder most macabre

A murder by non-resident Sikh lovers in a remote UP village was solved by alert cops in three states.



There was high drama when a police manhunt at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport led to the nabbing of an NRI, Gurpreet Singh alias Mitthu Singh, who was standing in a queue to board a Dubai-bound flight. He was wanted by the police for allegedly killing a childhood friend Sukhjeet Singh, 35, in his ancestral village Basantapur in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district.

The police also arrested the wife of the deceased, Ramandeep Kaur Maan, who is a British citizen by birth, on the charge of plotting the murder of her husband in cahoots with her lover Mitthu Singh.

The couple's two kids had also come to Basantapur so that the family could spend time with their grandmother. Sukhjeet was found dead on his bed, lying in a pool of blood on the intervening night of 1-2 September, his throat slit.

This murder is being sensationalised in UK tabloids. The British Foreign Office says it is providing assistance to the British national who had been detained as well as to the family of Sukhjeet Singh. The kids are British nationals by birth and the UK government could take over

custody from their grandmother. The Indian community there is demanding a proper investigation in the matter.

The NRI was a transporter in Derbyshire, East Midlands for more than a decade. One day he met Ramandeep Kaur, a British citizen, and fell in love. They married in 2005. Their kids are nine and six years old.

Sukhjeet and Mitthu were in school together. Sukhjeet settled in London whereas Mitthu went off to Dubai, where he lives with his three brothers. The two stayed in touch as friends. In November 2015, Sukhjeet and his family went on a pleasure trip to Dubai on an invitation from Mitthu.

Apparently, Ramandeep and Mitthu hit it off during the 10-day tour. According to cops, the two stayed in touch after that and chatted regularly. Gradually, the relationship grew serious and they began to talk over the phone frequently.

As love blossomed, Mitthu and Ramandeep decided to meet up. Ramandeep planned a visit

to her uncle's place in Jalandhar the following year, where Mitthu was already waiting. During that trip, her relatives took note of her growing fondness for Mitthu and even cautioned her against it. "But she had perhaps decided there was no looking back," said Pyaara Singh, Sukhjeet's uncle, who is a DSP with Punjab Police.

The investigating police team picked up clues from a mobile phone found near the bloodstained body of Sukhjeet. It has a family selfie on Sukhjeet's smartphone that shows him posing with his wife, their two kids, and Mitthu. The picture, clicked when the group was vacationing on the sand dunes of Jodhpur, is barely a few days old. This frame unravelled the crime of passion that has left three families shattered.

The sordid saga spanning Derbyshire, Dubai, Kapurthala and Shahjahanpur ended on 3 September with the arrest of Mitthu at IGI airport. A timely phone call by Shahjahanpur

Superintendent of Police Manoj Kumar to the airport authorities put brakes on his journey. Security officials managed to detain Mitthu at the airport just 30 minutes before his flight's scheduled departure. Later, the Shahjahanpur crime branch team took custody and brought Mitthu to Shahjahanpur. Police claim it has recovered the murder weapons.

Having come to know that Mitthu has been arrested, Ramandeep broke down and admitted to cops that she was a party to the crime. She told police that she mixed sleeping pills in the dinner. After the family had eaten, everyone except her fell into a deep sleep. The dogs were also given sleeping pills. Around midnight, Ramandeep informed Mitthu he should come inside. Together they killed Sukhjeet using a hammer and a sickle.

Surely, Sukhjeet had never imagined that his wife and childhood friend would kill him so brutally.

URI AFTERMATH

Khawaja Asif's threat to nuke India displays a Pakistani habit to play victim

Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif's preposterous statement that the Uri attack was "a plan devised by India itself" is a familiar narrative that emanates from across the border after all major acts of terror. His rant falls into the larger pattern of global jihadists' narrative they use to portray them as victims and not aggressors. Asif flatly denied any Pakistan's role in the Uri attack stating that there was no proof yet to implicate his country. And then taking to by now familiar rant he told Dawn newspaper, "It was evident the attack was a plan devised by India itself."

Pakistan plays the victimhood card every time it carries out an act of terror against India. It resorts to lies every time it's exposed and squeezed for its acts of terrorism. After the Pathankot and the Mumbai attacks too, Pakistan used the same tactics to accuse India of staging the attack itself. The Pakistani government is not the only entity to shift the blame for the attack on India. The Pakistani army, all the jihadist groups or the so-called non-state actors, the media, as well as the civil society too, buy into the victim-as-aggressor syndrome. The whole country is seen to be on the same page on this issue.

Soon after the Uri attack on 18 September, the Pakistani media began singing the familiar tune as though on a cue. The News International quoted sources in the Pakistani security establishment to say that the Uri attack was "a Pathankot-like Indian-staged drama to trumpet its terrorism mantra against Pakistan." Other newspapers such as The Express Tribune and The Dawn too sang the same tune.

The narrative of calling the victim as an aggressor is based on the cult of victimhood and lies the global jihadists have mastered. The whole narrative stands on two legs: play a victim and weave lies to mask the terror crime, gain the sympathy of the people and the gullible intellectual class and justify and enhance the broader agenda of jihad.

Once the jihadists get traction in the propaganda to paint them as victims, the process to indoctrinate people for carrying out jihad becomes easy. This culture of victimhood is part of a much broader and calibrated strategy to mould impressionable minds and for recruiting volunteers for global jihad.

This is what happened after the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York. The global jihad industry accused the US of staging the attack to defame Islam with an aim to carrying out war against Muslims in

Afghanistan and later Iraq.

Just a week before the Uri attack, the mother of Mohammed Atta, who piloted the hijacked plane to destroy the World Trade Centre said in an interview that her son was the victim of a US plot. She also believes that her son is still alive and that he is being held at US prison in Guantanamo Bay. Bozaina Mohamed Mustafa Sheraqi, Atta's mother, told AFP, "The United States is hiding the truth. They are the ones who designed this attack to spread the idea that Islam is terrorism." She is not the only one who believes in the jihadist propaganda that the US staged 9/11 to defame Islam. A large number of gullible and common people do.

Atta's late father too believed the US was not the victim but aggressor in the

9/11 attack. He claimed that his son had phoned him from an undisclosed location the day after the attack. One can understand the pain and loss of parents and empathise with them. However, Atta's parents' belief of painting the US as an aggressor in the Twin Tower attack and their son as a victim fits into the narrative of victimhood and lies theory used by jihadists to advance their cause.

The phenomena of victimhood and lies used by Pakistani against India are designed to gain moral high ground abroad and to maintain and continue the jihadists industry at home. The Pakistani government has to maintain the veneer of denial and lies to distinguish itself from the global jihadists, such as Al Qaeda and the Islamic State who own up their



acts of terrorism, to maintain the State's legitimacy.

Pakistan also gathers the sympathy of a vocal section of civil society and political class in India. The narrative of victimhood appeals to the whole grievance industry in India, which in turn helps in blunting the response of the government towards Pakistan.

Congress' Digvijaya Singh almost fell into the trap with his tweet quoting the Pakistan's Defence Minister and by choosing not to debunk Asif's lies.

Veteran journalist Chitra Subramaniam slammed Digvijaya Singh on Twitter by asking him why he had not condemned Khawaja Asif's lies.

Absurd World Of American War & Peace

The president who called for nuclear "abolition" is now presiding over the trillion-dollar modernization of that very arsenal.

Recently, sorting through a pile of old children's books, I came across a volume, *That Makes Me Mad!*, which brought back memories. Written by Steve Kroll, a long-dead friend, it focused on the eternally frustrating everyday adventures of Nina, a little girl whose life regularly meets commonplace roadblocks, at which point she always says... well, you can guess from the title! Vivid parental memories of another age instantly flooded back — of my daughter (now reading such books to her own son) sitting beside me at age five and hitting that repeated line with such mind-blowing, ear-crushing gusto that you knew it spoke to the everyday frustrations of her life, to what made her mad.

Three decades later, in an almost unimaginably different America, on picking up that book I suddenly realized that, whenever I follow the news online, on TV, or — and forgive me for this but I'm 72 and still trapped in another era — on paper, I have a similarly Nina-esque urge. Only the line I've come up with for it is (with a tip of the hat to Steve Kroll) "You must be kidding!"

Here are a few recent examples from the world of American-style war and peace. Consider these as random illustrations, given that, in the age of Trump, just about everything that happens is out-of-this-world absurd and would serve perfectly well. If you're in the mood, feel free to shout out that line with me as we go.

Nuking the Planet: I'm sure you remember Barack Obama, the guy who

entered the Oval Office pledging to work toward "a nuclear-free world." You know, the president who traveled to Prague in 2009 to say stirringly: "So today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons... To put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy, and urge others to do the same." That same year, he was awarded the Nobel Prize largely for what he might still do, particularly in the nuclear realm. Of course, that was all so 2009

Almost two terms in the Oval Office late, our peace president, the only one who has ever called for nuclear "abolition" — and whose administration has retired fewer weapons in our nuclear arsenal than any other in the post-Cold War era — is now presiding over the early stages of a trillion-dollar modernization of that very arsenal. (And that trillion-dollar price tag comes, of course, before the inevitable cost overruns even begin.) It includes full-scale work on the creation of a "precision-guided" nuclear weapon with a "dial-back" lower yield option. Such a weapon would potentially bring nukes to the battlefield in a first-use way, something the U.S. is proudly pioneering. And that brings me to the September 6th front-page story in the New York Times that caught my eye. Think of it as the icing on the Obama era nuclear cake. Its headline: "Obama Unlikely to Vow No First Use of Nuclear Weapons." Admittedly, if made, such a vow could be reversed by any future president. Still, reportedly for fear that a pledge not to initiate a nuclear war would "undermine allies and embolden Russia and China... while

Russia is running practice bombing runs over Europe and China is expanding its reach in the South China Sea," the president has backed down on issuing such a vow. In translation: the only country that has ever used such weaponry will remain on the record as ready and willing to do so again without nuclear provocation, an act that, it is now believed in Washington, would create a calmer planet.

Recall that in October 2001, when the Bush administration launched its invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. was bombing no other largely Islamic country. In fact, it was bombing no other country at all. Afghanistan was quickly "liberated," the Taliban crushed, al-Qaeda put to flight, and that was that, or so it then seemed.

On September 8th, almost 15 years later, the Washington Post reported that, over a single weekend and in a "flurry" of activity, the U.S. had dropped bombs on, or fired missiles at, six largely Islamic countries: Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia. (And it might have been seven if the CIA hadn't grown a little rusty when it comes to the drone strikes in Pakistan's tribal borderlands that it's launched repeatedly throughout these years.) In the same spirit, the president who swore he would end the U.S. war in Iraq and, by the time he left office, do the same in Afghanistan, is now overseeing American bombing campaigns in Iraq and Syria which are losing close to 25,000 weapons a year on those countries. Only recently, in order to facilitate the further prosecution of the longest war in our history, the president who announced that his country had ended its "combat mission" in Afghanistan in 2014, has once again deployed the U.S. military in a combat role and has done the same with the U.S. Air Force.



As Indian cities grow more diverse, public services shun inclusiveness

I have been fascinated recently by archaeological reports of early 20th-century Karnataka, particularly those written by scholarly, polyglot Brahmins. Although most of were visibly religious, with elaborate caste marks on their foreheads, their findings were recorded without comment or religious context. The primary underlying characteristic I discerned from these annual reports — written when the area was the British-controlled royal state of Mysore — was the remarkable diversity of people and cultures that inhabited the region. In sum, the languages discovered on inscriptions, many of which survive to this day, include: Old and modern Kannada, Sanskrit, Persian, Tamil, Prakrits (regional dialects of Sanskrit), Telugu, Malayalam, Gujarati, Marathi, Urdu and English. As elsewhere, this linguistic fecundity reflects the interplay of diverse civilisations that gave rise to modern India.

The majority of these languages continue to be used in Karnataka, some modified by time, others kept pure by isolation. Consider the Marathi spoken by many Bangalore families.

When my mother — a native speaker of Marathi conversant with the language's literature — first came to the city in 1969, she was fascinated to find some shop-owners in a business neighbourhood called Commercial Street speaking an archaic version of Marathi that she, sometimes, struggled to understand. That's because Bangalore's Marathi is a version spoken more than 350 years ago, from a period of Maratha rule, which started when Shahaji Bhosale, father to the great Shivaji, conquered the city. The descendants of settlers from the Maratha armies — many with the last name Rao — were the people my mother spoke with. In the warren of lanes that flow out of today's Commercial street, you will find more linguistic migrants whose languages were firmly established — and refreshed by new immigrants —

over the centuries: Dakhni (a dialect of Urdu), Tamil, Hindi (from Marwari moneylenders and traders) and Telugu.

Yet, when you travel the shiny Bangalore metro — or use the airport — you will find no evidence of these languages. There are only English and Kannada. Announcements on the metro were in Hindi as well, but these were recently dropped on the western corridor, with metro officials claiming the names of some stations were simply too long, such as Sri Balagangadhara Natha Swamiji (the area is known only as Hosahalli) Station, a title forced on the metro by politicians. The suspension of Hindi led to a flurry of online protests, but as for the other languages, there is little chance, although Telugu, Dakhni and Tamil are the leading minority languages.

The two-language formula is manifest in a host of new metro systems across Indian cities and is a metaphor for the exclusion of minorities from other government-run services. In Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata or Delhi, little effort is made to accommodate minorities — linguistic or religious. In Bangalore, this year, a proposal for a multi-lingual call centre was rejected by angry corporators. In Mumbai, knowing Marathi now is a prerequisite for getting an autorickshaw permit.

The new metro in Chennai speaks only Tamil and English, as does the older system in Delhi, a city that traditionally used four languages on road signs — English, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. Delhi's airports, too, now use only English and Hindi. Earlier this month, I was in Delhi's largest and most modern aero hub, Terminal 3 (T3), when a man in a skull cap and kurta-pyjama came up to me and asked where the exit was. That way, I said, pointing up at the board, it's on the signs. He looked away, then looked back, "I can read only Urdu," he said.

The fading of Urdu from public spaces across India is a largely

unspoken but largely accepted practice that illustrates how emerging India hobbles minorities and migrants by religion, language and culture. Among Indian languages, Urdu is an outlier in this debate of disenfranchisement because it is driven by religious bigotry, which does not make it any more acceptable. Although millions of Muslims across India speak a variety of languages, Urdu is spoken largely by Muslims. In 2001 (the latest data are not available), it was India's sixth most widely spoken language with more than 51 million native speakers. In many northern and some southern cities with large Muslim populations, its status as a leading language is ignored. With the blossoming of often insecure and muscular local identities, regional linguistic domination hobbles Indians who move in search of their dream or to survive. Nearly 350 million

Indians are internal migrants, according to various estimates. Short-term or so-called "seasonal" migrants — who circulate between their homes and workplaces — could range from 15 million to 100 million, according to a United Nations review of data. Even if you consider 100 million seasonal migrants, that leaves 250 million long-term migrants. That is more than the population of Brazil, the world's fifth-most populous country. This vast migration should encourage Indian cities to be more multilingual and overall more inclusive. Instead, the opposite is happening. It is ironic that as our cities grow more diverse, public services are becoming linguistically less diverse than ever.

Worldwide, language use in public services is often based not on the narrowest majoritarian impulses but on the greatest good. In Berkeley, California,

where I was a visiting lecturer three years ago, the notices pasted in local buses were not just in English but Spanish, Vietnamese and Korean, a recognition of changing demographics. In Singapore, depending on the areas served, Tamil is used, alongside English, Mandarin and Malay, on bus and metro signs and for announcements. In Manchester airport in Britain, Punjabi announcements are common. These regions and countries also deploy translators in government offices. In Seoul, capital of a unilingual country, subway announcements are in four languages (English, Korean, Japanese, Chinese).

To be sure, this is not always the case. There are a host of linguistically narrow-minded countries that refuse to make lives easier for minorities, but that, surely, is not something India should aspire to.

Modi Attempts To Turn Pakistanis Against Their Rulers

And he called Pakistanis for a fight to end poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and infant mortality

There were great expectations for warmongers from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and he did disappoint them during his speech at a rally in Kerala.

Post Uri attack by militants that killed 18 Indian soldiers, some of them in their sleep, there were calls for a retaliatory attack on Pakistan. And Prime Minister Modi was expected to give insights into the decisions taken during his meeting with ministers and army chiefs over the last few days, during his visit to the coastal town of Kozhikode for the BJP's National Council meet.

And he did reveal his mind with a clever splitting of the most important sentence of his speech — satisfying the hawks first and the doves later.

In his thundering voice, he said: "I am calling Pakistan for fight, a fight to end poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, infant mortality.

"Let's see who wins first," he said.

Modi, without the use of notes, spoke directly to his immense audience punctuated by near-perfect Malayalam translations.

After his initial niceties to the audience, he began pounding Pakistan slowly. He first offered Pakistan the comfort of anonymity while describing its "atrocities on India", qualifying it first as a country in Asia, then "our neighbor" and later took the neighbour's name. He reproduced his much-loved

comeback at Pakistan to shame the neighbour. "One country in Asia is exporting terror to the four corners of the world," he said.

His speech had an agenda. He tried to underplay the armed forces failure in stopping the Uri attack by spotlighting the uncelebrated successes of the soldiers in thwarting, what he said, "17 infiltration bids over the last few months."

He said: "In the last few months, our soldiers have killed over 110 terrorists, the highest in recent years". He then sang a different tune, by distinguishing the state from the nation. And sicced the people of Pakistan on the rulers. He exhorted Pakistanis to ask its government, when India is exporting software, why is Pakistan exporting terror.

Modi then tried tugging at their heart.

"I want to remind the people of Pakistan that before partition, your forefathers too used to respect this land," said Modi.

Probably worried that he was sounding a tad too dove-ish to his listeners who were expecting a clenched fist and sharp tongue-lashing for Pakistan, he had this: "Sacrifice of our 18 jawans will not go in vain. We will leave no stone unturned to isolate Pakistan in the world." After hitting the crescendo, Modi made a climbdown by appealing to the audience to make his pet dream — Swachh Bharat — a success.



The Mewat Biryani raids have permanently damaged livelihoods of poor Muslims

In Mewat, Haryana, the traditional cheer of Eid ul Zuha was muted this year, overcast by clouds of fear. Four out of five residents of the district are Muslims. Outside Jammu and Kashmir, Mewat has the highest ratio of Muslim residents except Dhubri in Assam. The Meo Muslims practise Islam but also retain many Hindu names and practices. Mewat, recently renamed Nuh, is one of the poorest districts of Haryana. In earlier years, impoverished Meos would sometimes come together for the annual Eid sacrifice, seven households joining to sacrifice one animal. But this year, for the first time, most Muslim households did not sacrifice any animal.

The dread of Muslim residents mounted after raiding teams of the state police, supported by non-State cow vigilantes, collected samples of biryani sold by locals on the highways to Alwar and Gurgaon to test whether these contained cow meat. This was about a week before the Eid. No official reports were made public about the findings of the tests, but cow vigilante leaders claimed that five of the seven samples tested 'positive' for cow meat.

Memories are also fresh among Muslims of the lynching of Mohammed Ikhlaiq in Dadri less than a year ago, based on the rumour that he had killed a cow and eaten its meat during Eid. People in Mewat feared that mobs could attack any of them, claiming that the meat that they were eating and distributing was cow meat, and they could be killed in the way Ikhlaiq was. In fact, 'Ikhlaiq' had become a verb in people's conversations: 'people may Ikhlaiq us', they said, meaning that they could be lynched.

It has become risky to transport cows. If a truck is found to carry cows, then gau rakshaks stop the truck, thrash the driver, often vandalise or burn the vehicle, and then drag the driver, if still alive, to the police.

These rakshaks derive a great sense of social power from this role. But even if the transported animals are not cows —

buffaloes, or even camels — the transporters remain equally vulnerable to attack. Instead of gau rakshaks, they pose to be animal rights activists, often claiming allegiance to Union minister and leading animal rights activist Maneka Gandhi. And they are still attacked even though they are not transporting cows.

Apart from the long shadows that the Haryana police biryani raids cast on Eid festivities, the even more permanent damage they inflicted was on the livelihoods of thousands of poor Muslims. Along highways, young men would sell on portable wooden carts steaming biryani to truck-drivers and workers. They would mainly use buffalo meat, which was economical and conformed to local tastes. A plate would sell for Rs 15 to 20. It offered a source of inexpensive and sanitary nutrition, and had become a major part of the contemporary culture of the region.

But even more than this, the biryani stalls were a source of

decent livelihood to approximately 15,000 people. It is estimated that around 3,000 such stalls operated across the district. Each offered employment to at least five people, for a range of tasks from the rearing and sale of the meat and rice, collecting firewood, cooking that began typically before dawn inside thousands of Mewat homes, transportation and sale.

However, after the raids by the police, almost all of these have shut down. In an impoverished district with low literacy, there were few jobs for residents who owned little land. Many worked in stone quarries but these were recently shut down. Tens of thousands drove trucks, but more than 50,000 of their driving licences were recently cancelled when they submitted these for renewal. On the back of so much livelihood distress, the abrupt closure of the biryani trade in terror of official action has resulted in suffering and anger.

Cow slaughter is prohibited in Haryana since the mid-1950s under the Punjab Prohibition of Cow Slaughter

Act (1955), but lawyer Ramzan Chaudhary tells me that this statute was lightly enforced. This changed with the election of a BJP government in Haryana in 2014. The socially conservative chief minister led the passage of a far more stringent Haryana Gauvansh Sanrakshan and Gau Samvardhan Act, 2015. This first expanded the prohibition to include slaughter of any 'gau vanshaj' — including bulls, oxen, heifers and calves, even when these animals are disabled, diseased or barren. It made possession even of tinned and imported beef a crime. It prescribed high penalties including rigorous imprisonment of three to 10 years. The earlier law made no provision for testing or sampling meat samples, but this statute provided for establishing laboratories for such testing. The Haryana government constituted a police — Cow Protection Task Force — led by a DIG Bharti Arora, who went on record about her missionary zeal to protect cows. It was policepersons of this task force

who conducted the Mewat biryani raids, sending samples to the Lala Lajpat Rai University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Hisar. The Tribune reports that all that the forensic investigation could conclude was that the meat was 'cattle meat', not whether or not it was cow meat. It stated that the laboratories are not equipped to conduct any such tests that would stand legal scrutiny in a court of law.

All of this makes the official motive for the police raids on the biryani stalls even more troubling. Lacking the expertise and equipment to actually test whether the meat samples were of cows or buffaloes, what the raids timed a week before the Eid festival accomplished was only to create a climate of dread that crushed both the festival and one major livelihood source of thousands of poor persons. The greater tragedy is that this seems to have been precisely what the government, openly hostile to a segment of its citizens based on their religious identity, actually wanted to accomplish. Harsh Mander is the author of *Looking Away: Inequality, Prejudice and Indifference in New India*.

Are these the worst wedding dresses EVER?

From a cup-cake monstrosity to barely-there hotpants and a shocking pregnancy peephole, brides showcase their most outrageous gowns

Most brides spend months agonising over that all-important dress to ensure they look their best on their big day.

And whether they opt for a satin, ivory or lace number, they'll no doubt want to go for an elegant classic that stands the test of time.

But it seems these blushing brides were determined to stand out at any cost - wearing show-stopping numbers that turned heads for all the wrong reasons.

From head-to-toe crochet to customised t-shirts, there's no doubt these frocks will be permanently etched in the memories of their guests.

A series of photos sweeping the internet show the statement-making and bizarre directions that a simple white gown can take - racking up more than 8,000 views on Imgur.

One resourceful bride proved she had no need for a wedding cake - turning her entire gown into a cake stand. The five-tiered creation was adorned with what appear to

be actual cupcakes, begging the question whether she could actually move - and accessorised with a top hat, parasol and sleeveless gloves.

Other women determined to flash the flesh on their big day included one who stepped out of a limousine with a barely-there corset which only just protected her modesty. She did however make up for it with a flowing gown, gloves and a statement necklace.

While one wedding photographer must have had the fright of his life when his subject appeared to be spilling out of her top.

One brunette beauty ensured all eyes were on her in a gown with a sweeping train adorned with bright orange flames - a pattern that wouldn't have looked out of place on a motorcycle helmet.

And taking the 'meringue' theme to dizzying new heights, one bride paired a frothy skirt with a billowing train, lacy garter and patent platform shoes - with her hair styled into tight ringlets.



Sleaze slips up in Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab

With the state convenor being sacked and three dissident groups tearing up the fabric of the new party, there is little hope for AAP unless its leader mends his ways

When l'affaire Christine Keeler, a 19-year-old petite British socialite and would-be model hit the headlines in the English mainstream media in 1963, few could anticipate the rude shock it was about to deliver to the handful of cultural remnants of the still prudish Victorian English society nor the extent to which it was destined to rock the British political system to its very foundations. We all know England is not India — and was not India even during that starchy morality era — yet the seemingly innocuous sex scandal not only devastated the political career of the then British defence minister John Profumo but even set the then prime minister Harold Macmillan firmly on course to a final descent into political oblivion.

Back home, what is now happening to the Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab may still not earn its leaders the kind of grace which Macmillan and Profumo received from their countrymen. The reason for this difference lies not in the moral and social attitudes of the people of the two countries, although there are decidedly many such differences. But the real reason seems to lie not in that India is not England but in that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is not Macmillan, and his Sandeep Sharmas and other alleged exploiters of Punjabis' honour are not Profumos: they are worse and they are arrogant.

Which brings me to the political adventures of Kejriwal, whose superficial moral vehemence appears not only to be gradually running out of steam but also steering him inevitably towards the slot which destiny normally reserves for the overambitious. In Punjab, a series of wounds, largely self-inflicted, have bogged him down and unless he finds quick moral, intellectual and political replenishment, he is in serious danger of bleeding to an early and untimely political demise (for him and his followers). His customary political bravado apart, Kejriwal chose a standalone bungalow for himself, subjecting every guest, including party colleagues to the regimen of searches. No one is allowed to take cellphone, camera, goggles, specs, pens, pencils or wallets inside the building. Such suspiciousness comes only when you have something you need desperately to hide from your people and friends. Why should an Aam Aadmi leader live like an oppressive paranoid like Bin Laden and Dawood? Such paranoia and suspicion is not entirely unique for those whose overvaulting ambition seeks to outstrip their destiny. The Delhi CM may not see it but the fact is that no one today wants to be in

Kejriwal's fashionably rumpled and ragged muffler, even though he may have used it to good effect as a weapon of political deception. But it's not hard to see how short the shelf life of success gained through such deception and cosmetic conscience can be.



In brief, there are clear signs now that the people have begun to see through the fact the AAP leader is just a manufactured and carefully manicured messiah — and this is unacceptable in Punjab. It has always been the great fortune of the manufactured messiahs that their devotees are generally dazzled by the magic of their fake simplicity and 'faked' identities, and they generally trust high-sounding but hollow proclamations of honesty and humility. To his credit, Kejriwal seems to have perfected these questionable ploys into an art form. But I still remain suspicious of the long-term value of this short-term opportunism.

It is fascinating to observe that Kejriwal has been riding the luck of those who believe that it is better

to reign in hell than serve in heaven — or better to rule over an unreal state like Delhi than serve in a real kingdom like Anna Hazare's. Therefore, it is hardly any wonder that Kejriwal's devotees are more full of passionate intensity to worship their blind followers of Milton's inverted hero are in Paradise Lost. Kejriwal's devotees are clear that if there is a god in this universe other than Arvind Kejriwal, then that god has to be disobeyed. We all know that the weakest and the shakiest throne belongs to the strongest and proudest arm.

There are more than enough signs that Arvind Kejriwal has lost the opportunity which destiny had created for him. He has lost it because either he understood it to begin with or he understood it as an opportunity to centralise power and authority in his hands. In fact, it was an opportunity to decentralise.

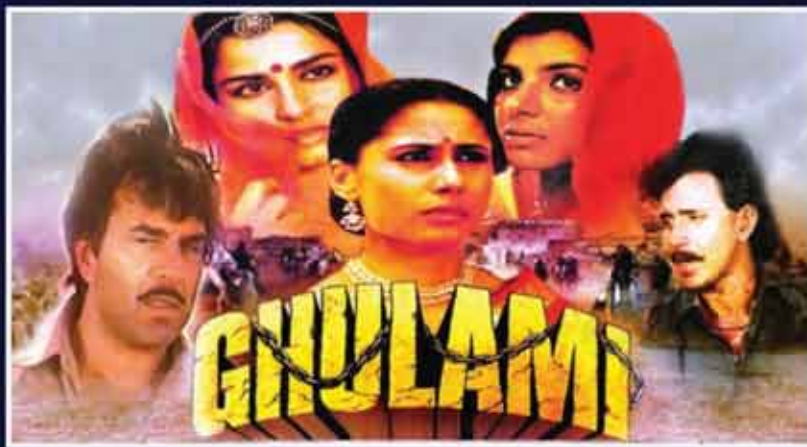
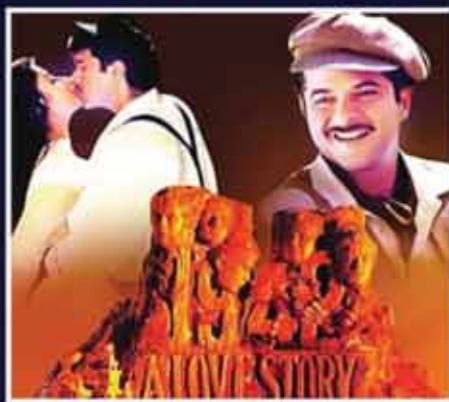
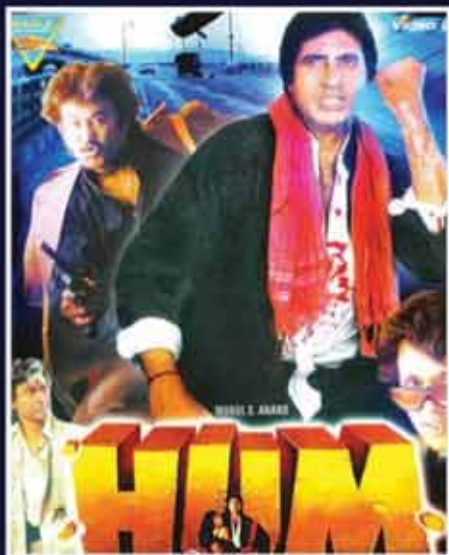
If he were to be true to the ideals of the Anna movement, then he has to begin demonstrating how to shed power in order to make the system work for the good of the people. But his party became a one-man show, so he made it. Power and responsibility will not be shared, he declares. Out of the window go values and principles and Yogendra Yadavs and Prashant Bhushans and Khalsas. Therefore, now there is no such thing as the Aam Aadmi Party. It died the day Kejriwal was sworn in as CM, dropped his hypocritical renunciation and took over a bungalow larger than the one he had

blasted his predecessor for — followed by cabinet larger than hers, security as large as hers, salaries for self and friends far larger than hers.

Meanwhile, he will speak such moral 'truths' as that Sukhbir Singh Badal has 63 sex CDs on Kejriwal's ministers (fake, of course!) There is no need for Kejriwal to prove this. He will say media has been bought over. There is no need to prove that 74 percent of Punjabis are drug addicts! No need to prove that. Bikram Majithia challenges him to repeat in court that he has brought thousands of crores worth of drugs into Punjab. Majithia has filed a defamation suit against him and is daring him to agree to day-to-day hearings. Of course, there is no need for Kejriwal to agree. Where is the hurry for the truth on drugs to be out?

And it doesn't matter that Kejriwal's own party is split into at least three equal factions in Punjab — factions headed by sincere or serious about Sucha Singh Chhotepur and Dharmavir Gandhi. Kejriwal's former-lieutenant Jassi Jasraj was also thrown out of the party because he said AAP leaders close to Kejriwal are indulging in immoral acts, including selling tickets for crores and acts of moral turpitude like exploiting poor women workers. Jassi raised the banner of Punjab's honour and begged Kejriwal for a hearing. Of course there is no need for that! Sucha Singh Chhotepur said tickets have been sold for crores, and begged Kejriwal to look into it. There is no need for inquiry into anything, because everything begins and ends with Kejriwal. So what if Sucha was convener of the party?

The Aam Aadmi Party is long dead; long live the aam aadmi.



A bunch of then young filmmakers from the 1980s, including Vidhu Vinod Chopra (above), came close to creating an environment that nearly did away with the 'naach gaana'. (Anti-clockwise from above) posters of Ghulami, Hum and 1942: A Love Story.

When Bollywood almost did away with song & dance

EVER since one can recall, the business of song and dance has been integral to the ethos of popular Hindi cinema. Even after witnessing the entire parallel cinema movement of the 1970s and the independent experimental fare of the late 1990s like *Hyderabad Blues* (1998) and the early 2000s including *Khosla Ka Ghosla* (2006) and *Bheja Fry* (2007) to name a few, a 'song-less' film continues to make news.

While one would have imagined that the so-called new age filmmakers would do away with song and dance ritual, ironically enough they too seem to have taken to it. Intriguingly enough it is a bunch of then young filmmakers from the 1980s, a decade often said to be the worst for Hindi cinema, who came achingly close to creating an environment that nearly did away with the *naach gaana*.

On the face of it, there is nothing unique in the films of Mukul Anand, Vidhu Vinod Chopra, JP Dutta and Rahul Rawail that set them apart from the standard definition of Hindi films. They made some of their best films in a decade where most of the movies were escapist and run of the mill. Video piracy had reached its peak and it was almost impossible to get middle-class families, especially women and children, to the cinema halls.

Most of the films were also not being able to do great business at the box office and save a few such as *Karma* (1986) or *Mr India* (1987) and the odd

Amitabh Bachchan feature, films were successful only in pockets. The biggest impact that the decade of the 1980s had was on the music in films. To get an idea of just how bad the state of film music was one needs to simply listen to any of Bappi Lahiri-Indeewar songs from this period — for instance, this one from *Tohfa* (1984): "Ek aankh marun toh pard hatt jaaye, Dooji aankh marun qalyja qat jaaye, Dono aankhein marun toh chhori patt jaaye."

It was in this kind of atmosphere that Rahul Rawail, Mukul Anand, JP Dutta and Vidhu Vinod Chopra arrived on the scene. It was not like the films they made did not feature songs; in fact, Rawail's *Love Story* (1981) featured a stellar score by RD Burman, JP Dutta's debut *Ghulami* (1985) had the iconic 'Zihal-e-miskin makun ba-ranjish' (lyrics Anand Bakshi, music Laxmikant-Pyarelal), and had it not been for Vidhu Chopra's *Parinda* (1989) RD Burman would have slipped into an early retirement and later his *1942: A Love Story* (1994) would go on to become Pancham da's swansong and Mukul Anand's *Hum* (1991) gave the nation a new anthem of sorts in 'Jumma chumma' (lyrics Anand Bakshi, music Laxmikant-Pyarelal).

But a deeper look at their best films

reveals how the absence of songs would not have made any difference to the narrative. Mirroring the nuances of classical Hindi cinema where a song is ideally supposed to take the story forward, songs in Rawail's *Arjun* (1985), Anand's *Agneepath* (1990), Dutta's *Ghulami*, *Hathyaar* (1989) and *Yateem* (1988) and Chopra's *Parinda* augment the narrative. In *Arjun*, 'Mamiya Kairo Mama' is the only song you recall and it's the only one that needed to be in the film. Similarly, the presence of 'Alibaba' in *Agneepath* and *Parinda*'s 'Tumse milke' or 'Kitni hai pyari pyari dosti humari' can be attributed to the same reason.

Music made a comeback in Hindi cinema with the arrival of *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (1988) and *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1988) and later *Aashiqui* (1990) and *1942: A Love Story* (1994) completed the circle. Perhaps it were the market constraints — the need to put songs even if it hampers the story (like in the case of *Agneepath* where the songs are, in fact, the film's weakest link) — and the lack of multiplex culture that forced Rahul Rawail, Mukul Anand, JP Dutta, and Vidhu Vinod Chopra to carry on keeping one foot in the past while they

attempted to reinvent the narrative. Even filmmakers who were known for music of their films like Subhash Ghai also somewhere could not imagine a film without songs or even with just a couple of them. Imagine how different *Khalnayak* (1993) would have been without the songs.

In addition to the songs, they were forced to include comedy tracks that stuck out like a sore thumb. This possible new commercial Hindi cinema had been brewing since the mid-1980s with *Arjun* and finally came into its own with Mukul Anand's *Agneepath*, which in many ways was a culmination of this thinking. Unfortunately, the failure of *Agneepath* and the arrival of Aamir Khan and Salman Khan, whose breakthrough films featured a new kind of sound, put an end to this experimentation.

The presence of songs and the absence of a huge segment of the family audience that had abandoned going to the cinema halls diluted the impact of these filmmakers' films. Moreover, by the time video piracy and the influence of abysmal films that were made around the same was overcome by the new kind of narrative that was being attempted by Rawail, Anand, Chopra and Dutta, the audiences were taken in by the romantic-boy-next-door.

The writer is the author of the best-selling 'Dark Star: The Loneliness of Being Rajesh Khanna'

Imagine how different Subhash Ghai's 'Khalnayak' (1993) would have been without the songs

HOW DID ANCIENT ROMAN COINS GET TO JAPAN?

FOR THE first time, Japanese archaeologists have unearthed ancient Roman coins at the ruins of an old castle. The discovery of 10 bronze and copper coins, the oldest dating from about 300-400 AD, in southern Okinawa caught researchers by surprise.

This was the first time Roman Empire coins had been discovered in Japan, thousands of miles from where they were likely to have been minted.

Researchers think the coins travelled during the Middle Ages, when trade between Japan and the West was reaching a high point.



Roman coins have for the first time been found in Japan.

'At first I thought they were one cent coins dropped by US soldiers,' archaeologist Hiroki Miyagi said.

'But after washing them in water I realised they were much older. 'I was really shocked.'

The sub-tropical island chain hosts a cluster of US military bases and thousands of troops. A team of researchers has been excavating Katsuren castle in Okinawa, hundreds of miles southwest of the Japanese mainland, which is a UNESCO world heritage site, since 2013.

An X-ray analysis of the dime-sized coins showed some were embossed with Roman letters. They even possibly show the image of Emperor Constantine

I, who ruled Rome from 324 to 337 AD, and a soldier holding a spear. Several others dated from a later period, the 17th century Ottoman empire.

Researchers were left scratching their heads about how the coins ended up at the castle in faraway Okinawa, which was built during the late 13th or early 14th century and abandoned about 200 years later.

Although it is not clear exactly where the coins were made, if the Roman coins dated between 300 and 400 AD were forged in Rome, they would have travelled 9,936 km

to get to the castle.

It was once the residence of a feudal lord, whose wealth was linked to regional trade but he was not known to have had business ties with Europe.

'East Asian merchants in the 14 and 15th centuries mainly used Chinese currency, a round coin with a square hole in the middle, so it is unlikely that the Western coins were used as a means of currency,' said Miyagi, who also teaches at Okinawa International University. 'I believe they probably got the coins in Southeast Asia or China.'



I don't think I am hot. I am awkward, dorky and shy: **Nargis Fakhri**

(Agencies) Bold, brazen and outspoken. You could describe actor Nargis Fakhri in these three words. And while, she is known to have a 'sexy' image, the actor thinks otherwise. Ever since her debut with Rockstar, the hot tag has stayed but Nargis prefers 'dorky' over hot. "I don't feel hot and I don't think I am hot. I am a very awkward, dorky and shy human on the inside. People who know me always laugh because they say that when God made you, it was a mistake. He made this outer part that is so sexy and the inner one is funny, goofy, shy and they don't match at all. I don't like so much attention and pressure on me", she says. A few months back, rumour mills were abuzz with news that Nargis had moved back to New York and that she had no plans to return to Bollywood. She did come back to promote her recently release film Banjo, but she is very clear that she will only be in the country as long as she gets work.

Setting the record straight she says, "I went home because I was unwell. My home is America. I have travelled the world before, but this is longest I have been in one place. Usually I get very bored and I want to go find another country. I am not bored yet but I miss home. There is no family, no friends,

there is nothing here, except for work. My mother lives in New York." "And I have realised that in the five years that I have been here, I haven't seen her enough. And when you see them, you realise they're growing old. I take care of her financially and she is very grateful for that. But actually, she wants to see me and spend time with me. If someone hires me, I'd love to work and come back. Whether I leave or stay, it doesn't matter," she adds. As per a recent report, when Nargis was on a TV show promoting her film, she was asked to cover up her outfit as it was 'too revealing'. That's when they had to tack her neckline and though Nargis says she is used to people being conservative in India, the request right in the middle of the show was bizarre.

"I was on the show and they felt that it was a little too open so we just tacked it. Coming to India, I had learnt that a lot of people here are conservative and aren't too comfortable with revealing outfits. Although, in the picture with me with the tack and without the tack, you don't see anything. But they felt that so it's not a big deal. But I just wish they had told me beforehand. If they felt that was the issue, why did they let me go on the show and then decide in

the middle of the show that my outfit wasn't alright? That's a little silly. But no, it doesn't bother me", she signs off.



Bollywood's tryst with the Great Depression



(Agencies) After actors Deepika Padukone and Varun Dhawan, filmmaker Karan Johar's recent admission that he battled depression, has once again put the limelight back on why so many stars are vulnerable to it.

In a recent interview Johar said, "It was a dark, deep and helpless time. There was nothing I could do about it. I stopped feeling excitement and happiness. There was lack of sleep and I was always on the edge. I think I hadn't dealt entirely with the loss of my father.

There was also the fear that I was not able to find my life partner. There is so much love I get from my friends but where do I take it all? I used to feel very lonely." Speaking about why celebs are prone to being depressed, clinical psychologist, Pulkit Sharma says, "Being a celebrity, people get very dependent on external admiration to feel good and to keep their self esteem intact. They get addicted to it and get shattered if that admiration declines."

In 2015, actor Deepika Padukone, too, spoke

extensively about fighting depression and how it was important for her to fight it. "Being sad and being depressed are two different things. Also, people going through depression don't look so, while someone sad will look sad. The most common reaction is, 'How can you be depressed? You have everything going for you... It's not about what you have or don't have," said Padukone, who launched her own foundation Live, Love and Laugh in 2015 which is dedicated towards helping people fight depression.

Manish Jain, a psychiatric

consultant adds, "People who are in the limelight are prone to depression. They have the pressure of performing well all the time and anybody can be a victim of this." In an interview last year, actor Anushka Sharma spoke out on taking medication for anxiety. "I have anxiety. And I'm treating my anxiety. I'm on medication for my anxiety. Why am I saying this? Because it's a completely normal thing. It's a biological problem. In my family there have been cases of depression. More and more people should talk openly about it. There is nothing shameful about it or something to hide. If you had a constant stomach pain, wouldn't you go to the doctor? It's that simple. I want to make this my mission, to take any shame out of this, to educate people about this," she said.

In January 2015, Varun said, "I was depressed. I was not clinically declared depressed but I was heading



there. I was very sad to a certain degree. I don't want to use the term 'depression' loosely because it's a serious illness. It definitely affected my mental health. I was prescribed and did see a doctor for it as well."

Katrina Kaif does a Victoria Beckham, is set to launch her own label

(Agencies) Katrina Kaif is set to venture into a completely new field — retail. Apparently, the actor has been working on the project for some time now. But for the moment, the details are being kept under wraps.

“Katrina has been toying with the idea for a long time. While not much is known at this stage, the project seems exciting. She has also been in discussions to tie up with big brands in different spheres, where she feels she will be able to create things that reflect her personality,” says an insider. A few weeks ago, when Katrina attended several business meetings in London, UK, it fuelled speculations about a venture that will be launched in India. Sources insist

that if all goes as planned, Katrina will announce this “revolutionary” project soon. The source adds that Katrina’s new venture will not be limited to a fashion line, but will include several other things as well.

It is believed that Katrina has “personally been spending a lot of time” on her pet project since “it is something that she is passionate about”. The insider says, “She is already in talks with some of the best names in the business to launch the venture that she calls groundbreaking.” Apparently, Katrina’s partners in her retail venture are gung-ho about the project. “Since Katrina is a regular on search lists and popularity charts, it speaks volumes for the kind of

reach she has. So, her partners are confident about the project’s success,” adds the insider. While there are not many such instances (actors getting into the retail business) in India, global stars such as Victoria Beckham, Kate Hudson, Mark Wahlberg, Jay Z and Madonna, among others, have successfully launched their retail projects. When contacted about her retail venture, Katrina confirmed the news, saying, “It’s true that I am planning a label. But it’s too early to give out any details right now. I will make an announcement soon.”



I hope my part is not shown in Dhoni’s biopic: Laxmi Raai

(Agencies) Chennai-based actor Laxmi Raai, who is making her Bollywood debut this year, is surprised to see stories about her relationship with cricketer MS Dhoni surfacing yet again ahead of the release of his biopic.

“It’s so strange that people are unnecessarily focusing on my past. While I and Dhoni have moved on, it

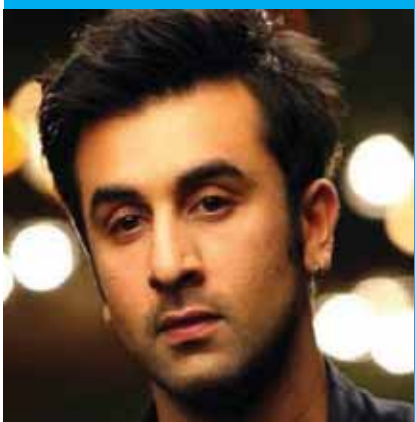


We had never committed to each other and never thought of getting married either, so I don’t understand why people would talk about us. It didn’t work for us, so we moved on,” adds the actor. While Dhoni’s biopic talks about one of his ex-girlfriends Priyanka Jha who died in an accident, speculations are rife that Raai’s part might also be shown in the film. “I hope not. Though there was an indirect approach to know the story from my side but I have not given any such consent so they cannot claim a relationship existed unless they take names in the film,” she says adding, “(Also) it’s not that he (Dhoni) has dated only me in his life. There have been other girls too that he’s been in relationship with after me. And a biopic is much more than just girls and relationships.”

looks like some people are still stuck with it. It’s been eight years that chapter got over for me,” says Raai who was allegedly dating Dhoni in 2008 during IPL.

“I was the brand ambassador for the team that he was a part of and we were together for less than a year.

I am aware I have a drinking problem, says Ranbir Kapoor



(Agencies) Actor Ranbir Kapoor is known to be reticent when it comes to media interactions. In what can be called one of his most candid interviews, the actor spoke about drinking problem. “It (films) is a visual medium and I have to look after myself. I have seen it in my family, I have seen it go the wrong way, so I’m aware I have a drinking problem. When I shoot, when I work, I don’t drink,” he said in an interview to a magazine. The interview also stated that Ranbir usually preferred a cold draught beer but it that wasn’t available, he’d drink anything.

Pakistani actor Fawad Khan leaves India after threats from MNS



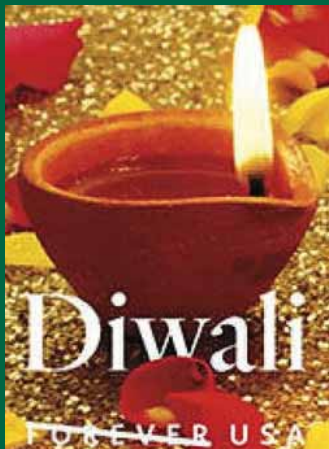
(Agencies) Pakistani actor Fawad Khan has reportedly left India, and stalled plans to get back anytime soon, after Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) threatened to beat up Pakistani actors if they didn’t leave India by Sunday (September 25). The threat comes in the wake of the recent terror attack in Uri, J&K, in which 18 Indian troops were killed. Although Mumbai Police promised protection to Pakistani artists in

the city, looks like they don’t want to take any chances. Our source reveals that Fawad, who was in India until recently, flew out to Pakistan. MNS has particularly targeted Fawad’s upcoming film Ae Dil Hai Mushkil, claiming that they wouldn’t allow the release of the film, slated for Diwali.

Be a part of History

Historic Diwali Stamp unveiled by USPS

(By Vijay Shah) The U.S. Postal Service on Monday said it will issue a Diwali postage stamp, meeting one of the long pending demands of Indian-American community here. The Diwali stamp is being issued as a "Forever" stamp, the U.S. Postal Service said in a statement. The stamp design, unveiled by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), is a photograph featuring a traditional diya oil lamp lit in a sparkling gold background. The first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony will take place at the Indian Consulate in New York City on October 5, the USPS said.



Hinduism was the only major world religion, for which the USPS had not issued a postage stamp. "This is a dream come true," said New York-based Ranju Batra chair, Diwali Stamp Project, who had led campaign to send thousands of letters to the U.S. Postal Service in the past and had campaigned before the U.S. Congress.

Programme
Diwali Stamp Sales by USPS
 Stamp Dedication Ceremony Starts 1PM
Lunch Reception
 Diwali Stamp Sales by USPS
 Free Raffle Drawing of Air India Free Roundtrip Tickets on 3.15 PM

The United States Postal Service® cordially invites you to join us in the celebration of the

DIWALI

FIRST-DAY-OF-ISSUE FOREVER® STAMP DEDICATION CEREMONY

Commemorate the joyous festival of Diwali with a new stamp that features a traditional diya, or oil-wick lamp, that dots the homes of observers around the world.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2016, 1:00 P.M.
 CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA
 3 EAST 64TH STREET
 NEW YORK, NY 10065

RSVP at usps.com/diwali

Admission is free and open to the general public. Stamp sales and the actual stamp launch at Noon. Buy stamps at USPS.com/stamps. Connect with us using #DiwaliStamp.

U.S. : Wells Fargo illegally repossessed 413 service members' cars

(Agencies) Wells Fargo will pay \$24 million to settle allegations that it mistreated members of the military — including illegally repossessing their cars.

The bank, already reeling from a scandal over fake accounts, will pay \$4.1 million to settle Justice Department charges that it seized 413 cars owned by service members without a court order, a violation of federal law.

The Justice Department said the illegal repossessions took place from 2008 to 2015. The first complaint came from an Army

National Guardsman in North Carolina who said the bank seized his car while he was preparing to deploy to Afghanistan.

Wells Fargo then auctioned his car and tried to collect a balance of \$10,000 from his family, the Justice Department said.

The bank will pay \$10,000 to each of the affected service members, plus lost equity in the cars with interest, and repair their credit. The bank was fined \$20 million more by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency for breaking three provisions of the

same law by denying members of the military certain banking protections, including capping their interest rates at 6%. Those violations began in 2006, the OCC said.

Wells Fargo said in a statement that it apologizes for not living up to its commitment of ensuring that all service members "receive the appropriate benefits and protections."

"We have been notifying and fully compensating customers and will complete this work in 60 days," the company said. News of the penalties came as Wells



Fargo and CEO John Stumpf faced the wrath of the House Financial Services Committee at a hearing about the millions of fake bank and credit card

accounts, plus claims that it retaliated against whistleblowers.

The company is also facing lawsuits from shareholders, former employees and customers.

U.S. to open new vetting agency for 'secret' security clearances



(Agencies) The U.S. government will open the doors next week to a new agency, with stronger data protections, meant to shorten by many weeks the time it takes to vet government workers seeking "secret" and "top secret" security clearances.

The National Background Investigations Bureau will be headed by Charles Phalen, who has worked as a security executive at the CIA, the FBI and defense contractor Northrop Grumman, officials said on Thursday on a conference call with reporters. (Contd on page 20)

Do Driverless Cars Favor Urban or Suburban Life?



(Agencies) Here are two competing theories of how the coming transportation revolution could impact American life.

One possibility is that easy mobility—driverless cars, on-demand deliveries, and the like—will dull the pains of suburban life. The long commute, the wasted

driving time, the difficulty of running out for a carton of milk—the inconvenience and expense of the subdivision will be melted away by hot new technology. Milk by drone, what a concept!

Another is that easy mobility produces greater advantages in the city. Carless living is better than ever.

NIMBY battles don't happen because parking and congestion aren't problems. Wasted auto infrastructure, like lots and curbside parking and garages, is converted towards better uses like housing and restaurants. Maybe a central highway, once evidence of a city's essential unpleasantness, becomes a park. Those two futures might both exist, but is it possible that the technology could push Americans away from the suburban status quo? Or is it the opposite? Will freedom from driving allow us to live closer together, or permit us to live further away? Consider the question a loose societal analogy to Clayton Christensen's business dichotomy of disruptive versus sustaining innovation. Does the transportation revolution sustain American sprawl or disrupt it?

(Contd on page 20)