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## War for Water

### Why India should be worried about China's dam projects on the Brahmaputra river



A vast and densely populated region of North-east India that depends on water from Brahmaputra and its tributaries is feeling agitated over China's ambitious efforts to redraw its water map.

China's reported plan to divert the Brahmaputra from its upper reaches is being seen as a direct affront to India and a violation of International norms of sharing river waters. Once the construction of dam is complete, the control on the water of Brahmaputra will be in the hands of China. As the Brahmaputra is the lifeline of North East India, the life and environment in the region will be adversely affected by this development. The term Brahmaputra means "son of

brahma" and in the early days of Indus valley civilizations Brahmaputra River was the subject of faith and legends of Bharat.

The Brahmaputra flows for about 1,625- km inside the Tibet Autonomous Region of China and for a further 918-km inside India. This is not the first time that tension is building up between India and China over Brahmaputra projects, which could affect the flow of water into India.

The BJP was quick to react to these reports and demanded that if there is fresh evidence of China's intentions then India should immediately take up this matter with the Chinese authority. "These reports are of real concern to India. Since the last two years, there are

reports that China wants to divert Brahmaputra waters from the Himalayas. If it is diverted, we will have real problems which will affect the economy of the whole region," BJP spokesperson Prakash Javadekar said. The BJP MP had raised the issue in the Rajya Sabha last year.

Besides India, which raised the construction of a 510 MW dam on the Brahmaputra in talks with the Chinese leadership for many times. Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia had expressed similar concerns over eight dams being built on the Mekong river. The blame game, voiced in vulnerable river towns and Asian capitals from Pakistan to Vietnam, is rooted in fear that China's accelerating programme of damming every major river flowing from the Tibetan plateau will trigger environmental imbalance, natural disasters, degrade fragile ecologies, divert vital water supplies.

A few analysts and environmental advocates even speak of water as a future trigger for war or diplomatic strong-arming, though others strongly doubt it will come to that. Still, the remapping of the water flow in the world's most heavily populated and thirstiest region is happening on a gigantic scale, with potentially strategic implications. On

the eight great Tibetan rivers alone, almost 20 dams have been built or are under construction while some 40 more are planned or proposed.

China is not alone in disrupting the region's water flows. Others are doing it with even worse consequences. But China's vast thirst for power and water, its control over the sources of the rivers and its ever-growing political clout make it a singular target of criticism and suspicion.

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Within days of India announcing plans to assert its right within the Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan, China said it was building a dam on a tributary of the Yarlung Zangbo, as Brahmaputra is known in Tibet. This will be its 'most expensive hydel project'. Here's all about the project, the tributary and why India worries about the project.

Why India sees red

1. China's dam building overdrive is a concern because there are no bilateral or multilateral treaties on the water
2. China believes dam building on the Brahmaputra helps it assert claim over Arunachal Pradesh
3. India believes China's projects in the Tibetan plateau threaten to reduce river flows into India
4. Dams, canals, irrigation systems can turn water into a political weapon to be wielded in war, or during peace to signal annoyance with a co-riparian state
5. Denial of hydrological data becomes critical when the flow in the river is very high
6. China is contemplating northward re-routing of the Yarlung Zangbo
7. Diversion of the Brahmaputra is an idea China does not discuss in public, because it implies devastating India's northeastern plains and Bangladesh, either with floods or reduced water flow

(Contd on page 21)



# London is 'open' for business, Mayor Sadiq Khan reaches out to Indian firms

(Agencies) London : Mayor Sadiq Khan on Wednesday reached out to leading Indian firms, the second biggest foreign investors in London who employ around 50,000 people, to reassure them that the British capital remains "open" for business amid concerns arising out of uncertainty post Brexit.

The Pakistani-origin mayor hosted a meeting at his City Hall office by the river Thames with 17 companies already working with London, including the Tata Group, Infosys, Wipro, ZEE TV, ICICI Bank, among others, to discuss expanding their links with London after Britain's decision to leave the EU.

"London is open for investment and business from around the globe and the city already has an excellent trading relationship with

India," the 46-year-old Khan said. "I am looking forward to meeting with leading Indian businesses to reassure them that our great city remains open to the best global talent, and I'm keen to discuss how we can strengthen and support further investment in London," he added before the meeting, which was chaired by his Indian-origin deputy mayor for business and enterprise, Rajesh Agarwal. Among the participants was Shuchita Sonalika, UK Country Head and Director of the Confederation of Indian Industry. She said nearly 40 per cent of the fastest-growing Indian companies investing in the UK are based in London, highlighting that London has been the destination of choice for Indian FDI. "Their diverse operations range from IT, financial services, media and entertainment,

tourism and others," she said.

"We hope that London will continue to be an attractive place to do business and their interests will be fortified post-Brexit. This interaction of Indian companies with Mayor Sadiq Khan is testament to that effort and CII looks forward to working with the Mayor's team to deepen business links between India and London," she added. Indian businesses employ around 50,000 people in London and are the second-biggest foreign investors in London. According to data from the Mayor's promotional company, London & Partners (L&P), in the last 10 years, London has attracted more foreign direct investment (FDI) from India than Japan and China and only the US invests more. India is also described as a "crucial trading

partner" for London and a "significant market" for London's businesses, with the value of the city's exports to India amounting to 1.29 billion pounds in 2014. There is uncertainty over what Britain's vote to leave the European Union in a referendum in June would mean for foreign businesses. Kevin McCole, Chief Operating Officer of the UK Business India Council (UKIBC), said: "Indian business contributes hugely to London, and London businesses contribute hugely to India. So, at this time of uncertainty due to Brexit, the UK India Business Council is delighted that the Mayor and his Deputy have taken the time to hear the views of Indian businesses in London, and, quite rightly, to remind them that London is open for business."



## Historic Poll puts Trump & Clinton in a tie

A poll that has been tracking the same group of voters throughout the general election and has typically favored Donald Trump now shows a tie in the presidential race.

Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are each at 44 percent in the LA Times survey.

Trump's six point lead over Clinton evaporated after a video of him making lewd comments about his conduct toward women emerged.

The last time the candidates tracked so closely together in the LA Times poll was early September, when Clinton opened up her campaign plane to press and held her first news conference of 2016.

Her near collapse at a 9/11 memorial and subsequent revelation that she had pneumonia and didn't tell anyone, leaving even her daughter, Chelsea, and staff in the dark, sent Trump soaring.

The Republican White House nominee kept his lead in the LA Times survey following the first presidential debate as other pollsters recorded six point swings in Clinton's direction.

A Reuters/Ipsos poll published Wednesday had Clinton seven points ahead of Trump at 44 to 37 points among likely voters. Libertarian Gary Johnson is at 6 and Green Party nominee Stein is at 2. The fieldwork was done Oct. 6-10.

And in a Rasmussen poll also published Wednesday, which was mostly taken after the second debate, the gap has narrowed between Clinton and Trump to four points, at 43 to 39.

Clinton started the week leading 45 points to the Republican's 38. The seven-point lead was her biggest ever as Trump was hit by tape-gate.

The rolling survey, published daily, was conducted October 9-11 - mostly after the St Louis, Missouri debate on Sunday. It appears to show that Trump has regained lost ground since the aggressive standoff.

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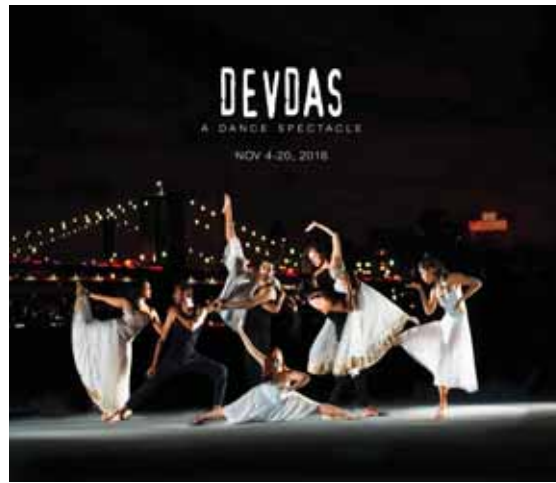
# Hypokrit Theatre Company and Junoon Performing Arts presented Choker Bali and Devdas (Re-imagined)

(By a staff reporter) NEW YORK: Hypokrit Theatre Company and Junoon Performing Arts present Indian classics re-imagined with the showcase of Devdas and Choker Bali. The presentation of the dual performances will run from November 4th – 20th, at the Theater for the New City in New York.

Devdas – a modern day dance spectacle is set in India's hyper-competitive and hyper-masculine reality dance competition world. It's the story of two women who coveted both, the main prize and the man. Devdas will be portrayed from the point of the two women that loved him through a ballet set in modern India. This theatrical presentation will use original music composed by Aalap Desai, and contemporary choreography by Swarali

Karulkar. Choker Bali is an exploration of the life of widows in 20th century Calcutta, in which our one particular widow Binodini becomes entangled and forbidden love triangle. The performance is adapted by Dr. Partha Chatterjee from Rabindranath Tagore's novel of the same name. Hypokrit's performance of Choker Bali will be adapted as a Greek tragedy and showcase the world of 20th Bengal as it relates to the world now.

"We're bringing together the brightest South Asian talent for Devdas and Choker Bali. For those familiar with the stories, the experience will be unlike anything they have ever seen. This modern retelling will also bring new audiences to the theatre. So often, the word 'classic' is relegated to



works from the West, Devdas and Choker Bali continue our mission of showing that works of art from South Asia have universal themes. Anyone that comes to our show will be able to see something familiar in something foreign."

Founded by Arpita Mukherjee and Shubhra Prakash, Hypokrit Theatre Company adapts

classical plays from different cultures for the contemporary audience. Hypokrit Theatre Company's mission is to encourage artistic inquiry and break down the artifice in a work to reach its emotional core. Interested in posing the question of what makes a story universal, Hypokrit Theatre

Company is dedicated to adapting classics, both time-tested and brand new, from around the world for the contemporary audience. Their mission is expressed through the choice of setting and time period. Through the collision of different worlds and aesthetics, Hypokrit challenges notions of universality in a multicultural world.

## Overseas Congress (INOC(I),USA) hosts former Union Minister Mr.Ashwani Kumar



(By a staff reporter) New York- Indian National Overseas Congress-I (INOC-I) hosted senior Congress leader and Member of Parliament Ashwani Kumar here on Monday. Kumar has been in the US to deliver guest lectures at the top universities. Welcoming the senior Congress leader from India, INOC Chairman Shudh Parkash Singh briefed him on the activities of the Indian National Overseas Congress in the US.

Shudh Parkash Singh also explained to him how for the first time he initiated the process of democratic elections held last year. This was as per the advice of Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Department of the Congress Party Dr Karan Singh.

He said the voters and candidates had come from California, Texas, Florida,

Washington, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia and New York. "Democratization of the Party was initiated by Rahul Gandhi first time in India and we did so for the first time in the USA," he added. In her address, INOC President Lavika Bhagat Singh said "we are proud to have such a learned man in our midst and looking for his long-term guidance and support to grow the awareness of the INOC and make every Indian aware as to what the Congress Party has done for India that it stands right next to the United States in all its power."

She said "the US-India partnership is one to contend with in the future and they will remain strong allies to contend with despite all upheavals that may irk the world in the future. Lavika Bhagat Singh also spoke of her desire to host a major event next year in Washington D.C. to bring Congress economic policies in focus. INOC General Secretary Rajender Dichapally made a

presentation to the former minister and senior Congress leader and explained how this seminar would build stronger US-India relations and foster closer ties and lead to better trade and bring prosperity between the two nations.

Among others, INOC Vice Presidents -- Phuman Singh and Ravi Chopra -- also interacted with Ashwani Kumar.

Gurmeet Singh Gill, President Punjab Chapter, said he would be happy to participate

in the election campaign to ensure the victory of the Congress Party in Punjab.

Visiting dignitary Ashwani Kumar said that he aims to project Congress party and its policies in favorite light through a series of meetings he would be delivering in the US, Canada and the UK. INOC Joint Secretary Gurminder Singh Talwandi proposed a vote of thanks. The meeting ended with a sumptuous dinner. It may be mentioned that Ashwani

Kumar represents the Indian National Congress party from Punjab in the Rajya Sabha. He has been nominated as the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests in September 2014. He has also been nominated as Member of the General Purposes Committee of Rajya Sabha and Member of the Consultative Committee for Ministry of Defence in January 2015.

## Nutan Kalamdani - A Woodbridge Resident Contests for Council Position

(Insider Bureau) New Jersey : Nutan Kalamdani is not a newcomer to the field of politics. She has earlier contested for the Council seat in 2009 and created history by being the first Indian to contest elections in the town. She is back again and contesting for Councilwoman in the 4 th ward Iselin (Woodbridge) – New Jersey, as an Independent candidate for the upcoming elections on November 8 th , 2016.

Nutan is a well-known media personality and community member in New Jersey. She is the Founder and Managing Director of Awesome Internet Television, which is a very popular medium amongst South Asians the world over. Despite her background in Architecture & Design, her diverse interests delve into the business of Media, PR, Events, Design and

Production for over a decade now. She grew up in an affluent iconic Maharashtrian family in Bombay, India, where art and culture were imbibed in her foundation.

A resident of Woodbridge for the last 22 years, Nutan has actively immersed herself in local community activities and events in New York and New Jersey for more than 10 years. She has been involved with several organizations in NJ as a committee member and has worked silently offering her personal services and through her TV channel. She is also the Founder & President of Cineviews Media - a PR, Events and Production Company. Nutan has completed numerous Hindi, English & Telugu films as a Line Producer /Production Manager/ Associate Producer / Executive Producer,



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# Donald Trump's GOP civil war



(Agencies) Donald Trump is tearing the Grand Old Party apart. The tension that has simmered in the Republican Party for years -- shutting down the government and nearly bringing the nation to default -- escalated into an outright civil war Tuesday. The conflict not only threatens the party's ability to make any realistic attempt at reclaiming the White House next month, but also previews the conflicts and divides that could consume the GOP for years to come if Trump loses.

On one side is Trump, who spent much of Tuesday lashing out on social media at his GOP foes, such as Speaker Paul Ryan and Sen. John McCain, and lamenting the lack of party unity. He's backed by conservative lawmakers including Iowa Rep. Steve King and the throngs of loyal supporters who attend his rallies, including the one here in Panama City, Florida, Tuesday, where he renewed his call for a government investigation into his

opponent, Hillary Clinton. Some are even raising the potential of denying Ryan the speakership after the election.

On the other side is Ryan, who is devoting the full resources of his stature to maintaining a congressional majority. That dominance of Capitol Hill is suddenly threatened -- and not just in the Senate, where there are many competitive races, but also in the House, where the GOP majority was considered untouchable until recently.

The infighting -- sparked by the release Friday of a 2005 video depicting Trump describing women in vulgar and sexually aggressive terms -- isn't likely to ease in the 27 days before Election Day. Trump made clear Tuesday that if he loses in November, he won't go down quietly -- or alone.

He began the day with a series of shots -- taken over Twitter -- at Ryan, saying it's hard to do well when the speaker isn't supportive. He followed up about

an hour later calling Ryan a "weak and ineffective leader."

And nearly two hours after that, Trump posed his most explosive tweet of the day. "It is so nice that the shackles have been taken off me and I can now fight for America the way I want to," he said.

Trump continued his attacks on Ryan Wednesday during a rally in central Florida, where he said he's at a disadvantage when "you have leadership not putting their weight behind the people."

He also complained about getting no credit from party leaders for his Sunday night debate performance.

"Wouldn't you think Paul Ryan would call and say good job?" he said. "It got just about the largest audience for a second night debate in the history of the country. You'd think they'd say great going, Don, let's beat this crook. No, he doesn't."

Trump's turn on his own party may seem counterproductive -- it hardly allows him to improve

his chances of catching Clinton.

But it does allow him the satisfaction of vengeance against party leaders he believes have never treated him fairly since his stunning outsider campaign captured the nomination earlier this year. And by blaming Republican leaders for their failure to wholeheartedly endorse his campaign, Trump also opens up the possibility of a face-saving excuse if he crashes to defeat in November.

But the cost to the Republican Party of Trump's burn-it-down-around-him strategy is already high, could become more extreme and potentially leave the GOP badly damaged long after he has left the political scene.

To begin with, the estrangement between Trump and the party leaders is blowing open a gaping split between the party's grass roots and its

establishment leaders that Republican National Committee Chairman Reince Priebus and others worked so hard to bridge over the summer.

It is a divide that will be hard to overcome if Trump loses the election. Forging unity could be impossible if hordes of Trump voters blame party leaders for the defeat of a man who electrified the grass roots supporters in a way no other Republican has managed in decades. GOP on the precipice King, the Iowa Republican congressman, warned Tuesday that a purge of party elites might be necessary, saying "the establishment wing of the party could simply be amputated out in this effort that's going on right now."

# Millennials are NOT lazier than baby boomers

*The idea that older generations work harder is a myth*

## Generation Broke



hard would lead to a better life. Generation X'ers on the other hand were thought less likely to endorse this ethic, as they were born into a period of growing economic problems and increased urbanisation.

The late-comers, the millennials, were thought least likely to subscribe to the strong work ethic.

This shift in attitude was thought to be down to being born into a world with billions more people, less economic and job security, dependence on technology and a drive for a better work-life balance.

After taking into account changing factors such as age, family commitments, and hours

of work, the researchers found that when it came to endorsing the idea of a strong work ethic, there were no real generational differences between the baby boomers, Generation X and Millennials.

Writing in the Journal of Business Psychology, the authors explain: 'The finding that generational differences do not exist in [work ethic] suggests that twenty-first-century skills should not be affected by any generational differences in [work ethic]. They add: 'Organisational interventions aimed at building twenty-first-century skills should not be concerned with generational differences in [work ethic] as part of the intervention.'



(Agencies) The typical millennial is a work-shy, gadget-addicted, selfie-taking layabout. At least that's the stereotype that is typically used to describe the younger generation.

But the evidence suggests young people may not be so lazy after all.

A study has found the idea that older generations work harder than youngsters today is just a myth, with no difference in work ethic across the generations.

The idea that baby boomers of the post-war era have an inherent 'Protestant work ethic' -- to be hardworking, firm and fair -- is deeply ingrained in society.

Despite huge shifts in working practices, longer hours, increased dependence on

technology and 24-hour connectivity, it is debated whether younger generations, such as Generation X (born before 1980) and millennials (born before 2000) have the same drive and affinity for hard work as their elders.

By analysing the findings from a large number of studies carried out on work ethic, researchers from Radford University in Virginia searched for differences.

The team, led by Agnieszka Shepard, tested the idea formed from deep cultural stereotypes among the three groups.

Baby boomers are believed to view work as a meaningful and fulfilling part of life. As they were born in the post-war period of economic expansion, the consensus was simply working

They are the first generation to do worse than its parents as far as data is available.

A new investigation into the prospects of Millennials - or Generation Y - has revealed that those born between 1980 and the mid-1990s are suffering huge levels of financial inequality.

The study, which used exclusive data from the LIS (Luxembourg Income Study): Cross-National Data Center, established that a series of factors including debt, rising house prices and unemployment played a role in dropping incomes for young people.

In many of the countries, young adults are earning as much as 20 per cent below their average fellow citizens while pensioners have seen income increase.

The latest research, however, suggest that this has nothing to do with their overall work ethic.

# Death toll in the U.S. from Hurricane Matthew climbs to at least 35, with 'extremely dangerous' conditions



(Agencies) North Carolina is fast becoming one of the hardest hit states to be affected by Hurricane Matthew with the death toll hitting 18, up from 14 on Tuesday. One person was still reported as missing.

Flooding has displaced several thousand people across the state and authorities were helping more evacuate on Tuesday as swollen rivers threatened a wide swath of the Tar Heel State.

Governor Pat McCrory warned of 'extremely dangerous' conditions in the coming days in central and eastern North Carolina, where several rivers were at record or near-record levels.

Hurricane Matthew has now damaged or destroyed more than a million buildings, forced businesses from Florida to North Carolina to close and put thousands out of work.

Goldman Sachs estimated the storm had caused damage worth \$10 billion.

Insurance companies will likely be liable for about half of that total, according to an



estimate by CoreLogic, a real estate data provider.

Matthew, the most powerful Atlantic storm since 2007, killed at least 1,000 people in Haiti last week before barreling up the U.S. southeastern coast and causing at least 30 deaths in Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas.

An additional U.S. death occurred on Monday night in Lumberton, North Carolina, where officials said a highway patrol officer fatally shot a man who became hostile and flashed a handgun during search-and-

rescue efforts in fast-running floodwater.

Nearly 4,000 people have taken refuge in North Carolina shelters, including about 1,200 people in the hard-hit Lumberton area, where the Lumber River had crested at almost 4 feet above the prior record set in 2004 after Hurricane Frances.

Water blanketed the city of 21,000 people, leaving businesses flooded, homes with water up to their roof lines and drivers stranded after a stretch of Interstate-95 became impassable.

'We lost everything,' said Sarah McCallum, 62, who was staying in a shelter set up in an agricultural center after floodwaters drove her from her home of 20 years.

State officials are particularly concerned about victims like McCallum, who have no flood

insurance because they do not live in areas typically prone to inundation. U.S.

President Barack Obama on Monday signed a disaster declaration for North Carolina, which will make federal funding available to people in the hardest-hit areas.

Obama approved a similar declaration on Tuesday for South Carolina, where Matthew made landfall on Saturday.

State officials are now urging residents to prepare for potential flooding from the Waccamaw and Little Pee Dee rivers.

About 532,000 homes and businesses remained without power in the U.S. Southeast on Tuesday, down from the peak of around 2.2 million on Sunday morning when the storm was still battering the Carolina coasts.

Matthew dumped more than a foot of rain in areas of North Carolina already soaked from heavy September rainfall.

It has triggered the worst flooding in the state since

Hurricane Floyd in September 1999, the National Weather Service said.

That storm caused devastating floods in North Carolina, resulting in 35 deaths, 7,000 destroyed homes and more than \$3 billion in damages in the state.

In Matthew's wake, officials are monitoring a number of overtopped or breaching dams in addition to the threat of inland river flooding, the governor's office said. Concerns about a potential breach of the Woodlake Dam, which led to overnight evacuations in the central North Carolina town of Spring Lake, had eased by Tuesday afternoon after it was reinforced with 700 sandbags, but a mandatory evacuation was still in effect for nearby residents.

McCrory warned that the Tar River was expected to crest on Wednesday in Greenville, where a mandatory evacuation order is already in place.



# Rape is not a spectacle, don't violate privacy

Dear colleagues,  
Before we talk about what the most sensitive and appropriate way there might be for all of us to report on rape and sexual abuse, we should first acknowledge how long it took all of us — women journalists included, and sometimes especially us women — to place the issue at the top of the news hierarchy. I can confess that when I first began my job as a twenty-something I was very defensive about being saddled with covering what were then called 'women's features'. I wanted to report on politics, insurgency, riots, war, calamities — what I thought was the 'tough' stuff that wouldn't 'gender' me as a 'female' reporter.

Among my earliest assignments though was the gang rape of a Dalit woman — Bhanwari Devi — in a village in Rajasthan, who had been assaulted for trying to stop the child marriage of a one-year-old infant. She worked with a government program that sought to create local awareness against this retrograde custom. The rapists included the father of the child. If that was not bone-chilling enough; a judge who tried the case acquitted the accused because he believed men of a certain caste would not 'touch' a woman of a caste considered inferior to theirs; forgetting, again that Rape is Not about Sex; it's about Power. Bhanwari Devi was ostracised by the village for daring to complain against the perpetrators. She lived on the outskirts of her own village, shunned at weddings and funerals and forbidden to draw water from the common well. That first assignment taught me swiftly that there is nothing 'soft' about reporting violence against women; it remains mired in our country's deepest fault lines — caste and class. But in 2016, the story of Bhanwari Devi brings home some new and critical questions for me as a journalist. Our collective reportage on the 'Nirbhaya' case (the horrific gang rape of Jyoti Singh, a young medical student in Delhi) and the mass student protests that

followed it pressured Parliament to change the laws and finally made sexual violence a lead story that could no longer be buried in the inside pages. But I have always wondered why we never responded to Bhanwari Devi with the same intensity as we did to Nirbhaya. The year that the Nirbhaya case made international headlines was also the 20th year that Bhanwari Devi had been fighting a hostile system for justice. Ironically, it is to Bhanwari Devi that we owe the 'Vishakha' guidelines — the first legal sexual harassment code that is now required to be followed by all workplaces. The Supreme Court recognised that Bhanwari had been abused while doing her job. It is because of Bhanwari and these guidelines her battle gifted us that influential men like RK Pachauri or Tarun Tejpal are facing trial. Yet, her own story is now on the margins of public attention as is the fact that the men who did this to her have still not been punished. More than two decades later there is still no verdict in her case. So why is our outrage missing? Is it because we are guilty of fickleness, moving on from one headline to the next? Or is it because our coverage of rape betrays the worst sort of (subliminal) class bias?

Did 'Nirbhaya' get our attention in a way Bhanwari did not because one was the story of aspirational India set in an identifiable urban setting and the other was the suffering of a marginalised woman, the injustice to her as a woman clearly compounded by the caste bigotry against her. The Nirbhaya case was an inflection point in how we talk about rape and not one of us can ever shake off the thought of that moving bus and an iron rod being forced into the private parts of a young woman coming home from watching a movie. I will never undermine the enormity of that case; but I often wonder what it says about us that others like Bhanwari Devi don't get an equal amount of anger and attention. Apart from our

transitory and selective focus there is a trivialisation that is creeping into our media conversations about rape that is disturbing. Take a recent 'sex' tape for example on the assignments of a Delhi minister. What first appeared to be consensual sex between adults has subsequently been registered as a case of rape but not before a tawdry, albeit censored camera recording played out on several TV channels. There are legitimate questions about whether the minister (since sacked) misused the power of public office to coerce the woman who is also on tape. However, the looping of this sordid footage that played endlessly to satisfy the vicarious curiosity of a mass audience surely undermines the gravity of an offence like rape.

Salacious sensationalism can only do disservice to a conversation that we as a people have only just begun to have. The National Commission for

Women then summoning an Aam Aadmi Party representative for writing a skeptical column (importantly at a time when there was no known complaint of rape) on the tapes and way his own party responded further eroded the seriousness of the debate.

Finally, we must discourage language that links rape to honour. In the aftermath of every such assault aggrieved families, politicians and lawyers will often use words that confuse notions of respect. When women fight back, it is suggested they are fighting for their honour; their self-respect. The rapist and his crime cannot be allowed to define a woman's sense of self. The fight is for justice; the dishonour is that of the criminal. And though finding that balance is always precarious, we must look for ways to report the monstrosity of the crime

without violating the privacy of the rape survivor or her family with intrusive questions and thrusting microphones. We must allow the women or their families (or young men who have experienced sexual abuse as boys) to choose their own pace, their own language and give them the freedom to draw their own red lines. They cannot and must not be pushed by the punishing and often insensitive deadlines of the next television bulletin or next morning's newspaper. Rape is not a spectacle. Rape is not a first headline only when it's absolutely macabre or when it happens identifiably to people like us. Never forget — most women in India get abused within the circle of trust; 90% of Indian women who have been sexually abused know their aggressor. And we haven't even begun talking about marital rape yet. Rape and sexual violence — they're closer home than we think.

By Barkha Dutt

## Unless social infrastructure improves, India will not get out of the hunger trap

Hunger levels in developing countries may have fallen 29% since 2000, but unfortunately, India is still rated as a country with 'serious' hunger levels in 2016, says the Global Hunger Index (GHI), which was released on Tuesday. It also said that the country is slated to become the world's most populous nation in six years, and it's crucial that it meets this milestone with a record of ensuring that the expected 1.4 billion Indians have enough nutritious food to lead healthy and successful lives. Since 2000, the country has reduced its GHI score by a quarter and has a score in 2016 of 28.5 (rank 97 of 118 countries). Recent data show that almost 40% of Indian children under five years of age are stunted compared to over 60% in the early 1990s. The GHI ranks countries based on four key indicators: Undernourishment, child mortality, child wasting and child stunting.

The report brings back the focus on the implementation of the National Food Security Act. To date, several states and Union Territories have implemented the



food security law and the basic entitlements are being delivered. However, it will not be entirely correct to say that only implementation of the Act will solve the India's problem. This is because hunger and malnourishment are closely linked to sanitation issues. According to Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health professor Jean Humphrey, the stunting in children is not simply due to a lack of food. The constant ambush of germs and bacteria from their environment forces "these children's bodies [to] divert energy and nutrients away from growth and brain development to

prioritise infection-fighting survival," Dr Humphrey told The New York Times.

Then there are other issues such as health, the anganwadi infrastructure and incomes of people. India's health infrastructure is in a pitiable state and that has a direct impact on maternal health, which in turn impacts the health of children. As far as incomes are concerned, rural distress has been quite widespread in India for the last couple of years. In other words, unless and until the full social infrastructure improves, India will not be able to get out of the hunger trap.

# Military fables of a democracy Donald Trump's Weird World

The valorous soldier versus the pusillanimous civilian and the patriotic soldier versus unpatriotic civilian are false binaries on which a militarised society thrives.

When the rich fight the rich, it is the poor who die. — Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Devil and the Good Lord*. In 2004, the world saw evidence of one of the most horrific acts of torture and sexual abuse by an army on captured prisoners. The soldiers did not belong to the army of a banana republic or a military dictatorship but to the U.S., a democracy. The prisoners were Iraqi, held at the Abu Ghraib prison.

At present, India is going through a staggering phase of amnesia: that it is a democracy. War clouds have caused a flight of reason. The valorisation of the Indian military after the “surgical strikes” has culminated in a perverse logic amplified by a shrill media: you cannot question the government on matters military as it is equivalent to insulting the army, which itself is beyond scrutiny and reproach.

The question here is not of the veracity of the surgical strikes but whether questions can be asked of the government and the army. The logic that answers in the negative is one that suits a military dictatorship, not a democracy.

If this logic held, we would have never known how the American and British governments led their people to the catastrophic Iraq war over flimsy reasons of national security. The Abu Ghraib expose too would have never seen light. Nor would have our own Kunan Poshpora. That such logic shows a tendency towards the militarisation of society, especially now when an aggressive nationalism gains ground.

Witness the closing of public mind since Uri and the surgical strikes. Actors are facing a public outcry either for “disrespecting” soldiers or for “supporting” Pakistani artistes. Parties are being condemned for demanding “proof”. And farcically, television guests are thrown off studio debates for speaking over martyred soldiers’ fathers. The army, in essence, has become a holy cow.

This is a dangerous tendency, for the militarisation of society and the predominance of militaristic values is opposed to some fundamental tenets of democracy like critical thinking and questioning of hierarchy. Militaristic values are also intrinsically connected to notions of hypermasculinity. Of course, unquestioning obedience is useful in the institutional context of the army and in limited situations of war, but it cannot become a general value of society for all times.

More crucially, militarisation fundamentally obfuscates society’s real problems. Fear becomes the basis of society, and a soldier’s job becomes the most important occupation. People who clean the sewers with no protective equipment, and at great threat to their lives, do not, in this narrative, serve the nation. As the writer Aakar Patel asks, why are sewer cleaners, dying in the hundreds, and sanitation workers not considered martyrs?

The tragedy of a dead soldier is justifiably commemorated by all. But millions die unsung, performing jobs in hazardous conditions. The precariousness of soldiers on the Siachen Glacier is rightly sympathised with, but not the horrors of manual scavengers who have to handle human faeces and die due to diseases.

Shouldn’t there also be outrage over men carrying their dead daughter and wife on their shoulders because hospitals refused ambulances, as was the case in two separate incidents in Odisha? Where is the outrage and TV coverage about the 1.2 million (preventable) child deaths in India last year, the highest in the world? How does this number compare with deaths caused by terrorism? For society’s well-being, should this not be the most important problem exercising discourse?

Ironically, a militarised society despite valorising the soldier does not actually speak for him/her. Warmongering could only lead to the deaths of more soldiers. While Kargil and its 527 war heroes entered India’s military folklore, Operation Parakram and its 798 dead soldiers are little discussed by the public. How is it justifiable to lose nearly 800 soldiers without even fighting a war?

Further, in every violent conflict like Uri, the overwhelming numbers of the dead are sepoy and non-commissioned officers hailing from the most marginalised strata of society. It is a tragedy at many levels.

The valorous soldier versus the pusillanimous civilian and the patriotic soldier versus unpatriotic civilian are false binaries on which a militarised society thrives. On the one hand, defence arms procurement, and land and recruitment scams show the involvement of both higher echelons of the military, and civilians (politicians and bureaucrats). On the other, what unites both is that tragic social conditions are disproportionately shared by the soldiers and civilians from the poorest and most oppressed groups, especially the costs of war. After all, the shrieking TV anchors and the elite civilian classes wanting a war are not the ones fighting the war, or are among the 15 lakh people forcibly evacuated from border village homes and living in makeshift camps.

The valorisation of the military in a democracy is ironical. Ultimately, what is the military fighting for? Is it merely Indian territory? The military, while protecting the nation, does not dictate India’s constitutional values. By conflating the two, a fundamental mistake is made. In the eyes of the world, what distinguishes India from Pakistan is not that it has a bigger military, but that it is a settled, even if flawed, democracy. The Indian Army is different from the Pakistani Army because it is, ultimately, under the control of the people.

For most of this campaign, Donald Trump’s admiration for Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, and his willingness to act as a Kremlin apologist on issues ranging from Syria to the computer hacking of individuals and political parties have been sources of bafflement and dismay. Mr. Trump’s alarming performance at Sunday night’s debate deepened these concerns.

Mr. Trump again denied that the Russians were doing anything to manipulate the presidential election despite powerful evidence to the contrary. And he again laid bare his cockamamie and uninformed view of the bloody civil war in Syria and his refusal to acknowledge Russia’s role in making it worse.

Mr. Trump has no foreign policy experience. He has, however, received two briefings from American intelligence agencies that should have alerted him to the challenges facing the next president but apparently have not. All of which raises unsettling questions about whether the Republican nominee for the most powerful job in the world is Mr. Putin’s poodle, stubbornly naïve, totally clueless or, as some have ominously suggested, protecting undisclosed business interests in Russia.

Though allegations about Russian interference in the election have circulated for some time, the Obama administration on Friday formally accused Russia of stealing and disclosing emails from the Democratic National Committee and other institutions. When Hillary Clinton raised this, Mr. Trump came to Russia’s defense: “Maybe there is no hacking. But they always blame Russia. And the reason they blame Russia because they think they’re trying to tarnish me with Russia. I know nothing about Russia.”

“To profess not to know at this point is willful misrepresentation,” one senior United States official told NBC News. Presidents can choose to disregard an intelligence finding, but at this point, why would Mr. Trump feel he has better information or analytical ability than a “high confidence” conclusion by the country’s intelligence professionals? Why would he not want to acknowledge a threat and address it?

It is similarly unacceptable that Mr. Trump refuses to accept Russia’s role in backing Syria’s brutal dictator, Bashar al-Assad, and to condemn the bombings that have killed thousands of civilians in Aleppo and elsewhere. Instead, he ignored the civil war and effectively praised not just Russia but also Mr. Assad and Iran for “killing ISIS,” the Islamic State. Russia, Iran and the Assad forces are, in fact, largely focused on destroying the Syrian rebels opposed to Mr. Assad. Various dark theories are circulating among experts about why Mr. Trump is so enamored of Mr. Putin, a dictator who has crushed dissent at home and is fixated on expanding his influence abroad. One theory, denied by Mr. Trump and impossible to confirm or rule out because he refuses to release his taxes, is that he has business interests in Russia that he wants to protect or develop in the future.



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## India needs help of Kashmiris to offset Pakistan's dirty cross-border games



**Abhijit Banerjee**

Anyone who has a child knows the importance of not over-playing your hand. He was up all night playing some game on his smartphone and you feel like saying that if it happens again the phone is gone. Forever. Till he is old enough to buy his own. Till then he can have your old Nokia.

The question is always whether, when it comes to it, you will feel up to carrying out the threat — knowing what his friends will say, realising how delighted the neighbourhood bully will be to get such an opportunity to get to him, worrying about all the other bad things he could get up to. The rational economist in me says why would he, knowing the consequences, ever get to the point where you have to act, but then a rational economist is not a 15-year-old with a fragile sense of himself and a strong desire to be proved that he is a man.

At the risk of sounding patronising, Pakistan is that troubled adolescent, unsure about the kind of country it wants to be, caught between the mad dreams of power-hungry theocrats and the more middle class aspirations of much of its population, a country born in the rejection of its conjoint twin and committed, above all, to step out of its long and looming shadow. China is that neighbourhood bully, secure in its immense power and recently earned economic credentials, happy to play its neighbours off against each other with gentle needling and occasional encouragement. And, we, alas, are the hapless parent, trapped between uncertainties about how to deal with the troubled teenager and our own, not infrequent, childish impulses.

Let me be clear about one thing: I don't have an opinion, or at least a considered opinion, about whether the "surgical strikes" were a good idea or a bad one. If the strikes were successful in taking out the next group of attackers on one of our

army camps or civilian destinations, they would indeed have served an important purpose. What is indefensible is what we have done since — the tom-tomming of our great success — the chest thumping that Prime Minister Narendra Modi warned us against but continues, seemingly unabated, in the media.

If you were the Pakistani government how are you supposed to react to that? Pretend that it never happened? They tried that but it did not stick. Admit that our security forces succeeded in pulling off a fast one over their Pakistani rivals? What

Pakistani government could even think of that without risking a coup? The Pakistani army has not only pride riding on the image of their being the one institution that works in dysfunctional Pakistan, but also real money. It is well known that the army in Pakistan controls a substantial part of the country's GDP (I have heard the number 15%) through its various trusts. According to Dawn, the Fauji Foundation has oil refineries, natural gas companies, power, fertiliser and cement plants as well as a bank. The armed forces are also a leading real estate

developer in Pakistan. That gravy train would be upset if people started to question the army's competence and relevance. Isn't that why no peace attempt is allowed to go very far?

With the local media not convinced by the State propaganda so far, the Pakistani State is probably under pressure to do something to salvage the army's honour — not revenge — one cannot take revenge for something that one is claiming never happened — but something definitive and surely violent. The question for us is what if that does happen. More strikes? This time they will be ready for it, happy to have our soldiers walk into a trap and the opportunity to humiliate us. Abrogate the Indus waters treaty? Good heavens no. We forget that we are downstream from China, which is always happy for an excuse to capture more water in dry Tibet, especially if it also helps a friend in need. It may not be a coincidence that just when we were talking about doing something with the Indus waters to punish Pakistan, China announced the building of a dam on the Brahmaputra. So what's left? All-out war? Nuclear weapons?

Let us face it. We overplayed our hand. The strikes themselves Pakistan might have swallowed as a move in our age-old game of tit for tat. The propaganda, the public display of our delight at their expense, force their hand — it's the smartphone moment. And we may very well come to regret it.

The question is how to climb down from here. It has to come from us. They cannot afford to look any weaker. The problem is that our present government has often shied away from disappointing its most rabid supporters, which might seem strange, since those supporters have nowhere else to go.

But it is also time to think hard about Kashmir. The best way to secure the border is to get local people to start looking out for terrorists — which is what ultimately helped us in Punjab. For that we need the local people on our side.

The most compelling case we can make to the Kashmiri people is that the real alternative for them is to be swallowed up by the mess called Pakistan, and we can surely offer them better than that. But we severely undermine that case every time we tolerate anti-Muslim hysteria, or some arm of the India State shoots an unarmed student in the Valley.

## Bhagwat's support for cow vigilantes will only embolden them further

The ardour of cow protection enthusiasts had cooled a bit after Prime Minister Narendra Modi came out strongly against the vigilantism they were indulging in. But they are likely to get a new lease of life with RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat speaking on the issue on the organisation's foundation day recently. "Cow protectors perform an important role and it's important to distinguish between those who protect the cow and others who are self-appointed," he said during his speech in Nagpur. The so-called protectors are not given to subtle nuances of who is self-appointed or not. Mr Bhagwat need not have sought to make any distinctions here as the states which ban cow slaughter have rules in place to guard against any illegality. The plethora of gau rakshaks which have sprung up have no role in policing, which they often do under guise of protecting the cow. So far this year, at least three people have been killed and several others injured by cow vigilantes on suspicion of possessing beef or cattle rustling.

Dalits who have traditionally disposed of cow carcasses have



borne the brunt of the depredations of the gau rakshaks with horrific incidents of people being stripped, tied to jeeps and dragged around. The Mohammed Ikhtlaq case was perhaps the most horrific in which cow vigilantes entered his home on the suspicion that he had beef in his fridge and beat him to death. While Mr Bhagwat has said that the cow protectors must operate within the law, he must surely know that, given past example, this will be taken as licence to harass people.

Earlier in Haryana, biryani

sellers were at the receiving end of this zeal during Eid because the state in its pursuit of cow protection conducted checks on their wares suspecting them of selling beef. Unable to bear the harassment, many vendors chose to shut shop during that period incurring losses. If Mr Bhagwat meant that these rakshaks must undertake the care of cows in gaushalas, he should have made that clear. But he did not.

Cow protection has today evolved into a racket aimed at harassment and often extortion.

The Dalits had gone on a massive protest against this earlier, refusing to deal with cow carcasses and organising themselves across states. The lack of political support as enunciated by the prime minister had forced gau rakshaks onto the backfoot. The cow protectors not only created a fear psychosis among the minorities and Dalits but also gave India a bad name internationally as an intolerant country. The government must be vigilant that they don't overstep their limits again and attack innocent people.



# Hungary's treatment of refugees is a disgrace to its history



We came from wars and places where governments are threatening people," 20-year old Nasratullah, an asylum seeker fleeing violence in Afghanistan, told me last week. "And then we came to Hungary and police beat us a lot. I want to know why they are doing this to us. We are not animals and we are not criminals."

I met him days after Hungarian border officials beat him severely in late May, then pushed him back to the Serbian border.

Nasratullah is not alone. During the past two years, I have documented first-hand Hungary's response to the refugee crisis: the appalling conditions and overcrowding in camps, restrictive laws aimed at making it hard for asylum seekers to enter the country and obtain protection, and policies to make life as hard as possible for those who do.

The government doesn't just make life miserable for asylum seekers and refugees. It wants the Hungarians to hate them too. The government has relentlessly stirred up xenophobic sentiments against refugees and migrants by spewing hateful and misleading messages on billboards, in booklets, and on TV and radio nationwide. Anti-migrant rhetoric by decision makers and high-ranking public officials has become commonplace.

Asylum seekers, migrants and refugees are called "intruders" and "potential terrorists," and described as people who don't abide by laws and who are unable to integrate into Hungarian society. According to the distorted government-driven narrative, refugees pose a danger to Hungary's Christian values and traditions. In July, Prime Minister Viktor Orban himself referred to migration as "poison."

This is taking place in a

country where, just 60 years ago, persecution drove 200,000 of its citizens to seek — and to find — sanctuary in other parts of Europe and the United States.

On October 2, in contempt of that history, the government is holding a referendum asking Hungarians to reject an EU agreement to share responsibility for asylum seekers. Under the deal, Hungary, a country of some 10 million people, has been asked to take a mere 1,294 asylum seekers, but the

government has objected to even this small number and is trying to overturn the deal in the EU Court of Justice.

In the weeks leading up to the referendum, the taxpayer-funded anti-refugee campaign has intensified, with thousands of billboards across the country carrying hateful messages like "Did you know? Brussels wants to forcibly resettle numbers of illegal migrants the size of a city into Hungary," and "Did you know? From the beginning of the migration crisis, abuses against women in Europe have skyrocketed."

In August, the government distributed an 18-page booklet containing factual distortions and outright lies about migration and asylum to over four million Hungarian households. It links migration to increased terrorism and refers to non-existent "no-go" areas in European cities with large migrant populations, including London, Paris and Berlin,

where it claims authorities have lost control, and law and order are absent.

The campaign has cost the Hungarian taxpayers the equivalent of over 16 million euros -- or approximately 12,000 euro per asylum seeker that Hungary has been asked to take. This money would be far better spent improving conditions in refugee camps and establishing integration support programs for refugees and asylum seekers in line with Hungary's obligations under international and EU law.

With Hungary's leaders encouraging hostility against asylum seekers, it is hardly surprising that its border officials show little humanity for those they actually encounter at the country's borders.

Those who cross the razor-wire fence that Hungary erected on its border with Serbia in September 2015 stand a very real risk of being

pushed back to the Serbian border, often violently, as Nasratullah was. I have interviewed dozens of asylum seekers and migrants, including some women and children, with similar stories. They told me that border officials pummel them with fists, kick them, use pepper spray, and beat them with batons, often laughing all the while, then push them back to the border. The few investigations opened into the abuse have gone nowhere.

The Hungarian government denies that such abuses are taking place.

Nasratullah is now safe in Austria. But instead of fueling xenophobia and treating asylum seekers like him with contempt, Hungary's government should remind the country of its own history and create a more welcoming and humane attitude to those fleeing war and persecution who are seeking safety in Hungary today.

## Barack Obama: America will take the giant leap to Mars

One of my earliest memories is sitting on my grandfather's shoulders, waving a flag as our astronauts returned to Hawaii. This was years before we'd set foot on the moon. Decades before we'd land a rover on Mars. A generation before photos from the International Space Station would show up in our social media feeds.

I still have the same sense of wonder about our space program that I did as a child. It represents an essential part of our character — curiosity and exploration, innovation and ingenuity, pushing the boundaries of what's possible and doing it before anybody else. The space race we won not only contributed immeasurably important technological and medical advances, but it also inspired a new generation of scientists and engineers with the right stuff to keep America on the cutting edge.

That's one of the reasons why, in my first address as President to the American people, I vowed to return science to its rightful place. In our first few months, my administration made the largest single investment in basic research in our history, and I went to the Kennedy Space Center to call for reimagining and reinvigorating our space program to explore more of our solar system and look deeper into the universe than

ever. In the years since, we've revitalized technology innovation at NASA, extended the life of the International Space Station, and helped American companies create private-sector jobs by capitalizing on the untapped potential of the space industry.

Last year alone, NASA discovered flowing water on Mars and evidence of ice on one of Jupiter's moons, and we mapped Pluto — more than 3 billion miles away — in high-resolution. Our space telescopes revealed additional Earth-like planets orbiting distant stars, and we're pursuing new missions to interact with asteroids, which will help us learn how to protect the Earth from the threat of colliding with one while also teaching us about the origins of life on Earth. We've flown by every planet in the solar system — something no other nation can say. And we continue to drive down the cost of space exploration for taxpayers.

This week, we'll convene some of America's leading scientists, engineers, innovators and students in Pittsburgh to dream up ways to build on our progress and find the next frontiers. Just five years ago, US companies were shut out of the global commercial launch market. Today, thanks to groundwork laid by the men and

women of NASA, they own more than a third of it. More than 1,000 companies across nearly all 50 states are working on private space initiatives.

We have set a clear goal vital to the next chapter of America's story in space: sending humans to Mars by the 2030s and returning them safely to Earth, with the ultimate ambition to one day remain there for an extended time. Getting to Mars will require continued cooperation between government and private innovators, and we're already well on our way. Within the next two years, private companies will for the first time send astronauts to the International Space Station.

The next step is to reach beyond the bounds of Earth's orbit. I'm excited to announce that we are working with our commercial partners to build new habitats that can sustain and transport astronauts on long-duration missions in deep space. These missions will teach us how humans can live far from Earth — something we'll need for the long journey to Mars.

New evidence of where life might exist on Mars

Where life might exist on Mars The reporter who covered the moon landing for The New York Times, John Noble Wilford, later wrote that Mars tugs at our imagination "with a force mightier than gravity." Getting there will

take a giant leap. But the first, small steps happen when our students — the Mars generation — walk into their classrooms each day. Scientific discovery doesn't happen with the flip of a switch; it takes years of testing, patience and a national commitment to education.

President Eisenhower knew this: In 1958, he devoted great resources to science and math education around the same time he created NASA. And it's why I'm proud that we've passed important milestones in STEM education. For the first time, more than 100,000 engineers are graduating from American schools every year, and we're on track to accomplish my goal of training 100,000 excellent new STEM teachers in a decade.

When our Apollo astronauts looked back from space, they realized that while their mission was to explore the moon, they had "in fact discovered the Earth." If we make our leadership in space even stronger in this century than it was in the last, we won't just benefit from related advances in energy, medicine, agriculture and artificial intelligence, we'll benefit from a better understanding of our environment and ourselves.

# A true original: Vir Sanghvi remembers Parmeshwar Godrej

(Agencies) A true original: Vir Sanghvi remembers Parmeshwar Godrej. To the world at large, Parmeshwar Godrej was a coolly elegant figure who partied with the international jet set and carried one of India's most famous surnames. Those who knew her, however, remember a different Parmesh: warm, caring, giving, and always fun to be with. I first met her when I was 20 and just starting out in journalism. She was already Mrs Godrej, queen of Bombay society, and had no reason to give a damn about a young journo. But she was unfailingly hospitable, charming and friendly. At the time, she was famous for having bridged the gap between the film world and Bombay society, which had

seemed unbridgeable till she appeared on the scene – and on the cover of Stardust.

We forget now that she was India's first designer, running the successful Dancing Silks boutique at the Oberoi and making clothes for the top heroines of the 1970s. When fashion bored her, she moved into interior designing and set up Bombay's hottest design firm, Inner Spaces, in partnership with Sunita Pitamber. Inner Spaces designed the homes of millionaires in Bombay, Delhi and London but is probably best remembered for its revolutionary approach to restaurant décor. The original China Garden in Kemps Corner was the first stand alone to actually look better than any five-star hotel

restaurant.

By the time others had attempted to copy the success of Inner Spaces, Parmesh had finally got involved with the Godrej Group's businesses, advising the real estate development division. I used to joke with her that with Inner Spaces she made so much money that she could have maintained her glamorous lifestyle without drawing on the Godrej wealth. And her lifestyle was certainly glamorous. When she and her husband, Adi, abandoned their Carmichael Road apartment to spend more time at their stunning beach house in Juhu, their move had the effect of quadrupling property prices in Juhu. Suddenly, every millionaire wanted a beach house

like the Godrejs. Some of her legendary parties were thrown at that beach house and attended by the likes of Richard Gere, Goldie Hawn, Amitabh Bachchan and Imran Khan. The parties acquired an iconic status not because of the guest lists or the extravagance but because of Parmesh's own sense of warm hospitality. She was born into an upper middle-class Sikh family and met Adi when she was flying with Air India. They had an intense romance before marrying. Till the end, Adi remained the centre of Parmesh's universe and for all the exterior glamour, the Godrejs and their children were a close-knit family. When middle-class women marry into billionaire families, they usually have to



change to fit in. Parmesh was the exception. She changed the Godrejs much more than they changed her. She took a conservative Parsi family whose idea of a good time was a family picnic and introduced it to international glamour. But through it all, she remained the exuberant Punjabi she had always been: generous to a fault, full of life and vitality, and yet, at the same time, sensitive and vulnerable. She was a true original.

## Arunachal seeks more security personnel to strengthen international borders



(Agencies) Arunachal Pradesh has sought to raise three more units of Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) to protect the state's international borders with China, Myanmar and Bhutan and allay fears of investors in the northeastern state.

Chief minister Pema Khandu made this request during a meeting with Union home minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi last week.

"Considering the state's strategic geographic location and under-developed status, it is important that we are geared fully on the law and order front," he told Singh.

Khandu said that the existing police

force in the state is insufficient to deal with security along the international border. Arunachal Pradesh shares with the three countries. The

chief minister also told Singh that more forces were needed in view of "concerns raised by investors on security" in the state. Deployment of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or drones for vital intelligence inputs along the borders was another proposal made by the chief minister during the meeting. He also requested for a world class training institute on the lines of North Eastern Police Academy in Shillong, to train the state's police personnel. "After giving a patient hearing, the home minister assured support to Arunachal Pradesh in every possible way," a state government release said. Arunachal

Pradesh already has five IRB battalions with the Centre providing 75% funds for maintaining the infrastructure and 50% for personnel. Each battalion has nearly 1,000 personnel. The northeastern state has a 160 km-long border with Bhutan in the west, a 1,030 km border on the north and northeast with China and 440 km border with Myanmar in the east.

Border dispute exists between India and China as Beijing claims a large portion of Arunachal Pradesh as theirs. Instances of Chinese troops crossing the border and entering India keep happening. Active insurgent groups in the region like United Liberation Front of Assam-Independent (ULFA-I) and National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM) use Arunachal Pradesh's eastern region as an area to hide, sneak into Myanmar and also bring in arms. The state has a huge potential for electricity generated from hydropower projects and deals to develop nearly 150 such projects by constructing dams have been inked in the past 10 years.

## HP govt to encourage people to stop sowing cannabis, poppy

(Agencies) Buoyed over the success of its statewide drive to destroy cannabis plant, Himachal Pradesh government has now come up with a plan to wean away people in the remote regions of the state from narcotic trade. The government has now proposed a plan to rehabilitate families in remote regions that depend on drug trade for earning their livelihood. "The government has drawn a proposal to wean people away from cannabis and opium trade," chief secretary VC Pharkha told Hindustan Times.

Government has directed teams of officials from horticulture agriculture and animal husbandry departments to visit regions infamous for cultivating cannabis and opium. "Various government departments will hold consultations with people in the cannabis growing areas. Teams will find what can be the best alternative crop for the people so that they stop cultivating narcotic plants," he said. Narcotics trade in the state has reached an alarming stage with international drug mafia operating actively.

## Yadav divide out in open at Lohia anniversary

(Agencies) The feud in the ruling Samjwadi Party's first family was out in the open at an event held to mark the 49th death anniversary of party ideologue and socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia on Wednesday. Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav, who reached the venue an hour behind schedule, attended the programme at Lohia Park with cabinet minister and younger brother Shivpal Yadav.

His son and chief minister Akhilesh, who has a running feud with Shivpal, paid floral tributes to Lohia and left before Mulayam arrived on the spot.

Akhilesh's supporters, most of them members of the SP youth brigade, too, followed their leader, leaving half the chairs at the venue empty.

The signs are that the rift in the party is widening as the state election, due early next year, draw close. Recent decisions

in the party and the government indicate that Mulayam is backing Shivpal, who is also the SP's state chief, over Akhilesh.

Last week, the party, overlooking the chief minister's reservation, announced the merger of the Quami Ekta Dal (QED) of mafia don-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari with it. The merger, called off in June, was announced by Shivpal, who also replaced a few party candidates. In the past, Lohia's death or birth anniversary events were marked by party leaders putting up a joint front and exhorting workers to spread the socialist icon's message and strengthen the party.

But Wednesday, the buzz was missing. "Earlier, workers used to register strong protest when rivals attacked SP leadership. The old fervour is missing these days" Mulayam said while addressing party workers.

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# Designer huts come in south Delhi neighbourhood parks



The South Delhi Municipal Corporation's horticulture department is installing thematic gazebos (designer huts) in all neighbourhood parks to make them 'aesthetically pleasing' and to draw more

people. Such huts have been placed at six major parks in Sarvodaya Enclave, at Subhash Park in RK Puram Sector 2, near DDA Flats in Munirka, in Nangal Raya, in Green park

extension and Tilak Nagar. Corporation officials said the huts received positive response from the residents, prompting the civic body to develop the facility in 30 other parks in south and central zones.

"We have identified the major parks in different wards and work has already started at some places. We target to complete the project in three months. Each gazebo will cost us Rs 6 lakh," said a SDMC official.

Gazebos can be constructed in various shapes —rectangular, triangular or circular.

"The design of these gazebos is inspired by Buddhist temples. These have tiled roofs with designer iron pillars,

sculptures and a rooftop adorned with carved figures of birds and floral designs. The sculptures of these huts are a visual treat," said an official from the horticulture department of SDMC.

The red terracotta tiles installed on the roofs of such huts prevent leakages if it rains. The designer huts have sitting arenas that can accommodate 15-30 people at a time.

Construction work has been outsourced to a private company that has

engaged skilled artists for designing them.

"We have been avoiding any concretisation in the parks as per an NGT order," said the official.

The agency has made provision for ramps to make these designer huts disabled-friendly.

The south corporation maintains 6,818 parks over an area of 2,169 acres under its jurisdiction. In Phase II, the agency plans to develop designer huts in 607 parks. The project will cost SDMC Rs 36.50 crore.

## Is Kerala fertile ground for terror groups like Islamic State?

(Agencies) Not long ago, a Malayali Muslim boy living in Qatar with his parents was sent to Paris for further training after he showed promise in athletics. The Qatar sports ministry, foreseeing a bright future for him, sponsored his education and training. But on his return his parents were shocked to find their 19-year-old son completely changed. While in Paris, his exposure to Islam from online sources led him to extreme spirituality. The budding champion's "spiritual realisation" that sports was a means to maintain a healthy life, and not a source of livelihood, forced him to stay away from such "unholy" activities. Things got worse once the family returned to Kerala: He could not pursue his studies as a majority of the



schools were mixed and he considered the traditional institutions for religious education "deviant". This is not the story of just one young person. Investigations into the disappearance of 21 youth from northern Kerala in June have shed light on the problem of 'Online Islam'. News and views are also being

bandied about on Kerala being a safe haven of Islamic State (IS) or a fertile ground for terrorism, especially after the arrest of six persons with alleged IS links on October 3. Is Kerala a breeding ground of terrorists? Is there a conducive environment in the state that helps IS operatives recruit members? If there

is, how did that situation come about? How did religious movements, political parties and the government not realise that there was a problem? Only a realistic approach to these questions, not motivated by religious and political self-interests, can lead us to the right answers.

## 10 drown in Gaya boat mishap as Dussehra trip turns into tragedy



(Agencies) At least 10 people including six minor girls of a family were feared dead and six others reported missing when a boat ferrying them capsized in the Falgu river on Tuesday. Seven bodies had been fished out till Wednesday morning, as the administration pressed the state disaster response force (SDRF) in the rescue operation. Gaya district magistrate, Kumar Ravi, however, confirmed only seven deaths, but said the number could go up by the time the rescue operation is concluded.

Five of those killed were identified as Runa Kumari (15), Puja Kumari (15), Bharati Kumari (15) — all students of class 10 at the Sripur Kanya High School, Belaganj — Chirai (12) of class nine and Kajal (11) of class six. Two other bodies were yet to be identified, the police said. Over 50 people were on the ill-fated boat when it toppled near Panari village under the Khijarsarai police station, about 35 kms from Gaya. The victims, mostly from Belaganj block, were going to Khijarsarai to witness Dussehra festivities.

## Kashmir unrest: Separatist leaders extend strike call till October 20

(Agencies) Separatists, who have been spearheading the ongoing unrest in Kashmir for the last 96 days, on Wednesday extended the shutdown call till October 20, even as people began resuming their normal activities. In a fresh protest calendar for the upcoming week, the separatist camp, comprising leaders of both factions of the Hurriyat Conference headed by Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and JKLF chairman Mohammad Yasin Malik, have asked people to march towards Raj Bhavan to hand over a memorandum to the governor on Friday. It also called upon social and religious organisations to start a "door-to-door campaign" on October 16 to raise funds for the support of transporters who have "suffered immensely" due to the ongoing strike which entered fourth month



last week. "Identify and prepare a list at mohalla (locality) level of all drivers, conductors, auto rickshaw owners, cab owners and matador (mini-bus) owners and extend help to them in all possible ways," the camp said in a joint statement here. The proposed protest calendar includes 14-hour relaxation from 5 PM daily from October 15 to October 20.

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# You don't sell churan, hing and call it real sales: Flipkart's Binny Bansal



(Agencies) Taking potshots at Amazon, Flipkart CEO Binny Bansal has said selling churan, hing and memberships do not constitute real sales.

"We did not sell 'churan', 'hing', detergent, products of daily-need and virtual memberships. We sold products that people love to buy during the festival season such as smartphones, LED and apparel," Bansal told HT.

The week-long sale has just concluded and the big three- Flipkart, Amazon and Snapdeal- have claimed to have posted stupendous sales performance over the previous year.

Retaining its lead, Flipkart alone sold 13 million goods. As a group, together with fashion e-tailers Myntra and Jabong,

it sold 15.5 million products. Amazon was a close number two with 15 million products, which included daily needs, churan and hing, as well as its Prime membership. Snapdeal sold around 11 million units.

According to Bangalore-based consultancy firm Red Seers, e-tailers sold \$1.2 billion worth of goods so far. Of which, Flipkart sold \$451 million, or 37.5%, of the total festival season sales, reports said. Amazon's numbers were not available.

In fact, according to Bansal, Flipkart has also sold more smartphones – 2.5 million during the five-day sale – than what is sold in the country in a week. It sold more LEDs during the period than what normally gets sold in the country in

45 days. "We crossed our internal target by 40%."

The company's internal calculations also show that 95% of goods sold on Flipkart were above the selling price of Rs 300. Around 100,000 customers shopped for more than Rs 50,000. The e-tailer's high point was on October 3, when it sold goods worth Rs 1,400 crore, which was more what all organised retailers sell in a day (around R868 crore according to industry estimates). But it wasn't easy for India's biggest e-tailer. Amazon was breathing down its neck. The Jeff Bezos-led firm has already pumped in \$5 billion into India. Flipkart has invested \$3.2 billion since it began operations in 2007. Amazon has more money and a bigger

war chest to offer more discounts to consumers. But Bansal says Flipkart used the six-month slowdown period before the festival sales to expand its reach to smaller towns. "We expanded out reach to the remotest towns... We sold mid-to-low value products in smaller towns, something we have never seen before," he said. More people from smaller towns shopped online than ever before. The festival season, which goes up to Christmas, is far from over, and Bansal has more plans. "You will see more innovations as we penetrate deeper into the country," he said.

## Focus on Jain ritual 'tapasya' after 13-year-old Hyderabad girl dies fasting



(Agencies) The parents of a 13-year-old girl who died after fasting for 68 days in Hyderabad have gone into hiding fearing arrest, but they continue to be under the spotlight along with the Jain ritual of 'tapasya' which allegedly claimed their daughter's life. Friends and relatives of Lakshmidhand and

Manisha — the parents of Aradhana Samdariya — say they have "gone out of town in search of peace" ever since the police registered a case against them for homicide amid allegations that they had coerced the girl to undertake the hazardous ritual. They have also moved the local court seeking anticipatory bail. Many Jain leaders, meanwhile, have come out in support of the parents, saying they are being targeted and the community deliberately maligned. They say the ritual of 'tapasya' that Aradhana undertook is the first of the nine steps (nav-pad) aimed at attaining salvation, and is not the same as the more controversial Jain ritual of 'santhara', whereby the elderly or the sick abstain from food until they die. The other eight steps towards salvation include charitra (character), gyan (knowledge), darshan (faith) and arihant (one

who has vanquished all inner enemies and is still within the body). "There are various forms of fasting as part of tapasya — one can do it on alternative days, or two days, four days, 18 days, 34 days and 68 days or even more, depending on the capacity of individual. But there is no pressure on anybody to do it and it is purely voluntary," insists Maangilal Bhandari, an influential Jain leader of Hyderabad. "The objective of tapasya is self-purification and atonement for sins. It is a very common practice in the Jain community with the most common duration of the fast being one day," points out Sanjeev Bhanawat, director of Centre for Jain Studies at Rajasthan University. "An important aspect is the duration of it has to be according to the physical capacity of the person who is vowing to do it," he adds.

## Sprawling house, big cars but no leave: Indian PMs are always on duty

(Agencies) It is the country's top job, all frills attached — big car, a sprawling residence, an army of guards and, most of all, the power to shape a billion lives. But, no leave.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hasn't taken a day off the 32 months he has been in office and the PMO doesn't know if his predecessors either did.

"Information regarding leave record of previous prime ministers is not a part of records held by this office. However, it may be noted that no leave has been availed by present Prime Minister ie Shri Narendra Modi since taking over charge," a media report said, quoting a PMO response to an RTI applicant.

Technically, the Indian prime minister can never be on leave. Asked if there were leave rules for the PM like the ones for civil servants, the government suggested there were none. The prime minister of India can be said to be on duty at all times, the PMO said. There was no provision for the PM or the ministers to be on leave, former cabinet secretary Naresh Chandra said. No leave applications have ever been sent. But this doesn't mean they haven't taken time off.

Back in 1986, Chandra recalled, Rajiv Gandhi famously took his first holiday when he travelled to Rajasthan's Ranthambore National Park. AB Vajpayee, too, took his annual vacations in December. When prime ministers are not at hand to take urgent decisions, the practice is to leave a note with the cabinet secretary nominating a senior cabinet minister — referred to as the Number 2 — to chair cabinet meetings.



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# Credit army for surgical strikes but cheer govt's bold move: Parrikar



army deserved praise for the September 29 strikes, Prime Minister Narendra Modi should get most of the credit for ordering the attack, and he himself should get some of it. "I don't mind sharing the credit, including on surgical strike, with every countryman because it is done by our armed forces and not by any political party.

"We in the government and I personally as the defence minister are happy

to share the credit with the army, the 127 crore citizens and also those doubting Thomases," he said at another function.

His comments come amid opposition claims that the government was trying to leverage the military action for political gains in states going to elections early next year, prompting Modi to ask his ministers and party leaders to desist from chest-thumping. The Congress was quick to hit

back, with spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala saying the BJP "publicly devalued the sacrifices" of armed forces and tried to make political capital out of it. Parrikar also said surgical strikes might not be India's only response to terrorist attacks in future but did not elaborate. "Unpredictability is the key weapon," he said, a day after Modi told a public rally in Lucknow that India doesn't like war but sometimes it become inevitable.

(Agencies) The army deserves full credit for last month's surgical strikes on militant shelters across the Line of Control with Pakistan but the government must also be cheered for taking the bold decision, defence minister Manohar Parrikar said on Wednesday.

Parrikar's comments came a day after HT reported that he was set to become the BJP's star campaigner for next year's elections in Uttar Pradesh, where the party wants to showcase the government's "decisiveness" in hitting militants inside Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir.

The defence minister also said India did not carry out any surgical strikes in the past, refuting claims by the Congress that its governments had ordered such precision attacks but never made those public to claim credit.

"What probably they are quoting are actions taken by border action teams, which is a common practice across globe including the Indian Army," Parrikar said at a city event, adding such covert operations were not ordered by the government.

Earlier in the day, he set off a storm of protest from

opposition groups by suggesting that, while the

## Medical bulletins on Jayalalithaa's health hide more than they reveal

(Agencies) Alongside rumours that continue to swirl over the health of Tamil Nadu's ailing chief minister J Jayalalithaa, the medical bulletins issued by the hospital have themselves become a subject of speculation.

The bulletins released by the Apollo hospital are brief, guarded and hide more than reveal anything on the chief minister.

The last one issued on October 8 read: "The honourable chief minister continues to be under constant monitoring by the intensivists and the consultants in the panel. The respiratory support is closely watched and adjusted. Lungs decongestion treatment is being continued. All the other comprehensive measures including nutrition, supportive therapy and passive physiotherapy are underway".

The health update shared some details of the treatment, but gave nothing away on the status of the chief minister who has been in hospital since September 22.

Take a look at all the medical bulletins released so far

The lack of information has set tongues wagging, particularly among those in opposition parties. DMK patriarch K Karunanidhi questioned why no leaders visiting the hospital have been allowed to meet the chief minister. "Is the health of the CM an official secret?" asked a DMK activist. An activist had moved the high

court seeking a directive to the state government to share information, but the appeal was rejected on the ground the petitioner was seeking publicity.

Chennai-based academic Ramu Manivannan insisted the hospital had reasons to be cautious. "They need to be very careful in what it says as it could be the victim of targeted violence should anything go wrong".

Known for her fanatical supporters, the hospital seemingly is playing safe. In the initial days, it was more forthcoming. On September 23, it said: "The honourable chief minister of Tamil Nadu was admitted last night for fever and dehydration. Honourable Madam has no fever now and is taking a normal diet. The honourable chief minister is under observation".

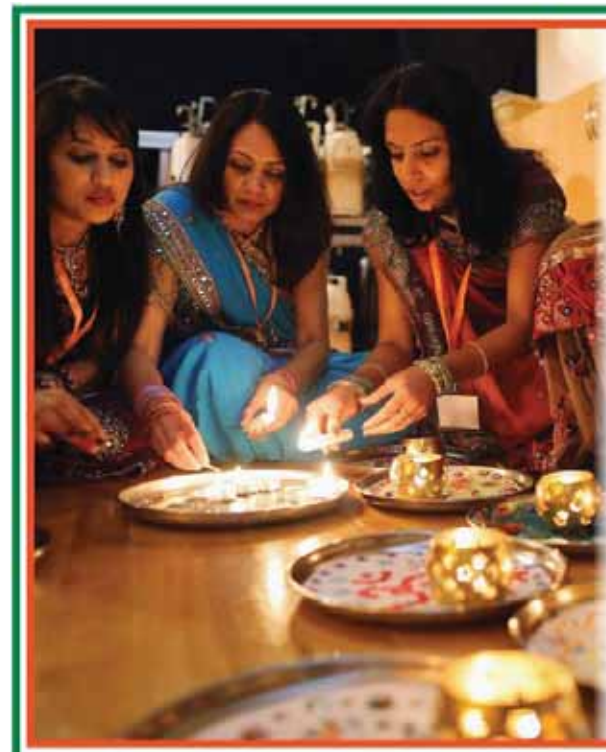
Another bulletin on September 25 stated: "The honourable chief minister had fever and dehydration at the time of admission. Treatment was commenced immediately and by the very next day, i.e., 23.09.16, fever was brought under control. The chief minister resumed regular diet. Honourable chief minister is under observation since then". The bulletin also went on to scotch rumours that Jayalalithaa was being taken abroad for treatment. It went on to say that "the honourable chief minister was responding well to treatment and continues to get better".

Even as late as October 6, another bulletin informed that a team of doctors from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi was helping to treat the chief minister, who "continues to improve and is making gradual progress".

But thereafter, updates on her health have become scarce. Bulletins over the past week talk more of the treatment, but say little about the person being treated.

The October 10 bulletin, in fact, borrowed lines from an earlier one and read: "The honourable chief minister is being constantly monitored by the intensivists and the other consultants in the expert panel. Necessary respiratory support, antibiotics, nutrition, supportive therapy and passive physiotherapy are being given". It also talked of an AIIMS expert concurring with doctors on the treatment.

With no clarity on the chief minister's health, rumours have been flying thick and fast, prompting the police to arrest several people. Some, however, have stepped forward to criticize the clampdown on information. "Secrecy, fear and panic-mongering are the hallmarks of monarchies, autocracies and dictatorships and not that of a democracy which India is supposed to be," pointed out retired bureaucrat MG Devasahayam. "This is against the very basics of medical and governance ethics," he told Media.



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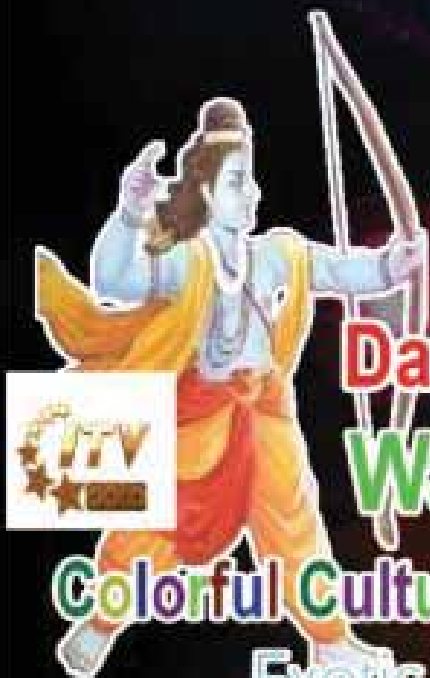
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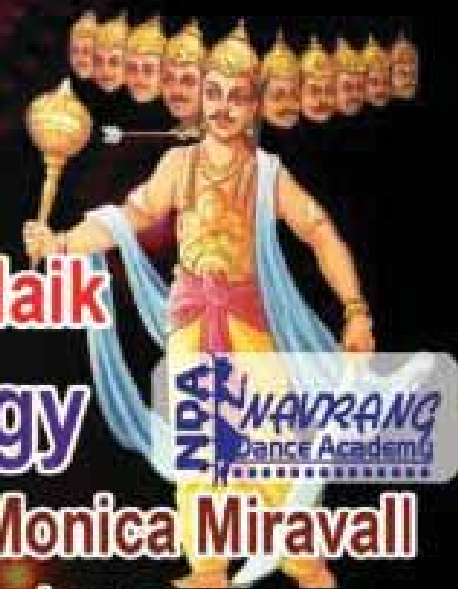


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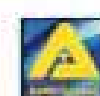
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# Democrat Peter Jacob Capitalizing on Swastika?



(By Dave Makkar)

It is very disturbing to see in a multi-religious highly advanced country like America people are still prepared to inflame religious passions on the issue of Swastika. The fact is Swastika originated in 2000BC and is an auspicious symbol for over 1 Billion Hindus and millions of Jains, Buddhist, Europeans, Chinese and few others. The rotated distortion of Hindu Swastika, the Nazis has used, is markedly different and the differences are clearly visible to human eyes. Nazi Swastika is drawn with black in a white circle within a red square and it is a symbol of hate. On the other hand Hindu Swastika is always drawn with red vermillion and can be drawn on any surface including human body, on the head after complete head shave off of a child as per Hindu rituals.

It is a symbol of faith and auspiciousness and used for all religious ceremonies including Hindu weddings, installed/drawn outside & inside homes, Temples and business establishments. The first question that must come to every one's mind is what kind of a Swastika was drawn outside Peter Jacob's house? Was it really an exact replica of Nazi rotated Swastika drawn with black in a white circle within a red square? If not why a media frenzy was created that can very well create unrest among the peace loving well educated very religious Hindu community especially their young children to create a permanent fear in their minds about their own religious symbol that represents faith and auspiciousness. The Hindu community has not forgotten the 2013 incident in Middlesex county school that punished an 8 years old for drawing a perfect Hindu Swastika along with a

Christmas Tree as part of his assignment to draw some thing related to Holidays; on the complaint of his Jew Teacher. Before mentally traumatizing the 8 yrs old, the teacher, school principle and counselor should have spoken to a Hindu Priest or the parent of the child concerning the matter for which they themselves were completely ignorant rather lack any desire to learn about Hindu Swastika.

These educators hurt the religious feelings of the child and also the religious feelings of the entire Hindu community especially the children living in New Jersey and other parts of America. On top of that these ignorant Educators lost an opportunity to present the child's drawing as a show case on "Unity in Diversity". The child had drawn a perfect Hindu Swastika & Christmas Tree that represent Christianity, together on one sheet. Educators could have shared this with the child's classmates rather with every school student of New Jersey and other parts of America by explaining them the meaning of both symbols. But unfortunately the child was mentally and emotionally traumatized and humiliated by the ignorant educators of the Middlesex County with a punishment and racial bias counseling. We are a highly educated and advanced society, by associating the Swastika with the Nazis we only give credit to the monstrosities of this horrible regime. Symbols have been abused throughout history and hence the importance of explaining people their true origin lies with the present generation especially the media, educator and the religious leaders of different faiths. Imagine the outcry amongst Christians worldwide if an African American teacher would take offense in a Christian child's drawing of a cross for a school project because the teacher's ancestors were killed by the Ku Klux Klan. And I highly doubt that any of our schools all over America would approve racial bias punishment & counseling like given to the 8 yrs old Hindu child,

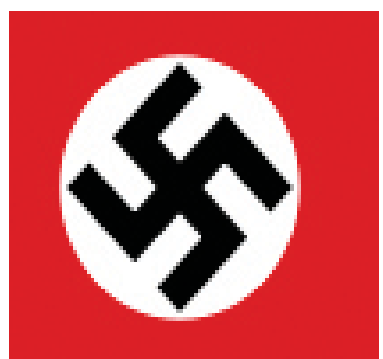
for a Jewish child drawing a star of David for the school Winter Holidays project that would have offended a teacher from Palestine whose family was slaughtered by the Israeli army.

Recently I attended a trial involving a young Hindu who is being accused as master mind behind 5 incidents mostly involving drawing a Swastika and other graffiti outside Synagogues in Dec. 2011-Jan 2012 by his Hispanic friend. In one incident there was an amateurish act of arson also. The Hindu boy at that time 19yrs old was in New Hampshire, campaigning for Republican Presidential candidate Ron Paul when these incidents took place. Still he is being charged with domestic terrorism and other criminal offenses for being the master mind and has been incarcerated in solitary confinement since March



2012. The Rabi produced as witness by the Prosecutor was asked by the defense what was his first reaction when he saw the Swastika on the pathway leading to the Synagogue door. He said his initial reaction was may be few crazy kids did it to scare us! From his own notes according to him some one told him, "this opportunity (act of vandalism) should be capitalized". He along with other Rabi's produced as witnesses agreed with defense attorneys that these were mostly acts of vandalism. 14 synagogues with the help of Jewish Federation official and a Bergen county Law enforcement officer got federal grant for enhanced security systems by reporting the act of vandalism as Terrorism. The witness was further asked before this particular act of vandalism, "was there any other incident of similar nature, the answer was "NO". Any terrorist cell or group or individual connected with them claimed responsibility for the incident, the answer was "NO". Did he received any threatening phone calls or e-mails or letters before this incident or after this incident by a terrorist group or cell or a person connected with them, again the answer was "NO". Any other similar incident after this incident in Dec. 2011, the answer was "NO". Still 14 Synagogues took federal grants from Home Land Security to enhance

their security systems by reporting vandalism as terrorism. The application form for these kind of grants clearly states that grants can be availed if there has been an act of terrorism or serious threat of terrorism or valid perception of terrorism. Peter Jacob is an educated mature person rather than creating a media frenzy Swastika, Swastika; to create confusion and fear in the minds of Hindu kids, he could have handled this incident differently. Especially being born to Orthodox Christian parent who migrated from Indian state of Kerala. When Peter was growing up his parent must have explained the importance of Swastika as an article of faith and auspiciousness to Hindus besides the Nazi Swastika. I don't think Peter is trying to revive his sagging Congressional campaign in Dist. 7 with absolutely "Zero" chance of



winning against the 64 years old 4 term incumbent Republican Leonard Lance; a politically corrupt carrier politician since 1991 by creating the media frenzy about Swastika. Since 1914 Dist. 7 Congressional Seat has always been in the Republican Column barring 1975 to 1981 when it was held by a Democrat Andrew Maguire from Ridgewood. In Nov. 1980 he was defeated by a fellow resident Marge Roukema a Republican. After that only time a serious challenge has ever been given by a Democrat was in 2006 by very popular Assembly Deputy Speaker Linda Stender a carrier politician since 1988. The 2 term incumbent Republican Mike Ferguson won his 3rd term by less than 3000 votes. In 2008 Stender was defeated by current Republican Congressman Lance by a wide margin of almost 30,000 votes. In 2010 Lance defeated Democrat Ed Potosnak by 33,000 votes by re-establishing the Republican style winning of this district by double digit margins of 10-18%. In 2012 he defeated Democrat Upendra Chivukula by a record margin of 55,605 votes and in 2014 defeated the Democrat Janice Kovach by 36,000 votes. Re-districting that should be used to create more competitive Dis-

tricts is used as a scam run by both parties since 1981 to ensure the winning of the incumbents belonging to both parties for another 10 years. They swap areas to make each others constituency more Democrat or Republican safe. This is also called "Incumbent Protection Plan" in which Republicans and Democrats both join together to make sure no incumbent lose his/her seat. In 2011 re-districting the Democrats and Republicans agreed to a deal that virtually protected all the incumbents barring one for the sacrificed district to cut down the number of districts to 12 from 13. In other words they settled for 6-6 split for the future Congress till 2022 rather than creating more competitive districts.

Looking at all the relevant facts related to "Incumbent Protection Plan" run by unionized Republican and Democrat; Peter Jacob does not fits in this plan to unseat Republican incumbent Lance in Dist. 7. Then for Peter it is his first election and he hardly knows how the State of New Jersey is run by unionized carrier politicians posing as Republican and Democrat. May be he is living in a fantasy world and has closed his ears and eyes on the issue of "Incumbent Protection Plan." Then I do not find any record of Peter that he has ever used his vocal cords to raise the issues of political corruption, racism and injustice to minorities in New Jersey. He has never spoken against political corruption or demanded NJ needs structural changes. That is to cut down the number of local governments with a big battalion of elected officials and an army of politically appointed officials and term limits for all public offices. Now he has become the victim of political corruption by his own party. For that he will be committing a political suicide on Nov 8, 2016 believing that minorities can only advance and prosper under Democrat ruled state or municipality or county or country. There is a silver lining for Peter that he is not the first Indian-American to commit a political suicide in Dist. 7. Before him another Indian-American Assemblyman Upendra Chivukula committed a political suicide funded by his own community in Dist. 7 in 2012. For Peter his youth and outsider label is there to defeat Lance in the general election but the timing and Republican composition of the district 7 are not in his favor. Even the Swastika frenzy is not going to help him to win the Dist. 7 Congressional seat.



# Sorry, Donald, rich people like you and me actually don't create the jobs



(Agencies) One of the seemingly less-controversial things that Republican nominee Donald Trump says on the campaign trail is that, as a successful businessman, he has “created thousands of jobs.” That is a common refrain among entrepreneurs, investors, and executives like Trump: “Rich people create the jobs.” It sounds persuasive. It just doesn't happen to be true.

The story that “rich people create the jobs” goes like this: By starting and directing America's growth companies - and hiring the people who staff them - entrepreneurs and investors create the jobs that sustain everyone else. When my partners and I started Business Insider nine years ago, for example, there were no jobs. Now Business Insider employs about 400 people. So, voila, we created 400 jobs! But entrepreneurs and investors like Trump and me actually don't create these jobs - not sustainably, anyway.

Yes, we can create jobs temporarily, by starting companies and funding losses for a while. And, yes, we are a necessary part of the economy's job-creation engine. But to suggest that we alone are responsible for “creating” the jobs that sustain ~150 million working

Americans is the height of self-importance and delusion. So, if rich entrepreneurs and investors like Trump and me don't create the jobs in our economy, what does? A healthy economic ecosystem - one in which most participants (especially the middle class) have plenty of money to spend. This ecosystem starts with a company's customers. A company's customers buy

the company's products. This provides cash that allows the company to hire people to produce, sell, and service those products. If the company's customers and potential customers go broke, the demand for the company's products will collapse. And the company's jobs will disappear, regardless of how brilliant or well-intentioned the entrepreneurs or investors are. Yes, entrepreneurs are an

important part of the company-creation process. And, yes, so are investors, who risk capital in the hope of earning returns. But, ultimately, whether a company continues growing and creates self-sustaining jobs is a function of people's desire and ability to pay for the company's products, not the entrepreneur's vision or risk-tolerance or the investor's capital.

## Watch out Ola, Uber's battle for market share in India is getting aggressive

(Agencies) Ever since the taxi hailing application company Uber gave up on the Chinese market a few months back following intense competition from the local player Didi Chuxing, it became more or less clear that the focus for the US-based firm will now shift to the Indian market.

But here too, the world's largest startup company boasting a valuation of \$69 billion, realises the growing competition from the domestic player Ola.

In China, Uber couldn't stand up to the growing onslaught from the deep-pocketed Didi, prompting the former to eventually merge its business in the Dragon nation.

With Uber exiting China, the company has got enough room now to focus on India.

As a recent Bloomberg report says, “India will be crucial in terms of both demonstrating success in large international markets and long-term growth potential”.

Unlike Didi Chuxing, Ola, Uber's rival here, doesn't have deep pockets. Backed by venture capitalist, Ola has a war-chest of \$1.2 billion, while Uber will divert a big portion of \$10 billion it raised from Didi into the Indian market.

With the battle lines clearly drawn, Uber has been fast expanding in India and now has presence in 28 cities and handled 5.5 million rides per week in

August, says the Bloomberg report.

While India's market is poised to grow at \$10 billion, Uber has been making a strong pitch to enter other transport areas besides the traditional cab service via its mobile app.

According to a report in Mint, Uber plans to introduce buses and mini-vans for people through its ride-hailing app, and the service would be called Uber Everything.

“The next big innovation that the company plans to introduce is Uber Pool in buses and mini-vans,” Mint report said. The new initiative would be similar to its UberHop service, which functions more like a scheduled bus service, the report says.

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# Nutan Kalamdani - A Woodbridge Resident Contests for Council Position

shot in the USA and has also been a Publicist for several movie projects here. She was a Publisher for a print edition of an entertainment magazine. She is also a committee member and supporter at Enable, a non-profit organization that provides services, resources and support for adults and children with disabilities and seniors in New Jersey.

Nutan is a local celebrity herself yet she remains friendly, modest and well grounded. She is a proud mother of two children Nikhil and Nisha, who attended school in Woodbridge Township. Her husband Nitin Kalamdani, has been the rock foundation of her career and has supported her in every aspect of her life. "He is the wind beneath my wings," says Nutan adding, "I could never have been where I am today without his support. My kids are equally supportive. They have always stood by me in all my endeavors." Nutan has been described as efficient,

hardworking, straight-forward, down to earth, friendly, modest, always helpful, goal-oriented and a no-nonsense individual by her friends, colleagues, clients and others. On one hand she is a tough taskmaster while on the other she is known to be a very generous and compassionate human being. Many have addressed her as a 'superwoman' due to her multi-tasking capabilities and time management skills, which she accomplishes with always a smile on her face. When asked the reason for her running for this position, she said, "There are many serious issues in the town that have been overlooked by the administration. They have exploited our community with the help of our own people for selfish & greedy motives and sold our interests in the political system. The community in Iselin has been deprived of good representation.

I have met several

people who have confided in me about the various issues they have, but have not been addressed fairly. I still remember the history of this town and I am sure many of the earlier residents do too. It has been a long struggle of a handful of activists who have transformed the town that you see today. We do not want all those efforts going down the drain. In my true opinion, our interests are somehow not served well. If I am elected, I will do everything in my power to represent & demand fairness to our community. The taxes have gone up so often, but the services have not been

at par. Iselin is a middle class community and cannot afford the tax the way it has been increasing. There has to be a stop to unnecessary spending. I will

bring honesty in the administration and help root out the corruption. We need to rebuild integrity and restore the trust in our leadership. If we don't wake up and send the right people in the government we will not have any right to criticize it. It is in our hands to determine who represents the interests of the community. This applies not just to the entire nation but begins right in our backyard. I request the community to support me and I would also like to urge people to register themselves to vote, if they haven't already and cast

their votes on November 8th." There is one key characteristic that is prevalent in Nutan that would endear her to each and every community member in her constituency. She has absolutely no bias when it comes to race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. She is an American in every respect but still an Indian at heart. We would like to wish Nutan good luck with her elections and we sincerely hope that she wins, as she is definitely a deserving candidate who can make a difference and bring about the much required change in the community.

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# War for Water

"Whether China intends to use water as a political weapon or not, it is acquiring the capability to turn off the tap if it wants to—a leverage it can use to keep any riparian neighbours on good behaviour," says Brahma Chellaney, an analyst at New Delhi's Center for Policy Research and author of the forthcoming book *Water: Asia's New Battlefield*.

Tibet's spiritual leader, Dalai Lama, has also warned of looming dangers stemming from the Tibetan plateau. "It's something very, very essential. So, since millions of Indians use water coming from the Himalayan glaciers... I think you (India) should express more serious concern. This is nothing to do with politics, just everybody's interests, including Chinese people," he said about the talking of Chinese intentions over the redrawing water map.

Although China is saying that it is constructing the dam to produce power but actually some hidden agendas are also associated with it.

The water resources of Brahmaputra will be a strong point to blackmail India. If China blocks the water in Brahmaputra, it will lead to famine in the whole NE region. India needs to take this issue seriously. The attention of international community needs to be attracted. But the problem here is that China does not care for anyone. It is trying an act of international bully. India needs a totally different tactic to tackle China. But can it handle.

Thus, the important concern is that whether the Indian policy makers will wake up before it's too late. India lose its dignity in past because of sleeping diplomacy of Jawaharlal Nehru. When China started to build the Sinkiang to Ali highway in 1951 than our diplomats showed their concern about the highway in written on October 18, 1958. In his conversation with Henry Kissinger, the than Chinese premier Zhou Enlai quoted "even three years after the road was built, Nehru didn't know about it. In my discussion with Nehru on the Sino-Indian boundary in 1956, he suddenly raised the issue of the road. I said, 'you didn't even know we were building a road for the last three years, and now you suddenly say that is your territory, I remarked upon how strange this was'" (The National Security Archive). Although if it did not happen in the case of Brahmaputra, in the case of highway projects and railway projects, we all know the Gol failed the nation. Indian government always wake up after the happening of policy disaster.

The mighty Himalayas act as the water tower of the South and Southeast Asian region. More than ten major rivers originate from the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. And for the past decade, India and China, the two biggest geopolitical forces in the region, have engaged in a hydro-power race to harness this power.

The waters that flow from the Himalayas know no borders. These rivers include the Brahmaputra, the Yangtze, the Mekong, the Sutlej, the Indus, the Salween, and the Huang Ho, which is also known as the Yellow River.

The Brahmaputra has a total length of 2,880 kilometres with a total drainage area of 5,73,394 square kilometres. It is shared by China, India, Bhutan and Bangladesh. The river is known as the Yarlung Tsangpo in China, the Siang and the Brahmaputra in India and the Jamuna in Bangladesh. The Brahmaputra is the lifeline for communities living along its banks. The path of the Brahmaputra has sculpted the natural and human landscape of two north-eastern Indian states, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. The river nourishes the young and fragile ecology of the Eastern Himalayas and the rich diversity of people and languages in this frontier space.

In recent years, the central governments of India and China have decided to tame the Brahmaputra, by building hydropower dams. Among them are the Lower Subansiri Project and the Dibang Valley project. As many as 168 memoranda of understanding have been signed between the Arunachal Pradesh state government and private and public dam-building companies to build medium and large dams in the state.

The legendary 20th century Assamese singer

and composer, Bhupen Hazarika, mentions the Brahmaputra river in one of his popular compositions Bistirno Parore. He was influenced by the American standard, *O! Man River* (Show Boat, 1936), sung by African-American artist Paul Leroy Robeson, who was involved in the American civil rights movement.

In his song, Hazarika asks the mighty Brahmaputra the reason for its quiet and unbounded flow, amid the suffering and pain of the people living by its banks.

Today, the song can be reinterpreted to reflect the great uncertainty and fear among the communities living in the Brahmaputra river basin, exhorting the river to answer back and not keep quietly flowing amid all the dam building.

In upstream Arunachal Pradesh, and downstream communities of Assam and Bangladesh, concern is widespread about plans to construct mega-dams by both China and India and water diversion infrastructure projects by China along the river system.

The size and scale of proposed infrastructure developments on this river, and the wider region, is unprecedented in the development history of northeast India. Indigenous communities of the region are worried they will face tremendous social and economic upheaval if the projects go ahead.

The Indian government's hydropower obsession has led to great fear among local communities in Arunachal

Pradesh and Assam, for the first time significantly overriding existing concerns about upstream dam building projects by China.

Recently, local people have taken to the streets in large-scale protests to voice their dissatisfaction.

The conversations around the Brahmaputra have been dominated by the Indian state, and this sits at odds with how the local communities think about the role the river plays in their own lives. India has to balance its strategic development interests with local community interests. Instead of its current aggressive approach, the government could assume a leadership role to initiate a basin-wide dialogue involving all the riparian stakeholder countries.

The way forward must be to highlight the Himalayan environment as an area of cooperation between all the South and Southeast Asian countries that share the transborder water resources in the region.

The only way to understand the Brahmaputra better is through a mix of modern research methods and traditional community-based knowledge systems. This approach should be central to any dialogue between and within the countries served by the river. An emphasis on multilateral cooperation will dispel the prevailing sense of conflict on this crucial river. The Brahmaputra, meanwhile, meanders along ceaselessly, shifting between its moods of ferocious rampage and eternal quiet flow.

8. In 2013, India complained to China about its hydro projects on the Brahmaputra

9. India and China signed two pacts in 2008 and 2010 which facilitated India with data on water levels and rainfall twice a day from June 1 to October 15 at three hydrological stations in Tibet

10. In 2001, an artificial dam in Tibet collapsed and killed 26 people and damaged property of Rs 140 crore along the river Siang in Arunachal Pradesh

The Lalho project  
\*The Lalho project on the Xiabuqu River in Xigaze (close to Sikkim) is under way at an investment of \$740 million. Xigaze is a few hours from the junction of Bhutan and Sikkim. It is also the city from where China intends to extend its railway towards Nepal

\*China's first dam on the main upper reaches of the Brahmaputra was built at Zangmu in 2010

\*Three more dams at Dagu, Jiacha, and Jeixu (small-scale projects) are under construction

\*In 2015, China inaugurated the Zam Hydropower Station, largest in Tibet, the highest dam built on Brahmaputra

The Tributary that was blocked

\*The Xiabuqu river, 195-km long, flows from Bainang in Tibet northwards and joins the Yarlung Zangbo near the region called Xigaze, also known as Shigatse

## *This is the worst election, ever*

The Donald, never to be outdone, is burdened by bankruptcies, over-the-top flip-flopping, womanizing and allegations of misogyny. All told, they present an ethical embarrassment of global proportions. And morally, what a shame. I mean, there have been moments over the years that make you wonder how politicians can still proclaim we are the greatest nation on Earth without blinking or flinching. Abu Ghraib comes to mind. Tuskegee Experiment. Operation Wetback. Japanese American internment. Jim Crow. Slavery. Native American genocide. And the list goes on and on.

But debasing the debate about race into senseless finger-pointing and disingenuous pandering further humiliates

minority communities without offering concrete solutions to the complicated challenges we face.

Trump has chosen to portray undocumented Latino immigrants as rapists and murderers rather than as vital contributors to our economy and refugees from failing nations. He taunts African-Americans to support him, with offensive exhortations like: "What do you have to lose?" He stokes white supremacy and xenophobia, wailing for walls and racial profiling as policy solutions to address immigration and terrorism.

Yet his surrogates — including a handful of inexplicable African-Americans, Latinos and Muslim Americans — cover up his callousness by dismissing criticism as mere

political correctness, ignoring the corrosive effect of his vitriol on race relations and civil discourse on this important subject. On the other hand, it is far too easy for Clinton to assume she will carry the minority vote despite her party's failure to deliver tangible results on critical issues such as immigration and judicial reform.

During these troubling times; we can find no solace in having elected an African-American president only to see our country rapidly regress into a state of arrested social development and heightened racial tension. And that's not even delving into the Black Lives Matter/police racism conundrum that the candidates have also fumbled about in their typically polarizing ways, without offering any real and holistic

solutions.

Indeed, this election has been ugly. It has consistently raised more questions than answers, provoked more problems than solutions. So much so it makes you wonder if the whole system isn't falling apart. I used to think Congress and Washington were broken, but this electoral season reveals broader and deeper dysfunctions: the intractability of the two-party system, the dubious role of the media, and the polarized, crass, uncivil, uneducated, sensationalist, shallow and self-absorbed national culture. If I could vote for anything this season, it would be a do-over: A shorter campaign season. Higher standards for media coverage. Stricter campaign finance rules that

keep big money out of politics and level the playing field for a wider range of candidates offering diverse and innovative ideas as well loyalty to the best interests of the entire nation. And a revamping of the system so that more political parties can provide better options while shattering the paradigm of bipartisan gridlock that paralyzes our nation's progress.

Unfortunately, those concepts are not on any ballot. Instead of refreshing visions for a future geared to the needs and aspirations of a young millennium, we are mired in a nightmarish late 80s/early 90s déjà vu. Choosing between Clinton and Trump makes for the worst election ever. The only thing that promises to be ghastlier is the outcome.

# Higher education has collapsed in India, we just don't know it yet

The obsession of the academia in Delhi with politicians is not new. Most faculty appointments are at behest of the politicians. Huge physical infrastructure but very poor soft infrastructure is not just true of public universities like Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha but it is even worse in private universities.

The highway from Delhi to Roorkee, is dotted with shells of buildings posing as private universities. Actually on any national highway anywhere if you see a glass or fancy building with nothing around it will be a private university. Everything is new and shiny, designed to grab a student's attention. Large rooms are labelled labs with hardly any equipment inside, huge campus with skeletal staff and even less faculty.

As of 2014, there are 677 universities, 37,204 colleges and 11,443 stand-alone institutions in India, as per the statistics from the website of India's HRD ministry. There is no dearth of institutions willing to give a degree for money, education or skills is not the concern. Higher education is in rot at all levels, the irony is that these numbers are touted as an indication of the prowess of our education system. Not a sign that this rapid mushrooming has created an edifice that is destroying an aspirational class. There is very little debate and discussion on the fact that our higher education system has completely collapsed.

A study done by a private body says that approximately 18.43 percent of engineering graduates are employable, which means 80 percent of them are unemployable. The situation is worse for plain graduates and that is where the real malaise lies. Employers say just 5 percent of the graduates in other disciplines are actually employable. What these figures mean is that in sum higher education or

college education has collapsed. Do we see any concern around this collapse. NO.

The IITs, AIIMs, IIMs are cited as examples of success, not because they have great faculty but because of the students. How many faculty members from our so called Institutes of National Importance have done anything worthy. A committee under Anil Kakodkar was formed in 2011 to revamp the 30 NITs, the second rung of the IITs, and not the 37,204 colleges or the 11,304 institutions. The rationale according to the preamble to this committee says that these 30 NITs can aid in 'nation building'. So what will the lakhs of students in thousands of colleges do? If they are not involved in aiding the nation building exercise than we have a much bigger problem on hand.

Kakodkar's report is a bundle of homilies, generalities and advice from geriatrics. It was submitted in 2014 to the then Education Minister Smriti Irani. Here is a sample of Kakodkar committee's recommendation: "ICT for the NITs acts like a force multiplier. NITs must deploy and upgrade the IT infrastructure and associated facilities. Each institute must facilitate extensive use of computer-aided / on-line

teaching, virtual labs, e-learning resources, connectivity with National Knowledge Network, etc". This is a recommendation in 2014, in the world of MOOCs, Coursera, and availability of free lectures from MIT or any other university of repute. In a world of mobile internet, ubiquitous internet access.

Its recommending National knowledge network !! will a student go there or see and hear the latest lecture from a noble laureate. Even the term ICT referring to Information computer technology harks back to the 60's when some of the committee members actually did their education.

This is the saddest and the most ironical part of higher education the system is ossified because of its sheer reliance on age, hierarchy or seniority. While the world that their students live and learn in has changed. Higher education will not be revived or pulled out from depths of his failure by people who do not have a stake in its future. A retired nuclear scientist more a bureaucrat should not be recommending anything about the future of anything let alone higher

education. Bureaucrats should be kept far away when it comes to reinventing.

While we struggle with higher education, Europe seems to be eyeing the conscientious Indian student. More and more students are now travelling abroad for education. Earlier cost used to be big barrier for a foreign education. But as our higher education system is collapsing other countries are seeing it as an opportunity. German chancellor Angela Merkel has approved a six year plan to attract Indian students to Germany. Under fire for her liberal immigrant policy she is pushing German universities to attract Indian students waiving off tuition fees for them. Daria Kulemetyeva, of Germany's largest public university, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, says, Indian students will have to pay just the administrative fees of 300 euros per year if they are selected in a course. The travel and accommodation costs are separate. The rationale, according to Kulemetyeva is to seek diversity in the student population.

It is not just German universities, almost every country in Europe and its

public universities are keen to attract Indian student. Universities from Sweden, Norway, Spain, and France have been working very hard for the last few years to attract Indian students. They have adapted their courses in English offering free language lessons for immigrant students, etc. A combination of ageing population and fall in interest in higher education among the current generation is forcing these universities to India. British universities have always found India a fertile ground for students.

John Sanders of University of Sussex, says the lack of standards in Indian higher education means that our Indian student population has always been growing year on year. Harish Lokhun of University of Edinburgh says, now Indian students go for even liberal arts and humanities whereas earlier they were only interested in engineering and the likes. Even the oldest university in Europe, Sweden's Uppsala University is looking for Indian students, and for a reason. Lina Solander, of Uppsala University, "When we

are looking at health problems, Indian students would have a much more different view of health policy than a local Swedish student."

Spain has formed a consortium of four universities to target Indian students. Matilde Delgado Chauton represents Universidad Autónoma De Madrid, one of the leading university which is part of

the consortium. She says, that the gaps in higher education in India means that only a small number of students gets access to quality, we are looking at bridging those gaps by offering a quality education with a European exposure. Spain is also looking at funding Indian students. Indian students have traditionally looked at just US universities for graduation, now they have more avenues opening up.

If India does not look at the collapse of its higher education closely not only will we be leading to a new brain drain but a collapse of aspirations. This is especially of concern to the new government that has come to power on the rise of this aspirational class.

## Why is Russia so interested in US politics?

These attacks cannot be traced definitely back to the Russian government, but similar games have been played elsewhere -- and to the Kremlin's advantage. The selective release of a bugged conversation between Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland and the American ambassador during her visit to the Ukrainian capital, Kiev, in 2014 made the United States look meddling and arrogant.

Emails from Gen. Philip Breedlove, then NATO's top military commander, showed he was "plotting" -- to use the term favored by the Intercept website -- to "escalate military tensions" in Europe. In fact he was doing what senior generals do: bouncing ideas off friends and allies, and working out how to make his case best to the

White House.

Another series of leaks later that year involved senior Polish officials, whose bugged restaurant conversations showed them to be blunt and foulmouthed in private, leading to resignations and ultimately the government's election defeat.

But the combination of hacking and leaking has proved effective on other fronts, too. Russia was furious when the World Anti-Doping Agency exposed a huge state-sponsored effort to give Russian athletes an unfair advantage. Now the agency's computers have been breached, and private medical data about athletes have been published. The aim is to show that the agency was selective: Western athletes take banned substances, too,

on flimsy-sounding medical grounds.

These charges may be quite baseless or exaggerated, but the damage is done. The aim of that operation was probably to bolster the Kremlin's standing at home, underlining the Putin regime's overall propaganda narrative: that the West is hypocritical and hostile.

Russia, in short, is a formidable adversary. It can do what the West can't: accept economic pain (brushing off sanctions), use force (as in Syria) and ruthlessly exploit the weaknesses of a free society -- our careless ways with computers and our gullibility about the sources of information we read online.

Few stop to ask who is behind DCLeaks, for example, the mysterious "whistleblowing"

site that acts as such a convenient repository for stolen material? Questions also surround WikiLeaks and its founder, Julian Assange. When did these campaigners for transparency ever publish material that embarrasses the Kremlin?

The paradox here is that the West is falling victim to just the tactics that its critics mistakenly ascribe to it. Edward Snowden says that his leak of National Security Agency documents was motivated by the fear of an Orwellian nightmare in which the authorities would use digital means to control society and eliminate opposition

As our democracy and our alliances crumble, that nightmare is indeed taking shape before our eyes.

# The shell-shocked white working class

And I mean just about every stinking time." The rise and fall of stability in working-class life explains much that otherwise seems puzzling in the responses to this week's CNN-Kaiser Family Foundation poll. We've heard much about working-class anger. Yet the poll reveals a rather uncomplaining acceptance of what is, in many cases, a far from an easy life.

Sixty-three percent of white working-class respondents say they are "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with their personal financial situation, even though in the past year 46% of them say they postponed medical or dental care and half took an extra

job or added work hours to make ends meet. About 30% of those who are employed face the stress of work shifts that change every week. But 76% say they are optimistic about what's going on in their personal life, and 77% of those who are working believe their jobs are secure.

However, this willingness to see the upside of difficult living conditions coexists with a deep pessimism about the future, and especially their children's future. Fully half of working-class whites expect their children's lives will be worse than their own. Fewer than one-quarter expect their children to do better.

Working-class blacks and

Hispanics are far more optimistic than their white counterparts, even though the unemployment rate of blacks without a college degree is twice as high as that of whites, as is the percentage of black workers who are working part time although they want full-time jobs. On average, blacks and Hispanics have lower incomes and are less likely to own their homes. They lost more ground than whites during the recession and have regained less ground since. Yet 36% of working-class blacks and 48% of working-class Hispanics believe their children will do better than they.

Another striking difference is

that only 45% of whites without a college education, compared to almost 75% of blacks and Hispanics, say their life would be better if they had a four-year college degree. Fifty-one percent of the whites think it would make no difference, and 3% feel it would have made things worse.

These attitudes stem from the tremendous leap forward that white working-class Americans made in the 1950s and 1960s. People who study race relations in America often talk about white privilege, but this is a relative concept when it comes to the working class. For 200 years, elites had encouraged a sense of white superiority to defuse

class resentments and head off interracial class alliances. But as in so many conflicts, the foot soldiers of white dominance seldom got a very large share of the spoils.

Low-income whites were given preference over minorities in hiring, wages, and promotions (except during strikes, when employers were quick to replace strikers with minorities whom they fired afterward, reinforcing hostility on both sides).

Yet their relative advantages over workers of other races did not produce a life of privilege for white production workers, who earned low wages with few benefits, faced frequent layoffs and suffered high rates of on-the-job injuries.

## India's Eternal Inequality

My father was Muslim, and since religion in India is patrilineal, my presence in the Brahmin household should have been an unspeakable defilement. But it wasn't. I belong to India's English-speaking upper class and, in the eyes of my host, I was exempt from the rules of caste. As we approached the village, he did make one small adjustment: He stopped calling me by my conspicuously Muslim name, and rechristened me Nitish, a Hindu name. The visit was going well. But, as evening fell, and we finished dinner with my Brahmin host and his parents, a terrific tension came over the household. Unbeknown to me, the family had made an extraordinary exception: They had allowed the driver, who was of a peasant caste called Yadav, lower in the hierarchy, to eat with us, in their house, using their plates. But now there was something they absolutely could not do.

"I can wash your plate," my host whispered to me. Then, gesturing to the driver, he said: "But I cannot wash his. If people in the village find out, it will become difficult for us." By the rules of caste, a vessel that has come into contact with the saliva of another person is contaminated. At that point, it cannot be handled by someone whose status is higher than that of the eater. My host wanted me to make this clear to the driver.

I was mortified. I had never had to tell anyone something so awful. I froze. I neither had the courage to upset their laws — and get up and wash the driver's plate myself — nor the ability to tell him this terrible instruction. My host must have sensed my

consternation, and so he went to tell the driver himself. The man crumbled at the mere suggestion of this transgression. "You are like gods to me," he said. "I would never dream of ..." I couldn't listen. I walked away. A few moments later, I saw him washing his own plate in the light of a naked bulb.

Ancient Indian society was divided into four varnas, or categories: Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (merchants or traders) and Shudras (laborers). An unofficial fifth varna were the Dalits, or untouchables, a group so low that its members are assigned jobs like cleaning latrines, sweeping the streets, tanning hides and handling the remains of the dead.

These ancient categories are not the same thing as the caste system, but they undergird it. Caste is a religious notion of spiritual purity that defines one's function on earth. It comes alongside strict restrictions on how a person can live and what a person can eat and whom they can marry. Caste, or jati, as it is known in Hindi, is a bio-spiritual identity, which has nothing to do with money or power, and offers no escape save for death or renunciation. As Octavio Paz, the Mexican writer and onetime ambassador to India, wrote caste is "the first and last reality."

India's last caste census was conducted in the early 1930s, when the country was still part of the British Empire. It found that while Brahmins constituted only some 6 percent of the population, the other lower castes, even without Dalits and the tribal people, who are not part of the caste system, came to as much as 40 percent.

In 2010, Vinod K. Jose, writing in *The Caravan*, conjectured that the shape of society was roughly the same, and "as a block, the Shudras and untouchables could reach 70 percent of the Indian population." In 2011, the government conducted a "socio-economic census," but its findings on caste were never released, in part because the issue is so explosive.

The modern Indian state has tried to correct the imbalances that caste creates. The Constitution bans discrimination based on caste, and the government has instituted quotas for low-caste people in government jobs and at universities. But the wound is so deep that even when this form of affirmative action throws up the odd success story, tragedy can quickly ensue.

The same week that my driver in Varanasi was forced to wash his own plate, the issue of caste roared back to the forefront of Indian political life. Rohith Vemula, 26, was a Ph.D. student at the University of Hyderabad, in southern India. He was active in student politics, and part of a Dalit organization that frequently clashed with a Hindu nationalist group on campus. In August 2015, he was accused of assaulting a member of the student wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Hindu nationalist party that now controls the government. The group wrote a letter, which eventually made its way to the education minister, accusing Mr. Vemula of "casteist" and "anti-national" activity. The next month, Mr. Vemula, along with four other students, was suspended. In December, the university decided to uphold the suspension.

In January, Mr. Vemula, who had once hoped to become a

science writer in the tradition of Carl Sagan, committed suicide, hanging himself from a ceiling fan. The suicide inspired protests across the country and forced Indians to once more confront this fundamental inequality.

Mr. Vemula should have been part of a national healing. Here was a student from among the lowest castes, attending one of India's most prestigious universities. His story could have been about the country's success in putting this terrible history behind it; instead it became a testament to its inability to do so. In a suicide note, he wrote that he could not move past "the fatal accident" of his birth.

The 2014 election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his B.J.P. emboldened every variety of Hindu nationalist group. The primary aim of these groups is an aggressive form of nationalism. But there is a contradiction at the heart of this ideology: As Mr. Paz wrote in 1995, the idea of the nation itself is "incompatible with the institution of caste." It was not possible to want everyone to be homogeneous while at the same time believing them to be fundamentally unequal.

The contradiction presented by caste and nationalism was never clearer than in the searing images that emerged from Mr. Modi's own home state, Gujarat, in July. They showed Dalit boys being stripped and beaten with iron rods. They were accused of killing a sacred Indian cow. But they claimed they were only skinning a cow that was already dead, work that is typically reserved for people of low caste. The irony could not have been more stark: It was caste on one hand that had forced this occupation upon them, and it was caste that was degrading them

further. Modernity should be the natural enemy of caste. And, in many ways, it is. Urban life, apartment buildings, restaurants — even something as simple as municipal water and housing — have the power to erase the prohibitions under which caste functions. Democracy, too, is an enemy of caste: The low-caste groups form a powerful voting bloc, and so politicians are obliged to be responsive to them. But by upsetting hierarchies, modernity can also exacerbate old tensions. It can make the higher castes, whose numbers are small, insecure about their place in the world and drive them to reinforce it.

The spread of modernity in India has certainly undermined caste, but it has also made the need to assert it more vehement. And the unfolding story in India is not one about the disappearance of caste, but rather of its resilience. Brahmins still have an outsize presence in intellectual life; the armed forces are still dominated by the martial castes; a majority of rich businessmen and industrialists are still of the mercantile castes; the lower castes still do the least desirable jobs. In the cloistered, English-speaking world where I grew up, caste seemed hardly to exist. As a child in Delhi, I could no more tell a Brahmin name like Mishra or Sharma from any other. And even if I could, I would not have held it in regard. Our only category was class, and it was determined by privilege, education and how well one spoke English. But there are some categories so deep that they hold without needing to be enforced. What I didn't realize was that in one very important respect, caste did exist among us: because the lowest castes were not represented.

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## Is your phone addiction harming your kids?

**Researchers warn constantly checking handsets can cause conflicts with children**



(Agencies) It's not just kids who are addicted to technology – parents are just as guilty, researchers have warned.

A new study reveals parents' use of mobile technology around young children may be causing internal tension, conflicts and negative interactions within relationships.

Researchers suggest parents should track mobile usage, set boundaries and stay away from web activity that increases stress levels.

Parents are estimated to use smartphones, tablets and wearables for at least three hours everyday.

And although they often complain their children are glued to devices, previous research has shown that 34 percent of children believe it's their parents who are more addicted.

A study from the University of Michigan Health System has found that as technology has blurred the lines between work, home and social lives - parents struggle to finding a healthy balance. 'Parents are constantly feeling like they are in more than one place at once while parenting,' says lead author Jenny Radesky, M.D., a child behavior expert and pediatrician at University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital who conducted the study with colleagues from Boston Medical Center.

'They're still 'at work'. They're keeping up socially. All while trying to cook dinner and attend to their kids.'



(Agencies) It usually happens about two months in.

You're snuggled up after a great sex session and the thought pops into your head, uninvited, and lingers: How many times have they done this

before?

The 'how many before me' question is undeniably interesting.

You're curious about other areas of your

partner's life, why wouldn't you be curious about their sexual past?

But think twice before you actually ask this loaded question.

What will you gain by knowing the answer? In my opinion, very little.

Numbers mean nothing without knowing the circumstances

Knowing the amount of lovers your partner has had without knowing the age and stage they were at when it happened tells you very little.

Say they admit to 40 lovers.

They might have clocked up 38 of them between the age of 18 and 25 and had a modest two more in that last 20 years.

Or they might have had two lovers, then got married and had six affairs, topping up the total after being separated for just one year.

Or perhaps they added the last 20 at an erotic 'sex party' like Killing Kittens – oh, and those 20 happened to be same sex rather than heterosexual encounters.

To make sense of someone's final number, you need a lot of detail. Do you really want to know that much detail?

Knowing someone's sex number without the details is a bit like snooping, finding something out and not being able to ask for an explanation.



## Why you should NEVER ask your partner how many lovers they've had

You drive yourself mad imagining who, what, where, how (and how good).

Unless your partner's prepared to answer one hell of a lot of very personal questions, knowing their number is going to accomplish little else but drive you nuts.

If you're asking to calculate whether sex is going to be safe, it's not the number of sex partners you want to know, it's the amount of times your partner had unprotected sex.

The person who slept with 50 people and used a condom every single time is a safer sex bet than someone who's had sex with five people and never used protection.

And what about all the people they've slept with 'indirectly'?

If they're in the habit of not using condoms and you sleep with them unprotected, you're also exposing yourself to all the other partners your lover has had sex with – and all their partners.

During British Sexual Health Week last year, a UK pharmacy (Lloyd's) published an online sex calculator that computed the number of indirect partners we have based on the number and age of actual sex partners we've had.

A man who has slept with nine people (without condoms) has around 2.6 million

(yes, million) indirect sexual partners.

If he was truly honest, that's the figure he'd be confessing to!

'So how many people have you slept with?' If it's a group of old girlfriends asking the question, you're six bottles in and at that no-holding-back, slightly boasty stage, you're far more likely to be unflinchingly honest (and maybe even up the score a bit, if you're feeling competitive).

If the person asking is your new, sweet boyfriend who you're desperate to please and don't know the sexual history of, the answer will be very different.

People tailor their answer to fit what they think will be the most acceptable to the person doing the asking.

If most people lie, what's the point of asking?



## Friendships at workplace: Let employees network if you want them to stay



(Agencies) Giving employees the opportunity to network with fellow colleagues makes them stay at the organisation for longer, claim researchers.

Lead author of the paper Caitlin Porter said, "Work used

types of networking — internal networking vs. external — to determine what networking behaviours predicted an employee would leave their company within two years, as well as the impact of four other factors: job satisfaction, job embeddedness, perceived employment opportunities and actual job offers.

In general, he said, scholars define "networking" as a set of behaviours performed with professional contacts, including the mutually beneficial exchange of resources, such as news about job openings and advice on how to better perform a job.

External networking, with people from outside an employee's workplace, is often

facilitated by professional groups or trade associations.

Internal networking can be more casual, even gathering for coffee and donuts before a meeting.

Both offer the opportunity to talk about common issues, ask for advice and offer support.

Using data collected from a group of industrial organisational psychologists followed for two years, the researchers elaborated on earlier work that had found a correlation between networking and job turnover by distinguishing between internal and external networking to determine why and how each contributes to employee decisions to leave a

job. Internal networking promoted job satisfaction and job embeddedness, a feeling that the worker should remain in the job, both because of ties to co-workers and concerns about losing real or perceived benefits and reduced turnover. External networking, meanwhile, increased the likelihood of turnover by 114%, a figure that was even higher if opportunities for internal networking were reduced. "This study reveals that internal networking behaviours are associated with a reduced likelihood of voluntary turnover, and external networking behaviours are associated with an increased likelihood of voluntary turnover," the researchers wrote.

# World Arthritis Day: Here's how you can keep your bones healthy



when consumed during the peak bone-building years of childhood and adolescence.

Also, the phosphorous in soda may limit our ability to use the calcium we consume. Excessive soda consumption also lowers magnesium levels that are needed for bone health.

**Excessive coffee consumption**  
 Excessive coffee consumption is bad for bones. If you're drinking more than three or four cups of coffee a day, then add some extra calcium because coffee decreases calcium absorption and increases calcium loss. Try substituting coffee with tea — as per a meta-analysis published in 2014 in the reputed journal Osteoporosis International, there is some evidence that tea drinkers have a lower risk of hip fracture.

**Too much alcohol**  
 Heavy drinkers have weak bones, frequent falls, and more broken bones than non-drinkers. When you imbibe 2 to 3 ounces of alcohol every day, calcium is not absorbed from the intestines. Alcohol also affects the liver thereby affecting the function of vitamin D — the bone vitamin, thus causing weak bones.

**Too much chocolate**  
 A study of women who consumed more than one daily serving of chocolate showed a higher risk of weak bones than women who consumed chocolate less than once a week.

Even though chocolate contains flavonols and calcium, both of which are linked to a positive effect on bone density, it also contains oxalate, an inhibitor of calcium absorption, and sugar, which is linked to calcium excretion. So have Chocolate in moderation.

**The Western diet**  
 This is also called the "meat-sweet" diet and includes excessive amounts of fats, sugar, red meats, and refined grains such as white flour that's used for white pasta and white breads. It's better to eat fish, whole grains, vegetables, and fruits. Arthritis acquired due to immune deficiency can be prevented, said expert Raman Kant Aggarwal.

With early detection and adequate treatment, arthritis acquired due to immunity

deficiency can be prevented.

Degenerative arthritis happens because of mechanical wear and tear. One should avoid becoming overweight especially around hips, ankles and knees. The joints will not be able to tolerate the excess weight.

Very few people know that the body weight becomes three times the normal weight on the knees during activities such as climbing stairs.

A proper diet is a must to keep weight in check, with adequate amounts of Vitamin D and calcium. Consistent exercises via a regular routine are necessary, especially walking.

Elasticity and flexibility in the joints can be maintained through adequate nutrition which helps the bones to remain lubricated and in good function.

(Agencies) On the occasion of World Arthritis Day, Fortis Healthcare has issued guidelines to keep the bones healthy.

Rheumatic or musculoskeletal conditions comprise over 150 diseases and syndromes, which are usually progressive and associated with pain. They can broadly be categorised as joint diseases, physical disability, spinal disorders, and conditions resulting from trauma.

Musculoskeletal conditions are leading causes of morbidity and disability, giving rise to enormous healthcare expenditures and loss of work.

Arthritis is a disease related to joints and the cartilage where the cartilage gets thinner and thinner. The various types of arthritis include rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, spinal disorders.

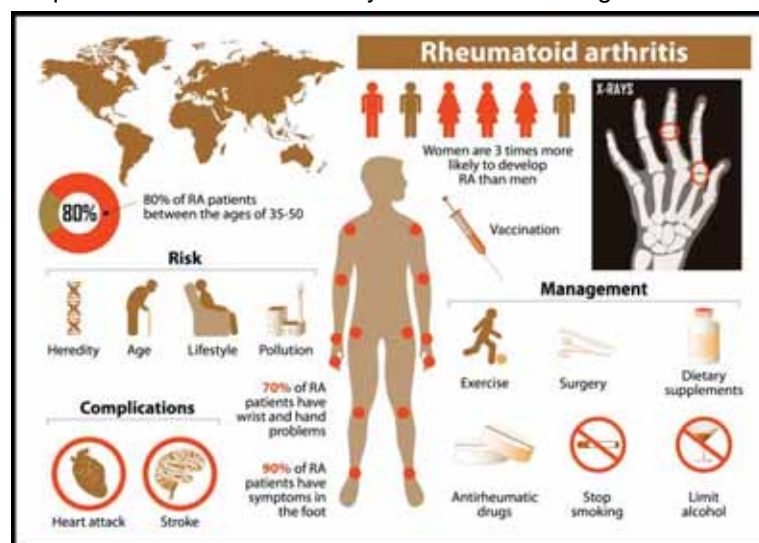
Common dietary mistakes that have a harmful effect on our bones, said Balvinder Rana, MS

Orthopaedics at Fortis Escorts Research Institute.

**Too much salt**  
 Too much salt in food causes us to lose calcium through urine to release extra salt. Some of this calcium comes from the bones which can lead to weak bones or Osteoporosis in the long run. Some studies show that a reduction in salt intake from 10 to 5 gm/day would have the same effect on bone strength as an increase in calcium intake of 1000 mg/day.

**Sodas and fizzy drinks**  
 Sodas and fizzy drinks are also linked to weak bones for several reasons: In the 1950s, children drank 3 cups of milk for every 1 cup of sugary drinks. Today that ratio is reversed: 3 cups of sugary drinks for every cup of milk. Sodas have thus replaced healthy drinks such as milk and fruit juices.

There's growing concern that soda can be more damaging



## Move over cricket and football 10 reasons why you should play golf

*Are you tired of the regular cricket-football-tennis drill and want to try your hand at a different sport? We say give golf a chance. Why, you ask? Here we give you 10 reasons to get outside this fall and start practising your swing. Because why not?*



**1. Burn calories and stay in shape**

As golf provides moderate intensity workout golfers can benefit from many health benefits just by playing their favourite sport. After reviewing over 5,000 papers for their study as part of the Golf & Health Project, researchers from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland found that golfers who play a round of 18 holes can typically expect to walk 11 to 17,000 steps, 4 to 8 miles and burn 1,200 calories. Even using the golf cart has its benefits, as you'll still walk 6,000 steps over 4 miles and burn 600 calories over 18 holes.

**2. Prevent disease**

Golf also has the health benefits associated with other moderately intense workouts, including preventing and treating more than

40 major chronic diseases such as heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, breast and colon cancer, and a lower risk of hip fractures.

**3. Improve balance and strength**  
 Although it still needs some more research, the findings from this latest study show that balance and muscle endurance in older people are improved by playing the sport.

**4. Respiratory benefits**  
 Regular participation in the sport leads to improved and maintained lung function in older adults.

**5. Boost mental health**  
 Although more studies are needed in this area, it seems the benefits of golf aren't just physical. The research from the Golf & Health project suggests that golf can increase sense of self-esteem, self-worth, and self-confidence, and a

reduced risk of anxiety, depression and dementia.

**6. Live longer**

And if the physical and mental benefits aren't enough, when compared to non-golfers, lead author of the study Dr. Andrew Murray notes that golfers also live around five years longer than non-golfers.

**7. Get some fresh air**

Getting out into nature and soaking up some vitamin D also bring additional health benefits. However make sure to also wear sunscreen, seek the shade where possible, and cover appropriately to avoid a risk of sunburn, and possibly skin cancer.

**8. Low risk of injury**

Pay attention to your back, wrists and elbow as they are susceptible to injury when golfing, but overall golfers enjoy a low risk of injury.

**9. It's a social sport**

A game of golf is a great way to spend time with friends and make new ones, which in turn has health benefits of its own as well as making sport more fun.

**10. Golf is for everyone**

These health benefits and the game

can also be enjoyed by everyone, with the study also finding that the physical benefits of golf increase with age, with the sport's physical and mental health benefits seen in people of all ages, genders and backgrounds.



# The 'No-Brainer' Fix To America's Student Loan Mess

More people are falling behind on paying their debt because the IRS won't make one small change.

Two years ago, America's biggest labor unions urged the Obama administration to cancel its lucrative contract with Navient Corp., once known as student debt collector Sallie Mae. Last year, union leader Randi Weingarten upped the ante, referring to the company—the nation's largest college loan servicer—as a “known predatory actor” whose “profit-taking has contributed to the wage stagnation of an entire generation.”

This year things are different. On Wednesday, both sides announced they've become friends.

The newfound partnership between the AFL-CIO, the nation's largest labor federation; Weingarten's American Federation of Teachers; and Navient concerns an effort to fix a little known aspect of the federal student loan program that could be helping distressed Americans manage, or even climb out of, debt. Right now, it more commonly lets them fall behind.

As student debt

swelled to \$1.4 trillion in recent years while wages remained flat, millions of borrowers signed up for government plans allowing them to repay based on their earnings rather than what they owe. Income-driven repayment plans are unique in the world of household debt, where Americans mostly make payments on their mortgages, car loans, personal loans, and credit card bills based on how much they borrowed.

To enroll in income-driven plans, borrowers have to share their most recent earnings information with loan companies—such as Navient—working under contract for the U.S. Department of Education. Little more than a few recent pay stubs or a copy of their most recent tax return are required before borrowers can enjoy a year's worth of payments indexed to their income. The existence of income plans means the federal government should be “aiming at a zero default rate among student loan borrowers,”

Education Undersecretary

Ted Mitchell said last year.

But getting enrolled is tough, thanks to slow application processing by loan companies, random rejections, and frequently lost paperwork, according to an August report by Seth Frotman, the U.S. Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's student loan ombudsman.

Compounding those issues is that borrowers have to navigate the process every year, since the government requires annual re-certifications. An Education Department study last year revealed that some 57 percent of borrowers, or 696,000 people, whose income information came due at re-certification missed their deadline. As a result, their required monthly payments shot up and their loan balances soared, thanks to accrued interest. Close to a third of borrowers who missed their deadlines ended up postponing subsequent payments. About 15 percent became delinquent.

The problem has become so widespread that, of the 4.1 million borrowers with

loans direct from the Education Department who are enrolled in the government's most popular income plans, more than one quarter have fallen out of them, federal data show. That helps to explain why, over the last year, more than 1.1 million Americans defaulted on a student loan obtained directly from the feds, translating to a default every 28

seconds. Fortunately for borrowers, there's an easy fix—one that President Barack Obama embraced in March of last year and that the Treasury and Education departments said “can and should be developed.” It calls for the government to create an electronic system that would allow borrowers to give the Internal Revenue Service permission to automatically share for several years a portion of their tax returns with the Education Department's loan contractors. If such a system existed, there would be no need for annual paperwork nightmares that afflict hundreds of thousands of Americans.

The IRS says it doesn't have enough money to create such a system,

according to the Obama administration. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities reckons the agency's budget has been slashed by an inflation-adjusted 17 percent since 2010. Privacy issues are also probably hampering automatic disclosure of tax information. Eric Smith, a spokesman for the IRS, didn't comment.

The frustration with such an easy fix being just out of reach has managed to bring together once-sworn enemies. The coalition of labor organizations, consumer advocacy groups, and loan servicers seek to pressure the White House to implement what Ben Miller, senior director for post-secondary education at the Center for American Progress, described as a “no-brainer.”

Jack Remondi, Navient's chief executive, told the consumer bureau in June that a multi-year student loan system is among his recommendations that have the “greatest potential” to reduce loan defaults. There's little doubt that such a system would save Remondi's company money. But it also would allow servicers such as Navient to focus their attention on aiding the most distressed borrowers, Miller said. “There are a lot of areas where servicers and consumer groups don't always agree, but this is such an obvious thing that's better for everybody,” he added.

## Ex-Wells Fargo worker: Intimidation included no bathroom breaks

Harassment, intimidation, even bathroom breaks denied. That's some of the “unconscionable behavior” a former Wells Fargo worker drove five hours to confront a bank executive about.

Nathan Todd Davis said at a California State Assembly hearing on the Wells Fargo (WFC) fake account scandal that he filed 50 ethics complaints during his decade of working at Wells Fargo—but nothing was ever done.

“I've been harassed, intimidated, written up and denied bathroom breaks,” said Davis, who drove 350 miles from his

home in Lodi, California, to speak at the hearing.

The former Wells Fargo worker directed his complaints to David Galasso, a senior Wells Fargo executive who was filling in at the hearing for CEO John Stumpf.

“The sales culture of Wells Fargo needs to be picked apart,” he said, standing at the podium but looking to his right to address Galasso. Davis estimated that almost two-thirds of Wells Fargo employees “cheat the system” due to unreasonable sales pressure.

After a decade at Wells Fargo, Davis said he was fired in June 2016 for being “90 seconds late to work.” The real problem, he said, was that he never “made it to management because I don't cheat.” Galasso, who serves as Wells Fargo's head of community banking in Northern and Central California, did not address Davis' comments directly.

Wells Fargo declined to comment on the individual allegations, but said in a statement that it tries to make every employee “feel valued, rewarded and recognized.” The allegations by Davis

echo ones made by other former and current Wells Fargo employees to CNNMoney. After regulators accused Wells Fargo of creating as many as 2 million unauthorized accounts, workers reached out to lay the blame on the bank's unrealistic sales goals that led many to cheat. Other former Wells Fargo workers believe they were retaliated against after they called the ethics line. The Labor Department has since said it's reviewing whistleblower retaliation complaints against Wells Fargo.

# Aleppo bombing leaves more innocent children

As bombs continue to pepper Aleppo where up to 41 people including five children were killed yesterday, the Pope has begged for a ceasefire.

An intensive day of bombing yesterday on besieged rebel-held parts of the Syrian city has left activists and volunteers once again counting the dead.

Rescue workers pulled at least one boy alive from under the rubble late Tuesday night, but the bombardment has continued today, prompting Pope Francis to call for an 'immediate ceasefire'.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says Wednesday that Tuesday's bombings killed 25, while the first responders Syrian Civil Defense and activist media platform Aleppo Media Center put the death toll at 41.

Ibrahim al-Haj, of the Civil Defense, says teams are continuing to search for survivors and bodies under a collapsed building in the al-Fardous neighborhood.

He says the mother of the boy pulled from the rubble is in a critical condition.

Al-Haj said a bomb hit while

rescuers were on the scene, injuring several of them.

Pope Francis, in his strongest appeal to date on the conflict in Syria, on Wednesday called for an 'immediate ceasefire' to allow for the evacuation of civilians.

The war in Syria has escalated since efforts to reach a ceasefire collapsed in September.

Syria and its ally Russia subsequently launched their biggest offensive on the city of Aleppo's rebel-held sectors.

The air strikes have drawn widespread condemnation, including calls from France and the United States for an investigation into war crimes they say have been committed by Syrian and Russian forces.



'It is with a sense of urgency that I renew my appeal, imploring those responsible with all my strength for an immediate ceasefire,' he said before tens of thousands of people at his weekly general audience in St Peter's Square.

Francis said a ceasefire was essential 'at least for the time necessary to allow for the evacuation of civilians, especially

children, who are still trapped by cruel bombardments.'

Francis has made many appeals for an end to the bloodshed in Syria.

Last month, he urged forces to stop bombing civilians in Aleppo, warning them they would face God's judgment.

He did not name those carrying out the air strikes.

On Sunday, Francis

promoted the current Vatican ambassador in Syria, Italian Archbishop Mario Zenari, to the high rank of cardinal in order to show the concern of the 1.2 billion member Catholic Church for Syria. It was believed to be the first time in recent history that a Vatican ambassador, known as a nuncio, would have the rank of cardinal.



## Russia orders all officials to fly home any relatives living abroad

(Agencies) Russia is ordering all of its officials to fly home any relatives living abroad amid heightened tensions over the prospect of global war, it has been claimed.

Politicians and high-ranking figures are said to have received a warning from president Vladimir Putin to bring their loved-ones home to the 'Motherland', according to local media.

It comes after Putin cancelled a planned visit to France amid a furious row over Moscow's role in the Syrian conflict and just days after it emerged the Kremlin had moved nuclear-capable missiles near to the Polish border.

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has also warned that the world is at a 'dangerous point' due to rising tensions between

Russia and the US.

According to the Russian site Znak.com, administration staff, regional administrators, lawmakers of all levels and employees of public corporations have been ordered to take their children out of foreign schools immediately.

Failure to act will see officials jeopardising their chances of promotion, local media has reported.

The exact reason for the order is not yet clear. But Russian political analyst Stanislav Belkovsky is quoted by the Daily Star as saying: 'This is all part of the package of measures to prepare elites to some 'big war'.'

Relations between Russia and the US are at their lowest since the Cold War and have soured in recent days after Washington

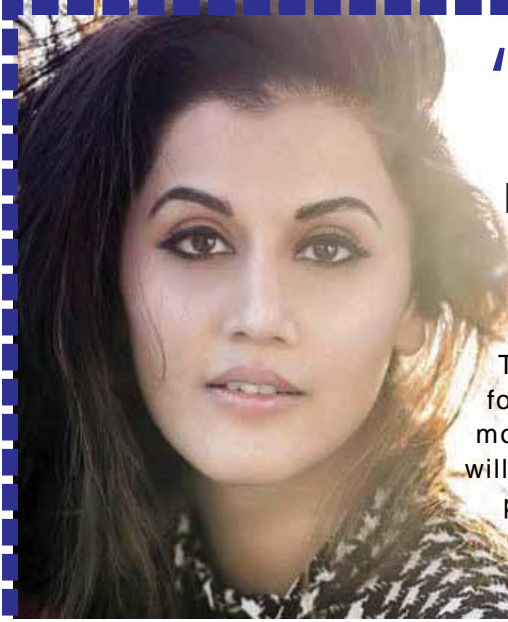
pulled the plug on Syria talks and accused Russia of hacking attacks. The Kremlin has also suspended a series of nuclear pacts, including a symbolic cooperation deal to cut stocks of weapons-grade plutonium. Just days ago, it was reported that Russia had moved nuclear-capable missiles near to the Polish border as tensions escalated between the world's largest nation and the West. The Iskander missiles sent to Kaliningrad, a Russian enclave on the Baltic Sea between Nato members Poland and Lithuania, are now within range of major Western cities including Berlin. Polish officials – whose capital Warsaw is potentially threatened – have described the move as of the 'highest concern'. Putin's decision to cancel his Paris visit came a day after French



President Francois Hollande said Syrian forces had committed a 'war crime' in the battered city of Aleppo with the support of Russian air strikes. Putin had been due in Paris on October 19 to inaugurate a spiritual centre at a new Russian Orthodox church near the Eiffel Tower, but Hollande had insisted his Russian counterpart also took part in talks with him about Syria.

The unprecedented

cancellation of a visit so close to being finalised is a 'serious step... reminiscent of the Cold War', said Russian foreign policy analyst Fyodor Lukyanov. 'This is part of the broader escalation in the tensions between Russia and the West, and Russia and NATO,' he told media. The Kremlin has also been angered over the banning of the Russian Paralympic team from the Rio Olympics amid claims of state-sponsored doping of its athletes.



# 'Ghazi' will be one of its kind

## Taapsee Pannu

(Agencies) New Delhi: After her latest release "Pink", which won critical acclaim, actress Taapsee Pannu is gearing up for the release of her upcoming movie "Ghazi" which she says will be one of its kind. "I am very proud to a part of that film ('Ghazi'). It's going to be one of its kind... India's first submarine film

based on a real incident of how the (Pakistani) Ghazi submarine was sunk," Taapsee told IANS over phone from Hyderabad. To be helmed by Sankalp Reddy, the film, which also stars "Baahubali: The Beginning" star Rana Daggubati, is touted to be India's first submarine film which will be about the sinking of PNS Ghazi, a Pakistani submarine. Talking about her role in

"Ghazi", the 29-year-old actress said: "I play a Bangladeshi refugee and the film is due to release soon. I think it is undergoing some graphic work... It is the only period film I have done so far." But it is unlike other period dramas, she said. "It is not a regular costume drama period film. It is something really interesting," added Taapsee, without divulging any more details

### 'Shivaay' action will be visual treat for everyone: Vir Das



(Agencies) Actor Vir Das is all praise for the action sequences in Ajay Devgn's upcoming film "Shivaay". "I think he (Ajay) has been able to pull off the story very well. I think nobody is able to pull off action the way Ajay has done in 'Shivaay'. It will be a visual treat for everyone," Vir told media. Vir was surprised when Ajay offered him a role in "Shivaay". "He (Ajay) called me and said come to office. His team of writers narrated the film and I liked it," he said. The "Delhi Belly" actor reveals he is playing a Pakistani hacker in the film. "It's not a negative role. I am playing a Pakistani hacker. I am under contract, I can't reveal much details about the film," he said. Directed by Ajay, the film also starring Sayyeshaa Saigal and Erika Kaar releases on October 28.

## Tisca Chopra to walk for Kavita Bhartia at AIFW SS'17

(Agencies) Actress Tisca Chopra will turn showstopper for designer Kavita Bhartia at the Amazon India Fashion Week (AIFW) 2017.

The five-day gala started on Wednesday. The 28th edition of AIFW, in association with Maybelline New York, is being held at the NSIC Grounds, in Okhla, here.

"Kavita Bhartia's clothes have an easy effortless chic with a luxe finish. Her looks can be worn many times over in multiple ways... That's what I love about her label," Tisca said in a statement.

Bhartia will be presenting her latest collection inspired by iznik pottery — a decorated ceramic art from Turkish lands, on Friday. The range is full of feminine silhouettes with a perfect blend of Indian contemporary handwork and modern appeal.

Bhartia describes Tisca as a "wonderful personality with grace".

"She looks beautiful in our ensembles. We are excited to have her as the showstopper," she said.

In all, 110 designers — on the runway and stall area — are taking part in the event.

The theme of the entire gala is 'India Modern Festive'. It will open with the re-interpretation of chanderi, and close with a guru-shishya (Master and Disciple) presentation by designers JJ Valaya and Alpana-Neeraj. On the professional front, Tisca is busy shooting of short film titled "Chutney", which peeps into the world of the Indian middle class.



## Not prepared for films yet: Aada Khan

(Agencies) Mumbai: Actress Aada Khan, who is seen as Shesha in TV show "Naagin 2", says film offers have come her way but she is not prepared to tread that path yet. "I have been getting quite a number of film offers, but I am not prepared to enter such a big industry yet. Whenever I shall be prepared, I will definitely do it," Aada said here. "It's not about the roles, it's just that I get a little scared. There were a lot of film offers, but I don't want to name them because now someone else has that. So, it would be unfair to take names," added Aada, who earlier featured in shows like "Amrit Manthan" and "Piya Basanti Re". She considers "Naagin", which came out in June this year, as the turning point in her career.

"I definitely feel 'Naagin' is the turning point in my career. It gave me a lot of success. I got to play different shades. I started as a positive character in 'Naagin', and then I did grey shades. "So, as an actor, I was satisfied with the role that I played. I got an equal amount of love even when I played the negative role," she added. Close on the heels of its success, now Colors has come up with the second season of the show. The story has taken a forward leap of 25 years. It features actress Mouni Roy in a double role.

## Priyanka Chopra's new magazine cover triggers online row

(Agencies) Actress Priyanka Chopra's latest magazine cover, in which she sports a t-shirt with the words refugee, immigrant, outsider and traveller, has not gone down well with some, who took to social media to slam it as "insensitive". The 34-year-old "Quantico" actress's plain white t-shirt features refugee, immigrant, outsider,

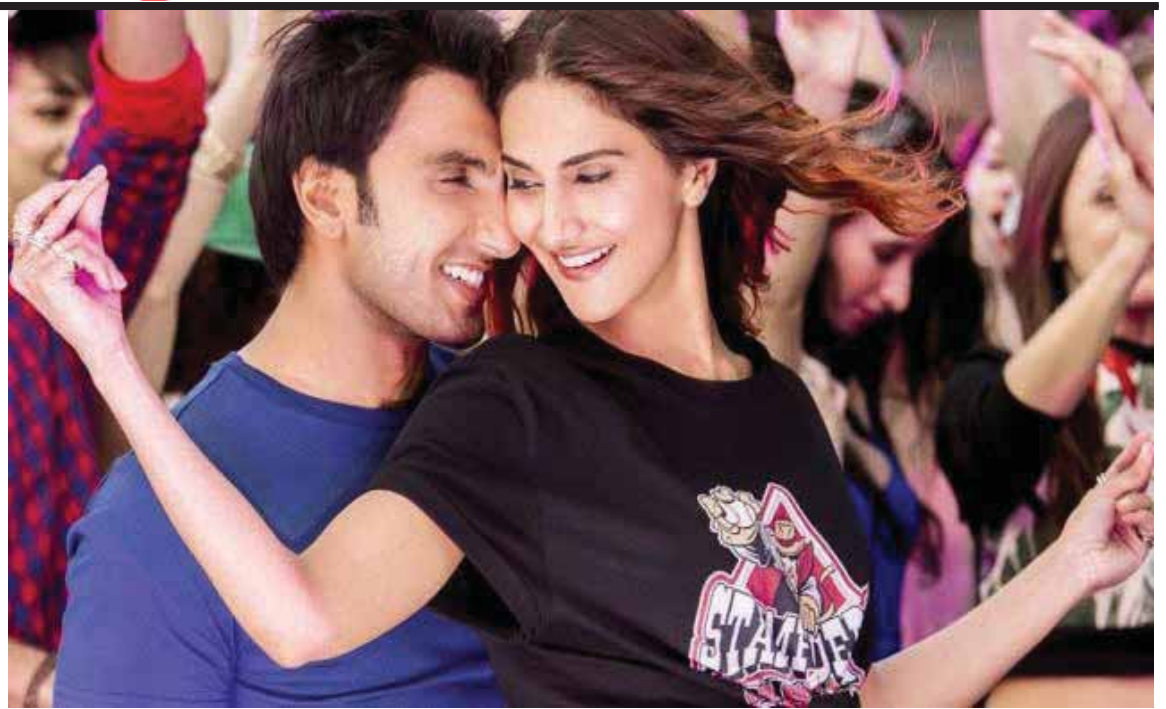


traveller arranged one below another but the first three words are struck off with a red line, suggesting that Priyanka is a traveller. Priyanka shared the cover of Conde Nast Traveller on Twitter, writing, "My new cover. Thank you @CNTIndia." But some Twitter users slammed the cover. One wrote, "Oh, I'm sorry, I wasn't aware that being a refugee is a matter of choice... What were you thinking?!" Another said, "@CNTIndia @priyankachopra offensive t-shirt. With 65 million ppl displaced, highest no. since WWII, to pretend as if it's a choice. #nonPC." "@cntindia being a refugee is NOT a choice, it's a matter of survival."

## Riteish Deshmukh shares younger son's photo



(Agencies) Mumbai: Bollywood actor Riteish Deshmukh has taken to social media to share the first picture of his younger son, Rahyl. In the picture, Riteish, 37, is seen holding his son in his arms. "It's a special day coz its my Aai's Birthday & on this special day I would like to share something special. #RAHYL #HappyBirthdayAai," Riteish posted alongside the picture. Riteish and his wife Genelia Deshmukh welcomed Rahyl in June. They are also parents to son Riaan, who was born in 2014.



## Is Befikre inspired from Love Me If You Dare?



(Agencies) The trailer of Ranveer Singh and Vaani Kapoor's Befikre seems unstoppable on YouTube. It has already registered more than 11 million views. But the more people are watching it, the more they're pointing towards its similarity with Hollywood films like No Strings Attached, Friends With Benefits and French film Love Me If You Dare. Ranveer and Vaani play Dharam and Shyra in Paris who are with each other without any commitments. Through the trailer, director Aditya Chopra promises high energy, masala and a lot of pleasant drama. Ranveer and Vaani were in Paris for the trailer launch at a special ceremony at the Eiffel Tower. We are leaving you with all the four trailer. You watch them and decide if Befikre is inspired from any of them!

**Rishi Kapoor calls it the 'adult version' of Chandni**



(Agencies) Looks like the recently released trailer of Befikre is making Rishi Kapoor relish his role as Rohit Gupta in the 1989 movie Chandni. The 64-year-old veteran posted a personal review on his official Twitter handle complimenting it as "an outstanding hot trailer!" and as an adult version of the romantic drama from 1989. Starring Ranveer Singh and Vaani Kapoor, Befikre depicts a couple of carefree partner living their life without a care. Set in a vibrant and unconventional style, the characters Dharam and Shyra create magic with their no strings attached chemistry. The Aditya Chopra directed flick, which recently garnered 10 million trailer views in the first 24 hours, releases on December 9.

## 'MS Dhoni...' biggest earning biopic in Indian cinema, claim makers

(Agencies) Mumbai: "MS Dhoni – The Untold Story", a film on the life of cricket star Mahendra Singh Dhoni, has minted over Rs 112 crore since its release on September 30, becoming the biggest earning biopic in Indian cinema, claim its makers. Produced by Fox Star Studios and Arun Pandey of Inspired Entertainment, the film, directed by Neeraj Pandey, narrates Dhoni's journey from the lanes of Ranchi to his becoming the captain of the Indian cricket team. It collected Rs 3.40 crore on Monday (October 10), taking the total to Rs 112.70 crore. Vijay Singh, CEO, Fox Star Studios, said in a statement: "MS Dhoni – The Untold Story' is now the highest earning biopic ever made (in Indian cinema). This goes to show the love people have for Mahi and how they have been discovered, adopted and promoted the film. "We are truly humbled with the response from his fans, cricket lovers and movie audiences alike." According to the statement, issued on behalf of the film's makers, the demand for the shows have increased despite big releases like "Mirzya" and "Tutak Tutak Tutiya". The film stars Sushant Singh Rajput in the title role, and also features Kiara Advani, Disha Patani and Anupam Kher in pivotal roles.



## Shah Rukh's unreleased film 'Ahamaq' to screen at Mumbai fest



(Agencies) Superstar Shah Rukh Khan's lesser known mini series-turned-film "Ahamaq" will be screened at the upcoming Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival here. Directed by filmmaker Mani Kaul, the film was first released as a four part TV mini-series on Doordarshan in 1991, before being screened at the New York Film Festival in 1992. "Ahamaq", however, was never commercial released. The film will have a screening at the Jio MAMI 18th Mumbai Film Festival in the newly introduced programme 'The New Medium'.

The segment will be curated by artist Shaina Anand. "Ahamaq" was based on Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel "The Idiot". The unedited mini-series will be presented back to back as a four-hour film. To discuss the film and how it was to work with Kaul, key members of the original cast and crew including actor Meeta Vasisht and cinematographer Piyush Shah among others will also be present. 'The New Medium' section will open with the restored version of Dziga Vertov's 1929 classic, "Man with the Movie Camera". The film will

be accompanied by a live score performed by the Vitaly Tkachuk Quartet joining from Ukraine. "We are truly excited to present this new section – my personal favourite section – which showcases some of the more bold and seminal experiments in filmmaking. "I hope film lovers will take this opportunity to experience works like the newly restored 'Man with a Movie Camera' accompanied by live music, and Lav Diaz' 'Evolution of a Filipino Family', among others," Jio MAMI with Star, Festival Chairperson, Kiran Rao

said in a statement. The section will feature the best in innovative film-making by scouring the living history of cinema – from its inception to the contemporary moment. Among the 14 titles that will screen throughout the festival, some of them include Uday Shankar's "Kalpana" (1948) restored by the World Cinema Foundation and an iconic work of expanded cinema – the two-screen "Light Music" (1975) by Lis Rhodes that will be installed inside the cinema hall. These films will be screened throughout the festival, between October 20 to 27.



## Mirzya review: How Bollywood killed a folk tale

(Agencies) In the valleys of Ladakh, a strange game on horseback, of arrows and CGI clay pigeons, is taking place. The landscape is shot through a filter, people are in dramatic lighting, riding horses, splashing water, shooting arrows in glorious slow-motion. It's visually stunning. And remarkably unreal.

Authenticity is a frequent casualty in Bollywood retellings. And Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's version of the Punjabi folk tale of Mirza-Sahiban aims to be anything but real. The central complexity of the original tale is that Mirza and Sahibaan's parents were brought up by the same woman. It's critical to why their love defies social norms.

Mehra tells two versions: one, a contemporary story set in Rajasthan. The other, the one with most of the CGI and slow-mo, in a fictional past where the men have hipster buzz cuts, and the women wear leather bodices, winged eyeliner, and layers of foundation. It's less Mirza Sahiban, more 300, or the Dothraki clan from Game of Thrones.

You could argue that folklore is the stuff of legends, and justify the visual extravagance. But Mehra does away with the crucial angle of related protagonists. And that rips the heart out of the story.

Instead, the principal story is about two childhood sweethearts. In a little segment, of a passionate young friendship in Jodhpur, Mehra seems the most at home. The narrow lanes, the low-roof houses remind you of Delhi 6, where Mehra turned Old Dilli into a character. Unfortunately, that's the shortest segment, thwarted violently by a murder that lacks sufficient cinematic motivation.

Such is the focus on effect that even a murder scene is made to look pretty. A moment that perhaps called for

tenderness, or silence, to let the audience absorb the shock, is drowned out in thumping music.

The music, in fact, breaks out in loud bursts every 10 minutes. You get what he's going for – an ode to Rajasthani folk theatre, where words, actions and music come together (he even has a narrator). In one scene, with bodies lying about, slowly coming to life, he even references puppetry. It's clever.

But it's clever at the cost of storytelling. The theatre is overwrought, breaking flow rather than aiding the narrative.

Pieced together, it's more a Shakespearean tragedy than the Mirza-Sahibaan tale. The police commissioner's daughter, Suchitra (Saiyami Kher), is set to marry Prince Karan (Anuj Choudhary). It's a marriage of the rich, and the two even seem to be in love. Until Suchitra finds her childhood love, now called Aadil (Harshvardhan Kapoor), a horse trainer in the royal stable.

Kapoor, the star son making his debut, gets his hero frames: riding a horse in slow-mo; camera looking up to enhance screen presence. But in critical scenes, the debutant leads falter.

**Direction:** Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra  
**Actors:** Harshvardhan Kapoor, Saiyami Kher, Art Malik, Anuj Choudhry  
**Rating:** 1.5/5

What are to be passionate scenes of love and reunion are at best insipid, at worst, comical.

The film feels real, ironically, only in parts that are kept simple. The class divide between the lovers is sharply drawn – the absolute poor (Aadil, school dropout, brought up by blacksmiths), and the absolute rich (the royalty). It's the same with the young friendship in small-town India, the kids in uniform hanging about Mehrangarh Fort.

But there's too little of it. Instead, it's a film directed with a heavy hand, like a movie version of a Vogue fashion shoot: stunning frames, good-looking people, and drama, drama, drama. It's a pity because the story had such potential: an eternal tale set in modern India, perhaps even a take on honour killing, still rampant in Rajasthan.

Instead, it's yet another love story. Yet another folk tale killed in Bollywood adaptation.

## For us, Indian movies were Big B running around in his glasses: Tom Hanks



(Agencies) Megastar Amitabh Bachchan "running around in his glasses and beating up bad guys" long stayed with Tom Hanks and defined the world of Indian cinema for him. The Oscar-winning actor says the vast expanse of Indian cinema and different storytelling techniques still remain a mystery for the West, with only Bollywood making inroads abroad.

"For a lot of years, Indian movies for us were Big B and beating up bad guys or midgets and stuff like that. We didn't quite understand what was going on. If everyone starts speaking the common language of cinema, it will start representing itself," said Hanks.

The actor said "it is only a matter of time" till the varied Indian stories spin their way to the West. "Like the cinema from Japan and China have impacted the entire cinematic narrative of the West like Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon by Ang Lee. Those guys are working in American films now. The fact is that we have not just been able to see films outside of Bollywood for whatever

reason, or outside Satyajit Ray's films. But it is only a matter of time because people in the United States see everything...All you have to do is be available," he added.

Hanks has worked with Indian star Irrfan Khan in his forthcoming Sony Pictures Entertainment's film Inferno. And he says he is open to attaching his star power to any Indian project, but would not do it "just to break into the marketplace".

But Hanks will not be seen as a super spy climbing on the roof of Taj Mahal or doing stunts on helicopters, he'd rather do a film on "stereotypes of public life in India".

Be it acting, directing, producing or writing -- Hanks has explored different arenas of the creative field.

He made his debut with a low-budget movie He Knows You're Alone in 1979. Following that, Hanks became a part of TV series like Bosom Buddies, Taxi and Family Ties, and TV movie Mazes and Monsters.

He got noticed with Disney's comedy Splash, which became the sleeper hit of 1984. It was Hanks' charm and upbeat attitude that got him instant stardom.

## Accused raped perfumer Monika multiple times before killing her, say police

(Agencies) The Goa police charged perfumer Monika Ghurde's alleged 22-year-old murderer with rape on Tuesday evening. According to police, Raj Kumar Singh confessed to have raped Monika multiple times at knife point before killing her. "Singh entered the building premises from the back portion of the society and spent around 40 hours on the terrace waiting for the right time to make his move," said deputy inspector general (DIG) Vimal Gupta.

Around 6.30pm on October 5, Singh knocked at her door pretending to be the security supervisor. When she opened the door, he forced himself inside and pulled a knife on her. "Singh



then tied her to the bed. He robbed her off Rs 4,000 and mobile phone. He also took her ATM card and PIN number forcefully. He then showed her three pornographic films on his phone and raped her," Gupta said, adding that Singh spent close to nine hours inside Monika's house.

"While staying in the house for

several hours, he boiled and ate eggs. He then scoured the fridge and ate chocolates and ice-cream while she was tied to the bed. He also shaved his beard," said an officer.

"Although he has still not confessed whether he made any clips of her to blackmail her, we need to verify this. We will take help of a software expert to check his phone if he would have deleted anything from his mobile phone," said a police official.

Singh has revealed that he single-handedly committed the crime and had no accomplice. Police arrested Singh from Bengaluru on Sunday after they tracked Ghurde's mobile phone.

# Why is Russia so interested in US politics?

(Agencies)Mitt Romney was right. In 2012, the then-Republican presidential contender attracted derision by dubbing Russia America's "No. 1 geopolitical foe." Russia has indeed gone from being a regional nuisance to a global adversary of the United States. And right now it looks as though it is winning. True, the Putin regime has failed to modernize or diversify the economy. The political system is a farce piled on a tragedy -- as this weekend's sham parliamentary elections will demonstrate. Russia is a pipsqueak when it comes to gross domestic product, innovation or culture. (Donald Trump: Please call your fact

checkers.) But no other country poses such a threat. We used to think Russia was no military menace. Then came the war with Georgia in 2008. Then we said it could attack only small countries. It invaded Ukraine in 2014. Then we said it could not project military power beyond its borders. In 2015, it stormed back to the Middle East, checkmating the West in Syria by keeping the Assad regime in power and pulverizing the opposition.

Worse, Russia has exploited the borderless Internet and globalized media to take the fight to the heart of the West. The most notable target is the American presidential contest. Only two

years ago the suggestion that the FBI and CIA would be investigating Russian intelligence operations aimed at disrupting the world's most important election would have seemed like the delusions of a failed Hollywood scriptwriter.

Now, according to The Washington Post, such an investigation is indeed underway. Attributing cyberattacks is hard. But all the signs point to Russian state involvement in the hacking of the Democratic National Committee's computer network and of Colin Powell's emails.

The release of such information plays into a big weakness in our media and politics: prurient excitement about other people's private communications. It should be



no surprise that Democratic Party chiefs preferred Hillary Clinton to her left-field challenger, Bernie Sanders -- which the DNC hack "revealed." Powell thinks that Clinton is greedy. Wow. Most Americans think that, too. Yet revealing these

"secrets" creates a frisson of excitement. It feeds into many Americans' feeling that the political elite is hypocritical. And it is excellent news for Donald Trump, the candidate who portrays himself as an outsider. (Contd on page 22)

## The shell-shocked white working class



(Agencies) The problems bothering white Americans without a college degree have less to do with immediate economic insecurity or material hardship, although those are widespread, than with the collapse of a whole way of life.

Following World War II, production workers experienced three decades of unprecedented economic and social gains. But since the end of the 1970s, they have seen a nearly unremitting decline in their real wages, working conditions and social status, along with a loss of the interpersonal and work networks that were once the basis of their upward progress and their entire community's stability. I think it's fair to say that large segments of the white working-class are feeling shell-shocked. One pastor who has ministered to a congregation of whites in post-industrial central Philadelphia and to a rural congregation in Wisconsin said this of his parishioners: "Every time something changed in their lives, it changed for the worse." (Contd on page 23)

## This is the worst election, ever

(Agencies) This is the worst election ever. One that won't result in the best of us being sent to Washington, but rather the worst of us being revealed.

Dragging on for an excruciating eternity, this election season has demeaned democracy, elevated mediocrity and insulted and embarrassed us all on just about every level imaginable: Intellectually, with regard to the lack of focus on policy and substance; ethically, with a complete disregard for integrity and character; and morally, driven by a disgraceful descent into racist and xenophobic vitriol. Given that our country has consistently climbed down the educational attainment ladder, and that inane and banal reality TV shows draw more eyeballs than books and opera, it should not surprise us that a growing swath of the electorate is more enthused by a coarse, bullying celebrity than by an awkward policy wonk.

But what's doubly disappointing — as we head into the crucial presidential debates — is that this lack of intellectual depth is enabled not only by the candidates, but also by the topics they gravitate to, which the media frenzy then exacerbates.

These are topics that don't matter when it comes to making a difference in the future

of our country: the size of a candidate's hands (and therefore other body parts), the now-moot birther issue, the Monica Lewinsky and Marla Maples scandals, the name-calling and finger pointing about who is more racist than whom, who is healthier than whom.

What happened to serious problem-solving? What happened to working toward a better world? To the extent that the candidates have voiced views on relevant policy matters such as child care and college costs, they've been drowned out by spectacle and triviality.

Speaking of a better world, what about ethics? Have we ever witnessed a more compromised pair of candidates?

How could such a great country not produce better options? These are two candidates whose spectacular failures and stark shortcomings are only overshadowed by the fact they have consistently evaded significant personal consequences while growing ever richer through calculated connections and deft manipulation of legal, political and financial systems. Hillary is hobbled by her evasions and lack of transparency, deleted emails and haunting doubts about her decision-making and role in complex fiascos such as Benghazi and Whitewater. (Contd on page 19)

## India's Eternal Inequality

(Agencies) New Delhi— It is one thing to have a theoretical knowledge of caste.

It is quite another to see it in action. A few months ago, I was given a small, relatively benign glimpse into how this idea of spiritual purity actually affects people's lives in India.



I was in Varanasi, India's most sacred city, conducting research for a book about Brahmins, the priestly caste at the top of the Hindu hierarchy. I was speaking at length to a young student who, like his Brahmin ancestors, was steeped in the study of Sanskrit and the Veda. One day, we drove together to the village where he came from. Our driver on this five-hour journey was a voluble man from the neighboring state of Bihar. Along the way, the driver, the student and I chatted amicably, but as we neared the Brahmin village, our dynamics swiftly changed. (Contd on page 23)

## Higher education has collapsed in India, we just don't know it yet

(Agencies) The failure of Indian education system is stark when seen in light of the fact that thousands of students every year go abroad for college education. European universities and even the European governments seem to have a more definite plan for Indian students than India.

A graduate degree in India is mostly a farce in most of the colleges. There is hardly any education imparted and it is seen

as more a stepping stone for a masters or a necessity to do something else. Students file into colleges spend their time in everything but education. Courses are outdated, faculty is inept, illiterate to the changes around them.

A recent experience in Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University really brought all these issues upfront. The outreach cell of the university organised a

seminar on globalisation. It roped in a public sector company as a sponsor, tied up with a one man think tank from Chandigarh. Invited to speak I was piqued as it seemed like a interesting effort. It seems only the invitation was genuine. Neither the university nor the organisers were actually interested in seminar. All that they were interested in was getting to know a minister. (Contd on page 22)

