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Americans scammed and defrauded again

70 Call Center workers arrested in Mumbai (India) in relation with "IRS Call Scam"



(A Call center image for representation purpose only)

(By Sharanjit Singh Thind)

Mumbai : "This is agent so and so with IRS. There is a lawsuit filed in your name regarding tax evasion and/or tax fraud." This is a final notice from the IRS. The nature and purpose of this call is to inform you that we have received legal petition/notice concerning a tax lien against you. Before this matter goes to the federal claims courthouse or before you get arrested, please call immediately."

For years now, scammers posing as Internal Revenue Service (IRS) agents and officers have been making calls to taxpayers, demanding immediate payment and threatening jail or deportation for those who failed to comply. The scam has netted the millions and emboldened scammers to try new tactics, including making "robo-calls", or automated calls leaving threatening messages.

Remember those Pestering prerecorded calls ? Those calls even hit

our cellphones and one time looked like there was no stopping them. Anyone or everyone you met mentioned getting one of those calls from IRS. Some of us were wise enough to just delete the voice message or ignore those calls altogether, but it turned out law of number worked just fine for those scammers and they raked in Millions. And not very surprisingly, those calls were originating from India, the supposed IT capital of the world.

This was a secret but highly organized operation, from a call center in Mumbai, India. Millions of everyday Americans received similar calls from nine call centers at Thane near Mumbai. They were threatened with a tax investigation by executives pretending to be Internal Revenue Services or IRS officials. To escape an investigation, many unsuspecting Americans agreed to pay anywhere between 500 and 60,000 dollars.

These call centres scammed nearly

6,500 Americans and estimates suggest collected over 36 million dollars. On Tuesday night, as the workers started dialing America, some 200 policemen swooped in to cut the lines. Nearly 800 workers were questioned through the night and 70 of them were finally arrested - among them the eight kingpins who came up with the "business model". The rest were let off with a warning. "They would call people and say that if they didn't pay then the cops would come and raid their house in half an hour," said Thane police chief Param Bir Singh.

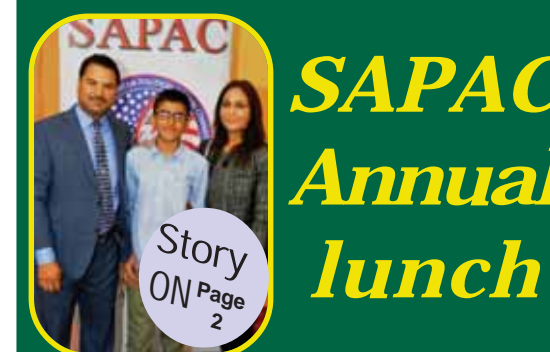
The employees, some either barely out of school or in college, would make calls from a database of numbers leaked from the US and blackmail them. Their parents say they were tricked into believing they were doing legitimate work.

The non-descript call centres were run by different owners, who hired professionals to make calls to the numbers stored in their database. They had been running the scam for the last seven months.

The owner of one of the companies, reportedly based in the US, allegedly stole information and passed it on.

Investigators say one or two of every 100 call would hit the mark. A primary investigation has revealed that the database had personal details of thousands of foreign and Indian nationals like their contact numbers, names, addresses and citizenships. Such details were allegedly used to take victims into confidence. Once they convinced their victims of the urgency of the calls — say for defaulting on tax or

insurance payments — the fraudsters threatened them with legal action, and coaxed or extorted them into revealing their bank account details. As soon as the details were out, the bank accounts were wiped clean. Alternatively, the victims were encouraged to transfer money to bank accounts provided by the callers.



SAPAC Annual lunch

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Annual AIA Deepavali

Story ON Page 2



Indian American Voters Forum
(You don't vote, you don't count. Speak up)
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Annual AIA Deepavali celebrated successfully



(By a staff reporter) New York- The Association of Indians in America, NY Chapter (AIA-NY) celebrated their 29th Annual Deepavali Festival at the South Street Seaport in New York City on Sunday October 2nd, 2016. The event was attended by thousands of people throughout the day that enjoyed Indian culture, food, heritage, live performances

and a spectacular display of Live Fireworks. Deepavali was a full day extravaganza with highlight performances by North American artist Mickey Singh & The Jungle Book actor, Neel Sethi. The highly sought after inter-collegiate dance competition, Naach Inferno, in its third year saw first-time entrants Rutgers Bhangra as their winner this year. Arya

International interacted the audience with Bollywood moves and made the entire crowd dance. Mickey Singh had the entire youth audience along with their families light up South Street Seaport with glow sticks, cheers and hands up in the air. Neel Sethi interacted with the audience and answered questions on how he became Hollywood's

most adorable and successful new star. Numerous local performing arts schools and academies also showcased their talents on both stages throughout the day. This year, Deepavali also marked the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. There was a special tribute for Gandhiji along with an Essay & Drawing Competition for the youth to showcase the importance and meaning of Peace. Winners of the competitions were acknowledged and awarded by Neel Sethi on stage in front of the audience. The event culminated with a VIP Hour which was attended by Ambassador Riva Ganguly Das, Counsel General of India in NY; Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer; Public Advocate Letitia James among many other business leaders and community leaders of the Indian American community in NY. Live Fireworks sponsored by CheapOair & Qatar Airways from the East River illuminated the New York City skyline and served as the Grand Finale.

SAPAC Annual lunch held successfully

(By Sharanjit Singh Thind)

Uniondale- Most powerful political organization of South Asian's in Long Island, SAPAC (South Asian American Political Action Committee) recently held their annual

luncheon and award ceremony in Marriot of Uniondale. Award ceremony which is named "SAPAC Hereos" awarded some of the accomplished South Asians in business, community & politics.

community affirmed his commitment to keep on serving and empowering the community. Kanwaljit Singh Chandi, a well known businessman and Event Chairman, thanked those who attended the event.

(Pictures by Vijay Shah of Freelance Media)

Jasbir Jay Singh, a successful businessman and Publisher of Hum Hindustani Hindi Weekly and Asli Punjabi, a Punjabi Weekly was among those who were awarded. Also awarded were Shikha Sehgel, a technology and education professional. Zahid Syed, Chairman of SAPAC, a well know community leader and one of the most strong voices of South Asian



Kristen Jarnagin, President & CEO of Long Island Tourism & Convention Bureau was in Hicksville recently. She met with businessmen and leaders of Indian community led by Mohinder Singh Taneja, President of "American Diversity Forum" and Satbir Bedi "Kucha" at Lotus Restaurant o. Also seen in picture, Rupal Sehgal, TJ Anand CPA, Rosy Sondhi and others.



Yahoo Secretly Scanned Customer Emails For US Intel: Sources



(Agencies) Yahoo Inc last year secretly built a custom software program to search all of its customers' incoming emails for specific information provided by US intelligence officials, according to people familiar with the matter.

The company complied with a classified US government demand, scanning hundreds of millions of Yahoo Mail accounts at the behest of the National Security Agency or FBI, said three former employees and a fourth person apprised of the events.

Some surveillance experts said this represents the first case to surface of a US Internet company agreeing to an intelligence agency's request by searching all arriving messages, as opposed to examining stored messages or scanning a small number of accounts in real time.

It is not known what information intelligence officials were looking for, only that they wanted Yahoo to search for a set of characters. That could mean a phrase in an email or an attachment, said the sources, who did not want to be identified. Reuters was unable to determine what data Yahoo may have handed over, if any, and if intelligence officials had approached other email providers besides Yahoo with this kind of request.



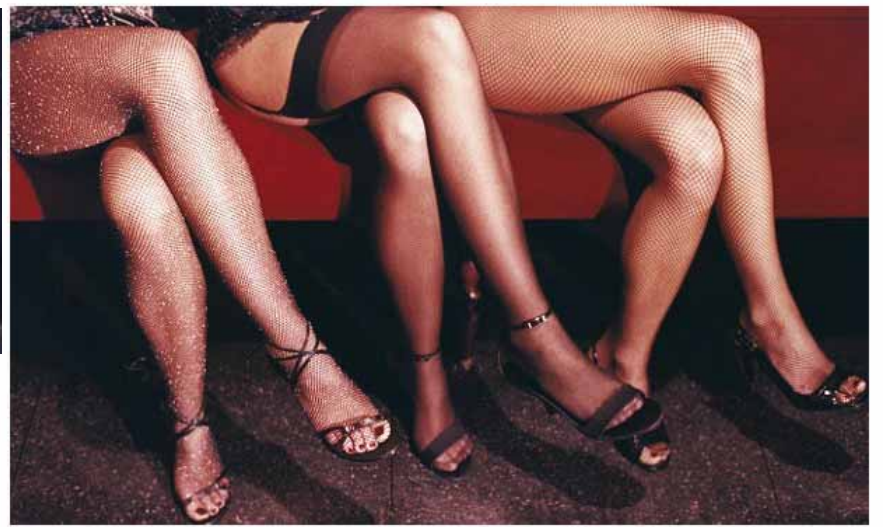
(Agencies) The women — including one who was forced to have sex with strangers for 12 hours a day, six or seven days a week— were not allowed to move about freely and were 'effectively modern day sex slaves', according to a redacted indictment.

The arrests, along with the recent arrest of the organization's boss in Belgium, will effectively dismantle the operation,

said Alex Khu, special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Minneapolis.

'We feel pretty confident that based on the number of important-position folks we are taking down, we'll really hurt this organization,' he told AP in advance of an official announcement about the arrests. 'It will take down this ring.'

Khu's office began investigation the sex trafficking case in the Twin Cities in January 2014.



Twelve sex traffickers arrested across the US for 'bringing hundreds of women from Thailand to America

His team discovered that it was part of an international ring and 'a very sophisticated, complex network operating throughout the United States ... where women are really placed on a circuit, traveling from one city to the next'. Since 2009, hundreds of women were brought from Bangkok, Thailand, to several cities in America, including Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Minneapolis, Washington and Dallas, according to the indictment.

The women were from poor backgrounds, spoke little English and were lured with promises of a better life.

Bosses or traffickers for the operation in Thailand entered the women into a bondage debt 'contract' in exchange for a visa and travel to the US. As part of the contract, the women would owe a debt ranging from \$40,000 to \$60,000 and would be 'owned' by the organization until that debt was repaid. The women were often encouraged to have breast implants to make them more appealing to potential clients and the cost of the surgery was added to their debt.

Once they arrived in the US, the women were forced to have sex in various 'houses of prostitution' including hotels, massage parlors and apartments. They were not allowed to leave without escorts, who would have sex with the victims as part of their payment. The women were forced to turn over most of the money they earned, as well as pay for rent, food and personal items, making it virtually impossible to repay their debt, the indictment said. The organization controlled the women by isolating them and threatening to harm their families in Thailand if they escaped.



Egyptian lawmaker's call for mandatory virginity tests for women draws ire



(Agencies) An Egyptian lawmaker's call for mandatory virginity tests for women seeking university admission has irked a women's rights group, the Al-Masry Al-Youm newspaper reported on Sunday.

Head of the state-sanctioned National Council for Women, Maya Morsi in her complaint demanded the expulsion of Ilhami Aghena from parliament and a criminal investigation into his actions. She said the lawmaker

was harming the reputation of Egyptian women, men and the country itself.

Aghena said in an interview last week that virginity tests were needed to combat the proliferation of informal marriages, known as "gawaz orfy", between students. Virtually expense free, such marriages have become more popular in recent years because of high youth unemployment and a shortage of affordable housing.

The gawaz orfy is widely viewed as a religiously sanctioned way of having premarital sex, a taboo in mostly conservative and majority Muslim Egypt. Muslim clerics

have spoken out against such marriages. In Egypt, as in other conservative, Muslim countries, a young woman's virginity is widely seen as a matter of family honour, the loss of which could prevent her from getting married. The military was alleged to have conducted virginity tests on 19 women arrested after troops violently broke up a protest in Cairo's Tahrir Square in March 2011, shortly after longtime President Hosni Mubarak resigned in the face of a popular uprising. Three months later, Amnesty International said that Egypt's then-military rulers acknowledged carrying out the tests as a way to protect the army from possible rape

allegations. The military pledged not to conduct the tests again, according to the London-based rights group. Aghena's comments about women have sparked controversy in the past, including claims that some female lawmakers were not dressing modestly enough. He sparked an uproar last month by saying that the practice of female genital mutilation, or FGM, was needed to curb women's sexuality and counterbalance allegedly widespread male impotence in Egypt. He claimed that 64% of Egyptian men suffer from impotence, citing increased sales of Viagra.

This bus runs 2 kilometres on 15 seconds of charge



India reduce a whopping 3.7 million tons of CO2 emissions. Geneva's public transport operator TGP, the Office of Promotion of Industries and Technologies, the Geneva power Utility SIG and ABB have collaborated to develop these buses. TOSA is the acronym this new bus system is known by. That stands for Trolleybus Optimisation Systeme Alimentation.

At first sight, these buses look like the regular electric trolley buses one sees in most European cities. But look towards the roof of one of these buses and you will see that instead of trolley poles - that connect to overhead lines - there's a

moving arm on the bus that connects to an overhead receptacle, which is in turn integrated with a bus terminal.

That receptacle holds a flash-charging technology that feeds the batteries on the bus for 15 seconds, as passengers get on and off it. This 15-second charge gives these batteries a 600-kilowatt boost - enough for the bus to travel 2 km with more than 130 people. Later, at the bus terminals, the batteries are charged fully, and that takes 4-5 minutes. Sounds simple, yes, but when Geneva's 229-strong diesel fleet is replaced with the new buses, it will help Geneva save as many as 1,000 tons of carbon dioxide a year - that is, assuming the

diesel buses run 600,000 kms annually. When fully commissioned in 2018, these buses - that will run on the city's Route 23, which connects the city's airport with its suburbs - will carry over 10,000 passengers a day. Transport accounts for a tenth of India's greenhouse gas emissions and road transport accounts for 95% of that. According to a study by the Indian Institute of Science, one diesel bus replaced by an electric bus on Indian roads will lead to a CO2 reduction of around 25 tonnes a year. India has 150,000 diesel buses. If all of these are replaced by electric buses, that amounts to 3.7 million tons of CO2 emissions a year that India could reduce.

(News Agencies) Geneva: In 2017, Geneva will have a new line of buses that will likely change the face of public transport in this global hub of finance and diplomacy. These buses need just 15 seconds of charge to run a whole 2 km. And the technology they use will have Indian environmentalists chomping at the bit, because it could help

UK announces crackdown on immigration, decision to hit Indians

(News Agencies) London: The UK on Tuesday unveiled plans to further its crackdown on immigration through "work and study routes" from non-EU nations, in a move expected to make it difficult for British firms to hire professionals from countries like India.

Home secretary Amber Rudd told the annual Conservative Party conference in Birmingham she will be looking at a range of options to cut migration.

"Leaving the EU is just one part of the strategy. We have to look at all sources of immigration if we mean business... We will be looking across work and study routes. This will include examining whether we should tighten the test companies have to take before recruiting from abroad," Rudd said as she announced a new consultation on tightening immigration.

New rules are expected to make it tougher for British companies wanting to bring in foreign professionals from outside the EU, including countries like India.

"The test should ensure people coming here are filling gaps in the labour market, not taking jobs British people could do. But it's become a tick box exercise, allowing some firms to get away with not training local people.

"We won't win in the world if we don't do more to upskill our own workforce ... I want us to look again at whether our immigration system provides the right incentives for businesses to invest in British workers," she said.

She also announced that from December, landlords that knowingly rent out property to people who have no right to be in the UK will be committing a criminal offence and could go to prison. Immigration checks will be a mandatory requirement for those wanting to get a licence to drive a taxi.

From next year, banks will have to do regular checks to ensure they are not providing essential banking services to illegal migrants.

The crackdown will affect students from India

planning to study in the UK; their numbers are already at an all-time low.

"We will also look for the first time at whether our student immigration rules should be tailored to the quality of the course and the quality of the educational institution ... We need to look at whether this one size fits all approach really is right for the hundreds of different universities, providing thousands of different courses across the country," the minister said.

However, she stressed that the new rules will

be brought in after consultation with businesses and universities. "This isn't about pulling up the drawbridge. It's about making sure students that come here, come to study. We're consulting because we want to work with businesses and universities to get this next stage of our reforms right," Rudd added. For migration within the EU, the home minister unveiled plans to overhaul legislation to make it easier to deport criminals and those who abuse UK laws while Britain negotiates its complete exit from the economic bloc.

Nassau County and NYS Open \$19 Million Medical Center for Seniors, Women & Children



Pictured above from left to right: Joseph S. Saladino, NYS Assemblyman; Dennis Dunne, Sr., Nassau County Legislator; Dr. Victor Politi, President/CEO, NUMC; Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano; David G. McDonough, NYS Assemblyman; Tom McKeivitt, NYS Assemblyman; Kemp Hannon, NYS Senator; Edward A. Ambrosino, Hempstead Town Councilman; Norma Gonsalves, Nassau County Legislator; and Linda Reed, NUMC Board of Directors

(News Agencies) Mineola, NY – Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano and Nassau University Medical Center (NUMC) President/CEO Dr. Vic Politi joined with other elected officials at a ribbon cutting and grand opening ceremony on Tuesday, October 4, for a \$19 million, 38,000 square foot Primary Medical Care Center. The state-of-the-art facility is expected to serve over 300,000 residents a year. It will be open to everyone, as well as those that cannot afford the cost of medical care. The Center will reduce unnecessary emergency room visits. The over use of the Emergency Department in the United States is responsible for over \$38 billion of wasteful spending a year.

"It is an honor to join everyone as we announce the opening of this facility, which will further advance medical services for residents of Nassau County," said County Executive Mangano. "This new Primary Care Center is focused on putting patients first—with dedicated teams of physicians delivering quality care to both children and adults. I'd like to thank Senator Hannon for helping to secure the funds needed to build this facility and serve our community."

'Declare Pakistan State Sponsor Of Terror' Becomes Most Popular US Petition Ever



(News Agencies) Washington : More than 50,000 new signatures have been added to the final count of the White House petition seeking to designate Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism, making it the most popular US petition ever.

The petition, "We the people ask the administration to declare Pakistan, State Sponsor of Terrorism (HR 6069)", was archived by the White House on Monday with 613,830 signatures.

By yesterday afternoon, the number of signatures on the petition had increased to 665,769, a jump of 51,939 signs.

This is believed to be the most popular White House petition so far as the highest number of signatures received by any White House petition so far had not crossed 350,000.

There has been no explanation from the White House so far. However, it is

possible that these signatures, which were signed before the petition was closed by the White House, were added to the final tally after being duly verified. In that case, the chances of a fraud being committed appears unlikely.

Another possibility could be that the petition was flooded with signatures. And since the petition had already reached the mandatory threshold of 100,000 to earn a response from the Obama administration, a decision could have been taken to archive it and stop accepting any new signature.

The White House is expected to have an official response to the petition within stipulated 60 days.

Meanwhile, the White House is still looking for signatures that did not meet the

criteria for the petition which was created on September 21 by someone who identified himself with initials RG, after Congressman Ted Poe and Dana Rohrabacher introduced a bill in the US House of Representative, seeking to designate Pakistan as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

It met the threshold of 100,000 signatures in less than a week. With various groups both inside and outside the US actively campaigning on the social media for people to support the petition, the signature count increased at a fast pace, sometimes more than 100,000 signatures in less than 24 hours.

In the process, it became the first-ever petition to cross half a million mark. A day after it was closed for signature, the final count as of now stands at 665,769 signatures.

While there is no official ranking of popular petitions, the one seeking "charges against the 47 US Senators in violation of the Logan Act in attempting to undermine a nuclear agreement" in April 2015 appears to be the second most popular petition with 320,000 signatures.

According to a website - WHpetitions.info - that keeps track of unanswered petitions, so far 323 White House petitions have met their signature thresholds.

The White House has responded to 318 of them (98 per cent) with an average response time of 117 days. Average waiting time so far for five unanswered petitions is 36 days. This does not include the latest petition.

Baloch-Americans have also launched their own petition on "Free Balochistan from Pakistan's illegal occupation".

UK's Crackdown On Immigration Will Make Hiring Indians Difficult



(Agencies) London : The UK today unveiled plans to further its crackdown on immigration through "work and study routes" from non-EU nations, in a move that is expected to make it difficult for British firms to hire professionals from countries like India.

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tailored to the quality of the course and the quality of the educational institution... We need to look at whether this one size fits all approach really is right for the hundreds of different universities, providing thousands of different courses across the country," the minister said.

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drawbridge. It's about making sure students that come here, come to study. We're consulting because we want to work with businesses and universities to get this next stage of our reforms right," Rudd added.

For migration within the EU, the home minister unveiled plans to overhaul legislation to make it easier to deport criminals and those who abuse UK laws while Britain negotiates its complete exit from the economic bloc.

Indo-Pak tension may get Gen Sharif an extension

(Agencies) Islamabad : The cross-border tension between India and Pakistan has lent a late tailwind to the campaign for extension of General Raheel Sharif 's tenure as Pakistan army chief.

With just over four weeks left to his retirement, he remains as active as he was when he took over the reins of Pakistan's only true seat of power. If the stand-off with India continues for a month, there might be renewed calls for Sharif to remain. "The General has maintained his popularity in the public and some of his supporters can make a case that horses shouldn't be changed midstream," said Salman Masood, a defence analyst.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has been advised by some of his partymen to give a one-year extension to General Sharif. But, there's no indication from the government that it's thinking along these lines. "For institutional strength and for legacy, General Sharif might decide to hand the baton to one of his successors. The new chief will face multiple challenges, most potent being the relation with

India and the political instability at home. Relations with Afghanistan and Iran too have dipped in recent months," Masood said. The anti-terror campaign across Pakistan and the drive against corruption within the military made General Sharif popular. A drop in terror attacks too reflect the efficacy of his efforts to root out militancy since his launch of the offensive in June 2014 in the tribal regions of the country bordering Afghanistan.

"In midst of war against terror or tension with India, it's not prudent to change the top commander who has much gains to his credit. His retirement at this critical time will not have a positive impact on the army and masses," Ali Muhammad Khan, a politician of Pakistan's Tehreek-e-Insaf party, told TOI. Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, a prominent opposition figure in Pakistan's parliament, has long been campaigning for Sharif to remain in harness. "November end will determine which Sharif among the two will stay," Rasheed said.

Crimes against architecture?

Design blunders of the hundreds of McMansions that litter suburbia after Nineties construction boom

From the 1990s to mid-2000s, cookie-cutter suburban homes known as McMansions soared in popularity in neighborhoods across the country. But now the once popular design for home building is being deemed out of style and ugly, as the premiums paid for McMansions declined significantly in 85 of the country's biggest cities, according to a report from Bloomberg.

With the decline in sales of McMansions over the years, an architect has pointed out all that is seemingly wrong with the homes on a blog titled 'Worst of McMansions'.

The site, which is authored by an architecture educator, writer, and critic, who simply calls herself 'Kate', was created in late July and chronicles how McMansions are not balanced

homes as they often have flaws including inconsistent window sizes, gables of contrasting style and dormers.

She has cataloged the most outrageous examples of McMansions, while providing the criticism about the homes explaining all that is architecturally wrong with them.

In one picture of a McMansion on her blog, she claims that the 'fake brick patchwork' featured as a design for the home was 'tacky literally instantaneously'.

Another picture calls out how the design of an oddly shaped home with long columns is 'unforgivable in so many ways.'

Kate says on the site that McMansions which feature columns, use them incorrectly and often times aren't supporting the home at all. 'The McMansion

was never designed to last forever ... [it] was built cheaply in order to get maximum items checked off the check-off list for the lowest cost,' she told Business Insider.

'The designing of houses from the inside out caused the rooflines to be massive and complex.'

The blog list numerous details about why certain McMansions are just flat out horrible, with pictures and diagrams pointing out all of the faults with them.

In her 'McMansions 101' posts, Kate explains how the homes don't have balance like normal houses because McMansions a jumble of features that don't match like columns, oversized garages, and eaves to name a few. In addition, 'Worst of McMansions' calls out builders for their bad designs including, creating garages bigger than the homes they're attached to,



shoddy construction and a mishmash of contrasting styles within and outside the homes.

Before the 2008 financial crisis, many considered bigger homes to be better and the McMansion style is what home buyers sought since they featured a three-car garage and cathedral ceilings in several of the five or more bedrooms.

Though they cost more to construct in that time period, McMansions also sold more than the typical starter homes would. From 2012 to 2016, the additional money that home buyers were expected to be willing to pay to purchase a McMansion dropped by 84 per cent in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, according to data from Trulia.

In Phoenix, the premium fell by 42 per cent, while in Las Vegas it dropped by 46 per cent. A basic McMansion style home would be valued at roughly \$477,000 in 2012 in Fort Lauderdale - which is about 274 per cent more than other homes in the area.

In the same city in 2016,

McMansions would be valued at roughly \$611,000 which is 190 per cent above the rest of the market. Kate is hoping that her site will help to finally end the architectural era of McMansions.

'Among the general population, a positive trend is emerging: People are starting to see that bigger isn't always better — this is evidenced by the tiny-house phenomenon that's been sweeping the nation the last couple of years,' she stated.

'However, I started McMansionHell with the goal of educating people about architecture and making them aware of the flaws of these houses (both architectural and sociological) through a combination of humor and easily digestible information in a way people who wouldn't otherwise care about architecture can get engaged with. 'If my work can stop just one person from bulldozing a forest to build an oversized house that's a blight on the environment, then I would call McMansionHell a very successful project.'



My chest vs yours

After the watershed strikes, India needs a vibrant discourse — not triumphalism and me-too bragging.

In the early hours of September 29, the NDA government carried out surgical strikes on terror launch pads along the LoC, and owned up to it. On that day, the India-Pakistan relationship entered a new phase, imbued with a new dynamic, bearing new challenges — and raising key questions. What was the defined objective of the military strike and has it been accomplished? Have the costs of the proxy war that Pakistan has waged against India been raised in a manner and to an extent that it is dissuaded in future?

What are the next steps for India's government, for managing the escalation? In a robust democracy, these are questions that must be asked of the government and questions that the government must address, within the constraints and while keeping the necessary options open, without labelling the questioners as unpatriotic or anti-national. But in a climate where the initial sobriety displayed by both government and opposition after the strikes is rapidly evaporating, serious conversation or questioning is

being rendered difficult. On show is the triumphalism and chest-thumping by sections of the ruling dispensation, being countered by immature claims and irresponsible dares issued by the opposition, particularly the Congress.

Union Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar broke through the general restraint with which his government had handled the aftermath of the surgical strikes with some effusive imagery, describing Pakistan as the anaesthetised patient after surgery, and the Indian army like Lord Hanuman, awakening to its own prowess. Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad followed his colleague's trail, and went further. Suggesting that to question government and the army is to be with Pakistan, he accused Delhi

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of making headlines in the Pakistani media and warned him not to "do or say anything whereby our armed forces feel let down". This, after Kejriwal had exhorted the government, quite unexceptionably, to expose "Pakistan's false propaganda". The Congress, after having initially supported the government, no questions asked, appears to be rashly overcompensating. Digvijaya Singh has asked that the government furnish proof of the strikes, while, and here is the problem, the party has officially boasted that it had carried out similar strikes when it was in government in 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2013, but not taken political ownership. All revelations are welcome, by those who are in power and those who have

been. But that a thought-through governmental policy can be upended so cavalierly by the Congress in the heat of this moment, just to score points off the BJP, is immensely sobering. The Congress has raised questions that the Congress must answer even as it interrogates the government.

There is need for greater thoughtfulness and responsibility on all sides. The BJP-led government, which has opened a new front against the terror that has repeatedly struck the nation from across the LoC, must refrain from drawing borders within. And the Congress must know that its rhetoric in this difficult moment will return to haunt.

An unclean slate *Mr. Trump's Government Bailout*

To find the way forward, India and Pakistan must first recognise the pull of history.

The origins of this Kashmir conflict rest in British policy. They withdrew from the subcontinent without a clear understanding of the consequences. Their strategic naiveté was mirrored in another dispute, the Middle East, where they left plenty of material for future UN sessions. They believed they could entrust the Northwest frontier to Pakistan, and, crossing their fingers, assumed there would be no other quarrel. Some leaders of the British Indian army, including Claude Auchinleck, thought otherwise, but did not reckon on Pakistan turning to a faulty Kashmir accession as a way out.

The rest has been history. In Pakistan, the British general who took command deliberately constrained his forces until he was replaced by General Ayub Khan, who launched the 1965 war. The Indian decisions were made by a man — Jawaharlal Nehru — who did not believe in the use of force except in extreme urgency. He forgot that he had given Pakistan a critical issue, one that would toxically combine with the truth; he (but not Mahatma Gandhi) wanted to politely starve the Pakistanis into submission.

In the Cold War, the military came to influence and power in Pakistan. Trying to free himself from the army's grip, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto understood that the army had to be hedged, and used a narrow victory to drive the point home. In the process, he entangled Pakistan in Afghanistan, beginning the long process of Islamising both states. Benazir caught the virus, and made intemperate speeches at the beginning of the internet era, but she also understood that her position was driven by politics.

The Uri event was by itself inconsequential. It could have been started by Pakistani "minders" of the trouble-makers, or it could have begun on its own. The issue is not Kashmir, but the army's peculiar attachment to it, highlighted by the rapture with which it is held. However, Pakistani officers now get the full shock of contact with the Pakistan Taliban.

Certainly, most Pakistanis don't want the achievement of a separate Kashmir, but they relish the idea of a troublesome state, controlled by India. The brief hiatus in Pakistani policy under General Pervez Musharraf collapsed quickly. In the end, they don't have a clear vision for re-uniting Kashmir, but the distant hope is better than managing increasingly angry crowds. Even Nawaz Sharif may have gone along with this venture, as he could use the Jammu and Kashmir seats for his parliamentary struggle to maintain a dominant position.

We are beginning to learn about the new decision-making process. It works at these levels, but raises some questions. First, the US model of using force to break up Iraqi forces when Saddam Hussein died was calamitous, and no one agrees with that policy today. India is not close to stripping the Pakistan army, unless it can neutralise the Pakistan bomb. This could be a US role in the future (as was suggested by the late K. Subrahmanyam). America is now neutral regarding India and Pakistan, although tilting towards India, but there is always the hope that it might change its policy. But hope is not a ground for a new policy, Pakistan is important enough to keep the relationship with the US as more than an alliance, but less than close.

Second, India has a Pakistan problem. The people in charge have little to do with electoral politics. There will be a new army chief, but will General Raheel Sharif accept popular opinion, and continue in office, or will he gracefully retire? There is enough ambiguity to raise concern in several capitals. This could be the starting point for more war, and could also be the starting point for a serious dialogue, but these will be sabotaged by the military in Pakistan. General Sharif will go, perhaps, but will his successor be tougher and more resistant than Raheel?

Third, the language used in the case of the deployment has to be reconsidered. India and Pakistan rest in the zone of uncertainty, their terminology makes war difficult but not impossible, risky but not calamitous. If both sides are cautious, they can please the crowds while meeting vital economic goals. Here is one round for improvement. The military terminology needs to be bilaterally redrawn. Not "surgical" strikes or "launch pads", these are nuclear-related terms. The countries need to get a shared vocabulary, but this will not happen in an era of mass communications. Both sides are constrained by using old Cold War terms to describe a situation of mutual disadvantage.

Fourth, India needs to go back to real interests. Dialogues have failed, but there is still room for reasoned discussion. India needs an international approach to Kashmir, albeit without international meddling. Pakistan must feel that the fate of Kashmiris is not yet determined, but must go to other issues. US policy has been recently neglectful, backing India vis a vis the silly doctrine of dehyphenation. The US needs an objective examination of Kashmir, and of Pakistan's role.

For more than a year, Donald Trump has said his genius as a businessman makes him uniquely qualified to fix the country's problems. We can dispense with that fiction now that we know that he claimed a \$916 million loss on his 1995 tax returns. Such a mammoth loss amounts to an epic failure, not runaway success. It is not clear how Mr. Trump racked up this gigantic loss, worth about \$1.4 billion in today's dollars, because he refuses to release his tax returns. It probably had something to do with disastrous business ventures like his bankrupted Atlantic City casinos and the ill-fated acquisition of the Plaza Hotel. What we do know is that this loss, reported by The Times this weekend, could be used to cancel out taxable income from other sources for up to 18 years, and therefore allow Mr. Trump to get out of paying federal and state taxes. Without more information, we can't know if he paid nothing in income taxes for nearly two decades, but neither he nor his campaign have denied that he did this. If Mr. Trump wanted to defend his tax practices, he could simply release his returns. But it seems that even for Mr. Trump, paying no taxes would be a political embarrassment. It would show that the government bailed him out of his catastrophically bad business decisions. Legal or not, this is the kind of handout no ordinary citizen could hope to get no matter how dire the circumstance. During the first presidential debate, Mr. Trump called his tax avoidance "smart." What he's justifying is a tax code that allows the extremely wealthy to shift the burden to everybody else, especially working Americans whose taxes are withheld from their paychecks and who can't shield most of their incomes from taxation. Congress made this particular tax dodge possible by treating real estate professionals different from other taxpayers. Developers like Mr. Trump are allowed to use their real estate losses to offset income from activities unrelated to real estate. In Mr. Trump's case that would include earnings from "The Apprentice" and money made from selling steaks and neckties. By contrast, under federal law, doctors, lawyers and others with real estate losses can use them to offset only real estate income. Incredibly, the Trump campaign argues that because he knows how to game the tax system he should be trusted to reform it. There is no evidence that he would improve tax policy, and plenty of evidence that he would confer even more tax advantages on himself. Mr. Trump has not proposed closing the real estate developers' loophole. Instead, he would make the code more favorable for his interests by proposing to cut the rate for limited liability corporations and partnerships — the entities in which he holds his real estate assets — to just 15 percent from ordinary income rates. Without access to his tax returns, the public cannot tell the full extent of such conflicts of interest. Mr. Trump has, however, proposed closing the carried interest loophole that currently allows hedge fund and private equity executives to pay a very low rate on some of their income. Since he does not manage hedge funds, this wouldn't affect him. Every new revelation about Mr. Trump's business career shows that he's built his millionaire's lifestyle on debt, tax avoidance and other people's money. From bankrupt casinos to a so-called university, he milked them for all he could and left workers, students and taxpayers holding the bag.



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Violence against women has increased, but no sign of rape crisis centres

The 2015 National Crime Records Bureau report is as grim as the earlier ones: Overall, crimes rose to 7.3 million, a 3.4% increase compared to 2014. The only comforting news is that the number of rapes has come down from 36,735 (2014) to 34,651 (2015), though the dip in numbers is too insignificant to crow about. "You cannot also cast aside from the fact that there were as many as 4,000 foiled rapes," a senior police officer wrote in a website.

This large number of registered cases, foiled rapes and numerous cases of stalking --- there has been a 33% increase in stalking cases between 2014 and 2015 --- show that these are more than just a law and order problem; the discussion on violence against women has to start in every home, and it has to involve both boys and girls. On Monday, Hindustan Times started a special eight-part series --- Let's Talk About Rape --- where eight eminent Indians will write open letters in the newspaper to discuss the reality of sexual assault in India. It is an effort to look at the issue of violence against women from different perspectives. But such efforts by media, citizens and NGOs need a strong support from the government.

But is not happening: In 2014, the Centre announced that it would launch Rape Crisis Centres in every district in India. But by 2015, that came down to 36 centres; to date only 18 have been built. But even these centres are not functioning to their full capacity because of lack of personnel, infrastructure and convergence among different departments. This is not all: There has been no utilisation of the Rs 2,000 crore fund that was set up in memory of the December 16, 2012, gang rape victim; in fact, there is no national plan as to how rape victims are to be compensated. As the Supreme Court reminded the government earlier this year, setting up of the fund is not enough and it is just paying "lip service"; It added: "The State must ensure adequate relief to the victims of sexual offences". Do we say more?

Come Republic Day and Pakistan will be squirming uncomfortably

By Bobby Ghosh

When Narendra Modi visited Abu Dhabi and Dubai last summer, the Pakistani daily Dawn wondered if the Indian prime minister had "stepped into the recent breach between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates over Islamabad's refusal to actively join the Yemen war?" The need for the question-mark was removed this week, with the announcement that Abu Dhabi's crown prince, Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan, will be the guest of honour at India's next Republic Day celebrations

There are plenty of reasons for Modi to make Sheikh Mohamed his chief guest, not least the \$60 billion in Indo-UAE trade, and the 2.3 million Indians who live and work in the Emirates. But the timing of the announcement made it especially piquant for Pakistan, for it came in the middle of New Delhi's campaign to isolate Islamabad diplomatically in the aftermath of the Uri attacks. Islamabad should have seen this coming. On his August, 2015 trip to the UAE, Modi made pointed barbs at Islamabad during his public speeches, eliciting no reproach from his hosts. Earlier that year, Pakistan had earned the wrath of several Arab states, including the UAE, when it refused to join a coalition led by Saudi Arabia in an assault on Yemen, where Iran-backed Shia militias known as the Houthis had toppled a Saudi-friendly government. The UAE was especially blunt in its expression of displeasure. Minister of state for foreign affairs Anwar Mohammed Gargash rounded on Islamabad for its "vague and contradictory stand", and warned Pakistan would pay a "heavy price".

In the language of diplomatic politesse, such words are the

equivalent of schoolyard curses, but Gargash had even harsher invective to deliver. He suggested Islamabad cared more for Iran than for the Arab states: This, in the context of the Sunni-Shia conflagration across West Asia, came within a whisker of accusing Pakistan of apostasy, a heinous and contemptible crime in Islam.

Pakistan was right to stay out of the war on Yemen, which continues to this day, bringing ever more destruction to the Arab world's poorest nation and still more dishonour to its richest. Although Islamabad does little to discourage the persecution of the Shia (and other minorities) within Pakistan, it cannot, for many reasons, afford to participate in the wider sectarian conflict. Having long been assured that their military was busy protecting them from the designs of India, and the depredations of internal enemies, like Baloch separatists and Pashtun terrorists, ordinary Pakistanis showed no interest in sending their troops to fight for a dubious Arab cause.

Even so, saying "No" can't have been easy for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, or for army chief Raheel Sharif. The Arab states are Pakistan's principal economic benefactors, as well as a diplomatic bulwark against India. The UAE is one of Pakistan's largest donors of aid, both humanitarian and economic, and its largest trade partner. Around 1.8 million Pakistanis live in the Emirates. The Arab states also bankroll Raheel's troops, and helped underwrite Islamabad's nuclear programme. In return, they have long regarded the Pakistani military as theirs to summon.

It is hard to know if the Pakistani military would have



swung the conflict in Yemen decisively in favour of the Saudi coalition, which has proved singularly incompetent, despite overwhelming superiority in arms. Earlier this summer, Gargash announced the UAE was pulling most of its forces out of Yemen, citing the death of 80 of its soldiers — a large number for such a small country. (The war continues to exact a toll, however: Over the weekend, a UAE vessel was sunk by Yemeni rebels. They claim it was a warship, the UAE says it was delivering aid, and the US says it belonged to a dredging company.) For a nation that takes pride in its ability to buy the world's best war weaponry to be forced into a withdrawal by a rag-tag band of rebels was an utter humiliation, and many Emiratis must wonder if they may have been spared the ignominy if Pakistan had joined the fight.

Since Gargash's outburst last year, Islamabad has tried desperately to make nice with the Arab states, and especially with the UAE. But its efforts have mostly been in the shape of words, including a speech from Nawaz Sharif to the effect that Pakistan "does not abandon friends and strategic partners". This has gone down like a lead balloon in the Emirates. On a trip to

Dubai earlier this year, practically everyone I met were still asking why Pakistan was sitting out on the war.

Unable to do anything substantive to mend relations, the Pakistani leadership will have squirmed at Modi's announcement of a "strategic partnership" between India and the UAE during his visit. Their discomfiture will have been the more acute for hearing that the India-UAE joint statement called "on all states to reject and abandon the use of terrorism against other countries, dismantle terrorism infrastructures where they exist, and bring perpetrators of terrorism to justice". Subtle, it was not. With Sheikh Mohamed's participation in India's Republic Day now confirmed, there's additional pressure on Pakistan's leaders — political and military alike — to get back into the UAE's good books. There's little prospect that the Pakistani military will be deployed in Yemen, and even if that were to happen it would earn Islamabad few brownie points with the Emiratis, since they've themselves all but abandoned the battlefield. Nor are there any meaningful economic inducements that Pakistan can offer in recompense: The UAE already enjoys unrestricted access to the Pakistani market.

Black is the new black

Surat tax-payers can show Donald Trump why black is always in vogue.

No taxation without representation!" was once the rallying cry for American freedom against British colonialism. It is indeed an irony of time that America now finds itself debating representation versus taxation — with Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump declaring he's smart, reportedly for having

escaped tax over years. Amidst one of America's most charged presidential contests, US media has carried reports on how Trump declared a loss of nearly one billion dollars in 1995, enabling him to legally evade taxes. But instead of getting angry or abashed, Trump has greeted the allegations with glee. Trump has sky-scraper levels of support from former New

York mayor Rudy Giuliani too, who feels Trump has only fulfilled his capitalistic obligations to maximise profits by minimising paying taxes.

Not everyone is applauding though. Iconic Democrat — and once, a possible challenger to Trump, until he ceded the role to Hillary Clinton — Bernie Sanders commented that if everyone in his country was a similar genius, Americans would not have a country. But Bernie's burning words haven't stumped Trump, who instead bragged online that he was the only person who could fix US tax laws.

But Trump could take a leaf out of Surat entrepreneurs' balance books. Certain Surat firms joined the government's drive to sweep undeclared money into its Income Tax Declaration Scheme. Not only did these men and women cooperate, they celebrated their contributions in style, proclaiming them on banners around town. The love letters to the taxman were removed once the authorities gently suggested so. But the hint still blows in the wind for Trump — by paying his taxes and saying it with pride, he won't tax others and might even max support.

Surgical strikes: A face-saving move or planned retaliation?

Bharat Karnad

Amid the self-congratulatory noises emanating from the BJP government and the satisfied snorting of the media commentators in the aftermath of the "surgical strikes" on jihadi targets 2-3 kms across the Line of Control (LoC), several contentious issues have come to the fore. In the context of a ramped-up Hammurabi Code voiced by the BJP general secretary Ram Madhav who promised "jaw" for "tooth", the strikes by heli-lifted special forces on seven staging areas in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) were fairly tame, retributive, actions of the kind routinely undertaken by frontline units of the Indian Army in response to some Pakistani provocation or the other. The present strike seems like a scaled up version, for instance, of the shallow penetration and ambush on July 28, 2011, in the 15 Corps sector of a transport carrying Pakistani troops proceeding home on Eid leave, culminating in five heads being taken as trophy. This was retaliation in kind to a Pakistani attack in the previous days on an Indian post and the beheadings of two Indian soldiers. Such tactical level actions often involving regimental izzat and inconclusive artillery and small arms duels are par for the course. So there was nothing particularly novel or new about the attack this time around by Indian para-commando. What was innovative, however, was the follow-up move by the Director General, Military Operations, Lieutenant General Ranbir Singh to apprise his Pakistani counterpart of the successful Indian operation and to request Pakistan army's cooperation in eliminating the jihadis. It, in effect, has prevented Pakistan from escalating. But the lapse in time between the Uri attack and the riposte suggests that the commando action was more an after-thought and a face-saver for the government than a thoroughly prepared action. This is because of absence of an in-place system facilitating instant, automatic and, depending on the situation, proportionate or deterrent response to Pakistan army-driven terrorist events. The evolving international norm is for punitive, anti-terrorist actions, to be launched in the immediate wake of an egregious terrorist incident accompanied by official assurance (such as by Ranbir Singh) about such strikes being limited response to specific provocation, while indicating

readiness to deal with any military reaction and possible escalation.

This requires that India, embroiled in an asymmetric conflict prosecuted by an adversarial Pakistan, have strike platforms at the ready at all times, primed by continuously updated intelligence and information about prioritised targets and target coordinates, and Pakistan's military preparedness, etc, so no time is lost for the punishment to get underway. Lacking such a system, each terrorist incident is treated anew and initiates the same rigmarole of bureaucratized consultations up and down the government and the laborious process of conceiving and fleshing out options, this despite two decades of experience of fighting the jihadi-terrorists, who constitute an irregular arm of the Pakistan army. The system of automaticity of proportional and punitive retaliation linked to anti-terrorist intent will do two things: Compel Pakistan to carefully think through the kind of terrorist event it may, at any given time,

be planning. If it tips over, inadvertently or otherwise, into something big, General Headquarters, Rawalpindi (GHQR), would inadvertently face a situation spiraling out of its control — something it doesn't want.

Second, with major provocations and escalation thus pre-empted, the situation will stabilise at low, mutually tolerable, levels of insurgency-counter-insurgency operations. This is not an ideal situation, but India and Pakistan could live with it until fatigue of the Kashmiris combines with good sense in GHQR to end the turmoil in the Srinagar valley and a compromise is implemented with Pakistan along the lines agreed upon by President Pervez Musharraf in the mid-2000s.

A more worrying aspect pertains to the Indian armed services' characteristic unpreparedness for immediate retaliatory action. It forced AB Vajpayee after the December 2001 attack on Parliament to order the more wasteful "general mobilisation for war" once the Army chief General S



Padmanabhan intimated him that the military was not in a position to take immediate action, and left Manmohan Singh in 2008 with the alternative of doing nothing after he was informed by the air force chief, Air Chief Marshal Fali Major that IAF did not, just then, have target coordinates of terrorist camps in PoK. It is also the military's complacency and, apparently, habitual laxity about perimeter security that have permitted terrorist intrusions and incidents to happen in the first place. The attack on Mumbai in 2008 occurred because the loose, in theory multi-tiered, maritime security allowed the seaborne attackers to slip through. Pathankot

happened in January owing to base security being reduced to a joke. And now the Uri event obtained because the jihadis sauntered to the Army camp by taking the un-policed path between the Army and Border Security Force camps that stretches to the LoC.

While it is well to criticise the government and the political class for their terminal indecisiveness, it is time the Indian armed services are held accountable for inexcusable lapses in preparedness and security. To continue to treat the armed services as holy cow is to fundamentally undermine national defence.

Measuring PM Modi's Chest Needs A Bigger Tape Now

Yashwant Sinha

The morning of Thursday, September 29, 2016, was a defining moment in independent India's history. It was on this day that India showed its neighbor Pakistan and the whole world that it will no longer tolerate being messed around with. It also informed the world in loud and clear terms that the principle of "strategic restraint" was no longer cast in stone and India would do whatever it takes to protect itself. We had not crossed the Line of Control (LoC) even during the Kargil conflict of 1999. It always stood there like a Chinese wall, which could not be crossed unless there was a declared war between India and Pakistan. That myth has been destroyed forever. The LoC is only as sacrosanct for us as it is for Pakistan. Pakistan cannot go on violating its sanctity at will and expect India to maintain it unilaterally. If the LoC is used by Pakistan to launch its dreaded terrorists into India, we will seek out such launch pads and such terrorists and destroy them at the LoC or beyond it in Pakistan. A new paradigm has been established; a new doctrine has been enunciated which will stand India in good stead in future.

Pakistan cannot even shed tears at its loss. It has been caught in the act and it can neither admit the beating it has received nor deny it. Its predicament is like that of a corrupt official who has been robbed of his ill-gotten riches but is no position to admit it or report it to the police. Pakistan has been doing it

since 1947 when it launched its non-state actors to capture Jammu and Kashmir; the same thing happened in Kargil but every time it managed to get away with it. Its non-state actors are actually its own soldiers who are deputed for such clandestine operations. The Pakistani army in uniform appears on the scene when it feels that it is winning, otherwise it does not own up the operation. It does not even accept the dead bodies of its identified soldiers who may have got killed in action. This is the fate of the soldiers of a rogue state and its rogue army.

We have done well on the diplomatic front too so far. But India should not remain engrossed with Pakistan for too long. We have to move on and do a lot of other things to further raise our standing in the comity of nations. Hyphenation with Pakistan must be avoided at all cost.

Having made history, however, India has also to be fully on guard. Pakistan has not responded so far, but it surely will. It will be a grave error on our part to let our guard down, now or ever. Pakistan is a mean and vicious enemy. It will strike, it is bound to strike, and in a cowardly manner. My own guess is that it will unleash a terror attack against us at a time and place we least expect. The festival season is a time when we must be on maximum alert. India must demonstrate that it will not be caught off guard. The responsibility is as much of the government as of the people.

India must tell every foreign interlocutor

including the Secretary General of the UN that if they want to play a role, they should tell Pakistan to abide by the bilateral agreements it has signed with India. Terrorism will automatically stop if Pakistan stops sponsoring it and stops allowing its territory to be used or misused for this purpose. There should be no dialogue with Pakistan unless it puts a complete stop to cross-border terrorism.

A word for the advocates of peace with Pakistan in India: nobody wants war with Pakistan. But it cannot be peace at any cost. My quarrel with the so-called peaceniks is that they reserve their advice for India alone. Pakistan cares a damn for them or their counsel. They have not succeeded in their mission in the last 70 years. It is unlikely they will succeed now, but it creates confusion in India. Instead of uninterrupted and unintermittible dialogue, we have had uninterrupted and unintermittible export of terrorism from Pakistan.

A word for those who always warn us of dire consequences in case we take on Pakistan: no nation can be great if it lives constantly in fear. The last word has not been said on Uri and the subsequent surgical strike by India across the LoC. But whatever the consequences, a historic beginning has been made, the rubicon has been crossed; let us wait for the consequences with determination and fortitude. The Indian armed forces have shown the mettle they are made of; the Prime Minister has shown the will power he possesses. Those who were trying to measure his chest must be looking for a new and much bigger tape.

Sign of China Embracing Pak More Tightly



Jyoti Malhotra

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping prepare to meet again in just over a fortnight on the occasion of the BRICS summit in Goa on October 18, both sides will be closely watching for signs of greater mutual understanding and mutual accommodation on issues that have evaded resolution for some time.

While the phrase, "mutual understanding and mutual accommodation", left over from history, really refers to the undemarcated as well as acrimonious border dispute between the two major Asian powers, these days Delhi and Beijing are dealing with other top-of-the-mind matters.

The most important of these is the "increasing strategic value that Pakistan has for China, even beyond being a proxy against India," said a former Indian ambassador to China, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Pointing to the overnight cross-border attack by Pakistani fidayeen in Baramulla, in which one Indian soldier has died, the Indian diplomat pointed out that the government would have to start taking into account the limit to which the Chinese would be restrained on the question of India-Pakistan military exchanges.

In the wake of the covert strikes mounted by Indian commandos in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir - which the Pakistanis have vehemently denied - the Chinese have been especially guarded, advising both sides to exercise both restraint as well as dialogue.

But within a couple of days, the official Chinese news agency Xinhua put out a story saying that Beijing was building its biggest-ever dam on the Xiabuqu tributary on the Brahmaputra river - or the Yarlung Zangbo as it is called in Tibet - that would generate 42 MW of electricity and cost \$750 million. While the

media went to town over the weekend on the story, New Delhi has been quiet. For a start, no one wants to disturb the waters of the Panjim creek on the banks of which Modi and Xi are going to meet very soon. Secondly, the Ministry of Water Resources is holding judgement, arguing that it needs more hydrological data than it gets from the Chinese on the May-October window annually.

On its own, the story is harmless. After all, the decision to build the dam was taken as long back as 2014, so what's the point of re-running the story again?

Analysts say the Brahmaputra story is a balloon, a signal, an exploratory probe, as to how New Delhi will react to this information. One China-watcher told this reporter that whether or not the Xiabuqu discharge into the Brahmaputra in the Tibetan plateau was significant or not, "by putting out the story, an element of uncertainty has been introduced in the Indian mind."

He pointed to the other signals on the horizon that seemed to have come together, especially Beijing's decision to block a Delhi-led move at the UN to ban Masood Azhar, the Pakistan-based Chief of the Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist group.

Moreover, China continues to resist allowing India into the world's most powerful nuclear club, the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Certainly, a lot of water has flowed down the Yarlung Zangbo since Modi last met president Xi in India. That was over two years ago, in Ahmedabad, and the fact that the visit was overshadowed by an incursion by Chinese PLA soldiers at Chumar in the Ladakh plateau constituted a moment of truth for the newly-elected Prime Minister. Two years on, the relationship seems to have become even more complex.

For a start, the increasingly intimate relationship between China

and Pakistan seems to be becoming clear. With Beijing building the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through Pakistan, observers say that Beijing has taken the strategic decision to invest in Pakistan.

There are several figures bandied about in the Pakistani press on the monies that will be spent for CPEC-related infrastructure from \$46 billion to the more recent \$51 billion. The Chinese haven't put out one single figure, but several - these amount to around \$35 billion, itself a staggering sum.

Question is: as Modi meets Xi, he will certainly try to gauge what plans China has for Pakistan. So far, the China-Pakistan "all-weather relationship" as well as growing economic ties between China and India had put Beijing in a sweet spot. To the equivalent of the Hindi metaphor, "paanchon ungli ghee mein" or enjoying all benefits.

Now it appears that perhaps China is moving Pakistan into a much closer embrace.

How much credence, then, should be given to the story stating the building of the dam on the Xiabuqu? Even if the river only accounts for an exceedingly small discharge, only 0.15 per cent of 25.8 cumecs (cubic metres per second) of the Brahmaputra's 19,000 cumecs discharge when it enters India in the lean period and 40,000 cumecs in the normal period annually.

Certainly as

a lower riparian state, India has the right to consume all the water the Brahmaputra brings down (said to be about 40 per cent of its total discharge), while China, as the upper riparian state, is only allowed to build run of the river (ROR) projects. These ROR projects, which temporarily impound water (versus a regular dam which creates pondage) are typically used to generate electricity.

And so the next question follows: was China sending India a message that as the upper riparian state it could also use water as a weapon, just as India was threatening to do with Pakistan by considering the abrogation of the Indus Waters Treaty? Beijing insists that the dam on the Xiabuqu as well as three others being built on the upper reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo at Zangmu are ROR projects for power generation only. But there is the question of irrigating 30,000 hectares in the drought-prone Tibetan plateau, which may not be possible if there is no significant pondage.

Meanwhile, there remains the concern about China refusing to ban Masood Azhar, extending the "technical hold" on his proscription for another three months. According to the rules, when this extension expires, China will have to take one of two decisions: to either permanently block the ban, or to drop its objections.

Which one will it be, wonder Indian diplomats.

If the Chinese take the first route, it is certain that relations with Delhi will become even more frosty and may push India further into the arms of the US. Taking the second route would mean that China was abandoning its closest friend and ally, Pakistan, where Masood Azhar lives. Certainly, by the time the end of December comes around, the Sino-Indian relationship will go

through another trial by fire, which is whether or not Beijing will back Delhi's membership at the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Last time around in July, the Chinese prevented a discussion on India's candidature, insisting that all countries who wanted admission needed to abide by the rules - which is, that only countries who had signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) could get admission into the NSG. Certainly, India, which is seeking NSG membership as a de facto nuclear weapons state, remains unwilling to do so.

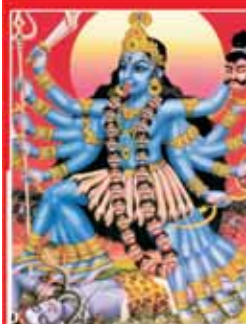
But China surely has another ace up its sleeve even at the NSG: Pakistan. If India wanted admission, then it would have to let Pakistan in at the same time.

But Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains unrepentant. Certainly he was severely embarrassed when he asked President Xi for China's support at the NSG when both leaders met at Tashkent on the eve of the NSG meeting in July in Seoul. Xi just smiled and repeated the formalities necessary for membership.

It is unlikely that Modi will bring up the NSG matter when he meets Xi in Goa. But government sources say that India is determined to go ahead and push its case at the next NSG meeting when it takes place before the end of the year. It seems that Delhi is looking to get all the remaining 47 countries on board at the NSG, leaving China isolated. "Imagine how it will look, 47-1," said one government source, adding, "that will surely send China a message that the world is ranged against it." Brinkmanship is the name of the new game in Delhi. At least for the time being, Modi and his advisors believe they have to start paying hostile neighbours back in the same coin they have received for so many years.

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India retains right to protect its interests, Doval tells counterpart



(Agencies) New Delhi: In the first conversation between National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and his Pakistani counterpart Nasir Khan Janjua since the Uri strike, India gave Pakistan details

, Doval is understood to have stressed that Pakistani inaction after the Pathankot attack had robbed any confidence India may have had.

It was put across to Janjua that India retained the right to protect its interests and this implicitly included actions such as the surgical strike across the LoC. The lack of confidence in Pakistan's "offers" to investigate the Pathankot attack in January followed the absence of results after India invited a Pakistani team to the air base for investigation. Pakistan did not facilitate a return visit by Indian investigators to

look into the attackers' Pakistan links. But the message drawn by Sartaj Aziz+, Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif 's foreign policy adviser, from the NSAs' conversation was "de-escalation", and this was put out in the media. It was a message reiterated by Pakistan high commissioner Abdul Basit in an interview on Tuesday. "Both our countries understand war is not really a solution to our problems and there is simply no room for a conflict in a nuclear environment... It is important to avoid raising false expectations, as happened after the cross-

LoC firing (how Pakistan refers to the surgical strike) on September 29. We cannot afford to go down that route," said Basit. "Statements are made, but I think both countries do understand serious implications of escalating the situation either horizontally or vertically," he added. The talk of de-escalation has failed to move the government, and top sources maintained India would not relax its defence posture on the border, particularly in view of the continued firing by Pakistan and the repeated attacks on Indian security posts. Meanwhile,

Russian envoy Vitaly Churkin, who is president of the UN Security Council for October, said on Monday in the UN that the Security Council did not have any discussion on the India-Pakistan situation. Pakistani envoy Maleeha Lodhi had asked the previous UNSC chair, New Zealand, to call for a discussion on the India-Pakistan situation. But when the New Zealand envoy raised it, there was no response from the members and no discussion. Churkin's remarks settled for Pakistan the entire campaign of trying to internationalise the current tensions.

In Kerala, RSS bosses, HC judges were on IS hit-list

(Agencies) New Delhi: In a stunning revelation, members of an Islamic State (IS) module arrested in Kerala two days ago have told their interrogators that they were planning to kill senior RSS functionaries

and high court judges in the state for which they had even prepared a list of targets. According to sources, this is the first such admission by IS operatives arrested in the country.

Local police and intelligence agencies have beefed up security of the persons whose names were found on the hitlist of the IS module led by Majeed alias Omar Al Hindi, who recently came

back from Qatar where he was in touch with some senior leaders of the so-called caliphate. The IS members, sources said, had prepared a list of at least eight RSS office-bearers and Kerala HC

judges. The NIA had arrested six members of the module from Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Apart from Omar Al Hindi, the others are Abu Basheer alias Rashid from Coimbatore, Swalih Mohammed T alias Yousuf from Thrissur, Safwan P from Mallapuram, Jasim N K and Ramshad Nageelan Kandiyil alias Aaamu from Kozhikode. Meanwhile, the agency detained another IS suspect who is not associated with the module but is said to be an important IS operative. The officials, however, clarified that none of these IS operatives had any connection with the 21 missing persons from

Kerala who joined the IS in Afghanistan earlier this year. When asked about the motive to target RSS leaders in Kerala and HC judges, a source said, "We are still interrogating them but it appears that they wanted to show the presence of IS in south India by targeting political leaders and judges as such attacks would have increased their visibility. Omar Al Hindi named the new outfit Ansar-ul Khilafah Kerala after owing allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi. The NIA suspects that more members of the module are absconding while some facilitators and financiers are based abroad.

7,000 Indian sites hacked, claim Pak rookies

(Agencies) Bengaluru : A group of Pakistani hackers has said they have hacked 7,070 Indian websites and released a list of names early on Tuesday. The hackers are no experts, say cyber security specialists, but are 'script kiddies' or those who don't write their own code and use existing scripts to hack into websites.

Each of the websites has the logo of the hacking group, Pakistan Haxors Crew, and a song "Ae watan tera ishara aagaya, ar sipahi ko pukar aagaya..." (Oh nation, we've received your signal, every soldier has got his call(ing)... begins to play with a scroll that reads, "Tum ne socha tha, hum ne kar dikhaya" (You thought, we've done it). The group has in the past hacked websites of Tata Motors, AIADMK and Taj Mahal, and on Tuesday, said, "There is more to come." While most of them are non-government websites, experts say this indicates how vulnerable Indian websites are to such threats. According to information from the communication and information technology ministry, 1,490 government websites have been hacked between January, 2010,

and December, 2015. The data for this year is yet to be compiled.

"I've seen their post. They are not even proper hackers. They are what we call script kiddies, people who use existing computer scripts to hack into computers as they lack the expertise to write their own," says Mirza Faizan Asad, legal head, Global Cyber Security Response Team. And, if people who cannot write their own code are hacking into websites, the damage by real hackers would be greater.

One of the worst instances of the hacking of a government website was in August, 2013. The Electronics Corporation of India Ltd (ECIL) website was hacked by 'PhrozenMyst', who allegedly stole sensitive data pertaining to the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (Barc). The hacking of government websites saw a decline from 2013. However, in 2015, the number went up.

Aravind Prakash, associate professor at Binghamton University, US, said, "There is always a school of thought that will argue, 'why can't we buy

software'? But one must understand that you cannot trust these companies that we buy from to provide a vulnerability-free software or system. Intrusion or hacking happens when there are vulnerabilities."

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Singapore too slams cross-border terror

(Agencies) New Delhi : Singapore expressed solidarity with India over the Uri attack on Tuesday with its Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong condemning terrorism in all its forms. He said this after a meeting with Indian PM Narendra Modi here.

Addressing a joint press conference, the heads of the two nations urged all those who believed in peace and humanity to come together to defeat the menace of cross-border terrorism, and said that the two countries had decided to boost their anti-terror cooperation.

During his address, Lee condemned terrorism and offered condolences to the families of the 19 soldiers who were killed in the Uri attack.

Modi, in his speech, said the rising tide of terrorism, especially cross-border terrorism, and the rise of radicalisation

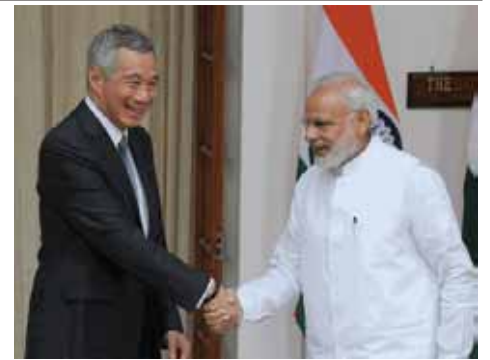
were grave challenges to people's security. "They threaten the very fabric of our societies," Modi said, adding that India and Singapore had agreed to enhance their cooperation to counter these threats, including in the domain of cyber security.

The meeting's focus on terrorism is being seen as another attempt by the government to get Pakistan on the ropes diplomatically after the Uri attack. India's campaign against Pakistan recently saw four countries in the neighbourhood pulling out of the Saarc summit in Islamabad, leading to postponement of the event.

The two countries also sent out a message to China, which had recently rejected an international tribunal ruling dismissing its nine-dash line claim over South China Sea waters. "As two

maritime nations, keeping the sea lanes of communication open, and respect for international legal order of seas and oceans is a shared priority," Modi said, adding that defence and security cooperation was a key pillar of India's strategic partnership with Singapore.

The two nations also inked three agreements, including one dealing with intellectual property rights to facilitate greater business-to-business exchanges and collaborations. Describing trade and investment as bedrock of bilateral relationship, Modi said India has embarked on a path of strong economic growth and transformation and in this journey, it regards Singapore as a key partner. The two leaders agreed to expedite the second review of Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement and welcomed the issuance



of corporate rupee bonds in Singapore. "It is a step forward in our efforts to mobilise capital for India's large infrastructure development needs," the Indian PM said. "I have been informed that Singapore is leading the world in putting driverless cars on the road. But I rest assured, we all rest assured, that one of India's strongest well-wishers, Prime Minister Lee, is in the driving seat for Singapore and for our bilateral relationship. Excellency Lee, you are a friend of India," Modi said.

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LoC shelling forces thousands to flee



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Row over surgical strikes deepen as govt, Oppn bicker about 'evidence'

(Agencies) Under pressure from the Congress and other opposition parties to release proof of the September 29 "surgical strikes" against militant camps in PoK, the government on Tuesday hit back at the rivals for questioning the "courage of the armed forces".

Five days after the two sides were on the same page over the raid, the much-publicised army operation has turned into a political slugfest, with the opposition asking the government to furnish evidence to call "Pakistan's bluff".

Pakistan has dismissed India's claims, saying the raid was nothing but cross-border firing.

"In the garb of demanding proof, please don't belittle the courage and sacrifice of the armed forces," minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Tuesday.

The Congress said it had not questioned the army's claims and supported the government's action. "There has never been a reason to raise a question or doubt the statements by DGMO on surgical strike," Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said.

Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and vice-president Rahul Gandhi had supported armed forces and the government on surgical strikes and "we reaffirm the same", he said.

Urban development minister Venkaiah Naidu said the proof would be presented at an appropriate time.

"No one has any question about the strikes except the Congress and the chief minister of Delhi. I want to tell them they should not worry about the evidence. It will be presented,"

Naidu said in Kanpur.

Union minister Uma Bharti slammed politicians seeking evidence of the strikes and said, "Those leaders who say that if Pakistan is demanding evidence about surgical strike, they should be given the evidence, such people should take the citizenship of Pakistan."

to infiltrate into India from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The strikes came 10 days after an attack on an army camp in Uri left 19 soldiers dead. Upcoming elections in the five states could be the reason why the opposition is asking for proof but couching it as a must to quash Pakistan propaganda. No one would like to be seen questioning the armed forces who enjoy mass appeal in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand which are

among the five poll-bound states.

Praising the Prime Minister, Delhi CM and Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal had in a video message on Monday asked Narendra Modi to release proof to "unmask" Pakistani propaganda.

Several Pakistani newspapers and international media outlets reported his comments, doubting India's version of events.

Prasad asked Kejriwal if he believed in the valour of Indian forces. "If so, then why is he swayed by alleged false propaganda asking proof to be given." The CM said Tuesday he had no doubts that the strikes were conducted but Modi should give a "befitting reply" to Islamabad.

Prasad also criticised former



home minister P Chidambaram who said the demand for a proof was expected after the government went public with the strikes. The UPA government, too, had hit militant bases in PoK but didn't publicise the strikes.

"Is Chidambaram joining the bandwagon of people of creating a doubt about the strike and

belittling the armed forces?" Prasad said, urging Sonia Gandhi to clarify if the comments reflected the party line.

Digvijaya Singh echoed Chidambaram's views. "Our credibility is at stake Modiji/ (national security adviser Ajit) Dovalji. Release video footage immediately," he tweeted.

CM Jayalalithaa in hospital, her adviser is in Tamil Nadu hot seat



(Agencies) It isn't Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalithaa alone who is the centre of attention at the city's Apollo Hospital.

Somewhere on the second floor where the ailing chief minister is being treated by a team of top doctors, another lady holds court these days with top officials queuing up for instructions.

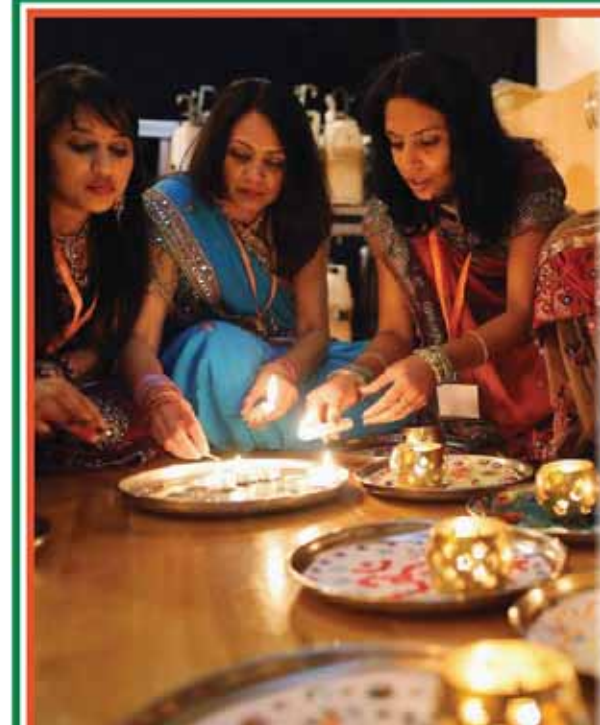
Retired IAS officer, Sheela Balakrishnan, 62, is credited with running the state administration while the chief minister is battling her illness. "Even ministers are taking instructions from her," pointed out a top official who did not wish to be named. "Jayalalithaa has implicit trust in Sheela

Balakrishnan, both for her abilities and attitude, which is why she has become the most important person in the state today. Nothing moves without her consent," he added. Few in Tamil Nadu are willing to come on record on how the administration is being run in absence of Jayalalithaa who has been hospitalised for more than 10 days. There has always been an element of secrecy shrouding both the chief minister and the top-rung of her AIADMK party and no one is willing to invite her wrath by sharing details.

Even her illness and the current state of her health have been the subject of speculation. On Tuesday, the Madras high court ordered the state government to inform the court about her health within two days after an activist filed a petition seeking clarity.

Top officials visiting the Apollo hospital say their visits are for twin purposes: To check on the chief minister's health and to also seek guidance from the bespectacled

Balakrishnan. The 1976-batch IAS officer hailing from Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala is said to be operating from a room close to that of Jayalalithaa. Another room on the same floor is occupied by Sasikala, a long time aide of the chief minister. But Balakrishnan is the person whom top officials such as chief secretary P Rama Mohan Rao and director general of police TK Rajendran actively seek out. Balakrishnan retired in 2014, but was appointed as the CM's official adviser soon after. It is in her capacity as Jayalalithaa's most-trusted advisor that Balakrishnan is calling all the shots, insiders say. Influential ministers including O Panneerselvam, who became the chief minister twice when Jayalalithaa had to step down because of legal troubles, play marginal roles. Though no major policy decisions are being taken in Jayalalithaa's absence, officials say Balakrishnan is ensuring the administration runs smoothly, giving an impression of being on 'auto pilot'.



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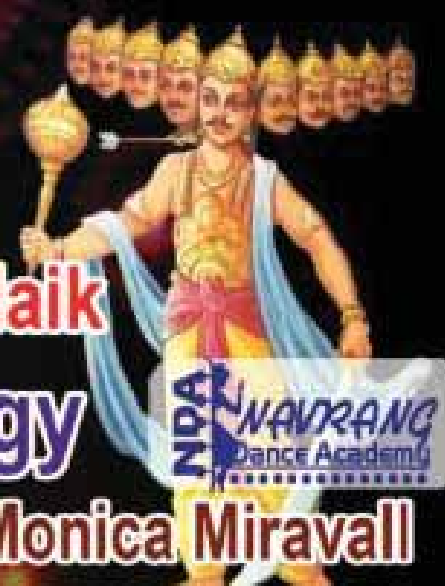


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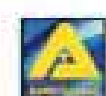
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After 2 weeks, Karnataka finally agrees to release Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu

(Agencies) Karnataka decided on Monday to release Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu, after twice deferring Supreme Court directives to share the river's water with its neighbour.

A resolution was passed at a special legislative session to release water to farmers in the Cauvery basin, including Tamil Nadu, for people's irrigation and drinking water requirements.

However, the quantum of water to be released was not mentioned in the resolution.

The Supreme Court asked Karnataka on September 30 to

discharge 6,000 cusecs from October 1 to 6. The court's directive came with a warning that no one would know when the "wrath of the law" would fall on it.

Again on Monday, the Court asked Karnataka to stop defying its order to release water to Tamil Nadu, asking the state to let it know by 2pm on Tuesday if it has followed the directive.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the state has no intention to disrespect the Supreme Court's orders now that rainfall in the past 10 days has eased the water shortage.

Tamil Nadu had pressed for Cauvery water to save its paddy crop, but

Karnataka refused, citing monsoon failure and depleted reservoirs. When the top court ordered Karnataka to release water last month, it triggered riots in Bengaluru, with Kannadigas attacking Tamils and their property.

As the century old dispute over sharing the river's water simmered, the Centre did an volte face on Monday and opposed a top court order to set up a Cauvery Water Management Board, which would be an all-encompassing authority to instruct or suggest measures and settle disputes.

Attorney general Mukul Rohatgi

requested the bench headed by Justice Dipak Misra to reconsider its order, saying only Parliament has the power to constitute such a board.

The Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal was the first to recommend in 2007 that such a board should be formed. But Rohatgi explained that the inter-state water disputes act of 1956 allows Parliament, not the Union government, to set up the board.

"I agree it was my fault," he said when the court questioned him why he accepted the order in the previous two hearings on September 20 and 30.

In New Role, BJP's Roopa Ganguly Replaces Navjot Singh Sidhu

(Agencies) New Delhi : Actor and BJP leader Roopa Ganguly has been nominated to the Rajya Sabha or Upper House of Parliament to take a seat vacated by cricketer turned politician Navjot Singh Sidhu, who resigned earlier this year.

Four months ago, Ms Ganguly had lost the first election she fought as a BJP candidate in the West Bengal assembly polls to another cricketer, local star Laxmi Ratan Shukla, who was fielded by Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress.

Known most for her fiery portrayal of the mythological Draupadi in a television serial Mahabharat that ran for almost two years, Ms Ganguly's short innings in politics - she joined the BJP last year - has been rather dramatic.

On voting day in Bengal in April, Roopa Ganguly was caught on camera in Howrah Uttar, the constituency she was contesting, slapping a woman supporter of the Trinamool Congress. The next month she

was attacked near Kolkata, allegedly by workers of the Trinamool Congress, and suffered head injuries. In Parliament, Ms Ganguly joins actors like Rekha and Suresh Gopi from Kerala who was nominated along with Mr Sidhu in April this year.

Navjot Sidhu had resigned from the Rajya Sabha in July in a dramatic move, expressing disenchantment with his party, the BJP, which had denied him an opportunity to contest the Lok Sabha elections in 2014 from Punjab's Amritsar, a constituency he represented for two terms.

Mr Sidhu formally quit the BJP last month, and has announced himself open to political tie-ups with "like-minded parties" that want to defeat the BJP and its ally, the ruling Akali Dal in the Punjab elections early next year. Long drawn negotiations with the Aam Aadmi Party came to naught, reportedly because Mr Sidhu wanted to be projected for Punjab chief minister.

Russia backs India's surgical strikes, says Uri 'terrorists' from Pakistan



(Agencies) Russia on Monday came out in support of India's "surgical strikes" along the line of control (LoC), saying every country has the right to defend itself, the first P-5 country to back New Delhi openly. "Greatest human rights violations take place when terrorists attack military installations and attack peaceful civilians in India. We welcome the surgical strike. Every country has right to defend itself," Russian ambassador to India Alexander M Kadakin said. Russia was the only country to say in plain words that terrorists came from Pakistan, Kadakin said, asking Islamabad to put an end to cross-

border terror.

The Russian ambassador made the comments in an interview to CNN News 18. Indian soldiers in an early morning raid on September 29 had struck militants who were planning to infiltrate into India from Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. The lightning strikes were in response to an attack on an army base in Uri in northern Kashmir that left 19 soldiers dead. The other four permanent members of the UN security council - the US, the UK, China and France - have chosen not to mention the surgical strikes, which Pakistan says was nothing but cross-border firing.

Russia is the first major world power to use the term "surgical strike". In the neighbourhood, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, too, have backed India and were the first to join Delhi in opting out of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit that Pakistan was to host in November. Kadakin also tried to allay Indian concerns over the Russia-Pakistan military exercise, the first war games between the two countries. He said the exercise didn't take place in "Pakistan-Occupied Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir". "India should not be concerned about military exercises between Russia and Pakistan because the theme of the exercise is anti-terror fighting", he said. The exercise was in India's interest as "we teach Pakistani army not to use itself for terror attacks against India", the envoy said. "And the exercise was not held in any sensitive or problematic territories like Pakistan-occupied Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir", the Russian diplomat said.

Why the opposition is wrong in demanding proof of surgical strikes

(Agencies) In a democracy, there must be no redlines in the public sphere.

From issues of government functioning to national security, from the conduct of the armed forces to draconian laws, from the violence that often accompanies nation-building exercise to even existing territorial boundaries, we must be willing to open every conversation, listen to every perspective. That is a testament to the strength and resilience of a democracy.

And that is why when the government or loyal TV anchors say that there should be no questions asked about last Thursday's 'surgical strikes' across the Line of Control as it denotes disrespect for the armed forces, they are wrong.

But this does not mean that India's opposition is right in asking for proof - more specifically, video footage - to show that the strikes indeed did take place.

The politics of strikes
Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was the first off the block with a clever video message .

Careful not to alienate the nationalist constituency, and in recognition of the admiration the Modi government has evoked for its move, Kejriwal first lauded the strikes. But then he pointed to what he termed was Pakistani propaganda in denying the strikes. And he went on to suggest that it was important to counter this propaganda - and for this, the government must offer proof of the attacks.

The old 1956 Hindi song - Kahin pe nighein, kahin pe nishana - was playing out in one's mind. Kejriwal may have couched it in nationalist terms and aimed at Pakistan, but his target was closer home - Modi. The gambit was obvious - sow doubts among people about the strikes, and force the government to show its hand clearly. The Congress too has followed up on the act.

But the original culprit here, in some ways, is the BJP apparatus. The opposition is desperate because the ruling party is out to appropriate the strikes as its achievement. Now, as the political executive that authorised the strike, and delivered on a campaign promise to send across a 'tough

message' to Pakistan, it is inevitable that Modi will seek to use this politically. While he has been quiet and government has officially been responsible and circumspect, the BJP has gone overboard in cashing in on the 'achievement'. Off-the-record briefings exaggerating the scale of the operation and the casualties have only added to the perception that the ruling party has scored an unprecedented victory. The opposition wants to deplete precisely this additional capital in the BJP bank.

The perils of tangible proof
But while the politics and the motives are understandable, the opposition's demand is dangerous and self-defeating.

Here is why.
There is a reason the government has been deliberately ambiguous on the nature of the strikes. The BJP government - and India - has many other goals, besides dealing with terror emanating out of Pakistan. It knows that war rhetoric dents the India story in international investor circles, and distracts from the domestic focus on economic growth and governance.



It is well aware that India no longer enjoys massive conventional superiority over Pakistan, there is a nuclear context, and the long-term policy goal of changing the Pakistani state's behaviour cannot be achieved through military means alone. In simpler terms, the government does not want war. And that is why, from the day it announced the strikes, it has been clear that for now, this is the end of any operations from the Indian side.

There may be some exaggeration in the narrative that has been informally put out about the operation - and some in government may be wary of the holes being picked. But that is not the real

reason the footage has been held back. Those who have watched it, or know people who have watched it, believe that it offers damning proof of both the raid and identifies those who have suffered on the other side. Till now, Pakistan has been claiming that there has been no raid, that this is all fiction. This is convenient for both sides. Islamabad is then under no pressure to immediately retaliate; India meets its objective of having sent a message across, but also de-escalated. If the footage is released, then there will be both clear proof of the raid and the nature of Pakistani losses.

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Speculation rife over Jayalalithaa's health, cops crack down on rumour mongers

(Agencies) Tamil Nadu police on Saturday cracked down on people allegedly speculating about Jayalalithaa's health, even as the ruling AIADMK refused to release photos of the reticent chief minister undergoing treatment at a private hospital for over a week.

The Apollo Hospital authorities flew in multi-organ failure treatment specialist and acute lung injury expert from London, Richard John Beale, on Friday night, adding to the confusion over Jaya's health condition.

The 68-year-old CM, whose health condition has always been a highly-guarded secret, was admitted to the private hospital on September 22 with complaints of fever and dehydration. Jayalalithaa, a former actress, is known to be a chronic diabetic and suffers from high blood pressure and arthritis. The AIADMK and the hospital continued to issue identical statements, saying the CM was fine and responding well to treatment. Dr Beale, a consultant critical care physician at London Bridge Hospital, also said the CM was receiving the "best course of treatment" and he would be on hand for the next few days

as a consultant. However, in the absence of visual evidence to back the assertions of AIADMK spokesperson CR Saraswathi and senior leader Panruti Ramachandran, wild speculations spread fast on social media and by word of mouth.

Outside the hospital, supporters of Amma — as she is popularly known among her followers — milled around the gate, hoping for the "latest" news on her. Some of them were visibly worried as they spoke in hushed tones about what could be ailing the leader.

Acting governor Vidyasagar Rao also visited the hospital on Saturday evening to enquire about the CM's health and told the media that she was recovering well. Police arrested one DMK worker on

Saturday and booked three others, including a France-based blogger, for allegedly spreading rumours about her health. The blogger, identified as Tamizachi, was booked for allegedly writing that Jayalalithaa has been dead for days, police said. On Friday, DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi demanded release of Jayalalithaa's pictures to scotch the rumours. However, AIADMK senior leader Ramachandran said the party and the chief minister "are answerable to the people and not to the opposition". Karunanidhi, as well as BJP leader Subramanian Swamy, are facing defamation cases for speculating on her health earlier. A spate of publications that speculated on her health too were slapped with defamation cases.



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Afghanistan 15 Years On: Obama's Sorriest Legacy

"Let's talk to the SEALs. Let's talk to Delta. ... Anybody you know, let's invite." But as it turns out, the U.S. military didn't seem all that interested in Afghanistan. Schroen's aide came back to report: The special operations people couldn't decide on who should go.

And so it was that America's war in Afghanistan, dubbed Operation Enduring Freedom (renamed Operation Freedom's Sentinel in 2014), began as a strategic and tactical muddle on October 7, 2001, when the air campaign began 15 years ago. It remains a muddle to this day. And a muddle—possibly an intractable one—is precisely what the next U.S. president will inherit from Barack Obama, despite the 44th president's strenuous efforts to pull out of Afghanistan entirely before he left office.

In all, the U.S. has spent over \$850 billion on the Afghanistan war, suffered nearly 2,400 dead and the Taliban are not only back in the field, they've made steady progress in wresting control of the country from the U.S.-backed Afghanistan government. The Pentagon would like to convince us that the glass is half full: Two weeks ago the Defense Department announced that "U.S. backed forces control 70 percent" of the country. Another way of saying this is that the Taliban control 30 percent—a not insignificant gain from zero, which was the case only eight weeks after Bush's air campaign began back in 2001. The Pentagon's estimate is conservative: The Long War Journal's Bill Roggio, who tracks the conflict, recently noted that the Taliban have a heavy influence in fully half the country and their power is expanding. Is the U.S. winning at all in Afghanistan, even if progress is glacial? For former CIA officer Milt Bearden, the answer is "a little complicated" adding that "everyone goes into Afghanistan fine, the problem is getting out." Robert Grenier agrees, but he carefully adds his own corollary: "Who's 'we'?" he asks, "and what do you mean by 'win'?" Will Afghanistan ever be a stable country again, or will Washington have to settle for

what former Gen. David Petraeus used to call "Afghan Good Enough"?

A key issue, experts say, is weaning the Afghan government and military from its 15-year dependency on the U.S. and NATO. James Clad, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense who focused on Afghanistan, says the country's problems can be fixed, "but they're the ones who have to fix them." Clad quotes from Caesar's Commentaries in describing the tribes of Gaul, where there were "factions not only in all states, and in the cantons and their divisions, but almost in each family." That, Clad says, "is a perfect description of Afghanistan." The solution is to "allow Afghanistan to resolve its own problems," he says, "and end the illusion that we can do it for them."

That will take time, says Afghanistan expert Paul D. Miller, the associate director of the Clements Center for National Security at the University of Texas. In 15 years, he told me, Afghanistan "might look like Colombia of 20 years ago—a failed narco state locked in perpetual war with a low-grade insurgency." But such an outcome isn't fated. "A bit more investment and engagement by the U.S. could create a significantly better picture, more political stability, more economic stability, more momentum against the Taliban, AQ, and the drug traffickers," Miller argues. "But that would require a commander in chief willing to pay attention to America's longest war and a Congress willing to spend a bit of money on foreign aid, and so far I see no candidate for public office at any level of either party with the competence, leadership and knowledge required for such a minimally successful foreign policy."

And yet, with just a month to go before the election, Afghanistan has hardly come up at all. "It is a national disgrace that neither of the two major-party nominees for president has even mentioned, much less has a plan for, a war they will inherit if elected," says Miller. Fifteen years ago, hopes were somewhat higher, despite the muddled beginnings of the

war. Gary Schroen and his team arrived in Afghanistan on September 26, 2001, made contact with the anti-Taliban Uzbek and Tajik leaders of the Northern Alliance and started their forces rolling south. The U.S. Air Force entered the fight on October 7, along with teams of U.S. special operations forces. By early November, the Taliban were on the run and on November 13, the U.S.-backed alliance seized Kabul: the Taliban were defeated, al-Qaeda was on the run and bin Laden was hiding out in the Afghanistan's southeastern mountains. By any measure this was a victory.

But the Taliban's 2001 defeat was temporary. In a breathtaking strategic miscalculation, the U.S. turned its attention to Iraq, a war promoted by Donald Rumsfeld within 24 hours of the 9/11 attack. The Taliban regrouped in Pakistan and made their presence felt in Afghanistan's southern provinces, while the U.S. was slow to respond. At the end of the Bush years, Joint Chiefs Chairman Mike Mullen warned Congress that the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force was "plagued by shortfalls in capability and capacity." Mullen was as blunt with Bush. "We've taken our eye off the ball," he told him. By the middle of 2008, the lines tracing the numbers of U.S. casualties in the two wars intersected, with Iraq casualties headed down, and Afghanistan casualties headed up. The University of Texas' Miller recently wrote that in late 2008, "the war in Afghanistan was going poorly, and Bush knew it." Bush responded by increasing the number of U.S. troops in the country by some 10,000 in his last months as president.

In the years since, foreign policy commentators have called the shift from Afghanistan to Iraq the "original sin" in the war on terror, forcing multiple re-dos on Afghanistan. Is that true? "Absolutely, yes," Miller told me in an email exchange. "Resources don't guarantee victory, but their absence can guarantee defeat. Afghanistan was always under-resourced." After he entered the White House in January

2009, Obama sought to rectify things. Having campaigned on a platform that the U.S. needed to refocus its fight in Afghanistan, Obama upped the ante, surging 30,000 additional troops into the country. The new U.S. commander, Stanley McChrystal, headed up the effort, with his first offensive focused on Marja, a town of 50,000 in Helmand Province. On February 13, 2010, U.S., Canadian and British troops took control of Marja, defeated the Taliban and installed what McChrystal dubbed a "government in a box." At first all went well. Coalition troops built schools, set up health clinics, dug wells and repaired roads. But the government in a box was a disaster: The local official picked by McChrystal as the district governor was despised by the locals and spent most of his time holed up under U.S. protection. Inevitably, he was removed and then, six months later, murdered. (According to his media assistant, McChrystal was not available to be interviewed for this article.)

The result is that, by early 2014, the Taliban were back with a surge of their own, battling the Afghan Army's 215th Corps and overrunning parts of northern Helmand. In the Spring of 2015, the Taliban launched Operation Omari, an offensive focused on attacking government administrative centers. Then, in August 2015, the Taliban pummeled Kunduz and Uruzgan provinces. A map of Afghanistan now shows an oil patch stain of loyalties. Taliban forces are now closing in on Kunduz in the north, while three recent Taliban suicide bombings in Kabul have claimed the lives of dozens of people. The blasts came two weeks after an attack by two gunmen at Kabul University that killed 13.

According to a senior U.S. military officer who tracks the conflict for the U.S. Central Command, the recent violence is a part of a tit-for-tat series of incidents that began last May when the U.S. killed Taliban chief Mohammad Mansour in a drone strike on his car in Pakistan. The killing was hailed by Barack Obama as "an

important milestone in our longstanding effort to bring peace and prosperity to Afghanistan."

Was it? Now it appears that all the U.S. achieved with the strike was to radicalize the Taliban even more. After Mansour's death, the Taliban leadership announced that Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada would succeed him. As it turns out, Mansour was a divisive figure, driving hard-liners into more militant groups, like ISIL. Akhundzada, on the other hand, is more extreme. Which is to say the killing of Mansour may not be a "milestone," but a millstone, with the U.S. stuck with an even more intransigent Taliban than that led by the leader we killed. Mansour's killing shows that the U.S. remains wedded to the highly suspect "whack-a-mole" strategy of fighting terrorism: an endless round of strikes that actually produces more, and worse, terrorists than it kills.

Says the CIA's Milt Bearden: "My touchstone is historian Louis Dupree, one of the really great thinkers on Afghanistan. ... Dupree said there were four mistakes the British made in Afghanistan: They occupied it, put their own hated emir on the throne, knocked down doors and killed people, then stopped paying their friends. We've followed the same pattern. It didn't work for the British, it's not working for us." Bearden should know: He served as CIA field officer in Afghanistan from 1986 to 1989, when he directed the U.S. covert war against the Soviet Union, and he has returned to the country numerous times in the wake of 9/11.

The U.S. strategy in Afghanistan appears to hang on hopes that with enough advice and support the Afghan government and military will reach some tipping point of self-sufficiency, and the Taliban will finally get the message. "The strategy is to advise the Afghan army and continue to fight those, the Taliban and other extremist groups, who pose a threat to us or to the Afghan government," a senior military officer says. Is it working? "The capacity and the capabilities of the Afghan military are improving every day," he

contends. The answer is telling: The strategy for Afghanistan is more political than military, with the Obama administration hoping that military force will persuade the Taliban to negotiate a long-term accommodation with the Kabul government. In fact, this military officer notes, the reason that Mansour was targeted by a U.S. drone last May was not simply because he was a terrorist, but because he was viewed as an obstacle to a political solution (even though his successor appears to be even more recalcitrant). Which is to say that the strategy being followed by the White House is diplomacy by drone strike: "We're signaling the Taliban that they need to choose a leadership that is interested in a political solution," the officer says, "because, obviously, this conflict isn't going to be decided on the battlefield."

This is a limited whack-a-mole strategy: You whack every Taliban unwilling to talk until you find one who will, a message made explicit by Secretary of State John Kerry in the wake of the Mansour assassination. "It is time for Afghans to stop fighting and to start building a real future together," he said.

The strategy is less cynical than it sounds. After years of war in Afghanistan, retired CIA officer Graham Fuller says, the U.S. has failed to bring stability to the country or to eliminate the Taliban as a factor in the country's future. Fuller points out that the Taliban "is much more than an Islamist movement; it has in many ways been a surrogate for nationalist Pashtun power." The Pashtun, numbering from 15 million to 20 million people in southern Afghanistan and western Pakistan, view the Kabul government as opposed to their interests, despite the fact that the U.S. was careful to support a Pashtun, Hamid Kharzai, as Afghanistan's first post-9/11 president.

"The Pashtun lost out big when the Taliban government was overthrown by the U.S. in 2001," Fuller says, so that "inclusion of mainstream Taliban within the new government is essential to future Afghan stability."

India Can Snub Pakistani Actors And Singers But Can It Tame China, The Dragon Next Door?

The reasons are not just playing Pakistan off India. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is of vital interest to China. That is, according to a former Indian ambassador to China, quoted by NDTV, the reason for "increasing strategic value that Pakistan has for China, even beyond being a proxy against India." NDTV reports that Pakistani press estimates that the money spent on CPEC infrastructure is between \$46 billion to \$51 billion. That kind of money (and the power associated with it) talks much louder than any display of Modi-Xi Jinping bhai-bhai in Ahmedabad. Modi had described his rapport with the Chinese leader as "plus one", but for Beijing, Islamabad is like a popular Chinese smartphone, one plus one. "India and China can do it better," says the hero of Chandni Chowk to China (CC2C), Bollywood's first kung-fu caper with Akshay Kumar. Now there's a great

wall between the two. Of course, we could argue that despite its behind-the-scenes support, ultimately the Kashmir attack came from Pakistan, not the Chinese. Thus the call for boycott of Pakistan makes more logical sense than a call for boycott of China. But Kishwar also makes a larger point and a more pertinent one in this current season of Fawad-bashing, among other things. The likes of Fawad Khan are soft targets. While some will miss his good looks and Karan Johar might want to cast him in a film, Bollywood will not fall apart without Fawad Khan or Mahira Khan. There's not that much we can think of that we import from Pakistan and thus it's easy to call for a boycott of "not much" and feel puffed up with patriotic pride as a perk. China, however, is a different ballgame altogether. If we genuinely went for a mass populist movement to boycott Chinese-made

goods, our daily lives would unravel, starting with those smartphones with which we are calling for the boycott in the first place on WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter.

China is India's largest trading partner and it's a lopsided relationship. As trade has grown, so has the trade deficit with China. CNBC reported this year that in the financial year that ended in March, India exported \$9 billion worth of goods to China, much of it raw materials like copper and cotton, and imported goods worth \$61.7 billion. Much of what comes back are consumer products which makes #Boycott-Chinese_Items a much trickier proposition. Even our film stars will be affected. China allows only some 34 foreign films to be released in their country every year, but some of those are big Bollywood blockbusters and films by Aamir Khan and Shah Rukh Khan have earned millions of dollars in recent

years, says CNBC. #BoycottPakOrNot sounds like a war cry we can get behind without too much inconvenience (unless you are addicted to Shan meat masala or Pakistani teleserials). But #Boycott_Chinese_Items this Diwali would definitely make it a less bright Diwali. We might be made in India, but our daily lifestyle is pretty much Made in China. We can snub Pakistan via its actors and singers but who wants to tame the dragon next door?

But it also points to the futility of feel-good boycotts in an interconnected world. Robyn Meredith, author of *The Elephant and the Dragon: The Rise of India and China And What it Means for All of Us*, said, "A company in Hyderabad developed the brains of the iPod. But it's actually made in China by Taiwanese sub-suppliers." Thus, in our zeal to boycott in order to teach someone a lesson, who would we be really hurting anyway?

Sudha Enthral's Guests at UN

The day also commemorates the Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi who epitomized a lifestyle with the smallest carbon footprint. With this India became the 62nd country to ratify the Agreement taking the cumulative emission of the countries that have ratified the Agreement so far to 51.89 percent.

This significant contribution towards the early entry into force of the Paris Agreement underlines Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to global cause of environmental protection and climate justice and reaffirms India's responsive leadership in addressing the impact of climate change.

The speakers included UN Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, General Assembly President Peter Thomson, and Professor Barry L. Gan, India's Ambassador to the UN Syed Akbaruddin, Director of Center of Non-Violence, St. Bonaventure University, New York.

The event was followed by a Carnatic Music concert by Sudha Raghunathan. The MC of the event was Manjunath Chennerrappa Head of Chancery of the Permanent Mission of India to the UN.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon stressed the link between non-violence, peace and nature as he observed the International Day of Non-Violence. "Every year on the International Day of Non-Violence, we re-commit ourselves to the cause of peace, as exemplified by the life of Mahatma Gandhi who was born on this day 147 years ago," Ban said. The UN General Assembly, through a resolution in 2007, designated 2 October as the International Day of Non-Violence to coincide with the birthday of Gandhi, who led the country's independence movement and pioneered the philosophy and strategy of non-violence.

"We know that a culture of non-violence begins with respect for others, but it does not end there. To nurture

peace, we must respect nature. I am pleased this year's International Day of Non-Violence puts the focus on sustainability and the environment," Mr. Ban said.

"In all he did, Gandhi honored our obligation to all living things. He reminded us that 'Earth provides enough to satisfy everyone's needs, but not everyone's greed.' Gandhi also challenged us to 'be the change we wish to see in the world,'" the Secretary-General noted. India's commitment is reflected in a momentous way, the UN chief said, as its government is depositing its instrument of ratification for the Paris Agreement on climate change.

There is no better way to commemorate Gandhi and his legacy for people and planet, he said, urging all countries to complete their domestic processes for ratification and also strive in all activities to achieve progress through non-violence. The Day is annual with commemo

Hurricane Matthew Bears Down On U.S.

After Killing Dozens In Caribbean

The storm carved a path of devastation through southwestern Haiti, dumping boats and debris on coastal roads hit by surging seas and flooding residential areas heavily.

Some 80 percent of homes were damaged in Haiti's Sud Department, which has a population of more than 700,000, a government official said in a meeting with U.N. officials. Some 11,000 people were in shelters in the province.

In the town of Jeremie, people were cooking and sleeping outside because most houses were either knocked down or severely damaged. Similar scenes were reported across the coastal towns of the south. Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, had been set to hold a repeatedly postponed presidential election on Sunday, but the country's electoral council delayed it again in the aftermath of Matthew. No new date has yet been set.

3 dead in Florida from Hurricane Matthew

Miami (US): The US marked its first three fatalities from Hurricane Matthew as the powerful storm lashed the Florida coast, officials have said.

A 58-year-old woman suffered cardiac arrest in her home in central Florida's St Lucie County overnight, but high winds from Matthew – then a major Category Three storm on a scale of one to five – prevented fire officials from reaching her, a fire spokeswoman told AFP yesterday.

"We were unable to respond safely, and unfortunately she died," said St Lucie County Fire District spokeswoman Catherine Chaney.

In the early morning hours, rescuers also received a call about an 82-year-old man who was experiencing stroke-like symptoms and was having difficulty breathing.

"Again, we could not go because that's when the winds were high," Chaney said.

The man was taken in a personal vehicle to a nearby hospital, and fire officials learned later that he died, she said.

At midday yesterday, a woman in Volusia County ventured outside to feed some animals during a lull in the storm and was killed by a falling tree, said county manager Jim Dinneen.

The powerful storm surged through the Caribbean earlier this week, at times as a powerful Category 5 hurricane, killing more than 400 people in Haiti and four in the Dominican Republic.

Matthew was downgraded to Category 2 storm yesterday as it pummelled the northeastern Florida coast with winds of 175 kilometers per hour.



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You're more likely to get help in crisis than in non-hazardous situation



(Agencies) Have you ever wondered why people readily help accident victims but hesitate to give loose change in exchange for Rs 500? Researchers have found the reason behind this strange human behaviour.

Turns out you are more likely to get help from others in a crisis situation rather than in a harmless everyday problem, say researchers, adding that extreme conditions bring out the best in people, especially those who are altruistic and pro-social. "Emergency situations seem to amplify people's natural tendency to cooperate," said one of the researchers Mehdi Moussaid from Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin, Germany.

In the study published in the journal Scientific Reports, the researchers showed that readiness to help depends heavily on personality.

The experiments showed that pro-social and altruistic people in particular often helped others even more in an emergency situation than in a relaxed and non-threatening situation, whereas selfish participants became less cooperative.

The researchers invited 104 individuals to participate in a computer game that was developed specifically for the experiment. In this 'help-or-escape dilemma game,' participants under time and monetary pressure had to decide whether they were willing to risk taking time to help others before reaching their goal or saving themselves in two different situations one everyday and one emergency situation.



(Agencies) Next time you try to stifle a yawn, it might be worth discarding polite etiquette by letting your mouth gape for as long as you need because it could help to reveal how smart you are.

Biologists have discovered a surprising relationship between the length of time mammals yawn for and how big and complex their brains are.

They believe it may also be a sign of greater cognitive ability. Primates, including our own species, tend to have the longest yawns of all compared to other species – up to 50 per cent longer.

The findings help to suggest a possible role for why yawning evolved – it helps to cool the brain.

Writing in the journal Biology Letters, researchers at the State University of New York at Oneonta, said it appears yawning duration may be related to cognitive capacity too.

They found that animals like mice, rats, rabbits and foxes had the shortest yawns while gorillas, gibbons, walruses, camels, elephants and finally humans



had the longest yawns.

Although humans do not have the greatest brain weight – elephants have by far the largest brain by weight alone – our brains have more neurons in their cortex than any other species

Intriguingly African elephants also have more cortical neurons than other primates and the second longest yawn, perhaps hinting at their intelligence.

Dr Andrew Gallup, a psychologist at the State University of New York at Oneonta who led the work, and his colleagues, said: 'Neither the size of the body nor the anatomical structures specific to yawning - cranium and mandible - are driving



these effects, because gorillas, camels, horses, lions, walruses and African elephants all have shorter average yawns than humans. 'Instead, differences in yawn duration appear to be specifically linked to interspecies variation in brain size and complexity, with cortical neuron number being the most significant factor.'

The researchers examined videos of a dozen individuals from each species while they were yawning and timed how long they went on for. In total they looked at 205 full yawns from 177 individuals across 24 different species. Humans yawn on average for just under seven seconds while African elephants yawn for six seconds. Camels yawn for a little over five seconds on average while chimpanzees yawn for about five seconds. The researchers said their findings may help to answer the long-standing mystery of what purpose yawning serves. The reflex is commonly associated with tiredness, sleepiness and boredom while some studies have shown that they can be contagious in many species including chimpanzees and dogs.

Your yawn may reveal how smart you are
Mammals with bigger and more complex brains gape for longer

Genes responsible for bigger brains are found

Discovery could be the key to tackling dementia

genomes of 28 mammals with differing sizes of neocortex.

This is the region of the brain that is involved in language and decision-making.

The size of this region differs hugely between species, and is the part of the brain that has grown the most in the human lineage over evolutionary time. The study, published in the Royal Society journal Open Biology, found a number of genes that have expanded in line with the size of the brain.

The research highlighted a

host of new genes that haven't previously been linked with brain development.

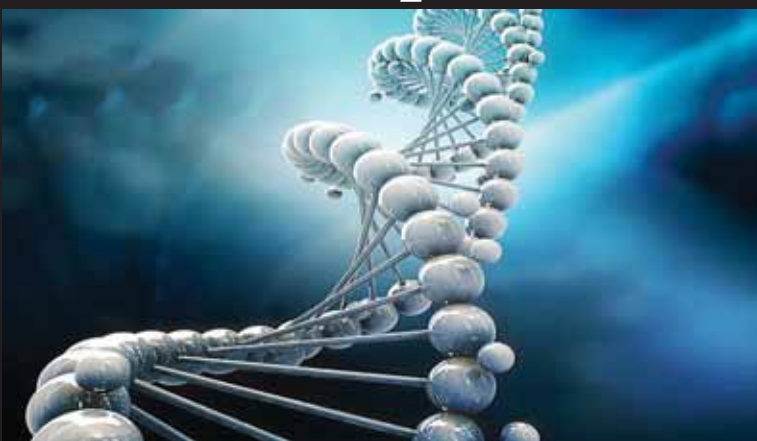
These include those known to be involved in cell signalling and immune response.

The researchers hope this discovery might give a better understanding as to which genes are key in human brain development. They say it could lead to new insights into what goes wrong in a variety of mental health disorders, including dementia.

Dr Araxi Urrutia, from the Milner Centre for Evolution at

the University of Bath's Department for Biology and Biochemistry and Dr Humberto Gutierrez from the School of Life Sciences at Lincoln University, led the research.

Dr Urrutia said: 'Most research on brain development uses mice as a model, but this approach could be missing some genes that are key for human brain development as our brains differ from those in mice in many aspects, most notably in the size of the neocortex.'



(Agencies) A group of genes can help build a bigger brain.

While this has long been known, a number of new links between genes and brain size have now been found by British scientists.

The discovery opens up a new avenue of research to better understand brain development and diseases like dementia, researchers claim. A team of scientists from the Universities of Bath and Lincoln compared the

Richest Americans has Bill Gates on top again

14 people under the age of 40 and Donald Trump falling to 156 on the list after losing \$800million last year



America's 20 Richest People

1. Bill Gates, Microsoft (\$81billion)
2. Jeff Bezos, Amazon (\$67billion)
3. Warren Buffet, Berkshire Hathaway (65.5billion)
4. Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook (\$55.5billion)
5. Larry Ellison, Oracle (\$49.3billion)
6. Michael Bloomberg, Bloomberg (\$45.5billion)
7. Charles Koch, Koch Industries (\$42billion)
7. David Koch, Koch Industries (\$42billion)
9. Larry Page, Google (\$38.5billion)
10. Sergey Brin, Google (\$37.5billion)
11. Jim Walton, Walmart (\$35.6billion)
12. S. Robson Walton, Walmart (\$35.5billion)
13. Alice Walton, Walmart (\$35.4billion)
14. Sheldon Adelson, Las Vegas Sands (\$32billion)
15. Steve Ballmer, Microsoft (\$27.5billion)
16. Jacqueline Mars, Mars Inc. (\$27billion)
16. John Mars, Mars Inc. (\$27billion)
18. Phil Knight, Nike (\$25.5billion)
19. George Soros, Soros Fund Management (\$24.9billion)
20. Michael Dell, Dell (\$20billion)

(Agencies) The annual Forbes 400 ranking of the richest Americas is out, and for the 23rd consecutive year it is very, very good to be Bill Gates.

The Microsoft founder's already massive wealth increased by \$5billion over the past year, giving him a net worth of \$81billion and putting him well ahead of runner-up Jeff Bezos.

The Amazon founder worked his way into the second spot for the first time this year with \$67billion, enough to narrowly edge out Warren Buffet of Berkshire Hathaway, who was down one spot with \$65.5billion.

Also notable are the 14 people under the age of 40 who made their way onto this year's list, with Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg leading the pack at number four with a net worth of \$55.5 billion after making over \$15billion in the last year.

It was not however a great year for Donald Trump, who dropped to 156 on the list after losing \$800million.

Trump fell 35 spots from last year, and is now behind 14 immigrants on the list with his net worth of \$3.7billion. The 14 Americans under the age of 40 is largely split between heirs to fortunes that now work for their family company and individuals in the technology field.

In addition to Zuckerberg

there is fellow Facebooker Dustin Moskowitz (\$10.4billion); Airbnb founders Nathan Blecharczyk, Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia (all with \$3.3billion); wireless-product maker and Memphis Grizzlies owner Robert Pera (\$3.2billion); Facebook alum Sean Parker (\$2.4billion); Evan Spiegel of Snapchat (\$2.1billion); and Bobby Murphy of Snapchat (\$1.8billion) Spiegel, who is just 26, is the youngest person to make this year's list. he is also engaged to supermodel Miranda Kerr.

The heirs to a family fortune include Lukas Walton of Walmart (\$11.2billion); Scott Duncan of the pipeline firm Enterprise Products Partners (\$5.2billion); brothers Alejandro and Andres Santo Domingo who inherited their Colombian father's beer company SABMiller (\$4.8billion); and their nephew Julio Mario Santo Domingo III (\$2.4billion).

Meanwhile, more than 10 per cent of the list is made up of immigrants, with the Russian-born Segey Brin of Google the wealthiest of them all with \$37.5billion.

The rest of the top five include hedge funder George Soros who was born in Hungary (\$24.9billion); Len Blavatnik who immigrated to the United States from the Ukraine for college (\$11.2billion); Thomas Petterfy, who after fleeing Hungary arrived in the United States with nothing more than a suitcase and went on to pioneer electronic trading (\$12.6billion); and Mr. Space X himself Elon Musk, who was born in South Africa (\$11.6billion).

The Australian-born Murdoch clan finished just outside of the top five with \$11.1billion, with



most of that fortune coming from their stake in 21st Century Fox and News Corporation.

The Murdochs are also not self-made billionaires like the men above them on the list, with Rupert having inherited his first newspaper from his father as a young man.

To make this year's list an individual had to have a net worth of at least \$1.7billion, meaning that 153 American billionaires did not even make the list.

Among those who dropped off from last year were Jack Dorsey of Twitter and the embattled Elizabeth Holmes, whose once promising blood testing company Theranos. Holmes' net worth was put at \$4.5billion in the 2015 list, but earlier this year Forbes very publicly announced that they now believe her to be worth nothing after a close examination of her company found numerous problems with the abilities of her blood-testing system.

It was also a good year for women on the list, with 57 being included this year, up for 51 one year ago.

Among the notable names are Steve Jobs' widow Laurene (\$17.7billion) and television titan

Oprah Winfrey (\$2.8billion) Other self-made woman ranking high on the list are Diane Hendricks (\$3.8billion), who co-founded the roofing company ABC Supply in 1982; Doris Fisher (\$2.6billion) who co-founded retail giant the Gap back in 1969; Johnelle Hunt (\$2.3billion) who in 1961 co-founded the trucking company J.B. Hunt Transport Services; eBay's Meg Whitman (\$2.3billion); and Judy Faulkner (\$2.2billion), the founder of Epic Systems, which stores medical records. Other notable names on this year's list include IAC Chairman Barry Diller (\$2.7billion); director Steven Spielberg (\$3.7billion); former presidential hopeful Ross Perot (\$4billion); New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft (\$5.1billion); Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones (\$5.2billion); and designer Ralph Lauren (\$5.9billion).

There are also a few individuals on the list who seemed in danger of losing some of their personal fortunes in recent years due to personal matters including Donald Sterling (\$3.4billion); Sumner Redstone (\$4.7billion); and Harold Hamm (\$13.1billion).



How Bill Clinton plotted to 'bushwhack' attorney general on airport tarmac



which was giving Hillary's campaign agita.'

Bill Clinton ended up telling his Secret Service agent to call Lynch and set up a meeting on the tarmac.

The adviser, who was not on the plane, said Clinton told him later that he noticed 'beads of sweat' on Lynch's upper lip as she and her husband listened to the former president talk – sending a message that Hillary had a power base that included 'the full weight of the Clinton machine, the Democratic Party, and the White House.'

'Bill said he could tell that Loretta knew from the get-go that she'd made a huge mistake,' the adviser said.

'She was literally trembling, shaking with nervousness. Her husband tried to comfort her; he kept patting her hand and rubbing her back.'

Ultimately, Klein reports, Lynch told the former president that there was no chance of his wife being indicted or prosecuted for exposing state secrets to hackers and foreign adversaries.

She made the same pledge to President Barack Obama and his key adviser Valerie



Jarrett, even though the Department of Justice is nominally independent of the White House.

And the easy-going Comey, whom many observers pegged for a principled good egg, turned into a pragmatist driven by, according to Klein, 'huge ambition and an instinct for political survival.' 'But he didn't give a damn. He wanted to intimidate Loretta and discredit Comey's investigation of Hillary's emails, which was giving Hillary's campaign agita.'

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(Agencies) Hillary Clinton was never in any danger of prosecution for mishandling classified documents on her infamous homebrew email server, according to a book set to rock the election season.

The fix was in, thanks to Bill Clinton's plan to ambush Attorney General Loretta Lynch when their private jets were at the Phoenix airport at the same time.

The former president told his pilot to abort a takeoff, according to Ed Klein in his latest book, 'Guilty as Sin,' when a Secret Service agent told him Lynch was about to land.

'Don't take off!' Bill shouted.

The meeting, which began minutes later and lasted a half-hour, took place just one week before FBI director James Comey announced publicly that the Democratic

presidential nominee was in the clear. One of Clinton's most trusted legal advisers told Klein that he took a call from the former president. The New York Post published a book excerpt spelling out what happened.

'Bill said, "I want to bushwhack Loretta", the adviser told him. "I'm going to board her plane. What do you think?"

'And I said, "There's no downside for you, but she's going to take a pounding if she's crazy enough to let you on her plane".'

'He knew it would be a huge embarrassment to Loretta when people found out that she had talked to the husband of a woman – the presumptive nominee of the Democratic Party – who was under criminal investigation by the FBI,' the adviser explained to Klein. 'But he didn't give a damn. He wanted to intimidate Loretta and discredit Comey's investigation of Hillary's emails,

'It's clear who tonight's biggest loser is' Official GOP website accidentally declares Mike Pence as winner of vice presidential debate... hours before it begins

(Agencies) The official GOP website made a huge gaffe ahead of the vice presidential debate on Tuesday night by declaring Republican candidate Mike Pence as the winner before the event even started.

More than an hour ahead of the start time, a blog post on the official website for the Republican National Committee announced that Pence was the 'clear winner' of the debate against Democrat Tim Kaine.

The post, titled 'Who Won the Vice Presidential Debate', appeared on the website early Tuesday evening and included Pence's top moments from the debate - how the Indiana governor discussed the economy and highlighted Hillary Clinton's scandals.

'Americans from all across the country tuned in to watch the one and only Vice Presidential debate,' the post said.

'During the debate we helped fact check and monitor the conversation in real time @GOP.'

'The consensus was clear after the dust settled, Mike Pence was the clear winner of the debate.'

In addition, the site said Pence 'perfectly shared Trump's vision to make America great again' during the debate, according to the GOP. Mike Pence made the most of his opportunity to debate Hillary's VP pick Tim Kaine,' the GOP wrote in the post.

'The other clear winner from tonight's debate was Donald Trump.'

'His running mate perfectly shared Trump's vision to make America great again and that message is resonating with Americans all across the country.'

The page has since been taken down, but not before image grabs of the huge mistake were taken and shared around social media. Also, a separate post, titled 'It's clear Who Lost the VP Debate, Hillary Clinton' on their site made it clear that Kaine lost, even though the debate hadn't even happened yet.

Tim Kaine was unable to answer for his running-mate's record of failure, corruption and secrecy at tonight's debate,' the second post stated.

'The American people have spoken and it's clear who



tonight's biggest loser is, Hillary Clinton.'

GOP.com also listed links to other debate posts that were live on their site under the two sections 'More Election 2016' and

'Recommended for you'.

Pence and Kaine are set to face-off at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia at 9pm for their only debate before the election next month.

Copycat?: 15 Bollywood films that are way too 'inspired' from Hollywood

Be it music, plots, character names or movie posters, Bollywood has often been accused of lifting elements from the West. While some prefer to call it an inspiration, others look at it as blatant plagiarism. The most recent example involves Uda Punjab allegedly based on High Society, a 2002 novel by Ben Elton.

Here's taking a look at other films, which have come under the scanner in the past.

Kaante and Reservoir Dogs

Sanjay Gupta's 2002 directorial became a cult classic that showed actors Amitabh Bachchan, Sanjay Dutt and Suniel Shetty rob a bank. Things turned ugly, when lawyers for the film 1998 film Reservoir Dogs realised that the plot was completely copied from the Harvey Keitel starrer.

Satte Pe Satta and Seven Brides For Seven Brothers

Popular comedy film Satte Pe Satta (1982) starring Amitabh Bachchan and Hema Malini, along with an ensemble cast, was a copy of Hollywood's Seven Brides for Seven Sisters starring Howard Keel, which released in 1954.

Murder and Unfaithful

Two years after Diane Lane and Olivier Martinez created waves with their intimate scenes in the romantic thriller Unfaithful (2002), actors Emraan Hashmi and Mallika Sherawat created a similar furore in Murder. The Bollywood film which released in 2004 was lifted from the popular Hollywood film, which talks about extra marital affairs.

Chachi 420 and Mrs. Doubtfire

Starring Kamal Hassan, the comedy film Chachi 420 (1997) was inspired from Mrs Doubtfire (1993) starring Robin Williams. Although there are many differences in the plot, the film broadly revolves around similar premise to the Hollywood counterpart, where a father cross dresses as a housemaid to remain close to his kids.

Pyar Toh Hona Hi Tha and French Kiss

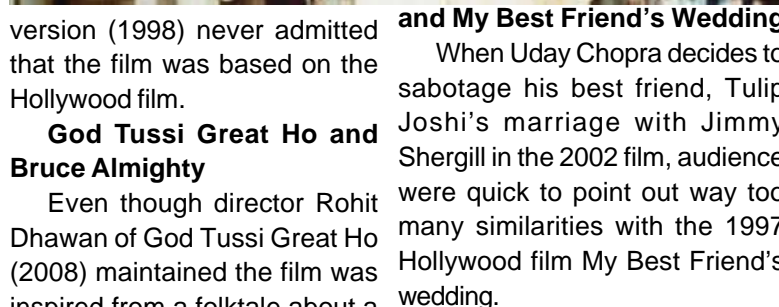
French Kiss (1995) starring Meg Ryan and Kevin Kline was never a big hit in the West. Perhaps that's why the makers of its successful Bollywood



Chachi 420



Mrs. Doubtfire



and My Best Friend's Wedding

When Uday Chopra decides to sabotage his best friend, Tulip Joshi's marriage with Jimmy Shergill in the 2002 film, audience were quick to point out way too many similarities with the 1997 Hollywood film My Best Friend's wedding.

Qayamat and The Rock

Seven years after Sean Connery and Nicholas Cage saved the city of San Francisco from a deadly chemical attack in the film The Rock (1996), Bollywood lifted the plot

and showed Ajay Devgn and Aashish Chaudhary saving Mumbai from similar attacks by Arbaaz Khan and Sanjay Kapoor in Qayamat (2003).

Hum Tum and When Harry Met Sally

After Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan raised the question about whether a man and woman can be just friends in the 1989 film, Saif Ali Khan and Rani Mukherji debated the same thing for Indian viewers in Kunal Kohli directorial in 2001

Chocolate and The Usual Suspects

Taking a clue from Kevin Spacey starrer (1995) in how to mislead a policeman about a robbery, Irrfan Khan pulled off a similar thing in Chocolate (2005), when he misled his lawyer Anil Kapoor about a robbery that he claimed he never did.

Deewane Huye Pagal and There's Something About Mary

Three boys fighting to woo a girl might have turned out to be

one of the biggest hits in Hollywood in 1998. Not so much in Bollywood though, as Shahid Kapoor, Akshay Kumar and Paresh Rawal fought over Rimi Sen didn't impress Indian movie buffs in the 2005 film.

Taxi No. 9211 and Changing Lanes

The John Abraham and Nana Patekar starrer in 2006 was a copy of Ben Affleck and Samuel Jackson's Changing Lanes (2002), which saw a wealthy brat on the mercy of a cab driver.

The Killer and Collateral

The 2004 film showed Tom Cruise and Jamie Foxx engaged in a high tension battle as Jamie Foxx - the cab driver tried to get away from Tom Cruise the assassin, who was on his mission. Few years later in 2006, Emraan Hashmi witnessed a similar thing, when the assassin Irrfan sat in his car and ordered him to take to the spot where he was about to commit his next murder.



Murder



Unfaithful



Pyar Toh Hona Hi Tha



French Kiss

Farhan Akhtar to play the role of Dawood Ibrahim with his signature moustache in Daddy!



Farhan Akhtar, the accomplished actor-director who mesmerized the audience with his performance in Bhag Milkha Bhag, is all set to enact the part of dreaded gangster Dawood Ibrahim in upcoming Ashim Ahluwalia's film Daddy. The film is based on Arun Gawli and the main character in the film is being portrayed by Arjun Rampal. Farhan Akhtar will also be sporting Dawood Ibrahim's signature moustache in the film. As a source was quoted by a tabloid: "The makers were keen on Farhan for the role. He will shoot for one more day sometime this month and has filmed several sequences including one with television actress Shruti Bapna who plays an escort in the film. He sports Dawood's signature moustache too."

Complaint filed against Om Puri for insulting the army during a TV debate



A police complaint has been filed at the Andheri police station in Mumbai against Bollywood actor Om Puri for allegedly "insulting" the Indian Army during a TV debate.

Puri had backed the Pakistani artistes working in the Indian show business. He said, "Did we force them to join the army? My father was also in the army... We are proud of them (soldiers)... I am asking you: Do you want India and Pakistan to become Israel and Palestine?"

"I don't give a damn to Salman Khan or some other Khan... Go to Modiji (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) and cancel their (Pakistani actors') visas. Prepare 15-20 people as suicide bombers and send them to Pakistan."

Om Puri is also getting slammed by a section of the film fraternity for comments they say are insulting to Indian soldiers. Filmmaker Ashoke Pandit and veteran actor Anupam Kher came out against Om Puri after he told a TV channel that nobody forced soldiers to join the army and people should ask whether India and Pakistan should become Israel and Palestine.

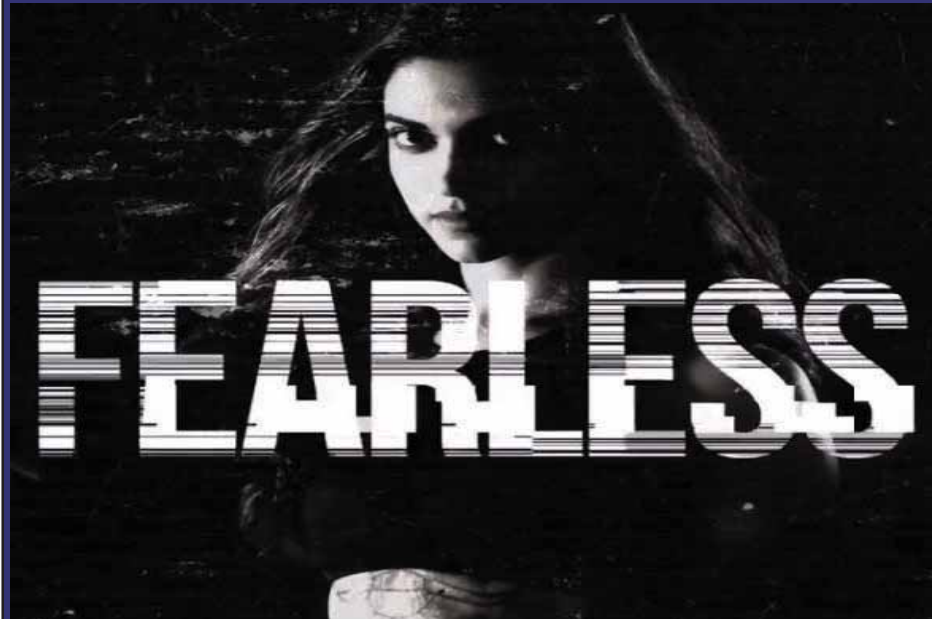
Reacting to his comment, Pandit tweeted, "Om Puriji, Pak artistes banned isn't a solution, but show of solidarity to our martyrs. We can't be lighting pyres while continuing to perform with them."

FINALLY! Shah Rukh Khan, Karan Johar can RELAX as IMPPA requests MNS to LIFT ban from ADHM, Raees!



Finally, there is some good news for films like Ae Dil Hai Mushkil, Raees and Dear Zindagi which star Pakistani artistes like Fawad Khan, Mawra Khan and Ali Zafar but had been completed before the ban came into place. Now, IMPPA has requested the MNS' Amey Khopkar and Shalini Thackeray to allow the release of movies that star Pakistani actors and have been completed. Filmmaker and social activist Ashoke Pandit tweeted this good news.

FEARLESS! Deepika Padukone shared her reckless n hot avatar from XXX!



Deepika Padukone, the leggy lass of Bollywood who plays the part of Serena in upcoming biggie XXX: The Return of Xander Cage opposite Vin Diesel, shared a reckless and fearless video of herself from the movie. Deepika Padukone is looking hot in this action caper and we just cannot wait to see her in the film, which is due for a worldwide release on January 20. Deepika Padukone captioned the video: "#Serena #xXx:Return of Xander Cage."

Pooja Bedi And Daughter Aalia Get Gorgeous On Magazine Cover

After Jhanvi Kapoor looking no less than actress-mother Sridevi at a recent outing, it's time for another star-kid to shine. Actress Pooja Bedi's daughter Aalia joined her mother on the cover and photoshoot of the October issue of Femina magazine and let's just say, they're letting the genes do all the talking. Born with an illustrious lineage of her own (actor Kabir Bedi and late dancer Protima as grandparents, and celebrity mom Pooja), Aalia is definitely on her way to becoming the Bollywood star to look out for. Currently a student of acting at the New York Film Academy, Aalia Eff (as she is known on Instagram) follows in her mother's footsteps as 'sassy, sexy and cool' Indian beauty. Both Pooja and Aalia, the latter a social media celebrity in her own right, look glamorous on the cover of Femina, which was shared by Aalia, and Pooja on Instagram with the caption, "Some moments last a lifetime." Clearly, whether Aalia will soon be making a debut on the silver screen, is an answer worth waiting for.



Sunny Deol is looking for a Delhi girl for his son Karan's Bollywood debut

Actor Sunny Deol is once again donning the director's hat, and this time he is all set to launch his son Karan Deol as the hero. While all eyes are on this star kid making his Bollywood debut, Deols are going to start a mega hunt today for the leading lady to star opposite junior Deol. And they are looking for a Delhi girl. On why they chose Delhi and not any other city, Sunny shares, "The role of the lead actress in the film is based in Delhi. Hence I decided to cast someone from Delhi itself. This way, the girl will be much more familiar with the character she is playing. She will also be able to add her own unique touch to her role. Stating that his priority is a "Delhi girl!" and that's why they have this mega talent hunt, the 58-year-old actor adds, "I trust the talent in Delhi and am sure will get Karan's "Leading Lady" with the help of this campaign." Besides the fact that the girl has to be from Delhi, she is to be aged between 16-20 years and should have finished her schooling.



Brangelina split: Jolie to keep the kids; Pitt gets visiting rights

(Agencies) Hollywood superstar Angelina Jolie has reached a temporary agreement with actor Brad Pitt, her husband of two years. She has got the custody of their six children and has granted him visiting rights, reports said on Friday.

The divorcing couple were persuaded to agree to the detente by the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services.

Both will get one-on-one counselling and Pitt has to undergo drug and alcohol testing, TMZ said, despite him already submitting to a test voluntarily, whose results were found negative.

Jolie will have the physical custody of the six children — three of whom are adopted — while Pitt gets a first visit under the supervision of a therapist, who will decide how to proceed in the coming weeks.

“This is a completely voluntary agreement, and it is not an order or a mandate of any kind, nor is it any determination of custody,” entertainment website People quoted an unnamed source as saying.

It said the plan was effective up until October 20 and that the children would remain with Jolie at a rented LA house.

Jolie, 41, filed for divorce on September 19 citing irreconcilable

differences and seeking permanent custody of their children.

Together since 2004, the power couple finally got married in France in August 2014. The FBI has said it is gathering information before deciding whether to launch a federal probe into an alleged incident on a plane carrying Pitt and his children back from vacation in France. It has not offered any details of the allegations but according to several American media outlets, Pitt had been involved in an angry outburst with at least one of his children.

Celebrity news organization Entertainment Tonight said on



Thursday that Jolie’s team had hired a New York-based strategic communications firm, along with manager Judy Smith, the inspiration for Kerry Washington’s character on Scandal. Pitt, meanwhile, has

hired a Beverly Hills divorce attorney Lance Spiegel, whose past clients include Eva Longoria, ET reported.



(Agencies) There’s something farcical about the brouhaha over whether Pakistani “artistes” should be allowed to work in Bollywood. Ever since the terrorist strike on the Army camp at Uri, in Jammu & Kashmir, a fortnight ago, newspapers and news telly have been obsessed with this issue with big and small names pitching in with their tuppence worth of “opinion” — everybody seems to have one, few are willing to keep it to themselves.

So let’s cut through the clutter. It’s downright silly and offensive to artistes of merit to describe pretty faces from foreign shores as “artistes” or the films they work in as works of art on celluloid. The last we had a burst of art films was in the late-1970s and early-1980s; the directors, scriptwriters, actors and musicians were Indians. Like a meteor they blazed a trail and disappeared.

Pakistani actors looking for jobs in Mumbai, or Indian producers and directors hiring them, has nothing to do with

bunk like “people-to-people contact”. It’s about commerce and the new economics of the film industry. With the rise of regional movies, and the uneven, fast-changing fads of young India, Hindi films need an expanding market to recover costs, if not make profits.

Circumstances in Pakistan, entirely the creation of Pakistanis, have prevented the growth of a robust entertainment industry over there. That creates a vacuum which is filled by Bollywood movies; the box office pickings are better if the cast includes Pakistani actors or singers. So let’s not indulge in bogus talk of subtle messaging and winning hearts. It does not happen that way.

It would be instructive to take note of the fact that there’s no outcry in Pakistan against the Pakistani government’s decision to stop the screening of Indian films and block Indian TV channels after the surgical strike by the Indian Army across the Line of Control. Just as Indians are

rooting for India, Pakistanis are rooting for their country.

Flag-waving patriotism at times of hostilities has no space for treacly concerns that transcend borders and national identities. Which also explains why none of the Pakistanis who make a living in Mumbai, and have returned home ever since relations between India and Pakistan turned from bitter to hostile, has uttered a word of criticism directed at the Pakistani government or army. At the end of the day their loyalty lies with Pakistan. At a non-ideological level, they need to be mindful of their welfare and that of their families. What all this means is that no purpose is served by posing with placards scribbled with foolish messages calling for peace and brotherhood, as some of our windbag Bollywood directors and actors have been doing, or airing views that are at best infantile and at worst ignorant. Trying to bully the government into changing

It’s box office pickings that drives Bollywood’s love for Pakistani artistes

track at this point of time when it has got India’s relentless tormentor in a corner, or heckling the masses who would like to see bluff called and bluster challenged, is entirely misplaced. The government does not tell directors and actors how to make movies; they should desist from telling the government how to run foreign policy or mind India’s national security.

There have been strident suggestions by the comprador intelligentsia that India should desist from projecting “hard power” in its dealing with Pakistan and persist with the use of “soft power”. For some strange reason we have come to believe that soft power essentially means Bollywood films, music and associated entertainment. The Indian diaspora loves it; politicians looking for their votes pretend to love it; neighbours and friends suffer it lest they be accused of racial prejudice. In Pakistan, it’s the forbidden fruit that Pakistanis lust after but whose seeds they would never plant in their own barren garden.

We are also told that the path to big powerdom lies through the projection of soft power. That’s hogwash. The United States rose to its pre-eminent position, and China has come to dominate the

world, not through films, music, burgers, pizza or chow mein and Peking duck. Their velvet glove of culture always hid an iron fist that was used, and continues to be used, whenever and wherever required.

Whenever I hear otherwise intelligent people talk about soft power and why India should opt for it over hard power, I am reminded of the tragicomic scene from Satyajit Ray’s *Shatranj ke Khiladi* which shows Nawab Wajid Ali Shah (Amjad Khan played the role) dancing with ankle bells, to the tune of a ghazal composed by him, late into the night as John Company plotted the smash and grab of Awadh. One doesn’t have to be a warmonger to laugh at those who believe ghungroos, gajras and ghazals can turn ghazis into friends. The real world is vastly different from the make-believe reel world of clapboard sets. Those in Bollywood pleading the case for Pakistani actors and singers under the guise of promoting cross-border friendship should be more honest than that and admit that banishing them would be bad for business. Or are we to believe that their hearts beat for Pakistan, a terror-sponsoring State which makes no attempt to hide that it is India’s implacable enemy?

The fashion industry is unfair to men: Why are male models paid less?

(Agencies) Elizabeth Rose, London's top modelling agent, recently remarked that fashion might be the "only industry where men get paid less than women". The agent, who has contributed greatly to the careers of popular models such as Cindy Crawford, also said "it's unfair for men". At a time when women are fighting for equal pay with regards to their male counterparts in almost every field, modelling is, perhaps, the only glamour industry in which women have an upper hand when it comes to remuneration. The trend is no different closer home. Male models often rue the fact that their wages are far less than what a female model earns per show.

Amit Ranjan, who has been modelling for the past 11 years, says Bollywood is male-oriented, and one will often see actors over 50, playing lead roles in films. But the fashion industry is female-centric. "Any good show at a fashion week will have just four to five male models and 16 to 17 female models. The problem is that the demand is low, and the supply is high. Every month, several men enter the industry with the hopes of becoming top models. But the reality is that there isn't much work for male models out there," he says.

Ranjan reveals that in India, designer womenswear still rules the market and designer menswear falls in the niche



segment. As a result, designers are keener about releasing collections for women. This results in more shows for female models, and fewer for men. Apparently, there is so much competition in the industry that to be part of a show, male models are often forced to slash their show rates. "There are models who are even willing to

walk the ramp for free. This creates a sad situation for people like me who have been in the industry for a few years and don't deserve to do shows for less money," says another model, Rouhallah Gazi, who has been doing shows for the past four years, and has managed to make a name for himself in the industry.

He adds that because he doesn't like lowering his rates, he often loses out on big shows. "People still want to pay me what I was paid four years ago. I don't know why people don't understand that with time, a model's experience increases, and so does his budget. But designers take male models for granted," he says.

Did Kim's social media updates lead the robbers to her doorstep?



(Agencies) As American reality TV star Kim Kardashian was "bound and gagged", while she was robbed at gunpoint in Paris on Sunday night, many wondered if Kardashian's social media activity caused the robbery. The 35-year-old was in France to be a part of a fashion week, when she was robbed of jewellery worth nine million euros. Kim's regular updates from the luxury apartment in Paris on Instagram and videos posted by her sister Kylie Jenner on Snapchat, hours before the robbery, led the robbers to her doorstep, believe many. "If you're constantly putting information out there, keeping your name in the public eye... keeping your wealth in the public eye... (you are) increasing the chances of an attack," Christopher Hagon, a managing partner at a Florida-based international security consulting firm told People magazine. "If you really are concerned about your personal security then you've really got to make it as difficult as possible for people to hone in on you as a possible target," he added. Interestingly the Kardashians have voiced their concern over stalking on social media and their mother Kris Jenner had said that they wanted to "take our security to a new level". While the debate still remains open about whether celebrities should take measures to hide their location on social media, many of Kardashians' friends took to Twitter to extend their sympathies.

They needed a star: Arshad Warsi on why Akshay Kumar replaced him in Jolly LLB 2

(Agencies) Ever since he made his Bollywood acting debut in Tere Mere Sapne (1996), Arshad Warsi has played a variety of roles, including a lawyer in Jolly LLB (2013). Now, Akshay Kumar has replaced the 48-year-old in the Subhash Kapoor-directed sequel of the same movie. Arshad feels that "one has to accept the reality".

"I feel bad that I am not doing the film. It will be stupid of me to say I don't feel bad. However, it doesn't really bother me. That is the truth, and when you accept the reality, life becomes easier. It becomes a problem only when you fight the reality. The film's makers needed a star, and it's as simple as that," says Arshad.

Interestingly, the actor admits that when there is a star in a film, "life becomes very simple" for the makers. "Also, the chances of success, the money recovery, the promotions, and everything else become a cakewalk. If I direct a film, I will also want a star in it. I won't cast myself, so that my life becomes easy. That's how it is — pure business. And that's absolutely fine," he says.

Arshad adds that the "only thing that matters is the box office [collection]". "It doesn't have anything to do with me doing a good job, and being a good actor or a good human being. That is absolutely of no consequence. If I don't rake in at the box office, that's the end of the story. I am fortunate enough that despite all of that, I am going on and on [in my career]. I should not be cribbing," he says. But does he also feel Jolly LLB is one of his best performances? "Till date, I have never felt that I have done a great job in any film. I just did what the director had in mind. In fact, I used to keep telling my director that an actor can only be as good as the director allows him to be," says Arshad, who will next be seen in Aankhen 2 and Golmaal 4.



India Can Snub Pakistani Actors And Singers But Can It Tame China, The Dragon Next Door?

The call for boycott of Pakistan makes more logical sense than a call for boycott of China.

(Agencies) It's not without logic. China has gone out of its way over and over again to save Pakistan's butt, especially in the international arena. As India threatened to review the Indus Waters treaty with Pakistan, China has blocked the Xiabuqu/Yarlung Zambo tributary of the Brahmaputra in connection with its hydropower projects in Tibet. The two events are unrelated, and the hydro projects long

in the works, the Chinese will claim, but the timing smacks of tit for tat.

China also extended its technical hold on Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar for another three months in the UN Security Council. The resolution to ban Azhar was co-sponsored by India, US, UK and France. Only China has blocked it asking India to "talk directly" to Pakistan. China's official response to the Uri attacks has been polite restraint. It has said

it's "shocked" by the attack and asked for relevant parties "to have dialogue and consultation". But the Azhar hold has also been a signal to reassure Pakistan, the kind of reassurance Nawaz Sharif did not get from Washington when he went there after the Uri attacks. According to Dawn, China's consul general in Lahore Yu Boren was quoted as saying, "In case of any foreign aggression, our country will extend its full support to Pakistan." (Contd on page 23)



Afghanistan 15 Years On: Obama's Sorriest Legacy

Why America's longest war will remain a muddle for the next president. If only Trump or Clinton were paying attention.

(Agencies) Twelve days after 9/11, on September 23, 2001, CIA Islamabad station chief Robert Grenier received a telephone call from his boss, George Tenet. "Listen Bob," Tenet told him, "we're meeting tomorrow morning at Camp David to discuss our strategy on Afghanistan. How should we begin?" Over the next three hours, Grenier laid out the U.S. battle plan in an eight-page paper, then sent it on to Washington. President George W. Bush approved Grenier's memo and gave the task to the CIA, whose mandate was to destroy Al Qaeda, wrench control of Afghanistan from the Taliban and



hunt down Osama bin Laden. Tenet handed ops off to CIA veteran Gary Schroen, who then directed his staff to contact the Pentagon to recruit the help of special operations. "Reach out to these guys," Schroen told an aide. (Contd on page 22)

Hurricane Matthew Bears Down On U.S. After Killing Dozens In Caribbean

Millions of people in the southeastern U.S. have been urged to evacuate.



(Agencies) LES CAYES, Haiti/GUANTANAMO, Cuba - Hurricane Matthew twisted toward the Bahamas and Florida's east coast on Wednesday after killing at least 26 people and damaging a majority of homes in Haiti's south, prompting the hard-hit country to postpone a long-awaited presidential election.

The powerful Category 3 hurricane, the fiercest Caribbean storm in nearly a decade, whipped Cuba and Haiti with 140 mile-per-hour (230 kph) winds and torrential rains on Tuesday, pummeling towns and destroying livestock, crops and homes.

In the United States, more than 1.5 million people were urged to evacuate the southeastern coast and Florida Governor Rick Scott warned residents to prepare for a possible direct hit that could be catastrophic.

Hundreds of thousands of people had been evacuated from the path of Matthew, which caused severe flooding and killed four people in the Dominican Republic as well as at least 22 in Haiti. The two countries share the island of Hispaniola.

(Contd on page 23)



UN Postal Administration unveils the commemorative stamp of M.S. Subbulakshmi, Indian music legend on the 50th anniversary of her performance at the UN in 1966, during an event on the International Day of Non-Violence at the UN Headquarters on 2 October 2016. The first copy is presented to musician Sudha Raghunathan (left). UN Photo/Evan Schneider

Sudha Enthra's Guests at UN

(By Prakash Swamy) United Nations: The birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Non-Violence Day was observed with a program that included, besides India's ratification of the Paris Agreement, performance by renowned classical music singer Sudha Raghunathan as well as the unveiling of a commemorative UN postage stamp of Indian music legend M.S. Subbulakshmi.

India deposited its Instrument of Ratification to the Paris Agreement under the convention on Climate Change today, coinciding with the International Day of Non Violence.

(Contd on page 23)