



# INSIDER

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Priyanka is an inspiration: Alia Bhatt  
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## The reality behind Russia's fake news

(Agencies) The 2016 presidential race was rife with disinformation, none more blatant than fake news -- hoaxes, half-truths, outright lies -- that flashed through the internet at warp speed.

Take, for example, "Pizzagate," a made-up story of a pedophilia ring supposedly being run out of a Washington, D.C. pizza parlor by none other than Hillary Clinton and her campaign chairman John Podesta.

Fueled by conspiracy theorists posting on social media sites like Reddit, Facebook and Twitter, the story picked

### FAKE NEWS INVASION



up so much traction that The New York Times and the Washington Post were forced to track it down, finally debunking it. Then there were the stories about Clinton's health. Not just her actual September bout with pneumonia, but other stories claiming she had a brain injury and was losing her mind.

Western media, for the most part, are blaming Moscow, accusing the Kremlin of exploiting fake news to damage Clinton, help elect Donald Trump, and undermine the American electorate's faith in their government. (Contd on page 23)

## Bharara to 'Stay On' as US attorney



(By a staff Reporter) There's going to be the same old "sheriff" in this town. Preet Bharara, the gungho Manhattan federal prosecutor, has agreed to "stay on" as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District after President-elect Donald Trump offered him the gig during a meeting Wednesday afternoon at Trump Tower in Midtown. "We had a good meeting. I agreed to stay on. I have already spoken to Sen. [Jeff] Sessions, who is as you know is the nominee to be the attorney general.

(Contd on page 23)

## Shocked, Awed, Stuck In Cash Limbo

*For the Indian marketplace, shaking off the cash chain is easier said than done as almost nothing moves without it*

(Special Report) Thousands of traders and manufacturers across the country are grappling with the Rs 50,000 weekly limit on cash withdrawals ordered by the government in the wake of the demonetisation chaos. And it's nothing short of a nightmare for many. A peek into the informal sector—the best one can manage considering its size—shows most of them are neither familiar with the world of digital transactions nor find it convenient. And surely, that's not what they desired. Many fear the tight flow of cash may well cripple their business if the money supply is not eased soon.

On its part, the government, in its des-ire to promote digital transactions, has removed a big hurdle—albeit temporarily—by doing away with service charges on debit

card and smartphone transactions. But this move may not be enough to help the traders, contractors and small industries—all part of the informal sector that accounts for 45 per cent of India's GDP and over 80 per cent of the workforce—resume normal operations.

The near-desolate look in large parts of the normally crowded wholesale markets in Delhi, whether Sadar Bazaar or Bhagirath Palace, the largest electrical goods market in Asia, or even at the retail hubs, has its own tale to tell—a story that finds an echo everywhere in the country, whet-her in Muzzaffarnar, Uttar Pradesh, or the hundreds of small-scale industrial hubs, all of which are operating well -below their -capacity due to the cash crunch. "Output has



been affected, especially in large industrial hubs in places such as Moradabad, Firozabad, Muzzafarnagar, Panipat, etc. There are over 300 such hubs. Much of the raw materials used by industries there are recycled material. One cannot buy 'kabadi' through cheque payment, which means the raw material supply to many units has almost dried up," says Anil Bhardwaj, secretary general of the Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises. As most workers in these hubs are mig-rants who prefer cash payments, thousands

(Contd on page 22)





## Nehru's Legacy Celebrated on his 127th Birth Anniversary in newyork



(By a Staff Reporter) New York: On November 14, 2016, both the Indian National Overseas Congress, USA and the Nehru Foundation-USA jointly celebrated the birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India since its Independence, at the Sohna Punjab Restaurant in New York.

## Well known community leader Mohinder Singh Taneja at Nassau County Police Academy with C. O. Ron Walsh and Police Officer recruits for Cultural Diversity Initiative.



## Vinod Dadlani, an Indian American receives two years in prison



### \$200 million fraud scheme

(By a Staff Reporter) A 53-year-old Lyndhurst man will spend two years in prison for his role in what authorities have called "one of the largest credit card fraud schemes" ever unearthed by the Justice Department -- costing businesses more than \$200 million.

U.S. District Judge Anne E. Thompson sentenced Vinod Dadlani in her Trenton courtroom following his June guilty plea to one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud. Dadlani is the 19th person convicted in connection with the long-running scheme, which could have begun as early as 2003, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office and court documents.

Dadlani, along with Tahir Lodhi, Babar Qureshi, Ijaz

Butt and others, fabricated more than 7,000 false identities and at least 1,100 separate bank accounts to obtain tens of thousands of credit cards, authorities said.

Lodhi received a six and a half year sentence. Butt received five years. Qureshi and other defendants are scheduled for sentencing in December.

The co-defendants created false identities by making fake ID documents and

a "phony credit profile" with major credit card companies. By using false information, the defendants would "pump up the credit" of those false identities and then borrow or spend as much as they could without repaying the debt, court documents show. U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman previously said that the goal was to get the highest credit limits, max out the cards and then "walk away." Dadlani admitted that he worked with co-conspirators

who came to his Jersey City jewelry store, Tanishq Jewels, where he let them swipe credit cards he knew were fake. The jewelry store owner would then split the proceeds with them. The Lyndhurst man's business arrangement with the co-conspirators was just one of many "complicit businesses" that allow card holders to make "sham" purchases, authorities said. The majority of the charges at Dadlani's store were made between July and December 2008, totaling an estimated \$325,000 from two credit card machines, according to court documents.

## Unique American Exceptionalism



(By Ravi Batra) Not since Abraham Lincoln's victory on November 6, 1860 to become the 16th president of these United States has our republic had a president driven to greatness by walking the only sure path known to humanity - genuine respect and embrace of political rivals and enemies, and inviting them to join in the noblest endeavor of all: to make government be "for" the people. Mitt Romney just had dinner with president-elect Trump despite the well-earned savage attack by Trump loyalists, and the magnanimousness of POTUS45 is both awe-

some and reassuring to the world. It proves that president Trump will be a deliberate and calibrated president who will seek the public good over petty satisfactions. Mitt Romney will serve America and president Trump with great distinction and loyalty - and I'm delighted that my president Trump is serious about appointing Mitt as our Secretary of State when the world has 6 flash points - Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, North Korea and China's 9-Dashes and strategic web of road-construction. And then there is an overarching threat of Terror, and Russia that seems to feel from NATO as we did with Russian Missiles in Cuba. And, then we have the problems of globalization's underbelly - loss of good American jobs and petty leaders, like Philippines Duterte, daring to be gutter-mouthed. Trump's inherent strength permits him to better project American strength, such that Duterte has



learned to kiss the ring and send Antonio, owner of Trump Tower in Manila, to Washington DC to curry forgiveness. The line of foreign leaders who need forgiveness from America is starting to queue up - such is the obvious difference between "resolute determination," as Trump exemplifies, versus "unlimited cerebral possibilities," as President Obama personifies. I, for one, wish for president Trump to select Mitt Romney as our Secretary of State, and by doing so presi-

dent elect Trump will send the strongest possible message to our friends and allies that there is no enemy that cannot become our friend. In point of historical fact, America is that nation that every person across the globe wishes they were American citizens. To paraphrase Charles Dickens, I look forward to leaving the worst of times and the near start of World War III, for a bright new dawn with the promise of the best of times for all of us.



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# IISD anniversary celebrated Community Activist recognized



(By Shomik Chaudhuri) United Nations- Institute of International Social Development, an international NGO based in India in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC of the United Nations, celebrated its 20th anniversary by honoring two leaders from the United Nations and Spiritual backgrounds. The event was held on November 17, 2016, at the Tillman Hall in the Church Center of the United Nations, in New York. The 2016 Institute of International Social Development Honorees were Dr. Hanifa Mezoui, Senior Advisor, Humanitarian Affairs and Civil Society, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations; and H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami, Gaudiya Vaishnava swami and a religious leader of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).



(By Vijay Shah for South Asian Insider) New York- A "Congressional Declaration" was recently presented to community activist Dilip Chauhan, declaring Nov. 12, 2016, as "Dilip Chauhan Day" for the 6th Congressional District. Rep. Grace Meng, (Democrat-

NY) made the announcement about Chauhan, by calling him "an outstanding community leader within the state of New York." Chauhan was also the guest of honor at the LIGCS ( Long Island Gujarati Cultural Society) Diwali celebration attended by some 600 people.

## An upscale dining experience at Aarzu Modern Indian Bistro



(By a Staff Reporter) New Jersey A Persian word meaning wish or desire, "Aarzu" is also the name of Arora Hospitality Group's latest culinary venture, specializing in modern Indian cuisine with a focus on taste, texture and presentation. Even the décor, lighting, colors, art and serving platters are designed to complement the food and create an unprecedented experience for the guest.

Established in Freehold, New Jersey, this summer, Aarzu celebrated it's 6-month anniversary with a holiday party today. Attended by the diasporas who's who, the event was a showcase for the culinary creativity of the chic Indian eatery. Renowned restaurateur and Arora Hospitality Group's CEO, Kamal Arora was as usual an excellent host. "The aim of Arora Hospitality Group is to give its guests an unparalleled culinary experience through its preparations, presentation, innovation, service and quality, and the concept of modern Indian dining that redefined how Indian cuisine was perceived both by the

Indian community as well as the more mainstream audience fit right into our vision." he said, when quizzed about how he picked his varied restaurant concepts.

Partner Archana Sharma who is a fabulous cook, food writer and



critic herself, believes that food should look as pretty as it tastes! The New Jersey native said "For long the Monmouth County area has been deprived of great Indian food and with Aarzu, I wanted to deliver a fine dining experience with innovative, modern dishes

clubbed with an outstanding presentation that would fill this gap." She also mentioned that for every meal they serve at Aarzu this month, they will donate a meal to the local food bank.

Payal Mehta, partner at Arora Hospitality Group also shares

Kamal's & Archana's vision. "Being in the catering business for so many years and having done events of every type and scale, I'm in touch with people's culinary dreams." she laughed. "I knew right of the bat that the Aarzu Modern Indian Bistro was the right new venture for the group."

The guests were delighted with a memorable meal by Executive Chef Shravan Shetty & Chef Dayanand Shetty and the group's legendary hospitality.

Aarzu is open Tuesday through Sunday from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm for lunch and from 5 to 10 pm for dinner. Reservations at Aarzu.com .

## Diwali Shines Brighter with Bruhud New York Seniors



(By a Staff Reporter) Bruhud New York Senior's leaders Shree Shashikant Patel/Gopi Udeshi organized celebration of Diwali – Festival of Light at 5 Star Banquet Hall Long Island City Queens on Friday November 18, 2016 Friday at 7 pm. Senator Tony Avella and Council Member Barry S. Grodenchik grace the event. Event started with National anthem of US and India sang by

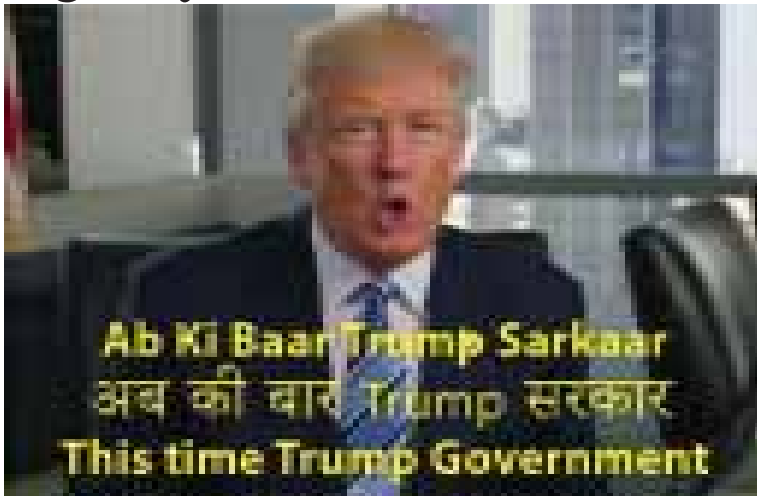
Miss Teen India Manjari Parikh. Gopi Udeshi welcomed the audience and Shashikant Patel conveyed Diwali Greeting to everyone. Ceremony of Deep Pragtaya was followed by community woman leaders. Diwali is a reflection of the hopes and dreams that bind us together. same way delegates of Gujarati Community leaders, delegates and invitees and friends more than 520 people re-

joice the bond to celebrate this joyous festival with versatile singer Rakesh Raj and singer Ankita Brahmve sang songs of Bollywood. Manjari Parikh added a flavor to the event by her dance From the movie Devdas -- -song Mere Dholna. Muscial and Dance event was ended with a delicious Dinner and Diwali Gift to all. Thanks to TV Asia for covering the event and CK for photography.





# Meet AdMark Communications - The South Asian advertising agency behind the successful "Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar" campaign



behalf of the members of AdMark Communications, I extend congratulations to President-elect Donald J. Trump for his remarkable victory in yesterday's election," said Mr. Shyamal Modi, President of AdMark Communications. AdMark was responsible for the media placement and media buying strategy for the successful "Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkar" ad campaign that targeted the Indian American population in the U.S... Shyamal Modi in association with Mr. Shalabh Kumar of the Republican Hindu Coalition created a 30 and 60 seconds

advertisement "in Hindi" for the Trump campaign. This was the first time that an U.S. presidential candidate had specifically targeted the Indian American vote bank. "We had the honor of working with Republican National Committee and Mr. Trump on this ad campaign that aimed at the growing Indian American voting population," said Mr. Modi. AdMark was also instrumental in handling the marketing and Media Buying of a massive charity event for Republican Hindu Coalition on October 15, 2016 at the NJ Convention & Expo Center in Edison, New Jer-

sey where President elect Mr. Donald J. Trump was the Chief Guest. Almost 10,000 Indian Americans gathered to see Mr. Donald J. Trump. The charity event saw performances by superstars like actor, director Prabhu Deva, Malaika Arora Khan, Manasi and many more from both Bollywood and Tollywood Film Industry. "Mr. Trump has made an unprecedented effort to reach out to the Indian Diaspora. He is the first presidential nominee to address an Indian-American event, and we are thrilled to be part of this history-making moment," added Mr. Modi.

(By SAI staff reporter) New Jersey: AdMark Communications, the fastest growing South Asian Advertising and Public Relations agency, congratulated the president-elect Donald J. Trump on his historic win in the 2016 general elections. "The American people have spoken. On

## Balwinder Singh, an Indian citizen in US pleads guilty for plotting attack with Khalistan movement terrorists

**Conspired with others to support terrorist attacks in India as part of a movement to create an independent Sikh state from Punjab**

(News Agencies) A 42-year-old Indian citizen in the US has pleaded guilty to planning terrorist attacks in India, including assassination of officials, by allegedly providing material support and resources to terrorists involved in the Khalistan movement aimed at creating an independent Sikh state.

Balwinder Singh, a resident of Nevada, pleaded guilty before US District Judge Larry Hicks to one count of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, knowing and intending that such support would be used to carry out terrorist attacks overseas, Acting Assistant Attorney

General for National Security Mary McCord said Tuesday.

"Singh attempted to provide material support and resources to terrorists to create violence and disruption abroad," McCord said. "Identifying, thwarting and holding accountable individuals who pursue international terrorism is a top priority of the

Department of Justice," she said. A citizen of India and permanent US resident, Singh went by the aliases of "Jhaji", "Happy" and "Baljit Singh" and has been detained and charged since his arrest in December 2013. He faces the statutory maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.



## Box Office Blues In Bollywood

**The film industry, like others, is experiencing slump with no cash around**



(Agencies) Every Friday when a new Bollywood release hits the screen, it is either the content or the star cast or both that determine its fate at the box office. But now, as in all other aspects of commerce,

demonetisation appears to have redefined business in tinsel town. The ambitious scheme of Prime minister Narendra Modi to do away with the high-denomination currencies and the resultant commotion caused by

the short supply of new notes have wreaked havoc at the turnstiles in the largest film industry in the world. With the average cine-goer feeling the pinch of cash crunch over the past fortnight, the footfalls at the multiplexes as well as single-screen theatres have gone down sharply, hitting the -recent releases with a sledgehammer.

Farhan Akhtar's Rock On 2, a much-awaited sequel to his 2008 hit, had everything going for it—good music, an ensemble star cast, and a positive word-of-mouth after its previews. Everybody associated with the film, from Arjun Rampal to Shradha Kapoor, appeared gung-ho about its prospects at the cash counters, hoping for a repeat of the success of its prequel, until Modi declared Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes as worthless pieces of papers two days before the film's release. (Contd on page 22)

## Seema Verma Indian-American Woman To Top Administration Post

(News Agencies) US President-elect Donald Trump on Tuesday nominated a second Indian-American woman to a top administration position, putting her in charge of a federal agency within the health department as part of a "dream team" which he said would transform America's healthcare system.

"I am pleased to nominate (Dr) Seema Verma to serve as Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services," Mr Trump said in a statement. The announcement came along with Trump's nomination of Congressman Tom Price as his Health and Human Services Secretary. A leading expert in the country on Medicare and Medicaid, Dr Verma would serve as Administrator of Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. "She has decades of experience advising on Medicare and Medicaid policy and helping states navigate our complicated systems. Together, Chairman Price and Seema Verma are the dream team that will transform our health care system for the benefit of all Americans," Mr Trump said. "I am honored to be nominated by President-elect Trump today," said Dr Verma, who met Mr Trump in New York last week. "I look forward to helping him tackle our nation's daunting health care problems in a responsible and sustainable way," she said.







By Srijana Mitra Das

The star-spangled dust of the American Presidential election has settled — but wails over it still rise. Hillary Clinton's camp has joined demands for a vote recount. What a scam, snarls Donald Trump, who promised exactly such a negation of the system if he lost. But as the Democrats try to turn the hands of poll-time backward, in *The New Yorker*, star journalist David Remnick, with smooth, prosy beauty, describes the ugly victory of a man who's degraded every Other, demeaned women, evaded rules and remained "knowledge-free" of morality.

Remnick's article, titled with F. Scott Fitzgerald-like dark elan, "The Great American Tragedy", dovetails beautifully with the Oxford Dictionaries announcing 2016's word of the year with a gloomy thud: "Post-truth". Echoing like an elephant stomping through the US election jungle,

"post-truth" means: "circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief." Post-truth helped Trump win, Remnick writes, pointing to the "platform of resentment" on which Trump towers today, balanced on an alt-right altar of "lies, propaganda and conspiracy theories". Post-truth won, Remnick despairs, but advises, Americans, defend American values.

It's so lovely — but forgive me while I laugh, for both Remnick and *The Dictionaries* are comically wrong. "Post-truth" and "The Great American Tragedy" are not path-breaking events defining 2016. Both actually happened 13 years ago, in 2003, when America invaded Iraq, searching for "weapons of mass destruction". It never found the weapons but it provided mass destruction anyhow. The Great American Tragedy

# America's true lies

*Donald Trump's triumph should make America finally face a few home truths.*

edy happened when US bombs, rained on Baghdad, glowing like malicious fireflies on TV screens, CNN bringing you humanity's first televised war, palpable excitement ruffling its correspondents' immaculate scarves. In that "post-truth" world, a democratically elected American demagogue — US leaders serve full terms, a luxury not enjoyed by nations like Chile, where President Allende, loved by all except the CIA, was removed in 1973 — crushed a world of doubts. Our questions, our objections were crunched like pretzels in a bar full of US contractors running Iraq That, and the breaking of the United Nations' spine, was the first Great American Tragedy impacting my generation.

But while the world woke up and smelled the blood (currently Syrian), why is America still droning on about truth? The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind. Literally. American pop culture is a magical — and dangerous — beast. It's sung songs, danced defiance, stuck its tongue out at authority, giving

heart to many wronged by history. Miles Davis's jazz connected to rolling, moaning African slave ships; Madonna's cheek added zing to feminism; Michael Jordan lent swing to Afro-American rap, which drew from a heartbeat that simply wouldn't be crushed.

But you can have too much of a good thing. Revolutionary, American pop culture became pastiche, a hall of mirrors reflecting not what's real — but what should be. Half-history, half-make-up, mesmerises, presenting truth with extra cheese. Thus, murdered Martin Luther King looks comfy on coasters today. Malcolm X adorns cushions; Vietnam glows on screens where helicopters and napalm become routine, as the crack of whips on enslaved backs fades outside films, as guns in *Bowling For Columbine* present a reality so leaden, America chooses Mad Men.

With commerce, the truth becomes a T-shirt; one of such charming irony (featuring Che Guevara mostly) that it melts re-

sistance and endears. Thanks to Hollywood, art, music, slang — America's signal contributions include the "F-word", that ubiquitous exclamation celebrating sexual violation which makes users tiny Trumps — the Truth comes with botox now. But the truth isn't lovely. It's ugly and sad, a discomfiting image of inhumanity and how little that's changed.

Yet, in America, truth's discomfort has faded, becoming a soft-focus shot where 12 years of being a slave end in a group hug, where re-tweeting #BlackLivesMatter answers police killing kids, where, despite sticking by a man who overawed an intern into a sex act, Hillary Clinton is projected as an independent woman. Against this, Trump — perhaps the most truthful thing in politics today, an awful, twisted truth, but the kind that makes us angry enough to refuse more Cabernet — has won. Trump's time is the Great American Tragic-Comedy, where America will realise lies, like truths, need no passport. What you gift the world will come home too.



By Baradwaj Rangan

Why is it always the movies? Take smoking. There are many ways to bring it down. You can stop the sale of single sticks, force people to buy a pack every time they feel like lighting up. You can raise the cost of packs. What we get instead is a disclaimer at the bottom of the screen every time the villain's henchman is caught chomping on a bidi.

There is an artistic argument against this imposition. Woody Allen refused to allow *Blue Jasmine* to be screened in India with this disclaimer, saying that "when the scroll comes, attention goes to it rather than the scene". But

brush aside artistry and just consider logic. If the reasoning is that films are widely seen and that this tiny print at the bottom is an educational measure against a harmful act, then why not a disclaimer every time a rape occurs on screen? Or every time a man stalks a woman, trying to get her to reciprocate his love? Or every time thieves hatch a plan to rob a bank?

**Popcorn patriotism**

And now, the Supreme Court has ruled that the national anthem must be played in cinema halls across the country before a film is screened, and everyone present must stand to pay re-

## Reeling out patriotism

spect. Forget, for a minute, the arguments about personal choice, about freedom in a democracy. Screenwriter Aaron Sorkin put it best in these lines he wrote for the scarily prescient *The American President*, when an Obama-like liberal finally rose to respond to the accusations of a scaremongering demagogue. "You want free speech? Let's see you acknowledge a man whose words make your blood boil, who's standing centre stage and advocating at the top of his lungs that which you would spend a lifetime opposing at the top of yours. You want to claim this land as the land of the free? Then the symbol of your country can't just be a flag; the symbol also has to be one of its citizens exercising his right to burn that flag in protest." That this Utopia is becoming (or has become) a pipe dream is no longer under contest.

But why movies? There are many situations and avenues that warrant the national anthem, if the purpose is indeed to teach people the words. (That is part of the Supreme Court ruling's agenda.) It makes sense to play the anthem every day at school and college. (Catch them young.)

It perhaps makes sense before television news — this is, after all, news about the nation. It may make sense when our cricket team beats England. It may even make sense before certain films — serious films like *Swades* or *Border* that deal with "nationalistic" subjects. But how can the compulsory presentation of the national anthem before a Sunny Leone or Salman Khan-starrer be considered a form of respect?

To expect "pride" from a ticket buyer who wants nothing more than to forget his troubles with overpriced popcorn and soda, and a mindless movie, is even more of a pipe dream. One could make the case that we are, in fact, disrespecting the anthem by associating it with a medium that — nine times out of ten — makes no bones about being "commercial". In other words, after standing up for the anthem, you're going to be sitting down for a cleavage-popping item number.

**Theatre of the absurd**

A bhajan belongs in a temple, and even if sung or played outside, it retains its reason for being only when it's a festival or at an event that's holy and pure, untainted by commercial consid-

erations. The national anthem is not unlike a bhajan. It's an expression of one's reverence for the country. It stirs the soul, makes us feel patriotic even when things around us make us angry about the state of the nation. But enforced patriotism is simply transforming a private emotion into tokenistic public spectacle. You stand up not necessarily because you want to, but because if you don't, you're likely to be labelled a traitor, or worse, screamed at or assaulted by self-styled nationalists, which is what happened at a Panaji theatre in October with poet, disability activist and writer Salil Chaturvedi, who did not stand up for the national anthem because he could not stand up. He was in a wheelchair. Chaturvedi was quoted as saying, "I just don't understand why it seems impossible for so many people to express patriotism in a non-aggressive manner." And there are many ways to prove your love for your country. You could contribute to flood relief or volunteer in a tsunami-stricken area or ensure the domestic help has enough cash till she gets used to plastic — all of this is a form of loving, caring for, respecting the nation.



# Queuing up for change Can the Democrats Move Right?

In May 2014, when Narendra Modi became prime minister, it was expected that boosted by anti-incumbency against the Congress, personal charisma that inspired people to believe in promises of *acche din*, and a strong Hindutva undercurrent, Modi would change the narrative of Indian politics and confidently lead his party to 2019's election.

But Modi has proved more ambitious than any other leader in recent history. Exactly halfway into his tenure, Modi gave an astonishing jolt to the nation on November 8 by touching on a raw nerve — money. This has created a new class divide out of which Modi wants to earn electoral profit. The great gambler has put everything on the table.

There are no two opinions on people suffering hardships they didn't deserve. As old notes pour into banks, it seems the government's calculations have gone haywire. A lack of preparation and inefficient implementation add hardships. Yet, there are contradictory emotions around demonetisation.

When you talk to poor people, you realise that they think Modi has actually unleashed the promise of *acche din* plus. Now, it won't be easy to bracket the BJP as a "Brahmin-bania" party. That's bad news for its opponents. This explains Nitish Kumar, Chandrashekhara Rao and Naveen Patnaik supporting the move. The victories of the BJP in local body polls after November 8 also proves that people have been patient, so far.

Traders are angry as the Modi government wants them to put their cash in the banking system, slash profits and pay taxes. They hate exposing their dealings via Aadhaar, etc. They see demonetisation as Modi's "undemocratic" way of "imposing" change. Traders in Surat told me that just as China bulldozed people and displaced them from their land to rebuild Shanghai and Beijing, Modi is pushing a digital economy into India. They claimed the government is bullying dhobis, cobblers and daily wagers to open bank accounts, for meagre earnings of Rs 20 a day, which shows an insensitive disconnect from Indian reality.

But many of these poor people are singing a different tune. In Delhi, Sanjay, who cleans Mercedes SUVs costing over 50 lakh and gets paid Rs 350 a month, has a smirk on his face. He says, "Saab ko zaroor takleef hoga. Bahut maal kamaya hai." (The car owner will feel the pinch, he's earned a lot.)

Modi has touched upon this idea amongst the poor that "others" have earned too much and hoard lakhs of unaccounted money in dark corners of their homes. For Sanjay, the rich, flashy people he serves affect him profoundly. He supports Modi, who gives him the feeling that he's punished a Mercedes owner in some way.

With demonetisation, Modi has brought a sharp divide on to the national platform. Normally, the poor are resilient simply to survive — that famed Indian resilience is working for the Modi government now. People are suffering but staying patient, thinking, "Acche din will come after the cleaning is done." The AAP has strong support among poor voters, but in Delhi the street situation is under control. This shows Modi has once again touched a chord with the aspirational Indian.

Those carrying shopping bags belonging to their "madams" in malls, those paid low wages but carrying the physical burden of growth, those whose income is only "salary-after-tax-deduction-at-source" feel "this will bring good results for the country in the long run". This narrative is not backed by economic logic; it works on the worldly wisdom of ordinary Indians. Today, the idea of attacking injustice assures order. I spoke with poor workers, salaried professionals, unscrupulous builders and devious traders across Delhi, Mumbai, Vadodara and Ahmedabad. A conversation with Mahesh, an unemployed youth in Delhi, was revealing. When I asked, "What do you think about *notebandi*?", he replied, "It's trauma. But the pain is only for a few weeks. We can do without *subzi* temporarily. *Lekin bhavishya ke bina kya hai zindagi main?* (Without a good future, what's there in life?)" Mahesh added, "My friends who go to college and seek jobs think that after December 30, everything will be affordable. Cereals will become cheaper. We'll have more money. Today, rich men are weeping. Corrupt people are howling. This has happened for the first time."

In Vadodara, Mrugesh runs a taxi service. His business is down to 20 per cent but he supports *notebandi*, saying, "My father was raided in 1987 by the tax department. We lost our jewelry business. Taxmen harassed us for bribes. We sold flats, bought with black money, to pay our customers, whose gold the tax department confiscated. I now pay taxes and sleep well." In South Delhi, a two-bedroom flat was on sale. The week before demonetisation, the deal was finalised at Rs 1.60 crore. But it got delayed. After demonetisation, the flat is being purchased for Rs 1.32 crore, the full payment in cheque. Someone's hard-earned 28 lakh is saved because of a feeling that real estate prices will crash by one-third. That's bad news for builders — but good news for honest buyers.

(By Sheela Bhatt for The Indian Express)

Since Election Day the great intra-Democratic debate over What Went Wrong has been dominated by two visions of how liberalism should be organized, identity politics versus economic solidarity, with writers variously critiquing or defending each tendency, or arguing that they are complements and that any tension can and ought to be resolved.

This is an interesting and fruitful debate (my own outsider's contribution can be found here), but it has been mostly about a debate about two different ways of being (sometimes very) left-wing. There has been much less conversation about the ways in which the Democratic Party might consider responding to its current straits by moving to the right.

That kind of movement is often part of how political parties recover from debilitation and defeat — not just by finding new ways to be true to their underlying ideology, but by scrambling toward the center to convince skeptical voters that they've changed. It's what Democrats did, slowly but surely, after the trauma of Ronald Reagan's triumphs; it's what Bill Clinton did after his 1994 drubbing; it's what Rahm Emanuel and Howard Dean did, to a modest degree, on their way to building a congressional majority in 2006. And it's also what Donald Trump did on his way to stealing the Midwest from the Democrats this year — he was a hard-right candidate on certain issues but a radical sort of centrist on trade, infrastructure and entitlements, explicitly breaking with Republican orthodoxies that many voters considered out-of-date.

If the idea of moving rightward seems distinctly strange to today's Democrats, it's partially because until this month's rude awakening, much of liberalism was in thrall to demographic triumphalism: Convinced that the party's leftward drift under President Obama and candidate Hillary Clinton was in line with the drift of the country as a whole, and confident that with every birth and death and naturalization and 18th birthday their structural advantage would only grow.

Because Trump won without the popular vote, a version of this theory is still intact — but it shouldn't be. The Democratic coalition is a losing coalition in most states, most House districts, most Senate races; the party's national bench is thin, its statehouse power shattered, its congressional leadership aged and inert. It has less political power than it did after the Reagan revolution and the Gingrich sweep. To repurpose an aphorism often applied to Brazil: It has the majority of the future, and if current trends continue, it always will. So the incentives are there to look for issues where Democrats might plausibly move rightward, back toward voters they have lost. And so are the issues themselves. The Democrats have ceded a lot of territory in their recent gallop leftward, and it wouldn't be that hard to come up with a revised version of the (again, Bill) Clinton playbook suited to the present time. or instance: Democrats could attempt to declare a culture-war truce, consolidating the gains of the Obama era while disavowing attempts to regulate institutions and communities that don't follow the current social-liberal line. That would mean no more fines for Catholic charities and hospitals, no more transgender-bathroom directives handed down from the White House to local schools, and restraint rather than ruthlessness in future debates over funding and accreditation for conservative religious schools.

(By Ross Douthat New York Times)



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# Modi Likely To Undertake Even Riskier Gambles Than Notes Ban

Back in 2014, Narendra Modi's landslide victory was hailed by columnists in the Wall Street Journal and the Financial Times, who predicted that he would prove to be India's Ronald Reagan or Margaret Thatcher, modernizing India's economy with a revolutionary program of deregulation and privatization.

Abruptly withdrawing more than 80 percent of the cash in circulation in India, Modi appears today a very different kind of revolutionary: the type that emerged in many non-Western countries in the previous century.

This figure, variously incarnated as Ataturk, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek, pitilessly uses the power of the state to impose sacrifice and pain upon his compatriots, conscripting their bodies and souls in the all-important task of forging a virtuous new people and nation.

To many eyes, the initial verdict on Modi's radical demonetization policy has been crushingly negative. Both Larry Summers and Kaushik Basu have described it as a blunder amid reports of financial sclerosis and extensive suffering, including dozens of deaths. According to Amartya Sen, "only an authoritarian government can calmly

cause such misery to the people." Even some of those who welcomed Modi as an economic modernizer now attack him for callously exposing Indians to unnecessary distress.

But, projecting their own fantasies and disappointments on Modi, they disregard a cardinal rule: "Believe the Autocrat; he means what he says," as the Russian critic Masha Gessen put it in a recent article titled "Autocracy: Rules for Survival."

For Modi plainly has his eyes fixed on a bigger goal. In recent days, he seems to have convinced himself, through a public survey on his own app, that Indians overwhelmingly back his proposal (and it does seem that many among even the poor do). Indeed, Modi was bold enough to announce early on that Indians would have to suffer for at least 50 days. Soon after plunging India into chaos, he left for Japan, where he exhorted his countrymen to learn from the Japanese. Indians, he urged, should come together and make national interest paramount, just as the Japanese had in the aftermath of the devastating 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

This obsession with the Japanese spirit of self-abnega-

tion is no passing fad. Modi's ideological movement of Hindu nationalism was inspired by ultra-nationalists of the early 20th century, who saw widespread suffering as necessary, and not just inevitable, in the urgent endeavor of creating a new ethical and spiritual community and a sense of cohesion. Looking for likely models, V.D. Savarkar, Modi's greatest hero, came to admire Turkish nationalists as well as the Nazis.

These nation-builders believed, along with Nietzsche, the intellectual godfather of many early 20th century ideologies, that "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger." I pointed out in an earlier column on Modi's fascination with Japan that Hindu nationalists were especially admiring of the first Asian nation to become economically and militarily powerful through harsh self-sacrifice. The Japanese project, in which citizens were expected to ransom their personal interests to the glory of the nation, obviously has little appeal for Western or Westernized liberals. Certainly, the consequences of a national culture in which hara-kiri and kamikaze were exalted became grotesquely clear during World War Two. But then, ra-

tionally calculating liberals always underestimate the ever-renewed political appeal of what they call "irrationalism."

Khomeini may have seemed daft to many economists when in 1979, as Iran faced a severe economic crisis, he declared that donkeys concern themselves with economics and that his Islamic Revolution was not about the price of melons. Khomeini knew that it is individual and collective sacrifice and suffering that binds people and forges a collective ethos. The extraordinarily bloody and prolonged Iran-Iraq war, which ideologically strengthened Khomeini's struggling regime, proved him right. Modi belongs to this line of autocratic ideologues rather than the Western tradition of revolutionary neoliberalism, or Marxist rationalism. And, though his critics are surely tempted, it's too early to say that demonetization spells political disaster for him. Another revolutionary nation-builder, Mao Zedong, led his people into a much bigger calamity with such amateurish economic projects as making steel in backyard furnaces. Surrounded by sycophants and time-servers, Mao convinced

himself that his policies were a wild success. When their terrible consequences could no longer be hidden, he launched a witch-hunt against his opponents in the guise of a "cultural revolution." Yet Mao Zedong's name today is invoked piously by ruling elites and the masses alike in China.

There should be no doubt: Modi is advancing a similarly ambitious and long-term experiment in India that aims to re-engineer human souls and minds as much as socioeconomic realities. Success and failure in this grand endeavor cannot be measured through the conventional terms of technocrats. Demonetization seems right now like a kamikaze mission for the Indian economy, and political hara-kiri for Modi. But India's ideologically driven prime minister is likely to undertake even riskier gambles with an eye on posterity. And, to adapt the words of a recently departed revolutionary, history, as unreliable as ever, may even absolve him. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

(By Pankaj Mishra, Bloomberg View, as seen on NDTV.com)

## Holding Parliament Hostage Over Notes Ban Makes No Sense

India. The irony remains that since the House is getting adjourned on a daily basis, the government would have been better off holding a discussion via an adjournment motion in the beginning itself. Given that the numbers in the Lok Sabha dictate that any vote would go in the favour of the government, why the opposition continues to push for an adjournment is beyond logic. The clash of these egos has prevented a meaningful debate in the House, while the country continues to suffer. It appears as if the government is waiting for the situation to better by tweaking the policy every day while the opposition is betting on the government to fail, both at the cost of immense tragedy caused to the citizens who have voted them to office. There is a looming absurdity in the unwillingness of elected representatives to discuss demonetization with an unprecedented stubbornness. While discussions on some major bills remain ignored so far in

this session, the political reluctance depicts a disinterest in reconciliation, even in the face of a pressing need to discuss the GST Bill. This shall ultimately draw a compromise between the two distinct sides as noticed in the parliament currently. Principally, the Lok Sabha is required to address the oversight of the Legislature's duties to hold the Executive responsible as well. The deadlock arising from the complete breakdown of communications in the parliament currently is interfering with the duty of the legislature to hold the government answerable for its actions, to question the legality and efficiency of the current demonetization move and to suggest methods that will ease the transition process in a constructive parley of ideas. There is therefore an immense need for introspection on both sides of the political spectrum and a speedy realization of what the duties of elected representatives of people's interests are.

(Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo as seen on NDTV.com)



Following the announcement of the demonetization of 500 and 1000-rupee notes by the Prime Minister of India, I had predicted the distress this would cause for the common man and the nature of political divide it was destined to create in the near future. While any evidence of money recovered shall be noted only in the months to follow, the discussion now must focus on how matters have come to a head with a deadlock in the functioning of the winter session of parliament.

The political class now stands divided in two distinct groups, with the government and the opposition averse to the idea of allowing a discussion unless held on specific conditions. In this process, the legislature and its functions have been held hostage by the warring egos of these two

groups. Despite the fact that some parties including BJD and JD(U) have attempted to establish dialogue on the floor of the house, a large section of the opposition has expressly, and at times in a volatile fashion, criticized the poor implementation of the demonetization process while at the same time disallowing parliament to function and with no furnishing to the government of constructive solutions to end this plight.

It is around the rule under which the discussion on demonetization must be introduced that the Lok Sabha stands divided. The argument over which rule to introduce the discussion under, while seemingly pertinent for sticklers for parliamentary procedures, does not seem entirely fitting



# Dear Zindagi, I'm Alia And Life Couldn't Get Better

Dear Zindagi,  
What can I say? Life really sucks! I mean, I know I am awesome in the movie. But that's because I am awesome, period! All of India is in love with me. Kaira or Alia...same-same, and not all that different. But that worries me these days. How long can I go on playing Alia? Perky, spunky, cute? I will end up like perky, spunky, cute Preity Zinta (but without an IPL team).

Every director makes me play me. Or, at least, the me they think is me. Actually, I am also confused! Who is me? What is me? Where is me? Is there a me? There is so much me, that I no longer know which me is me. I wake up in the morning and face the mirror. Other actresses look for zits. I look for me. I am very existential that way. My dad, Mahesh, taught me the spelling of existential before I could spell

Alia. My mother, Soni, made me rehearse the pronunciation. See...our family is very evolved. We don't waste time discussing Sonam's next film or her next outfit. We discuss zindagi. Others in the industry discuss boring things like 100-crore clubs. We discuss real stuff - finding ourselves. Haan. If we find me in the 100-crore club, that's okay. Like Osho used to tell dad in the old days, "There is life beyond 100 crores. Think 200 crores...500 crores." Of course, J Krishnamurti also spoke to Dad about angst and other such issues. So, my upbringing has been intellectual and full of intro...intro...yes...got it...introspection.

.Take the role of Kaira. She looks smart and sorted. But she's anything but. I mean, she is so stooopid! Why tell a current boyfriend: "I slept with Raghuvendra".

And then say "Sorry"! There is no time for such type of a "sorry" in zindagi...when life gives you champagne, you shampoo your hair with it. And that man-bun-walla Raghuvendra - imagine eating raw mirchies and street-side chow mein for such a loser. A smart girl will always think of her intestines first! Gut over heart. Next time, I will write the script and direct myself. Gauri is a darling. But I think she needs to sort out a few basic issues in her own zindagi, also. Kaira has to be clear: does she want to make movies? Or just make out? Then come those parents and Kiddo. Pleeasssse, yaar! Can't torture yourself forever because your mum doesn't reply to your letters! And how rude to reject her bebinca! Which Goan girl would reject bebinca? Okay, okay...I am avoiding talking about Dr. Jehangir Khan. I mean SRK.



While I was busy looking for me, I found him, who was also looking for me. So it was all cool. We both loved me. But he also loves him. That is, he is hung up on himself. I am hung up on myself. And we are both hung up on our close-ups. My dad is the best therapist in the world. SRK came a close second. By the time I got to hug him, the timer had rung. And I feel Gauri should have

lingered longer on that scene...because, that is how audience psychology works! People came to watch both of us interacting...you know...like, romancing a little. Instead of interacting properly, we went cycling! I am not cribbing, though. Who says zindagi is simple!

(By Shobhaa De, as seen on NDTV.com)

## Why the Trump Team's Economic Promises Will Be Hard to Execute



WASHINGTON — The middle class will see a big tax cut, but the wealthy will not. American businesses will pay much lower taxes, and as a consequence bring back billions of dollars from overseas. All this will create sustained growth of 3 to 4 percent a year and prevent the budget deficit from exploding.

That is the economic future described on Wednesday by the people President-elect Donald J. Trump's has chosen to lead the Treasury and Commerce Departments, Steven Mnuchin and Wilbur Ross.

But in making those bold promises, the two men have contradicted some of Mr. Trump's campaign pledges, promised economic growth targets that will be difficult to achieve given modern demographics, and committed to plans that even sympathetic analysts project will vastly widen the budget deficit.

The comments shed light on how two men tapped as top economic policy makers in the Trump administration view their

job ahead — but also expose what will be challenging about getting campaign goals accomplished.

"Any reductions we have in upper income taxes will be offset by less deductions so that there will be no absolute tax cut for the upper class," Mr. Mnuchin said in an interview with CNBC on Wednesday morning. "There will be a big tax cut for the middle class, but any tax cuts we have for the upper class will be offset by less deductions that pay for it."

That is not what independent analysts concluded after analyzing the tax proposal Mr. Trump made during his campaign, which would reduce the income tax rate on the wealthiest families from its current 39.6 percent to 33 percent.

In that plan, middle-class families would see a 0.8 percent increase in their after-tax income, according to an analysis by the Tax Foundation, while the top 1 percent of taxpayers would see a 10.2 to 16 percent gain. An-

other group, the Tax Policy Center, calculated middle-class families would get a 1.8 percent boost in after-tax income, while the top 0.1 percent of earners would see a 14 percent gain and a tax cut worth an average of \$1.1 million.

But Mr. Mnuchin was talking big: "This will be the largest tax change since Reagan."

Mr. Mnuchin suggested closing some tax loopholes would counter the effect of lower tax rates for the rich, but he mentioned only one: a cap on the mortgage interest deduction. Tax reformers have long suggested that mortgage payments should either no longer be deductible or be capped for mansions and second homes. Mr. Trump's Treasury pick did not clarify what he meant.

It was not clear whether the comments on Wednesday represented a shift in Mr. Trump's tax policy intentions or political spin.

"What he described there doesn't match the plan unveiled in September," said Alan Cole, an economist at the Tax Foundation. "This statement could be a legitimate pivot, or it could be hand waving. I don't know which."

One promise of Mr. Mnuchin's that matched Mr. Trump's was a 15 percent corporate income tax rate, a huge cut from the current 35 percent. Leaders in both parties favor a lower corporate rate, paid for with a simpler tax code with far fewer deductions and dodges. But former Treasury Secretary Timothy F. Geithner could get the rate down only to 28 percent when he ran the numbers. Even House Republicans have aimed for 25 percent.

"We're going to cut corporate taxes, which will bring huge amounts of jobs back to the United States. We're going to get to 15 percent, and we're going to bring a lot of cash back to the U.S.," Mr. Mnuchin said.

Mr. Mnuchin and Mr. Ross suggested that the plans would not widen the budget deficit thanks to "dynamic scoring," or forecasts that assume tax cuts will release much faster economic growth and therefore pay for themselves.

But the Trump tax cuts would need to unleash far faster growth than the historical record suggests is likely to avoid rapidly increasing the budget deficit. The Tax Foundation's analysis of the September Trump campaign plan found that even with dynamic scoring, the plan would reduce federal revenue by \$2.6 trillion to \$3.9 trillion over the next decade, which absent spending cuts would enlarge the deficit by up to one-third over levels the Congressional Budget Office projects.

And the Trump nominees stuck with a bullish forecast for long-term growth. "Our No. 1 priority is going to be the economy, get back to 3 to 4 percent growth," Mr. Mnuchin told reporters gathered at Trump Tower in Manhattan on Wednesday. "We believe that's very sustainable."

It is true that economic growth averaged around 3.5 percent a year in the second half of the 20th century, before falling to around 2 percent a

year in the last 15 years. In trying to achieve that goal, though, the Trump administration will face significant demographic headwinds.

The speedy growth of the last century was helped along by the enormous baby boom generation entering the work force, and more women joining the ranks of the working. Now, the baby boom is retiring and the proportion of women working is stable. For those reasons, the Congressional Budget Office projects that the United States labor force will grow by 0.6 percent a year over the next decade. By contrast, from 1949 to 2000 it rose by an average of 1.7 percent a year. Another complication to the Trump team's predictions? Mr. Trump has promised tight controls on immigration, the one lever that could increase work force growth. To achieve the economic strength that the Trump administration is aiming for, either something will need to change existing demographic trends, such as higher immigration levels or would-be retirees working longer, or American businesses will need to find ways to become sharply more productive than they have been in recent years. In other words, as the Trump economic team forms and tries to turn bold campaign promises into policy reality, it may find that the biggest limit of all is economic math.

(By Neil Irwin, for New York Times)



# National anthem in cinema halls: Supreme Court may have gone way too far this time

The Supreme Court's order making it mandatory to play the national anthem in cinema halls before screening of films has once again exposed the shortcomings of judicial activism that often attracts criticism from various quarters.

There can hardly be any disagreement with the idea that the national anthem and national flag should be respected by one and all. The court has rightly put an end to commercial exploitation and dramatisation of the national anthem and banned its display in disrespectful manner.

"It is the sacred obligation of every citizen to abide by the ideals engrafted in the Constitution. And one of them is to show respect to the National Anthem and National Flag,"

the court said. But the top court may have gone way too far this time. The interim order requires all cinema halls in India to play the national anthem before the screening a film while viewers are obliged to stand up for the duration of the national anthem. The order is difficult to implement and would be a nightmare for law enforcement authorities. It runs the risk of being violated on a large scale, leading to law and order problems as it is bound to give rise to vigilantism. The court has cited the fundamental duty of citizens under Article 51-A of the Constitution that says, "It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institu-

tions, the National Flag and the National Anthem." The Constitution does not, however, provide for enforcement of the duties.

This is not the first time that the top court has passed an order for mandatory screening of government films. In *Union of India versus Motion Picture Association*, the Supreme Court had in 1999 upheld the government's order for compulsory screening of educational, scientific or documentary films on current events, saying it promoted free speech.

But the current order doesn't deal with dissemination of such information. Also, it appears to be in contrast with the court's verdict in the *Jehovah's Witnesses* case in which it upheld the right of schoolchildren belonging to



this religious sect to refrain from singing the National Anthem during a school assembly. The children had contended that their religious belief precluded them from singing the National Anthem, though they were prepared to stand by respectfully while fellow students sang it.

People go to cinema for entertainment and certainly not for a lesson in patriotism. The National Anthem has its own

sanctity and citizens have their own way of expressing nationalism. Playing it in every cinema hall and multiplex before each show and making it obligatory for each one present to stand up is not the way forward. It would be a logical argument now to seek playing of the national anthem in courts before the start of the day's proceedings.

(By Satya Prakash ,  
Hindustan Times)

# Who cares about the facts? How transient rage is driving India's politics



If you have seen the latest big-budget Bollywood movie *Dear Zindagi*, starring SRK (Shah Rukh Khan) and Alia Bhat, you cannot miss singer-actor Ali Zafar's two songs and his bite-sized role. You know he is Pakistani, right?

Wait, had we not drummed Pakistani actors out of India?

The outrage over the Pakistani presence in Bollywood began on social media after 18 Indian soldiers were murdered by jihadis in Uri, Kashmir. Online fury was promoted to a shrill crescendo by the mainstream media and politicians, until Bollywood nervously promised to get the Pakistanis out. That was last month. Asked about the Ali Zafar question, Bhat — with 9.6 million followers, she knows how this works — said: "We can leave... that topic for some time since it has died down." That was 15 days ago.

Zafar clearly has a more substantive role than his countryman Fawad Khan had in the movie that started the get-them-out

furore, *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil*. Although he has stayed away from the movie's promotional road shows, the Pakistani question is already on the back burner. Just to be safe, the *Dear Zindagi* producers have taken other precautions, such as getting an Indian singer to replace Zafar's songs in the music release.

As the ire dissipates, the Pakistanis are returning. You will soon see — among others — Mahira Khan opposite SRK, Adnan Siddiqui and Sajal Ali opposite Sridevi and Saba Qamar opposite Irrfan Khan. I won't mention the movies; let the outraged do their research.

Recent instances of Indian public ire have revealed the transient, ephemeral nature of smartphone-driven outrage. The facts don't really matter, and a month of indignation is hard to sustain. The anger produced inside the bubble appears to dissolve as rapidly as it gathered, as do the outcomes they were supposed to produce. What

these explosions of electronic emotion do require, however, is that a head — any head — must roll. Outrage must produce retribution, or appear to.

Recall the "second freedom movement", the anger against corruption that brought Anna Hazare, a frail retired soldier, to Delhi? Thousands poured into the streets, and while it wasn't clear how corruption was to be excised, the Congress government reluctantly acceded to the idea of a Lokpal, a national anti-corruption ombudsman. It has stayed an idea — with many flaws. The Bharatiya Janata Party and Narendra Modi rode that wave of emotion to displace the Congress. Last week the Supreme Court asked Modi's government why there was still no Lokpal. It does not matter. The mob got the Congress' head. As for corruption, it's as entrenched as ever, only more creative in demonetised India. I heard recently of corrupt officials demanding gold, European air tick-

ets, other gifts, and — as they become available — IOU bribes in new 500- and 2000-rupee notes.

Recall the nationwide rage after the 2012 gang rape of the physiotherapy student in Delhi? That anger was substantive and stayed till the 2014 election. But in August, four years after the Nirbhaya outrage, a colleague found that rapes reported in Delhi have tripled; women comprise less than 9% of Delhi police ranks, instead of 33%, as they were supposed to; the biases of male officers are as evident as before; and the expenditure on training dropped by 6.9 percentage points over two years to 2015.

The smartphone outrage is real in the sense that it gets inside television's talking heads and on to front pages. Politicians cannot but react, often mirroring the loutish language of twitter. So you hear the once cautious Manohar Parrikar threatening, as India's defence minister, to "gouge the eyes out" of enemies. Once you get an online gallery, you have to play to it. Action or retribution, or the appearance of it, has to be swift and visible. That is why the "surgical strikes" against Pakistani terror camps were a resounding public-relations success. Now, the facts: 28 Indian Army and Border Security Force troopers have died since the strikes, meant to avenge the deaths of the 18 soldiers killed in Uri; the 2016 death toll from terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir is currently the highest in seven years. The use of transient outrage tends to obfuscate the need

for sound strategy and long-term planning, a situation that is not surprising in a nation led by a Prime Minister who pioneered the use of social media in elections, uses it to build his image and drive policy. As I write this, Modi commands a following of 25 million — that's the population of Australia, with a million to spare — on Twitter. The press conference is history. Modi's primary public contact is on social media, which he has used to promote laudable programmes, such as educating girls and cleaning up India. But here, too, facts and real change genuflect to hype. Big political prizes, such as the next general elections, tempt someone as impatient as Modi, who has now harnessed the truly disruptive potential of transient outrage, deploying it in the war against "black money". He uses emotion and hyperbole ("I won't stop even if they burn me alive") effectively, drowning out dodgy facts and planning. For instance, Modi cited terrorism financed by fake Indian currency as one reason for the invalidating of 86%, or Rs 14 lakh crore, of India's currency notes. A 2015 joint study — cited in the Lok Sabha — by the Indian Statistical Institute and National Investigation Agency said the face value of fake currency did not exceed Rs 400 crore. Various experts and estimates agree that most of India's unaccounted money is not in cash, and that the remonetisation process has been bungled

(By Samar Halarnkar ,  
Hindustan Times)



## Indian citizen in US? pleads guilty for involvement in foiled terror plot

(Agencies) An Indian citizen living in Nevada, the US, as a permanent resident pleaded guilty on Tuesday to involvement in a foiled terrorist strike in India in late 2013. He has been in detention since his arrest and faces up to 15 years in jail. Balwinder Singh, 42, purchased two sets of night-vision goggles for a co-conspirator who was to carry out the attack in India as "part of a movement to create an independent Sikh state in the Punjab region", the US justice department said in a statement.

The plan was to assassinate or maim an Indian governmental official, the department said. "The final target would be determined after the co-conspirator arrived in South Asia."

Acting assistant attorney general for national security Mary B McCord said, "Singh attempted to provide material support and resources to terrorists to create violence and disruption abroad... Identifying, thwarting and holding accountable individuals who pursue international terrorism is a top priority of the Department of Justice." The co-conspirator, who was not identified in the statement, was arrested at San Francisco airport from where he had

planned to board a flight for Bangkok, Thailand en route to India. The justice department said he was to travel to South Asia

According to the justice department, Singh discussed the attack with several co-conspirators, who remained unidentified, over



and then India, and not directly. It was not clear where in South Asia. Pakistan has been a staging ground for most such attackers. Singh, also known as Jhaji, Happy, Possi and Baljit Singh, pleaded guilty before US district judge Larry R Hicks to one count of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists. He had been in detention since his arrest on December 17, 2013.

He was charged on December 18, 2013.

phone between September and December 2013. They "agreed to provide material support by facilitating a co-conspirator's travel to and within South Asia and providing funding and materials necessary to carry out an overseas attack". Singh continued discussing the plans with his co-conspirators even after the arrest of the man who was to carry out the strike, till he himself was arrested.

## FBI: 'Too soon' to know if Ohio State attack was terrorism

(Agencies) It is "too soon" to determine if the attack at Ohio State University Monday was terrorism, the FBI said Wednesday. At a press conference, the special agent in charge of the FBI's Cincinnati Division said that 18-year-old Abdul Razak Ali Artan "may have been inspired by ISIS" when he injured 11 people using his car and a butcher knife. "It's too soon to draw any type of conclusions whether or not this is terrorism," Special Agent Angel Byers said. Byers said it appears that Artan was inspired by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and the late al Qaeda-linked cleric Anwar al-Awlaki. While ISIS's Amaq news agency claimed Artan was a "soldier" of the terrorist group, Byer said it is too early to confirm that. "They have been known to take credit for attacks like these when the attacker is deceased and cannot refute that." Artan was killed at the scene by a police officer. He was an Ohio State student and a legal permanent resident from Somalia.

## Could Trump be forced to sell his hotel to keep the White House?



(Agencies) Washington — Donald Trump's election as president and his recently completed transformation of Washington's Old Post Office Pavilion into a luxury hotel have created a legal headache: The 60-year lease of the federal property prohibits any elected official from owning a share of the project.

Two former White House contracting experts who disclosed the problem contend that the best solution is for the government to terminate the lease, essentially forcing Trump to divest himself of the property to avoid conflicts of interest. The lease also allows the government to sell the property to a private party, which would then serve as Trump's landlord. When Trump's daughter Ivanka signed the \$180 million lease with the General Services Administration on behalf of his organization in August 2013, he was not yet a candidate for the presidency. Prospects for his election as

president seemed far-fetched.

Now agency officials and Trump's legal advisers must confront what to do to address the problem, after the president-elect spent tens of millions of dollars to turn the historic property into the glittering Trump International Hotel. Already, Trump and his team have drawn criticism for

encouraging foreign government officials to book rooms at the hotel, including for his upcoming inauguration on Jan. 20, an arrangement that could create the appearance they are being induced to curry favor with the incoming president. The clause in the lease was designed to prevent conflicts of interest from turning an arms-length financial relationship into what amounts to a cozy insider's deal, wrote Steven Schooner, who oversaw federal procurement legal matters for the Clinton administration, and Daniel Gordon, President Barack Obama's first procurement policy administrator. Schooner is now a law professor at George Washington University, and Gordon is a senior adviser to the school's

Procurement Law Program.

In an opinion piece published Monday in Government Executive magazine, Schooner and Gordon contended that the deal represents "an intolerable intermingling of an elected official's government duties and his family's personal financial interests." "To protect the integrity of the federal government's procurement process, GSA must end its lease arrangement with President-elect Trump now," they wrote.

The GSA said in a statement that, as required when Congress ordered the redevelopment of the Old Post Office in 2008, it "ran a fair and open competition, subject to careful and rigorous review, which resulted in the selection of the Trump Organization as the

preferred private sector entity to redevelop the Old Post Office." "It is the Office of Government Ethics that provides guidance to the executive branch on questions of ethics and conflicts of interest," the agency said. "GSA plans to coordinate with the president-elect's team to address any issues that may be related to the Old Post Office building."

However, the Office of Government Ethics lacks jurisdiction over the terms of federal contracts, and so its only role might be to advise the Trump White House.

A spokesman for the ethics office declined to comment. Trump's transition team did not respond to a request for comment.

## Trump announces he will leave business 'in total' leaving open how he will avoid conflicts of interest

(Agencies) President-elect Donald J. Trump tweeted Wednesday morning that he would soon leave his "great business in total" to focus on the presidency, a response to growing worries over the businessman-in-chief's conflicts of interest around the globe. The announcement marks a turn from Trump's months-long refusal to distance himself from his private business while holding the highest public office. But it remained unclear whether the new arrangement would include a full sale of Trump's stake or, as he has offered before, a ceding of company

management to his children, which ethics advisers have said would not resolve worries that the business could still influence his decisions in the Oval Office. "I will be holding a major news conference in New York City with my children on December 15 to discuss the fact that I will be leaving my great business in total in order to fully focus on running the country in order to MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!" Trump tweeted. "While I am not mandated to do this under the law, I feel it is visually important, as President, to in no way have a con-

flict of interest with my various businesses. Hence, legal documents are being crafted which take me completely out of business operations. The Presidency is a far more important task!" Presidents are not bound by the strict conflict-of-interest laws governing most U.S. elected officials. But most modern presidents have agreed to sell or sequester their assets in a "blind trust," led by an independent manager with supreme control, in order to keep past business deals, investments and relationships from influencing their White House term.





(Agencies) Barack Obama's expansion of the student-loan repayment program, intended to help curb America's \$1.26 trillion pile of outstanding college debt, is proving a lot more costly.

In a 100-page report (pdf) released today, the Govern-

ment Accountability Office said it'd forgive \$108 billion in debt for the borrowers of government loans who have fulfilled their obligations under the Obama administration's income-driven repayment plans. That number is much higher than what the US gov-

ernment originally expected.

Why the discrepancy? Part of it is that the number of borrowers enrolling in the plans has tripled in the last three years, forcing the government to spend more. It said almost 20% of direct-loan borrowers were "delinquent on their loan payments at the end of 2015, and more than a million borrowers defaulted on their loans over the 2015 fiscal year."

But it's also, according to the GAO report, the fault of the country's education depart-

ment—which forgot to account for inflation when making initial estimates of borrowers' earnings. "Estimates will continue to change over time, and actual subsidy costs of a loan cohort will not be known until all loans in the cohort have been repaid, which may take 40 years," the GAO said. The \$108 billion figure also only covers about a third of the total \$355 billion owed by the former students enrolled in the plans; the remaining two-thirds haven't yet met the requirements for debt relief.

But adding a dollop of further uncertainty into the mix is Donald Trump's recent election; the president-elect—who, after all, started his own for-profit university (a venture that proved thorny in and of itself)—has hinted at instituting stricter policies for loan relief. While Obama's White House made a point out of looking out for debt-ridden students, even at the government's cost, Trump's administration might just reverse that thinking.

## Why Saudi Arabia shocked the skeptics with an OPEC deal

(Agencies) Wednesday's deal comes as Saudi Arabia is trying to remake its oil-dependent economy into one that is more diversified, under a plan it calls Vision 2030. A higher oil price would help boost revenues at a time when it has been running deficits and borrowing.

"They need a decent oil price, and they need to maintain market share. Part of the great irony of Vision 2030 is that in order to diversify the Saudi economy away from oil, they need to sell oil," said IHS Markit Vice Chairman Daniel Yergin.

The kingdom steered OPEC Wednesday to cut back on the oil spigot in order to boost prices. All producers have been struggling with a bruising cycle that has strained budgets and hampered their

ability to reinvest in energy infrastructure. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries agreed to cut production by 1.2 million barrels a day, bringing output to 32.5 million barrels a day.

Additionally, OPEC said non-OPEC producers are also expected to contribute with a 600,000-barrels-per-day reduction, including a surprise 300,000 barrels a day cut by Russia. Saudi Arabia would trim just 486,000 barrels a day, about 300,000 less than expected.

"The Saudis really pulled off a victory for themselves ... I think that the most recent selloff in crude oil scared them all into this. I think they saw what lay ahead if they didn't do this," said John Kilduff, founder of investment firm Again Capital.

Higher oil prices should also be a plus for the expected initial public offering next year of state-owned oil company Saudi Aramco, a pillar of the kingdom's plan to create a huge sovereign wealth fund. The world's largest oil exporter is hoping to diversify into areas such as technology, mining and tourism.

Saudi Arabia may have pushed for the current OPEC deal, but it was also the main force behind OPEC's November 2014 decision to abandon the cartel's long-running policy of using output as a lever to control prices. It instead let the market set prices, in an effort to stem the growth of high-cost production, especially U.S. shale.

That strategy resulted in OPEC and other producers pumping record amounts of

oil, which ultimately drove prices into the \$20s per barrel this year.

Saudi officials have been vocal about their concerns that low oil prices make it difficult to reinvest in exploration and production, and that they ultimately could create a supply shortage when demand starts to rise.

"I think the Saudi minister has been very explicit now for over a year, warning that the under-investment could lead to a fly up in prices before the end of the decade, and that is something they don't want to see. They recognize that low prices are a big problem, but so are high prices — if you're a long-term supplier — because it erodes demand and encourages alternatives," said Yergin.

Michael Cohen, head of



energy commodities research at Barclays, said Saudi Arabia oil minister Khalid Al-Falih mentioned the industry's need to make capital expenditures in his remarks in Vienna Wednesday.

"At the end of the day, what Saudi Arabia is worried about is they wanted to get the engine started on investment. They don't see it starting when oil is at \$35 to \$45," he said.

The agreement to cut production comes at the end of a year of failed efforts, and several days of high drama between producers, who quibbled over how much cutting each would contribute in order to reign in the global oil glut. West Texas Intermediate oil futures plunged Tuesday, and then rallied 9 percent Wednesday in response to the accord. Whether the proposed deal works remains to be seen, but even the semblance of an agreement is expected to be positive for prices.

"There was a lot of overnight diplomacy. That was the turning point. The skeptics in the room needed to see the numbers. It looks like the Saudis drove the hardest bargain on specificity. They knew what the market needed, and they pushed it through," said Helima Croft, head of global commodities research at RBC.

"I think even the requirement for non-OPEC (nations) is really about the Saudis looking for the most credible statement they could get.

## Mike Pence and 'Conversion Therapy': A History

(Agencies) Since Mike Pence was chosen as Donald J. Trump's running mate in July, he has faced complaints from groups critical of his record on gay and transgender rights, who said he has long been an opponent of the gains made by the L.G.B.T. community in recent years. Mr. Pence has been particularly dogged by accusations that he is a supporter of "conversion therapy," the practice of trying to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. It has been discredited by the medical establishment and denounced by gay and transgender groups.

Mr. Pence's spokesman, Marc Lott, denied to The Times over the weekend that the vice president-elect supports the practice, saying a past campaign statement had been misinterpreted. But L.G.B.T. groups remain skeptical, pointing to his record of opposition to gay rights as a member of Congress and as

governor of Indiana and an approving reference to conversion therapy in the 2016 Republican Party platform.

The phrases "conversion therapy" and "reparative therapy" refer to discredited psychotherapy methods that aim to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Spiritual efforts to accomplish the same goal are sometimes called "ex-gay ministry."

Conversion therapy has been condemned by a range of groups, including the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association, which said it was based on the view that homosexuality is a disorder, an idea "that has been rejected by all the major mental health professions."

Conversion therapy practitioners "often frame the inability to change one's sexual orientation as a personal and moral failure," adding to its harmful effects, the A.P.A. said. In the past, ef-



orts to change someone's sexual orientation sometimes involved extreme measures like institutionalization, castration and electroshock therapy, according to the National Center for Lesbian Rights. Today, critics contend that conversion therapy still sometimes includes physical abuse. For example, a New Jersey organization convicted of fraud last year was accused of sexually abusing its clients and forcing them to participate in violent role-play exercises.



# Passport authority has no power to curb travel: HC

(Agencies) Mumbai: The Bombay High Court said on Wednesday that the passport authority did not have the right to decide whether an accused in a criminal case could travel abroad or not. "That right vests with a magistrate who alone can impose conditions if an application is made seeking permission to travel abroad," said a bench of Justice Vidyasagar Kanade and Justice Nutan Sardesai.

The court heard a petition filed by Samip Rajani (28), a flight purser with Jet Airways, who challenged the renewal of his passport only for a year as opposed to 10 years. His petition said as a result he cannot get his flight schedule for overseas travel and will lose considerable remuneration. Rajani was booked for

assaulting a traffic policeman and for criminal intimidation and driving dangerously. Rajani, in turn, filed a counter-complaint against the cop for allegedly demanding a bribe and physically assaulting him on refusal. Rajani was released on bail.

On his plea, the Mulund magistrate had directed that his passport be renewed. Instead of 10 years, though, it was renewed for a year. Rajani then moved high court. The judges said whenever a criminal complaint is pending against an applicant who wishes to go abroad, the magistrate alone has the jurisdiction to impose the condition regarding his right to travel. Also, if a magistrate is satisfied that an applicant should not be permitted, he can reject the appli-

cation. However, when an application is made for renewal, the passport authority has to adhere to provisions of the Passport Act. The judges said the Centre's notification which allows passports to be renewed for a year was earlier held by the high court as ambiguous. The bench said it is common knowledge that some countries do not grant visa unless a passport is valid for more than six months. It said the Supreme Court has already held that the right to travel for business or service is a part of one's fundamental rights subject to reasonable restrictions imposed under the Passport Act and Rules. "In the present case, the applicant as a flight purser has to travel abroad and there is no possibility of him absconding since he has to return along



with the flight," the bench said. The judges directed the regional passport office to renew his passport for 10 years expeditiously and within three weeks. The judges also clarified that Rajani will have to apply to the magistrate in order to obtain permission to travel and the magistrate may impose conditions deemed fit and proper.

## At Rs 3 per unit, solar power tariff hits new low



(Agencies) New Delhi: It's not just oil that is on a slide. While globally crude has slid some 70% in the last year-and-a-half, solar power tariffs have sunk to a new low of Rs 3 per unit - the same as average cost of power from state-run NTPC's coal-fired plants.

The new record came from Gurgaon-based Amplus Energy Solutions in a Solar Energy Corporation of India's auction of rooftop solar power projects and beats the previous low of Rs 4 per unit for a solar park in Rajasthan by a quarter. The rooftop projects will be installed on buildings of NGOs, educational institutes, hospitals, trusts and not-for-profit companies in these states.

The lowest tariff quote for these projects is same as average tariff offered by state-run generation utility NTPC for power from its coal-fired plants and nearly half of tariffs charged by some private power producers

Till now, a solar project at Badhla in Rajasthan held the record for the lowest tariff at Rs 4 per unit in the solar park category. The lowest tariff before that was Rs 4.34 per unit, quoted by Fortum India in January for one of the six packets of 70 MW (420 MW total) each bid out by state-run generation utility NTPC for an earlier phase of the Bhadla solar park.

SunEdison was the first to pull down solar power tariffs below the Rs 5 per unit-mark by quoting a tariff of Rs 4.63 per unit for a project in Andhra Pradesh. In a statement issued on Wednesday, Amplus said the Rs 3 per unit tariff will apply to grid-connected rooftop projects in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry. Similar projects in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra will get solar power at Rs 5.56 per unit. For Rajasthan, the tariff will be Rs 5.38 a unit. The price for Haryana will be Rs 5.76 and Punjab will be Rs 6.20 per unit.

## Rahul Gandhi's Twitter handle hacked; abusive tweets flow

(Agencies) New Delhi: The official Twitter handle of Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi appeared to have been hacked on Wednesday evening. A series of abusive tweets were sent out from the handle to its 1.21 million followers.

The handle seems to have been hacked by a group called 'legion', according to one of the tweets. The hackers seem to have access to Rahul's profile for about an hour.

The tweets that did not revolve around demonetisation were outright abusive towards Rahul and his family.

The Congress party has announced that a

police complaint will be lodged against the hackers. "Will lodge a formal complaint with cyber police, hope govt will show sincerity of purpose in investigating and punishing them," party spokesperson RS Surjewala said.

Some of the tweets were being deleted a short while after they were posted. However, whoever hacked the account soon changed the bio of the handle.

Rahul Gandhi does not tweet personally, and his handle is managed by his office. His team seemed to be in a tug-of-war with the hackers over the comments being posted out.

## India inks Rs 5,000 crore howitzer deal with US to break Bofors jinx

(Agencies) New Delhi: India on Wednesday inked the \$737 million (almost Rs 5,000 crore) contract for the acquisition of 145 M-777 ultra-light howitzers from the US in a government-to-government deal.

TOI was the first to report on November 17 that PM Narendra Modi-led Cabinet Committee on Security had cleared the deal for the acquisition of the first modern 155mm howitzers for the Army in over 30 years to break the Bofors jinx+.

The contract, of course, will also further consolidate the position of the US as one of the largest arms suppliers to India, having bagged deals worth over \$15 billion since 2007.

Of the 145 M-777 howitzers to be delivered from mid-2017 onwards, 120 will be "assembled, integrated and tested" in India with artillery-manufacturer BAE Systems selecting Mahindra as its business partner here.

The 1.3-million strong Army has been demanding such 155mm/39-calibre ultra-light howitzers, with a strike range of over 25-km, for well over a decade now since they can be airlifted swiftly to "threatened high-altitude areas" in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh along the 4,057-km Line of Actual Control with China. The howitzer, which weighs just over 4-tonne due to the use of titanium, can be moved to altitudes up to 16,000-feet. The M-777 howitzers+ are meant to equip

the new 17 Mountain Strike Corps being raised for effective conventional deterrence and "quick reaction capabilities" against China. The Army is being forced to cannibalize from its existing re-



serves to raise the 17 Corps, which will be fully in place with 90,274 troops by 2021

A series of scandals beginning with the Bofors one, and followed by the ones around South African firm Denel+ and finally Singapore Technology Kinetic's (STK), has meant that the Army has failed to induct even a single 155mm gun for three decades. The overall artillery modernisation plan for 155mm/52-calibre guns, worth around Rs 1 lakh crore, incidentally, envisages the induction of 814 mounted, 1,580 towed, 180 wheeled and 100 tracked guns, among others.



# There was no intelligence input on Nagrota strike: Army



“There were no specific intelligence,” asserted the outgoing Northern Army Command chief Lt-General D S Hooda on Wednesday. Another top officer, who did not want to be identified, added: “Generalised intelligence alerts, which hold high-value targets are going to be attacked, are a routine practice in J&K. They are neither specific, nor actionable. In fact, I would call it a major intelligence failure, both on part of the intelligence agencies as well as the J&K Police.”

But the Army does agree that it will have to further refine its standard operating procedures as well as strengthen the perimeter security of its camps in J&K. “But

the government also has to allocate funds for strengthening the security infrastructure around military bases,” he said.

In its edition on Wednesday, TOI had reported that both the defence ministry as well as the armed forces have largely failed to act on the comprehensive recommendations of the tri-Service committee, headed by former Army vice-chief Lt-General Philip Campose, which had submitted its report six months ago. The Campose committee, which was constituted after the terror attack on the Pathankot airbase in January, has held there are several gaping holes in the existing security arrangements around the majority of military

bases and installations around the country.

“But for every one successful strike by terrorists, there are around 30 that we manage to thwart in J&K. I wish we could succeed all the time but this is the nature of the battle. We have to accept some setbacks,” said Lt-Gen Hooda, who retired on Wednesday, while talking exclusively to media. “Can we do better? Yes, we can. We take our casualties seriously. We, more than anyone, mourn over them. The Army will learn lessons and apply them. Army camps, of course, are high-visibility targets for terrorists that grab a lot of media attention, while civilian targets generate the opposite sentiment,” he added.

But after the Pathankot, Uri and Nagrota terror attacks, several questions are being asked about the heavy casualties the Army is taking in such encounters without learning the requisite lessons. In contrast, the terrorists, with active help and reconnaissance by local sympathisers, seem to have fine-tuned their strategy. Such attacks, of course, are not a recent phenomenon. The deadliest such attack was the massacre at the Kaluchak camp in May 2002, which left 31 people dead and many more wounded, at the height of the Army’s forward deployment during Operation Parakram after the terror strike on Parliament in December 2001.

After the initial assault plan against Pakistan in January 2002 was deferred, India came close to war for the second time that year after the Kaluchak incident.

(Agencies) New Delhi : The Army has rejected reports that there were specific intelligence inputs about the impending terror attack on the artillery regiment compound in Nagrota, which left two officers and five soldiers dead on Tuesday. However, it did not deny lapses in ensuring proper perimeter security of the camp.

## India is far away from being a cashless economy. Here’s why

(Agencies) A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that to curb black money in circulation Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes would no longer be recognised as legal tender, finance minister Arun Jaitley added a new gloss to the decision. He announced that this currency swap would “not merely nudge the economy in the direction of cashless economy but [give it] a significant push in that direction.” Economic affairs secretary Shaktikanta Das echoed this in an interview, explaining that this move was part of a larger agenda to move India into a digital economy. These calls reached a crescendo in Modi’s monthly radio address, where he asked citizens to take a pledge to be part of a cashless society. But do the preconditions for a successful transition to digital banking exist? The numbers paint a stark portrait. As of last



week, there were 256 million no-frills ‘Jan Dhan’ accounts, roughly one for every household, under the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). The scheme also promised to provide every new account holder with RuPay debit cards, with 195 million cards being issued so far. While the finance ministry must be given due credit, the Modi administration appears to have conflated outputs with outcomes. Just as building more schools does not improve literacy rates, opening accounts does not empower citizens to make digital financial

transactions. Key demand and supply-side gaps remain: 23% of PMJDY accounts lie empty. A recent investigation from September found that 10 million accounts held only Re. 1, as bank officials took matters into their own hands to reduce their branch’s share of zero-balance accounts. A survey of PMJDY customers conducted by a financial inclusion consultancy found that only 33% of all beneficiaries were ready to use their Rupay cards. The others were bewildered by the complicated PIN and activation procedures. Inconsistent

electricity and sporadic internet access further eroded customers’ trust in ATMs and POS machines, with one failed transaction enough to make an entire village swear off formal financial institutions. This is as much a structural constraint as it is logistical. Card acceptance infrastructure struggles to keep pace with India’s growing population: in 2014, there were 18 ATMs and 13 commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults – in comparison, the number in Brazil was 129 and 47 respectively. Between 2013 and 2015, debit cards grew twice as fast as the number of POS machines and one-and-a-half times the number of ATMs, with the majority of new infrastructure taking root in urban centres. India’s modern banking system maps neatly onto social and spatial inequalities.



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## Deposit Rs 600 crore by February 6 or surrender, Supreme Court to Sahara chief Subrata Roy

(Agencies) New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday asked Sahara Group chief Subrata Roy to deposit Rs 600 crore more by February 6 next year in the SEBI-Sahara refund account to remain out of jail and cautioned him that in case of failure, he would have to return to prison.

A bench comprising Chief Justice T S Thakur and Justices Ranjan Gogoi and A K Sikri also said that it may consider appointing a "receiver" of properties if the group finds itself unable to sell them to pay back dues to the investors.

"If you (Sahara Group) are unable to sell properties, then the court would be

comfortable to appoint a receiver," the bench said, adding it also did not want to keep a person in jail.

The bench, initially, asked senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing Roy, to deposit Rs 1,000 crore with market regulator SEBI in two months or it will appoint a receiver, but later reduced the money to be deposited to Rs 600 crore till February 6, 2017.

At the outset, Sibal said the group has deposited the money in pursuance of an earlier direction and filed a fresh re-payment plan to the court which asked senior advocate Arvind Datar, appearing

for SEBI, and another senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, the amicus curiae, to file their response.

The bench said the case, which is pending since 2012+, has a "history" and asked SEBI and the amicus curiae to respond to the question as to whether the group is entitled to any further benefit in its re-payment schedule.

The group said that it has assets to the tune of Rs 1.87 lakh crore and "now you are unable to pay the dues", the bench observed and asked Sibal about the amount deposited by Roy after he came out of jail following the death of his



mother.

"I have deposited Rs 1,200 crore after that," Sibal said, adding, "Rs 11,000-odd crore has been deposited and around Rs 11,036 crore is remaining".

## Union cabinet simplifies visa regime

(Agencies) The Union cabinet on Wednesday approved merger of existing tourist, business, medical and conference visa categories to make one comprehensive long-term multiple entry visa category.

The cabinet also decided that citizens of eight more countries will be eligible for e-tourist visa on arrival. Already citizens of 155 countries are eligible for e-tourist visa.

A government statement said the cabinet approved liberalisation, simplification and rationalisation of the existing visa regime.

Under the new non-permanent, non-working comprehensive visa category tourists, businessmen or people coming for medical treatment or to attend conferences or even for film shoots will be covered. The visa will be given for 10 years with multiple entry facility, said a government official.

The official added that except those covered under 10-year travel and trade visa policy, citizens of other countries would be



offered five-year multiple visa for travel and trade. Further, if the stay is restricted to 60 days on a visit, the government may waive the visa fee as well. But to meet security concerns, the government will seek biometric details of the visitors.

The cabinet approval came following discussions among all stakeholders that included ministries of home, commerce and external affairs. The original proposal for liberalisation of visa regime came from commerce ministry. A government statement said the decision considerably ease the travel of foreigners to India for the above-mentioned legitimate purposes. Package for PoK refugee families Meanwhile, the Union cabinet also approved a Rs 2,000 crore development package for displaced people of Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK) living in J&K and Chammb. The package includes approval for home ministry's proposal to provide enhanced financial aid to 36,384 families. Each of these families will get around Rs 5.5 lakh as aid.

## Indian economy grows 7.3% in September quarter, but note ban cloud looms

(Agencies) India's economy expanded at 7.3% in the September quarter, the fastest rate among major economies, but growth could tank at least over the next few months because of the government's demonetisation drive.

The July-September growth rate announced on Wednesday is higher than 7.1% registered in the first quarter of this fiscal, but lower than 7.6% recorded in the corresponding period the previous year. Still it was higher than China's 6.7%. "Investment is down substantially and that needs to be watched ... but overall steady trend of growth," the government's chief economic adviser, Arvind Subramanian, said.

Government officials attributed the growth of the GDP, which stands at Rs 29.63 lakh crore, to higher output in agriculture and construction.

At the growth rate failed to mask the misery inflicted by the government's surprise move to abolish 500- and 1,000-rupee notes

from November 9, sucking out 86% of the cash in circulation. The shock therapy for tax dodgers and counterfeiters has left compa-



nies, farmers and households suffering.

The outlook for upcoming quarters is not encouraging as the demonetisation drive dented consumer spending, which makes up 55% of Asia's third-largest economy.

Finance minister Arun Jaitley expects a minor impact lasting for a quarter or two. Private economists, however, reckon the impact would be felt through 2018.

Fitch Ratings has already lowered the forecast from 7.4% to 6.9% for the fiscal. The most pessimistic forecast, from Mumbai-

based brokerage Ambit Capital, is for a precipitous drop to 3.5% growth.

"Impact of demonetisation in the third quarter is based on a considerable amount of uncertainty. Since we are in uncharted waters, we need to wait for data and need to put in a lot of analysis before we know the impact," chief economic adviser Subramanian said.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) pointed out that the numbers point to "continuing dependence on consumption and public spending to revive demand, while investments are showing a declining trend as compared to last year".

Saugata Bhattacharya, the chief economist of Axis Bank, followed a similar line. "The numbers show that growth is still dependent on government spending. It is a little surprising that agriculture growth was lower than expected." However, CII director general Chandrajit Banerjee held out hope, saying demonetisation would be a temporary setback.

## Son has no legal right in parents' house, can stay at their mercy: Delhi HC

(Agencies) A son, irrespective of his marital status, has no legal right to live in the self-acquired house of his parents and can reside there only at their "mercy", the Delhi high court has said. The court also said only because parents have allowed the son to live in their house as long as their relations are cordial does not mean they have to bear his "burden" throughout his life.

"Where the house is self-acquired house of the parents, son whether married or unmarried, has no legal right to live in that house and he can live in that house only at the mercy of his parents up to the time the parents allow," justice Pratibha Rani said in an order.

"Merely because the parents have allowed him to live in the house so long as his relations with the parents were cordial does not mean that the parents have to bear his burden throughout his life," the court said. It said this while dismissing an appeal by a man and his wife challenging the order of a trial court that had passed a decree in favour of his parents, who had filed a suit seeking a direction to their son and daughter-in-law to vacate the floors in their possession.

The parents, both senior citizens, had told the lower court that both their sons and daughters-in-law, who were living with them, have made their "life hell" after which they had given complaints to the police and also issued public notices in 2007 and 2012 debarring them from their self-acquired property. Both the sons and daughters-in-law had contested the suit before the trial court while denying the allegations. They had also claimed that they were the co-owners of the property as they had contributed towards its purchase and construction.





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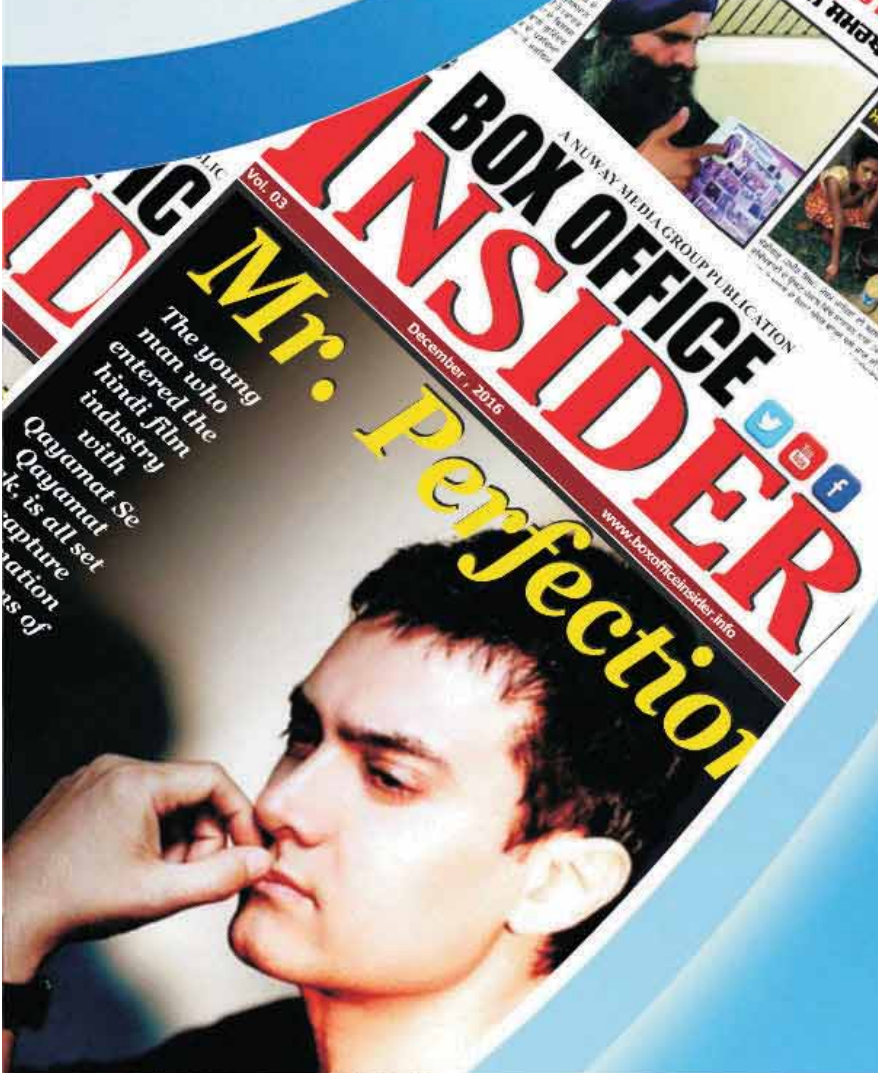
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## Sandeep Mathrani, Indian-American real estate executive might join Donald Trump team

(By a staff Reporter) US President-elect

Donald Trump has met a top Indian-American real estate executive amid reports of him joining the new admin-



istration. Sandeep Mathrani, 54, the Chief Executive Officer of General Growth Properties, met the President-elect at the Trump Towers in New York yesterday. The presidential transition team, except for announcing the scheduled meeting, did not issue a readout of the meeting Trump had with Mathrani, real estate executive from Chicago, the hometown of outgoing President Barack Obama. Local media reports speculated that Mathrani could join Trump administration. According to Chicago Business, Mathrani earned USD 39.2 million last year, more than any other CEO of a US real estate investment trust.

## Veterans Day celebrated by Indian American community

(By a staff Reporter) During the beautiful week of Thanksgiving, as Holiday season started, members of Indian American Community joined together and started initiative for Veterans families in USA. Collections for Veterans Families was started by NY State Senator Kemp Hannon in Garden City, Long Island. Several members of IAF, IALI, AAPIQLI, Ladies Club and other groups started collecting non-perishable items to be sent as donations to soldiers and veterans of US Army. Donations were given on Nov 22 at Senior Bethpage Community



Center in Hicksville Long Island. IAF Massapequa accepted the donations on behalf of the Veterans Group. Senator Bethpage Center every fourth Tuesday of Hannon praised the efforts of the Indian the month. Mr Richard Olson, President of Adopt a Battalion Program in for this initiative.

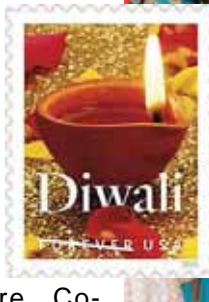
## Diwali Stamp to be celebrated at the United Nations

(By a staff reporter ) New York - "Light over Darkness" and "Good over Evil"; embedded in a USPS Diwali Forever Stamp, will be celebrated at the United Nations.

In an open invite, general public is invited to witness this "Once-In-A-Lifetime-Event", on Monday, December 5, 2016 6:30 pm, to celebrate the Diwali Stamp & Ranju Batra, chair, Diwali Stamp Project. UN Member states of Belarus and India are Co-Organizers of this event. Event is Co-Sponsored by Kazakhstan, Germany, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Sri Lanka,



**Ranju Batra, Chair of Diwali Stamp Project was honored for her efforts by New York City Council.**



Palestine, Kuwait, Morocco, Georgia, who wishes to attend; should RSVP ranjubatra@aol.com by 12/2/16 and & many other countries. Anyone one be part of this historic UN event.

## New Immigration rules make H-1B friendlier until Donald Trump

(By a staff Reporter) Chicago: Even as broader uncertainty looms over the fate of the H-1B visas under the incoming Donald Trump administration, some recent changes by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) make them friendlier to those already on them.

"The immigration authorities have now clarified that that is not the case ending what many thought was an inhuman provision," a Silicon Valley based head of an accounting firm and an expert in immigration issues, told media. Under its Final Rule published on November 18, 2016, which will be effective from January 17, 2017, the USCIS will now allow terminated H-1B workers a grace period of 60 days to either leave or sort out their paperwork for new jobs. Another change will also prevent the revocation of I-140 by employers for those employees who have held it for more 180 days but whose services were terminated.

What this does is help such employees not lose their turn in the protracted green card process once they change over to new jobs. One more significant change that the USCIS has announced relates to employment authorisation for H4 visa holders who come as spouses of H-1B visa holders. Under this change, those H4 workers will not have to wait for the approval of their extension for them to continue working.



The USCIS will now allow terminated H-1B visa holders a grace period of 60 days to either leave or sort out their paperwork for new jobs. Although the existing rules did not explicitly state that the terminated H-1B worker had to leave immediately, there have been cases where such H-1B workers had to find a way to leave the country immediately. Decision-making in such cases came down to the individual discretion of the immigration officer.



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# A new general in GHQ

**Qamar Javed Bajwa's challenge: To turn Pak army into a less-publicity driven, more normal organisation.**



In fact, General Sharif turned into a pied piper himself, fighting the battle against corruption through public announcements of disciplinary action against some of his officers, or by drawing a link between terrorism and corruption. Like other parts of South Asia, this message had traction amongst the ordinary people in Pakistan. But the fact that society was not ready for the military taking control of the state, nor was the army prepared to do the same, was one of the reasons that a coup did not happen. In this respect, the selection of Qamar Javed Bajwa as the new army chief is important. According to sources, the general was Nawaz

Sharif's second choice rather than the outgoing army chief's pick. Not that the new chief, out of indebtedness to the prime minister for his selection, would entirely de-politicise the army. Probably, the political government's expectation is for the new chief to agree to remain neutral during the 2018 general elections. The past three years of General Sharif witnessed cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan's political party, the PTI, shooting to prominence.

Amid the growing frustration of the people with the PML-N's centralised style of governance and allegations of corruption encouraged due to politics being turned into a family business,

Imran Khan's sit-ins of 2014 and 2016 received a lot of national and international attention. Imran Khan in Pakistan represents an iconic figure, who has right-wing support with parts of the life-styled liberals also in tow. This has similarities to Modi's India with the primary difference being that Pakistan's political system is not as advanced as India's to have allowed Khan to overtake the older parties politically. While he kept referring to the possibility of army intervention as the "umpire raising its finger", Imran Khan was unable to muster an impressive number of people to follow him out on the streets during his famous dharnas (sit-ins).

Sartaj Aziz, the Pakistan Prime Minister's advisor on foreign relations, plans to attend the "Heart of Asia" conference. Although there seems very little to talk about on both sides, many around the world will be watching if Aziz brings something fresh to the discussion table now that a new general has replaced General Raheel Sharif at the GHQ.

Domestically in Pakistan, there is an expectation of relative lowering of temperature in

civil-military tensions that peaked during the three years of General Sharif. The former army chief's tenure was akin to a tempestuous love affair for a select segment of society. The emerging elite, the upper middle class and the new political power centre found psychological refuge in the idea of a man they thought would shift the game of civilian political power from old players like Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari to new ones such as Imran Khan.

## If India Rebuffs Sartaj Aziz, Pak Will Have What It Wants



Sartaj Aziz, Pakistan's octogenarian National Security Adviser and de facto Foreign Minister, is well-inured against being snubbed by India. In his earlier incarnation as Pakistan's de jure Foreign Minister, he fetched up in New Delhi uninvited in the middle of the Kargil war. As Sartaj tells it in his revealing autobiography, *Between Dreams and Reality* (OUP, Karachi, 2009), written in his wilderness years when Musharraf had ousted Nawaz Sharif and Sartaj, "The atmosphere of the dialogue was unusually cool and somber. The two ministers did not even exchange niceties like handshakes or customary hugs. A bitter atmosphere hung over the talks, as the tension prevailed all over the Indian capital." The report in Pakistan's *The Nation*, which Aziz quotes, described Jaswant's statements to the press as "curt, abrasive".

Thus, Sartaj would find it a bit *deja vu* if Modi and his team were to give him the cold shoulder when he fetches up in Amritsar on December 3 for the annual Heart of Asia conference. Our Foreign Office spokesman, in an

unusually blunt statement, has let it be known that such indeed is the treatment being readied for Sartaj: "It would be better to woo Pakistanis to end his government's policy of state sponsorship of terror" as "talks and terror cannot go together".

Sartaj, for his part, is only too willing to take it on the chin because he knows that this will only reinforce the point he is making to the world by coming to Amritsar at all. First, he wants the world to know that, in sharp contrast to India, Pakistan is not in the game of tit-for-tat diplomacy. For where India sabotaged the SAARC meeting that was to have been held in Islamabad earlier this month, Pakistan is intent on demonstrating that it is a "good South Asian" in searching for solutions to Afghanistan (however distant the prospect), which is the purported purpose of the Amritsar conference. Ironically, it was at precisely this same conference in Islamabad in December 2015, a year ago, that Sushma Swaraj and Sartaj Aziz signaled the thaw in the India-Pakistan freeze that led to Modi,

a few weeks later, dropping in dramatically on Lahore to say "Happy birthday" to Nawaz Sharif on Christmas (sorry, I mean "Good Governance Day"!)

Sartaj wants to emphasize to world opinion that Pakistan is willing and eager to talk to India and that it is India that is playing spoilsport.

New Delhi will, of course, spout its standard litany of complaints of all the awful things Pakistan has done to us since the Christmas-cheer of yesteryear that makes dialogue impossible with this renegade terrorist state. Alas, the world has heard us through several times before and remains unconvinced. Of course, they are quick to condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. And of course they are only too ready to do so in the specific context of Uri and Pathankot and Mumbai and the 2001 attack on parliament. But they also always, always add, either immediately before, or immediately after their implied reprimand to Pakistan, that India and Pakistan must sit together to sort out their differences. Pakistan's instant response is to underline that Pakistan, like Barkis, is willin' and it is Indian intransigence that keeps them from the negotiating table. They then get their interlocutors to invariably add two coda: one, that Pakistan is gamely fighting terrorism in its North-west region at a cost already of some 60,000 Pakistani lives; and, second, that Pakistan is, therefore the world's worst victim of terrorism. This gets Pakistan, Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar, and their respective orga-

nizations, completely off the hook, much to India's chagrin.

While, therefore, the world was with us when Sartaj was snubbed by Jaswant on his mid-Kargil visit to our capital, there is going to be little applause and less sympathy for India in the chancelleries of the world when we turn up our nose at Sartaj in Amritsar. India would be regarded as the stick in the mud while Pakistan gets away with the image of being both a warrior against terror and a party only too willing to settle matters through dialogue with India. Of course, it will be added that Pakistan really must do something about India-directed terror sprung from Pakistani soil, but Pakistan can take the reprimand in its stride because it would by then have made the point that it is a reasonable, responsible country, waiting for India too to become reasonable and responsible.

This is not a prediction. It is based on what has actually happened in the wake of Uri. Nawaz Sharif and US Secretary of State John Kerry met in New York immediately after Uri and it is their joint statement that I have paraphrased in the previous paragraph. The State Department and White House spokesman have reiterated this line in several subsequent statements, particularly in response to obstreperous Indian newsmen attempting to make their mark at official US press briefings.

The Russians too have endorsed that line. Not only did Russia continue their unprecedented military exercises with Pakistan after Uri, but Moscow

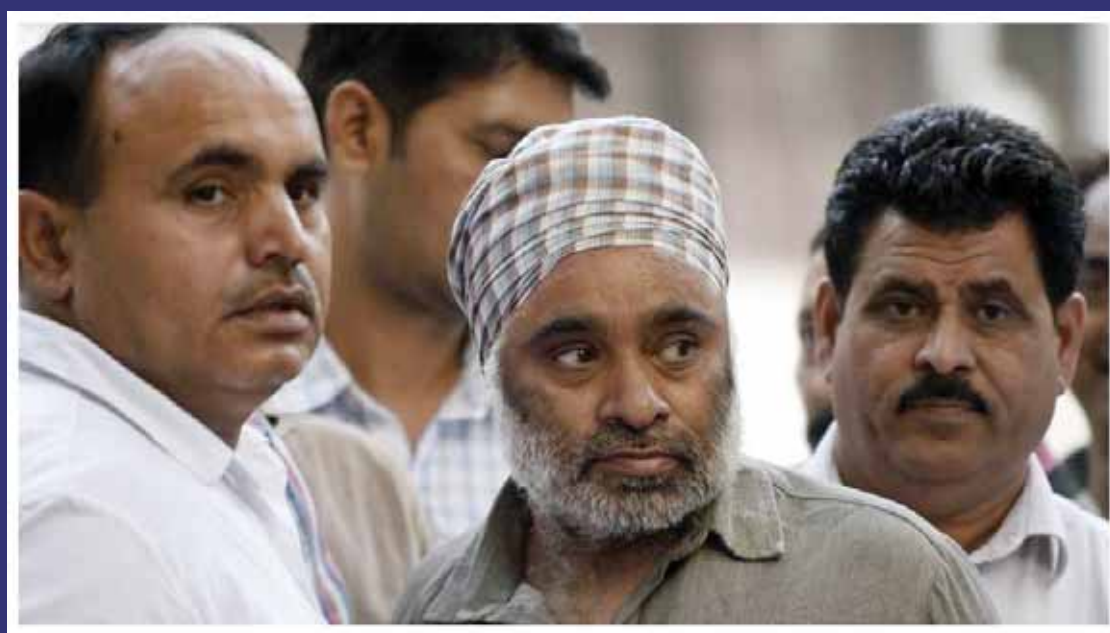
is displaying its enthusiasm to match India's diversification from Russia of its defence purchases by finding a new market for its arms and equipment in Pakistan. The final quietus to India's former "time-tested relationship" with the Soviet Union/Russia was delivered by Putin to Modi at the Goa BRICS summit when he refused to endorse Modi's plea for strong words against Pakistan.

In line with Washington (and implicitly Moscow), other western capitals from London to Paris to Berlin, and, of course, Beijing, are echoing the perception that this is the time for India and Pakistan to not turn their backs on each other but sit down and hammer out an agreement, however long it may take. Indeed, Beijing points to its own dialogue with India that has gone through 18 rounds and is nowhere near conclusion, but has ensured two decades of relative peace and tranquility at the border with no incident getting too far out of hand. It is widely acknowledged that getting to the goal of a satisfactory via media might be long, arduous and perhaps Sisyphean, but they desperately want South Asia's two nuclear giants to engage and not accidentally take the Sleepwalkers' descent that led the West into the massacres of the First World War (followed inevitably by the Second) only because in 1914, intransigence was privileged over accommodation. Hence, however loud or sharp the world's condemnation of Pak-sponsored terrorism, their bottom line is that New Delhi and Islamabad must talk.



(Agencies) Interrogation of Sikh militant leader Harminder Singh Mintoo has revealed that during his stay in Punjab's Nabha Jail he frequently received funds through Hawala from England's Lancaster, Canada and Germany to revive Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF) in Punjab before the state's upcoming assembly elections, police said.

Mintoo told interrogators that the funding was done on the instructions of Ranjeet Singh Neeta, chief of terrorist organisation Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF). A native of Jammu and Kashmir, Neeta is presently operating from Pakistan. His KZF has close links with Pakistan spy



## Mintoo received funds through Hawala from England, Germany, Canada for KLF revival

agency ISI, and is committed to joint action with Jammu and Kashmir terrorist groups, notably the Hizbul Mujahideen.

Another Sikh separatist group leader Harpreet Singh aka Happy is also based in Pakistan, and is working in close co-ordination

with the ISI. Mintoo had met him in Malaysia in 2009 on directives of Neeta. Like Neeta, Mintoo received funds through the ISI's Hawala network in India and other countries.

During the interrogation, a senior police officer said, Mintoo

claimed that he was frequently having video chats with Neeta and Harpreet through Skype and WhatsApp from the prison. He was also using a cell phone in the jail to contact them and his other KLF's members based in other countries such as Thailand,

Malaysia, Germany.

According to Mintoo's claims, the funding from Lancaster was done by Neeta's close confidant, a former member of Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) who is now associated with KZF. The police refused to disclose his

name. They, however, said that Mintoo was introduced to the Lancaster resident in Malaysia in 2008 by Neeta.

One Baljinder whom Mintoo had met in Canada was the latter's source of funding in Canada. Another BKI member, Jasvinder, was sending funds to Mintoo from Germany, said the officer.

Police said that the funds from the three countries were sent to a common contact in Khanna, a city in Ludhiana district in Punjab, through a famous money transfer service. This common contact that was introduced to all fund raisers by Jasvinder was taking help from Tejinder Sharma, owner of a sweetshop located just outside the Nabha jail, to send cash money and other communication gadgets to Mintoo in the jail, said police. Mintoo (49) was arrested in Delhi on Monday after fleeing from a Punjab prison a day before. The central intelligence agencies and Delhi Police officials are interrogating Mintoo to bust the entire network between ISI, KLF and KZF, and to unearth the conspiracy that the Pakistani spy agency had been planning through Mintoo.

## RBI restricts withdrawal limit on Jan Dhan accounts to Rs 10,000



(Agencies) The government clamped temporary restrictions on withdrawals from Jan Dhan accounts on Wednesday in a bid to stop people from parking illegal incomes in these accounts. In a notification, the Reserve Bank of India announced that Jan Dhan account holders fully compliant with bank transaction data norms will be allowed to withdraw Rs 10000 monthly. Further withdrawals may be allowed only after the "genuineness" of such needs was recorded by the bank. Any Jan Dhan account holder who isn't complaint with the "know your customer" norms will be allowed to withdraw ? 5,000 per month from the amount deposited through the old notes after November 9 "within the overall ceiling of ? 10,000". This comes after the government revealed the total deposits in the Jan Dhan accounts suddenly increased to

Rs 64,252.15 crore between November 10 and 16 – after the government announced the scrap-

ping of high-value banknotes. "With a view to protect innocent farmers and rural account holders of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana from activities of money launders and legal consequences under the Benami Property Transaction & Money Laundering laws, it has been decided to place certain limits, as a matter of precaution," the RBI notification read. Last Friday, the RBI had announced a weekly withdrawal ceiling of Rs 24,000 for all bank accounts. The government abruptly recalled all Rs 500 and

Rs 1000 notes – which made up 86% of the currency in circulation by value – three weeks ago in a bid to stamp out "black money". But a bumpy roll-out of the move has seen millions of people lined up outside banks and ATMs amid fears that thousands of jobs may be lost in India's large informal economy. Two weeks ago, the government announced it will monitor bank accounts, especially those of artisans, workers, housewives and the poor, and prosecute anyone allowing the parking of illegal

wealth of others. The finance ministry decision came after numerous reports that unscrupulous elements were using such accounts to stash "black money". The ministry would also monitor zero-balance accounts opened under the Jan Dhan scheme after a surge in the deposits of many of such accounts. The government had informed last week that among the deposits in PMJDY accounts, Uttar Pradesh led the chart with Rs 10,670.62 crore deposits followed by West Bengal and Rajasthan.

## Supreme Court orders status quo on Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal land

(Agencies) The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered status quo on land acquired for the construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal's stretch in Punjab and appointed the Union home secretary, Punjab's chief secretary and the director general of Police as receivers.

A bench of Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose and Justice Amitava Roy, however, made it clear that the receivers are only for the purposes of submitting a report on the ground situation.

The court order came on a plea by the Haryana government that sought status quo

ante in the wake of Punjab government's decision to denotify the acquired land and

unconstitutional the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004, passed by the state assembly. Following this, the Punjab government had de-notified nearly 5,000 acres of land acquired for the canal.

On November 16, The Punjab assembly directed the state government, its Council of Ministers and government officers and officials not to hand over land to any agency for the canal's construction.

The assembly resolved that the Punjab government should levy a cost on Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi for the water supplied to non-riparian states over the past many years.



restoring it to original owners. The Supreme Court had given its verdict on a Presidential reference on November 10 to hold as



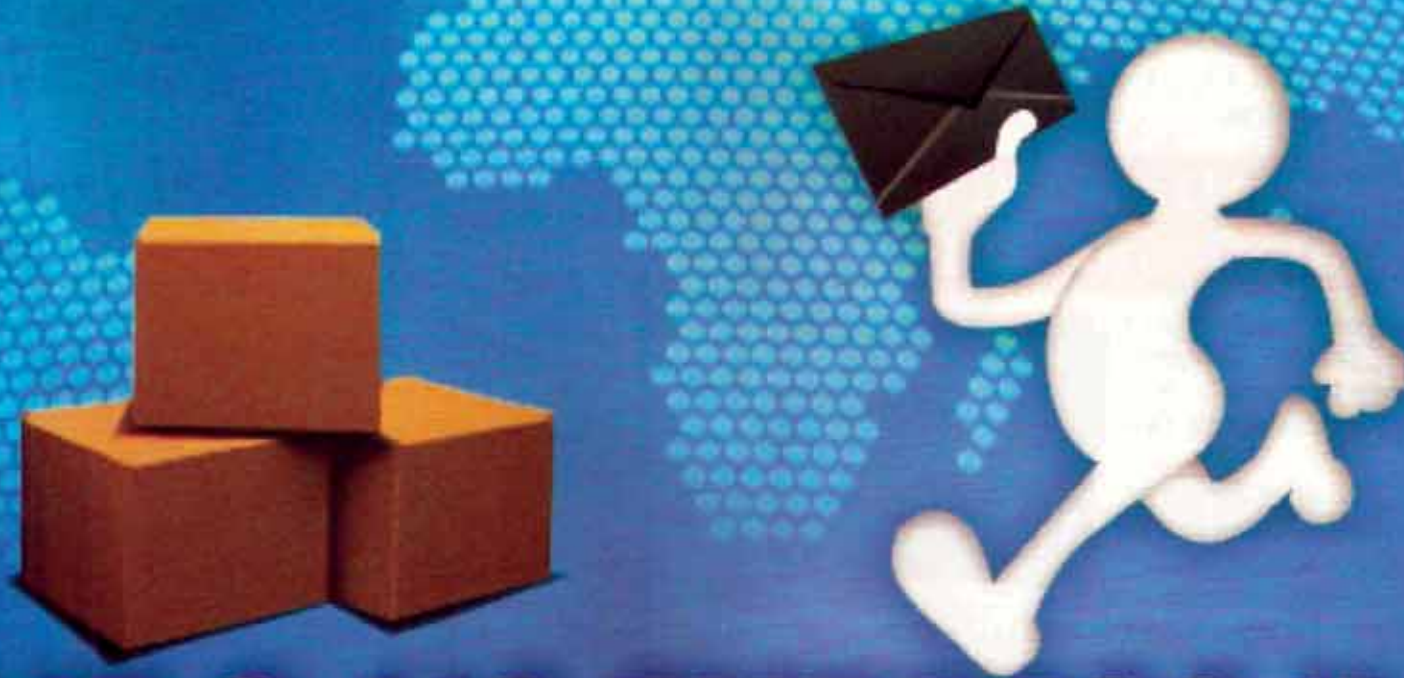
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# Shocked, Awed, Stuck In Cash Limbo

of them are going back to their villages, affecting production. November is part of the peak export season for units manufacturing curios, furnishing, gift items and seasonal wear, so the cash crunch could not have come at a worse time.

Bhardwaj fears many units may be crippled beyond recovery if the total conversion of demonetised currency takes six months as many fear. This is bound to affect the loan-repayment capacity of many units, leading to a rise in bank NPAs.

Praveen Kumar Anand, president of the Federation of Sadar Bazar Traders Association, laments the lack of cash flow, which drives the low-margin wholesale business. It has led to an almost 90 per cent dip in business. "Wholesalers don't favour a switch to digital or banking transactions," says Anand. "Our margins are 3-5 per cent on an average. Using a swipe machine or digital payment comes with transaction and rental charges, making it unviable. If the banks take 1.5-3 per cent as charges, how will we survive? Further, even if we want to do so, there are many small traders who are unwilling to transact except in cash for selling or buying products."

Anand points out that those who are selling without billing have an unfair advantage as the buyers often get swayed by the lure of paying 5-10 per

cent less without the tax component. While welcoming the government move aimed at cleaning up the parallel economy, traders were critical of the fact that "not even five paise out of Rs 100 collected as tax gets spent on public infrastructure, which are in poor shape compared to facilities in many countries we visit for business".

Devesh Rai, founder and CEO of B2B marketplace Wydr, says demonetisation has resulted in "a lot of white money too going out of the system, leading to a working capital crunch. Sales are down across sectors and it will take at least two months to get the liquidity back in the system."

Reporting 35 per cent dip in 'cash on delivery' transactions and overall 20 per cent dip in online sales, Rai admits card transactions can be limiting as there is a threshold for such operations. Currently, many of the high-value transactions are done through NEFT or RTGS, which have higher transaction costs. On top of this, there is a lack of wherewithal, knowledge and infrastructure to handle large volume transactions.

As households try to conserve new currency in hand, given the long queues in front of banks to withdraw money, the hardest hit are the contractors who undertake renovation of homes and offices with their retinue of painters, plumbers, electricians and daily-wage

helpers. "Extra expenses related to repairs, maintenance and renovation are being avoided. We are just carrying on with the work in hand. No new work is coming our way," says A.N. Das, a contractor, who is hopeful that things will improve in two or three months.

Achint Mittal, who owns the Muzaffarnagar-based R.R. Company, a wholesale business dealing in gur (jaggery), sugar, rice and pulses, hopes cash availability will improve soon as the weekly limit on bank withdrawals is proving to be a big handicap. "Farmers are hit as we are unable to make payments," he says. "There is already a 50-60 per cent drop in gur production. Even rice-milling work has been impacted as we are unable to procure enough stocks."

Mittal, who is also president of the Navin Mandi agri-produce wholesalers association, points out that farmers, on an average, bring produce worth Rs 50,000 to Rs 4 lakh to sell in the wholesale market. This is harvest season, so around 400-500 farmers come to the mandi every day. Not having sufficient cash is a major drawback as only the big farmers are able to sell their produce, on credit. The sale of stocks in hand is also moving slowly as even the retailers are not coming forth. Grappling with slow sales at their end, retailers are finding it tough to pay workers and manage other expenses with little cash in hand. The cash crunch is despite

there being sufficient legitimate money in their accounts, wholesalers complain. Even payments made through RTGS are inaccessible due to the withdrawal limit, making many businessmen "almost like beggars".

"The market is disturbed and business affected as most transactions used to take place in cash," says Bharat Ahuja, president of the Delhi Electrical Traders Association. "Outstation customers have stopped coming. Even the credit buyers are facing problems with banks not releasing the money in their account."

Operating from Bhagirath Palace, Ahuja says the desired transition to cashless sales will take time as there is hardly any provision for card payment in around 4,500 shops housed in the market complex.

Indeed, cash transactions, whether accounted or unaccounted, have for long ruled many a business in India—from cloth to leather, gems and jewelry, vegetables and fruits. A rapid transition to digital or online payments seems unlikely even if the proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST) is introduced. Already cash transactions in new currency are beginning to slowly replace what was put out of circulation by demonetisation. Will the government then offer incentives to woo the business class to adopt the digital mode? Or is another surgical strike in the offing

## Box Office Blues In Bollywood

Rock On 2 ended up doing a business of a paltry Rs 10.50 crore, becoming one of the biggest commercial duds in recent years. The next big release, John Abraham-Sonakshi Sinha starrer, Force 2, another sequel of a 2011 money-spinner, fared better than Rock On 2, collecting about Rs 21 crore over the weekend, thanks largely to the coordinated attempts by the producers and the multiplex owners to promote online ticket booking in a big way. Film trade analysts, however, believe Force 2 could have done better business had the currency crisis not happened.

The failure of the two big movies has left the industry worried. With four major films, including Shah Rukh Khan's Dear Zindagi and Aamir Khan's Dangal, lined up for release over the next few weeks, Bollywood is keeping its fingers crossed. Pahlaj Nihalani, chairman, Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) tells Outlook that the film makers would do well not to release their movies until December 30. "The average man is still facing the cash crunch -because of the Rs 2,000 limit on withdrawals from the ATMs," he says.

Nihalani, in fact, has issued an appeal to the producers and distributors "not to be adventurous enough to release their ventures and burn their fingers in this period of uncertainty".

Nihalani believes that the cash crisis situation is likely to ease off after

December 30, the deadline fixed by the Modi government for the exchange of old notes. "We must wait for the situation to stabilise and for liquidity to return to the economy before we can expect movies to do well," he states.

The maker of many a commercial hit in the 1980s and 1990s, warns the producers that their new films will be "destroyed" if they dare to release them in the coming weeks. "Those who try to play clever by trying their luck in such uncertain times will destroy their own products and only burn their fingers," he says.

But it is easier said than done. Noted film trade analyst Komal Nahta says it's not easy to defer the release of a film at the eleventh hour. "The release date of a new movie, especially a big one, cannot be simply put off on account of issues such as promotion and clash with other films," he says. Nahta, however, agrees that the cash crunch has already harmed both the sequels of Rock On and Force in the past fortnight. "Demonetisation has surely kept the audiences away from the theatres, but then, the content of the film also matters. A film like Rock On 2 would have flopped anyway," he says. "The common man is much more concerned about the daily needs of his family with the little amount he is able to withdraw from the ATMs. Buying movie tickets for entertainment is certainly not his priority

at the moment."

According to Nahta, the impact of the ban on old currencies will be felt on all the movies slated for release over the next month. "But its real impact will be properly assessed only after the box-office verdict on Shah Rukh Khan's Dear Zindagi comes," he states. "It is a big film which is being released only a week after Force 2."

Owing to Shah Rukh's huge fan following, the industry expects his latest release to come out unscathed from the troubled times. Shah Rukh, whose films are known to be big successes at the box office both in the country and abroad, also has a lot at stake in his new film directed by Gauri Shinde of the English Vinglish fame

But Shah Rukh's movie is not the only mega project facing the litmus test of demonetisation in the days to come. In subsequent weeks, Vidya Balan's comeback vehicle, Kahaani 2 (another sequel), Yashraj Films' Befikre, directed by the reclusive Aditya Chopra and, above all, Aamir Khan's Dangal, are all slated for release before the year-end. Regardless of Nihalani's suggestions, the release of none of these movies is likely to be deferred -because of commercial complications.

Curiously, even though demonetisation has stanching box office earnings, Bollywood has hailed Modi's move in unison. Ajay Devgn's Diwali

release, Shivaay was all set to enter the Rs 100-crore club in its third week in the domestic market when Modi's demonetisation gambit put paid to his hopes. Not only that, it also held up the shooting of his next film, Baadshaho.

Still, Devgn was the first among Bollywood personalities to sing paeans to demonetisation calling it a 'historic step' and a 'masterstroke'. "Sau sonar ki, ek lohar ki (One solid stroke instead of piecemeal gestures)," he tweeted. Devgn admitted that his film was suffering because of demonetisation but he found the inconvenience trivial in view of the national interest.

Aamir Khan, too, says he has not been affected by demonetisation at all. "I had to face no trouble because all my money is in the bank and payments are through cheques," said the 51-year-old actor, who was recently in Haryana attending the wedding of wrestler Geeta Phogat, on whose family his upcoming movie is based.

Like Aamir, most of the Bollywood stars appear to be unruffled by demonetisation. Nahta says most of the stars deal in white money now and transactions are done through cheques only. Nihalani says that stars such as Akshay Kumar and Salman Khan are among the highest individual tax payers in the country. "Gone are the days when it was said that Dawood Ibrahim finances Hindi movies," he says.



# The reality behind Russia's fake news

The Kremlin has consistently denied it tried to interfere in the election.

Two new studies that were cited by media outlets, including the Washington Post, claim Russia used "thousands of botnets, teams of paid human 'trolls,' and networks of websites and social-media accounts" to "echo and amplify" false or misleading tweets, Facebook posts, videos and media reports.

The first study -- "Trolling for Trump: How Russia is Trying to Destroy Our Democracy" -- appeared in early November in War on the Rocks, an online magazine.

"Russia's propaganda mechanisms primarily aim for 'alt-right and more traditional right-wing and fascist parties,' Clint Watts, one of the co-authors of the paper, told CNN, but they're also 'hitting across any group in the United States that is anti-government, or fomenting dissent or conspiracies against the US govern-

ment and its institutions."

Watts, a fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute and senior fellow at the Center for Cyber and Homeland Security at George Washington University co-authored the study alongside two other researchers, Andrew Weisburd and J.M. Berger.

"It's not exclusive to Trump," Watts explains. "They are huge in the white nationalist community. That's where we saw them before they went to Trump. And then they try on the left as well."

Watts says that, during the election campaign, three main groups traded in fake news: passionate Trump supporters; people out to make money by driving followers to their websites with "click bait" stories; and the Russian propaganda apparatus.

Each group used social platforms differently and the research team used various social media metrics to distinguish

the behavior among them. Content from "click bait profiteers," for example, is absorbed in a different way to propaganda content. "If you're just trying to sell something it's more like an Amazon advertisement," Watts explains. "The Russian propaganda system would have what you would call 'horizontal conversations' -- a discussion for influence purposes."

That doesn't mean Moscow would turn down an opportunity to exploit fake news created by someone else who supports the Russian line.

"They'll use it too," he says. "They see it as free propaganda."

But importantly, Watts says, Russia's goal wasn't just to elect Trump. "The goal is to erode trust in mainstream media, public figures, government institutions -- everything that holds the unity of the Republic together."

The second study was conducted by an anonymous, self-described "non-par-

tisan collection of researchers with foreign policy, military and technology backgrounds" who call themselves PropOrNot.

The group says it, too, analyzed tweets and other social media messages ricocheting around the web and found many of the same phrases, which it interpreted as indicating that they came from the same single source.

In some cases, fake news was spread knowingly; in other cases, activists and others simply picked up and passed on tidbits they liked, in what the authors describe as an "online echo chamber." Their conclusion: Russia has made "large-scale, long-term efforts to build online 'fake news' propaganda outlets with significant audiences in the US." "We are not exaggerating Russia's influence," the group told CNN in an emailed statement. "Many different groups spew fake news but Russia is currently the industry leader."

## *Everybody's fleeing India these days to evade proceedings : Supreme Court* Bharara to 'Stay On' as US attorney

Expressing the Centre's inability to take action, solicitor general Ranjit Kumar told the bench that the government did not have details of her passport and steps to bring her back could be taken only after details were provided to it. The bench, however, said it was the Centre which had issued passport to her and it could easily get information about her. "It is your job to bring her back to face proceedings in court. You tell us how and when you are bringing

her back... Passport and immigration come under you. Somewhere we are getting a feeling that you are not interested in getting her back," the bench said. The SG said the passport was handed over by UP police to her on the direction of the SC and the Centre was not involved in it. He, however, assured the court that the government could revoke the passport within 24 hours after getting her details. The court granted the Centre time till December 15.

He also asked that I stay on, and so I expect that I will be continuing to work at the southern district," Bharara said in the lobby of Trump's Fifth Avenue skyscraper following their 40-minute powwow.

Bharara, who earned the moniker "The Sheriff of Wall Street" for his aggressive prosecution of bankers, also heaped praise on his own office. "The president-elect asked, presumably because he's a New Yorker and is aware of the great work that our office has done over the past seven years," Bharara said.

## What Donald Trump Might Do for Working-Class Families

Among the rare areas of agreement in the aftermath of a contentious presidential election: Families with working parents, especially those with lower incomes, are having too hard a time.

Many can no longer count on lives that look like the ones their parents led. High-paying manufacturing jobs have been disappearing, especially for men. Fewer people are marrying, and more children are growing up in unstable families. Parents are struggling to work while raising children.

President-elect Donald J. Trump vowed to help the working class, and blue-collar whites in particular helped propel him to victory. Although quite a few economists disagree with him on the merits of his prescriptions, he has said cutting taxes, restricting immigration and renegotiating trade deals will ultimately raise incomes of struggling families.

Mr. Trump has said he understands the needs of working parents. "These solutions must update laws passed more than half a century ago when most women were still not in the labor force," he said in September in a speech unveiling his child care proposals.

is daughter Ivanka has pushed ideas like paid leave and seems to be taking a role in devising new policies. In a statement last week, she said she was distancing herself from certain aspects of her company in order to "broaden her efforts to take a stance on issues of critical importance to American women and families." Which policies will Mr. Trump pursue to directly address the needs of working and working-class families? A look at what he has said — along with the wish lists of Republicans in Congress, scholars and advisers — provides some clues.

### Paid Maternity Leave

A striking thing happened during the campaign: For the first time, both Republican and Democratic candidates made paid family leave a part of their policy agenda. As recently as 2014, Hillary Clinton said of paid leave, "I don't think, politically, we could get it now." Now it could find bipartisan support.

Mr. Trump has proposed six weeks of paid maternity leave, which he said would offer "a crucial safety net for working mothers." Currently, 87 percent of workers get no paid family leave, and 95 percent of those in the lowest quarter of earners get

none, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Most Americans support a paid leave policy. It can ease the burdens on families with two working parents and increase the likelihood that parents stay in the labor force. Still, the details could prove contentious. Should fathers also get leave, or just mothers? What about gay or adoptive parents, and people who need to care for sick children or aging relatives? And how should it be paid for?

Mr. Trump's proposal would apply only to new mothers, and he said he would pay for it with savings from reducing unemployment insurance fraud, though it's unclear how that would work.

The Family Act, a Democrat-sponsored bill stalled in Congress, proposes paying for it with a small increase in payroll taxes. Republicans have previously proposed giving businesses a tax credit for providing paid leave, but making it voluntary. "If he structures it in a way that it's not a burden on businesses and does not work against women's work force participation, I think more Republicans will get behind it," said Aparna Mathur, a resident scholar in

economic policy at the American Enterprise Institute.

Democrats have argued that by limiting parental leave to new mothers, Mr. Trump ignores the role fathers play in raising children, exposes women to discrimination in hiring and neglects the needs of people with ailing or elderly family members. "It was fantastic to see the Republicans stepping up and having this debate," said Heather Boushey, the executive director of the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, who was the chief economist for Hillary Clinton's transition team. "It really spoke to how important these issues are in terms of economic policy. But I hope that the actual policies are really grounded more in the evidence of what works than what he's put out so far." Another policy that analysts say is important to working-class families is paid sick leave, so that workers can care for themselves or for ill family members. It's unclear whether Mr. Trump will push for it. Thirty-five percent of workers over all and 66 percent of those in the bottom quartile of income get no paid sick leave. Some Republicans have instead proposed letting certain workers — those in the private sector who are not exempt from overtime laws — substitute time off for overtime pay.



# How to Manipulate Donald Trump

He's an emotional weakling, and his recent interviews give us models for dealing with it.

This week, in a volley of angry tweets, Donald Trump ridiculed the “badly defeated ... Dems,” claimed he “won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally,” and said anyone who burned the American flag should lose his or her citizenship or spend a year in jail. Trump's outbursts set off alarms. How could he believe such nonsense about voter fraud? Why would a man who had just been elected president gloat, threaten protesters, and insult half the country? What's going on in his messed-up head?

To understand Trump, you have to set aside the scripted speeches he gave before his election and the canned videos he has released since. You also have to set aside the caricature of him as a Klan-loving, Nazi-sympathizing woman hater who will deport every immigrant he can find. Instead, look at the four interviews he has given since his election: to the Wall Street Journal, 60 Minutes, the New York Times, and a group of TV anchors and executives. In these exchanges, all of them conducted outside the behavior-warping context of the campaign, you'll see how squishy he is. Trump did run a despicable campaign, and he's a menace to the country and the world. But it's not because he's a strongman. It's because he's a weakling.

That's the short version. The longer story is more complicated. Here are the various facets of Trump's personality, how they fit together, and why they make him dangerous.

1. He's all about reciprocal love. In the campaign, Trump often played on fear and hate. He targeted Muslims, refugees, undocumented immigrants, and any other scapegoat that served his interests. But deep down, what he wanted was the love of his adoring crowds. Emotionally, he's a child. He can love others, but only if they love him first. And that's how he sees his presidency. In his interview with the Times on Nov. 22, he explained that his job is “taking care of the people that really have proven to be—to love Donald Trump.”

2. His reflexes are vindictive. When Trump was down in the polls, he railed against Hillary Clinton, the press, and fellow Republicans. On election night, he said those grudges were over. But they weren't. In post-election tweets, he berated CNN, Saturday Night Live, and the cast of Hamilton. He blasted Democrats for supporting ongoing recounts, even after they conceded the election and said they just wanted to make sure the recounts were fair. He summoned TV executives to Trump Tower on Nov. 21, called them the “dishonest media,” and scolded them for underestimating him. The next day, in his meeting with the Times, he bragged that he had stiffed job requests and pleas for



campaign help from two Republican Senate candidates who had failed to support him. That's how Trump behaves on his political honeymoon. Imagine what he'll do when the going gets rough.

3. His ego is fragile. After winning the Republican nomination in May, Trump gloated about it for months. Now he's gloating about the election. In tweets and interviews, he has crowed that he beat Clinton “easily.” On Tuesday, he ran another victory lap, trumpeting the addition of Michigan to his “landslide.” To understand how central this is to Trump's sense of himself, check out the first 19 paragraphs of his interview with the Times. Invited by the publisher to give opening remarks, Trump spoke at length, not about the future but about his genius and prowess on the campaign trail. In his Nov. 11 interview with 60 Minutes, he bragged about the number of Twitter followers he had gained.

A president-elect who is self-assured doesn't behave this way. Nor does he snap at a late-night sketch comedy show. Nor does he summon TV executives

to complain that particular pictures they have aired are unflattering to him. Trump does these things because he's deeply insecure and easily wounded.

4. He craves approval. Trump often comes across as indifferent to the feelings of others. That's misleading. He cares intensely about being respected and loved. Consider his twisted relationship with the Times. For two weeks after the election, he tweeted that the paper was “nasty,” “failing,” and “looked like fools in their coverage of me.” Despite this, he requested a meeting and showed up at the paper's offices to wag his tail. He promised Times staffers an immigration bill that “even the people in this room can be happy” with. He told them

“it would be, to me, a great achievement if I could come back here in a year or two years ... and have a lot of the folks here say, ‘You've done a great job.’ And I don't mean just a conservative job, 'cause I'm not talking conservative. I mean just, we've done a good job.” Yes, Mr. President. Good boy.

5. He's easily soothed by flattery. Trump is a champ at nursing grudges when he feels cheated, threatened, or disrespected. But his grudges, like his commitments, can be washed out by small doses of affection. He speaks glowingly of generous post-election phone calls he received from the Clintons and the Bushes. He has praised both families in return. Those threats to prosecute Hillary? Never mind. Trump also can't stop clucking about his Nov. 10 meeting with President Obama. At least three times, Trump has claimed to have “great chemistry” with the man he had never previously met and had repeatedly denounced as the worst president ever. That's how easily Trump's wrath can turn to warmth—and vice versa.

6. He's a softie. If Trump

hurts a lot of people as president, it won't be out of malice. Calling Clinton a “nasty woman” from the safety of a podium, or threatening a few flag burners with the same jail penalty she supported, is easy. But Trump doesn't have the stomach to face down millions of angry Americans. On 60 Minutes, he backed away from talk of deportation, criminalizing abortions, and reopening the legal debate over same-sex marriage. If Roe v. Wade were overturned, said Trump, the worst thing women might have to endure is that “they'll have to go to another state.” As for LGBT people, he pleaded, “I mentioned them at the Republican National Convention! And everybody said, ‘That was so great.’” Trump might not understand the effects of his policies or appointments, but he knows what he needs: praise. He's not an attack dog. He wants to be petted.

7. His emotional softness makes him morally weak. Trump's critics see him as a thug who will damage the country and the world through aggression. That could happen. But he's far more likely to usher in bad things by being a lapdog when we need a watchdog. To take a small example: Three men who had partnered with Trump in a real estate project in India met with him after his election, took pictures with him, and posted the pictures to promote the venture. When the Times asked Trump about this, he pleaded: “What am I going to say? ‘I'm not going to talk to you?’ ‘I'm not going to take pictures?’ ... On a human basis, you take pictures.”

Trump was just being nice. But that kind of niceness can cause trouble. During the campaign, Trump said he would keep jobs in the U.S. by threatening companies that plan to move their operations elsewhere. But as president-elect, he's not using threats. He's using bribes. He described to the Times one of “numerous” conversations he's had with CEOs since the election. “We'll create the incentives for you,” Trump told the executive. “We're going for a very large tax cut for corporations, which you'll be happy about.” So the jobs will stay. But they'll be funded by taxpayers, and employers will control the transactions.

Trump is a patsy for Russian

President Vladimir Putin, too. He effused to the Journal about a “beautiful” letter Putin sent him after the election. “I would love to be able to get along with Russia,” Trump told the Times. He claimed, based on reactions at his rallies, that getting along with Russia would also make Americans happy: “I'd say this in front of thousands of people. ... ‘Wouldn't it be nice if we actually got along with Russia? Wouldn't it be nice if we went after ISIS together?’ ... And the people [would] stand up and give me a massive hand.”

Trump treats the presidency the way he treated The Apprentice: It's all about ratings. There's no limit to the moral lines he would cross to give the audience what it wants. In the Times interview, he said he might withdraw his support for waterboarding if it were found to be ineffective at extracting useful information. But he added: “If it's so important to the American people, I would go for it. I would be guided by that.”

8. He substitutes popularity for standards of conduct. Trump sees the moral universe in terms of feelings, not rules or reasons. He told the Times he could combine his presidency and his business any way he chose. Anything he did to limit conflicts of interest, he asserted, would be out of the generosity of his heart. He also suggested that he didn't have to sweat conflicts of interest because voters, by electing him, had shown they didn't care about them. “Prior to the election it was well known that I have interests in properties all over the world,” he tweeted. “Only the crooked media makes this a big deal!”

Trump is just as dismissive about financial transparency. “Are you gonna release your tax returns?” Lesley Stahl asked him on 60 Minutes. “Nobody cares,” Trump replied. “Obviously, the public didn't care, because I won the election very easily.” He gave a similar brushoff to concerns about his scorched-earth political style. The Journal reported that it had asked Trump “whether he thought his rhetoric had gone too far in the campaign.”



# AAPI congratulates President-Elect Donald Trump

## Trump Invited to AAPI's Annual Convention in Atlantic City

(Press Release by Ajay Ghosh) "On behalf of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), I want to congratulate and offer our best wishes to our President-Elect, Donald Trump on his stunning and remarkable victory in the Presidential Election," said Dr. Ajay Lodha, President of AAPI, in a statement issued here. Describing that AAPI is a non-political umbrella organization which has nearly 90 local chapters, specialty societies and alumni organizations. Almost 10%-12% of medical students entering US schools are of Indian origin. AAPI represents the interests of over 60,000 physicians and

25,000 medical students and residents of Indian heritage in the United States, Dr. Lodha, a prominent physician with decades of service to the country, said, "The mission AAPI, the largest ethnic organization of physicians, is to provide a forum to facilitate and enable Indian American physicians to excel at inpatient care, teaching and research, and to pursue their aspirations in professional and community affairs. The new Executive Committee is working hard to ensure active participation of young physicians, increasing membership, and enabling AAPI's voice to be heard in the corridors of power, and thus

taking AAPI to new heights." Dr. Lodha has extended a warm welcome to President-Elect Trump to be the Chief Guest at the next annual Convention. "We want to invite President-Elect Trump to address the delegates at our next AAPI Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey from June 21-25, 2017. The convention provides a venue for medical education programs and symposium with world renowned physicians on the cutting edge of medicine. The 35th AAPI Convention will be held at the Harrah's Resort in Atlantic City, New Jersey from June 21-25, 2017," Dr. Lodha said. AAPI's New York Chapter under the leadership of Dr. Raj Bhayani is working hard to make

this convention a memorable one for all. Expected to have a record attendance of nearly 3,000 delegates including Physicians, Industry Leaders, CEOs, Academicians, Researchers and Medical students at the convention, the annual convention offers extensive academic presentations, recognition of achievements and achievers, and professional networking at the alumni and evening social events. We are expecting a large pool of international media representatives at the convention. Physicians and health care professionals from across the country and internationally will convene and participate in the scholarly



exchange of medical advances, to develop health policy agendas, and to encourage legislative priorities for the coming year. (The South Asian Insider Weekly News Service)

# Currency Exchange facility demanded for NRI's



(By a staff reporter) New York- A group of NRI activist led by Juned Qazi demanded for Currency Exchange facilities to be extended over a period

allowing all NRI the opportunity to not let money convert to paper. The group consisted of a few renowned figures within the community, some of who present were Harkesh Thakur, Seema Jagtiani, Chandrakant Patel, Mahesh Patel, Jaimin Patel, Rahul Thakur, Magandeep Sehla, Raj bhagia, Shilpa Sathu. The protest was peaceful and done in front of Indian Consulate, NEW YORK. Memorandum was handed to Deputy Consulate General Mr. Manoj Mahapatro addressing to and urging the Prime Minister and Govt of India to think about NRI

rights globally. The demands were specific and relevant to the outcries heard within the community of currency held by hard working individuals turning to worthless paper. Most importantly the NRI must be allowed a extended time period within which to exchange the currency upon arrival to India. The group also demanded the same opportunity for tourist who have recently visited India and may possess some currency. Lastly, they ask the Govt to allow a capped amount of currency to be allowed to be brought back upon return from India which is a convenience matter for frequent travelers.



**Famous Indian playback singer & Filmfare Award winner Kanika Kapoor with Serena Milan.**

## Serena K Milan appointed

### "Global Brand Ambassador of Box Office Insider"

We are pleased to announce highly talented, "Serena K Milan" as Box Office Insider's "Global Brand Ambassador". Our Global Brand Ambassador initiative was started as part of our commitment to promote young talented individuals seeking career in entertainment. Serena is an exceptionally talented Ramp Model, Miss India New York 2015 and winner of many other pageants.



**Sharanjit Singh Thind, Editor & Publisher with Serena Milan.**

(Pictures by : Vijay Shah)



# America: This Is Your Future

**What's the country really going to look like in 30 years? Get ready for older, more diverse, and new tensions about who gets what.**

Barack Obama roared onto the political stage in 2004 with a speech many Americans found soothing. "There's not a liberal America and a conservative America," he said. "There's the United States of America. There's not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America; there's the United States of America. The pundits like to slice and dice our country into red states and blue states. . . . We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes, all of us defending the United States of America."

Twelve years later, the Obama era is ending with a lesson—taught by Donald Trump—in how deep political divisions of race and geography remain. The electoral map that emerged on Nov. 8 looked like a sea of red speckled with islands of blue. Hillary Clinton won the cities and close-in suburbs where affluent professionals, millennials and people of color are clustered. Donald Trump prevailed in the farther-flung suburban, exurban and rural places where residents are disproportionately white and aging.

It will take a long time to fully understand why this election turned out the way it did. But part of it, undeniably, has to do with anxiety about how America is changing. Some voters idealized a picture they grew up with, in which culture and politics were dominated by a white Christian majority. They found a voice for their disorientation in Trump's rhetoric and his promises that he could restore an older vision of the country.

Demographic change, however, is not a force that is easy to halt — and as American leaders and policymakers grapple with the country's real challenges and political trajectory, it's the actual face of Future America they'll need to deal with, not an imagined one. It might sound unknowable, a kind of crystal-ball exercise with numbers, but in many ways the picture is already becoming clear. The big trend lines in our population are powerful and hard to budge. The next official snapshot will arrive in the form of the 2020 Census, which experts project will

show an America becoming slightly less white and more diverse: white Americans will likely make up 2 percent less of the population than they did in 2015, while Hispanic Americans will make up 1.5 percent more. Asian Americans, foreign-born Americans, and those who identify as multiracial will all make up a larger share of the country, while the black population will hold steady.

What happens after that? We

Census projections show that by the census of 2050, the United States will no longer have a clear white majority—at least as we define "white" today. Fifty-three percent of the population will be multiracial or nonwhite, compared with less than 40 percent currently. Because the growth of the nonwhite population is driven more by fertility than by immigration, researchers believe this racial shift will occur even if the federal gov-



decided to find out, sketching a picture of the nation by talking to a range of demographers who specialize in tracking and analyzing American population shifts. They are experts on race, immigration, aging, changing family structures and urban planning, along with how all these factors affect electoral politics. They emphasized that demographics aren't destiny. No political party can count on perpetual support from any particular demographic group. But the big changes they study will shape the issues we'll be debating for decades to come. By examining their research, it's possible to envision the potential America of 2050 right now.

That nation will have gone through two big shifts: It will likely be browner and more polyglot than the America of 2016, and it will also be much older. Though those two trends both pose major policy challenges, they're also interlinked; as the country ages, it will depend on the productivity of a shrinking number of young people to support its retired and elderly population, and those young people will be much less white.

ernment enacts new immigration restrictions. "If you reduced new immigration to zero, you'd still see growth in immigrant communities, more so than in white, native-born communities," said Randy Capps, director of research for U.S. programs at the Migration Policy Institute. "Immigrants just have more children and have them younger."

Most of these new Americans will have roots in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Although the Trump administration is setting itself up to crack down on undocumented immigration, anti-immigrant sentiment tends not to depress legal immigration—as long as jobs remain available. Research from states that passed recent laws targeting undocumented people, like Arizona and Georgia, finds the laws had no significant real-world effect on the number of immigrants living in a state. (It's possible Trump could go after legal immigration as well, by reducing the number of visas granted to workers with special skills and to those with family members already living in the United States. But that would create a fight with the business community, which relies on access to

legal immigrant labor at all levels.)

Alongside these ethnic and racial changes, the growth in the population over 85, those most likely to be ill or disabled, will be especially stark. Currently, there are approximately 33 working adults for each American 85 and up; by 2050, that ratio will fall to 13 workers per American over 85.

What all of this means for politics depends on factors that are more difficult to predict — and on battles that might be fought in unfamiliar places. With rapidly diversifying populations, the swing states of the future may be Oklahoma, Georgia and Texas, rather than Ohio or Pennsylvania, which will, even in 2050, remain majority white. It's not at all clear who,

tionary tales about just how hard it may be to craft a shared American identity in an increasingly multicultural country.

Stephen Klineberg gets excited when he talks about Houston. "Wherever you go, you think you're on the edge of town. Then—all of a sudden!—there's a new patchwork of civilization," he said. Klineberg is a sociologist and the founding director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University. Like lots of other Houstonians, he is a transplant from the Northeast. He has spent the past three decades tracking the economic and demographic transformation of his adopted home.

Houston's wide-open spaces, surrounded by oil fields, have helped make it America's boomtown. With 6.5 million residents, it is the nation's fastest growing metropolitan region; a sprawling, flat, dry metropolis whose ethnic diversity reflects what America will most likely look like in 2050 and beyond. There is no racial majority in the Houston metro area. Forty-two percent of Harris County residents are Hispanic; 31 percent are non-Hispanic white; 20 percent are black; and 7 percent are Asian. Between 2000 and 2015, the Hispanic, black, and Asian share of the population grew, while the proportion of whites shrank.

"All of America will look like Houston looks today in 25 years," Klineberg said. "Houston is one of the cities where the American future is going to be worked out."

Houston is becoming more Democratic, if not as uniformly progressive as the nation's older big cities, like New York and Chicago. Eight years ago, Barack Obama became the first Democratic presidential nominee to win Harris County in over four decades, by just 2 points. In 2016, Hillary Clinton bested Donald Trump in Houston by 12 points. According to a survey of Houstonians conducted by Klineberg and colleagues, only about 20 percent of area residents believe undocumented immigration is a major problem, down from 50 percent in 2000. Feelings about the poor and Muslim-Americans seem to be more complicated. Fifty-seven percent believe that welfare recipients are "taking advantage of the system." Half of survey respondents expressed negative views on Islam.

(By **DANA GOLDSTEIN**, Politico.com)

in the future, will consider themselves white, or whether regional segregation by education and wealth, which has become more acute in recent years, will deepen or ease. Will the cities that have recently exploded in population, mostly in the Sun Belt, remain economically vibrant, or will new growth cities emerge, in other parts of the country? How will climate change impact where and how people live?

Many of those questions are unanswerable for now; they depend on the course of policies not yet formulated. But when it comes to the face of Future America, there are places where the likely demographics of 2050 — and the conflicts it's likely to bring — are already coming into focus. Below, we take a look at three of them: the expansive metropolis of Houston, Texas; the aging rural areas of North Carolina; and Detroit, where a neighborhood called BanglaTown is being revived not by white gentrifiers, but by South Asian immigrants. These regions offer hope for a newer America that works smoothly, showing that diversity can drive economic growth. But they also offer cau-



# Goldman Sachs poised for return to power in Trump White House



Government Sachs is returning to Washington.

After a decade in the wilderness, Wall Street's most powerful firm, Goldman Sachs, is dominating the early days of the incoming Trump administration. The newly picked Treasury Secretary, Steven Mnuchin, spent 17 years at Goldman. Trump's top incoming White House adviser, Steve Bannon, spent his early career at the bank. So did Anthony Scaramucci, one of Trump's top transition advisers. Goldman's president, Gary Cohn, spent an hour schmoozing with President-elect Donald Trump on Tuesday and could be up for an administration job, possibly as director of the Office of Management and Budget, people close to Cohn and the transition said. Cohn, a long-time commodities trader, is friendly with Trump's powerful son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

It's a stunning reversal of fortune for Goldman, a long-time Washington power that fell out of favor following the financial crisis. CEO Lloyd Blankfein got hauled before Congress along with other Wall Street executives to account for their behavior. And Trump, who ran as a populist and bashed Wall Street on the campaign trail, featured Blankfein as a shady and dangerous character in his final campaign ad.

Rolling Stone's Matt Taibbi famously labeled Goldman the "great Vampire Squid" on the face of America.

Had Hillary Clinton won the White House, Goldman faced a virtual lock-out from Washington with Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders poised to block any major picks from the bank or any other firm on Wall Street.

Now Goldman, whose proximity to the levers of power dates to the early 20th Century and the creation of the Federal Reserve, stands to return to a level of influence unmatched by any other company in America. And Warren and her allies are left throwing darts from the sidelines. "We are talking about a massive change in tone in literally just three weeks," said William Cohan a former banker and author of "Money and Power: How

Goldman Sachs Came to Run the World. "If this had gone as the cognoscenti thought it was going to go we would be hearing Elizabeth Warren with her megaphone saying no one with a Wall Street background is getting anywhere near a Washington job."

The rise of Goldman is also filled with ironies for Trump, even beyond his recent bashing of Blankfein.

Like many Wall Street banks, Goldman stopped doing business with the real estate mogul years ago, scared off by his bankruptcy filings. Many of the firm's top executives made it clear they preferred Clinton for president.

Now Mnuchin, whose father was also a powerful Goldman banker, will be Trump's top economic adviser, and he is already promising an agenda that thrills Wall Street and terrifies many Democrats.

"Our number one priority will be tax reform. This will be the largest tax change since Reagan," Mnuchin said on CNBC's "Squawk Box" on Wednesday, flanked by Wilbur Ross, the billionaire investor tapped by Trump to serve as Commerce secretary. "We're going to cut corporate taxes ... we're going to get to 15 percent," said Mnuchin, who also argued for changing parts of the Dodd-Frank financial reform law that curtailed many of Wall Street's swashbuckling ways.

"The number one problem with Dodd-Frank is it's way too complicated and it cuts back on lending," Mnuchin said. "So we want to strip back parts of Dodd-Frank that prevent banks from lending. And that will be the number one priority on the regulatory side."

Those kinds of comments and the rise of Goldman and Wall Street influence in Trump's Washington is sending progressive Democrats into a panic. Liberals fear an agenda that will slash tax rates for the wealthy and corporations and gut regulations while allowing Wall Street to go back to the kind of trading practices that helped fuel the financial crisis.

Even many reform-minded conservatives wanted Trump to

pick a different Treasury Secretary, someone like House Financial Services Chairman Jeb Hensarling or former BB&T CEO John Allison for the job. Both have strong views on increasing bank capital requirements and fighting so-called "Too Big to Fail" institutions. It's much less clear that Mnuchin will do anything to make life difficult for large banks.

Warren came out firing against Mnuchin on Tuesday night. And Democrats plan to hammer the Treasury nominee's record as head of OneWest, a California bank derided as a "foreclosure machine" during the depths of the crisis.

"Steve Mnuchin is the Forrest Gump of the financial crisis — he managed to participate in all the worst practices on Wall Street," Warren said in a statement on Tuesday night. "He spent two decades at Goldman Sachs helping the bank peddle the same kind of mortgage products that blew up the economy and sucked down billions in taxpayer bailout money before he moved on to run a bank that was infamous for aggressively foreclosing on families."

Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, which will consider Mnuchin's nomination, promised thorough hearings including a focus on Mnuchin's time at OneWest. The attacks may not be enough to derail Mnuchin, but they will add to a developing Democratic strategy of undercutting Trump's blue-collar credentials by portraying him as a billionaire plutocrat governing with the interests of his rich friends in mind.

"There are a number of serious problems raised by populating the most senior positions in

government from a single bank and from a single industry," said Dennis Kelleher, CEO of financial reform group Better Markets. "Whether it's true or not, Goldman Sachs will be perceived as having privileged access and influence throughout the government. What we need most, and Candidate Trump seemed to understand this, is a view that prioritizes what's good for Main Street and the real economy."

Goldman defenders say a negative focus on Mnuchin's time at the bank is unfair and that he has the economic and markets expertise to help create faster economic growth that lifts wages across the board.

I commend President-elect Trump on his outstanding selection of Steven Mnuchin to be Secretary of the Treasury," former Goldman CEO and George W. Bush Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson said in a statement on Wednesday. "Steven embodies the characteristics necessary to be a very good Treasury secretary. He is a doer with the analytic and political skills to get things done in a complex environment."

Goldman supporters also note that had Clinton won, the left would have pushed for Gary Gensler, former head of the CFTC and himself a long-time Goldman banker, to be Treasury secretary or take some other high-profile post.

"Throughout its 147-year history, Goldman Sachs has encouraged its employees to give back to the community while they are working here and after they leave," said Jake Siewert, communications director at Goldman. "We are proud that many have gone on to serve their country and their communities

after they have left."

The return of Goldman to prominence in Washington restores a tradition that waned in recent years. The relationship dates to back at least to 1913 when one of the firm's founding partners, Henry Goldman, helped create the Federal Reserve.

The influence declined during the Depression only to rise again with Goldman head Sidney Weinberg's close relationship with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. More recently, Goldman held sway in President Bill Clinton's White House with the elevation of former co-chairman Robert Rubin to Treasury secretary during a period that saw significant deregulation of the banking industry and the repeal of the Depression-era Glass-Steagall law separating the activities of retail and investment banking.

And when the financial crisis hit in 2008, then-president Bush turned to Paulson to help design a Wall Street bailout package that pumped hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars into the financial industry.

Defenders of the bailout say it saved the economy from potential ruin and most banks including Goldman quickly paid back all federal funds. But Wall Street critics worry that the return of Goldman to such levels of power will ensure friendly treatment of the industry that could spark more crises in the future.

"My real issue with Mnuchin is that it really is a start the countdown clock moment to the next crash," said Kelleher. "That is the inevitability if the Wall Street view of the world once again becomes policy."

(By BEN WHITE, Politico.com)

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# Flipkart Internet losses double to Rs 2,306 crore

(Agencies) Bengaluru : Flipkart Internet Private Limited, the locally registered marketplace unit of the online retail giant, has seen its losses more than double to Rs 2,306 crore in the financial year ended March 31, 2016. Losses were up by 110%, as the Bengaluru-based company continued to ramp up spending to fend off US-based online retail giant Amazon's \$5-billion war chest for India. Sales were up at a much faster clip of 153% during the year to Rs 1,952 crore, according to regulatory filings with Registrar of Companies (RoC). The pace

of increase in both revenues and losses has come down as compared to the three-times jump in losses and four-times increase in revenues between FY14 and FY15. Flipkart Internet owns Flipkart.com and registers sales from seller commissions and other services like advertisements. Both Flipkart and Amazon have a slew of companies registered in India, which run their business across commerce, logistics, whole-sale and payments. These units gets capital infusion from investment holding companies registered

overseas. Flipkart's commerce business in India is housed under two companies, of which the first one is Flipkart Internet. Singapore-registered Flipkart Marketplace, which in turn is owned by the parent company Flipkart Limited, owns 99.74% stake in Flipkart Internet. The other main commerce unit is Flipkart India Private Limited, the wholesale cash-and-carry unit which is owned by Flipkart Limited directly and registers product sales. In FY15, Flipkart India and Flipkart Internet reported a combined a loss of Rs 2,000 crore. Combined sales trebled to Rs 10,390



crore in FY15, with Flipkart India accounting for over 90% of the sales. The numbers for financial year ending March 2016 for Flipkart India are yet to be filed.

## Four India-Born CEOs On Fortune Businessperson Of The Year List

*Nadella has been ranked fifth among 50 global corporate heads by Fortune Magazine in its annual 'Businessperson of the Year' compilation.*

(Agencies) New York: Four leading India-born CEOs including Microsoft's Satya Nadella and Mastercard's Ajay Banga who delivered big in taking their companies ahead have featured in Fortune's Businessperson of the Year list topped by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.

Nadella has been ranked fifth among 50 global corporate heads by Fortune Magazine in its annual 'Businessperson of the Year' compilation, followed by CEO of Milwaukee-based maker of water heaters A O Smith Ajita Rajendra on the 34th spot, HDFC Bank's Managing Director Aditya Puri on the 36th position and

Banga on 40th. Zuckerberg took home the annual honour of Businessperson of the Year, with Fortune saying his success rests on three pillars of "his unique ability to look into the future, his otherworldly consistency, and the business discipline he has nurtured in an industry quite often enamored with bright, shiny objects".

The 2016 list includes "star executives with wildly varying styles and approaches, but one thing in common: They deliver, big-time," Fortune said. Fortune said since Nadella took charge in early 2014, Microsoft has been engineering a "stunning" turnaround. "He has taken a

company focused on personal computing but showing promise in its enterprise and cloud-computing businesses, and turned that equation on its head," it said. Fortune quoted former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer as saying that Nadella is a "great leader" for the technology giant. Ballmer said Nadella "has done a great job improving perceptions of the company in ways that can advance its agenda-with developers, industry participants, and investors". The US publication said Rajendra, in his four years as CEO of the maker of water heaters, has kept the company boiling hot, doubling profits and nearly tripling the



company's stock price with strong growth in North America and China. Under Puri, who has led HDFC for two decades, Fortune said there has been nothing boring about its growth, from a pipsqueak with \$40 million in revenues to one of India's largest banks with \$5.6 billion. A regular on lists of the most powerful and influential business persons, Banga has been described

as one of the "apostles" of a post-cash world who has been "aggressive" in expanding Mastercard overseas. The list of 50 business tycoons also includes Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, 2, Alphabet CEO Larry Page, 4, Alibaba Executive Chairman Jack Ma, 10, Apple CEO Tim Cook, 11, Uber CEO Travis Kalanick, 15 and Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, 29.

## Nusli Wadia to go ahead with defamation case against Tata Group

(Agencies) The spat between Tata Group and Mistry camp appeared to be escalating with industrialist Nusli Wadia saying on Wednesday that he has been left with no option other than to pursue defamation proceedings against the conglomerate.

In a seven-page letter addressed to Tata Sons director Bharat Vasani, which point-by-point denies the charges against him, the friend-turned-foe of Ratan Tata said since Bombay House has not provided any proofs for the allegations against him and instead has asked him to retract his statements, he is left with "no other option but to proceed with the defamation proceedings against the Tata Group."

On November 24, the salt-to-software conglomerate had asked the Wadia group chairman to withdraw his legal notice saying there was nothing vindictive in its

resolution seeking his removal as independent director on board of key group firms.

"Please note that your reluctance to address the issues raised in my letters and submit proofs to support the allegations and statements made in the special notice for an EGM of Tata Steel and your insistence not to withdraw them, will result in only one conclusion that it is a clear case of defamation," Wadia said in letter.

The letter further says, "The special notice for EGM of Tata Steel shareholders are aimed at defaming me as the content of the notice are false, frivolous, and per se defamatory, which are now established to be unsubstantiated for which I shall be compelled to initiate legal proceedings to protect my interest."

Wadia also said that as an independent on the board of Tata

Steel, Tata Motors and Tata Chemicals, he has no fiduciary duty towards the "undefined Tata Group or Tata companies" as the fiduciary duty of an independent director is to all stakeholders of the company of whose board he is.

All the key six Tata group companies-TCS, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Tata Power, Tata Chemicals and Indian Hotels--have called extraordinary general body meetings between December 13 and 26 to remove Mistry from all these companies as a director and also Wadia from the steel (Dec 21), power (Dec 26) and chemicals (Dec 23) arms. On November 25, the Tata Steel board had removed Cyrus Mistry as the chairman and appointed independent director O P Bhatt in his place as interim chair. On November 11, the board has sent out a special notice calling for an EGM to remove Mistry and Wadia as its directors.





# Sterling Media awarded the prestigious Creative Media Award at the Asian Media Awards 2016



(By a staff reporter) London : Sterling Media, an international business and communications consultancy head-quartered in London, was presented the prestigious Creative Media Award at the Asian Media Awards 2016 for the #WhatIReallyReallyWant campaign, which they launched with partners Project Everyone. The award is the second consecutive accolade awarded to Sterling Media by Asian Media Awards; the company's CEO & MD, Natasha Mudhar was presented the Media Personality of the Year Award in 2015.

Sterling Media orchestrated the entire global communications campaign for the short film #WhatIReallyReallyWant which received a staggering 150 million views and more than 1.6 million YouTube views in the first few days of launch. The film was also shared by global names including Victoria Beckham, Richard Branson and Emma Watson.

Project Everyone is an organisation founded by British filmmaker and campaigner Rich-

ard Curtis team, which was launched to popularise the Sustainable Development Goals that were agreed by 193 world leaders at the United Nations in 2015. If we meet these goals, we could eradicate global poverty, reduce inequalities and tackle climate change by 2030. Sterling's CEO and Managing Director, Natasha Mudhar, is the India Director of Project Everyone and her objective is to popularise the Sustainable Development Goals to more than 1.27bn people in India, positioning India as the benchmark country to achieving these goals. In addition to this Sterling Media manage a number of other programmes and activities for Project Everyone covering political advocacy, creative consultancy, talent and global communications such as for the What I Really Really Want campaign.

However the Sustainable Development Goals will only be achieved if they address the needs of the most marginalised first, particularly those of girls and

women. Issues like quality education, an end to violence, an end to child marriage and equal pay for equal work need to be at the top of every governments' agenda in order to give the Goals the best possible start.

On the 20th anniversary of the release of the Spice Girls' Wannabe video, an updated version of "#WhatIReallyReallyWant" was launched in July 2016 marking twenty years of Girl Power. The film reflected the voices of girls and women all over the world telling world leaders what Goals they 'really really want' to be achieved to help improve their lives. The film was directed by MJ Delaney of Moxie Pictures and featured artists from around the world including Gigi Lamayne and Moneoa from South Africa, Seyi Shay from Nigeria, Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez from Sri Lanka, M.O from the UK, Taylor Hatala from Canada and Larsen Thompson from the USA.

The viral video launched online and in cinemas all over the world with a call to action for people

everywhere to share a picture of #WhatIReallyReallyWant for girls and women.

Speaking about the award, Natasha Mudhar, CEO & MD of Sterling Media said, "On behalf of everyone at Sterling Media we are so thankful to the event organizers, and the esteemed judges for awarding us this wonderful accolade for the short film we launched with our partners Project Everyone - #WhatIReallyReally Want."

Sterling launched over 20 years ago with a mission to bring a brand - whether that's a country, person, thought-leader, corporate, government, celebrity or charity - closer to their purpose. We dedicate this award to every person in the communication sector, whether they're journalists or reporters producing stories that present facts to the public, or whether they're in advertising, marketing or PR professions with a mission to educate, inspire and change behaviours through their campaigns, as we all have been blessed with an opportunity to move that needle for positive change through the work we do.

We all have the power in our hands to create positive impact."

Since it's launch in 1995, Sterling Media has been at the forefront of delivering effective communication strategies to address business and communication challenges, to help bring a brand's purpose closer to stakeholders in more meaningful ways. In addition to the launch of #WhatIReallyReallyWant, Sterling has been engaged in a number of other high profile projects. These include the launch of a \$9 trillion bauxite project in New Guinea; directing the global communication strategy for the US Government's GODAN (Global Open Data on Agriculture & Nutrition) Summit 2016 - the largest-ever event dedicated to open data in agriculture and nutrition to end hunger; the launch of the Worlds Largest Lesson India initiative which aims to teach every child in India a lesson about the Sustainable Development Goals; and managing the India and Africa strategies for the Jamie Oliver Food Foundation to tackle child malnutrition.

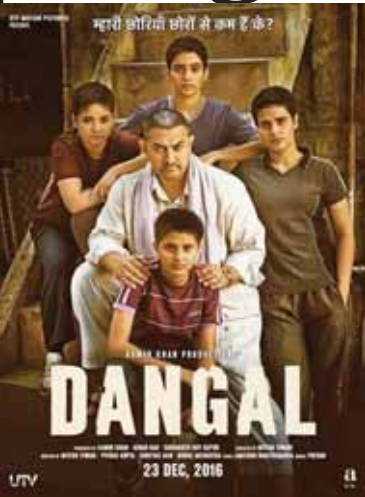
## Evil has a new face : Cheak out Akshay Kumar's Latest Villainous Avtar for 2.0



(Agencies) Amid huge fanfare and a cine extravaganza, the filmmakers of 2.0 starring superstar Akshay Kumar and Indian film legend Rajinikanth, finally launched the first look of the film at an event in Mumbai. Akshay Kumar took to his Twitter handle to unveil the poster with his char-

acter in the film simply tweting: "Evil has a new face!" The superstar is playing an antagonist called Richard, who turns into a Crow Man after an experiment goes wrong. The make-up for his role reportedly took 6 hours every day - ferocious! Speaking about Akshay's hard work and dedication, Rajinikanth said "In this film I am the villain. The truth is the hero of '2.0' is not Rajinikanth but Akshay Kumar. I would have taken that character. Hats off to Akshay, he has worked so hard." Salman Khan who made an impromptu appearance at the event also spoke eloquently about the superstar saying "Akshay Kumar is the only actor who has had growth in our industry. Rest of us are stagnant." Directed by Shankar, the science-fiction sequel to Robot is set to release in 3D during Diwali 2017 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu.

## Dangal



Release Date: Wednesday, December 21  
Director: Nitesh Tiwari  
Cast: Aamir Khan, Sakshi Tanwar, Fatima Sana Shaikh, Sanya Malhotra, Zaira Wasim, and Suhani Bhatnagar

dreams of winning gold for India in international wrestling due to lack of financial support. He resolves to train his future son to one-day represent India in his passion sport. But destiny had other plans. Over two decades, Mahavir's faith in his dream dwindles as he is blessed with

four children, all girls. But when his eldest daughter Geeta, aged 14 and his second daughter Babita, aged 12, bash up a group of boys from the neighborhood during an eve-teasing incident, Mahavir realizes his girls have the same talent he was born with. With hope restored, Mahavir relentlessly pursues his goal of transforming his daughters into world-class wrestlers. Forcing them to train with the village boys, Mahavir inspires them to fight to win despite the odds and to go for gold, no matter what.

Two years after his smash hit P.K. became the highest-grossing Bollywood movie of all-time, Aamir Khan returns with DANGAL, based on a true story, which releases in North America two days before India on December 21 ahead of the long Christmas holiday weekend.

Dangal ('Wrestling') revolves around the extraordinary life of Mahavir Singh, an ex-wrestler who is forced to give up his





# Sanjay Dutt insults Ranbir, says he is a no match for his biopic



(Agencies) It is known to all that Ranbir Kapoor will be starring in Sanjay Dutt's biopic. Well, it comes as no surprise that Sanjay himself is very much involved in the film. The film though has been facing many difficulties as there are many big names involved, Sanjay preferably has only allowed a few parts of his life to be highlighted in the film. The film is to be helmed by director Rajkumar Hirani and will be produced by Vidhu Vinod Chopra. The story is carefully crafted keeping in mind the many celebrities involved in Sanjay's life. While Ranbir is all prepped up to play Sanjay Dutt, Sanjay feels that the actor doesn't fit the bill. At a recent dinner party held at Dutt's house, apparently, Sanjay got drunk and ended up insulting Ranbir for not doing macho films.

According to a report in DNA, Sanjay had thrown a party at his house, and present there was Ranbir, Rajkumar Hirani, and David Dhawan. Ranbir was the only one in the group who was neither drinking nor smoking. Sanjay approached Ranbir and said, "I want to produce a film starring you," Ranbir replied with an 'Of course'. This was just the beginning, Sanjay then continued, "The film is called Laddoo." In a questionable tone, Ranbir repeated the name of the film. To this Sanjay retorted, "Yes, after that we will make films called Imarti, Jalebi, and then Peda." What followed post this conversation was awkwardness between the guests, but Sanjay was not to stop there. Sanjay soon added, "I watched 'Barfi!' on TV recently. What made you do a film like that? @\$^&\* bloody hell,

you are playing me in the Sanjay Dutt biopic. I don't know how they cast you." By now everyone just wanted the conversation to end, but Sanjay was in no place to take the clue. He continued, "You should be a macho man. Act in macho films. You can't be doing films like 'Barfi!'. You should be holding guns and doing action films. Do you think actors like me, Salman, and Ajay would have been around for so many years if we had not played macho characters on screen?" Ranbir was left speechless as there was nothing that could stop Sanjay. Dutt then went on to say that Ranbir had no connect with the masses and that it is very important for him to have that connect. RK junior was left with absolutely nothing to say and didn't even feel right to answer back. Sanjay went on to lecture Ranbir

for a long time post the conversation. What came to RK's relief was Manaayata who walked into the room to call out everyone for dinner to gorge on some delicious biryani.

## Anil Kapoor takes selfies with fans in ATM line



Rs 1,000 currency notes in an effort to curb black money. Anil on Thursday took to Twitter, where he re-tweeted a photograph of himself with two female fans. The actor is seen sporting a cap and gray t-shirt under a black jacket while waiting for his turn. "Taking selfies in an ATM line: check...Thanks to DeMonetisation, I get to meet you lovely people," Anil tweeted. On the acting front, the 59-year-old star will soon be seen in director Anees Bazmee's upcoming film "Mubarakan". The film will release next year. The film also stars Arjun Kapoor, Ileana D'Cruz and Athiya Shetty.

(Agencies) Demonetisation has brought the classes and masses in one line — and Anil Kapoor is one such example. The actor stood in an ATM line to take out some cash and took selfies with a few fans while he waited. Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi scrapped Rs 500 and

*I've never felt competitive in the industry: Vidya Balan*



(Agencies) New Delhi: Vidya Balan has seen a lot of ups and downs in her 11-year film career but the National award-winning actress says she has never felt competitive throughout the journey. The 38-year-old actress says she always appreciates the hard work of other people but has never followed someone else's path of success. "I've never felt competitive in the industry. I watch other people's work and if I like something, I really appreciate it. But it never makes me feel like 'Oh my god I wish I could be like him or her'. I'm not competitive by nature. I don't even compare any two films of mine," Vidya told media.

The actress says such things don't really bother her because she has always lived in her own world with two supportive pillars — her parents — who raised her to be a confident girl. "I've grown in confidence. As you grow in age and experience and you see success, your confidence grows. One of the most invaluable gifts my parents have given both my sister and me is the freedom to be ourselves and that confidence comes from there." Vidya, whose next "Kahaani 2: Durga Rani Singh" directed by Sujoy Ghosh releases tomorrow, says at times she also loses that confidence in herself but always makes sure to get it back. "Me and my sister both have always been very confident people. Sometimes that confidence gets shaken up and you doubt yourself but somehow we manage to bounce back," she says.



# Priyanka is an inspiration: Alia Bhatt

(Agencies) Mumbai: Actress Alia Bhatt says for her, Priyanka Chopra is an entrepreneur and she finds her very inspiring. Alia was asked if she would like to produce regional cinema like Priyanka Chopra did with Marathi film "Ventilator", and she says that she would love to do that. "Priyanka has come a very long way and it's great what she has done. She is an entrepreneur and I have that same drive as she is an inspiration for us. I would love to do such work but right now I want to focus on acting," she told Imedia. The actress says that she would like to try her luck in every medium. "I want to try my luck all over whether its Chinese cinema or whatever, I want to do it all. Right now I want to find my

feet here," she said. Currently Alia's work in Gauri Shinde's directorial "Dear Zindagi" is being highly appreciated. The actress says that if she is not doing film, then she prefers to travel. "As an actor, I am happy with the kind of films I am doing

but its like sometimes I am getting damn good films, sometimes I don't get anything interesting like I have not signed anything now so it all depends. "I love to travel when I am no working I love travelling and it's a huge learning experience for me," she said.





# Rohit Shetty averts 'Golmaal 4' clash with Rajinikanth's '2.0'

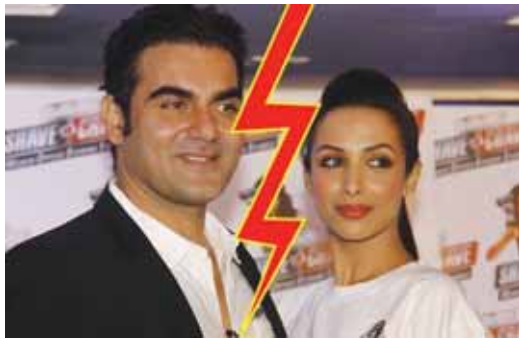
(Agencies) At the first look launch of Rajinikanth and Akshay Kumar's '2.0', it was announced that the magnum opus will hit the screens only in Diwali next year. Interestingly, Rohit Shetty had announced earlier that his laugh riot 'Golmaal 4' too would be a Diwali offering. Just when it was feared that Diwali 2017 would witness one of the biggest box-office clashes, the scenario has been averted, thanks to Rohit. Keeping the release of '2.0' in mind and given his admiration for Rajinikanth,

the director has decided to change the release date of his comic caper so that it does not lock horns with the trilingual film. This kind gesture did not go unnoticed by the producer of '2.0', Raju Mahalingam, who took to Twitter to thank the 'Golmaal' maker. "Rohitji, thanks for the magnanimous support given for 2.0 !!! You are Indeed a great fan of our @superstarrajini !!!" Rohit had already proved his devotion to the Thalaivar by having an entire tribute song in Shah Rukh Khan starrer 'Chennai Express'



## Malaika Arora and Arbaaz Khan to divorce in May

(Agencies) Estranged couple Malaika Arora and Arbaaz Khan, who had been married for 18 years, attended a counselling session (a mandatory procedure for



divorce) at the Bandra Family Court on Tuesday afternoon. According to a source, it was also attended by a marriage counsellor and the judge who has been appointed in their case. Reportedly, this was their only session before the six-month 'cooling-off' period begins. Their divorce matter will be up for hearing on May 11 next year.

The duo will meet in the judge's chamber after which their affidavits will be submitted, verified and the divorce by mutual consent is expected to be granted on the same day. The terms of settlement are being kept under wraps. The source told BT, "During the counselling session on Tuesday, Malaika and Arbaaz spent a few hours talking to the judge, and then the counsellor joined in towards the end. Usually a couple is asked to reconsider their decision before they part ways. They are also questioned about why they wish to separate, if they're doing it on their own will and what would be the monetary and other terms of divorce. The same questions were asked to Malaika and Arbaaz and both of them handled the matter maturely."

## Tisca Chopra turns producer with a spicy short film 'Chutney'

(Agencies) After impressing viewers with her performances in films like 'Taare Zameen Par' and 'Rahasya', Tisca Chopra is set to turn producer with a 15-minute short film, Chutney. Her look in it is a complete shocker. The debut venture, which also features Adil Hussain and Rasika Duggal, has been made under Tisca's banner The Eastern Way and presented by Royal Stag Barrel Select. It delves into voyeurism, infidelity, marital relationships and insecurity.

It's a dark tale about an ordinary woman Vanita (Tisca), who you wouldn't notice in a million years. It's a spicy story about the great Indian middle class — how they seem so normal but have such deep secrets buried in their seemingly calm exteriors. She says, "For me, pretty is boring. I love losing myself in the character. There are many people around us who

go unnoticed as there is nothing striking about them. I used to often wonder if some of them had exciting stories to share. Vanita is one such person. She is ugly, cannot speak well, and is married into a family that is higher in status than hers, but what is inside her is amazing. In a way, it's like the revenge of the geeks." Interestingly, the story is not new. "Many years ago, I had performed it as a play and it stayed on in my mind. Recently, I met the director, Jyoti Kapur Das, and we started writing the script. The film has been shot with a feature-like quality," the actress explains. Ask Tisca how she came up with the title 'Chutney', and she replies, "Isn't spice a necessary aspect of our lives? However, much like Vanita, 'chutney' often goes unnoticed. Despite all its spiciness, it is never the centre of attention or attraction in the Indian diet; it is never served alone."



## 'Daddy' teaser: Arjun Rampal is killing it as Arun Gawli

(Agencies) After releasing a unique audio teaser with Arun Gawli's voice and a motion poster of the film, the makers of Arjun Rampal-starrer 'Daddy' have now released the first official teaser of the film. The compelling teaser has Arjun Rampal (Arun Gawli) sitting inside the prison dressed in a white kurta pyjama and donning his trademark Gandhi cap, while the policeman poses some tough questions at him. Unfazed by the harsh tone of the policeman, Gawli, with his head down, answers the questions with all his swagger and style. It's only when he is asked his name, he lifts his head up, makes a direct eye contact and utters, "Arun Gulab Gawli."



It's at this moment that you get to see Arjun's intense eyes, which is the highlight of this teaser. Not to forget his uncanny resemblance with the Mumbai's gangster-turned-politician, who is fondly called as 'Daddy' by his followers. The succeeding shots have Gawli being clicked by a volley of photographers, greeting

a flood of fans with folded hands and sitting in the prayer room performing the aarti. And yes, don't miss that last shot where a carefree Gawli is smoking a cigar, exhaling all his worries out. Presented by Eros International, Kundalini Entertainment and Karta Entertainment, the film is directed by Ashim Ahluwalia.

## Shah Rukh wanted Salman to work in Kal Ho Na Ho

(Agencies) Shah Rukh Khan, Preity Zinta and Saif Ali Khan starrer 'Kal Ho Na Ho' recently completed 13 years.

We got to know that SRK wanted Salman Khan to step in his shoes for this film. King Khan was suffering from a terrible back injury during the filming of 'KHNH'. That's why the actor suggested his buddy Salman's name to director Nikhil Advani. Recollecting this particular change in the script, Nikhil Advani was quoted in SRK's book saying that, "After the 4-5 sequence of the shoot, SRK took a flight to Germany and on the fifth day he said that he won't be able to do the film. Obviously, I was crushed. Shah Rukh then called Karan Johar from Germany and told him that his back surgery was more serious than he had thought and was not going to be able to do anything for the next 6-7 months. He told us that he was going to talk to Salman to do the film in his place." However, the moment Shah Rukh Khan suggested Salman Khan's name, both Nikhil Advani and Karan Johar replied instantly with a 'No'.



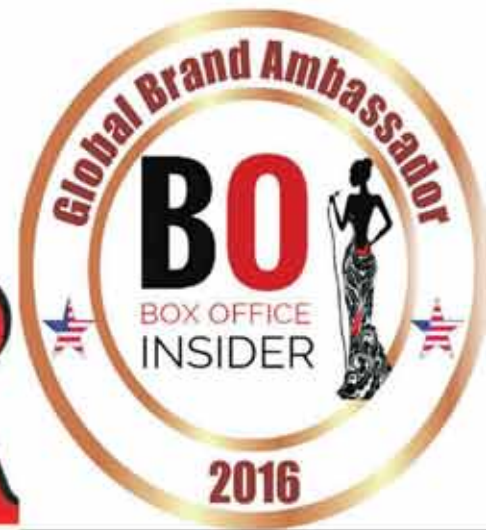


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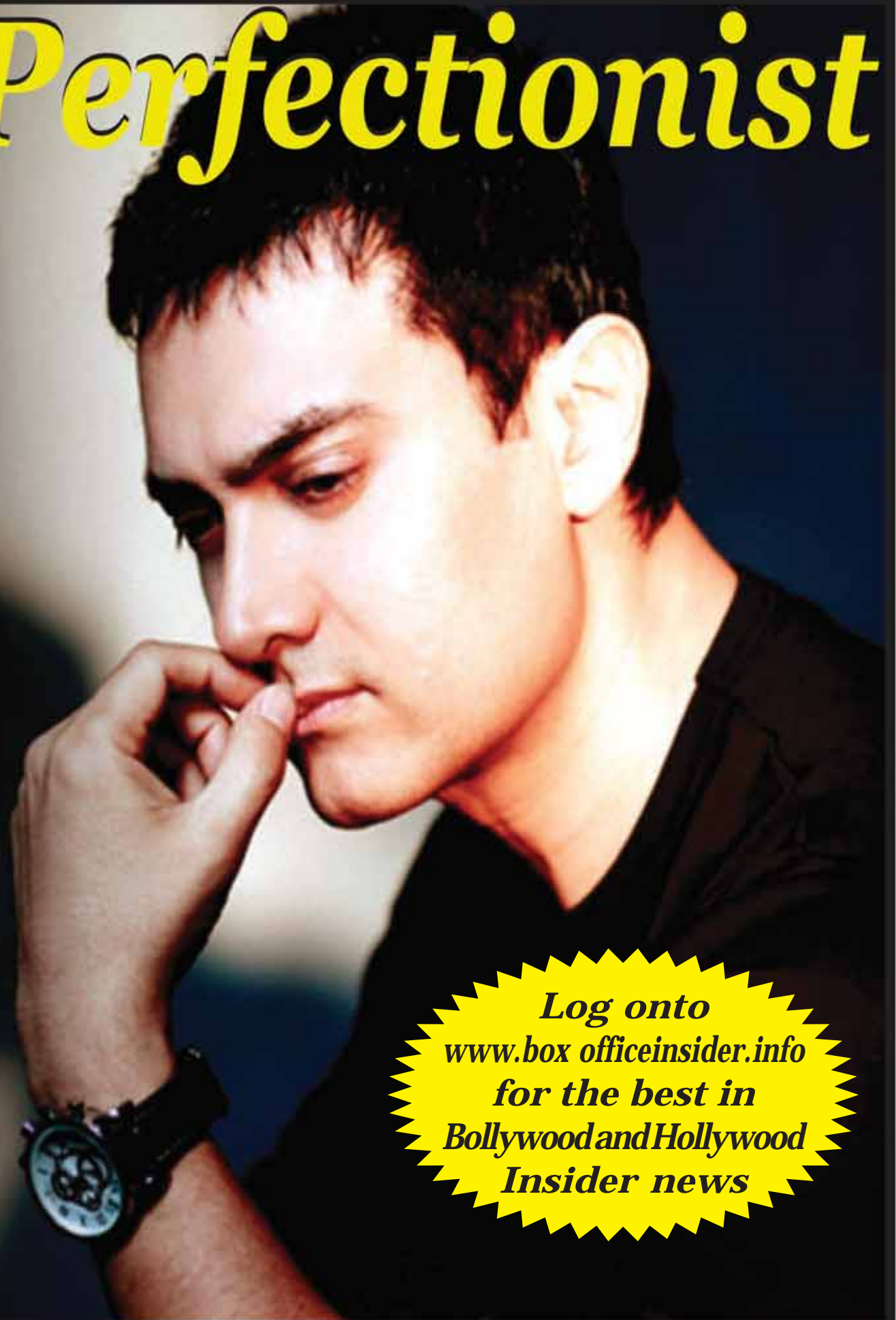
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Published Monthly

# Mr. Perfectionist

*The young man who entered the hindi film industry with Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak, is all set to capture the imagination of millions of his fans worldwide with his new offering "Dangal". Aamir Khan, is a versatile actor, who does everything to get under the skin of the character he plays.*



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