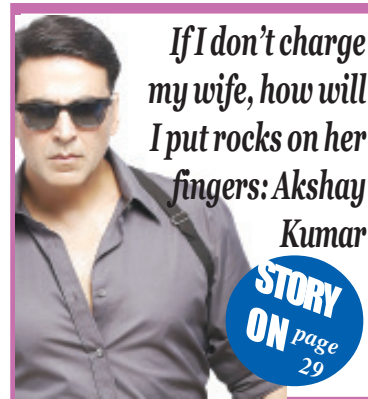




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If I don't charge my wife, how will I put rocks on her fingers: Akshay Kumar

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Trump calls Modi To congratulate him on Uttar Pradesh poll victory

The White House said Trump called Prime Minister Modi and congratulated him on his recent electoral success.

(Agencies) US President Donald Trump recently called Prime Minister Narendra Modi and congratulated him on his recent electoral success, the White House said. Press Secretary Sean Spicer told reporters that Trump congratulated Modi on his success in the assembly polls. Following the elections held in five states that begun on February 4 and ended on March 9 after polling was rescheduled on some seats, Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP) formed the government in four states: Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur. It, however, lost Punjab to main rival Congress after the results were announced on March 11.

Anchored mainly by Modi and his aide Amit Shah, the BJP juggernaut rolled on in UP and in the neighbouring state of Uttarakhand, bagging three-fourth majority.

The BJP returned to power in the politically-crucial state of UP after a gap

of 15 years during which regional parties such as the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party held sway.

Goa and Manipur had hung assemblies after the polls, but the BJP managed to form the government with the support of other parties.

The elections in the five states had turned into a virtual referendum on Modi's popularity following his decision to demonetise Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes.

Lawsuit filed against Indian American Motel Manager Yagna Patel



(Agencies) A teenage girl was forced to have sex with more than 1,000 men over two years at a motel in Philadelphia, a lawsuit claims.

The girl was forced into 'sex slavery' with men up to four times her age at the Roosevelt Inn in the north-east of the city, her lawyer has claimed.

The teenager, who was just 14 when the alleged abuse began, is suing the motel, its manager and the company that owns it.

The now 17-year-old girl claims she was paid \$50 to have sex with several hundred men at the motel after being forced into prostitution in 2013, CBS Philadelphia reported.

The lawsuit - filed against the Roosevelt Inn, its parent company UFVS Management Company and the motel manager Yagna Patel - claims the alleged ordeal continued into 2014.

The motel is alleged to have provided rooms for human traffickers, but Patel, 72, denied any knowledge of this. (Contd on page 19)

Teenage girl 'was forced to have sex with 1,000 men'

India asks the US for details of the 271 'illegal' immigrants

"We have said that it is only after we verify the details, can we issue an emergency certificate for their deportation."



(Agencies) New Delhi : The Indian government has asked the US to provide details of the 271 illegal immigrants it wants New Delhi to take back. "This is an ongoing matter. The US authorities had conveyed to us sometime back that out of certain statistics provided to us earlier, 271 cases remained to be addressed. However, no details of these cases were provided. We have asked for the same," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Gopal Baglay said. (Contd on page 18)

At sanctuary cities gathering, policymakers vow to become Trump's 'worst nightmare'

(Agencies) New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and dozens of legislators from around the country are dismissing the Trump administration's threat to cut millions of dollars in federal funding from sanctuary cities as an illegal maneuver to bully cities into enforcing immigration law, even as Attorney General Jeff Sessions aired that threat Monday from the White House.

"This is nothing new in terms of the threats that the federal administration has been making, but it really is sad that the security of our city, the security of our country,



would be put at stake to just meet a campaign promise to a dwindling base," Mark-Viverito told reporters gathered at Borough of Manhattan Community College for a conference on sanctuary city policy hosted by ThinkProgress.

(Contd on page 18)

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Replacement of US workers not the intent of H-1B visas: Trump's labour department nominee



(Agencies) Washington : Asserting that replacement of American workers is not the intent of H-1B work visa+ , the Trump administration nominee for labour secretary has acknowledged the shortage of skilled workers in the US. "Some Americans have seen jobs go overseas. Some Americans have seen jobs filled by foreign workers. Indeed, I've read reports that some

Americans have been asked to train their foreign replacements," Alexander Acosta, the labour secretary nominee, told Senators during his confirmation hearing. "And some Americans see that jobs are available, but these available jobs require skills that they do not have," he said on Wednesday.

Responding to questions from Senators, Acosta said that it's important to look at the issue that he highlighted about foreign workers taking American jobs+ . "Particularly, when, in those circumstances that I highlighted where Americans are being asked

to train their foreign replacements. That is not the intent of the H-1B," Acosta said.

"So one question that I would have is, how often is that happening? Is that something that we should be looking at with greater degree of care? I think we also need to work with, public-private partnerships. I know that there is a lot of discussion about an infrastructure programme. An infrastructure programme will certainly bring back a lot of jobs," he said. Acosta said for all of these, it's not just the jobs as part of an infrastructure programme or jobs that are developed for a small business but as individuals

get jobs they spend money. "Then those individuals that spend money go to restaurants. And you have this multiplier effect throughout the economy that I think is incredibly valuable," he added. According to him today many Americans are facing the same struggles his parents endured, only worse. "My parents had jobs; but not all Americans have jobs," he said, adding that helping Americans find good jobs, safe jobs, should not be a partisan issue. In his testimony, Acosta expressed concern over skill gap. "As I visited with Members of this

Committee, I repeatedly heard that in your states the jobs are there, but the skills too often are not. In one of your states, for example, a community college was teaching welding techniques that employers no longer used," he said. "Not surprisingly, the students could not get a job when they graduate. We can and must work to reduce the skills gap. We need to make better efforts to align job training with the skills the market demands of its workers, especially as advancing technology changes the types of jobs available in our economy," he added.

Holi re Holi – IALI Celebrates HOLI DHAMAKA In Style



(By a staff reporter) leaders, IALI Members, New York- Color, Noise Past Presidents, and Revelry and Volunteers, Families and Excitement, these were the verbs used to describe what was the Holi event celebrated by IALI on March 19, 2017. The Festival of Colors "HOLI" was celebrated at Antun's by Minar with a huge crowd of over 300 attendees included dignitaries, community

traditional greeting of gual, tikka and application of festive Holi colors.

The program started at 12 with appetizers and meet and greet. MC for the event was Dr. Sukhwinder Ranu, Past President of IALI. The program started with the Invocation of the Shlokas by Narinder Kapoor. President Bina Sabapathy welcomed everybody and



in her speech re-emphasized about working together with the Community to achieve goals and bringing the Community together. She requested for everyone's support in the upcoming Vaisakhi cruise on April 30th and the Annual Fundraising Gala Dinner at the Melville Hilton on June 4th.

Emcee continued the program with the Introduction of the IALI Executive Board and Council, and Past Presidents. Guest of

Honor included Town Clerk, Nasrin Ahmad, Town of Hempstead and Nassau County Comptroller Honorable George Maragos. Hon. Town Clerk greeted everyone with Happy Holi remarks. Citations were presented on behalf of the Town of Hempstead to IALI. Hon. George Maragos attended with his wife along with Senior Adviser to Comptroller, Mr. Dilip Chauhan. Hon. George Maragos presented big bundle of toys to President



Sabapathy for IALI toy drive. Entertainment was provided by Tara Chaudhary student of Shilpa Mithaiwala from Rhythm Dance Academy, Bollywood Medley by Arya Academy students, choreographed by Shilpa Jhurani. Entertainment also included "Dola Re Dola" a solo by Sandhya Prasad from Nataraj Center for Performing Arts and RajLuxmi who entertained everyone with her melodious voice. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Secretary Lalit Aery and dancing to the tunes of DJ Tony.

Community Interaction with Ambassador Dnyaneshwar Mulay and Send off to Manoj Mohapatra



A Warm reception was given to Ambassador Dnyaneshwar Mulay Secretary (CPV and OIA) Event also served as send off for Manoj Mohapatra Deputy Consul General. Seen in Picture: Prem Bhandhari, Ravi Batra, Ranju Batra, Raj Bhayani, Manoj Mohapatra, Ambassador Dnyaneshwar Mulay, Jagdish Sewhani

In The Mood For A Desi Robin Hood

(Agencies) Modi's demonetisation gambit has paid off and opened the door to bolder reforms. By noon on March 11, a few days before the spring equinox, the tidings were clear: the BJP had re-conquered Uttar Pradesh after a decade and a half. It was a win of never-before, tsunamic proportions, and the numbers rolling off media screens sparked frenzied discussions among pundits and laypeople alike. India's future political course seemed to have shifted decisively to a well-defined groove. For PM



Narendra Modi, however, after a punishing schedule of 24 rallies across the state, it was a day at work as usual. The PM sat in his South Block office, busy enquiring about the Maoist ambush that morning in

Sukma, Chhattisgarh, in which 12 CRPF personnel had been killed. He sought an update from home minister Rajnath Singh and asked him to rush to the spot and take stock of the situation. (Contd on page 19)

Pakistan allows anti-India terrorists to use its territory: US lawmaker Tulsi Gabbard



(By a staff reporter) Pakistan continues to allow its territories to be used by terrorists operating in India, Afghanistan and other nations and they have the "tacit and overt support" of officials in the host government, says Tulsi Gabbard, the newly elected co-chair of the India

Caucus of the House of Representatives. "In Congress, I've worked to cut back US assistance for Pakistan, particularly any military assistance, and increase pressure on Pakistan to stop these dangerous actions and break these ties," the Democrat from

Hawaii, a third-term member of the House of Representatives, said in an interview to Hindustan Times. Gabbard, 35, moved a legislation, Stop Arming Terrorists Act, in the House in January that's aimed at ending US funding of terrorist groups in Syria

and the region, which has been the focus of her attention in recent months, but if passed it would outlaw US funding for countries that back terrorism, such as Pakistan.

It has bipartisan support, as is reflected in its co-sponsors — six Republicans and three Democrats — and it was introduced in the senate in March by members of the upper chamber who are backing it. Leading them is Rand Paul, a fiercely libertarian Republican who has called Pakistan a "Frenemy".

On hate crimes against Indians, Gabbard said, "The recent rise of violence against Indians, Hindus, Sikhs, and other religious and ethnic minorities is deeply

concerning. In the 115th Congress, we will continue our work to increase awareness and understanding across our communities, and urge the department of justice to investigate these horrific acts and address the rise of hate crimes across the country."

Gabbard also called for a reasonable US stand on the H-1B visa programme, saying, "We cannot make cuts or limitations on immigration that do not take into account the broader economic and social impact for our country and for our friends around the world." The Trump administration is understood to be considering a set of measures, through one executive order or more or

legislative action, to curb H-1B visas, a temporary work programme for high-skill workers that critics have said is being abused to lay off American workers.

The first Hindu ever elected to US Congress, Gabbard has forged a unique bond with Indian Americans who have adopted her as one of their own brushing aside whatever sets her apart — white, un-hyphenated American, born in the USA and she has been a willing and active accomplice — Gabbard is often more culturally Hindu than her Indian American colleagues in Congress and American politics generally. She greets Indian Americans, for one, with "namaskar" and not the standard local fare.

Kuchipudi-Odissi jugalbandi by Bengaluru dancers



(By a staff reporter) Bengaluru-based dancers Shubha Nagarajan and Srividya Angara will be performing a rare jugalbandi of Kuchipudi-Odissi classical dance across the US between 22

April and 22 May. Titled SAMAAGATI — a Sanskrit word for 'taking steps together', is a synergy between the two dancers as they share stage and energy and synergy in presenting the very graceful and lyrical classical Indian dance forms of Odissi and Kuchipudi in the US. The spring of 2017 will see this duo present this unique concept in their maiden tour of the US. In the six weeks that is the span of their tour, they are scheduled to perform at six venues covering major towns along the East coast including New York City before heading to the West

coast where they perform at Los Angeles and San Francisco amongst other cities. Kuchipudi is the state dance style of Andhra Pradesh. Marked by dramatized expression and intricate footwork, this ancient dance-drama tradition came into being around the 15th century AD. Odissi, the lyrical and sensuous dance form from Odisha, in the eastern part of India is characterized by fluidity of upper torso, graceful gestures while displaying strength in footwork. Both Ms. Nagarajan and Ms. Angara are graded artists with the Doordarshan — India's

national television network. Together they set out to juxtapose these ancient and celebrated styles that share between them a similarity in lightness of the technique, while remaining discrete on how this technique is exercised within the plane of movement. SamAgati brings to fore the immense scope of expression that Kuchipudi and Odissi have, and when presented together, gives the audience a clear view of how close and yet how distinct the two styles are. The concept showcases traditional and original choreographies in both styles, with the dancers coming together to share stage for the finale. While

this is their first time presenting a creative collaboration together, individually, these dancers are not new to the US. Both of them have at some point been residents of the US and have umpteen solo performances in the past. While Shubha began her journey with Odissi while staying in Bay Area, under the tutorship of Guru Niharika Mohanty, Srividya has completed her Diploma in Kuchipudi under the guidance of her guru Vijayavalli Priya. Moving to the US after marriage, Srividya evolved as a choreographer and soloist; and has the distinct honour of being the very first classical Indian

dancer to be chosen to present her original work at the 27th Annual Choreographer's Showcase in College Park, Maryland, and at the Norristown Dance Festival in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Shubha and Srividya wear their passion on their sleeve, holding their technique and their love for the art, close to their heart. But combine this with an element of risk-taking, and the resulting brew has endowed these two dancing mothers with the determination and fortitude to step out and take on the world in a way only they can. For details contact shubha.nagarajan@gmail.com

BJP's success in Assembly Elections

Does return of one-party dominant system bode well for democracy?



NR Mohanty

It is now an accepted fact that the spectacle of one-party-dominant system has returned to Indian politics. It was a spectacle we were witness to in the first three decades of our Independence. That was the period when the Indian polity revolved round the axis of the Congress Party. The difference today is that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has replaced Congress as the party that enjoys unipolar hegemony over Indian politics.

In the 1952 General

elections, the first after the promulgation of the Indian Constitution, Congress won a whopping 364 out of 489 seats, the second biggest party being the Communist Party of India (CPI) with a meagre 16 seats. In the 1957 elections, the numbers somewhat changed (the Congress won 371 out of 494 seats and the CPI increased its strength to 27 seats) but the overall picture remained the same. The same scenario, more or less, prevailed in the three subsequent elections.

Some Western scholars back then had expressed serious doubts about the nature and character of Indian politics – if it was truly democratic. Formally, it was not a one-party dictatorship but it certainly did not present the possibility of an alternate party coming to power. The Indian scenario did not fit into the two-party or multi-party system prevalent in Western democracies.

Eminent Indian political scientist, Rajni Kothari, in his internationally acclaimed book, 'Politics

in India' (1970), explained the Indian phenomenon as a one-party dominant system. He argued that India was a true democracy based on universal adult franchise and because several political parties, both right-wing and left-wing, participated in the political process in free and fair elections. It was the overwhelming popularity of the Congress in the length and breadth of the country, having been the spearhead of the Indian freedom struggle, and the charismatic leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, the then prime minister, that ensured the unassailable position of the Congress.

Things have turned a full circle in the last four decades, starting in 1977, when the Congress hegemony over national politics came to an end with its humiliating defeat in the General elections. Though the party bounced back to power in 1980 and won an unprecedented victory in 1984, in the wake of the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, it lost its hegemonic power in

the 1989 election. Since then, it has managed to get hold of power a few times, but as the leader of an alliance of several parties, not entirely on its own.

The emergence of the Narendra Modi phenomenon in Indian politics has pushed the Congress party to the margins and catapulted the BJP to the centre stage. Though it is true that LK Advani was instrumental in transforming the BJP as a truly national party and sewing up the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) that could propel it to power in 1999. That was a spectacular feat given the fact the BJP had won just two seats in the Lok Sabha elections in 1984. But Narendra Modi has helped the BJP to consolidate its position as a hegemonic party.

Under his leadership, the NDA returned to power in 2014, a repeat of the 1999 scenario. But there was a difference; in October 1999, the BJP had won just 182 Seats, 90 short of a majority, but in 2014, the party notched up

282 seats. The BJP could have formed a government on its own, a feat that the Congress had achieved three decades ago, in 1984.

In the 2014 General elections, the BJP clearly established its one-party dominant status and acquired the halo of a hegemonic position by its victory in most of the subsequent state Assembly elections, culminating in the landslide in Uttar Pradesh earlier this month.

The BJP today is in power, either on its own or in alliance with other parties, in 17 states. If it wins over the few Congress-held states – Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Meghalaya – in the next couple of years, which it is most likely to do, then the stranglehold of the BJP over the Indian polity will be further reinforced. That would effectively establish the BJP system as the fulcrum of the Indian polity, replacing the Congress system of the yesteryears.

(Contd on page 19)

India needs a full-time defence minister as ministry cannot be run on ad hoc basis



It must be a measure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's implicit trust in Union finance minister Arun Jaitley that he has been again asked to handle hefty defence portfolio after Manohar Parrikar was happily packed off to Goa to become chief minister for the unprecedented fourth time.

The decision to put Jaitley in charge of South Block is quite understandable as Modi knows that this ministry

has been a political graveyard in the past for the Congress with allegations of corruption in hardware acquisition periodically flying thick and fast. Jaitley, with his legal and political acumen, is the best bet for Modi after Parrikar, who could also understand technological as well as financial demands of the defence ministry.

The fact is that after Parrikar made a highly-classified air power presentation before Modi in

2015, the Prime Minister, openly before PMO officials, said that India was fortunate to have such a defence minister. While the Raisina Hill buzz is that Jaitley will remain in South Block for some more time, the government must spell out clearly whether Jaitley will continue to have double barrel portfolios for some time to come or appoint someone else in his place. Considering the sensitivity of the portfolio, the defence ministry cannot be run on an ad hoc basis with security concerns mounting on the northern and western fronts.

Apart from the security ramifications of developments in China and in the Af-Pak region, the ministry and the three service headquarters are in dire need of disruptive reforms (Contd on page 19)

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Diplomacy for New India *Turn searchlight inward*

PM Modi will need to change how different parts of government relate to each other and the world

Never one to rest on his laurels, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set himself a new target — showcasing a “New India” by 2022, the 75th anniversary of the nation’s independence. In a significant address to the workers of the BJP on the Sunday following the party’s massive victory in the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, Modi said a New India is “on the horizon”. While the details of what he means by “New India” will have to wait, the PM has identified a near-term aspiration for the political mobilisation of the nation. What is important though is the fact that the PM is raising hopes for a more rapid economic development, whose benefits will accrue to the poor and middle classes.

Strong leaders do tend to lay out uplifting goals as a way of consolidating political support and establishing hegemony over national discourse. Two Chinese names come readily to mind — Deng Xiaoping and Xi Jinping. In 1980, just after he rescued China from the ravages of the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping proclaimed that the People’s Republic’s gross domestic product will be quadrupled by the end of the century. That goal was achieved a few years earlier than 2000.

For Deng, it was not just about numbers, but also politics. He was constructing an overarching framework that would drive the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the government to pursue an uninhibited and comprehensive modernisation of the nation. More recently, Deng’s successor, President Xi Jinping, outlined two great goals — to make China a “moderately well-off country” by 2021, when the CCP will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding.

And by 2049, when the PRC will complete a century, the CCP wants China to become a “strong, democratic, civilised, harmonious and modern socialist country”. Whether Xi might be as successful as Deng is not the question. For Xi, the slogan of “Two Centenaries” is a way of focusing national energies to achieve specific outcomes under his watch.

Those who pick nits might say Modi will find it much harder in India. That’s beside the point. If the development agenda has worked well for him in transcending some of the traditional divides in the heartland, the political vision of an India that makes solid economic progress and lifts all boats at home could well be his song for the elections in 2019 and beyond. Goal-setting is not entirely new to India. Its bureaucracies had routinely set developmental targets over the decades. But it’s been a long time since political leaders have articulated ambitious objectives for the nation.

Modi’s recent predecessors, who were running minority or coalition governments, had little energy or inclination to construct a political device to promote the case for change. The focus was on generating incremental change by stealth rather than making an explicit case for reform. In talking of a New India and change, Modi is under no obligation to tick off on the laundry list of reforms that are usually banded about.

It is the broader political goals that he has set for himself that might define the PM’s reform priorities and direction. The two themes Modi identified on that particular Sunday — empowering the poor with opportunities rather than handouts and lifting the burden on the middle class — could allow him to transcend the traditional discourse on reforms being pro-poor or anti-poor.

Although the PM did not mention foreign policy in his Sunday address to his party workers, diplomacy will be a crucial element in his quest for constructing a new India. With more than 40 per cent of India’s GDP linked to imports and exports, India’s interdependence with the world has never been as deep as it is today. How we deal with the world is inextricably intertwined with our internal prosperity.

While the idea of leveraging diplomacy for development has been an integral part of his worldview since he took charge of Delhi nearly three years ago, Modi will now have to deal with a world that is in great flux. Many political assumptions that seemed rock-solid just three years ago, when he became India’s prime minister, now look quite shaky.

All the political strength at home will not be enough for Modi to cope with the unfolding backlash against economic globalisation in the West, the technological revolution that promises to change the very basis of modern economies, the growing opposition in the United States and Europe towards immigration, shifting great power relations, and the changing regional order in different parts of Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific amidst the assertion of Russian and Chinese power.

Adapting to external change in the pursuit of a New India is not about finding fresh foreign policy ideas. Modi has already shed much of India’s past self-doubt and ideological ambivalence that hobbled its post-Cold War foreign policy, injected greater energy into the conduct of international relations, and addressed long-pending problems. His big problem has been the unresponsiveness of India’s domestic governance to the opportunities and challenges that the world presents India.

In the late 1970s, right after an Emergency that lasted only for 19 months, many Indians (including this writer) hoped that Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram, victorious opponents of the Emergency, would stay together and strengthen the institutions of a secular democracy. The hope was belied. A decade thereafter, in 1989, many (including this writer) hoped that V.P. Singh, Devi Lal and Chandra Shekhar would stay together and build on the democratic alliance that had defeated a damaged Congress led by Rajiv Gandhi. The hope was belied.

Twenty-five years later, in 2015, quite a few (including this never-refusing-to-hope writer) thought that Arvind Kejriwal, Yogendra Yadav and Prashant Bhushan would stay together to honour the incredible trust the people of Delhi had reposed in the Aam Aadmi Party. The hope was quickly belied. Early in March 2017, until clear indications to the contrary were available a few days before counting day, many (including this incorrigible writer) thought that the Akhilesh Yadav-Rahul Gandhi alliance could overcome the BJP machine in UP. Despite the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah alliance that blew away the Samajwadi-Congress tent, I have not lost my faith about UP and India in the long term, though I know that “long” is not a greatly assuring phrase. May I offer an earnest word to the very large number of Indians who are troubled today, as I am, by the mounting assault on their cherished image of an India which values all its residents?

This is a testing time that demands calm reflection, and also genuine appreciation for the many who gallantly fought a battle that was lost. It is certainly not a time for hurling blame. Turn the searchlight inwards, as the Gandhi of old — the ever-fresh Gandhi — used to say. For all those who want the Indian state to remain secular and Indian society to remain pluralist and mutually respectful, the need is to conserve strength, correct mistakes and construct networks. Let spotlights be on Modi, Shah and the Mahant, let searchlights illumine our own consciences. Right now, no one, whether in the SP, the Congress, the BSP or the left, or in the ranks of their countless sympathisers across India, should look for who to blame. That’s a no-no. Let each person focus on examining his or her own record.

We should also, of course, keep a steady eye on what the Hindutva machine (a complex contraption) is saying and doing. When the triumphal results came in, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent what sounded like statesman-like tweets: “A new India is emerging, which is being powered by the strength and skills of 125 crore Indians. This India stands for development,” he said. Then he added: “When we mark 75 years of freedom in 2022, we should have made an India that will make Gandhi ji, Sardar Patel and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar proud.” Soon thereafter, the machine nonchalantly nominated Mahant Adityanath — a well-known and no doubt very popular voice of Hindu militancy — as the UP chief minister. Whom would the choice delight or make proud? Not Gandhi or Patel or Ambedkar. They would be aghast.



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Editorial Intern: Amann Thind

Web Coordinator : Jatinder Kumar

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REGD & MAILING OFFICE :

P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

Tel/Fax : 516 342 1076 Cell : 917 612 3158

editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

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Adityanath's 'anti-Romeo' squads will not make UP any safer for women

There is a piece of good news. Uttar Pradesh, a state that usually is at the bottom of the heap when it comes to health, education, infrastructure, has finally broken out of the BIMARU mould. This means the state administrators may just have some time to spare. Not anymore for the political leaders have hit upon a novel idea of using their time much more fruitfully: Chase 'Romeos'. So the new BJP state administration under Yogi Adityanath has started 'anti-Romeo' squads to check "eve-teasing", which is a gentler term for sexual harassment. A day after his taking over, 'anti-Romeo'

squads of policemen fanned out across the state. The campaign, which was a BJP pre-poll promise, was, as expected, marked by harassment of innocent youths. Their proper implementation coupled with sensitive policing would be enough to assure women and force men to think twice before harassing them;

While we are all for women's safety (regular readers of this paper would know), we are against such dubious squads, even if they comprise police officers. Here's why: In India, there are very few public spaces for women/couples. With such an offensive, they will now have to let go of these spaces too; second, there are enough pro-women laws, which, if implemented properly, can bring

down crimes against women. Who gives anyone the right to stop a man from talking to a woman, or go for a movie? Why should a young man answer a police officer on his personal life as long as he is not breaking the law? Fourth, Yogi Adityanath may think otherwise but stopping men and women



from interacting freely will not bring down crime rates. In fact, allowing better interaction is a healthier approach to develop gender sensitivity. Even the central government's gender sensitivity programmes are increasingly accepting that men must be involved for them to succeed. Fifth, we fear that this programme will finally lead towards revitalising the dangerous love-jihad programme,

which had the Yogi's support. The BJP's national co-convenor Sunil Bharala, in the run up to the election campaign, was quoted as saying: "In love jihad, innocent girls are targeted and lured. To ensure their safety, anti-Romeo squads will be formed". Last but not the least, the BJP tried this programme in Gujarat but it did not have any major success. So why do a re-run in UP?

A weak Left has lost space to leaders like Modi, Trump, Netanyahu and May

Was there ever a time when the political leadership on the Left was so weak and hopeless? The recent state elections have gone against the Congress and Rahul Gandhi, and the uncomfortable truth is that he has plenty of company across the world. The same scenario is playing out in countries from Britain and France to Israel, Turkey, Russia, the Philippines, Japan, Australia and of course the United States.

Right-wing politics dominates the world today with a confidence perhaps unparalleled in modern history. In Britain, since Jeremy Corbyn became leader of the UK Labour, the party is near its worst showing ever. In France, the socialist president is so unpopular even the candidate hoping to succeed him didn't want his blessings. For eight years only former US President Barack Obama was a bright spot on the horizon. Now he has been replaced by Donald Trump.

I don't wish to depress my Left-leaning readers but this is a problem we need to address. It isn't just demoralising, it is a betrayal of the millions of people who need representation. Important ideals that our forefathers fought for — like secularism, minority rights, equality and anti-poverty — are being undermined and stripped away everywhere.

So, why is the Left failing so badly all over the world? It would be wrong to generalise but there are a few unmistakable trends. The likes of Narendra Modi, Donald Trump, Benjamin Netanyahu, Theresa May and others are popular because they

offer reassurance and national confidence at a time many feel uncertain about the world. They make voters feel good about their country, and themselves, even if that involves personal hardship.

Right-wing populists are successful because they are better at building an emotional connection with voters. They do this by wrapping themselves up in their flag and employing nationalism as a weapon against their opponents. In this way criticism can be dismissed as anti-national if needed. But more than that, they also build an emotional connection with people by promising them military security and protection from terrorism.

Many of us on the Left see their claims as ridiculous of course. We point out that criticism is vital to any democracy and that their actions make us more unsafe. But this is a waste of time. Building an emotional connection with people is not a matter of making rational arguments. It's about making people believe you have their basic interests at heart and will get the job done. The Left makes nuanced arguments, the Right shows clarity of purpose and a determination to succeed. Of course they're going to win.

Instead, the Left is embroiled in arguing about policy positions and whether someone is radical enough or not. But voters rarely pay attention to such distinctions. Right-wing populists have thrown away the traditional Left-Right distinctions and freely spread themselves across the ideological spectrum. We saw

this when Modi framed demonetisation as a strike against the corrupt rich and also when Trump said he would protect the benefits for America's poorest.

So how do we change this dynamic? For a start, the Left has to take leadership seriously and pick candidates who are able to communicate and connect with people. Without those basic building blocks any candidate is going nowhere.

Furthermore, we have to take seriously the language of patriotism with progressive ideals. People don't want to hear a list of policies from politicians, they want to know how much we want to make the country better. They want to know if we love the country as much they do. Only if they believe that will they be persuaded to change their mind on other issues.

This isn't to say that there is only bad news out there. Across Europe at least, Trump-clones are going out of fashion, as I said in my column last month. They still remember that the last time Europe flirted with Right-wing populism in the 1930s, it led to World War II. In national elections last week, the Dutch held back the populist tide and instead support for Left parties increased. In France, the charismatic liberal-Left candidate Emmanuel Macron has surged ahead of others and has the best chance of beating the far-Right. If he wins, the Right-wing populist wave is essentially over. But a sprinkling of good news does not solve our wider problem.

Stop targeting whistleblower Justice Karnan

Senior advocate Ram Jethmalani recently wrote a scathing letter to the Calcutta High Court's Justice CS Karnan, advising him to take back every word he has said about two Madras High Court judges and pray for pardon. Jethmalani has termed Justice Karnan's actions as lunatic. Neither me nor the National Lawyers Campaign for Judicial Transparency and Reforms (NLC), of which I am the president, supports Justice Karnan nor justifies his "tantrums". However, the NLC supports Justice Karnan because corruption has spread its tentacles in the justice delivery system.

Justice Karnan's anger might be out of feelings of discrimination, isolation and, or, humiliation. His attack on his brother Judges of the Madras HC, sitting and retired, is perhaps vindictive. He accuses them of having indulged in corruption, nepotism and malpractice. Though many accused of corruption and malpractices by him could be innocent or could have indulged in venial and not venial act of corruption or malpractice, the allegation against at least a few of them may not be unfounded. But the question to be answered is whether alleging corruption against sitting or retired Judges of the high court or the Supreme Court amounts to contempt of court as defined in Section 2(1)(c) of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 or will it attract the inherent jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under Art.138, r/w. Arts. 140 and 142 of the Constitution to punish a person for contempt of court.

The concept of contempt of court is a cathartic jurisprudence, which has its origin in the Canon Law and, in particular, the Canon Law of the Dark Ages, a jurisprudence of a time when the offence of heresy, nay, contempt of the Church, where the contemnor is burnt alive at a stake. The in terrorem (a legal threat, usually one given in hope of compelling someone to act without resorting to a lawsuit or criminal prosecution) jurisprudence of contempt of Court militates against all canons of justice and fair play; it flourished in the Middle Ages when Inquisition was the mode of justice administration, where contemnor was tortured to extract guilt. The foundation of The Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 on the jurisprudence of the Dark Ages is classically exemplified in Sub-Section (5) of Section 17 of the Act. Our constitutional and criminal laws are founded on the principle that the guilt against a person accused of an offence ought not to be wrung out of him, but has to be proved against him by other men and means. Sub-Section (5) of Section 17, supra, places the burden to prove his innocence upon the contemnor; it requires him to file an affidavit in support of his defence and empowers the Court to determine the matter on the affidavit of the contemnor. Section 17(5) of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, therefore, is in violation of Article 20(3) of the Constitution, which states that no person accused of any offence shall be compelled to be a witness against himself; so too Arts. 21, 14 and 19 thereof, which are required to be read together.

After assembly election victories, how long can Hindutva hold the fort for BJP

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's username in Uttar Pradesh was 'development' but his password was 'Hindutva', claim his political adversaries who are yet to come to terms with the BJP's unprecedented electoral success in the country's most populous state.

For the opposition, it could be a convenient excuse to hide their ineptitude. But the BJP might have, willingly or unwittingly, promoted the same line of arguments by appointing Adityanath Yogi the chief minister. Appointment of a Brahmin and an OBC leader as deputy CMs—both dyed-in-

the-wool Hindutva advocates — is more about the burgeoning influence of the RSS in the BJP's decision-making process than any attempt to reflect the BJP's expanding social base.

There is no denying the fact that Modi and his party colleagues blended Hindutva in their development narrative in their campaign.

There is, however, an element of chicanery in the opposition parties' arguments that the UP results mirrored polarisation along religious lines; they simply failed to read the pulse of the people.

The yearning for change — to be a part of an alternative narrative built around people's aspirations — was unmistakable. BJP's projection of its rivals as representatives of sectarian interests only whetted their longings.

For now, the real or imagined Hindu consolidation has got the opposition in a bind. The confusion in the opposition camp was evident from reactions of Congress leaders to Yogi's appointment.

Party spokesperson Manish Tewari saw in it as an extension of the "politics of shamshan-kabristan", but the



party's chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala was guarded, saying that it was the ruling party's prerogative to choose the CM and the Congress would continue to act as a watchdog of people's interests. Explaining how so-called secular parties have gone on the defensive, a Muslim leader rued, "They want to meet us in the darkness of night but refuse to recognise

us in the daytime." After the Lok Sabha elections, senior leader AK Antony had said that the perception about the Congress being pro-Muslim had hurt the party's interests. Post-UP verdict, many of his colleagues are coming around to this prognosis.

The BJP has reasons to gloat over the principal opposition party's plight, but the latest round of assembly elections has lessons for the ruling party, too. Since 2014, all the states the BJP won while riding the 'Modi wave' — Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Assam, among others — were those where the Congress faced strong anti-incumbency. The first time the BJP faced anti-incumbency was in the last Punjab and Goa elections. Even Modi's popularity could not help the BJP retain its support base among Hindus in Punjab and the party almost lost in Goa.

It's obvious that while the PM's popularity gives BJP an edge, much also depends on the performance of its governments in states.

The BJP seems to be coming close to realising its goal of a 'Congress-mukt Bharat' with three more Congress-ruled states — Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Karnataka — going to polls in the next 14 months.

Assuming that the Modi wave might still help the BJP buck anti-incumbency in Gujarat later this year, the big challenge for the BJP would be to retain its governments when the wheel turns full circle and other BJP-ruled states start going to polls from November 2018 onwards. Punjab and Goa results have posed a few teasers to the BJP about its governance models.

It might face more probing questions in the future if it continues to interpret poll results, especially in UP, as a triumph of its Hindutva politics.

Ganga and Yamuna are 'living entities' order puts onus for clean-up on Centre

In a country where nature is often treated as a 'second-class' citizen, the Uttarakhand High Court's recent decision to recognise the Ganga and Yamuna as living entities is a positive one. This is the first time that a court has recognised a non-human as a living entity in India. The order grants these rivers a new-found legal identity and all rights laid out in the Constitution. They can also be parties to disputes. The rights, experts say, can be used to protect the interests of the rivers.

The HC's decision comes just days after New Zealand according a living entity status

to its third largest river, Whanganui, in one of the longest running court cases that country has seen. The country passed a bill declaring the river as a living entity and appointed two guardians to protect its interests. While the order is a positive one, whether it will have any impact at all on the ground remains to be seen. This is because the order is given by a state high court which means that its jurisdiction will be within the state. It now remains to be seen whether the authorities heading the Namami Gange (Clean Ganga) Mission, a pet

project of Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched to clean and revive the river, will extend it to states through which the rivers flow.

Now with the BJP government both in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, it remains to be seen how the Centre implements this order and whether it has any impact on the upcoming and planned hydropower projects in the hill state. "[The legal status] is an extension of the philosophy of allowing a river to flow freely—as was intended in its nature. Any interference with the river as a

whole, including construction of dams, takes away from its essential and basic character. Such a move by court would involve a re-look into construction activities across the river such as sand mining and construction of dams," environmental lawyer Ritwik Dutta told MINT.

Unfortunately, the state and Centre are also vested parties in the dam construction activities. What the judicial order has essentially done is put the ball in state and the Centre's court. The latter attaches religious significance to these rivers. Now it must walk the talk.

Adityanath Selection Exposes Limits Of Modi's Power

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made his first mistake by helping appoint Yogi Adityanath as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. By installing a man as polarizing and malignant as the five-time MP and head of the Gorakhnath Peeth, Modi has told us that the gloves are off. That, just like Adityanath himself promised, the installation of a Hindu Rashtra has begun.

This article isn't about Adityanath. Commentaries and rancorous quotes from Ajay Singh Bisht, which is Adityanath's real name, have filled the virtual and real world since he was elevated to the top job in UP yesterday. "If one Hindu girl is converted, we will convert 100 Muslim girls"; "Mother Teresa was a part of a

conspiracy to evangelise India"; "there is no difference in the language between Shah Rukh Khan and Hafiz Saeed"; and most recently, on the eve of this assembly election, he told a rally in Bulandshahr that voters must remember "the rapes and riots" (of 2013 Muzaffarnagar) when they go out to vote.

This article is about Prime Minister Modi himself - what the appointment of the new UP Chief Minister says about him.

All those promises about development, that talk about bridging the chasm between Hindus and Muslims, all that affirmation about gender rights, including those of Muslim women reeling under the weight of the absurd triple talaq - clearly, it was all adulterated, fictitious and synthetic. Did we

believe it? Did we want to believe the man who promised us so much in 2014 that we cut across caste and creed and gender - and even religion - to give him a mandate India hasn't seen since 1984? Did we bite our tongue and grit our teeth when the perils of demonetization destroyed our lives, in the hope and belief that our Prime Minister would really empty out the black money jars hidden in caves deeper than Aladdin's and make India a much more egalitarian country?

Yes, we did.

In 2014, we looked at the tired and decapitated Congress party saying the same old-same old stuff about secularism and povertarianism and decided to give Modi a chance to make a new India. Then, in 2017, when Amit Shah and his cohorts stitched together Uttar Pradesh

with brilliant mathematical formulae that took into account the intricate faultlines of caste as well as religion, we admired Modi's hunger in redrawing the state in his image. Across UP, there was one man whose name the people chanted: Modi, Modi, Modi. The glue that affixed caste and class and gender together in this UP election and gave the BJP such an incredible mandate was the Prime Minister. Modi's reputation has soared away and beyond Gujarat in the last two and a half years. He has dealt with world leaders on an equal footing and promised to reinvent India. He has sent tough messages to both China and Pakistan. Again and again, we have applauded his energy, his determination, his drive.



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Yogi Adityanath Is Amit Shah's Choice. Here's Why

(Agencies) There have been reports in a section of media that the RSS played a key role in the surprise appointment of hardcore Hindutva leader Yogi Adityanath as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh while ignoring Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP President Amit Shah's preference for someone with an administrative experience and without a distinct caste identity. However, BJP sources have denied any such intervention, and to make it clear that Yogi Adityanath has been Shah's choice since the beginning and that ultimately, he prevailed upon the Prime Minister to go with his choice. In the meanwhile, the RSS, whose highest body for policy formation, Akhil Bhartiya Pratinidhi Sabha, is meeting in Coimbatore, has officially denied media reports that RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat called up PM Modi and urged him to appoint Yogi Adityanath as Chief Minister instead of Junior Telecom Minister Manoj Sinha, who was considered PM Modi's choice.

BJP insiders recall how Shah was impressed with Yogi Adityanath's organizing skills and mass base when he was appointed General Secretary in-charge of Uttar Pradesh back in 2013 and started intensive tours of the state in order to revive the defunct party organization at the micro level. Shah visited Gorakhpur many times

and interacted with Yogi Adityanath. Close associates of Shah recall an incident when the BJP chief, who that time had no security and used to travel in the interiors of Uttar Pradesh, had taken a road blocked by some agitating villagers and was stuck there. Shah made a few calls and many volunteers of Yogi Adityanath's organization, the Hindu Yuva Vahini, arrived on motorcycles within minutes and cleared the way for him.

With his hard-core Hindutva image and mass following, Yogi Adityanath was an ideal choice for Shah's game plan to revive the BJP in Uttar Pradesh. After a massive win in the Lok Sabha, whose credit goes to Shah, he decided to test the waters by making Yogi Adityanath in-charge of the assembly by-elections which were necessitated September 2014 because many BJP MLAs had been elected to Lok Sabha. The Yogi campaigned extensively outside the Gorakhpur belt; he was seen making provocative speeches in communally-sensitive Western Uttar Pradesh which was recovering from the Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013. Of the 11 seats won by the BJP, in the 2012 assembly elections, eight were won by the Samajwadi Party in the by-elections. This was a big setback to Amit Shah's Yogi experiment which aimed at cashing in on Yogi's image in Western UP. However,

Shah stated that by-poll results across the country in which BJP suffered major defeats were reflective of the voter's tendency to go with the ruling party, especially when the state government was not close to completing its term.

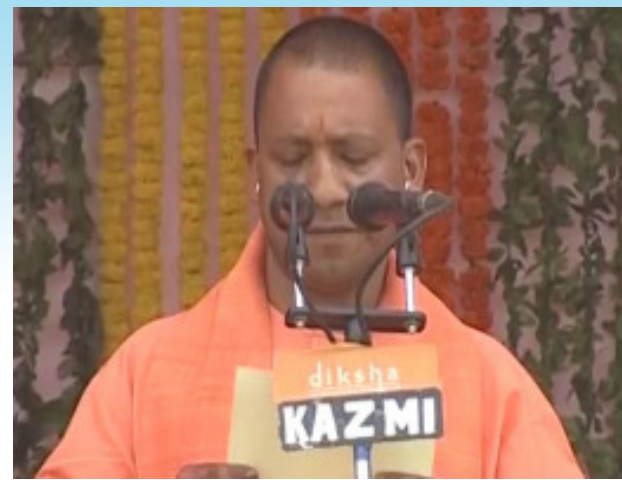
Shah made amends in UP and changed the state president. He replaced Brahmin Laxmi Kant Vajpayee with Keshav Prasad Maurya, Other Backward Caste leader. He started making a rainbow coalition by bringing in leaders of different castes from other parties. He mainly poached from the BSP. His target area was Non-Yadav OBCs and Non-Jatav Scheduled Caste leaders. The BJP decided not to project any Chief Ministerial face and instead decided to use photos of Rajnath Singh (a Thakur), Kalraj Mishra (a Brahmin), Uma Bharati and Keshav Prasad Maurya (both OBCs), apart from PM Modi and Amit Shah. However, Yogi Adityanath's supporters were upset that his pictures didn't find any place on the official BJP posters; nor was he made chairman of the campaign committee. That's why when rival SP-Congress floated the slogan "UP ko yeh saath pasand hai" with pictures of Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi, they started their own counter-campaign by adding Yogi's pictures in the BJP's official posters, thus taking the count of pictures on the poster to seven with the slo-

gan "UP ko yeh Saat (7) pasand hain".

In the meanwhile, all internal surveys done by the BJP pointed out that Yogi Adityanath was only second in terms of popularity after PM Narendra Modi. He was ahead of his Thakur rival and Home Minister Rajnath Singh, and emerged as a strong choice for the post of Chief Minister among people supporting the party. He was included in the list of the star campaigners of the party and campaigned extensively in the entire state, including Ghaziabad, which borders Delhi. He raised polarizing issues like the alleged exodus of Hindus from Kairana, and the need to shut down Love Jihad and abattoirs.

He didn't throw his weight around or raise a dissenting voice as he had done previous elections. In fact, when some of his supporters filed nomination papers under the banner of Hindu Yuva Vahini to run against BJP candidates, claiming that they had his blessings, he immediately issued statements disowning them and even called them criminal elements who were thrown out of the Hindu Yuva Vahini sometime ago. He took out a massive road show along with Shah in Gorakhpur and ensured that all the rebels were defeated by a huge margin.

In the past, Yogi has not had a comfortable relation-



ship with the BJP. His mentors belonged to the Hindu Mahasabha, which was a rival of the Jan Sangh, the erstwhile avatar of BJP. His predecessor, Mahant Avaidhyanath, was an MP of BJP, and he took on the leadership of the Gorakhpur mutt from him. Just like Keshav Prasad Maurya, he is a product of the Ram Janmbhoomi movement, and this movement brought him closer to the BJP. But he always wanted his own way on deciding BJP candidates in the Gorakhpur area and revolted silently when party didn't listen to him in the last assembly election.

Contrary to perception, Yogi has never had warm relations with the RSS, which has always been doubtful of his independent nature and temperament. BJP leaders say that the only leader of the Sangh Parivar who was close to him was the late Ashok Singhal of the VHP, who regularly coaxed Yogi back whenever he started drifting from the BJP.

BJP leaders say that Telecom Minister Manoj Sinha was the initial choice of the party leader-

ship because the PM wanted the BJP government in UP to deliver on the promises of good governance and development and he favored Sinha because of his good image as an able administrator. However, some key RSS leaders including Krishna Gopal, who looks after coordination between the BJP and the RSS, were opposed to him. Sinha, according to them, had a turbulent relationship with Krishna Gopal and some kshetra pracharaks of the Kashi area. Some of them vehemently opposed the choice of Sinha and Keshav Prasad Maurya, who also wanted to be considered for Chief Minister, started opposing Sinha's name. He met party Vice President and Uttar Pradesh-in-charge Om Mathur and registered his protest. Om Mathur and Sunil Bansal (RSS point person for the BJP in UP) then met Shah and informed him about the reservations of Maurya and other state leaders about Sinha. At this point, Yogi's name was proposed and accepted by the leadership.

US ban on carry-on e-gadgets will hit Indian travellers hard

(Agencies) Mumbai : One out of every two passengers who fly from India to the US transit through airports in the Middle East like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha and from Saturday they will need to check in all electronic devices sized larger than a smart phone like laptops, tablets, e-readers, cameras, electronic games, DVD players, etc. Apart from not having their personal device for work or entertainment at airport lounges and on board ultra-long haul flights, air travellers will have to worry about the possibility of their e-gadgets getting lost, misplaced or stolen from their checked-in bags.

On Friday, the US department of homeland security banned "all personal electronic devices

larger than a cell phone or smart phone" from the carry on bags (bags carried on board by the flyer) of passengers who board direct flights to the US from the airports in Amman (Jordan), Cairo (Egypt), Istanbul (Turkey), Jeddah and Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), Kuwait, Doha (Qatar), Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Airlines were notified by the US government at 3am EDT (12.30pm IST, Friday) about the ban and have been given 96 hours within which to comply. As for the passengers who transit from any of these airports, they will have to pack their electronic goods into their check-in bag at their airport of origin.

So a passenger booked on a Mumbai-Dubai-Dallas flight will

have to check in the laptop at Mumbai itself. The new security measures don't apply to passengers booked on Air India. But those booked on Jet Airways will need to check if their flights will transit through any of the above listed airports. Apart from passengers from the countries that are on the list, it will be those from India who would be the most hit as Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha are popular transit halts for passengers from India flying to the US. The US National Travel and Tourism office data on international travellers to the US and the countries they come from has Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Japan, China and European nations in the top ten list. Passengers from none of these

countries would generally transit through any of the 10 listed airports to reach the US. But that's not the case with India, which stands at the 11th position on the list. According to the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA), in the fiscal year 2016, of the 2.69 million passengers who flew from India to the US, 1.3 million flew on airlines like Emirates, Etihad, Qatar that transit through airports like Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha. Kapil Kaul of CAPA said that he sees the new security measures as a "serious passenger inconvenience and nothing more". He added that it might result in some business class traffic moving to carriers that are not affected but given the very high

demand and high passenger load factors there won't be any significant movement. "It's poorly executed and communicated but we expect it to be a short term measure," Kaul added. Anil Punjabi, president of Travel Agents' Federation of India, said: "The restriction, first by the US and then by the UK, has scared travellers. They feel that if intelligence agencies believe that terror outfits may explode a bomb on a plane that originates from the Gulf, they should avoid it altogether. Even elderly people travelling to their children living abroad want to avoid the flights. Though most of them don't carry the restricted items, there is fear of delay at airports in the Gulf."

Dilli Darshan at Rs 2500: Pawan Hans to start chopper rides



(Agencies) New Delhi : You can now get an aerial view of north Delhi up to Akshardham Temple like never before. Pawan Hans will start regular "Delhi Darshan" chopper flights from its Rohini Heliport from April 1. A 20-minute ride, costing Rs 4,999, will fly over Pitampura Tower, Majnu Ka Tila, Red Fort, Rajghat, Akshardham Temple and nearby areas. There will be a shorter 10-minute ride also for Rs 2,499 but Pawan Hans did not specify what areas will this cover. "Pawan Hans is commencing helicopter ride and helicopter Delhi darshan from state-of-the-art integrated Rohini Heliport, Delhi. Initially the he-

licopter ride/Delhi Darshan is planned for (this week-end). Further, regular helicopter ride/Delhi Darshan is commencing from April 1, 2017 onwards," the state-run chopper PSU said in a statement on Thursday, adding that tickets for these can be booked online at www.pawanhans.co.in The public ride choppers won't be able to go much beyond Akshardham as beyond that the approach path of Delhi Airport's three runways begin. So they will have to return from the riverbed near this temple on the riverbed has been planned for years.

God save our country, says Air India staffer after slipper assault by Sena MP



(Agencies) Shiv Sena MP Ravindra Gaikwad, who assaulted an Air India staff on board a Pune-Delhi flight, may not be able to fly with the national carrier again. In response to the unruly treatment against a 60-year-old duty manager, the airline is planning to draw up a no-fly list of unruly passengers and put Gaikwad on it. "The complaint by R Sukumar and report by Deputy General Manager confirms that MP assaulted him and even tried to push him off the plane. He tore away the button of his cardigan, broke his specs and humiliated him in front of other crew members," said an Air India official. In his complaint, Sukumar said the MP abused him. "God save our country if this is the culture and behaviour of our MPs," he wrote. On Thursday morning, Shiv Sena Lok Sabha MP Ravindra Gaikwad hit the 60-year-old airline staffer with slippers. The MP

was angry allegedly because Air India changed his seat from business to economy class. Air India said that the MP had an open ticket of business class, which means he could have travelled in any Air India flight. Despite being informed that AI 852 did not have a business class, the MP chose to travel in the same flight. Upon landing at Delhi airport, he refused to deboard asking for the CMD to arrive and apologise, said an Air India official. When Sukumar tried to talk to him, he got furious and hit him "25 times". Sukumar has filed a complaint of assault while Air India is filing another complaint

for forcibly holding up the flight. The same aircraft had to go to Goa and 115 passengers had to wait for 40 minutes as the MP refused to deboard. According to the police, they have received one complaint so far and are examining it. "They have said that they will file another complaint but we are yet to receive it. The complainant has been sent for medical examination. An FIR will be filed after medical examination," said a senior Delhi Police official. Meanwhile, Gaikwad has written to LS speaker Sumitra Mahajan and Civil Aviation Minister Ashok G Raju listing out problems plaguing Air India.

How UP minister Mohsin Raza reacted to Mulayam Singh's photo in his office

(Agencies) New Delhi : When newly-appointed Uttar Pradesh minister Mohsin Raza entered his office for the first time, little did he know that he was in for a rude shock. The BJP leader, who is the only Muslim minister in chief minister Yogi Adityanath's cabinet, was taken aback to find a photograph of



Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav on his office wall. In the presence of government officials and mediapersons, Raza can be seen pointing to the image and demanding to know what it was doing in his office. "Aap ko pata hai ab sarkar kiski hai? Ye tasveer kyun lagi hui hain? (Do you know whose government is in power now? Why is this photograph here?)" Raza asks irately. When a staff member tries to explain that they had been waiting for instructions to remove the photo, Raza asks the person whether or not he's aware that the BJP, and not the SP, is the party leading the government now. "Why wait for order to remove (the photo)? You should know who has formed the government. This is your responsibility," said Raza in a rebuke to the staffer. Mohsin Raza is a cricketer-turned politician who contested the assembly polls on a BJP ticket. He has been made the Minister of State for Science and Technology, Electronics, IT, Muslim Waqf and Haj in the Yogi Adityanath led government. The BJP had secured an emphatic win in the Uttar Pradesh assembly election, ousting the ruling SP by capturing 312 seats in the 403 member House. The historic victory also ended the BJP's 14-year exile in the state.

Lucknow's Tunday Kababi open, but loses USP: Buffalo meat

(Agencies) Tunday Kababi, one of Lucknow's most iconic eateries, has stopped selling kebabs made of buffalo meat and is now offering chicken kebabs instead at its outlets in the old city and Nazirabad, days after chief minister Yogi Adityanath ordered a crackdown on illegal slaughterhouses across Uttar Pradesh. Mohammad Usman, whose grandfather established Tunday Kababi in 1905 and who is now the owner, also confirmed their outlet in the old city was closed for a day on Wednesday because of a shortage of buffalo meat. "There is a problem in procuring buffalo meat at the moment and hence we had no option but to stop selling the kebabs that used to be our USP," Usman told Hindustan Times. A visit to Lucknow is incomplete without tasting the melt-in-the-mouth galouti kababs at Tunday Kababi and hundreds of people jostle through the crowds on the cramped streets of the Old City to savour them. "These kebabs used to be among the most-sold mainly because of their taste and affordability," Usman said adding that about 60kg of buffalo meat was consumed each day in the outlets. Closure of illegal



and mechanised slaughterhouses has been among the pre-poll commitments of Adityanath's BJP, which was voted to power in the state recently with a massive majority. The saffron party seems to be acting on its promise, with a number of abattoirs across Uttar Pradesh being subjected to raids and shutdowns. Buffalo meat preparations are sold the most not just in Tunday Kababi's outlets but across various other popular eateries

like Rahim's Kulcha Nahari shop as well. "Our adversaries would like to raise the pitch against us but let's be very clear we are not against authorised and licensed slaughterhouses. But anything illegal cannot be justified and would certainly invite action," UP minister Siddharth Nath Singh said. Lucknow is among the several districts in the state where a comprehensive verification drive is underway to ascertain the number of legal slaughter houses and meat shops.

Rahul's hit-and-run politics won't work, says SM Krishna after joining BJP



(Agencies) Veteran Congress leader SM Krishna resigned from the Congress in January taking potshots at the party for being in a "state of confusion" and joined the BJP on Wednesday, almost a year before the assembly election in Karnataka.

The 84-year-old leader was associated with the Congress for 46 years and served as the chief minister of Karnataka, governor of Maharashtra and external affairs minister. "As long as Sonia Gandhi was in the saddle, I was very comfortable in the Congress

party. But for the past three years leaders like me were made to feel unwanted. Dynastic politics without giving any importance to competence is the bane of Congress party," Krishna told Hindustan Times in a free-wheeling interview. Here are the excerpts:

What is wrong with Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi's style of functioning?

"Politics is a serious business. It is not a hit-and-run job nor is it a part-time job," said Krishna without taking Rahul's name.

You were a close confidante of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi in the party which has had dynastic succession for years.

"That's what I am saying, dynastic succession without competence cannot last. I was among the many Congress leaders who requested Rajiv Gandhi to take charge of the party after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Rajiv was competent. He was an eloquent speaker, connected so well with people. It was only later in his tenure as the Prime Minister, he couldn't handle things."

Did you or other senior leaders raise these issues with Rahul Gandhi?

"Where is the opportunity for that? So I stayed away from making suggestions for long. But look at the way Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working and the BJP president is working. They are very focused and hard working."

Many senior Congress leaders blame you for leaving the party after getting many positions.

"That is not the way to look at it. I have also contributed to the growth of Congress party in the state. I was the chief minister of

the state from 1999 to 2004. In 1999, Congress had no chance whatsoever to form a government in the state."

You said he were drawn to the BJP after Modi's commitment to the nation and his 'zero tolerance' towards corruption policy. But does the choice of Yogi Adityanath make you flinch about the way your new party works?

"Not at all. I have been reading about him of late and I am quite impressed with his ideas about environment protection, animal welfare and so on."

RSS to counter Left ideology, push for positive, national narrative



(Agencies) Rashtriya Swayam sevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat will meet vice chancellors and academicians over the weekend to discuss how social science research in the country should be guided and how to create a "positive national narrative in academics".

Nearly 500 invitees will attend the closed-door meeting 'Gyan Sangam' in the Capital where apart from Bhagwat, senior Sangh functionaries will take stock of how the curriculum needs to be revisited, with emphasis on history and social sciences. Suggestions will also be made on textbook drafting and areas of research that universities can undertake in areas such as foreign policy and constitutional matters.

According to sources in the Sangh, the meeting will also review how to prevent campuses from being bastions of the Left ideology.

Speaking to Hindustan Times, one functionary said

events such as beef eating festivals, Mahishasur Shahadat Diwas and Kiss of Love campaigns that erupted across university

campuses over the past few years are fallout of communist ideology foisted on students. The Sangh blames academe for "cultivating" communist ideology and paving the way for Indian traditions and cultural studies being "questioned and denigrated". Support for such campaigns came from the theories evolved by neo-left academicians who have made Ravana into a hero and question

the relevance of goddess Durga," said a functionary on condition of anonymity. Alarmed by the communists "capturing the mind space of the youth", and to "unfetter campuses from such ideology," the RSS will set things rolling at the two-day meeting.

The RSS and its students' wing, the ABVP, have been at loggerheads with students unions, particularly those aligned with the Left parties over organising beef festivals while the Sangh pushes for a complete ban on its sale and slaughter. The Mahishasur Diwas, which was organized in JNU campus ostensibly to celebrate the mythological figure as an icon of the backward classes had sparked off a confrontation between the students and the government. According to the functionary the programme is intended to "correct the biases that have crept in interpreting history and cultural studies". "There is a need to change the way cultural studies are undertaken at universities. We cannot have the concept of nation dismissed as oppressive and authoritative. Like countries such as Switzerland and Australia that realized the dangers of western interpretation of cultural studies, there is a need to indigenize these," he said.

PM Modi, Amit Shah tell BJP MPs from UP not to seek transfers of govt officials

(Agencies) Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah instructed party MPs from Uttar Pradesh on Thursday to refrain from seeking favours or pressuring officials in a state crucial to the party's ambitions of retaining power in 2019.

At a breakfast meeting with the party's 71 Lok Sabha MPs from the state, the two leaders asked the lawmakers to help the new UP government with development-related work.

"Let the officers work. If someone is doing any wrong, the state government will look into it," Modi and Shah told BJP MPs at the first such meeting with parliamentarians from UP, according to sources. The two leaders told lawmakers to not seek transfers and postings of government officials or put undue pressure or police and administration, sources said. They also stressed on good governance being the mantra of the

new state government. Sources said when Amroha MP Kanwar Singh Tanwar raised the



issue of BJP supporters being arrested, Modi and Shah asserted that the law would take its own course and no favour would be extended to any culprit, merely because they were associated with the ruling party. Ballia MP Bharat Singh, too, raised the issue of party workers' recommen-

dations getting unheard. Sources reported Modi and Shah as saying that it was the duty of every

party worker to ensure no compromise on the issue of corruption and law and order. "Good governance should speak for itself," the PM said, advising party leaders against talking to media out of turn. Riding on Modi's popularity and Shah's poll management, the BJP swept to vic-

tory in India's most-populous state earlier this month, consolidating the prime minister's sway over national politics. With the party ruling at the Centre and in the state, the BJP leadership has repeatedly cautioned its lawmakers against laxity that could cost it in the next election. Winning UP again in the 2019 general election is crucial for the BJP if it has to return to power at the Centre. The BJP had built a campaign against nepotism and underdevelopment of UP under the previous Akhilesh Yadav government. With chief minister Aditya Nath distributing portfolios to his minister on Wednesday evening, the BJP is trying to get a synergy between the Centre, states, elected representatives and the party to maintain the momentum that recent electoral victories have given it. The prime minister himself represents Varanasi in the Lok Sabha.

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It takes two to tango in the new Punjab cabinet: Ministers' spouses centrestage

(Agencies) There are many "better halves" in the cabinet of Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh. And they are working in tandem within the government, for better or for worse.

On Monday, it was Navjot Singh Sidhu's wife Navjot Kaur Sidhu, a former MLA who opted out of her Amritsar East seat for him, who courted a controversy by attending an official meeting of the local bodies department. She defended it saying that as a former legislator she knows civic problems and was just sitting and listening to officials while it was husband

Sidhu who was chairing the meeting.

On Wednesday, it was minister of state Aruna Chaudhary who made headlines as a TV grab of her husband, Ashok Chaudhary, a former government officer and now Congress leader from Gurdaspur, perusing official files sitting next to the minister went viral. The only distinction in hierarchy was that the back of the minister's chair was taller! Ashok Chaudhary later described it as 'good couples do things together'.

Razia Sultana, also a minister of state with independent charge like Aruna, is

anyway seen as a proxy of her husband Mohammad Mustafa, an officer of the rank of director general of police (DGP) known for his proximity to Amarinder. Though Mustafa has not been seen in Razia's public works department, according to Congress sources he had lobbied hard for getting the department for his wife. Mustafa was barred by the Election Commission from entering Sultana's constituency, Malerkotla, during the elections.

As for the CM himself, Amarinder's wife Preneet Kaur, who opted out of Patiala



Urban for the husband but managed his entire campaign as he, as the Congress unit chief, campaigned across the state, is happy issuing specifications for the CM's new official residence.

Over 100 cops, identified as 'black sheep', suspended in Uttar Pradesh

(Agencies) Seeking to send a strong message that laxity in enforcing law and order will not be tolerated, Uttar Pradesh Police has suspended over 100 policemen since the new government led by Yogi Adityanath assumed office. Most of these suspensions were in Ghaziabad, Meerut and Noida. In Lucknow, seven

inspectors have been suspended. The crackdown followed directives issued by DGP Javed Ahmed a few days back to identify the "black sheep" among the policemen. Rahul Srivastava,



public relation officer of UP Police, said, "More than 100 policemen, mostly constables, have been suspended as per the directives of the DGP to identify the black sheep and take exemplary action against them." The directive was issued to all the superintendents of police through video conferencing by the state police chief and principal secretary (home) Debashish Panda hours after Adityanath assumed office.

Supreme Court to go paperless in six to seven months, says CJI Khehar

(Agencies) Chief Justice of India JS Khehar said on Thursday the Supreme Court will go "paperless"

within six to seven months, a move that will usher in a digital judiciary. He said soon there will be no need of filing hard copies of voluminous documents as it is in the process of digitising the entire court records

across the country. This will enable the apex court to collect all records electronically from the lower courts as well as the high courts, the judge said.

The CJI's statement came during the hearing of a petition filed in public interest seeking uniform guidelines on designating lawyers as senior. Senior advocate Indira Jaising, who has filed the petition, was seeking expeditious dis-

posal of her plea by a larger bench. "Within six to seven months you will not file any paper. We will

electronically pick up trial court and high court records and there will be no need of case records being filed afresh in SC," said the bench, also comprising Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice SK Kaul. The court also set

up a three-judge bench to hear petitions seeking framing of uniform guidelines for designating lawyers as senior by the apex court and the high courts across the country. Jaising has sought transparency in the system of designating lawyers as senior advocates. She has sought direction of the Supreme Court to frame uniform guidelines on the issue.



Punjab govt flays Badal over his beacon remarks

(Agencies) Chandigarh: The Punjab government today termed former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal's reported statement on red beacons as "mere tokenism" and asked him to take up meaningful issues instead of indulging in frivolous opposition.

Dubbing Badal's remarks as "symptomatic of the anti-people culture in the party (SAD)", an official spokesperson said that if he was finding it difficult to connect the elimination of VIP culture with public welfare then it clearly showed the extent to which the Akalis were alienated from the people of Punjab, which had translated into the party's poor show in the recent Assembly polls.

Yesterday a section of media quoted Badal as saying that there would be no impact on removing red beacons from vehicles of the VIPs on commoners in Punjab.

As the state's former chief minister, Badal should constructively work with the government in the in-

terest of the people of the state and not indulge in expressing opposition for the sake of it, the spokesperson said.

The spokesperson urged Badal to graciously accept that times had changed and there was no place for VIP culture in the modern world.

The red beacon, though symbolic, had become a tool for politicians to throw their weight around and assert their authority over the common masses, the official said.

"Not only do these kind of symbols alienate the people but send out the wrong message that the politicians are not ordinary men and women but hold a lofty status that requires others to bow before them," he said.

People have died because they could not reach the hospital in time as a result of VIP movement, and students have missed out on their exams for the same reason, the spokesperson claimed.

He said the state government is committed to abolishing the VIP cul-

ture of which the red beacon was one of the most visible insignias in the state.

All public servants, including politicians, need to remain always connected to the people if they are to serve them better, and the VIP culture has turned out to be a huge barrier in this regard, he added.

Besides, the VIP culture had proved to be a major drain on the state's economy, which was struggling to cope with a massive debt the biggest legacy of the Badal government, the spokesperson pointed out.

He said the state had set a healthy example with its decision to crack down on VIP culture, which other states are already beginning to emulate.

The government had already sought the support of all political leaders and others hitherto entitled to VIP frills, and hoped that Badal would also cooperate willingly and not oppose the move merely because he was now a part of the opposition.

Liquor becomes a bond among devotees and saint

(Agencies) Gurdaspur : An unusual bonhomie is witnessed at a two-day fair as numerous devotees throng samadhi of Baba Rodhe Shahat Bhooma village and seek blessings. The interesting part is that the first day of the fair is reserved for male devotees while the day two is reserved for women as both genders offer liquor at Samadhi. The offered liquor is further disturbed among devotees as parshad

The history behind the worship of the saint states that a farmer approached the baba who even after being married for couple of years was childless. After seeking the blessings, the couple gave a birth to child and offered Rs 500 to the saint which the later refused. The saint asked the couple to donate a bottle of liquor every day and distribute it as parshad. Many cops on duty and devotees can be found lying on roadside in semi conscious state. The village is also known for being the ancestral village of Shah Mohammad, the renowned Urdu poet during the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Many famous personalities including Mohammad Rafi and Shah Mohammad used to visit the shrine on regular intervals.

Will Uber's crisis shake Silicon Valley's confidence?

(Agencies) The British comedians David Mitchell and Robert Webb captured perfectly the moment when realization dawns.

Their comic skit opens with Webb, as a German commander, striding around an artillery encampment: "Now we'll see how these Russians deal with a crack SS division," he says firmly. Mitchell comes over, looking concerned. "Hans," he says. "I've just noticed something. Have you looked at our caps recently? The badges on our caps. They've got skulls on them. Actually got little pictures of skulls on them." He pauses. "Hans," he says, a growing horror in his voice. "Are we the baddies?" "One can imagine a scene a little like this playing out in the office of Uber, the taxi-but-don't-call-it-a-taxi business. Uber likes to say it's not just a cheap cab service -- it's "redefining the city". But in the past two months, a growing number of executives have de-

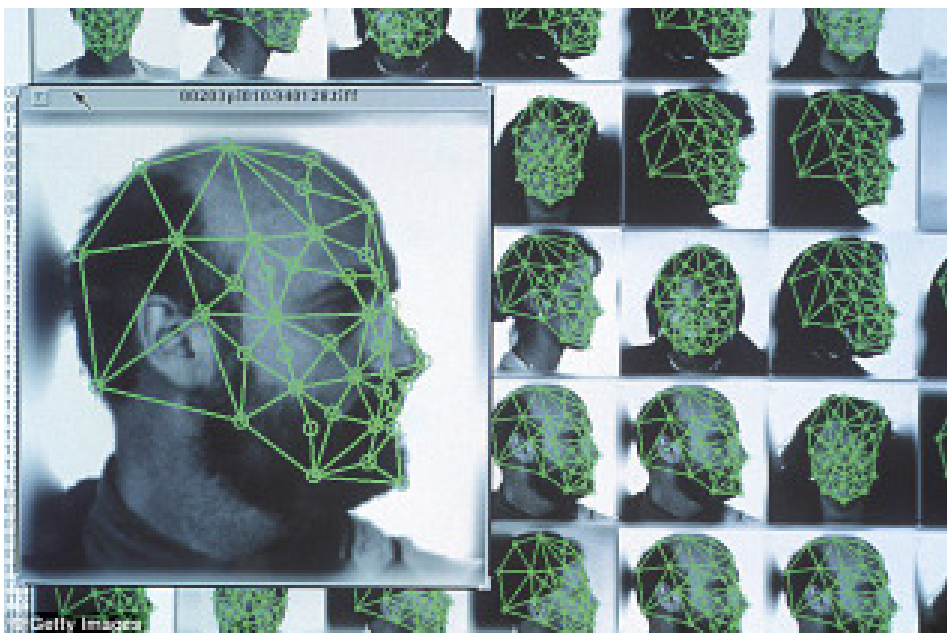
parted, most recently its president of ride-sharing, Jeff Jones, as allegations of an ingrained culture of sexism allied with an aggressive attitude that rides roughshod over regulators and safety has become too loud to ignore. Uber's CEO Travis Kalanick has taken the allegations seriously enough to order an internal investigation. Jones told Recode: "The beliefs and approach to leadership that have guided my career are inconsistent with what I saw and experienced at Uber." In other words: are we the baddies?

Meanwhile Google is being hauled before the UK government's Cabinet Office to explain how adverts for the latter ended up on extremist videos on YouTube -- where the video makers get a cut of the advertising money. The revelation prompted the withdrawal of millions of pounds of advertising by other brands including The Guardian, Marks & Spencer and the media buying agency Havas,

which controls £175m of spending for clients. Again, you can imagine the astonishment in the Google offices: we're giving money to extremists? Are we the baddies? Google's European chief Matt Brittin has said that the company is sorry and "looking again at how we improve what we're doing on enforcement," but didn't outline any solid policy changes when he spoke at the Advertising Week Europe conference in London. Tech companies are often encouraged to have an exaggerated view of themselves and the world. Steve Jobs urged Apple to make a "dent in the universe." Google has "moonshots." Mark Zuckerberg exhorted Facebook's programmers to "move fast and break things." The Silicon Valley ideal is "disruption" -- tearing everything apart, throwing all the cards in the air. Why, you're not just collecting and delivering washing door-to-door -- you're disrupting laundromats. Never

mind that lots of people need laundromats. They're stick-in-the-muds who'll soon discover how wonderful it is to spend a quarter of their weekly wage on cleaning. And tax? As the fictional Valley company executive in Armando Iannucci's satirical TV series *Veep* told the vice-president, "we like to think we're post-tax." But surely if you're changing the world, that can't be bad -- can it? Look at Facebook, connecting everyone and making the world a better place. Oh, no, don't tell me it's also host to fake news, illicit gun sales and child abuse imagery. How about Twitter, whose mission statement is "To give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers." That wasn't meant to include attacks coordinated by huffy video game players on women or sexist racists attack the actress Leslie Jones, even though it has been warned about an incipient abuse problem for years.

FBI bosses are grilled by Congress on secret face recognition program which has swept up tens of millions of Americans



(Agencies) FBI bosses have been grilled over a secret facial recognition program that allows agents to access photos of tens of millions of Americans.

The agency came under fire for its unrestricted access to ID photos in 18 states to help identify potential suspects - including innocent people who have never been charged with a crime.

Privacy advocates suggested the technology fosters racial bias and compared the system to 'Nazi Germany', at a congressional hearing yesterday. The system allows agents to access and algorithmically match the photos of tens of millions of Americans.

More than 400 million pictures of Americans' faces are kept in local, state and federal law enforcement facial recognition systems, the Government Accountability Office reported last year.

Experts estimated that about half of all American's faces are archived in those photos.

I have zero confidence in the FBI and the [Justice Department], frankly, to keep this in check," said Democratic congressman Stephen Lynch of the House

Committee on Oversight and Government Regulation.

'This is really Nazi Germany here, what we're talking about. And I see little difference in the way people are being tracked under this, just getting one wide net and getting information on all Ameri-

can citizens.'

Members also mentioned research which suggested that face recognition systems have a higher rate of false positives for African-Americans.

They grilled the FBI for 'choosing to ignore' the evidence over the accuracy of face-matching systems.

'According to these reports, if you're black, you're more likely to be subjected to this technology, and the technology is more likely to be wrong,' said the committee's ranking Democrat, Elijah Cummings of Maryland. 'That's a hell of a combination.

'Rather than conducting testing that would show whether or not concerns have merit, the FBI chooses to ignore growing evidence that the technology has a disproportionate impact on African Americans.'

Committee chairman Jason Chaffetz asked whether the FBI was storing photos of innocent people from other sources, like social media. FBI spokesman Kimberly Del Greco denied that they were, stating: 'The only information the

FBI has and have collected in our database are criminal mugshot photos.'

'We do not have any other photos in our repository,' she concluded.

Chaffetz refuted her claims, replying: 'That's not true.'

16 states have granted the FBI free access to driver's license photos for its Next Generation Identification and Facial Analysis, Comparison, and Evaluation (FACE) photo-searching systems.

Two additional states - Arizona and Maryland - have been added to that list, bringing the total to 18 states, according to a report by researchers at Georgetown Law.

Even if the FBI doesn't control some of the photo databases directly, it can still easily access them, the hearing concurred.

Attorney Jennifer Lynch added that FBI databases do in fact include the faces of innocent people.

FBI documents reveal that roughly 16 per cent of its NGI database is made up non-criminals, she claimed, referring to the Georgetown research.

Belgian police arrest man trying to mow down pedestrians in Antwerp

(Agencies) Brussels: Belgian police arrested a man on Thursday after he tried to drive into a crowd at high-speed in a shopping area in the port city of Antwerp, a police chief said. The man was of north African origin and used a car with French registration plates, Antwerp police chief Serge Muyters said. The incident came a day after an attack on the British parliament killed three people plus the attacker, as well as after the first anniversary of the Brussels attacks in which 32 people died.

"A vehicle with French plates has

tried to drive at high speed into the Meir (shopping street). A man in camouflage was taken away," Muyters told a news conference. "The pedestrians had to jump aside," he said. "My gratitude on behalf of all Antwerp to the soldiers who have intervened, the police services and the special intervention force," Antwerp mayor Bart de Wever tweeted.

Prime Minister Charles Michel said the government was "following this situation as it develops" in the Flemish-speaking northern city. "We con-

tinue to be vigilant. Our security services did an excellent job in Antwerp, thanks," he tweeted. Meir is the main shopping street in Antwerp's historic centre and is mostly pedestrianised. It is one of the most important shopping areas in the country.

With soldiers deployed at key sites, Belgium has been on high alert since 22 March last year when suicide bombers attacked Zaventem airport and Maalbeek metro station that left 32 people dead and more than 320 wounded.

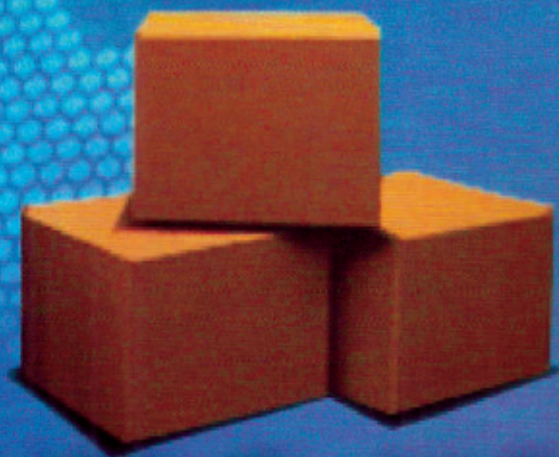
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At sanctuary cities gathering, policymakers vow to become Trump's 'worst nightmare'

"It is illegal for the federal government to withdraw funds in a punitive fashion from cities that they say are refusing to comply with ill guided policies and laws that they are enacting," she added.

At Monday's policy gathering, city officials from around the country weighed their options over how to appropriately defy Trump's immigration orders. Some of the lawmakers, including representatives from blue cities in red states, described fears of putting targets on their backs by not complying with federal law.

But Mark-Viverito insisted to reporters that leaders of sanctuary cities had a chance to show strength to Washington by coming together.

"Not only is there power in our numbers and in union in our cities, but as municipalities we have the power to secure a number of tools to expand the protection we offer to our immigrant communities, and that is why we are here today," she said. "We are hoping that we are going to become this administration's worst nightmare."

But as the conference was underway, Sessions took to the podium in the White House briefing room to warn that the Department of Justice is ready to hold back nearly \$4 billion in funds from going to any sanctuary municipality.

Sanctuary municipalities are cities that do not willfully cooperate with or help to enforce federal immigration laws. In New York City, for example, the New York Police Department for years has declined to use its resources in assisting Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers from enforcing immigration law, picking up undocumented people or holding them for ICE to arrest. The city Department of Correction only honors detainer requests for undocumented immigrants who have been charged with a violent crime or are considered a threat to national security.

Sessions on Monday urged cities to reconsider these types of policies, saying they have damaged national security and public safety.

"Unfortunately some states and cities have adopted policies designed to frustrate the enforcement of immigration laws," Session said. "Including refusing to detain non-felons on federal detainer requests."

Sessions cited the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, a

law passed in 1996, which includes a section providing that no state or local entity can in any way restrict its law enforcement officials from communicating with federal immigration authorities about a person's immigration status. Sessions said DOJ will now require jurisdictions seeking or applying for any DOJ grants to certify compliance with the law as a condition of receiving those awards.

"[This policy] made clear that failure to remedy violations could result in withholding of grants, termination of grants and disbarment or ineligibility for future grants," Sessions said. It is not yet entirely clear how much money the city could be at risk of losing, but Mark-Viverito said the city is within its legal rights to protect its undocumented residents without fear of losing federal funding. She also said her office was reviewing Sessions' order in order to come up with a proper response, which may include legal action.

"It is our right as a city to decide how our city employees share information with the federal government. If there is no judicial warrant, we will not honor a detainer," she said. Mayor Bill de Blasio, in a press statement later Monday, said much the same as the Council speaker in response to Sessions' comments. "President Trump's latest threat changes nothing. We will remain a city welcoming of immigrants who have helped make our city the safest big city in the nation," he said. "Any attempt to cut NYPD funding for the nation's top terror target will be aggressively fought in court. We won't back down from protecting New Yorkers from terror – or from an overzealous administration fixated on xenophobia and needless division."

New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman also issued a defiant statement shortly after Sessions' comments, insisting that state and local governments have broad authority under the constitution to not participate in any immigration law enforcement. Schneiderman had issued a set of legal guidelines earlier this year for sanctuary jurisdictions in New York, outlining a set of policies which cities can abide by to continue to guard immigrant communities.

"President Trump lacks the

constitutional authority to broadly cut off funding to states and cities just because they have lawfully acted to protect immigrant families," Schneiderman said. "Public safety depends on trust between law enforcement and those they bravely serve; yet, again and again, President Trump's draconian policies only serve to undercut that trust."

India Asks The US For Details Of The 271 'Illegal' Immigrants It Has Listed

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had on Thursday said in Parliament, "We have not accepted this list and have sought more details. We have said that it is only after we verify the details, can we issue an emergency certificate for their deportation."

The Donald Trump administration has given a list of 271 people, claiming they were illegal migrants from India. Asked about the killing of an Indian woman and her seven-year-old son in the US last night, Baglay said India is in touch with the US authorities who are trying to ascertain details of the "very unfortunate incident". He also said the Indian consulate was ready to extend all possible help to the family.

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BJP's success in Assembly Elections

But does this portend a good omen for India? That inevitably raises the question: Did the Congress system do good to the Indian democracy? It must be said that the political stability that the Congress-dominant system brought about helped the leaders to focus on administration in Independent India. With a leader like Nehru, with his deep democratic convictions, (Nehru had the opportunity to usher in personal

dictatorship as leaders in most post-colonial societies did in the 1950s and 60s but he did not fall for it) democratic postulates were institutionalised in India.

We owe our democracy largely to the Congress system.

There is a lurking fear that Modi is more akin to Indira than Nehru. Nehru went out of the way to uphold the sanctity of Parliament as the forum for larger policy debates and policy pronouncements. But

Indira believed in plebiscitary democracy, bypassing democratic institutions like Parliament. There was a clear authoritarian streak in her. Modi, in that sense, is carrying forward the legacy of Indira by directly addressing the people on the major policy issues rather than taking the route of the legislature. Modi is better placed than Indira, in this regard, as he is prime minister in an age when television has become a mass medium

in India, reaching every nook and corner of the country. Indira's authoritarian trait propelled her to impose Emergency when she was challenged politically in Parliament and on the streets. Will Modi do the same when he faces similar challenges? That question will arise only if the Indian political firmament will have a leader of the moral stature of Jayaprakash Narayan, as the conscience-keeper of the nation.

India needs a full-time defence minister as ministry cannot be run on ad hoc basis

as each still continues to function in vertical silos behind the so-called façade of synergy. The "Make in India" plan in the defence sector is still a work in progress with Parrikar leaving the "strategic partners" proposal to his successor for approval.

Under this scheme proposed by the ministry mandarins, select Indian private defence sector players will be allowed to tie-up with original equipment manufacturers from abroad to make top end hardware in India for both domestic consumption as well as exports. It seems that the new defence minister will again have to go back to the drawing board to convince himself of the proposal or come up with amendments to it.

While Parrikar had made the service headquarters and ministry mandarins more accountable during his 27-month tenure, the restructuring of the higher defence command is still hanging fire in spite of it being proposed by the K Subrahmanyam Kargil Committee report and its successors. The decision of appointing a chief of defence staff, a single point military advisor to the government, is still to be taken, as well as reorienting the service headquarters from its imperial past to a US style of theatre commands for faster military response, synergy and inter-service coordination. Even though Lt Gen DB Shekatkar committee on military restructuring and downsizing had submitted its report last December to

Parrikar, the report was still in process and on the table of defence minister before he was packed off to Goa.

Given the all-weather military relationship between China and Pakistan, with the former empowering the latter with beef to box much above its weight category, India cannot afford a status quo in the defence sector with decision-making delayed in acquisition of air platforms, particularly to maintain its cutting edge in South Asia and beyond.

It is not that the Indian strategic capability is in the decline. On the contrary, New Delhi has taken big steps in enhancing its strategic reach as well as its capacity to make the

battlefield more transparent across the borders. The border infrastructure under the Modi government has been definitely upgraded along the 720-kilometre Line of Control with Pakistan, as well as the 3,488 kilometre Line of Actual Control with the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China.

India needs a permanent defence minister to expedite day-to-day decision-making, as well as keeping the continuous turf war between mandarins and military under control. The unsavoury sacking of Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat in the previous NDA regime showed that this ministry is not an elephant that anyone can ride.

Lawsuit filed against Indian American Motel Manager Yagna Patel

The lawsuit claims the defendants 'knew or had constructive knowledge' that the girl was 'being sexually exploited'. Traffickers are alleged to have advertised sex with the girl online, before encouraging men to come to the motel after agreeing a price over the phone, Philly.com reported. When they arrived, a hotel clerk would show them to the girl's room, according to the lawsuit, which names a staff member, 'Abdul', who was supposedly aware of the abuse. The lawsuit claims that motel workers should have noticed tell-tale signs of abuse, such as the room allegedly regularly containing used condoms. It also claims that the room 'frequently smelled of marijuana' and that men and minors were allegedly seen leaving it.

The girl was allegedly treated 'aggressively' and would have seemed scared, court documents claim, adding that she often 'dressed in a sexually explicit manner'.

'This child was forced into sex slavery, paid to do things with men double, triple, quadruple her age,' her attorney Nadeem Bezar said.

Fellow lawyer Tom Kline added: 'You have to be blind deaf and dumb not to know that over 100 men are showing up over a period of a couple days.'

'You have a cleaning crew that comes into the room and often times finds boxes or waste cans full of used condoms. This is about as open and obvious as it gets.'

In The Mood For A Desi Robin Hood

He then spoke to National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh, questioning their claim that Naxals were down and out following demonetisation. Only then did he turn to the epochal business at hand. He called up party president Amit Shah, his trusted strategist and micro-manager par excellence, and congratulated him for successfully navigating UP's tricky political waters. The conversation was brief, say sources, and Modi urged Shah to keep the celebrations muted. It was only the next day that the triumphal march happened. It was just 200 metres to the BJP headquarters, and Modi strode, his light beige achkan-and-jacket making for a stark visual contrast against the grey and black of security personnel, very much the colossus.

As ecstatic party workers showered rose petals while he arrived at 11, Ashoka Road, it was clear that Brand Modi was -uncathed even after three years- and may, in fact, have gained some extra lustre. Strikingly, albeit counter-intuitively for many, his risky demonetisation gambit—wrapped in a heroic narrative—had paid dividends. As some placards put it, "Desh mein hai BJP ka mood, Modi hai hamaare Robin Hood." Self-explanatory, even without a translation.

Now with his ascendancy established, Modi was free to elaborate on his idea of a New India. The word 'gareeb' (poor) was one of the first uttered by Shah as he opened the event. A party leader on

the sidelines mentioned the vision of Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi. On the stage, Modi spoke of economic realities, the aspirations of the poor, the burden on the middle class. He laid out the roadmap for his government in the remaining two years and beyond until 2022, when India marks 75 years of freedom. Outlook spoke to several BJP leaders, officials in the PMO and the government to find out how this mid-term victory will help Modi and how he sees the reforms agenda in front of him. BJP Rajya Sabha member Bhupender Yadav, who coordinated the party's campaign in UP, says the reforms would be in keeping with the trend established in the past three years. "Let's call it J-A-M. The 'J' is for Jan Dhan Yojana, which symbolises the use of the country's financial institutions to empower the poor. 'A' is for Aadhaar, with its focus on delivery of services and stopping leakages to ensure benefits are going to the right people. 'M' is for Mobile...we plan to encourage the use of mobile and digital technology for more transparency and easy accessibility of government services. It also goes with the government's pledge to move towards a cashless society," Yadav explains. Across policies, the thrust would be on outcomes and delivery of services, confirms a PMO official. Schemes such as Ujala, Ujjwala, Mudra and Jan Aushadhi Yojana, which would have played a positive role on the ground

unbeknownst to critics, would be expanded. Aadhaar, he says, has emerged as the master key in stopping leakages in the system. "The -total savings because of this in the past two and half years have been more than Rs 49,000 crore. And this is only from the few welfare schemes where Aadhaar has been implemented," the official says. With 112 crore people covered under Aadhaar, it's being showcased as an important tool of transformation, good governance and empowerment. The idea now is to expand its footprint until each and every person is covered and benefits under all schemes, including the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), accrues through Direct Benefit Transfer, like it happens in LPG subsidy, scholarships, -NREGA and pensions. With ICDS, sceptics have been pointing to the risk of mid-day meal schemes being turned into a monetary benefit delivered to parents, but the government is bullish about the idea of maximising efficiency through better targeting, as it says has happened with the PDS. The Class in the Middle The PMO official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, underlines the thematic focus. The way forward, he says, was clearly delineated in the last two budgets: the thrust was firmly on schemes for the poor, farmers and the -middle class. According to him, Modi was extremely focused on "unburdening" the middle class that has been bearing a lot of financial pressures.

94-year-old is lovin' it at McDonald's since 1973

SHE has worked behind the counter at McDonald's for almost half a century—but even at 94 years old, Loraine Maurer has no intention of retiring.

Maurer is something of an institution at the restaurant in Evansville, Indiana but she has revealed that she did not plan to stay so long when she began working there in 1973.

Her husband had just retired, due to a disability, and she told him she felt she was too young to stay at home and applied for a job.

But she told ABC News: "When I started, I didn't start to stay."

Chip and Katie Kenworthy, who own the Evansville franchise of the Golden Arches, are glad she did decide to stay on after normal retirement age.

"Lorraine has quite a following. She has lots of very loyal costumers who

come especially to our restaurant to see her," said Mrs Kenworthy.

Her husband died in 1980 and her life from then on revolved around the restaurant, her four children and the nearby Good Shepherd Catholic Church.

Lorraine insists she will never retire from the joint

She said: "They were my life savers when I lost my husband. The customers helped."

The Kenworthys arranged a special party to celebrate Lorraine's 44 years of service and invited her friends from the church.

Mrs Maurer appreciated the gesture and said: "It was wonderful. There were so many people there that I couldn't talk to them all."

Nowadays she only works two days a week but she dismisses the idea of retiring altogether: "I would miss it too much. I don't want to get depressed and it's not that I don't look forward to going to work. It's not a job. I really and truly enjoy it."

And as long as she is able to keep up with the frantic pace of serving fast food, the Kenworthys are happy to keep her on.

The restaurant also shared a picture of Loraine with owners/operators Chip & Katie Kenworthy with the caption: "Lorraine had a blast at her party today, and we had a blast honouring this incredible woman's 44 years working at McDonald's! Suffice it to say, we haven't had many 94-year-old employees. We're lucky to have Loraine, and appreciate everyone who attended."

Daily Mail



Lorraine Maurer (pictured, right) has worked at the McDonald's in Evansville, Indiana, for 44 years.



THIS is the shocking moment that an anti-fascist demonstration at a pro-Trump march in California spiralled into violence, ending with one man being hit with a Trump flag.

The scenes, filmed at the MAGA (Make America Great Again) March in Huntington Beach, California, on Saturday, show Trump supporters stomping up the sand, with black-clad protesters marching alongside.

Then a Trump protester lunges forward at a marcher, setting off a chain of reactions that ends in a confrontation between two other men. This was just one violent incident of many at the march, which saw four people arrested. Shouts are being banded about when the fight breaks out, and a Trump fan in a white shirt shoves a photographer who is facing away from him.

One of the anti-fascist protesters then intervenes, getting between the Trump supporter and the photographer—only for the Trump supporter to start punching him repeatedly.

A female Trump supporter in a flag-patterned cowboy hat, later identified by press as organiser Jennifer Sterling, tries to break the pair apart.

But then a third supporter in a grey shirt jumps in behind her and starts hitting the anti-fas-



Around 2,000 Trump fans were followed by a handful of anti-fascist protesters, leading to violence at the Make America Great Again March at a beach in LA.

Trump fan hits man with flag during march

Four anti-fascist protesters arrested

sterling pulls the grey-shirted man away, just as another figure in black—a thin man with sunglasses and a black hood—appears to pepper-spray them both in the face.

The man disappears off-camera, while Sterling staggers around blindly, calling for help. She falls over and the march continues.

Minutes later, a fourth Trump protester with a beard and Make America Great flag jumps onto the scene. He begins to pursue the thin man, shouting "He sprayed my wife!"

The bearded man swings at the protester, managing to hit him on the shoulder with the flag.

But he is ordered away by another man, who appears to be one of the march's organisers.

The sporadic fights lasted for around half an hour. Four protesters were arrested and two detained, the OC Register reported. In total, the march attracted around 2,000 Trump supporters and a handful of protesters. Some of the Trump supporters had flags with swastikas on. Pro-Trump marcher Tim Morris said: "These guys don't represent all of us."

Three male protesters were charged with felony illegal use of pepper spray and one woman was booked on suspicion of misdemeanor assault and battery.

The two detained protesters were not arrested. Police said only two injuries were reported—both small cuts that didn't require any treatment.

Daily Mail

WHITE HOUSE DENIES \$374BN BILL TO ANGELA

THE White House says a report that President Donald Trump gave German Chancellor Angela Merkel a bill for about \$374 billion (€24,000 billion) earlier this month is 'false'. The invoice was for money Germany 'owed' NATO for defending it, a report published by The Times said, which cited 'German government sources'.

A German minister told the paper that the bill was 'outrageous'. The minister was quoted as saying: "The concept behind putting out such demands is to intimidate the other side, but the chancellor took it calmly and will not respond to such provocations."

Merkel allegedly received the bill for the United States's services to NATO while she was in Washington, DC, according to CNBC.

NATO member countries are supposed to spend two per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) in defense each year.

Just five members—Britain,

The invoice was for money Germany 'owed' NATO for defending it



Angela Merkel (left) allegedly received bill while she was in the US to meet Trump.

Estonia, Greece, Poland, and the United States—do so.

The Times said that Trump officials, beginning with 2002, calculated how much Germany fell short on the two per cent NATO goal for each year and added it together, before they proceeded to include interest.

The report is 'false,' White House spokesman Michael Short told CNBC. Trump met with Merkel on Friday, March 17, in Washington, DC.

Daily Mail

Pak baby born with heart out of chest

A BABY born with her heart pumping outside her body has stunned both her parents and doctors in Pakistan.

Shaista Zahida, 22, gave birth to her daughter naturally at a government-run hospital in Multan city last week.

But she was left shocked when she realised Laraib's heart was beating on the outside of her body due to an extremely rare condition.

Despite the organ functioning properly, doctors say she will need surgery to place it back inside her body to keep her alive. However, Pakistani doctors are unable to operate on her, meaning her only hope of survival is by having surgery in Europe.

Both Shaista and her husband, Baloch, 28, are devastated with their firstborn's condition and are appealing for miracle treatment abroad.

Currently, she is in the intensive care unit at The Children's Hospital in Lahore, being kept



Doctors say she will need surgery to stay alive.

alive by the doctors.

There doctors diagnosed her with Ectopia cordis but whether and when a surgery would be possible on the infant is not known yet. Ectopia cordis is a genetic condition that occurs in approximately one in every 126,000 births.

Infants with the malformation tend to die within the first few days of their life, according to medical figures.

Baloch has asked for help from the Pakistan government so that his baby can be taken outside the country for a surgery. He said: "She looks normal but we are worried what will happen to our baby as doctors have told us that treatment for such a condition is not available in Pakistan."

"Doctors told me that treatment for such a condition will be available in any European country. I'm appealing the Pakistan and Punjab governments to help me."

Daily Mail

Bhagat Singh Not The First Or Last Revolutionary Killed By British. But Why Is He Remembered Even Today?



He was not the first or last revolutionary to be killed by the British but none could capture the imagination of the people of India the way he did

“Why is everyone thinking of Bhagat Singh today? Even children in villages know about him. Many before him have made sacrifices and many more are still doing so. But why is the name of Bhagat Singh on every tongue? Why is his picture adorning the walls and why are buttons studded with it? There must be some reason for it.”

Jawaharlal Nehru, who had visited them in the jail, was to ask this after the hanging of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru. Kama Maclean talks about it in his beautiful book Revolutionary history of the interwar India. He tells us that the meeting between the young revolutionaries in their Lahore jail cells and Nehru left a deep impression on him. Fast was not the preserve of Gandhi. The young revolutionaries were fasting in the jail to demand dignified treatment to them. Hailing their ‘magnificent suffering’, Nehru said that they had created a “new consciousness of political life (that) once more made us all yearn for the liberty of our country...what a contrast this is, compared with the unfortunate wrangles among congressmen and the fighting for securing positions in the congress and the reception committee!”

There was something

sublime about Bhagat Singh and his friends. Was it only the act of violence? For violence has also been seen as a sublimating force.

Bhagat Singh turned into an enigma after his execution by the British. He was not the first or last revolutionary to be killed by the British but none could capture the imagination of the people of India the way he did.

But it was not only his death that moved the people. Even before it, he, through his actions was to force the then President of the Congress Party to compare him with a person none less than Gandhi. The action of throwing of bombs at the assembly by Bhagat Singh and his comrades had been condemned By Gandhi. But Motilal Nehru struck a different note and refused to condemn the act. He said, “Let the people and the government see things in their true perspective. The choice lies between Gandhi and Balraj.

Balraj was the signature on the leaflets thrown in the assembly after the bombs by Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt. The viceroy was livid with the senior Nehru for so glorifying the young revolutionaries but the younger Nehru added to what his father has said : “ While many of may grieve over the incident, for reasons that the viceroy may not appreciate, it is absurd to talk of unqualified condemnation of the young people who did it.”

Bhagat Singh has always been through the prism of his supreme sacrifice. We need to go beyond that. What makes him stand out was his ability to think through his actions. The tradition of revolutionaries in India is strewn with violent actions and scarifies but it was only Bhagat Singh who looked at the philosophy and use of violence critically. He was the first among them to realise and say it openly that violence has a very limited role to play. Ultimately it has to be mass-mobilisation that would bring about a transformatory change in society.

He was all of 23 when he died. So, in a way, he never ages in the imagination of succeeding generations of Indians. Despite his youth and revolutionary methods, which were then called terrorist, he never comes across as a reckless firebrand man. He represents a thinking young mind.

His argument with persons like Lala Lajpat Rai and his criticism of their

Hindu communal views is only a part of his world view. He came from a background and tradition of the Ghadar Party but moved further by not imprisoning himself within the ideals of nationalism. This is extraordinary for his readings could not have matched the breadth of what icons like Subhash Bose had achieved. And yet he, barely twenty, advised the youth of Punjab to distance themselves from the ‘emotional’ and ‘narrow’ ‘nationalism’ of Subhash Babu and align with the ‘scientific’ and ‘internationalist’ Jawaharlal Nehru. Bose was years away from collaborating with Japan and Germany with an aim to defeat the British. But the foresight of the young revolutionary could sense this danger. Later, Agyeya, the Hindi writer, who was a close associate of Bhagat Singh and was part of their core group, joined the British army after coming out of prison. He was clear, as if taking sue from his friend Bhagat Singh that it was not a compromise with his principles. He is very

close to Bhagat Singh when he say, through Bhuvan, a character of his novel Nadi ke Dweep that with Japan at the door step of India, his role was decided. Japan, Germany and Italy must not win or the possibility of humanity would vanish.

The clarity of thought which led Agyeya to see the danger of fascism can be seen in an even younger Bhagat Singh who warned the people to be alert to implication of the politics of Bose. It was natural for the revolutionaries to be religious. Bhagat Singh came from a militant Sikh tradition. But his readings and thinking led him away from the religious outlook. He not only turned an atheist but wrote a long essay to tell his friends and the people at large why he became an atheist. The recent killing of Farooque by ‘religious’ people in Coimbatore and the attack on Balendu Swami in Vrindavan, again by religiously inclined mobs supported by the police makes the essay all the more rel-

evant. Bhagat Singh seeks to vest responsibility of all his actions in himself. This abiding sense of one’s responsibility towards oneself and not locate it outside, to make oneself accountable for one’s thoughts and decisions has often been called Gandhian. Gandhi never evaded arrest, never ever sought clemency from his opponents. So was the case with Bhagat Singh. It can be compared with the act of Savarkar who has been venerated as brave but who kept writing conciliatory letters to the

British requesting them to ease restrictions on him and in return promising loyalty to them.

Bhagat Singh then demand rigour of intellect from the youth. It is not action which defines him, it is his ability for thinking deep. It is this which liberates him from the confines of nationalism and places him along a giant like Tagore who saw himself as a man of the world. It is this internationalist sensibility of Bhagat Singh which need to infuse in all our decisions and actions.

Broomstick Broke, AAP Got A Poke

The Aam Aadmi Party’s debacle in the Punjab ass-embly elections has undoubtedly jeopardised the party’s national ambitions. It has also plunged the party’s leadership and volunteers into a deep gloom, for it means they confront the impending Delhi municipal elections on a weaker wicket and will not have a strident victory narrative to take to Gujarat’s assembly polls.

AAP’s Punjab experience has also raised questions over whether the party went wrong in estimating its own popularity and the surge in favour of party chief Arvind Kejriwal. What the leadership is also “introspecting” about is their ability to bargain with, and manage expectations of, regional leaders. The electoral debacle has also bared the party’s mis-steps, though such clarity is brought about by hindsight alone. The most stark instance of AAP’s miscalculations is how it underestimated the impact of riv-als’ propaganda on the state’s

moderate Sikhs and Hindus. This damaging narrative, created effectively by the Shiro-mani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Congress, included the charge of AAP consorting with extr-eme right and left outfits.

“We count as our achievement having contested without distributing alcohol, cash or drugs. We talk only about clean politics and we are going to start working—just like before, if not more energetically,” says Himmat Singh Shergill, AAP’s con-testant from Majitha. In the same vein, the party has picked H.S. Phoolka as leader of opposition. Phoolka has for decades picked up 1984 riot cases and is generally regarded a fighter.

For now, the greenhorn party, which had expected to sweep the Malwa belt, has been forced to try and come up with a fresh strategy for Delhi and Gujarat, to help recoup from Punjab’s bloodied battlefield. AAP has bagged what it considers

a consolation prize—20 victories from 117 seats in the state, and none in Goa. These, it knows, do not help it pitch itself as a giant slayer elsewhere. That AAP garnered merely 6.3 per cent of votes in Goa despite high anti-incumbency—even the chief minister did not scrape through—is a sign that its campaign, leadership and strategy had not matured. Most AAP leaders lost their deposits too. The central leadership knew of its weaknesses in Goa, but drummed on enthusiastically. This perhaps indicates AAP’s inbuilt, and necessary, strategy—generating a buzz around potentially winning a state election. Goa’s verdict was nevertheless surprising—not because AAP lost but because voters plumped for the Congress which, by all accounts, had been floundering there. This became apparent post-elections, as it could not evolve a consensus over who would claim the CM’s post.

How can we save India's ecosystems? By paying for it!



In 2015, just before the last inter-governmental climate jamboree began in Paris, I was in Ramanathapuram, a sleepy coastal town in Tamil Nadu. I was following a story of declining fish catch in the area thanks to over-fishing and destruction of coral reefs (the breeding ground of fish) by trawlers.

"Declining fish catch will have a disastrous impact on our lives," a fisherman told me, as he rowed his boat towards the stunning Pamban Bridge, which straddles the Indian Ocean like a colossus. "How will I continue to send my girl to college?"

"Over-fishing will also strain India's relations with its neighbours," an activist, the fisherman's neighbour, added. I remembered that conversation recently when I read that the Sri Lankan Navy has killed a fisherman and injured three because they moved into Lankan territorial waters in search of better catch. Though ecosystems and biodiversity are critical to our daily existence, most seem oblivious to it and so destroy it without any fear of reprisal. Why does this happen?

At a recent conference organised by the Dialogue Highway, a Chandigarh-based Trust, and the department of environment studies, Panjab University on Himalayan ecology the brain trust of the meeting --- academics, ecologists, foresters and activists --- answered my query: The destruction in

the name of "development" happens because nature's economic worth is invisible.

But consider this. A 50-year-old tree provides services like oxygen, water recycling, soil conservation and pollution control worth Rs 23 lakh (this estimate has been done by green economists). Cutting and selling it fetches only Rs 50,000 (one time). Yet due to the absence of data about its ecological services, felling a tree seems more profitable. Moreover, a tree also adds to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the primary indicator of an economy's health. But the positive impact of planting a tree, however, never gets reflected in the economic growth.

But today many economists are trying to point out that a nation's progress should include its natural capital base. "Economists and planners prefer using the GDP gauge but it does not measure wealth --- it just measures production... Climate change is going to force the nations of the world to reinvent economics and why we should anticipate and plan ahead, rather than be caught napping," Pavan Sukhdev, a banker by day and an environmentalist by night, told Sanctuary Asia in an interview recently. In 2011, Sukhdev anchored the United Nation Environment Programme's Green Economy Initiative, which demonstrated that the greening of economies is not a burden on growth but rather a new engine for growing wealth, increasing

decent employment, and reducing persistent poverty.

The good news, as I found out in Chandigarh, is that two Himalayan states --- Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh --- are looking at this issue of finding the economic value of ecosystems with keen interest. "The state has commissioned a study to evaluate its ecosystem services and its Gross Environment Product," Jai Raj, PCCF, Uttarakhand, told the participants. The Gross Environment Product (green GDP) is an index of eco-

nomonic growth with the environmental consequences of that growth factored into a country's conventional GDP. According to a previous study, the value of ecosystem services we get from the Indian Himalayan region is Rs 943 billion per year while Uttarakhand forests provides services worth Rs 104 billion year. But this does not show up in the national accounting process. In Himachal Pradesh, which is also looking actively into GEP, an interesting experiment is happening: The town of Palampur is giving incen-

tives to an upstream village for conserving a forest area from where one of its water sources originates. This ensures that villagers use the forest in a sustainable manner.

The valuation of ecosystem services is not easy. The services are divided into several sub-categories. Moreover ecosystems are dynamic, they evolve with time. There are provisioning services (products obtained from ecosystems such as food, fresh water etc), regulating services (climate

regulation, natural hazard regulation, etc), habitat services (to maintain the viability of gene-pools) and cultural services (spiritual enrichment, intellectual development, recreation and aesthetic values).

But the science is evolving.

Now governments and people must realise that there's no such thing as a free lunch, and put their weight behind the economists and scientists working to fine-tune standards for evaluation of ecosystem services.

Yogi Adityanath as UP CM: How BJP played the biggest gamble picking the Hindutva leader

The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has played the biggest gamble by picking Yogi Adityanath as chief minister of the most populous state. For the fire brand Hindutva leader like Yogi, politics is a means to further the mission of serving for a cause. He comes from the league of saints who treat politics and religion as two faces of the same coin.

His daily routine is also like that of any religious leader. In no way does the condition of the room in which he lives indicate that he has been five-time member of Parliament. After waking up at 3:30 am, Yogi remains busy with special prayers till 5 am daily. He spends the next hour taking a stroll around the temple premises followed by a self-study session till 8:30 am. After spending an hour in dealing with temple management issues, he takes a light breakfast at 9:30 am. He begins meeting public at 10 am and doesn't leave the spot unless he addressed the issues of the

last person who visits him. This follows a visit to the areas in his parliamentary constituency followed by paying obeisance to cows. After another meeting with the temple management, he spends the next two hours in prayers. He takes dinner at 9:30 pm followed by another self-studying session. He doesn't sleep for more than four hours. No wonder then that he is popularly known as Yogi Maharaj in Poorvanchal region of eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Many times his speeches, laced with hardliner Hindutva messages have sparked controversies. In 2007, after the death of Rajkumar Agrahar, Yogi broke curfew and staged a protest leaving the administration in a tizzy. He was later arrested which was followed by arson and vandalism by his supporters across the city proving the clout that he enjoyed.

Given his stubborn image, Yogi is at times compared to Bal Thackeray, the Shiv Sena founder,

but his stature is often considered bigger than the late leader from Maharashtra. So does his coronation as CM mean that BJP is showing how significant Hindu saints are for the party? This, despite 19.6% of UP's 20 crore population comprises of Muslims. Will the move win the trust of Muslims for the party? We cannot dismiss the fact that half of the districts in Uttar Pradesh are communally sensitive and Ram Janmabhoomi is also part of the state. One cannot ignore that 'Kashmir' in West UP and 'terror factory' of Azamgarh, as referred by Yogi, are also parts of Uttar Pradesh. A nation without Ram is incomplete for Yogi and constructing a Ram Temple in Ayodhya is first on his wish list.

The pro-Hindutva image apart, Yogi believes in taking up causes of the poor. He has been heard saying that no one who doesn't care about poor will remain happy in life. His supporters would hope that he lives true to this pro-poor image as well.

How Yogi Adityanath's Arrest Changed Him

Yogi Adityanath and over a dozen other leaders of the Hindu Yuva Vahini were arrested while they were marching towards Gorakhpur's troubled areas on 28 January 2007, a day after he made an inflammatory speech aimed at turning a small commotion into a full-blown communal war. The arrest was timed such that the HYV could not carry out its threat of burning and destroying the tazia on 29 January. The tazia is a replica of Imam Husain's mausoleum at Iraq and it is the custom of Indian Muslims to bury the tazia on Muharram. Despite the arrests, sporadic riots broke out at various places in Gorakhpur and the neighbouring districts. In all, Adityanath had to remain in the lock-up for eleven days; his bail was approved on 7 February.

This was the first and only occasion when the local administration acted swiftly against Adityanath and his henchmen. The reason why the then chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mulayam Singh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party, chose to

ease off on his policy of appeasement towards Adityanath - at least for a short while in January 2007 - remains a matter of debate. Perhaps he did so because Adityanath was instigating a major communal war just before the state assembly elections due in April-May that year. Locals argue that a battle along such lines would have weakened Mulayam even further in the polls by forcing Muslims to cast their votes in favour of his rival, Mayawati of the Bahujan Samaj Party. Whatever be the reason, the arrest and the state government's decision to withdraw the security guards who had been assigned to protect Adityanath seemed to have unnerved him so much that his eyes welled up and tears rolled down his face as he explained to Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee about what he called the 'political conspiracy' against him. A report in the Hindu said:

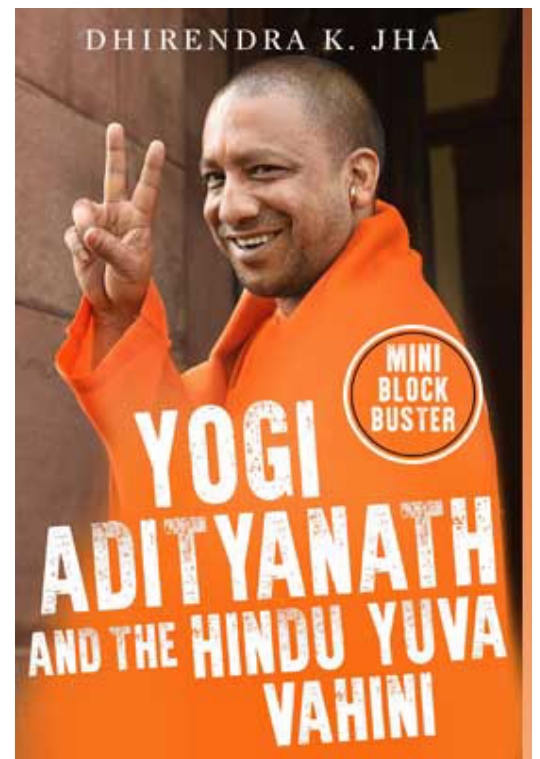
The MP, who attended the House after spending 11 days in the Gorakhpur jail, wept while narrating his experience

at the hands of the state government, alleging that it was out to 'malign and torment me'. A third-time member from Gorakhpur, he broke into sobs after Speaker Somnath Chatterjee allowed him to raise the issue during zero hour and promised to look into the matter. 'Will we get protection or will our condition be the same as that of Sunil Mahato?' he asked the Speaker. Mahato, a Jharkhand Mukti Morcha member from Jharkhand, was assassinated near Jamshedpur last week. The sight of Adityanath shedding tears shocked his Thakur supporters. It was seen as a sign of weakness unbecoming of a male belonging to a martial caste. Soon, however, his subordinates in the HYV started rebuilding his image, arguing that he was a sensitive man full of emotions even as many locals called him a coward capable only of spreading mob violence.

Nevertheless, as Adityanath's image of a firebrand leader took a serious hit, so did his outfit's activities in eastern UP. For some time the HYV ap-

peared to be in shambles and Adityanath refrained from leading the mob and participating in attacks on Muslims as he was earlier wont to. Later, even as the HYV revived its organizational activities, his re-activation was restricted to making inflammatory speeches and participating in token actions.

In his speeches he still followed the same old extremist politics. But in action, he appeared to have become cautious even if he claimed to be the same old Yogi. In essence, Adityanath and the HYV were now striving to keep the communal cauldron boiling - a strategy that became apparent during the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections in April-May 2014. Nearly two weeks after the murder of a Hindu trader on 4 December



2013 at Tanda in Ambedkar Nagar district, Adityanath intervened, but from a distance and with a vague threat. At a public meeting organized by the HYV on 16 December at Akbarpur, the district headquarters of Ambedkar Nagar, he put the blame on the Samajwadi Party's local MLA, Azim Ul-Haq, and threatened to lead a march to Tanda if the arrest was not made within fifteen days



WINZONE REALTY INC.

Baldev Singh

146-20 34 av. Flushing NY 11354

Cell: 917 224 7395

Email: josanbaldev@yahoo.com



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Mahout Who Lost The Elephant

The decline and fall of Mayawati is also the end of a Dalit dream. Does she have it in her to rebuild the movement and the party?

Back in 2007, it came with all the accumulated joy of an old dream being realised. Mayawati was taking oath for the fourth time as CM of India's most populous and political state of Uttar Pradesh—this time with a majority unprecedented for any Dalit party. It seemed like Dr B.R. Ambedkar's dream of a self-sustaining Dalit politics, which he initiated in 1936 by founding the Independent Labour Party (ILP), was finally bearing fruit. Mayawati's rise was ascribed to the Bahujan Samaj Party's ideology and its founder Kanshi Ram's vision.

Mayawati's victory seemed like a decisive inflection-point in Indian politics—it filled Dalits across the country with great pride and elation, and created a great reverence for Mayawati among them. Outside estimations reinforced the Iron Lady halo. She was even seen as a potential prime ministerial candidate by observers and other parties alike. In 2007, she was on Time magazine's list of 15 most influential persons of India and among Newsweek's top woman achievers. In 2008, she joined the likes of Angela Merkel and Sonia Gandhi in the Forbes list of the world's 100 powerful women. The Independent, London, called her "unstoppable."

In ten years, the narrative has inverted almost entirely. Her party drew a blank in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. And now, the BSP has plummeted to a mere 19 seats in the 403-seat UP assembly. Juxtapose that number with the 206 seats she won in 2007 to see how steep the fall has been. Whether she would make a perfect tragic figure, whose misfortune is brought about by an innate flaw, is an open question. But her fall presages a wider tragedy for Dalit politics, which must be understood and fought.

Independent Dalit politics, to which Mayawati claims a legacy, started with Ambedkar's idea of electoral representation for untouchables, based on the population percentage, as early as 1919. For the next 17 years, Ambedkar worked on making untouchables a political force, in the face of Mahatma Gandhi's opposition. In 1931, Ambedkar

and Gandhi clashed in London on the issue. Ambedkar won electoral representation by means of reserved constituencies with separate electorate in 1932, only to be thwarted by Gandhi by a fast unto death in Poona's Yerwada Jail.

Gandhi succeeded in tweaking the formula for representation, changing it from a separate electorate to a common electorate of all Hindus voting to elect a Dalit representative to the legislature. This arrangement was formalised by the Poona Pact, signed on September 24, 1932. Thus, every Dalit legislator in a reserved constituency is elected by the votes of the entire electorate there. Looking at the impending elections of 1937, Ambedkar created the ILP and won 15 of the 17 seats it contested in the Bombay Province. The first elected Dalit legislator appeared thus in 1937, solely a creation of Ambedkar's unrelenting efforts.

Ambedkar's politics of 1937 took up the cause of both industrial and agricultural labour, akin to the Dalit-Bahujan politics Kanshi Ram crafted decades later. Ambedkar engaged in continuous agitational politics. In 1937, he mobilised 20,000 agricultural peasants in Konkan in favour of the Zamindari Abolition

Bill. On the issue of the Industrial Disputes Act, he joined forces with the Communists, ensuring a big strike in Bombay's industrial mills in 1938. He fought for the abolition of Mahar Watan, a traditional village servitude of Dalits.

By 1942, Ambedkar realised Dalits had become politically conscious and created a new party, the All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF), solely focused on taking up the cause of untouchables further in the run-up to independence. The 'Elephant', later claimed by the BSP, was originally the AISCF's electoral symbol. Ambedkar never went in electoral alliance with the Communists and the Peasants and Workers Party. He did join hands with the Socialists—which Kanshi Ram too did, by tying up with its ideological legatee, the Samajwadi Party, for the 1993 elections in UP. Ambedkar was highly critical of the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha, the ideological progenitors of today's BJP. He called them retrograde organisations. The AISCF contested the 1946 elections and independent India's first in 1951 and was a failure. It could not even garner enough seats in 1946 to send Ambedkar to the Constituent Assembly. But he



used it as an organisational bargaining platform with the Congress, which came to power, to gain rights for the oppressed. He even joined the Nehru government to work towards ensuring the rights of Dalits, backwards and, more so, women.

Ambedkar's AISCF could not achieve the peaks that Kanshi Ram and Mayawati attained five decades later through the BSP. Nevertheless, Ambedkar had created the very space for organised Dalit politics. Not only that, he largely succeeded in capturing the imagination of Dalits, spurring them on to achieve political power by organising themselves into a party. After 1950, by virtue of universal adult franchise in a democracy, they became a numerical force to reckon with. Before his death, Ambedkar conceived of the Republican Party of India (RPI), which came into being in 1957. The RPI tended to the task of organising Dalits and was active in Maharashtra, UP and Andhra and returned some seats in assembly and Lok

Sabha polls in the first three decades after independence. But Dalits were still largely with the Congress. By the late 1970s, the RPI had suffered an amoeba-like fragmentation into several parties, when Kanshi Ram entered Pune and created BAMCEF (All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees' Federation) in 1978, quietly learning his lessons from the RPI's failure and its limitations. The RPI's fragmentation had created a political vacuum in India. It was at this juncture that BAMCEF arrived to fill this void. BAMCEF got involved in creating a Phule-Ambedkarite consciousness aimed at bringing a radical social transformation. Kanshi Ram was an organiser and sought to realise, in practical ways, the aims of an ideological movement encompassing the whole Dalit-Bahujan canvas. He saw this umbrella definition as covering 85 per cent of India's population, including Dalits, backwards and minorities, against the 15 per cent elite castes who ruled over them.

PM Narendra Modi's Breakfast Meet Had Strict Dos And Don'ts - And UP Delicacies

Over breakfast at his home this morning, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tabled a few health warnings for his party's MPs from Uttar Pradesh: that they should not seek favours from newly-installed Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and that while the BJP's record win in the state is an impressive feat, there's no time to sit back and relax. After the what not to do, PM Modi also delivered a to-do list at the meeting which was attended by nearly all the BJP's 71 members of parliament from Uttar Pradesh. The parliamentarians are to get busy planning the BJP's agenda for the general election that is now just two years away. For this, the PM sought suggestions for pro-poor policies, a large component of the recent UP victory. While some MPs stressed the need to upgrade the primary health care system, others proposed improvement in rail services in rural areas.

Mr Modi also asked MPs to coordinate closely with the newly-elected state legis-

lators to ensure important reforms and schemes are implemented efficiently and quickly in their constituencies which he said would help fend off anti-incumbency.

It was BJP chief Amit Shah who spelled out that Yogi Adityanath, the 44-year-old Chief Minister, must not be urged for favours including but not limited to suggestions for appointments of government officers. The Yogi needs to be allowed space to implement a pro-development governance, he said, and the government must not be flooded with requests for the transfers and postings of relatives or acquaintances. Mr Shah also stressed that MPs must not provide any kind of patronage or backing to individuals or groups with a tainted past or those who have targeted specific sections of society, an important message at a time when the BJP is being accused of flaunting a Hindutva agenda by choosing the Yogi, a saffron-robed monk, to lead India's most-populous state after a polarizing campaign in

the communally-sensitive state. Mr Shah was explicit: "Na apna, na paraya. Kanoon ka raj chalega." (Do not think of it as who voted for us or against us; only the rule of law will prevail).

After the meeting, Vinay Katiyar, a member of the Rajya Sabha, said, "There is going to be no let up. At any time, some part of the country is heading towards elections. And that's why the party has to remain in constant election mode."

In a show of respect and solidarity, the party's most senior leader from Uttar Pradesh, Rajnath Singh, was seated on stage with the PM and Mr Shah. It wasn't all blunt talk, however. Attendees said that the PM seemed jubilant about his party's big Uttar Pradesh win. That reflected in the spread too—in addition to standard Gujarati fare, the menu included typical UP delicacies like stuffed parathas, poori-vegetables, pakoras and jalebis.

How Sears changed America

Sears did more than change the way America shopped. It changed America.

(Agencies) In its heyday, it was more than just the largest U.S. employer or the country's retailer. It actually reshaped the nation, transforming the average citizen's lifestyle. Of course, the company is struggling now. Sears Holdings (SHLD), the company that owns both Sears and Kmart, warned investors late Tuesday that it can no longer promise it will remain in business. It is not in bankruptcy, but it has posted losses of \$10.4 billion since 2010, and debt has soared while the value of its stock has tumbled. But if its future is in doubt, its past was very impressive.

More than a century before shopping online emerged, the Sears catalog brought a nearly limitless assortment of

products into American homes — homes where people often made their own clothes or furniture themselves or did without.

At a time when the majority of Americans lived on farms or in small towns, "it was life changing for many rural Americans," said Amanda Nicholson, professor of retail practice at Syracuse University. And once Americans started to move to the booming suburbs following World War II, Sears stores anchored the malls that helped those suburbs to grow.

"You could argue that for a suburb to grow, first comes the water and sewer lines, then came the retailers," said Greg Portell, lead partner in the retail practice with A.T. Kearney. "Sears democratized retail in

America."

The store made consumer credit widely available, which was a first for many of its customers. That allowed families to buy labor-saving appliances and electronics like washing machines, stereos and TVs that otherwise would have been out of reach. At one point, Sears claimed that 50% of American homes had an appliance made by Kenmore, the Sears brand.

"It was the place that people went to furnish their home," Nicholson said.

Sometimes Americans even bought their actual homes directly from Sears. Sears's iconic Craftsman houses came with a floor plan and all the materials required to build one. Precut lumber, wallboard and other materials



were shipped by rail to the buyer to be constructed with minimal labor. Sears says 75,000 of the homes were sold between 1908 to 1940.

As Sears reached to every corner of the country, it also branched out into new businesses that reflected the changing American economy. It started Allstate Insurance (ALL) in 1931, and purchased both the Dean Witter brokerage firm and Coldwell Banker real estate in 1981. It teamed up with IBM (IBM, Tech30) to form Prodigy, one of the very first internet services, in 1984 and created the Discover (DFS) credit card in 1985.

"They had a phenomenal tra-

dition of doing things that were highly innovative," said Nicholson.

Sears also became huge. By the 1990's, the company said that one out of seven Americans either worked for Sears, or had once worked there. And these weren't the low wage jobs with few benefits associated with many retailers today. "These were jobs with health care and benefits and pension plans," said James O'Rourke, a professor of management at Notre Dame. "People looked to spend their entire career at Sears Roebuck. People thought there was no limit to the innovation at Sears."

There is a retail bubble and it's bursting

(Agencies) America has way too many stores -- at a time when consumers are increasingly shopping online instead of at the mall. One retail CEO even compared the state of retail today to the housing bubble back in the mid-2000s. Urban Outfitters, Staples, Dick's (DKS) and Men's Wearhouse/Jos. A Bank owner Tailored Brands (TLRD) all reported disappointing quarterly results this week. Women's apparel retailer J. Jill (JILL) went public on Thursday and found few interested shoppers. The stock fell -- after pricing its offering below its expected range. Handbag retailer Vera Bradley (VRA) underwhelmed Wall Street too. RadioShack just went bankrupt. Again. And Sears (SHLD) continues to hemorrhage red ink. The story is the same for these and other struggling chains like Macy's (M), JCPenney (JCP), Barnes & Noble (BKS), Victoria's Secret owner L Brands (LB) and Target (TGT).

Shoppers are more inclined to click and order than visit bricks and mortar. Amazon (AMZN, Tech30), of course, is the biggest beneficiary of this trend. Its stock is up almost 15% this year and is trading near an all-time high. The company is worth nearly \$410 billion -- almost double the market value of Walmart (WMT). So, to quote King George III in Hamilton: What comes next? Many retailers may be forced to shut even more stores and bulk up on their online commerce sites and mobile apps. The head of Urban Outfitters (URBN) had a blunt, and scary, assessment of the retail situation earlier this week. During a conference call with analysts on Tuesday, CEO Richard Hayne compared the state of retail to the housing glut last decade that helped bring about the Great Recession. "Retail square feet per capita in the United States is more than six times that of Europe or Japan. And this doesn't count digital commerce," Hayne said. "Our industry, not unlike the housing industry, saw too much square footage capacity added in the 1990s and early 2000s."

\$4 Billion Dividend: Record Return By An Indian Company

India's biggest zinc producer approved Wednesday a dividend of Rs. 27.5 a share, amounting to Rs. 13,990 crore.

(Agencies) Billionaire Anil Agarwal's Hindustan Zinc Ltd., profiting from a surge in metals prices, announced a special dividend that takes its payments to shareholders this year above \$4 billion, in what it said is a record return by an Indian company.

The immediate beneficiaries are parent Vedanta Ltd., which owns 65 percent of the Udaipur, Rajasthan-based company, and the Indian government, which holds a 30 percent stake. Both Vedanta and Hindustan Zinc rallied as investors eyed the impact on Vedanta's debt pile, which includes \$2.2 billion due for refinancing this month and \$3.4 billion over the following two years.

India's biggest zinc producer approved Wednesday a dividend of Rs. 27.5 a share, amounting to Rs. 13,990 crore (\$2.1 billion). That brings the total dividend paid for the year ending March 31 to Rs. 27,160 crore. The payout comes as zinc prices outperformed other

metals for a 55 percent gain over the past year, boosted by mine shutdowns and a steadying of the economy in China, the top consumer. The metal is used to galvanize steel.



The government agreed to sell out of Hindustan Zinc in 2014 but that effort has foundered. Vedanta's Chief Executive Officer Tom Albanese in February said that India has benefited from the stake after the gains in prices and that there are no plans for it to reduce its position. The comments were echoed by India's mines secretary.

Vedanta Ltd. rose 1.8 percent to Rs. 265.70 in Mumbai, the highest in more than two weeks, while its zinc unit rallied

2.5 percent to the highest since Feb. 3.

With free cash flow of \$1 billion-plus and a net cash position, Hindustan Zinc could pay a dividend above Rs. 20 a share next year as well, Citigroup Inc. said in a note Thursday.

"Vedanta continues to be in a very good space given all its verticals are doing well and if they can reduce debt that would be a better ploy and would increase the returns for shareholders," Sanjiv Bhasin, executive vice president at India Infoline Ltd., said by phone. "Metals, as a proxy to global growth and given the stimulus announced in the U.S., have been the best asset class in the past one year, and it will continue to outperform."

Agarwal is also maneuvering around Anglo American Plc, with a plan to buy as much as \$2.5 billion of shares in the mining giant after a merger proposal failed last year.

Life Style™



Will they ever grow up?

Millennials don't consider themselves adults until they are 30



moved out of their parents' home, has a job, and pays their own bills.'

Previous generations would have settled down and had a few children by 30, they found.

However, this is happening later and later these days and the age range for millennials is now 22 to 40.

High housing costs have reduced the stigma of living at home and the recession made finding work harder, which meant that people take longer to feel like adults, according to Mr Poltrack.

'More controversial is the whole idea that their baby boomer parents have really coddled them,' Poltrack told TheWrap.

'They've made it too good for them. Why would you

(Agencies) Many millennials don't consider themselves as adults until 30 years old, and some don't believe they are one until 40, according to a new study.

As more millennials delay moving out of their parents' home, getting a job and are paying their own bills, the age of adulthood has been pushed back.

One expert suggests that millennials stay children for so long because they have been coddled by their parents and have had things 'too good'. The research was carried out by David Poltrack, chief research officer at CBS, and Nielsen Catalina Solutions, a New York-based media company,

Mr Poltrack says an adult is defined as 'someone who has



leave?' The study was part of three years of research carried out by the CBS Campaign Performance Audit programme on what makes effective TV advertising.

Mr Poltrack carried out the survey in order to provide advertisers with information on the effectiveness of advertising.

He looked at what type of programmes different age groups were watching.

Researchers found that millennials are a demographic

that is older than people think - TV companies who target millennials are looking to capture the 18-34 age range. 'All previous generations would have probably said 22 or 23,' said Mr Poltrack.

As millennials delay major events, such as buying a home, getting a job and paying bills, so too they delay watching television and buying appliances. When people start getting married and having children

they really start to feel like adults, Mr Poltrack explained.

How Peanut Butter is the only cleaning and DIY tool you'll ever need

(Agencies) Peanut butter is traditionally eaten on toast, or in a sandwich - not used as a cleaning product.

But this store cupboard staple is surprisingly one of the most versatile tools you can have in your home, according to kitchen experts.

From cleaning leather to using it as a shaving cream, these are the very surprising ways you can use peanut butter around the house that could earn the spread the title of most useful household product ever - if you're not allergic to nuts, that is.

It's best to use a natural and smooth peanut butter to try out these tricks, rather than the crunchy kind or a spread with lots of added ingredients.

HOME & GARDEN

1 ODOR REMOVER

If you've cooked up a particularly potent dish and the smell is lingering, you can get rid of the smell by putting some peanut butter in a frying pan and frying it up for a minute or two! Try it!

2 SQUEAK ELIMINATOR

Peanut butter contains natural oils, and this means it can actually be used instead of WD-40 if you're in a pinch. Use it to lubricate squeaky hinges, lawn mower blades, or all sorts of tools.

3 MOUSE TRAP BAIT

Another type of squeak you may need to get rid of - mice. Turns out they're actually not that keen on cheese after all. We're as shocked as you are! But apparently what they do love is peanut butter, so pop some in a (humane) mouse trap and they won't be able to resist.

4 REMOVE GUM

If you've ever got gum stuck in your hair, or trodden it into the carpet, you'll know what a nightmare it is to get out again. Next time this happens, grab the peanut butter! Gum and peanut butter are both hydrophobic, which is apparently the science behind why this one works.

5 REMOVE STICKER GLUE

This one is a similar concept to the gum removal tip we just told you, but peanut butter is also capable of getting that annoying glue off that stickers always leave behind. Smear a bit of peanut butter on, and rub it off with a cloth.

HALF PRICE

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'There are ground rules...but we have lots of fun'

People in open relationships share exactly how they make their very complicated love lives work



(Agencies) For many people, an open relationship sounds like the ideal; an ongoing partnership that allows you to date other people.

However, the reality is often more complicated, with jealousy rearing its head. A new thread on social media site Reddit sheds some light on to how open relationships

really work...with posts by those who are in, or have been in, them.

One user who claimed he'd dated women who'd been in open relationships said that more often than not, it was men who initiated the less than conventional set-up but women who actually ended up having more fun.

Exploring Meghalaya, India's abode of the clouds



When it comes to aptly named destinations, the northeast Indian state of Meghalaya is up there with the best. Meaning "abode of the clouds," it's home to the top two wettest places on earth, according to Guinness World Records. But across this cool, green state travelers will also find India's cleanest village, the country's highest waterfall and a man who just might be the country's biggest Bob Dylan fan. For those ready to give this up-and-coming Indian destination a try we've put together a short itinerary centered on the Khasi Hills, a central Meghalaya region. **A walk in the clouds to India's highest waterfall**

To experience a walk in the clouds, we suggest starting in the town of Cherrapunji (also known as Sohra), which is about an hour and a half drive from Shillong, Meghalaya's capital. With an average annual rainfall of 463 inches, Cherrapunji is the second wettest destination on the planet. It's topped only by the neighboring village of Mawsynram, which gets 467 inches of rain per year. Compare this with the average annual rainfall of India, which is 11-25 inches (300-650 millimeters). Fortunately, most of the state's rain falls during monsoon season, between June and September, making it a great place to explore outside these months. One of the most photogenic spots in the area is Nohkalikai Falls -- the highest waterfall in the country at 1,115 feet (335 meters).

Another worthwhile natural attraction less than seven miles away from the falls, the Mawsmait Caves are dripping with stunning limestone stalactites and stalagmites.

Some gnarled, some smooth, they're the result of thousands of years of water erosion.

India's cleanest corner

About 50 miles -- or a 2.5-hour drive -- from Cherrapunji is Mawlynnong, which has been called "Asia's cleanest village" by

various publications -- a title its residents take seriously. The narrow lanes are spotless and locals can be seen cleaning and sweeping the streets throughout the day. "All this [focus on cleanliness] started with a literacy and sanitation drive a couple of decades ago," John Khongthohrem, owner of a small guesthouse in Mawlynnong, tells CNN. "And soon villagers realized that we can make this a model for tourism." Home to a population of 600 people, the village is known for its meticulously manicured gardens. Nearly every home has a private plot, with neat flower beds and carefully pruned blooms all year round. Along the bamboo-lined streets, Khasi women -- a matrilineal, ethnic community in Meghalaya -- sell locally produced honey and spices. To see the sprawling plains of Bangladesh across the



border nearby, Mawlynnong villagers built an 80-foot-high tree platform (known locally as a machan) called Sky View. To reach this tourist attraction, travelers have to climb a series of rickety but firm wooden steps. **Rooted in tradition** One of Meghalaya's biggest attractions, "living root bridges" have been a part of the local landscapes for more than a century. Unlike modern bridges, made of steel and wires, these structures are grown around betel tree trunks using the strong roots of rubber trees. Stretched across rivers, they're supported by stones and boulders. The living root bridges typically take 15 years to mature but after that can carry up to 50 people at a time. Growing stronger with age, these natural wonders do not

rot -- despite the perpetually wet weather. The most famous is a double-decker bridge in Nongriat village, just over seven miles away from Cherrapunji, called Jingkieng Nongriat. Getting there requires an arduous trek up 2,500 undulating steps through lush jungle. An easier, equally picturesque option can be found in Riwai village, next door to Mawlynnong. It's best to arrive early in the morning for a chance

to enjoy the stream and bridge in solitude. **Groves both sacred and** anyone who takes even a single leaf out of the forest. "Everybody here believes in this story without question -- but you can also think of it as our elders' way of conservation," says local village guide Andrew Lyngdoh. **Exploring India's rock capital** Apart from consistently producing some of the best music bands in the country, including Soulmate, this small hill town is also home to a dedicated Bob Dylan cafe -- aptly named Dylan's Cafe. Here travelers will find 69-year-old Lou Majaw -- a local rock enthusiast known for his renditions of Dylan's hits. (Something tells us "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" is particularly popular among locals.) There's more to do in Shillong than rock out. The Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures is a great place to learn about India's largely unexplored northeast region. A culture tour around Shillong continues with an early morning visit to the Bara Bazaar. Filled with fresh chicken, pork, and vegetables -- including dozens of varieties of chillies -- the market offers a peek into the everyday lives of Meghalaya residents.



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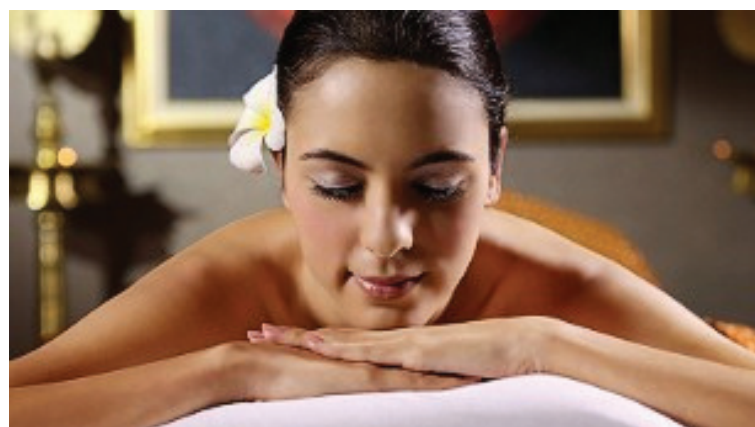
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cursed

On your way back to Shillong, we recommend stopping at the sacred groves of Mawphlang -- a small Khasi village about 16 miles before the city. With its 800-year-old moss-covered, towering trees and carnivorous pitcher plants, Mawphlang is reminiscent of Middle Earth from the "Lord of the Rings." This is a biodiversity hotspot -- picture



A Censor Board Member's View On 'Padmavati'

(Agencies) Violence or vandalism cannot recreate history. In fact, it cannot create anything. It only destroys - destroys peace, democratic discourse, creativity and free speech. Unfortunately, this happened twice recently on the sets of the film Padmavati. The film is based on an epic poem Padmavat written by Malik Muhammad Jayasi in Avadhi language. Jayasi himself acknowledges it be a fictional work and in fact assigns allegorical interpretations to the characters - Allaudin represents lust, Padmini stands for wisdom, etc. The vandals are thrashing one of the finest and accomplished filmmakers of the country and burning down expensive film sets based on rumored romance scenes between the two ! When facts meet fiction and the lines start blurring between the real and the unreal, some fringe groups resort to violence to seek credibility for their version of

imagined history. Will the fringe groups enforce the discourse of how we view history? If we were to start writing or interpreting history in our individual ways, then what is the role of historians and the historical evidence? Even in Padmavat, Jayasi writes about Queen Padmini committing Johar to avoid being captured and save her honour from lustful Alauddin, and if the film is recapturing the epic saga, then the question arises: what are these people protesting about? All this is happening when these protestors have no knowledge of either the script or the narrative of the film. The poor creators of the film have already been forced to clarify that nothing "objectionable" has been represented in the film. Now, the "protestors" are apparently demanding that they see the script and approve it. Really? Who are these people? In a country which has a film certification body called CBFC

(which itself is crying for reform), the various appellate authorities, and a judicial system of appeal, these people are seemingly super-censors and an extra-judicial authority. If they don't agree with a narrative, they will use violence to silence creative works. If someone disagrees with a film which is duly certified through established systems of certification, then one can react by not watching it. A film like "Udta Punjab" which was not passed by CBFC did get a favorable court verdict for screening. This is the beauty of our democratic system. It provides the means to balance the right of expression with the right of getting offended. In a democratic country like ours (for that matter any setup), one cannot resort to blatant violence to suppress any expression one doesn't find resonance with. That too when one isn't even clear about what the expression is! I think these are the times when we need to ask ourselves whether



we will continue to help creative people create contemporary narratives around history or mythical works (whether orally transmitted or written) or not. Paradoxically, while on one hand we are trying to facilitate film shooting and production with global alliances, on the other hand, we are becoming symbols of regression when our own filmmaker gets attacked in this manner. On the other side, in this era of marketing gimmicks, when you are as good as your last film release, it has become fashionable for some filmmakers to provoke and create disruption

so they get the eye balls which they otherwise wouldn't receive. But we need to make a distinction, looking at a person's body of work and sincerity of his or her craft. When one of the most opulent and sensitive filmmakers of the country goes through such abhorable act of violence, it should not only be condemned, but strict legal action needs to be taken against the perpetrators of such violence. A clear message needs to be sent out that our democracy is about creative freedom, it's about the right to expression and it's about civility even in disagreement.

My family and friends keep me grounded: Salman Khan

(Agencies) Salman Khan says his family and friends keep him grounded as they do not get affected by his a superstar status. The 51-year-old actor, who is one of the most popular stars of the Indian film industry, says people around him always make sure to counter him if he does anything "wrong".

"I don't keep myself grounded. I at times find myself flying high. But my family and friends keep me grounded." "When a person reaches at high position, people around them just agree to whatever they say. But my family and friends always tell me if they find something wrong in me," Salman says in reply to a fan's question on his app.

The actor says he is still afraid of his parents and makes sure that his behaviour did not affect his family and friends.

"Till now I have this fear of my parents. I still have the fear that what I am doing may hurt my mom and dad or upset my siblings."

Salman will next be seen in Kabir Khan's "Tubelight". The actor is currently shooting for Ali Abbas Zafar's "Tiger Zinda Hai" which stars Katrina Kaif as the female lead.



Would like to adapt TV show "Brothers & Sisters": Ekta Kapoor

(Agencies) Producer Ekta Kapoor says if she had to adapt any American television drama for the Indian audience, it would be hit series "Brothers & Sisters". "I watch lot of American drama shows as for me TV is my work and it is not a mode of relaxation. I think India will have its own stories. But if I ever had to adapt a show it would be 'Brothers & Sisters'," Ekta told media. "Brothers & Sisters" is an award winning drama series that centres around the Walker family and their lives in Los Angeles and Pasadena, California. Ekta, 41, says her mother watches a lot of singing reality shows and her actor brother Tusshar Kapoor follows "Big Boss". "For television we want to make stories that people can watch with the family. But at the same time every member has different taste and preference. We try to cater to all." "There is lot of money on television and because of television I can make films," she adds.



If I don't charge my wife, how will I put rocks on her fingers: Akshay Kumar

(Agencies) It has been over 25 years since he made his Bollywood debut with Saugandh (1991). Interestingly though, Akshay Kumar admits that now he "can have a flop and not worry about where my next meal is coming from". HT catches up with the superstar about his life, career, and working with wife, Twinkle Khanna. Success is a very bittersweet symphony. It comes with five minutes of relief followed by months of anxiety of maintaining one's success in the hope that one can improve personally as well as professionally; and rise rather than fall by the next big Friday [release] (laughs). But I will admit that now, the outcome of my movies have a different effect on me. Maybe, about a decade ago, my family as well as my welfare was dependent on every movie. Now, I don't have that kind of pressure. My family will survive even if I stopped making movies tomorrow. Now, it's about making films from a different perspective, and to grow in the industry rather than proving my worth every time my face is seen.

Today, I can have a flop and not worry about where my next meal is coming from, which is why I can enjoy my work a lot

more. But I must clarify that I am absolutely not hinting that I'm okay with failure (laughs). We all strive to be successful but now, I'm in a much happier, less earnest space at this stage of my career.

If I don't charge my wife, how will I put rocks on her fingers, and give her holidays to write about (laughs). I'm actually in my element right now. We just started shooting, with my wife at my side, my kids on her lap and with temples all around. It is a script so worthy that I truly believe every man and woman should watch this film. It will bring awareness and truly make so many women's lives easier, better and, most importantly, healthier. Again my wife has proved her magic in bringing to light what India needs to hear. All we can do now is pray that they want to listen to that. We are proud to make PadMan. Each and every partnership with Salman, over the years, has been epic in every way. This film will be no different. We have the utmost respect for each other's time and talent. Plus, the subject of this film has all of us excited, something I'm truly waiting to start. Like all things in life, give them

[the actors] time and they will learn. It's surprising how many people enter this industry with a chip on their shoulders, but I am never afraid, because life will teach them very quickly. If they want work, they better be a producer's actor. Regardless of how great anyone's last film may have been, the second anyone becomes a pain in the a**, the

Navjot Sidhu should not cite me as example to continue TV work: Kirron Kher

(Agencies) Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Chandigarh MP Kirron Kher on Thursday advised Congressman Navjot Singh Sidhu not to cite her example to justify his appearance on The Kapil Sharma Show, a comedy series, saying that her attendance in Parliament is much more than that of other parliamentarians.

"I am not a minister and also that I did not work in any movies for last three years. My attendance in Parliament is much more than other parliamentarians. I actively participate in all political debates," Kher told ANI, responding to reports that former BJP MP Sidhu's defence rested on other leaders also working while holding office.

"I stay in Chandigarh and travel to Mumbai for only the Colors TV show named 'India's Got Talent'. It is a three months' show and I work for

only 21 days for it. It does not interrupt my duties as MP as the shoot begins in October when the Parliament is not in session," she added.

Earlier in the day, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) took on Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh for not being able to take concrete action against Sidhu, who has refused to quit his television career. SAD leader Prem Singh Chandumajra said that Sidhu by continuing his television career is doing injustice with his post.

Amarinder on Wednesday had said that his government is taking legal advice in this regard, adding they may have to change the cricketer-turned-politician's portfolio if it is not permissible. However, Sidhu on Wednesday said his presence in the TV show will not affect his cabinet responsibilities.



BT BOLLWOOD
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Shot In Dubai

The Emirate's policies make it an ideal place for Bollywood, Hollywood and others to shoot films



(Agencies) The Swiss Alps have lost their silvery sheen, the charm of Interlaken has worn thin and the tulips of Keukenhof, well, leave nobody in thrall now. Bollywood's compass needle now points elsewhere, thousands of miles further east in fact, to a new location right in the middle of the desert. It's nearer home, and perhaps matches lived reality for the globalised Indian a bit more, while still being exotic and chic. Welcome to Dubai, Bollywood's favourite foreign jaunt in the decade they're calling the Tenties.

Once upon a long ago, Yash Chopra had made a serenade or two amid alpine meadows an inseparable part of Indian cinematic fantasy—the man in striped turtlenecks, the lady in pink chiffons (it showed off best against the snow), the temperatures a mix of sub-zero and sizzling, that was the sine qua non. But now Bollywood has stumbled onto locales that are as different from good, old Switzerland as snow is from the sand.

Derided for long as the haven of underworld dons and gold smugglers on and off the screen, it's with some concerted efforts, combined with hardsell, that Dubai has lately evolved into the most-favoured destination for the dream merchants of all hues, from big-time directors to lesser-known short film makers. What awaits the Dubai-bound production crew is a red

carpet rolled out for them by the local government, which apparently looks up to Bollywood movies to burnish its image as a global hub.

There's also the Dubai look—every-thing you might want in a 'phoren' locale, the look of a world-class city, top-notch infrastructure, swanky high-rises, shopping malls, plus the distinctive landmarks of Burj Khalifa and Palm Jumeirah, a visual field with which some millions of Indians have first-hand familiarity. The critical difference: the Alps remain the stuff of cloud-cuckoo fantasy, even if the well-travelled Indian has been there; Dubai is more real, more credible. A more proximate place on the world map, tied up more intimately in economic ways, this shift also points to a maturing of the cinematic imagination.

There are more mundane reasons too, of course. Film-makers from Mumbai who were lured by Dubai discovered, much to their delight, that shooting in the desert was cheaper than many outstation locations back home, due to special concessions provided by the local government and other agencies providing logistic support. No wonder, by Dubai Film and TV Commission (DFTC) figures, over 20 Bollywood movies, including Salman Khan and Shahrukh Khan starrers, have been shot on different locations

in the Emirate in the past three years. This year, 10 more will be added to the list.

"Dubai is fast gaining a competitive edge over popular destinations like London, New York and Interlaken as one of Bollywood's most preferred destinations," confirms Jamal Al Sharif, chairman of the commission, who has taken the initiative to make Dubai a major centre for international film shoots in general and Bollywood in particular. "The Emirate has underlined its prominence as a premium global production hub, able to successfully support the production needs of films of all sizes."

After a flicker of romance in the Eighties, Bollywood had kept a safe distance from the Gulf—owing to the reported presence of fugitive ganglords such as Dawood Ibrahim and others of his ilk who operated their alleged extortion racket from there, and, more often than not, targeted Mumbai-based movie moghuls with impunity. But, the scenario has changed now. The dons have since relocated or faded out, making it possible for

mega stars and producer-directors to renew the affair. Giving them company are film crews from Hollywood and many European and Asian nations.

In recent times, numerous big-budget ventures have been shot in the Emirates—count Welcome, Welcome Back, Dabangg, Dabangg 2, Jai Ho, Hamaari Adhuri Kahani, Ki and Ka, Happy New Year, Raees, Airlift, Baby, Boom Boom (Hindi), Lingaa (Tamil), Thala 55 (Telugu), Lai Bhari (Marathi) and Son of Alexander (Malayalam). The last named of course has a longer, deeper link: the Gulf is a salient presence in the horizon of Malayali experience, and has naturally left its mark on cinema, as a place spoken of at first, and frequently as an actual locale of late.

But Dubai as a 'place' is a different thing from its usefulness as a cinema hub. Many big

year," Sharif says.

For Bollywood, shooting in Dubai isn't a new phenomenon. Feroz Khan had explored the desert 25 years ago for his act-ion-thriller Yalgaar, with a prolonged gunbattle between Khan and Sanjay Dutt under the scorching desert sun at the climax. But the subsequent Bombay blasts of 1993, masterminded by Dawood, prompted a long abstinence. Only at the turn of the millennium did it start re-appearing, with Mujhse Shaadi Karogi, Maine Pyaar Kyun Kiya, Deewane Huye Paagal et al.

And now, the swarm of A-listers is back. Welcome was shot extensively at Grand Hyatt Hotel over the edge of Dubai's creek. Its sequel, Welcome Back, became the first Indian film to have been shot at Burj Khalifa, the same location used for jaw-dropping stunt scenes in Mission: Impossible Ghost Protocol. The



climax of Saif Ali Khan-starrer Race was also shot in Dubai; so were several scenes of Salman Khan's Dabangg and its hit sequel. Director Farah Khan's Happy New Year was, in fact, written with Dubai as the setting.

Zakir Hussain, director at Icon Art

Productions which provides infrastructure for all film shoots in the Emirates, says the trend now is to shoot the entire movie in Dubai because of all the facilities. "I've been associated with over 32 feature films, besides scores of music videos and other productions," he says. There's no red-tape, he says, and approvals come promptly because of a proactive DFTC, which coordinates with all other government agencies.

The presence of a huge Indian population adds a dual charm: it caters to home-like needs during production and, later, turns into a significant box-office market itself. Its potential was first realised in 2014 when Shahrukh Khan's Happy New Year did fabulous business there. Bollywood is immensely popular across the Arab world. But beyond that, says film analyst R. Mohan, expats numbering in millions have made it "a big business territory for the Indian film industry.... Bollywood and south Indian movies fetch handsome returns for producers."

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Baahubali 2 has been pre-sold at a profit a month before release; here's the breakdown

& created each part” Speaking exclusively to Firstpost, from his Banjara Hills office in Hyderabad, Baahubali 2 producer Shobu Yarlagadda of Arka Mediaworks says, “The trailer became a runaway success due to its grand scale, emotional and action scenes. After 17 cuts we got it perfect as the 2 minute trailer encompasses the vision and emotion in Rajamouli’s story telling. No other Indian film trailer has performed so well. I think the previous best was Dangal.”

Yarlagadda says 65 million of the trailer views were from You Tube, out of which 32 million was Telugu, 27 million in Hindi, 5 million in Tamil and 1 million from Malayalam. 27 million views in Hindi for a dubbed film is phenomenal by any yardstick.

The sequel to the 2015 blockbuster Baahubali: The Beginning is now the hottest film at the box-office as it is expected

to take a humongous opening when it releases on April 28. The trade buzz is that Baahubali 1 grossed Rs 600 crore worldwide, with the producers share around Rs 250 Crore. The distributors of the film made more profits than the producers. For example Baahubali 1 distributor in North America purchased it for \$4 million and the film got him a share of \$ 9 million. Now, the North America rights for Baahubali 2 rights have been snapped by a different distributor, Great India Films, for a whopping \$ 7 million and as per his expectation the film has potential to do \$15 million and break all records. The previous highest record collection for an Indian film in USA is Aamir Khan’s Dangal at \$ 12.3 million. Arka Mediaworks’ Shobu Yarlagadda and Prasad Devineni have arranged for a new set of distributors in all territories, barring Hindi version. The Hindi version

is being done by Karan Johar’s Dharma Productions and Anil Thadani’s AA Films. The association with Karan Johar is one of the main reasons why Baahubali became a major brand in the Hindi heartland. SS Rajamouli and the Baahubali team of Prabhas and Rana Dagubatti also gifted Katappa’s sword to Karan Johar. In the rest of India except Kerala, the makers have opted for different distributors who have paid them record amounts. Kerala distributor Global United Media is reported to have paid double the amount they paid for part one. Prem Menon, of Global United Media said : “We have immense faith in the Baahubali franchise and have a good relationship with the team who will deliver. Yes, we have paid a record amount, but we are very confident that Baahubali 2 will work big time at the box-office, just like part one and will be profitable for us.”

(Agencies) SS Rajamouli’s Baahubali 2: The Conclusion has become the most viewed trailer in India. It has 87.5 million views (from Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam trailers) in six days since it went live on March 16. A day after the trailer launch SS Rajamouli tweeted – “One of the reasons Baahubali franchise got the attention of the viewers is, the scale & grandeur with which we designed

Navjot Singh Sidhu to mediate between Kapil Sharma-Sunil Grover



(Agencies) Cricketer-turn-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu, who plays a celebrity judge in a popular television comedy show, is willing to broker peace between bickering programme host Kapil Sharma and fellow comedian Sunil Grover.

Kapil and Sunil had a fight when they were flying back with their team to New Delhi after a show in Melbourne. Apparently, Kapil got drunk on the Air India flight last Friday, belittled Sunil and also physically assaulted him. Kapil apologised to him on Twitter, but the two have yet to patch up.

“Kapil and Sunil are brothers. Being a senior member of the show, it is my duty to bring them together again,” said Sidhu, a cabinet minister in the new Congress government in Punjab. “It is a show that is much loved by the people,” he said, referring to the hugely successful The Kapil Sharma Show on

Sony. Sidhu is associated with show right from the start, and enjoys a great rapport with entire crew, including Kapil and Sunil.

Besides the Kapil-Sunil feud, the 53-year-old Sidhu’s participation in the show has also come under a cloud as government ministers are not supposed to promote private programmes.

Though the comedians and the crew were initially quiet about the spat, Sunil took to Twitter to express his feelings and all hell broke loose after that. A source, who was onboard the 12-hour flight, said the fight broke out after Kapil took umbrage as his crew started having their meal before he finished his drink. He apparently drank an entire bottle of Glenfiddich whisky. Sunil tried to calm down Kapil, but was yelled at. “Kapil got up, took off his shoe, and hit Sunil,” the source said.

Kapil Sharma threw a shoe at Sunil Grover because the team ate before him



(Agencies) Comedian Kapil Sharma’s ugly spat with co-star Sunil Grover happened after Kapil abused his crew for starting to eat in the flight while he was still drinking.

Much has been written about the Kapil Sharma-Sunil Grover fight on an Air India Melbourne-Delhi-Mumbai flight on Friday. Amid speculation about what happened, HT finally brings you the blow-by-blow account of why the spat broke out, as told by an eye-witness.

Wishing to stay anonymous, the source who was on-board the 12-hour flight told us that Kapil had consumed an entire bottle of Glenfiddich whisky, and was visibly drunk. When the food was being served by the cabin crew, Kapil’s TV show, The Kapil Sharma Show, who had gone to Australia for a show) started to eat. This angered Kapil, who was still finishing his drink. “Jab

maine khaana shuru nahi kiya toh tum logo ne kaise le liya khaana?” he shouted, well within the ear shot of co-passengers. The eye-witness reveals that Kapil’s co-stars looked so startled that they started returning their half-finished food trays to the crew. At this point, Sunil Grover tried to calm Kapil down, who then started yelling at him. “Kapil got up, took off his shoe, and hit Sunil,” says the source, adding, “He also pulled Sunil’s collar, and repeatedly slapped him.”

In the scuffle that broke out in the aisle, a female crew member of Kapil’s also got hit. “Grover tried to keep his calm and was trying to tell Kapil to not create a scene. By this time, Kapil’s abuses were so loud that he could be heard also where the economy class passengers were sitting. When the cabin crew asked Kapil’s team to calm him down, they refused and said they were scared. Kapil shouted at his team and said,

“Tum logon ko maine banaya hai. Sabka career khatam kar dunga. Tum TV waale kya samajhte ho? Sabko nikaal dunga main,” says the source. To Sunil Grover, he kept repeating, “Gaya tha na tu toh. Aaya na waapas mere hi paas” (in reference to Sunil quitting Kapil’s show, Comedy Nights with Kapil, earlier to start his own on a rival channel, and later returning to the show after failing to get enough TRPs). By this time, most passengers were rattled and several of them enquired from the crew if any emergency measure could be taken to diffuse the situation. “While yelling, Kapil also kept loudly abusing in Punjabi. At some point, the cabin crew told Kapil that they would have to call security on landing, if he didn’t stop. He, however, kept repeating, “Arrey yeh log samajhte kya hai. In sab ka career meri wajah se hai,” says the source.



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