

**Raveena Tandon's
'Maatr'
banned by CBFC?**



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Will CPEC lead to Kashmir resolution ?

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor may pave way for peace between both India and Pakistan

(News Agencies) Recently a seminar titled 'Impact of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Kashmir' was organized in Srinagar by the newly floated think tank The Kashmir Institute. Fahad Shah, the Director of the Institute, gathered a panel of experts to debate the issue in the light of the lingering conflict over J&K between India and Pakistan.

Andrew Small, the well-known author of China-Pakistan axis: Asia's New Geopolitics, addressed the seminar on Skype. (Contd on page 20)



How more and more Indian couples are live streaming sex to earn quick money
According to some reports, newcomers earn up to Rs 60,000 per day, whereas famous couples earn up to Rs 15 lakh per month.



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Why the World Banned Chemical Weapons

Yes, it's because they're morally hideous. But it's also because they don't work.



(Agencies) On the late afternoon of April 22, 1915—in the midst of World War I—Algerian and French soldiers in trenches along the Western Front, near the Belgian town of Ypres, noticed a yellowish-green fog drifting toward them. Believing the cloud masked advancing German infantrymen, the soldiers prepared for an attack. In fact, the cloud was chlorine gas, released by the Germans from 6,000 pressurized cylinders. The gas crept forward, then lapped into the allied trenches in a ghostly tide. The effect was immediate: Thousands of soldiers choked and clutched (Contd on page 19)

Vaisakhi Celebrated for the first time in Nassau County



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Failed Indian Tycoons in Trouble



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Vaisakhi Celebrated for the first time in Nassau County



(By a Staff Reporter) Vaisakhi, also known as Baisakhi, Vaishakhi, or Vasakhi, a historically important Religious as well as Cultural festival for Sikhs & Hindus worldwide, was recently celebrated for the first time in Nassau

County. This noble and historically important event in the County was made possible due to efforts of Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano and Zahid Syed, Chairman of Human Rights Commission of Nassau County. Jasbir Singh, popu-

larly known as Jay Singh of Hum Hindustani Media House, was another instrumental figure to make this event possible. Members of community made the event a great success to remember by participating in large number. Four

members of Community were honored for their outstanding commitment and contribution to the cause of greater good, notably among them were Bobby Kumar Kalotee and Attorney Sheryar Choudhry of Choudhry & Franzoni PLLC.

Hotelier Vikram Chatwal gets off easy in dog-burning incident IT's H-1B positive: Time for Indian IT companies to breathe a sigh of relief



(Agencies) Troubled playboy hotelier Vikram Chatwal got a slap on the wrist Tuesday for trying to set two dogs on fire in Soho.

Manhattan Judge Gerianne Abriano asked Chatwal whether he "attempted to cause serious physical injury to two dogs using an aerosol can and lighter to set fire to them?"

"Yes, your Honor," answered the founder of the Dream, Time and

Night hotel chains.

But "given the defendant's mental health history and lack of criminal history and minimal injury to the dogs, we are offering" a no-jail deal, said Assistant District Attorney Tanisha Palvia. Chatwal, 44, must serve five days of community service, continue mental-health treatment, submit to random drug testing and still live with his parents under the deal.

IT's H-1B positive: Time for Indian IT companies to breathe a sigh of relief

(Agencies) Indian information technology services companies can breathe easy for the moment, with US President Donald Trump choosing not to push for legislative changes in the country's visa programme for technology workers in his latest executive order. Instead, on Tuesday, Trump signed the executive order named 'Buy American and Hire American' in which he directed the US secretary of state, attorney general, secretary of labor and secretary of homeland security "to suggest reforms to help ensure that H-1B visas are awarded to the most-skilled or highest-paid beneficiaries". The \$150-billion Indian outsourcing industry has been bracing for drastic changes in the H-1B visa programme, the most favoured route to send Indian engineers to the US, which allowed IT services firms to keep costs low and gain an advantage over global competitors.

'Single largest dismissal of convictions in US history'

(Agencies) Thousands of people at the center of one of the largest drug lab scandals in U.S. history can breathe a collective sigh of relief thanks to former Massachusetts state chemist Annie Dookhan.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, prosecutors in seven districts on Tuesday moved to dismiss criminal cases in which Dookhan fabricated evidence. "Today is a major victory for justice and fairness, and for thousands of people in the Commonwealth who were unfairly convicted of drug offenses," said Matthew Segal, legal director for the American Civil Liberties

Union of Massachusetts. The Massachusetts ACLU estimates roughly 20,000 cases have been tossed out, making it the single largest dismissal of wrongful convictions in U.S. history. The dismissals came after nearly five years of legal wrangling between the prosecutors who fought to preserve the convictions and defense attorneys and civil rights groups who argued they should be tossed.

"Unfortunately, the victims of this crisis waited far too long for justice," Segal said. "It shouldn't have taken years of litigation by the ACLU, public defenders, and pro bono lawyers to address

this stain on the Commonwealth's justice system." Authorities in 2012 discovered Dookhan had been falsifying test results and tampering with evidence for nearly a decade. The discovery was made after she was fired from her job at a Boston lab operated by the state Department of Public Health. Carl Williams, staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, said Dookhan was involved in roughly 24,000 questionable drug cases involving about 20,000 defendants. The cases were prosecuted in the Bristol, Cape & Islands, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk,

Plymouth and Suffolk districts. In January, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court gave the district attorneys' offices until April 18 to notify them which of the cases involving Dookhan could be retried without drug lab evidence. According to The Associated Press, the Bristol County District Attorney's Office has acknowledged dismissing 1,500 of its 1,612 cases that were affected by January's ruling. The Essex County District Attorney's Office is reportedly dismissing all district court cases and all but 55 of 150 Superior Court cases, the AP reported.



The Yogi gamble

Adityanath's elevation as UP CM is a move of radical novelty — and political risk

A recent visit to India made it clear that the Uttar Pradesh elections stunned not only the observer and the reporter, but also the political class. Waves are normally noisy: UP 2017 introduces a new term in our political lexicon — silent wave. It rolled by without anyone noticing it.

The results raise two larger questions: Can the Muslim vote be rendered electorally irrelevant in India's democracy? And, under what conditions would Narendra Modi, or the BJP, pick a non-RSS man to head a BJP government? The first question is connected to the idea of Hindu consolidation. The second is significant because Yogi Adityanath, UP's new chief minister, has never been in the RSS, the mother organisation of Hindu nationalism. BJP leaders with an RSS background have been the party's default choice for heading governments.

The BJP's UP strategy acquires tremendous clarity in retrospect — it calculated that if it ignored Muslims, Yadav OBCs and Jatav Dalits, it would still be left with roughly 60 per cent of UP's electorate, consisting of upper castes, non-Yadav OBCs and non-Jatav Dalits. In a three-cornered contest, roughly 70 per cent of this 60 per cent — yielding 40-42 per cent of the total vote — was all that the BJP needed to win. Votes from other communities, if any, would be a bonus. That is why it did not pick a single Muslim candidate to contest the elections.

Since the BJP's UP vote was roughly similar in the 2014 parliamentary elections, we need to ask whether the pattern will be repeated in the 2019 general election. Can the BJP's vote stabilise around 40 per cent in UP?

Unless a Bihar-style grand alliance of the SP,

BSP and Congress can come about, turning the UP contest bi-polar and requiring nearly 50 per cent of the state's vote for victory, the BJP's vote stabilising at 40 per cent may well inaugurate a Gujarat 2.0, meaning a repeat of what happened in Gujarat, though on a vastly bigger scale. UP is more than three times larger than Gujarat. The BJP has been in power in Gujarat for nearly two decades. Should that happen in UP, it could transform Indian politics.

Comprising only 10 per cent of Gujarat's population, Muslims can, with relative ease, be made electorally irrelevant there. But Muslims are 20 per cent of UP's population; if they became politically inconsequential, it would be an unprecedented electoral development — it has never happened before. Several BJP state units would start thinking about how to make Muslim votes entirely peripheral via Hindu consolidation. Of course, a Gujarat 2.0 may not happen in UP. Gujarat 1.0 (Gujarat after 2002) was not only about Hindu nationalism, but also high economic growth. An economic backwater, UP's massive growth elevation cannot be assumed. It is the Hindu domination of Gujarat that might be replicated in UP, not economic growth.

That is exactly why Yogi Adityanath's appointment acquires enormous significance. Like Modi, Hindu nationalism is his ideological pivot, but unlike Modi, the Yogi was never in the RSS, which has produced virtually all the BJP chief ministers of recent years. He is a Hindu cleric, a monk, a sadhu, with a private vigilante group. He heads a religious order in Gorakhpur. Many of India's politicians, including Mahatma Gandhi, have been religious, but no Indian state in modern times has been ruled by the leader of a



religious order or institution. The radical novelty of the move has not been adequately noted.

What do we know about sadhus in politics? In his MIT PhD thesis, now a book, *When the Saints Go Marching In*, Rajesh Pradhan has produced the most systematic research on sadhus in recent years. During 1993-96, Pradhan followed 30 sadhus, probing why they got involved in the Ayodhya movement. He returned to 10 in 2008. His interviewees included Mahant Avidyanath, Adityanath's mentor in Gorakhpur. He met the Yogi, but he was not a major figure at the time.

Two of Pradhan's conclusions are noteworthy:

First, sadhus believe in spiritual, not political, discipline. They get involved in politics to serve a larger religious objective, not to serve a political party. Second, they are used to followers; they do not follow political leaders. Sticking to political parties goes against their spiritual mission.

Adityanath may have won his parliamentary seat on a BJP ticket five times, but he is not a Modi follower. Nor has he held organisational positions within the BJP. Indeed, he has often accused the BJP of diluting ideological purity. His causes are of the extreme cultural right; reconversion of Muslims and Chris-

tians to Hinduism; attacking what he calls "love jihad" (romances between Muslim men and Hindu women); the elimination of beef-eating and slaughter houses. Instead of opposing the lynching of a Muslim man by a mob on the suspicion of storing beef in Dadri, he argued that the Muslim family be severely punished. Finally, like much of the cultural right, he has never outlined a coherent economic vision.

So, why has Modi picked him as UP's head of government? He was not a CM candidate in the campaign. Modi does not subject himself to questioning by the press, so all we can do is speculate. Here are three political hypotheses worth considering.

First, for a second term, Modi needs to win 70 seats again in UP in the 2019 parliamentary elections, especially because, compared to 2014,

the BJP's tally in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar and Chhattisgarh might go down. The Yogi may not be as popular as Modi, but he is popular enough to hurt him in 15-20 seats in eastern UP, if not more. That will be electorally costly.

Second, Modi needs to rein in the party's extreme wing. Elevating the Yogi can appease this wing, with the attendant hope that being in power will induce responsible conduct. The assumption is that appeasement incorporates; it does not embolden further. Third, Modi is so politically confident by now that he thinks he can tame a monk and his followers, should they defy him.

Whatever the intention, this gamble can go seriously wrong. Will the Yogi moderate? Will his vigilante force? Will Adityanath follow political, not spiritual, discipline? Will UP's economy be reformed? The answers are wholly unclear.

Snapchat fiasco shows India is not just poor but some Indians are also stupid

In the middle of this storm over a statement attributed to Snapchat CEO, you got to feel for Snapdeal. Wait what? Yes, that is the same question I asked myself every time I saw my Twitter and Facebook feed yesterday. So outrageous are the Indians over what the Snapchat CEO said that they are uninstalling Snapdeal and rating it 1 star in the Google Play store because the word "Snap". It is as if there are thousands of Indian smartphone users who can't comprehend the difference between Snapdeal and Snapchat.

As the joke that is doing rounds on social media says, Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel should not have said that India is poor, instead he should have said "India is poor and some Indians are stupid". And isn't that all kind of sad? But before we talk about that, let's take a quick look at what the Snapchat controversy is all about. There is more to it than what you have read in headlines. Or less, depending on how you look at it.

Do you know what Snapchat CEO actually said? Guess what, there is no direct statement from him on this topic. He didn't say that India is a poor country publicly. It has been said, in a court document filed by a disgruntled employee, that the Snapchat CEO said he wasn't

bothered with poor countries like India and Spain. "This app is only for rich people. I don't want to expand into poor countries like India and Spain," reads the statement that has been attributed to Spiegel. Since then another report has come out in *The Information*, a widely respected tech news site, which confirms that such a statement was indeed made. And if Spain doesn't make a cut, how can India where millions still live on wages that amount to less than a dollar every day, where basic infrastructure like roads, hospitals, electricity, sanitation, clean water are still pipe-dreams for many, where hundreds of millions are land-less and houseless, where for millions living is all about surviving for a day, day after day, can be considered a market for Snapchat? Now whether Snapchat's business model is right or wrong is a different point altogether. But I fail to understand why Indians should be feel so outraged just because app doesn't consider India as its natural growth market. I mean have you seen the Twitter and Facebook feeds of Spaniards? Are they outraged and uninstalling Snapchat? And actually they have stronger ground for outraging because Snapchat CEO is allegedly calling them poor and they are not even

poor. Spain is a developed country with per capita income that is six times that of India's.

Triggered nation

Of late, India has acquired a kind of reputation on the web. The reputation is that Indians are easy to trigger. Say some nonsense about India on Reddit, or in a forum, or on social media and Indians will get triggered. The triggered nation, that is what the Reddit folks say about India. And the Snapchat fiasco shows that this description is not without its merits. Outraging over something genuine can be understood. Up to an extent. But outraging over comments that a CEO possibly made in an internal meeting while chalking out business strategy for his privately held company just shows that there is something wrong with the nation. I find it hard to believe that India as a nation has such low self-esteem that we get triggered by any, even most benign remark, and go up in arms. But of late, the evidence grows stronger that it is indeed the case. But the absolute worst bit about the whole Snapchat fiasco is the stupidity that it brings to the fore. In the last two days a number of web users have left bad ratings for Snapdeal, an India-based e-commerce site, because Snapchat CEO made some comments.

India's Lethal Race Problem *The great climate churn*

On March 24, Manish Khari, a high school student from Greater Noida, a suburb of New Delhi, failed to return home after an evening walk. Some neighbors of Mr. Khari claimed to have seen him with five Nigerian students living in the area. An irate crowd barged into the Nigerian students' apartment but didn't find the missing boy. His family and locals accused the Nigerian students of cannibalism. The police arrested the five Nigerian students but let them off for lack of evidence. Mr. Khari returned home quite unwell and died soon after, seemingly from a drug overdose.

Greater Noida symbolizes the post-liberalization India of aspiration, the India of new money, tower blocks, corporate offices, private universities and shopping malls. The veneer of modernity barely conceals regressive and racist social attitudes. Two days later, a vigil was held for the deceased boy at a traffic circle in Greater Noida. Endurance Amalawa and Precious Amalawa, brothers from Nigeria who are getting undergraduate degrees at a university in the area, were heading home after dinner at a restaurant at a nearby mall. The mourners at the vigil saw the Amalawas. Being African was crime enough: A gruesome video shows how Endurance Amalawa was kicked, thrashed with sticks and bludgeoned with waste bins.

Prejudice against darker skin is deeply embedded in Indian society. When I was a child, my grandmother would scrub me with a homemade "fairness paste" because I was not as light-skinned as my cousins. Skin-whitening products have replaced Grandmother's paste, and their sales have risen to \$460 million. Fair & Lovely, the market leader in fairness creams, has annual sales worth more than \$310 million.

Africans in India live with racism every day. Slurs such as "monkey" and "kalu" (blackie) are liberally thrown at them; they are often asked whether they eat human beings; they are turned away from clubs and overcharged for public transport. African men are perceived to be drug dealers, and women are seen as prostitutes. The incidents of racist attacks have increased as a greater number of African students come to the country. According to India's Ministry of Human Resource Development, there were 11,442 African students in the country in 2015, half of them from Nigeria and Sudan. Most of them are enrolled in new, privately run universities that conduct aggressive recruitment drives in various African countries, where educational infrastructure is strained. African students end up renting apartments in the vicinity of their universities in lower-middle-class and middle-class neighborhoods. Racial prejudice makes it harder for them to rent. They are charged higher rents. Landlords and neighbors view them with suspicion. This friction has increasingly led to violence. Last week I visited Michel Kyungu Kitanda, a 27-year-old Congolese man who works as a translator for Africans visiting India for medical treatment. I wanted to speak to him about his brother, Olivier Kitanda. In May 2016, Mr. Kitanda, a French-language teacher, was beaten to death by three men on a street in South Delhi after a dispute over hiring an auto rickshaw. The accused had hurled racial slurs at him and beat him with stones. He died in a hospital. I had been interviewing Michel Kitanda barely for 10 minutes in his apartment in South Delhi when the landlady banged on his door and asked me to leave. My presence in his apartment "wasn't proper." With barely concealed spite she insisted that I conduct the interview in an office space downstairs.

The spate of racist attacks on African visitors belies a better, older relationship between Africans and Indians. "You gave us Gandhi; we gave you the Mahatma," Nelson Mandela famously said. It was indeed in South Africa that Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a young lawyer, overcame his initial racial prejudices against Africans and emerged as a crusader against apartheid before becoming the saintly and beloved figurehead of India's independence movement.

India was a major supporter of anticolonial struggles in Africa. Indian diasporas grew across Africa; students and scholars from Africa routinely visited and lived in India. In the 1960s, a young Somalian student rejected an American scholarship and chose to travel to India to study at Panjab University in the northern city of Chandigarh. He wrote his first novel on that campus. He was Nuruddin Farah, the great novelist. "India and Africa are related in many different ways, which neither of them understand properly," Mr. Farah told an Indian magazine. "We are more entwined and in tune with each other." India has changed. An assertive and increasingly nationalistic Indian state has limited patience for the solidarities of the past; the very suggestion of racial intolerance draws a prickly response. After the assault on Mr. Amalawa, African diplomats in India described the attack as "xenophobic and racial in nature." Sushma Swaraj, India's external affairs minister, responded by calling that response "unfortunate." Ms. Swaraj insisted that the incident couldn't be described as racist until the police investigation was complete. A year earlier, after the killing of Mr. Kitanda, the Congolese teacher in Delhi, Ms. Swaraj had also denied the racial aspect of the murder. She had posted on Twitter, "I would like to assure African students in India that this an unfortunate and painful incident involving local goons."

In recent months, unprecedented rates of glacier melts have been reported both in the Antarctic and the Arctic. "A massive crack in Antarctica's fourth-biggest ice shelf has surged forward by at least 10 kilometres since early January," said Nature magazine in a recent article. Glaciers cover the terrain in both these regions, which have the only permanent ice sheets that still exist on earth today.

The earth has enjoyed a more or less stable temperature for the last 10,000 years. Prior to that there were several ice ages and periods of warmer temperature, also known as inter-glacials. The ice ages are believed to have been caused by small shifts in the earth's orbit, but all the reasons for the temperature fluctuations observed are not yet entirely understood.

About 5.3 to 2.6 million years ago, during the Pliocene epoch, global sea levels were close to 30 metres higher than they are today, while average global temperatures were only about three to four degrees Celsius warmer. What could happen in the current century, as a result of anthropogenic climatic change, remains a matter of great interest within the scientific and policymaking community.

The melting Antarctic

The Antarctic ice sheet is 14 million sq km in area and holds a large amount of frozen fresh water. (In comparison, the area of India's land mass is about 1.3 million sq km.) If all the ice over the Antarctic were to melt, sea levels would rise by about 60 metres. Parts of the ice sheet also flow into the ocean and do so through ice shelves that protrude into the water. Several media reports over the last few months have covered the expanding rift or crack along the Larsen C shelf in the Antarctic, which is expected to break off at any time. Larsen A and B collapsed in 1995 and 2002 respectively. Normally, ice shelves lose mass by the breaking off, or calving, of some of the portions and also by melting.

When such large chunks break away from an ice shelf, they speed up the collapse of the entire shelf. Since this is attached to the rest of the glacier, these processes can increase the speed at which the glacier flows into the ocean. Thus, even though the Larsen C collapse by itself, since it is in the water, will not raise sea levels, it will hasten the melting of the glacier it is connected to.

In 2014, Eric Rignot, principal scientist for the Radar Science and Engineering Section at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, wrote that the retreat of ice in the Amundsen Sea sector of West Antarctica is inevitable, with major consequences for global sea levels. While the entire West Antarctic Ice Sheet (WAIS) may take a few hundred to a thousand years to completely melt, the process and the resultant collapse are now recognised as unstoppable.



ISSN No. 1554 06X

Chairman: Karam Singh Thind (Honorary)

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A Publication of NuWay Media Group LLC

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Understanding crowd dynamics

Any one scanning the headlines for the past month would conclude that India is in the throes of irrevocable human-wildlife conflict. In this time period, a tiger was crushed by a JCB machine near Corbett while a mob screamed on, a leopard was burnt in Sariska by a crowd which also stoned forest department personnel, and a 33-member herd of elephants is being teased daily by a mob in Athgarh, Odisha. Close encounters

In the encounters between a wild animal and a group of people, there are casualties on both sides. The question is, is conflict truly irrevocable? In several cases of conflict this year, it has been noted that groups of people have prevented the forest department from carrying out its duties. Rather than only focussing on a wild, snarling animal, a greater understanding of crowd dynamics is also called for.

A group of people is often defined as a mob if the group becomes unruly or aggressive. One must also consider if the mob has a collective conscience or whether it simply follows the cues by leaders within it. How it gets composed, and what it wants are also important.

After a leopard entered a school in Bengaluru last year, a group of about 5,000 people surrounded the school. The fact that it is dangerous to be in the vicinity of a panicked leopard is belied only by the absurdity of the fact that most wanted to see the animal and take pictures. In the case of elephants in Athgarh, conservationists have documented a mob of people attacking the elephants almost daily. Activists say this is a form of entertainment for the people concerned, as the elephants are not always harming people. While there is potential for serious conflict or injury, the mob also feels safe in its numbers.

Other mobs that have gathered around wildlife have clamoured for instant 'justice', gratification or resolution — in the form of killing the animal, beheading it, or parading it after its death. In Sariska last month, a leopard, blamed for killing a man, was burnt alive; the mob also hurt forest department officials. In a case last

November, a leopard was bludgeoned to death in Mandawar, Haryana. The symbolic control of an animal by killing it and then parading the carcass has not escaped judicial attention. A December order of the Uttarakhand High Court said that if animals were (legally) put down, their dead bodies could not be displayed or shown in the media.

But in perhaps the most visceral and tragic human-wildlife conflict of recent times, a tiger was crushed by a JCB near Corbett after a mob demanded 'justice' for deaths. Two people from a labour camp working in forests near Corbett died after being reportedly attacked by the tiger. The forest department was caught in a human conflict situation — a crowd of people did not allow officials to do their difficult job of catching the tiger. The terrain was undulating. In its haste, the forest department brought in a JCB to capture the animal. The JCB attempted to 'pick up' the

tiger, akin to sandpaper being used to snatch up a protesting butterfly. The results were gruesome — the tiger was hit repeatedly by the JCB, and crushed to death, all part of its 'rescue'. In a video made documenting this, one can clearly hear a group of people around the animal, with a voice shouting "dabao, dabao" (press it down).

Human-human conflict

The Corbett story is telling. When going into an area inhabited by an obligate carnivore like a tiger, very few precautions are taken. Most labour camps are not provided with protocol, proper toilets, or monitoring to avoid work in the early morning or late night, and to move about only in groups. Many cases of conflict or aggression towards animals are exacerbated by carelessness and existing human-human conflict or tensions. The question is also linked to control and which groups or classes are interested in being dominant. In



2012, when a tiger was spotted near Lucknow, members and volunteers of the Samajwadi Party declared they would catch it. This was framed as 'public interest'. Needless to add, one needs training, not bravado, to catch a wild tiger.

The discourse around a wild animal, especially as it comes closer to people or human habitation, is that it is a criminal, a rogue, a stray, or a killer. There is, however, very little reflection on the role of people in inciting a wild animal. We need proper cordoning off of areas when wildlife comes close to people,

with animal capture being done with full police involvement and not just with a helpless forest department. We need investigations and action against groups that deliberately incite a panicked wild animal. To not do so would be to allow future situations to become even more dangerous; and to privilege revenge over solutions. A general mob mentality is on the rise in India. Mobs are involved in attacks related to race, food preferences, and various forms of moral policing. In the face of such 'mobocracy', does wildlife stand a chance?

President Trump's Loose Talk on North Korea

As a candidate, Donald Trump seemed to pay no more attention to North Korea's accelerating nuclear weapons program, which his predecessor has warned is America's most urgent threat, than he did to other complex foreign policy issues. Now he is paying attention, but not in a helpful way. His intemperate talk is adding to regional tensions, unnerving allies and likely reinforcing North Korea's longstanding fear that it could one day be attacked by America — the very reason North Korea invested in a nuclear arsenal in the first place.

It would be risky for Mr. Trump to let overconfidence and bombast, expressed in tweets and public statements, box him into some kind of showdown with the North's ruthless leader, Kim Jong-un, who has displayed similarly macho traits. South Korea, Japan and even Russia have urged both sides to avoid a devastating miscalculation.

That the weekend came and went without North Korea conducting its sixth nuclear

test in a decade was a relief. American and South Korean Intelligence agencies had detected evidence of preparations for such a test and it was assumed the country would go forward on a politically significant date. Saturday was the 105th anniversary of the birth of Mr. Kim's grandfather, who founded the state in 1949.

Instead, Mr. Kim displayed an array of military hardware, including three types of long-range ballistic missiles, during a parade in Pyongyang and then did a missile test, which fizzled, perhaps because of an American cyberstrike. The North will almost certainly test another nuclear device in the future. But pressure from China, the North's main ally and trading partner, which itself is under pressure from Mr. Trump, may have helped persuade Pyongyang to postpone that nuclear test for now.

Political temperatures have been rising. American warships were headed to waters near the Korean Peninsula, a pointed display of military might that was underscored

by the Pentagon's use for the first time of a massive conventional MOAB bomb against the Islamic State in Afghanistan. Then there were the tweets. In one, on April 11, Mr. Trump accused North Korea of "looking for trouble" and warned that "if China decides to help, that would be great. If not, we will solve the problem without them!" That was followed by an NBC News story — hotly denied by the Pentagon — that the administration might strike pre-emptively with conventional weapons. Previous presidents have not taken pre-emptive military action when the North prepared to test because they knew it would not solve the nuclear threat and would invite retaliation against millions of civilians and 28,000 American troops in South Korea. North Korea followed with its own threats to "go to war — if they choose" and to "hit the U.S. first" with a nuclear weapon if Washington launched a pre-emptive strike. All this inspired a warning from China about "storm clouds gathering" and a plea that all sides

should resist pushing things "to the point where it can't be turned around." Mr. Trump might be more inclined to listen to China if, as he has asked, Beijing significantly tightened economic sanctions as a means of persuading the North to curb its nuclear and missile programs. China has reportedly stopped buying North Korean coal, and a major government newspaper said that Beijing might curb oil sales, on which the North depends, in the event of another test. Meanwhile, however, China's overall trade with the North has expanded. What's missing in the White House is a coherent strategy, something beyond statements and asking China for help. Mr. Trump needs to be firm, not reckless in his talk, ratchet up sanctions and find a way to engage the North in negotiations. Peace and security in Asia, as well as the relationship between Washington and Beijing, depend heavily on whether Mr. Trump and President Xi Jinping of China can together manage the North Korean threat.



Dennis Kucinich: The 'Mother of All Bombs' is actually the mother of all warmongering

President Donald Trump has inherited wars from both Republican and Democratic presidents who have taken us down a dangerous path in the Middle East, which has helped radicalize the region and keep us at war.

President George H. W. Bush's Administration signaled indifference to Saddam Hussein when he planned an assault on Kuwait and then proceeded to annihilate Iraq's retreating army. Saddam Hussein swore vengeance.

President Bill Clinton's harsh sanctions on Iraq resulted in the deaths of 500,000 children. Those deaths were among Usama bin Laden's reasons for attacking the U.S. on 9/11.

President George W. Bush initiated a war in Iraq which led to the death of over 1,000,000 Iraqis.

President Barack Obama continued the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, while starting other wars in Libya and Syria (covertly). He escalated international drone strikes, allegedly even marking specific rebels for death from a special deck of face cards.

Obama's exercise of power was cold, subtle, sudden and deadly, hardly the mark of a sissy.

Yes, we need to deal with ISIS. However, what most Americans do not understand is that the CIA has provided covert support, weapons, materiel, and money for so-called "moderate" rebels, who became ISIS, Al Qaeda and Al-Nusra.

The U.S. did this in cooperation with our allies, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar, in order to overthrow the Syrian government, which, for all of its faults protected the freedom to worship.

The surest way to diminish ISIS is through cutting off their funding, which is exactly what legislation proposed by Rep. Tulsi Gabbard and Sen. Rand Paul would accomplish. If ISIS fighters are deprived of money and material, they will soon head home to the dozens of nations from whence they came.

Enter President Trump. The

show of brute military strength demonstrated with the dropping of the "mother of all bombs" in Afghanistan may or may not instill fear in ISIS, but it certainly is causing alarm among many in America and around the world who sense that this display of almost su-

pernatural military power might bring us a step closer to World War III.



home a bit more dicey. No nation can use a weapon of this power against another nation without creating great animosity, desire for retribution and an escalating world-wide arms race.

We are told by the Washington, D.C. establishment that "if we do not fight them there, we will have to fight them here."

It is precisely because we have chosen to fight "them" over there that we will have to fight "them" over here. If we roam the world looking for dragons to slay, some will follow us home. Wouldn't it be wiser, if we are serious about making America safer, that we actually investigate why young men from around the world are joining ISIS, Al Qaeda and Al-Nusra? Perhaps there is a better way than trying to bomb them and their ideas out of existence, especially since, despite protracted war, their ranks continue to be filled.

The musician Michael Franti once said: "You can bomb the world to pieces, but you can't bomb the world to peace." We seem to be testing that sensibility. In world capitals, the U.S.' sensational use of such a powerful weapon will be cause for concern, because it licenses larger aggressive actions on the part of both non-state and state actors.

The unprecedented use of such a blockbuster can endanger Americans abroad, including our military on 800 bases in 130 countries. Our troops are now more of a target. It also makes security here at

dropped two atomic bombs on Japan. Several of our leading generals at the time declared the war was already at an end and the bombs did not have to be dropped.

In the wake of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, several other nations, notably Russia, began spending billions on the research, development and production of nuclear weapons to protect themselves from annihilation. Today, Russia and the U.S. possess such fearsome destructive capacity that nuclear weapons could destroy life on our planet. We are not alone. In total, nine nuclear nations possess over 15,000 nuclear weapons. Just think of how our leaders presently express concern over nuclear threats coming from North Korea. We have actually dropped

the "mother of all bombs" on Afghanistan and all eyes are on America. If we monger war we will surely receive it in abundance. Russia, in response to the U.S. development of the "mother," has developed the "father of all bombs" which

supposedly has five times the devastating power of mother. Not to be outdone, the U.S. has taken steps to have a new "mother" brought forward, this one weighing 30,000 pounds. How unbelievable it is to live in a time where the life-creating symbols of mother and father

became the agencies of the destruction of life. Our metaphors are signposts to the end of the world. If the destructive power of our weapons matches the destructive power of our egos, then we will, like Major King Kong in "Dr. Strangelove," be in for the (last) ride of our lives.

Before our leaders act in fulfillment of the Apocalypse, I think a few questions are in order.

How, after a campaign where he repeatedly questioned America's adventures in Iraq and Libya — including warning President Obama not to strike Syria after an alleged government use of poison gas — did President Trump get trapped in these wars? How, after questioning the workings of the Pentagon and the CIA, and being the victim of government leaks, does he permit

leaks and disinformation to take us to the brink of war? How, after promising a new opening for peace with Russia, is he being dragged into a showdown with Russia in Syria, amid a hailstorm of phony stories about Russia tilting the US election?

Is President Trump really in charge, or is the permanent bureaucracy in the Pentagon, the CIA and the State Department now running policy while they take advantage of his inexperience?

These are not insignificant questions. The moment is ripe with portent: Expanded wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Sudan. Potential conflict with North Korea, Russia, China, and Iran.

As more Americans become aware of the danger of a world-wide conflict, their thoughts naturally turn to home and family and the beauty not of bombs, but to the beauty, the preciousness of life itself.

I think we have that in common with most people around the world. It is this awareness of a commonality which brought President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to end the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and avoid nuclear war. The bombing is accelerating in country after country and the death toll of innocent civilians continues to rise and with it the resentment against America continues to grow, and unless we soon reverse course, forces will be unleashed globally which will be irretrievable. The repercussions of the dropping of the 'Mother of All Bombs' on a village in Afghanistan will be felt in conflicts small and large. We live in a global village. ISIS may be the target, but the collateral damage may include ourselves.

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Government school teacher fights for her life after alleged acid attack

week with 90 per cent burns after her husband and in-laws allegedly doused her with acid.

The government school teacher says the attack followed years of harassment and torture over dowry.

'Papa, please help me get divorce from my husband,' she had told her father and family members many times.

Though the payment of dowries for marriage is illegal in India, they remain

widespread across caste, class and educational divides.

Doctors at Safdarjung say chances of Sangeeta's survival are slim. Her two sons, 13-year-old Avni and Akash, who is a year younger, have no idea where their mother has been since last week.

Sangeeta was going about her daily morning rituals last Thursday - getting the kids ready for school, cooking food for the family, etc.

She was about to leave for work when an argument with the in-laws over the alleged Rs 25-lakh dowry demand turned ugly.

She narrated her trauma to media at the hospital with great difficulty. 'I had been pleading with my father and family to help me get divorced from my cruel

husband for 15 years.

'The in-laws too always abused and tortured me for dowry to fulfil their desires. But none of my family members listened to me due to societal pressure. Now, see where I am...'

The government has made attacking someone with acid a specific offence with a minimum prison term of 10 years.

It has also tightened controls on sales of some acids, but cleaning agents are still easily available. 'Sangeeta's in-laws had always been pressuring and torturing her physically and mentally for Rs 25 lakh dowry.

The harrowing incident happened around noon, when I received a call from them saying that she had burnt badly,' said the victim's brother Pradeep Verma. 'We all rushed to her place and took her to a nearby hospital in



Ghaziabad and looking at her extensively burnt body, doctors there referred us to Safdarjung Hospital.'

'Sangeeta's father-in-law Richhpal Singh Nagar is a retired section officer from the ministry of urban development. He is absconding now along with his wife, Rambhuli,' said Pradeep. The victim was allegedly frequently threatened by her in-laws that if she spoke out about her harassment, her children would have to pay the price. 'Earlier, she was reluctant to tell the truth about her burn injuries. But, knowing that

her chances of survival are slim, on Tuesday she gave a statement to the police in an FIR that she was burnt by her in-laws,' Pradeep said. Sangeeta had saved Rs 1.5 lakh for her children's school fees, new books and uniform, but this was allegedly used by her husband, Sanjeev Nagar, to buy liquor and on other revelries. A senior doctor in the burns unit, on condition of anonymity, told Mail Today, 'Sangeeta came to our department late Monday evening in a distressed state. She has little chance of survival.'

(Agencies) Her face and body changed in an instant, permanently, and so did her life.

Ghaziabad resident Sangeeta Verma, 36, was brought to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital this

Arnab Goswami gets legal notice Media group threatens him for using phrase 'nation wants to know'

(News Agencies) Arnab Goswami, the popular news anchor who recently announced the launch of his new news venture Republic, uploaded a three-minute audio clip on Youtube on Monday, claiming to have received a legal notice from a media group. Goswami said the media group threatened him with imprisonment if he uses the phrase 'nation wants to know'.



"My dear viewers, I've just received another legal threat. This time I'm sharing it with you. A media group has sent me a six-page letter threatening me with imprisonment if I ever use the phrase 'nation wants to know'. They say they own the phrase 'nation wants to know'," Goswami said. Goswami became inextricably associated with the phrase 'nation wants to know' during his tenure as editor-in-chief of Times Now.

Goswami added: "I have watched the nervous antics of this media group with amusement and horror for the last few months. Today, I am replying to them in public. To them I say: The threat of imprisonment will not deter me. Bring your money bags and your lawyers. File the criminal case against me for using the phrase 'nation wants to know'. Do everything you can. Spend all the money you have. Arrest me. I am waiting right now, on my studio floor. The phrase 'nation wants to know' belongs to you, me and to all of us. To every citizen of this country."

Goswami said he had used the phrase 'nation wants to know' with pride during his reporting and debates for the past 20 years and he was deeply indebted to the viewers, who had found his journalism worthy of representing the public interest. He added that every Indian had a right to use the phrase and that this phrase 'nation wants to know' comes from the heart.

He further asked the public if he should stop using the phrase. He alleged that his team members had been harassed and threatened with "untoward action" and that this media group's aim had been to stall and delay the launch of Republic. Goswami ended by saying that team Republic is unstoppable and told the media group to "bring it on."

The heat is certainly here, but can rain be far away?



(News Agencies) Delhi may finally be able to feel the cool around April 22 when a spell of rain is likely to hit north India and relieve the region of the ongoing sweltering heat wave. Currently, the mercury is keeping around 42 degree Celsius. On Tuesday, Delhi witnessed the hottest day in April in the last seven years as the mercury crossed 43-degree mark in some parts. On Wednesday too, the denizens woke up to another warm morning with minimum temperature settling at 25.4 degrees,

four notches above the season's average. According to MeT, humidity level recorded at 8.30 am was 22 per cent. A MeT official said there were clear skies throughout the day but hot winds blew. Maximum temperature hovered around 42 degrees. Private forecaster Skymetweather said, 'South-

westerly wind from already searing Rajasthan is blowing over NCR. This has re-

sulted in high temperature level which has definitely made the weather unpleasant.' 'During pre-Monsoon season, such high level of mercury is not new but prolonged period of dry and hot weather is not welcome. Thanks to the upcoming western disturbance over the hills of north India, weather may see a very much likely and needed change,' it informed. This western disturbance is likely to hit the hills by April 21, and the effect to this weather system will reach the plains of north India too. '

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SC puts Sahara's Aamby Valley on sale; threatens to cancel Subrata Roy's parole



(Insider Bureau) New Delhi : Angry over his failure to deposit Rs 5,092 crore as ordered by it in February last, the Supreme Court on Monday ordered Sahara chief Subrata Roy to appear before it on April 27 and threatened to can-

cel his parole. "He who plays truancy with the Majesty of Law, invites the wrath and, may, ultimately, has to suffer the peril," a bench headed by Justice Dipak Misra told Roy.

"We are all tired... This man must be on his toes. We will deal with this man (Roy) and his property under Article 142 (SC's power of contempt)," said the bench.

It appointed Bombay High Court official liquidator to complete process of sale of Aamby Valley in

Maharashtra — estimated to be Rs 39,000 crore — realise money towards refund of investors' money and file a report in 10 days.

"I think enough is enough... You can't say something today and resile tomorrow," Justice Misra told senior counsel Salman Khurshid, who represented Roy during the hearing.

The bench asked Sahara to provide all the necessary details of the property also to the Official Liquidator within 48 hours.

The top court had sent

Subrata Roy to Tihar Jail in March 2014 after he failed to appear in response to its summons over non-payment of investors' money. Roy has been on parole since May last year after being released for performing his mother's last rites.

It also imposed a fine of Rs 10 crore on Prakash Swamy — the representative of MG Capital Holdings LLC, an international real estate company that had offered to buy its Plaza hotel in New York but failed

to deposit Rs 750 crore as directed by top court.

The bench ordered Swamy to surrender his passport before Chennai Chief Metropolitan Magistrate by Tuesday. It asked the real estate company's lawyer Sriram Parakkat to hand over the address and the passport number of Prakash Swamy for necessary action. It also asked the government to issue a red corner notice against him to ensure that he didn't leave India and appeared before it on the next date

of hearing.

It had directed the international real estate firm — which had shown willingness to buy Sahara's stake in New York-based Plaza Hotel for \$550 million — to deposit Rs 750 crore to show its bona fides. But the company failed to do so. The Supreme Court had on March 21 sternly told Roy that it would auction its Aamby Valley in Maharashtra if it failed to pay Rs 5,092.6 crore by April 13 as ordered by the court.

SFJ files defamation suit against Amarinder in Canadian court



(Insider Bureau) Moga : A "defamation law suit" has been filed against Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh in Canada under the Canadian laws for allegedly accusing a Sikh human rights' advocacy group of playing into the hands of Inter Service Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan's national intelligence agency, which has long

been accused by the Indian government of spreading terrorism in India.

Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), a Sikh human rights advocacy group, in a "Statement of Claim" filed with Ontario's Superior Court of Justice against Amarinder claims damages of \$1 million and a permanent injunction against him from republishing or facilitating the republication of defamatory statements against the human rights group.

While confirming this, Attorney Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, legal advisor to SFJ, who filed

the defamation suit, told The Tribune over phone that the SFJ had also announced a reward of \$10,000 to anyone in Punjab who would serve the Canadian court summons to the CM.

Claiming injury to SFJ's reputation, the complaint states, "By reason of the publication of the defamatory statements SFJ has been injured in its reputation. The defamatory statements have caused reputational damage to the SFJ's status as a non-profit organisation and, among other things; have hindered its ability to address the ongoing issues

of significance to Sikh community residing in Canada."

Pannun further claims, "It is an open secret that Capt Amarinder had a personal grudge against him and the SFJ; therefore, he made the statements on the SFJ-ISI nexus as a retaliation to Sikh groups' successful campaign to block him from addressing political rallies in Canada, the US and European Union countries and also an effort to hold him accountable for human rights violations during his tenure as the CM of Punjab from 2002 to 2007.

'Can't Criticise Army Sitting In AC Rooms': Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi On Kashmir Video

(Agencies) Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi, the government's chief legal advisor, has asked why there is "so much noise" over army men tying a man in Kashmir to the front of a military jeep as a "human shield" against protesters throwing stones at the vehicle.

"The recent report about a stone pelted tied to an Army vehicle, it helped contain stone pelters and saved the poll officials. Why so much noise," Mr Rohatgi said to NDTV today, adding, "Everyday people are dying. It's a surcharged atmosphere. The Army is dealing with terrorists not with protestors, so they will have to be dealt with...everyone should look at the Army with pride, they are doing a great job."

Stressing that the army's is doing a great job under hostile conditions, the Attorney General said, "Sitting in AC rooms you can't criticise army. Please



put yourself in army position."

The Jammu and Kashmir police have filed a First Information Report or FIR against the Army for the incident after a video went viral, drawing huge criticism. Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti sought a detailed report from the state police and the Army too began an internal investigation into the incident. Home Minister Rajnath Singh has said he will look into it. In the video, which sources

said was filmed on April 9, the young man sits tied with a rope to the front of the jeep as it drove into a village. By-elections were held that day for the Srinagar parliament seat amid a poll boycott call by separatists and mobs attacked polling booths stamping on and burning electronic voting machines or EVMS in many places. Security sources have said that the vehicle had in it poll officials who faced a mob of angry stone-

throwers. They said the man tied to the jeep, identified as Farooq Ahmad Dar, was not harmed. Police sources have said the charges being considered against the Army include kidnapping and endangering Mr Dar's life.

Mr Dar is a resident of Sitaharaan village in Khag tehsil of Budgam district in central Kashmir. He has alleged that he was picked up when he was on the way to his sister's house, where a relative had died, after voting.

He said a 53 Rashtriya Rifles contingent picked him up as it wanted to enter Beerwah village with the polling staff.

An earlier video that too went viral showed a mob kicking and slapping a jawan of the Central Reserve Police Force or CRPF, but he kept walking without reacting to any provocation. Five persons were arrested for the incident.

Gurmehar feted with 'Punjabi Icon' award



(Insider Bureau) Mumbai : Gurmehar Kaur, daughter of Kargil martyr Captain Mandeep Singh, who was recently trolled by right-wing activists for raising her voice against violence on campuses in the wake of clashes in Ramjas College, Delhi, was among others who were accorded the 'Punjabi Icon' awards here on the occasion of Baisakhi. Instituted by the Punjabi Cultural Heritage Board, the 'Punjabi Icon' awards were given to Kaur, Manish Paul, Bollywood personalities Neha Kakkar, Urvashi Rautela and others. In a statement released here, PCHB president and Congress party leader Charan Singh Sapra said the awards were given to Punjabis who had excelled in their respective areas of expertise. The chief guest at the award function was Punjab Cabinet Minister Charanjit Singh Channi. Sapra said Gurmehar Kaur was felicitated in the "Courageous Youth" category. "Gurmehar Kaur had fought against the unlawful behaviour of the ABVP. This was her first public appearance after she went into recluse, when her clash with ABVP turned into a national debate. It requires tremendous courage for a college student from a simple family to raise her voice against such unruly behavior," Sapra said.

Porn clip at Rajiv Chowk: Delhi Metro begins probe, questions own staff



(Agencies) The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is questioning its staff at Rajiv Chowk Metro station to find the culprit behind the April 9 porn clip incident.

Over a week after a pornographic clip played on one of the LED screens at the busy Rajiv Chowk station, the DMRC on Monday said it has begun its probe. Investigating the case

from all angles, the DMRC is not ruling out the involvement of its staff. The DMRC, however, maintained that commuters could also be behind the incident. The corporation said three unidentified men may have played the clip on the big screen as the newly installed system was not secure. The inquiry is going on in full swing and the team includes officials from different departments. Staff members both contractual, those outsourced from a company, and DMRC's are being questioned now, especially those who were present at Rajiv Chowk that afternoon," a source said. Pre-

liminary DMRC investigation revealed that the incident took place around 5 pm on April 9. Following the incident, which left the DMRC red-faced, it has also issued strict guidelines to the contractors, who are handling electronic systems such as LED screens at stations. These screens are used for advertisements and information dissemination. While there is no penalty in the Delhi Metro's rulebook for this particular offence, the DMRC is now considering a specific penalty. "For this case, the Delhi Police are working closely with us. Once the culprits are caught, we will

impose a penalty and hand them over to the police," an official said. The LED TV system, where the porn clip played on for at least 10 minutes on April 9, had just been commissioned and its WiFi port was accessible. "Prima facie, as per CCTV footage, three men played the porn clip through their mobile (phone) on this TV at Rajiv Chowk station. Attempts are being made to identify these men. CCTV footage is under examination," a metro official said. Delhi Police, meanwhile, said they have not received any complaint from the DMRC in the matter but are coordinating with the organisation in the case.

Billionaire plans \$150 million movie 'Mahabharata' - which will be three times more expensive than India's biggest budget film



(Agencies) A Gulf-based billionaire is planning to smash the record for the most expensive Indian movie by splashing out \$150 million to make a film of the Hindu epic 'Mahabharata'.

The cost of producing the two-part extravaganza is set to dwarf that of 'Baahubali', which is India's biggest bud-

get film to date at around 4.5 billion rupees (\$45 million).

"I believe that this film will not only set global benchmarks, but also reposition India and its prowess in mythological storytelling," said businessman B. R. Shetty in a statement late Monday announcing the project.

am confident that this film

will be adapted in over 100 languages and reach over three billion people across the world,' added the Indian billionaire, who lives in the United Arab Emirates. Filming is due to start late next year with the first instalment set to hit screens in early 2020, the statement said. It will be released in several Indian languages and dubbed for foreign audiences as well.

The blockbuster, which will be directed by south Indian filmmaker V.A Shrikumar Menon, will be the latest retelling of the 'Mahabharata', an ancient Sanskrit story about a battle between feuding princes

which includes the 'Bhagavad Gita'.

It has had many screen adaptations, including a highly successful television series in the 1980s, and inspired a number of films. The announcement comes before the release next week of the second and final instalment of 'Baahubali', a Telugu- and Tamil-language film featuring elaborate battle scenes. The combined cost for the two parts was about \$45 million. While budgets for Indian movies are rising they are still well short of those in Hollywood, where a blockbuster often costs more than \$200 million to make.

MLA Ramanjit Sikki under fire for asking Punjab police to serve Congress activists properly



(Agencies) Khadoor Sahib —Congress legislator of Khadoor Sahib assembly segment S. Ramanjit Singh Sikki has come under fire of Shiromani Akali Dal leaders for his controversial remark against Punjab police cops in a public conference. Taking video of Sikki's remark as an evidence, the SAD leaders have said that the Captain Amarinder Singh led Punjab government was going to frame Akali leaders in fake cases. A video of legislator S. Ramanjit Singh Sikki has surfaced on the media portals in which he could be watched asking a Deputy Superintendent of Police that no Congress activist should come out of Police station sadly. He further said that if he received any such complaint against any Police official then he would be forced to come to Police station himself that might be harmful for the Police cops. It may be recalled here that the legislator S. Ramanjit Singh Sikki had won the Khadoor Sahib Assembly seat with a margin of 17055 votes by defeating Akali legislator S. Ravinder Singh Brahmura. He was first elected as an MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) in 2012 and in October-2015 he had resigned from the assembly in protest of sacrilege of Sri Guru Granth Sahib at village Bath in his constituency.

Babri demolition more serious than Gandhiji killing: Owaisi



(Agencies) Terming the Babri Masjid demolition "more serious" than the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday deplored the delay in concluding the trial.

He also said those responsible for the "nation's shame" in 1992 are now running the

country. "Mahatma Gandhi assassination trial completed in 2 years & Babri Masjid demolition which (is) more serious than MK Gandhi killing not yet decided," the Hyderabad Lok Sabha member tweeted.

"Gandhi's killers were convicted (and) hanged & Babri accused have been made

Union Ministers, conferred Padma Vibhushan, justice system moves slowly," he said. His comment came after Supreme Court allowed the CBI's plea to restore criminal conspiracy charge against top BJP leaders LK Advani, MM Joshi and Uma Bharti in the Babri Masjid demolition case.

The apex court, however, noted that Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh enjoys Constitutional immunity and can be tried only after he ceases to hold the office. Kalyan Singh was the Chief Minister of UP in 1992. "It's 24 years late. 24-25 years have passed. But at last the Supreme Court has taken the decision that the conspiracy charge should be there. But I hope the Supreme

Court will also decide the contempt petition (pending since 1992)," Owaisi told PTI.

"The contempt petition has to be decided by them (SC)," he said. In a series of tweets, he said, "Will Kalyan Singh resign & face trial or hide behind cover of being Governor, Will Modi govt remove him in Interest of Justice I doubt".

Attacking the Narendra Modi government, Owaisi said, "Demolition of Babri Masjid is a nation's shame people responsible for this shame are now running the nation." "Now Supreme Court has said conspiracy charge added against accused will Padma Vibhushan be taken back from accused," he said.



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(Agencies) Britain has a long history of providing refuge to those fleeing political and religious persecution,' said an official after news broke that Vijay Mallya had been arrested. India and Britain signed an extradition treaty in December 1993, but so far only one fugitive wanted by India has been extradited: Samirbhai Vinubhai Patel, who was sought in connection with the 2002 post-Godhra riots in Gujarat. In

Only ONE fugitive of the 60 wanted by India from the UK has been extradited

2008, India extradited Maninderpal Singh Kohli to Britain in the Hannah Foster murder case. Extradition cases have not gone in India's favour mainly due to Britain's strong human rights laws, particularly the right to family life (Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights). In the case involving bookie Sanjeev Chawla, who was arrested in London in June last year over the cricket match-fixing scandal of

2000, UK officials wrote to Delhi Police asking for details about security arrangements and facilities in the jail he would be kept in. His name is still in the request list. For extradition, the UK has placed India in category 2 countries, for which the process is arduous and long. In category 1 are the US and European countries, which get preference. If the UK extradites Mallya, it will also have to move on other pending requests from India. The flamboyant businessman Mallya may have got bail hours after being arrested in London on Tuesday but Indian authorities appear optimistic about chances of his extradition from the UK even as they hustle to reel in other high-profile fugitives from various corners of the globe. Metropolitan police arrested the 61-year-old who is being pursued by the CBI and ED over accusations of fraud tied to his now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines. India had given a formal extradition request for Mallya on February 8 after he ignored court orders to return home and face trial for over Rs 9,000 crore (£1 billion) of unpaid debt. 'Usual Indian media hype. Extradition hearing in court started today as expected,' Mallya tweeted after getting bail. Sources said it was a voluntary arrest and he was let off within three hours.

Triple talaq victim suffered acid attack and says she may convert to Hinduism

(Agencies) Rehana Raza says she wants to give up Islam and embrace Hinduism. The Uttar Pradesh resident became the latest poster woman of triple talaq after allegedly being divorced over the phone by her husband and then attacked with acid by her in-laws. Now, she told Mail Today, she wants to change her religious stripes from green to saffron. 'Hindu law at least

reaffirms the right of consensus a woman should have in marriage and gives a woman a say. 'That's something Islam lacks, paving the way for triple talaq,' Rehana said in a telephone interview. Thousands of Muslim women from across India have raised their voices against the Sharia law custom that allows men to split up with their wives by saying 'talaq' three times.

The instant divorce practice has been barred by more than 20 Muslim countries including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia. 'A common law defends numerous Hindu women who need emotional and financial support after getting deserted. 'I have suffered because of triple talaq, despite my family's revered status in society,' Rehana said. A five-judge constitution bench will sit during the Supreme Court's summer vacation in May to examine a batch of petitions challenging Islamic practices such as triple talaq and polygamy after women complained of being divorced on Facebook and WhatsApp. Rehana says she was attacked with acid by her in-laws on April 14 at their house in Neoria

town of Pilibhit district. The torture did not surprise the victim, who alleges that her husband started beating her within days of their wedding after the couple moved to the United States in 1999. 'He brought me and my son back to India in 2011 when my mother passed away but he soon left us behind, claiming he had found a job in New Zealand. I had no choice but to turn to my in-laws in Pilibhit who also shunned me,' Rehana told Mail Today. Her mother-in-law allegedly asked her to not 'show her face' because Matlub had already given her triple talaq over phone, which Rehana says never occurred. 'I had approached them after the Allahabad high court order that termed the practice of triple talaq as unconstitutional which violates the rights of Muslim



women. 'But instead I have seen days when my son and I have lived without food and electricity,' said Rehana, who has now been assured support by women and child development minister Maneka Gandhi. The government told the Supreme Court last year that triple talaq violates the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution and said it does not form a part of the 'essential religious practices' in Islam.

No liquor shops near religious places, Adityanath tells officials



(Agencies) Lucknow : Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday warned state officials of action if the ban on liquor shops in important religious places like Ayodhya, Vrindavan, Chitrakoot and Deva Sharif was not strictly implemented. In a meeting with officials of the Excise Department, he also directed that a new excise policy be chalked out with a view to increase the state's revenue. "Strict action will be initiated against officials in case total prohibition was

not imposed around religious places and officials responsible be punished," the chief minister warned officials during the meeting held late last night. Adityanath directed officials that the 8,544 liquor shops whose location has to be changed following a Supreme Court order banning liquor sale along highways should be allowed to open only at a prescribed distance from schools, places of worship, hospitals and populated areas. There should be total prohibition in the one kilometre area around Kanshi Vishvanath Temple in Varanasi, Krishna Janmasthan in Mathura and Sangam in Allahabad, he said. Adityanath also told the Excise Department officials to chalk out on priority, a new excise policy with a view to increasing revenue.

Sonu Nigam stays firm on 'azaan' Tweet after mistaken identity leads to trolling someone else for his anti-Muslim sentiments



(Agencies) Sonu Nigam, who possibly woke up annoyed because of an azaan from a nearby mosque, thought it would be a good idea to vent his anger on Twitter. He made national head-

lines after he tweeted against the use of loudspeakers in mosques, temples and gurudwaras, termed it 'forced religiousness' and 'gundagardi'. Expressing his disgust, the singer tweeted: 'God bless everyone. I'm not a Muslim and I have to be woken up by the Azaan in the morning. When will this forced religiousness end in India.' In a series of tweets Nigam said: 'And by the way Mohammed did not have electricity when he made Islam..Why do I have to have this cacophony after Edison? 'I don't believe in any temple or gurudwara using electricity To wake up people who don't follow the religion...' Sonu

Nigam's tweets not only evoked sharp criticism from all corners of social media, but also resulted in a goof up when some Twitteratti, all through the day, ended up trolling Bollywood actor Sonu Sood by mistake instead. Many Muslims were offended because they thought it was a direct attack on Islam. Hindus got offended because he has clarified that loudspeakers shouldn't be used in temples as well, and liberals got offended because they thought Sonu's stand was not 'liberal' enough. On Tuesday, in a new tweet, Sonu Nigam slammed those who couldn't tolerate his opinion and freedom of expression.

'Panchtatva' to guide PM Modi's drive for New India



(Agencies) Post 2014, those who thought polarisation and hard-line saffron politics would prevail, move on to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's panchtatva — dabe, pichre, shoshit, vanchit and mahila, which would 'drive his government' to reach out to the unreachable up to 2019 general elections. The government would make women, youth, tribal, marginalized and minorities core to the central social schemes to realise the 'New India' objective spelt out by him at the BJP National Executive in Bhubaneswar. Triple talaq is nothing but women

and minorities in a combo, top Union Ministers and party functionaries told Mail Today. The paper spoke to Union ministers M Venkaiah Naidu, Prakash Javadekar, Dharmendra Pradhan, national spokesperson Sambit Patra and OBC Morcha National President Vinod Sonkar and they were unanimous in saying, 'PM Modi had directed them to 'take the quantum leap' and while some schemes have already been in motion before the Odisha meet, we are taking it to the next level in mission mode to maximise party's outreach before 2019 general elections.'

Naidu said: 'He believes in Dr Ambedkar's People's Development Model based on due empowerment of all sections, including the weaker sections, women and the minorities. 'Youth is another focus area when he talks about aspirational India. He had started the schemes - PM Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Mudra Yojana, Beti Padhao-Beti Bachao, Housing for All, Skill India, Ujjwala - with a clear thrust on an inclusive governance directly benefiting the five categories listed in his 'New India' mission. 'Lighting poor houses with LED, making women benefit from Ujjwala and people volunteering to get the medical life cover even if it comes at Rs 12 per person are just the beginning. We aim to take our social schemes next to high output delivery mode.' Union HRD minister Prakash Javadekar added, 'Modi's commitment to upliftment of poor and socially backward, including women, youth and tribals,

is final and not a rhetoric. 'He gave a special status to physically challenged by calling them divyang. And by giving a constitutional status to OBC Commission, he has already set in motion streamlining of benefits due to OBC and marginalized.'

Javadekar added, 'for the youth of socially backward classes, we have already given full waiver to SC/ST students in IITs, NITs and higher education. And to promote young and aspirational India, financial assistance for entrepre-

neurship and innovation by tribal, SC and ST youths are being taken as a priority to give maximum benefits to marginalized classes.' Modi in Bhubaneswar has stressed to take a 'quantum leap', said Sambit Patra, party national spokesperson.

Modi govt puts an end to red beacon; President, V-P, CJI exempted

Only three categories would be allowed to use the red beacon - the President, Vice President and Chief Justice of India.

(Agencies) The Union Cabinet on Wednesday decided to do away with red beacons atop officials cars, announcing that only three categories would be allowed to use it – the President, Vice President and Chief Justice of India. The decision comes into effect from May 1, 2017. "Red beacon to be removed from cars of PM and all ministers. It will be allowed only on emergency service vehicles from May 1 to end VIP culture," Union Minister Gadkari told news agency. Addressing a press conference in Delhi, Union Minister Arun Jaitley said: "A red light can be carried in vehicles of high dignitaries specified by the Central and State

government. Now, neither in state or centre the government will be able to nominate any members to use the red beacon. There are no exceptions," Jaitley said. Fire brigade, ambulance services, police vehicles and other emergency services will be allowed to use the blue beacon, Jaitley added. In effect, the ban applies to the prime minister, union ministers, chief ministers, state cabinet ministers, bureaucrats and judges of the High Court and Supreme Court. The move comes weeks after the two chief ministers of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab decided against the use of the red beacon or lal batti on their official cars.

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Two-year-old girl suffers from a rare skin condition that has left her body covered in Lizard like Scales



(Agencies) These heartbreaking pictures show the plight of a two-year-old Indian girl whose skin sheds everyday.

Doctors in New Delhi say that Shama has lamellar ichthyosis - a rare skin condition that affects just

one in every 600,000 people.

It has caused the toddler to develop lizard-like scales all over her body, causing her skin to harden.

Her dried skin constantly peels off as a result of the condition, leaving

her in agonising pain and prone to infections. Symptoms usually appear within the first few days of life, and sufferers tend to have plate-like scales of skin which often appear brownish in colour.

The condition is caused

by genetic abnormalities that affect the shedding of skin, medical literature states.

It occurs when both of a person's parents carry the abnormal gene - in this situation, there is a one in four chance of the person developing the condition.

Lamellar ichthyosis can also cause overheating as it prevents sweating, and can constrict the blood flow to the fingers and toes as it causes the skin to tighten. It can also cause eye problems, hair loss, and difficulty bending the hand joints. There is currently no cure and the key treatment is regularly applying

moisturiser, experts say.

Dr Anjali Mahto, consultant dermatologist & British Skin Foundation spokesperson previously said: 'Lamellar ichthyosis is a genetic disorder that mainly affects the skin.'

'Skin cells are produced at a normal rate but not shed normally resulting in scaling of the skin.'

'Babies may be born with a collodian membrane and may have problems with temperature regulation, and infection at birth.'

This comes after MailOnline reported in September on the daily ordeal of a young brother and sister in India who suffer from the same condition.

What is this condition?

Lamellar ichthyosis is a very rare skin condition that is characterised by abnormal scaling and shedding of the skin. It is believed to occur in one in every 600,000 people and symptoms usually appear within the first few days of life. Sufferers tend to have plate-like scales of skin which often appear brownish in colour. The condition is caused by genetic abnormalities that affect the shedding of skin.

BSF jawan Tej Bahadur after sacking: 'Will appeal in High Court, hope I get justice'

"This is what happens when you say the truth? Happening for years now," he said.

(Agencies) BSF jawan Tej Bahadur Yadav, who was sacked from service following a court martial enquiry, said on Wednesday that he is going to file an appeal in high court against his dismissal, as reported by news agency ANI. Maintaining that he was telling the truth regarding 'poor food conditions' served in the BSF, Yadav said he will approach the High Court

against his dismissal from service. "Hope I get justice, I have full faith in judiciary," he told ANI, adding, "This is what happens when you say the truth? Happening for years now." Bahadur further said that not all Army officers are corrupt. "I am not saying all Army officers are corrupt, some are really concerned but 50 per cent of officers responsible for poor food condi-

tions," he is quoted as saying by news agency ANI. The Summary Security Force Court (SSFC) at Samba dismissed Yadav for making 'false allegations' on social media regarding the quality of food instead of adhering to the Army's grievance redressal mechanism. It observed that he 'neglected' obeying orders by possessing two mobile phones while on

duty and also posting photographs in uniform on social media. Earlier in the day, a BSF spokesperson said he has been found guilty of committing an act prejudicial to good order and discipline of the force in which he made false allegations on social media regarding quality of food and did not adhere to formal grievance redressal mechanism of the force.



Yadav had earlier posted a video on the quality of food in the BSF, which went viral on social media. He had also alleged corruption in the force. In a series of four vid-

eos, Yadav posted visuals of a half burnt parantha and dal that is "more of turmeric and salt" and alleged corruption by senior officials.

India's proposed surrogacy law raises trafficking risk for foreign women



(Agencies) India's proposed law to regulate its booming surrogacy industry and curb the exploitation of impoverished Indian women could result in more foreign women being trafficked into the country to rent out their wombs, a leading expert warned.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is considering a bill to ban commercial surrogacy while allowing 'altruistic' surrogacy to infertile, married Indian couples. In such cases, the surrogate must be related to the couple, and cannot accept

payment. Pinki Virani, author of 'Politics Of The Womb - The Perils of IVF, Surrogacy and Modified Babies', said the draft law, which is widely expected to be passed later this year, did not go far enough. 'In its current form, if

passed as law, India's surrogacy bill could exacerbate human trafficking,' Virani told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview.

'If the surrogacy law does not specify that the altruistic surrogate must be an Indian citizen, and that she must be an Indian resident, there will be a continuing of horrific human right abuses.'

Activists say criminal networks could easily provide fake identity documents to trafficked women in a bid to pass them off as suitable surrogates for desperate, infertile couples willing to break the law and pay for surrogacy.

Virani, who has spent

almost a decade investigating the industry, said there were already cases of women from neighbouring countries such as Nepal being trafficked to Indian fertility clinics for the purposes of surrogacy. India opened up to commercial surrogacy in 2002. It is among just a handful of countries - including Georgia, Russia and Ukraine - and a few U.S. states where women can be paid to carry another's genetic child through a process of in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) and embryo transfer.

Low-cost technology, skilled doctors, scant bureaucracy and a steady supply of surrogates have made India a preferred

destination for 'fertility tourism', attracting nationals from Britain, the United States and Australia among others, fertility experts say.

There are no accurate figures on the size of India's fertility industry, but various studies suggest it is worth at least \$3.7 billion with 3,000 fertility clinics producing around 2,000 foreign babies from Indian surrogates annually.

But the surrogacy sector is vilified by women's rights groups who say the clinics are 'baby factories' for the rich, which dupe poor and uneducated women into signing contracts they do not fully understand.

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Trump plays hardball with Dems on ObamaCare payments



(Agencies) President Trump has riled congressional Democrats by threatening earlier this week to hold back payments to health insurers in an apparent bid to get them to negotiate over a new ObamaCare replacement package.

The president needed the minority party – which he's suggested he could work with in the wake of House Republicans' failure to pass an earlier repeal/replace bill – in a wide-ranging interview this week with The Wall Street

Journal.

While his comments to the newspaper on foreign threats and White House palace intrigue drew more attention, Trump pointedly threatened not to pay what are known as "cost-sharing" subsidies to insurers meant to bring down the cost of deductibles and copayments for consumers. They're separate from the better-known premium subsidies that customers receive. But without them, experts say the govern-

ment marketplaces that provide subsidized private insurance could face turmoil.

"I don't want people to get hurt," Trump said in the Journal interview. "What I think should happen—and will happen—is the Democrats will start calling me and negotiating."

So far, Democrats are taking the opposite approach – lashing out at Trump and instead demanding that the payments be included in an upcoming spending bill.

"Refusing to make the Cost Sharing Reduction payments has no purpose but to hurt millions of people, and manufacture a crisis," House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said in a statement. "If President Trump followed through on his appalling threat, millions of Americans would see their out-of-pocket costs skyrocket and premiums would immediately be driven up

by at least 15 percent." The new administration has continued to make cost-sharing payments to insurers as it weighs options.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration announced limited fixes Thursday for shaky health insurance markets, while reaffirming its goal of dismantling the Obama-era law. Many of the changes announced Thursday follow recommendations from insurers, who wanted the government to address shortcomings with HealthCare.gov markets, including complaints that some people are gaming the system by signing up only when they get sick, and then dropping out after being treated. The changes announced Thursday include: -- A shortened sign-up window of 45 days, starting with coverage for 2018. Curbs on "special enrollment periods" that allow consumers to sign up outside the normal open enrollment window.

'Mother of all bombs' kills 36 Islamic State militants, Afghanistan officials say



(Agencies) Afghanistan officials said 36 Islamic State militants were killed when the U.S. dropped the "mother of all bombs" on a tunnel complex Thursday.

The Afghanistan Ministry of Defense added in a statement Friday that there were no civilian casualties and that several Islamic State caves and ammunition caches were destroyed.

The GBU-43B, a 21,000-pound conventional bomb, was deployed in Nangarhar Province close to the Afghanistan/Pakistan border. The MOAB -- Massive Ordnance Air Blast -- is also known as the "Mother Of All Bombs." It was first tested in 2003, but hadn't been used in combat before Thursday.

President Trump told media Thursday afternoon that "this was another successful mission" and he gave the military total authorization. Pentagon spokesman Adam Stump said the bomb had been brought to Afghanistan "some time ago" for potential use. The bomb explodes in the air, creating air pressure that can make tunnels and other structures collapse. It can be used at

the start of an offensive to soften up the enemy, weakening both its infrastructure and morale.

"As losses have mounted, they are using IEDs, bunkers

and tunnels to thicken their defense," Gen. John Nicholson, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said in a statement. "This is the right munition to reduce these obstacles and maintain the momentum of our offensive against."

The MOAB had to be dropped out of the back of a U.S. Air Force C-130 cargo plane due to its massive size.

"We kicked it out the back door," one U.S. official told Fox News.

Ismail Shinwari, the governor of Achin district, said the U.S. attack was carried out in a remote mountainous area with no civilian homes nearby. He said there has been heavy fighting in the area in recent weeks between Afghan forces and ISIS militants.

Hakim Khan, 50, a resident of Achin district where the attack took place, welcomed the attack on ISIS, saying: "I want 100 times more bombings on this group."

The strike came just days af-

ter a Green Beret was killed fighting ISIS in Nangarhar, however, a U.S. defense official told Fox News the bombing had nothing to do with that casualty. "It was the right weapon for the right target, and not in retaliation," the official said. The U.S. estimates that between 600 to 800 ISIS fighters are present in Afghanistan, mostly in Nangarhar. The U.S. has concentrated heavily on combatting them while also supporting Afghan forces battling the Taliban.

Christianity's prospects of surviving in its birthplace are grim

(Agencies) Prospects of Christianity surviving in its birthplace, the Middle East, appear as grim this Holy Week as they have at any time in the last two millennia.

Persecution of the world's largest religion has intensified throughout the 20th century and that trajectory has only intensified in recent years, especially in Muslim-dominated countries. Jihadists appear to have repeatedly carried out one of their oft-stated goals of erasing any trace of Christianity in some regions, while in others persecution against Christians and other religious minorities are being held at bay — for now.

The actual prospects facing Christianity in three of its longest-standing strongholds, Syria, Egypt and Iraq, vary significantly. But a blind eye is often turned by the mainstream media and others when it comes to anti-Christian atrocities, which have become an all-too-common way of life for many in the Mideast.

What follows is a summary of challenges facing Christians in each of these three areas. Egypt's Christians, known as Coptic Christians, make up around 10 per-



cent of the population and have long been a target not only of Islamic extremists but the majority Muslim population's resentment of Copts.

Coptic leaders have reported that since February 2011, after the Arab Spring resulted in the election of a Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohammed Morsi as president, persecution worsened. Since then at least 200,000 Chris-

tians have fled the country. Two years later when a military coup ousted Morsi many of his supporters blamed the Copts. As a result, violent incidents against Christians have steadily increased. And while current President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has made concerted efforts to protect the Coptic community, this year has shown some of the most violent attacks against Christians.

North Korean ballistic missile launch FAILS



© AFP/Getty Images

Kim Jong-un launches new 'game changer missile' hours after it was introduced at a military parade - but it BLOWS UP almost immediately in embarrassing failure

North Korea attempted to fire a missile it introduced at a massive military parade - but it was an embarrassing failure when the weapon blew up four or five seconds after being launched.

It is thought to be one of the country's new 'game-changer' intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) which was revealed to the world in a display of military might yesterday.

The South Korean defence ministry said it had detected a failed launch from Sinpo - where North Korea's biggest submarine base is located.

According to a military official the weapon is 'presumed to be a new ICBM' as it is longer than the existing KN-08 or KN-14 missiles.

US defence secretary James Mattis said Donald Trump is 'aware' of the launch and has no further comment as Vice President landed in South Korea ahead of a 10-day Asia tour.

The South Korean defence ministry said in a statement: 'North Korea attempted to test an unidentified type of missile from Sinpo area in the South Hamkyong Province this morning, but we suspect the launch has failed. In a statement, the US military said: 'U.S. Pacific Command detected and tracked what we assess was a North Korean missile launch at 11:21 a.m. Hawaii time April 15.

'The launch of the ballistic missile occurred near

Sinpo. 'The missile blew up almost immediately. The type of missile is still being assessed.

'U.S. Pacific Command is fully committed to working closely with our allies in the Republic of Korea and in Japan to maintain security.'

The Foreign Office has said it is 'concerned by reports of a missile test by North Korea' and is 'monitoring the situation closely'. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has warned North Korea to comply with the

United Nations after its failed missile launch, adding: 'They must stop these belligerent acts and comply with UN resolutions.' It comes just hours after North Korea unveiled new weapons during a display of the country's military might in the country's capital Pyongyang as Kim Jong-Un warned of an 'annihilating strike' if the US attacks.

It has left President Donald Trump juggling North Korea, China and Russia after a string of threats and promises he made from

Washington. Before meeting Chinese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the beginning of the month, he said if China did not intervene in North Korea, the US would 'take care of it'.

Then when Russia refused to condemn Syria's chemical attack in Idlib a week later, Trump came out to say relations were at an all time low having praised Russian President Vladimir Putin during his election campaign.

It appeared as though The Oval Office was focused on Moscow and its relationship with Syrian President Bashar Assad, but after the failed missile launch and with Mike Pence's tour of Asia starting today, the emphasis may have shifted again to the North and China.

Meanwhile Pyongyang threatened 'catastrophic consequences' when Trump sent an armada of warships to the Korean

Peninsula.

At the same time, China has moved 150,000 troops to its border to deal with a possible influx of North Korean refugees amid fears Trump may strike Kim following the surprise US missile attack on Syria last week. The intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), which Pyongyang claim could travel thousands of miles, have increased concerns that the secretive state is preparing for a possible attack on Washington after they were paraded during the country's Day of the Sun celebrations.

US Vice President Mike Pence has arrived in South Korea at the start of a 10-day trip to Asia that comes amid the turmoil over North Korea's threats to advance its growing nuclear and defence capabilities.

He is joined by his wife and two adult daughters and will lay a wreath at the Seoul National Cemetery and join

US and South Korean troops for Easter Sunday church services and a dinner.

Pence is the son of a Korean War veteran and displays his late father's Bronze Star in his office. Just hours before Pence landed in the South, a gleeful Kim, wearing a Western-style suit at Kim Il-sung Square, saluted formations of soldiers who yelled out 'long live' to celebrate the 105th anniversary of his grandfather's birth.

Addressing South Koreans in a speech, Pence said: 'This morning's provocation from the North is just the latest reminder of the risks each one of you face every day in the defence of the freedom of the people of South Korea and the defence of America in this part of the world.

'Your willingness to step forward, to serve, to stand firm without fear inspires our nation and inspires the world.'

'Powerful' USS Carl Vinson steams toward North Korea

At a time when experts warn that North Korea's nuclear test site is "primed and ready," President Donald Trump on Wednesday told the Fox Business Network, "We are sending an armada, very powerful. We have submarines, very powerful, far more powerful than the aircraft carrier."

The president said about Kim Jong-un's threats against U.S. warships, "We have the best military people on Earth. And I will say this: He is doing the wrong thing."

This Saturday marks the 105th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il-sung, "eternal president" of North Korea, and grandfather of Kim Jong-un. Historically, Pyongyang has launched missile tests around important dates on the North Korean calendar.

SOUTH CHINA SEA (April 8, 2017) An MH-60R Sea Hawk from the Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 78 Blue Hawks prepares to

take off from the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70). The Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group is on a regularly scheduled Western Pacific deployment as part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet-led initiative to extend the command and control functions of U.S. 3rd Fleet. U.S. Navy aircraft carrier strike groups have patrolled the Indo-Asia-Pacific regularly and routinely for more than 70 years. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Matt Brown/Released) Expand / Contract An MH-60R Sea Hawk from the Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 78 Blue Hawks preparing to take off from the USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70). (US Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Matt Brown)

The "armada," officially called the U.S. Navy's Carrier Strike Group 1, is currently making its way toward North Korea. The strike group is led by the flagship U.S.S. Carl Vinson, which

was commissioned in 1982, and since has had a long and rich history. Often called "America's Favorite Aircraft Carrier", the San Diego-based ship was named for Rep. Carl Vinson, a Democrat from Georgia. Carl Vinson was born on November 18, 1883, and served more than 50 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. He was known for his motto, "The most expensive thing in the world is a cheap Army and Navy," insisting on U.S. military strength and preparedness. Branded as the "Father of the Two-Ocean Navy", Rep. Vinson sponsored the bill that increased the size of the U.S. Navy by 70 percent, allocating \$4 billion for the expansion of the Navy. The bill, signed by President Roosevelt in 1940 and known as the Vinson-Walsh Act, the Two-Ocean Navy Act, and the Seventy Percent Act, was one of the largest procurement bills in the history of the Navy. His efforts earned him

the nickname, "the Admiral." He retired on Christmas Day, 1964, boarding a train for Georgia. At the time, he was the longest serving member in the history of the House of Representatives. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson awarded Vinson the Presidential Medal of Freedom, calling him a "master legislative captain, helmsman, and navigator, his fixed star has always been the national interest." Vinson was the first living person in the history of the Navy to witness the launch of a ship named in his honor. Perhaps best known for the burial-at-sea of Usama bin Laden in 2011, the U.S.S. Carl Vinson provided humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in Haiti, arriving just 72 hours after the earthquake struck. The aircraft carrier also has been deployed in Operation Desert Strike, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Southern Watch, and Operation Enduring Freedom.

How more and more Indian couples are live streaming sex to earn quick money

(Agencies) An increasing number of Indian couples are engaging in live streaming of their sexual acts on porn websites for quick money, cyber experts have warned. According to an estimate, as many as 2,000 have been providing content to adult portals, performing stripping and sexual acts in exchange for digital currency. (Contd on page 20) The issue came to light after a Hyderabad-based software engineer was arrested for secretly live-streaming sex with his wife on a porn site for six months.

"In this case, the wife was unaware of the act but thousands of Indians have willingly made this illegal profession their full-time job," a senior cyber security researcher with a central law enforcement agency said.

According to cyber experts, porn content is a major contribu-

tor in online revenue and there is a huge demand of Indian content which is pulling young couple to perform sex-on-demand. Several of these couples have been featured on world's top porn websites, with subscriber base touching a million, an analysis of some adult sites by Mail Today team found.

COUPLES EARN UP TO RS 60,000/DAY

"At any point of time, there are more than 2,000 active users and the total number may be extremely high as many are engaged only on part-time basis for quick money," said Kislay Chaudhary, Delhi cyber crime expert, who assists state police in cases. Live streaming is being used in a way that it can be called 'strip club' of the virtual world.

Couples entice their viewers

by kissing, stripping and using sex toys and finally take paid users to private shows. In paid shows, they customize sex acts as per the demand of paid users and even take names of highest tipper. All the money is paid through tips or tokens allocated by viewers in cryptocurrency. In one day, a couple can make anywhere between Rs 35,000-60,000. "Porn is money spinner on the internet. There are writers, video/picture uploaders and live streamers.

They customize their content as per the latest trends and demand to get more eyeballs, which means more money. Many Indians are engaged willingly as police fails to act. Entire shooting, uploading telecasting of porn content of videos is illegal. Law exists against it but no action is taken. Enforcement

agencies need to crackdown on such content," said Deep Shanker, a cyber expert.

NEWCOMERS EARN RS 1 LAKH/MONTH: REPORTS

Shanker claims newcomers get around Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.25 lakh a month but 'pro-Indian' users can earn a whopping Rs 15 lakh a month, which has made it a permanent business for many couples. Not only popular global porn websites host such live telecaster but increasing demand has made many Indian websites host such videos. Experts say that although operating a porn website is illegal in India, people register and host it in places like Panama to avoid the police net. Publishing or transmitting a sexually explicit act is a crime under Section 67A of The IT Act, 2000.

The Hyderabad live streaming video was only tracked down af-

ter it went viral and came to the notice of the victim. "It took six months for the police to zero in on the husband as the accused in the case, tracing the IP address bank accounts, chat history and so on," said Assistant Commissioner of Police (Cyber Crime Police Station) S Jayram. The accused told police that he was hard pressed for money and therefore sold the video. He had made around `35,000 by selling videos. One of the couples who perform on several live sex sites said they were inspired by Sunny Leone and their act should be seen as "performance" and not as any illegal act. The two claimed to be from Bangalore, but MT could not verify this. They wearing a mask and played Bollywood music in their background and spoke in Hindi and English as per viewer demand.

Will CPEC lead to Kashmir resolution ?

In his 13 minute speech, Small drew a broad outline of the new CPEC-driven geo-politics of the region and its potential fallout on Kashmir. "China has made it clear to Pakistan that in order for CPEC to be a success, it will require some degree of stable relations with its neighbours, particularly with Afghanistan and India," Small said. "As a result, different set of pressures exist around CPEC, coming from Chinese side as to how Pakistan handles certain issues of high sensitivity including some of the Kashmiri militant groups operating out of Pakistan and in a certain sense how Pakistan handles Kashmir issue itself".

However, according to Small, the CPEC's "direct cross-border dimensions", in Kashmir, "are likely to be much farther off in future".

"But I think CPEC does have very consequential impact on the overall framework of India-Pakistan relations, and China's role in these disputes and equities that it has in these disputes," Small said adding the dispute between India and Pakistan involves China even more directly than it ever did in the past.

Kashmiri experts who spoke included Prof Siddiq Wahid, the former Vice Chancellor of the Islamic

University of Kashmir and Zubair Dar a researcher in economics at the University of Berkeley. Prof Wahid said CPEC would put Kashmir "in a larger South Asian and Central Asian paradigm" and that "If the CPEC happens, it is we the people of Kashmir who will have control to how we create capacity." The seminar was the first attempt in Kashmir to get Kashmiris thinking about the potential impact of the CPEC on the state and the lingering conflict over it. The growing public interest in Valley in the 46 billion dollar project is the result of the collective expectation that it will introduce new geo-political factors which in the short or long term will force the resolution of Kashmir.

"The entire initiative will be more successful if it very genuinely contributed to a fully integrated region, economically and through infrastructure and a whole series of different trade, transportation links," Small said adding that for that to happen, some of the issues of high sensitivity like Kashmir have to be either resolved or their nature made more "predictable".

"More premium is being now placed by China that some of these issues can be more stably resolved".

Already, the new fac-

tors being unleashed by the project are straining existing geo-politics of the region. Islamabad is mulling the grant of statehood to Gilgit-Baltistan following China's alleged insistence for a legal cover to its investment in the disputed region, a part of J&K claimed by India as a part of its territory. New Delhi has already objected to foreign investment in Gilgit-Baltistan, an entry point for CPEC, which has further complicated the situation for Beijing.

Pakistan is now seeking to formalize the constitutional relationship with the region, it officially doesn't consider its integral part. It seeks to further upgrade the Empowerment and Self Governance Order 2009 which granted "self-rule" to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, by creating an elected Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly and Gilgit-Baltistan Council. The province thus acquired de facto province-like status without constitutionally becoming part of Pakistan. This enabled nearly 1.5 million people to elect their chief minister and governor for the first time.

However, real power has continued to be vested in the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas which has traditionally administered the area.

Managing migration for equitable development

The new figures challenge conventional wisdom and lend themselves to an optimistic assessment of how integrated India's labour and goods markets are—especially when one also factors in the survey's high internal trade figures. Ideally, this free movement of goods and labour should have paved the way for lowering inequality within the country and bridging the gap between rich and poor states. This is what happened in China, for example, where poorer provinces have almost caught up with their richer counterparts. In India, however, the gap has grown along the north-south axis and the rural-urban divide.

An Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) study analysing growth, employment and inequality notes: "The benefits of growth have been concentrated in the already richer states, leaving the poorest and most populous states further behind (i.e Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh...). In richer states, high growth rates have led to a boom in commercial and service sector

activities, whereas in most of the poorest states agriculture is the main way of life... and industry is almost absent."

The survey takes note of this problem and wonders "why greater internal integration has not led to a narrowing of income and consumption gaps across states". It offers two possible explanations: First, "governance or institutional traps" have crippled convergence and, second, India's reliance on "skill-intensive sectors rather than low-skilled ones" to fuel its economic growth has only accentuated pre-existing inequalities. Both lead to the dynamics of cooperative and competitive federalism, and raise the question: "Why isn't there pressure on the less developed states to reform their governance in ways that would be competitively attractive?"

There are no easy or obvious answers but one thing is clear: While labour migration is a force of good, it has to be properly managed by the government to deliver the benefits in a just and equitable manner. In the poorer source states

that see the most out-migration, it is imperative to improve education and health outcomes to deal with regional inequality. In the richer destination states, more so in urban megapolises like Delhi and Mumbai which are already bursting at the seams, the focus has to be on capacity augmentation. There is also the issue of individual migrant welfare—the government can start with making benefits and entitlements easily portable (as envisaged under Aadhaar), by ensuring a basic social security network for all migrants, and by allowing migrants easy access to affordable housing and homeownership. These measures will also strengthen the forces of urbanization that are already under way and boost economic growth. Several studies have shown how urban economies are more productive than rural economies. Yet, in India, policymakers are still focused on reducing migration to the cities, as Pronab Sen noted in Mint earlier this month—and this is just one example of the many policy barriers to migration.

Why the World Banned Chemical Weapons

at their throats, unable to breathe, before falling dead; thousands more fled in panic, opening a four-mile gap in the allied lines.

The Ypres attack was not the first time gas was used in the conflict (both the French and Germans had used tear gas earlier in the war), but it was the first time in the conflict that a poisonous gas was used in mass quantities. The effects of the attack were horrific, causing “a burning sensation in the head, red-hot needles in the lungs, the throat seized as by a strangler,” as one soldier later described it. More than 5,000 soldiers were killed in this first gas attack, while thousands more, stumbling to the rear and frothing at the mouth, suffered the debilitating aftereffects for decades. What took place earlier this month, in Syria’s Idlib province, had the same effect as the gas used at Ypres, as Syrian-flown SU-22 jets released bombs filled with sarin gas near the town of Khan Shaykhun. The attack killed dozens of Syrian civilians, including 11 children. The effects of the sarin, a deadly nerve agent, were similar to those of 1915: The victims choked and vomited as their lungs constricted, then suffered through tormenting muscle spasms and eventual death.

In both cases, the use of gas was nearly universally condemned. After the Ypres attack became public knowledge, London’s Daily Mirror issued a banner headline describing the horror—“Devilry, Thy Name Is Germany”—then repeated the theme in bold type more than 100 years later, after Khan Shaykhun: “Assad Gassing Kids Again.” The “again” was a not-so-veiled editorial comment, for Khan Shaykhun marked the second time Assad had used sarin to kill civilians; the first incident took place in August 2013, when the Syrian regime used the nerve agent in an attack on Ghouta, a suburb of Damascus, killing an estimated 281 to 1,700 civilians (the numbers remain uncertain) while injuring thousands. The pictures of the victims, caught in the throes of their final moments, shocked the

world.

President Donald Trump, who hadn’t previously shown much concern for Syrian civilians, said the April 4 gas attack had changed his “attitude” toward Assad, and he ordered a missile strike on the airfield where the sarin had been stored. Trump’s turnabout stunned many observers, and it prompted some to wonder why, exactly, chemical weapons triggered a U.S. response when the vast majority of the half-million or so Syrians who have died in the country’s civil war were slaughtered by conventional means. Why, in other words, do we ban chemical weapons, but not equally deadly weapons like machine guns that rip through bodies and barrel bombs that tear them apart?

One answer is that while gas attacks are terrifying, the weapon has proved to be militarily ineffective. After Ypres, the allies provided masks to their front-line troops, who stood in their trenches killing onrushing Germans as clouds of gas enveloped their legs. That was true even as both sides climbed the escalatory ladder, introducing increasingly lethal chemicals (phosgene and mustard gas), that were then matched by increasingly effective countermeasures. The weapon also proved difficult to control. In several well-documented instances, gasses deployed by front-line troops blew back onto their own trenches—giving a literalist tinge to the term “blowback,” now used to describe the unintended consequences of an intelligence operation.

At the end of World War I, a precise tabulation of casualties showed that some 91,000 soldiers on all sides were killed in gas attacks—less than 10 percent of the total deaths for the entire war. Machine guns and artillery shells, it turns out, were far more effective systems for delivering death. But those numbers tell only a part of the story. The use of gas had enormous psychological consequences, adding a touch of barbarity to the already barbarous butchery. Poet Wilfred Owen’s “Dulce et Decorum est,” which described a gas

attack, became the war’s iconic poem (“if you could hear, at every jolt, the blood Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs, Obscene as cancer ...”), while painter John Singer Sargent’s “Gassed” shows a line of soldiers, blinded by gas, stumbling forward in a kind of religious procession. The painting was attacked for its patriotism, but its message might have been too subtle for its critics, with the blind leading the blind through a blighted landscape. Long after the war, French veterans of the war’s mustard gas attacks could be seen, their faces pockmarked by scars from the burning blisters, in seats set aside for them on the Paris Metro—“pour les invalides de la grande guerre.”

Then too, while the Great War’s military commanders conceded that the effectiveness of poison gas was exaggerated, that didn’t keep them from using it. The German attack at Ypres lowered civilization’s bar, but the British and French quickly

stooped to clear it. Sir John French, the British commander on the Western Front, harumphed his rage at the Germans, calling the Ypres attack “a cynical and barbarous disregard of the well-known usages of civilized war,” then quickly followed suit. “Owing to the repeated use by the enemy of asphyxiating gases in their attacks on our positions,” he announced, “I have been compelled to resort to similar methods.” Even so, there was little doubt that the use of poison gas was a kind of crime, or perhaps, as one British military officer later noted, “not quite cricket.” After the war, the great powers agreed that the use of poison gas was wrong, but didn’t banish it outright. In 1925, the Geneva Protocol prohibited the “Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare.” The agreement was signed most prominently by those who had used gas in the Great War—Austria, Britain, France, Germany and

Russia (the U.S. signed the protocol, but the Senate did not ratify it until 1975). The protocol was widely hailed as recognition by the international community that some weapons were too horrible to use, even in war. But, manifestly, the treaty did not ban the production or stockpiling of gas or chemical weapons (as a kind of unstated “just in case” clause), and most of the major signatories to the agreement continued to develop increasingly lethal poison gas weapons.

Nor, as it turns out, did the stigma attached to the use of gas prohibit its use in the conflicts that followed. There were widespread reports that the British used gas against the Kurds during a 1920 uprising in Iraq. While the reports remain unconfirmed, the war secretary at the time—Winston Churchill—favored it. “I do not understand this squemishness about the use of gas,” he said. “I am strongly in favour of using poisoned

The Kabul convergence

Delhi and Washington have common interests in Afghanistan. The challenge is to turn this into effective regional policy coordination

The US National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster’s visit to the Subcontinent this week is the first by a top Trump administration official. It comes just a couple of days after the US military dropped the “mother of all bombs” at Afghanistan’s eastern frontier with Pakistan, and it could well mark a big shift in regional alignments. It might also provide an opportunity to build on the unfolding convergence of interests between Washington and Delhi in Afghanistan.

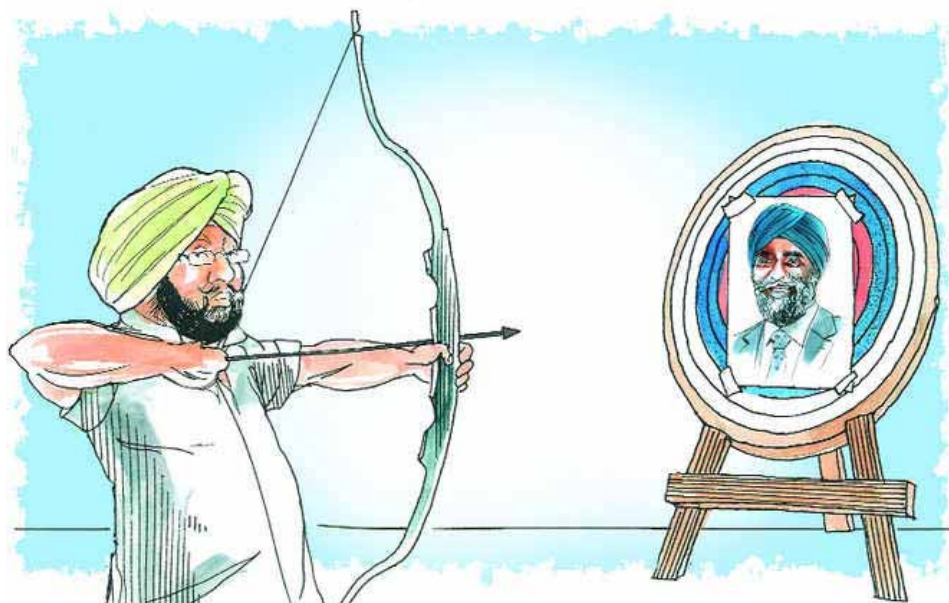
The decision to drop the massive 22,000-pound monster bomb, officially known as “GBU-43/B Massive Ordnance Air Blast” (MOAB) was ostensibly about hitting the caves from which militants of the Islamic State were operating. But it may really be about warning America’s friends and adversaries in the region not to count the US out of the Afghan equation.

Under the “surge and exit” strategy for Afghanistan announced by President Barack Obama at the end of 2009, the US military presence peaked at nearly 1,00,000 troops in 2011 and began to decline soon after. Obama held back on the plans to pull out of Afghanistan in 2014 and left a residual force of around 9,000 troops. He would leave it to his successor to decide the future US course in Afghanistan. That is where President

Donald Trump’s reported review of Afghan strategy and McMaster’s visit come in.

Speaking from Kabul over the weekend after his talks with the Afghan leadership, McMaster made it clear that the US was not going to leave without a fight. He expressed regret that at the height of US military commitment to Afghanistan, it did not have reliable partners in the country. And when it had one in President Ashraf Ghani, McMaster said, the US seemed to reduce its role in Afghanistan. “Our enemy sensed that and they have redoubled their efforts and it’s time for us, alongside our Afghan partners, to respond,” he said. McMaster affirmed that the US was “committed to give the Afghan state, the Afghan security forces, the strength they need”. The Trump administration has also signalled that it will not simply stand by and let the Russians and Chinese muscle into the Afghan theatre, where America had spent so much blood and treasure over the last decade and more. Obama seemed to encourage China to take the lead in promoting a peace process in Afghanistan. That initiative, however, failed to make much progress. Russia too has begun to dabble in Afghan politics by warming up not only to China and Pakistan, but also to the Taliban.

Khalistanis over there and over here



SUDDENLY out of nowhere, we find ourselves having to talk about as to how we should be treating the 'Khalistanis' in the Canadian Government when they visit Punjab.

I am rather inclined to applaud that the good Captain has brassily stood his ground on not wanting to meet the Canadian Defence Minister, Harjit Singh Sajjan.

Just because a foreign citizen of Indian origin becomes "successful" in another country, he or she is not automatically entitled to our respect or veneration. And, it would be foolish to forget the bottom line: these people have chosen to forsake their allegiance to the land of their forefathers; the convenient presumption, though, is that the NRIs have not cut off their emotional ties with Mother India.

Still, the Diaspora is presumed to be interested — and, is encouraged officially to get involved — in our collective well-being. We woo and court them at the Pravasi Diwas jingbang; each state government has also devised its own forms of NRI sammelans and melas.

In the recent years, the Diaspora has regularly chosen to get involved in and divided along party lines — not just in Punjab but also in almost every other part of India. In some

states, political parties have an informal quota for the NRIs; assembly constituencies are easily identifiable as "NRI" seats. Political leaders from India are regularly wined and dined or otherwise "honoured" by the mini-Chatwals and the minor-Hindujas among the NRIs. This is a rather transactional relationship.

The Diaspora in North America and England may have an abiding interest in our affairs; but I am not sure they are entitled to any right to "interfere" in the quarrel among the politicians and political parties. But once they choose to take sides, they should be prepared to be treated like any other partisan in a street brawl.

The Captain has a democratic right to put a "Khalistani" tag on Sajjan or his band of fellow-travellers. The Canadian Government has, expectedly, disagreed with the Captain. But it is rather strange that very many groups and leaders in India feel that as Chief Minister, Amarinder Singh is obliged to receive the Canadian Defence Minister.

Let the Defence Minister visit each and every gurdwara he likes; let him be given a siropa at every place; and, he would

be entitled to courtesies and protocol. But that should be about it.

It is no secret that there are vast swathes of the Sikh community, living in Canada and the United States, who subscribe to the memory, history and politics of the "Khalistan movement." Now this Khalistani tag has acquired a political usefulness in the distant democratic systems, geared to promote multiculturalism. The tricks and tactics of identity politics come into play; there is a political payoff in posing as a "defender" of the "community" or "faith." Sajjan is a very successful model of this "Khalistani" politics here and there.

ASHWANI Kumar is rather an incongruity in our politics — as perhaps is any educated man. In a way, he represents a dilemma of our times. Political life makes unappetising demands on those who choose to enter its portals. Yet, our public space would be an extremely poor place without the presence of men and women of learning, scholarship and erudition. An evolved polity finds ways of accommodating, listening and, occasionally, rewarding those with cerebral gifts. Demagogues and orators do have their

place, but so must the educated and the learned.

I first came to know of Ashwani Kumar as a partisan in the PV Narasimha Rao-Arjun Singh standoff in the mid-1990s. Over the years, I came to respect him as a man of ideas, who was at a great disadvantage in the world of intrigue and conspiracies that is the Congress Party. He was too decent and too much a gentleman to achieve any substantive breakthrough in the direct electoral arena — in that respect, he has Dr Manmohan Singh, Arun Jaitley, Jairam Ramesh, among others, for company. He found his place — but was never granted his peace — in the Rajya Sabha. He was there for fourteen years.

"Hope — In a Challenged Democracy" is a collection of the speeches and articles Ashwani Kumar has penned over the years. The book was released last Monday in Delhi. Put together, the collection is a powerful lament about the decline of the power of persuasion and reason in a democracy — and, a warning against the danger of passions and expediencies of the day overriding the established principles of justice and good governance.

The best reflections are in the section on the Constitution. Particularly thoughtful is the piece Ashwani Kumar wrote after former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was summoned to stand trial. He wonders "whether the oppressive prosecutorial process of the criminal justice system can be unleashed against a citizen by the court itself..." This is part of his larger argument that

our political and judicial processes need to be insulated against the "impulses of transient majorities."

He does put his finger on a great danger of our system — the judiciary yielding to "public opinion." And, he quotes a distinguished US Supreme Court Justice, Benjamin N. Cardozo, to make the point that a judge is not free to be a bull in a china shop: "he is not to innovate at pleasure, he is not a knight errant roaming at will in pursuit of his own idea of beauty or of goodness. He is not to yield to spasmodic sentiment, to vague or unregulated benevolence."

As a Congressman, who "benefited" from the Congress system, Ashwani Kumar is understandably understated in his dissection of what ails India's oldest political party. The closest he comes to expressing himself is when he laments "the routine triumph of intrigue over integrity, of expediency over principle..." He daringly makes a distinction between "loyalty to the national project and servility to party bosses."

I would recommend the book to all those who prefer to abide by the values and practices of liberalism and old-fashioned decency.

IF we have survived and prospered as a nation these last seventy years, it is because we are fortunate enough to have had the services of a band of dedicated public servants. Most of the time, such public servants work behind the scene and they mostly remain unsung. Garry Saxena was one such man. He was among the proverbial "wise men" without whose quiet and saga-

cious advice no system survives for long.

He passed away last Friday.

Garry Saxena was a classic intelligence man, who was twice asked to go to the Raj Bhavan in Srinagar during the days of crisis and collapse. As Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, he formally served four prime ministers — VP Singh, Chandra Shekhar, PV Narasimha Rao and Atal Bihari Vajpayee — but his counsel was sought by every prime minister since Indira Gandhi. During his first stint between May 1990 and March 1993, he saw to it that the authority of the Indian State was restored effectively and efficaciously.

I was fortunate enough to have sat, literally at his feet, a number of times; just listening to him as to how this or that "crisis" was tackled was an education in the principles and practices of statecraft. His memory of men and events remained undiminished till the very last.

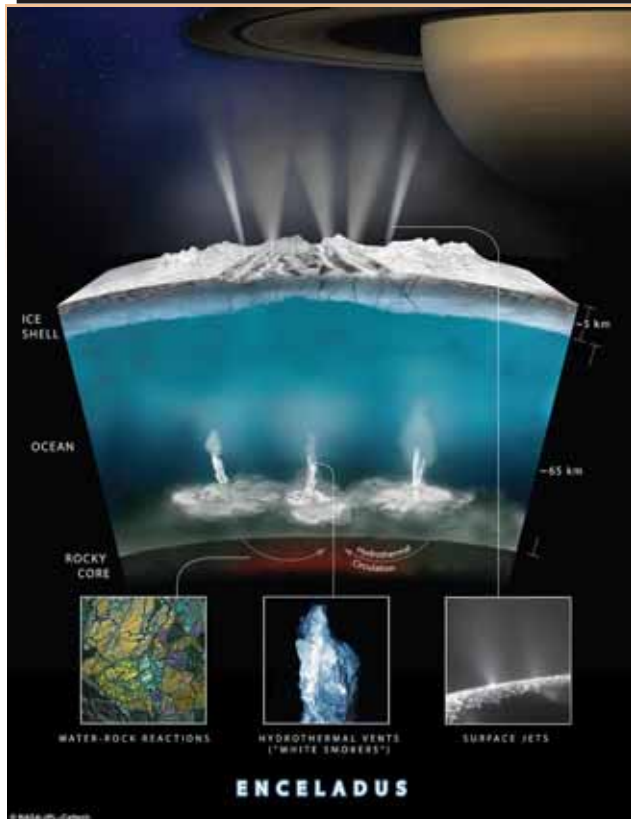
India is poorer in his death, because he was an embodiment of the first principle of public office: it is a trust that has to be exercised only in the service of the Indian State. He deserves a salute.

With considerable fanfare, we were informed the other day that the Prime Minister had decreed that "from now onwards, women will not have to change their names in passports after their marriage." Rather curious. There never was any such requirement in law anyway. I should know; my wife never changed her surname — and, I have been married since 1981.

That calls for coffee, hot and black.

Alien life could exist within OUR solar system

NASA reveals Saturn's moon Enceladus has 'the chemical energy for life' after hydrogen gas is found pouring into its deep ocean



NASA hailed a 'new frontier' last night after revealing some of the strongest evidence yet that alien life may exist.

The space agency said that practically all the elements needed for life had been discovered in the same place in our solar system – on one of Saturn's icy moons.

The missing ingredient, hydrogen, was discovered for the first time on Enceladus during the deepest ever dive by NASA's Cassini spacecraft.

This hydrogen is now said to be 'a potential source of chemical energy that could support microbes on the seafloor of Enceladus,' the researchers revealed during a NASA press conference yesterday.

After 13 years exploring Saturn, the craft dove into high-powered jets of water spewing from the moon's surface, where it found hydrogen gas.

The gas is the final piece of the puzzle following the discovery of water in an ocean under Enceladus's surface.

It means Saturn's sixth moon may have the same single-celled organisms with which life began on Earth, or more complex creatures still.

These organisms, still found on our planet within the darkest depths of our oceans, use hydrogen and carbon dioxide as fuel in a process known as 'methanogenesis.'

'What is intriguing about the data at

Enceladus, with the hydrogen detection, is that we are now able to determine how much energy would be available from the methanogenesis reaction at Enceladus,' said Chris Glein, Cassini INMS team associate at SwRI during the press conference.

'We have made the first calorie count in an alien ocean.'

This, the researcher explained, is a major step in assessing the moon's habitability.

While they haven't found life itself on Enceladus, Glein says the geochemical data 'could allow for this possibility.'

Mary Voytek, senior

astrobiologist at Nasa Headquarters, said last night: 'This is a new frontier because this is the first time we have seen evidence of an alien food source in an ocean not on Earth.'

'We knew we had two of the key ingredients for life and now we have the third. This is the most exciting discovery in my eight-year career at Nasa.'

The building blocks of life on Enceladus are water, which no form of life on Earth can exist without, an energy source and six elements – carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, phosphorus and sulphur. The last two of these, phosphorus and sulphur, have not yet been found in Enceladus's ocean – but scientists suspect them to be there because the rocky core of the moon is believed to be chemically similar to meteorites containing them.

This now paves the way for further explorations to find life in our solar system.

'Although we can't detect life, we've found that there's a food source there for it,' said Hunter Waite, lead author of the

Cassini study. 'It would be like a candy store for microbes.' Professor David Rothery, professor of planetary geosciences at the Open University, said: 'Right now, we only know of life beginning once in the universe, here on Earth, which leaves us alone in the dark. It could have simply been an incredible fluke.'

'But if it has happened twice in this solar system, it opens up everything.'

'There are tens of billions of worlds in our galaxy and there could be alien life on many of those too.'

Alien life was once only thought possible on habitable planets within the 'Goldilocks zone' – far enough from our sun not to be a fireball, but not so far as to be freezing.

Enceladus, a frozen moon around 800million miles from Earth, was one of the least likely candidates.

But in 2005 the Cassini spacecraft was orbiting Saturn when it picked up plumes of vapour coming from the 'tiger stripes', or deep fissures, in the moon's

surface. This established that, while Enceladus is freezing on its surface, underneath is a liquid ocean. That ocean is warmed by rock at the core of the moon, tidally heated as Enceladus orbits Saturn. The gravity from the planet pulls the moon out of shape, wherever it is closest, creating friction that heats the rock to 90C – enough to melt the ice.

Scientists did not have to drill beneath the ice to examine the reservoir under the moon's south pole, as its vapour erupted in plumes through cracks in the surface.

Cassini, on its final mission before it runs out of fuel and is allowed to burn up in space, was sent diving deep into the jets. Yesterday Nasa announced the spacecraft had found hydrogen as a gas, the form needed to support single-celled organisms, in the moon's ocean.

These microbes use hydrogen, which they cannot extract from water, like we use oxygen, to fuel their cells.

Scientists know this form of life can exist af-

ter discovering similar creatures at the bottom of Earth's oceans.

They are able to survive without sunlight, using hydrogen and carbon dioxide supplied by thermal heating from deep-water vents.

This could provide the necessary energy to support organisms at the seafloor of Enceladus.

'Confirmation that the chemical energy for life exists within the ocean of a small moon of Saturn is an important milestone in our search for habitable worlds beyond Earth,' said Linda Spilker, Cassini project scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California.

'This is the closest we've come, so far, to identifying a place with some of the ingredients needed for a habitable environment,' said Thomas Zurbuchen, associate administrator for NASA's Science Mission Directorate at Headquarters in Washington.

'These results demonstrate the interconnected nature of NASA's science missions that are getting us closer to answering whether we are indeed alone or not.'

Failure to sanction China helped North Korea, former officials say

Three U.S. administrations backed away from punishing Chinese banks and businesses for helping their neighbor's weapons program.



Even as Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping pledge to stop North Korea's fast-advancing nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, there's one uncomfortable secret that neither leader has publicly acknowledged: Chinese banks and businesses are playing key roles in providing Pyongyang with access to the global markets they need to acquire critical parts and technologies.

For at least a decade, North Korea has sidestepped U.S. and United Nations sanctions against its own trading and financial institutions by establishing a global network of front companies, shell companies and third-country agents to seek parts, technology and financing for its weapons programs, according to interviews with current and former counterproliferation officials and congressional documents. These front companies rely on assistance provided by Chinese banks to gain access to U.S. and global financial systems, often by conducting transactions in U.S. dollars, and on Chinese businesses to obtain weapons parts, according to those sources.

In a little-noticed letter sent to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in February, six senators called on the administration to target Chinese banks and other entities as a way of effectively cutting off North Korea's access to hard currency it uses to finance its illicit weapons-of-mass-destruction programs.

"With the risks of proliferation and war now at a critical stage," they wrote, "we have no more time to waste on inaction."

One of the financial institutions the senators cited as facilitating North Korea's weapons programs is one of China's

biggest — the Bank of China — raising concerns among U.S. officials that at least some of the assistance being giving to Pyongyang is state-sponsored.

The assistance provided by Chinese entities to North Korea goes as far back as the 1960s, and includes some state-run operations, according to current and former national security officials here and overseas, other experts and a POLITICO review of counterproliferation documents. During that time, Chinese businessmen and financiers also helped spread technology to virtually all of the world's other illicit WMD programs too, including some assistance on chemical and biological agents, these sources say.

As U.S. intelligence, military and law enforcement agencies watched, Chinese individuals and companies provided significant amounts of specialty components and technology to Iran, Pakistan, Syria and other nations. That assistance, and the participation of Chinese banks and financial institutions, has been instrumental in the research and development of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons by these regimes, according to the sources. Career counterproliferation experts in the U.S. government have been quietly ringing alarm bells about China's role in the global black market in WMD parts and technology for years, and with increasing urgency as North Korea and Iran made rapid advances in their programs, three senior U.S. national security officials who recently retired told POLITICO.

But instead of taking strong and public action against Beijing, they say, three successive U.S. administrations — under Presidents Bill Clinton,

George W. Bush and Barack Obama — opted to quietly nudge it behind the scenes and accept its repeated promises to put an end to the proliferation activity emanating from within its borders.

Some officials say that despite comments by both Trump and Xi about working together to thwart North Korea, they are wary that his administration is on the same path, despite mounting tensions over North Korean missile tests. The latest apparent provocation came early Sunday, when North Korea tried to test a missile, which exploded almost immediately upon being launched.

Although Trump himself has avoided publicly calling out China for its role in North Korea's WMD programs, he praised Xi last week, saying he is confident that the Chinese president will do what it takes to pressure Beijing's neighbor into dropping its nuclear threats, and standing down its illicit research and development programs.

"I have great confidence that China will properly deal with North Korea," Trump tweeted on Thursday. "If they are unable to do so, the U.S., with its allies, will. U.S.A.!"

In recent weeks, White House officials have begun anonymously floating the idea of sanctioning some Chinese institutions, in part as a way of avoiding military action against Pyongyang. And Secretary of State Rex Tillerson reportedly raised the issue in his recent visit to Beijing.

Some veteran counterproliferation officials said that while they welcome such efforts, previous administrations also considered them but ultimately backed down when China opposed them, in some cases by insisting the sanctions would destabilize its neighbor and hurt the North Korean people.

"Over time, every time we get close to putting in secondary sanctions, the Chinese agree to do a little more" to apply pressure to North Korea, said Dennis Wilder, who served from 2015 to 2016 as the CIA's deputy assistant director for East Asia and the Pacific. "They've been

very good at playing the game of ratcheting up the pressure on North Korea at times when it helps them avoid us imposing sanctions."

That's especially the case when the U.S. has threatened to directly sanction Chinese entities, its financial institutions in particular, for their role in assisting North Korea, according to Wilder and others. "You can imagine that if Treasury designates the Bank of China, the Chinese would have to worry about how once the bank is tainted, all sorts of people would move their money out, and other banks would end or slow their activity with the bank as well," Wilder said. "Now you would have a stigma attached to these institutions."

An official in the Bank of China's New York branch said

he was unable to respond to charges that the bank facilitated North Korean arms programs. "We're not able to make any immediate comment," he said. "Personally, I don't have the information, and it is difficult for us to coordinate a response. We will have to find out."

The bank has in the past also referred calls to Brett Philbin, a Washington-based vice president at the Edelman communications firm. He did not respond to a request for comment Friday afternoon.

If the United States were to seek sanctions against Chinese entities, it already has identified dozens of individuals, companies and banks around the world that have been facilitating and financing North Korea's weapons activities, former officials said.

Saffron storm sweeps heartland, BJP now targets 'New India'

Except perhaps Punjab, the BJP strategy and Modi-Shah magic has worked well.

The Uttar Pradesh poll verdict painting the country's biggest state in saffron hue along with Uttarkhand and installation of BJP governments in Manipur and Goa is akin to John Milton's 'Paradise Regained' after his epic poem 'Paradise Lost'. The BJP and its leadership (read Modi and Amit Shah), fully deserve their moment of glory in the sun. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, looking beyond the 2019 elections, has pitched for building a "new India" by 2022. He tweeted, "India is emerging, which is being powered by the strength & skills of 125 crore Indians. This India stands for development." In a statement on his website Narendramodi.in he said, "India is transforming, powered by the strength of each and every citizen of India. An India that is driven by innovation, hard work and creativity; an India characterised by peace, unity and brotherhood; and an India free from corruption, terrorism, black money and dirt." The BJP chief Amit Shah said people had expressed faith in Modi's leadership. "The win in the state Assembly elections is bigger than our victory in 2014 Lok Sabha poll. We will get a bigger mandate in 2019," he said. Even in this hour of victory when others were busy celebrating, Modi and Amit Shah were looking forward to Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, their next targets, which go to the polls later this year.

From a party visible only in select urban pockets, the BJP has come a long way to have strong presence in 14 states decimating the grand old party — Congress and major regional outfits like the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party. The BJP's rise has been as swift as the fall of Congress. In fact, after setbacks in Delhi and Bihar, the BJP leadership had resorted to strong measures to divert attention and build Modi brand. Seldom before an Army action against terrorists (surgical strikes) had been used to boost a political party's chances in an election. The Modi government demonetised 86 per cent of the country's currency suddenly creating a storm but the party was able to swing it in its favour. The successive municipal and panchayat elections created a favourable environment for the BJP.

While even a celebrity cannot escape trolls on social media for an off-hand comment, police say platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have also become a happy hunting ground and hiding place for bullies, who feel empowered by the audience.

According to the Mumbai police, in many cyberbullying cases, some that involved prominent personalities, the victims chose not to register an FIR. The low detection and conviction rate has only made anyone with a social media account vulnerable to messages of an intimidating or threatening nature.

The Mumbai police do not maintain a separate record for cases of cyberbullying, an official said, thus making it difficult to gauge the extent of it at present.

A senior police official said such cases are on the rise. Cyberbullying cases are currently maintained under the head 'other cybercrimes'. According to the police, of the 904 cybercrimes registered in 2016, 326 cases were registered under 'other cybercrimes'. This year, 80 cases were under this head, of the 216 cybercrimes registered till March 12, 2017.

According to an official, the scary part is that barely anyone is convicted. Even more worrying is that, of the 326 cases last year, only 90 were solved, while of the 80 cases this year, only 9 were solved.

Vijay Mukhi, cybercrime expert, said, "Such cases are increasing every day. You can't have a case worse than that of Delhi University student Gurmehar Kaur. They said all kinds of bad things to her and the problem is that none of the bullies were arrested and we don't even know who some of them are. It is very difficult to track these people. We don't even know if they posted from a fake account."

Kaur shot to limelight post her criticism of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) for the violence in Delhi University last month.

After Kaur, daughter of a soldier killed by militants in Kashmir, criticised the "brutal attack on innocent students by ABVP", she was labelled by many as an "anti-national" who should be "ashamed" considering her father's martyrdom.

Others, including a minister and an actor, were patronising towards the young woman in their comments, implying she



can't think for herself.

Cyber expert Ritesh Bhatia said, "Such incidents have increased massively. After the removal of 66 A of IT Act (Punishment for sending offensive messages through communication service, etc.), there is a very thin line between freedom of expression and cyber harassment. Also, everyone has access to social media with cheap smartphones and easily-available Internet connections."

Mukhi added, "These people who troll, abuse and post obscene comments know that the owners of Facebook, Twitter and Google do not give the IP address to the police easily. For cases of online harassment, they do not co-operate with police. So you see very few people get arrested. So such culprits know they are protected or are hard to track. Also it is very easy to make fake accounts."

A senior officer said people must be more empathic before hitting the like button or commenting. Bullies get empowered by an audience, the officer said. Along with taking the necessary precautions, it is also important for people to report cybercrimes, say Mumbai police.

"The certainty of punishment is very important to curb cybercrimes," said KMM Prasanna, additional commissioner of police, crime, at a recent discussion on women's access to police, organized by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). "It is important to report such cases. If a police officer is not registering your complaint, you must approach the senior police inspector, ACP or DCP to ensure an FIR is registered. You can also approach us at the cyber police station in BKC or write to us on the Mumbai police website. We are also on Twitter."

Bullies find a hiding place on social media

Akhileshkumar Singh, deputy commissioner of police, cybercrime, said, "Victims of online harassment and bullying should report such matters."

Former IPS turned lawyer and activist YP Singh told HT, "Section 67 of the Information Technology Act makes cybercrime a cognizable offence, for which an FIR can be registered. Under section 149 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, it is the duty of the police department to prevent commission of a cognizable offence, keep an eye on crimes. They need to either file a complaint of the victim or take suo motu cognizance of serious crimes." According to psychologists in the city, there have been several instances

where victims of cyberbullying went into depression and had to be put on medication.

Nirali Bhatia, a psychologist told HT, "People need to be emotionally strong to deal with cyberbullying and harassment on social media. The recent incident of Gurmehar Kaur's trolling and abusing was the worst she has seen in recent times, she added.

"She did the right thing by withdrawing from social media. Withdrawing does not mean you are being weak," Bhatia said.

According to her, one-on-one bullying is limited till the time you are in contact with the person, but in the cyber world the bullying is magnified as it is round-the-clock and

anonymity gives a lot of power to bullies.

Bhatia said one needs to gauge how much harassment, bullying and trolling he or she can tolerate and should withdraw before it starts affecting you. "The impact of such bullying is dreadful. In the past five years, I have handled many cases of cyberbullying where the victims have faced social anxiety and depression. They come to us so we can empower them to learn to be indifferent as on the outside, the situation is never in our control. We first start by asking them to withdraw from social media, so that it can be a statement of indifference to her bullies. What I found is that not everyone is emotionally strong to deal with online harassment and bullying."

According to Bhatia, women are more vulnerable than men on social media, but women are more outspoken as well. Bhatia spoke about a case involving a 20-year-old student. The boy was a favourite of his teachers as he was a bright student. However, some students started bullying him on Facebook and WhatsApp. "He slipped into depression and dropped out of college. We had to put him on anti-depressants for a year," said Bhatia.

Managing migration for equitable development

Labour migration is rising in India, but contrary to economic logic, inequality is still growing

It is no coincidence that in F. Scott Fitzgerald's magnum opus on the American dream, *The Great Gatsby*, just about every major character is a migrant in 1920s New York—the narrator Nick Carraway is from Minnesota, his neighbour Jay Gatsby from North Dakota, Gatsby's former girlfriend Daisy Buchanan is from Kentucky and her husband Tom from Chicago. Migration has been the cornerstone of the American way of life; people's ability to pack up and move brought dynamism to the US economy, ensuring that the right people could be matched with the right jobs at the right price, thereby enhancing productivity and spurring economic growth.

However, this trend has been slowing for a while now. When the US Census Bureau began tracking migration in 1948, the annual mover rate was 20.2%. In 2016, it was down to an all-

time low of 11.2%, according to data released last month. A Federal Reserve Board study published by Brookings Institution has similarly found that fluidity in the US labour market dropped by 10-15% since the 1980s. In short, working-age people are simply not moving like before. There are several theories for why America is becoming a "nation of homebodies": Nobel laureate Edmund Phelps argues that Americans are trapped in their own homes, especially after the 2008 crisis; David Schleicher at Yale Law School points to government policies which make it difficult for people to move across state lines. Others have pointed to the deteriorating quality of jobs (why move for a position that may become obsolete in a few years?) and the growing number of dual-income couples (it is harder for individuals to move if they must account for their partner's job prefer-

ences). The bottom line is that with Americans not moving to where the better-paying jobs are, economic growth may take a hit. Already, inequality in the US is soaring and some argue it's worse than in China. In this context, the Indian labour market offers a fascinating study in contrast—here, labour migration is on the rise but inequality hasn't dipped either. According to this year's Economic Survey, Indians are increasingly on the move and in much larger numbers than previously estimated. Based on the 2011 census and railway passenger traffic, the 2017 survey employs a new methodology to find that annual interstate labour mobility averaged five-six million people between 2001 and 2011, and that the average annual flow of migrants was close to nine million, significantly higher than the 3.3 million deduced from previous census readings.

(Contd on page 20)

Fancy a drink? This edible blob of water may be for you



(Agencies) Picture this. You're seated at a restaurant and the waiter comes up to you and asks: "Tap water or bottled?" "Bubble," you say as you whip out a small transparent wobbly sphere of water and swallow it whole.

Nope, that ain't science fiction. It's nearing reality now.

A London-based start-up has come up with a unique solution to cut plastic waste - by creating edible spheres containing water that eliminate the need for containers. The spheres, called "Ooho", have a jelly-like membrane made of plant and seaweed extracts that decompose after four to six weeks if not

consumed. The start-up company, Skipping Rocks Lab, says its mission is to make packaging waste disappear by creating a sustainable alternative, as many cities around the world struggle to dispose of vast numbers of used plastic water bottles. It says on its crowdfunding page that the packag-

ing is cheaper than plastic and costs less than two cents to make.

There are two ways to drink from the flexible globes - by tearing a hole and pouring into your mouth, or consuming it whole. In a trial near London Bridge, the innovative balls drew a mixture of surprise, amusement and delight among those who sampled them.

There are issues, of course, that remain to be resolved. How, for example, can the balls be transported and carried around reliably without leaking or making a mess when someone drinks from them? But while the creators - London engineers Rodrigo Garcia Gonzalez, Pierre Paslier, and Guillaume Couche - figure

these out, they've already won awards and been noticed for their design - winning the second annual Lexus Design Award and being featured during the Milan Design Week. One of the markets they plan to target is that of marathon runners, who will be able to dispose of the balls mid-race without concerns about the environment. And then there's another, more fun use for the Ooho balls. "People see these small round bubbles and they just think 'shots'. So that's definitely something we're looking at," said Skipping Rocks Lab Chief Operating Officer Lise Honsinger. "We have encapsulated alcohol, we want to perfect it, and then hopefully this will be the Jaegerbomb of the future."

How you can EAT your way to a stress-free life without resorting to fatty comfort foods



(Agencies) It's all too tempting when you're stressed to reach immediately for the salty snacks or sugary treats.

But instead of diving for the comfort foods, there are much healthier options that will help you de-stress much more effectively.

You don't have to give up indulgent foods altogether though, as experts reveal that cheese will help calm you down very quickly.

RED KIDNEY BEANS

'These beans add a healthy dose of zinc to your diet, the experts at nutrition tracking website Nutracheck said. 'Low levels of this mineral have been linked to increased risk of depression and reduced responsiveness to depression treatment. 'Ensuring you have an adequate intake of zinc can help balance mood and possibly your ability to manage stress better.'

CHEESE

Provides a good dose of tryptophan, an amino acid which is turned into serotonin in the body,' the experts revealed.

'Serotonin is a neurotransmitter which plays an important role in mood control.'

SPINACH

Rich in folate, this leafy green can help stabilise your mood. 'Studies show a link between folate deficiency and increased risk of depression.'

SALMON

'Farmed salmon in particular is a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids. 'This type of fatty acid

has anti-inflammatory effects which are believed to help reduce some of the risk factors associated with developing anxiety. Less anxiety equals less stress.'

ALMONDS

'These are a great source of magnesium. This mineral plays a role in converting tryptophan into serotonin. 'As mentioned above, serotonin plays an important role in mood control and can affect how calm and relaxed you feel.'

CAMOMILE TEA

'Camomile tea has been linked to several health benefits, including reduced anxiety and depression.'

'Your brother is better in bed' Dumped people reveal the VERY harsh parting words that still haunt them long after their break up



(Agencies) Some relationships are unforgettable - and unfortunately the same goes for some break-ups.

A question posted on Reddit asked users to share the cruelest words they've ever heard upon being dumped. More than 2,000 responses flooded in from broken-hearted Reddit users who recalled admissions of cheating, or being told their now ex wanted freedom - only to find out soon after they'd already moved onto someone new. Other Redditors re-



vealed how they'd been the ones to unleash harsh words on a former love.

One said they told the person they were breaking up with they'd been unfaithful no less than 13 times. Another admitted to telling someone they

were merely a 'distraction from my future'.

Another man who'd experienced a painful break-up recalled how a former girlfriend blamed his hair loss, and someone else said he was told 'your brother is better in bed'.



Why Don't All Jobs Matter?

(Agencies) President Trump is still promising to bring back coal jobs. But the underlying reasons for coal employment's decline — automation, falling electricity demand, cheap natural gas, technological progress in wind and solar — won't go away. Meanwhile, last week the Treasury Department officially (and correctly) de-

clined to name China as a currency manipulator, making nonsense of everything Mr. Trump has said about reviving manufacturing. So will the Trump administration ever do anything substantive to bring back mining and manufacturing jobs? Probably not. But let me ask a different question: Why does public discussion of job loss focus

so intensely on mining and manufacturing, while virtually ignoring the big declines in some service sectors? Over the weekend The Times Magazine published a photographic essay on the decline of traditional retailers in the face of internet competition. The pictures, contrasting “zombie malls” largely emptied of tenants

with giant warehouses holding inventory for online sellers, were striking. The economic reality is pretty striking too. Consider what has happened to department stores. Even as Mr. Trump was boasting about saving a few hundred jobs in manufacturing here and there, Macy's announced plans to close 68 stores and lay off 10,000 workers. Sears, another iconic institution, has expressed “substantial doubt” about its ability to stay in business. Overall, department stores employ a third fewer people now than they did in 2001. That's half a million traditional jobs gone — about eighteen times as many jobs as were lost in coal mining over the same period. And retailing isn't the only service industry that has been hit hard by changing technology. Another prime example is newspaper publishing, where employment has declined by 270,000,

almost two-thirds of the work force, since 2000. So why aren't promises to save service jobs as much a staple of political posturing as promises to save mining and manufacturing jobs? One answer might be that mines and factories sometimes act as anchors of local economies, so that their closing can devastate a community in a way shutting a retail outlet won't. And there's something to that argument. But it's not the whole truth. Closing a factory is just one way to undermine a local community. Competition from superstores and shopping malls also devastated many small-city downtowns; now many small-town malls are failing too. And we shouldn't minimize the extent to which the long decline of small newspapers has eroded the sense of local identity. A different, less creditable reason mining and manufacturing have become political footballs, while services haven't, in-

volves the need for villains. Demagogues can tell coal miners that liberals took away their jobs with environmental regulations. They can tell industrial workers that their jobs were taken away by nasty foreigners. And they can promise to bring the jobs back by making America polluted again, by getting tough on trade, and so on. These are false promises, but they play well with some audiences. By contrast, it's really hard to blame either liberals or foreigners for, say, the decline of Sears. (The chain's asset-stripping, Ayn Rand-loving owner is another story, but one that probably doesn't resonate in the heartland.) Finally, it's hard to escape the sense that manufacturing and especially mining get special consideration because, as Slate's Jamelle Bouie points out, their workers are a lot more likely to be male and significantly whiter than the work force as a whole.

US business group urges Washington to 'use every arrow' against China



(Agencies) The United States should “use every arrow” in its quiver to ensure a level commercial playing field in China, a U.S. business lobby said on Tuesday, warning that 2017 could be the toughest year in decades for American firms in the country. China's policies designed to support domestic compa-

nies and create national champions have narrowed the space for foreign companies, the American Chamber of Commerce in China said in its annual business climate report. The White House has said U.S and Chinese officials are fleshing out a pledge by leaders Donald Trump and Xi Jinping for a 100-day

plan to cut the U.S. trade deficit with China, which reached \$347 billion last year. But the chamber said it hoped more attention would be paid to market access for American firms in China. “Right now basically we are recommending everything you have in your quiver - please use every arrow possible, with the understanding that some of these points of leverage could be counterproductive to us,” chamber chairman William Zarit said, referring to possible backlash from Beijing. He was speaking at a briefing on the report.

Facebook may start using your WhatsApp data from this summer as it nears a deal with privacy watchdogs

(Agencies) Facebook could soon be using your Whatsapp data to target ads. The company, which owns WhatsApp, is currently in talks with European regulators to gain access to user information this summer. Last year, WhatsApp started 'coordinating' accounts with Facebook by sharing users' mobile phone numbers. This was met with huge opposition by privacy watchdogs. At the time, they suggested WhatsApp had not obtained valid consent from its customers. As a result, Facebook



agreed to suspend using data collected from UK WhatsApp users for advertising purposes. However, this could change by the summer. Ireland's Data Protection Commissioner Helen Dixon, the lead EU regulator on privacy issues for Facebook said that the

European Union might change its mind. 'I think we are in agreement with the parties - WhatsApp and Facebook - that the quality of the information provided to users could have been clearer, could have been more transparent and could have been expressed in simpler terms,' she told Reuters in an interview. 'We are working towards a solution on that.'

It's not yet clear what information will be shared, but Facebook is likely to use it to help advertisers target the right kinds of people.

Last year, Facebook said the data WhatsApp collects is extremely limited and only a part of what is then shared with Facebook.

Ramdev's Patanjali looks at restaurant business to counter McDonald's, KFC

(Agencies) Baba Ramdev took yoga to the masses, and has built a consumer business that is challenging Nestle, Unilever and Colgate. Now, he wants to go after junk food chains such as McDonald's and KFC. The Godman turned businessman is considering to open a chain of restaurants, according to the company. “There is a pro-

posal. It is being looked at by the senior management, but it has not been finalised yet,” said a company spokesperson. Ramdev has often spoken about denouncing products that are made and sold by multinational companies. Even the restaurant business, when it happens, will be a part of that plan. He has been leading a swadeshi (na-

tionalism) campaign for the past couple of years, which talks about using traditional Indian products -- from healthcare to medicines, and food to personal care products. On the back of ayurvedic and natural products, Ramdev has built an empire which made Rs 5,000 crore in revenue in 2015-16, and is eying Rs 1 trillion in the next one decade.



The MAHGUL aesthetic



**The Lawn Muse
Mohali
(Komal Minhas Bindra)**

One USP for MAHGUL unstitched Lawn collection 2017 which makes it interesting.

This year, the creative head of MAHGUL, Mahgul Rashid has tapped, new zone of Luxury Lawn. MAHGUL, is known for its Formal Bridal and Luxury Pret Wear. The launch, is expected to bring in fresh look to Lawn Collection's, which are facing repetition and stagnation in terms of color palette's and designing. MAHGUL, is all set for its debut, Lawn launch this Spring Summer 17.

To know Mahgul Rashid better, as a designer and an entrepreneur, we asked

her a few question in a cozy chat.

How did you first get into designing?

I've been designing for the past 8 years, with my grandmother Nasreen shaikh. I, started, my own label 4 years ago.

Lawn launches are Anti-couture launches. Yours, being first. What made you enter this realm ?

It's an intriguing sector of Pakistan's fashion Industry. I, wanted to challenge myself, knowing, the mass consumer better. It was, a natural step, for the brand to take, spreading its design aesthetic, to a wider base of people.

Every designer wants to create a status symbol for their brand. What would it be for Mahgul Lawn?

Anti status. Lawn is for everybody, and to be worn, everywhere. I'd like, to take the approach, that people should be comfortable wearing it and look great.

Lawn launches come with this expectation, of being both functional and beautiful, mainly because of the weather. What fabrics and prints have you used ,to keep Maghul Muse cool and chic at the same time?

The fabric is lawn for the shirts and trousers,

dupattas are silk , which brings out the freshness in the color palette, we have used. I've introduced a fully embroidered lawn dupatta too.

There is an incisive European Influence in all Lawn collections this year. Both in designing and shoot locations. What made you shoot in Bali?

The rawness of Bali. It has an energy, that exudes, beauty in its true form. Woman, wearing Mahgul lawn, has to feel confident, fashionable and most of all happy.

When you see a woman at a summer brunch party, what makes her stand out?

Her as a person. If, she, lets herself speak, before her adornments, it's a winner! One great tip to recycle pure Dupatta's from Lawn collection's, besides getting another solid kameez with it.

My suggestion, would be to fuse it, and line it, to create a ruffled stole, like we have done with one, in our shoot.

If, attached to a lovely solid silk sari, you can make a dramatic designer palloo with our dupatta as well.



You, can also make a short kurta. Our lawn dupatta, sleeveless balero, to be ofcourse can be stitched worn over a simple white into a shirt.



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Associate Broker/Notary Public

Shraddha catches sardi, cancels promotions

STARTRACK

THE oppressive weather seems to be taking a toll on Mumbaikars, and celebrities are no exception. The latest to fall prey is Shraddha Kapoor, who was compelled to cancel media interviews as part of promotions for her upcoming release, *Half Girlfriend*, yesterday.

An onlooker says, "She is recovering from a nagging

spell of cold and cough. On Tuesday, she had interviews with TV channels lined up. But when she reached the venue, everyone got concerned over how pale she looked. Post noon, she began feeling uneasy, but insisted

'Arjun [Kapoor, co-star] forced me to go back [home]... He was right; I needed to rest it out'

on going ahead with her commitments. When Arjun (Kapoor, co-star) heard of this, he convinced her to call it a day."

Yesterday, Arjun promoted the film solo at a suburban studio while his 'half girl-

friend' Shraddha recuperated at home. The actress will join him today.

Shraddha tells mid-day, "Arjun practically forced me to go back home [on Tuesday] because I was feeling unwell. I had initially thought I would make it through the day, but he was right; I needed to rest it out. It was a sweet gesture on his part."

Mohar Basu



Alia played cupid for fans, doles out love tips



(Agencies) From hosting a dinner to break the ice to forcing them to plan a surprise for you together, actress Alia Bhatt plays a perfect love guru for those friends who shy away from expressing their liking for each other.

Cornetto's brand ambassador Alia Bhatt shares how she plays the role of cupid for her friends while launching the new Cornetto Pack of Sharing!

* Make them collaborate on a surprise for you: Force them to plan a party for you. This gives them the opportunity to constantly be in touch with each other and talk about the one person they both love. And the person they both love has very slyly played cupid, for their budding romance!

* Dine in: Plan a dinner party for all your common friends. Food, wine and some good music are the perfect elements to lighten the atmosphere and have some fun. The best way to wind up dinner is with some delicious dessert. Have one less serving off dessert and offer the last little indulgence to the two of them, and if they share then you are going in the right direction. * Offer your support: Whether you suggest hosting a dinner or meet for casual drinks to ease the tension and break the ice, let each know that you are there if they want you to be, without really needing to say so. * Be prepared: Chances are you are more excited about this than either of your friends. Infact, unless they already know and have hinted at liking each other, they are entering the date with caution and trepidation. Expect things not to work out, and if they do you will be in for a pleasant surprise. Do not forget to not let this affect your efforts to play cupid or your relationship with either of them. * Don't pry: Once they have finally decided to go on a date, you need to curtail your excitement and not text them a 1000 times each. Let the process naturally unfold, and when the time is right they will tell you about it. You can however casually check how they are doing, and if they decide to let you in on more details.

'GO AHEAD, RAISE VOICE AGAINST ME'



Reacting to recent clamour against her condom ad, Sunny says only govt can decide what's best for citizens

EARLIER this week, the women's wing of the Republican Party of India (A) called for withdrawal of a condom ad featuring Sunny Leone, labelling it 'indecent' and 'a sheer embarrassment for female viewers'. But the actress is far from perturbed by the protests. Speaking to mid-day, Sunny says, "One of the greatest things about India is the democracy and freedom of speech. If people want to raise their voice against me, they can go ahead and do it. Only the government can decide what's best for the citizens."

Sunny, who has nearly 10 brands in her kitty, says she believes in each of the products that she endorses. "When I sign up for a brand, I take

moral responsibility for it. It's like bringing a baby into the world. A couple goes ahead with the decision of starting a family only when it is responsible enough to take care of the child," she says, nodding her head as if asking 'you catch my drift, right?'

Last year, the actress launched her perfume collection and now she is ready to put her business skills to test again by launching her own line of cosmetic products titled *Starstruck*.

"I never thought people would like my perfumes so much. The business really boomed and I thought of exploring more opportunities. The cosmetic line is an extension of my personality. I am personally making an effort to be involved in all possible decisions," she adds.

Sunny Leone in the ad

Akhiri Waris, Punjabi movie announced



(By a Staff Reporter) New Delhi- After being Global, the Punjabi Industry is proceeding with films which carry different Zone and of course with good experience too. Under this same series, we will see "Aakri Waris" in this year only. The announcement of the movie was done JW Marriott, Chandigarh. Producer Preetpal Shergill, Co-Producer Gagandeep Bhullar, Sanjeev Mittal and Simerjit Singh Sandhu, with the Director Teji Sandhu, Hero Dilpreet Dhillon, se-

nior actor Guggu Gill, Hobby Dhaliwal, Nirmal Rishi, BN Sharma, Nirmal Rishi, Mahreen Kaleka, Sufi Gulati, Shiwani Saini, Anukritii Singh, Creative Director Balbir Atwal, were present on this occasion. Under the banner of Wild Rose Films in association with Shudh Gold, the shooting of "Aakhri Waris", will be shot in different villages of border area of Ferozpur and some part will be shot in Foreign Country as well. On this occasion, Producer Preetpal Shergill

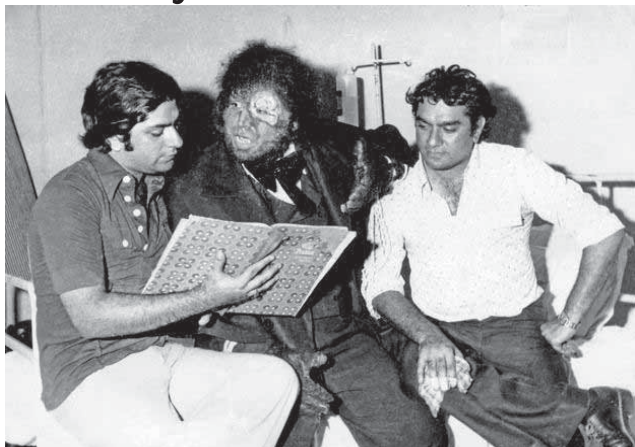
said, that after producing movies like Jee Aayea Nu, Assan nu maan watna te and Yaaran Naal Bahara, is all set to enter the Punjabi Industry again. As per him, this film will also be full of entertainment and with a different concept of course. This movie will be directed by renowned artist, Teji Sandhu, who has written the story also for this film. Director Teji Sandhu further added that this film will give an important message to the Punjabi Culture. This film will talk about the different relationships and its presence too. This film will show the responsibility of parents towards their children and vice versa. We will see Sarabjeet Cheema also in an important character. Besides him we will

see Harby Sangha, Minto, Sanjeev Attri, Sukhjinder Shera, Preetpal Shergill and Ramneet Sandhu and Teji Sandhu also. Lead Actor, Dilpreet Dhillon said this is his second movie, and the title of the film will depict his own character. He is going to play the character of a boy, who will leave Canada and come back to Punjab to get justice for his mother. Lead Actress, Sufi Gulati said that after her movie, "Munde Kamaal De", the audience will see her doing action in the film. We will witness, Mahreen Kaleka again in a strong role in this film, and is paired with Sarabjeet Cheema. Delhi girl Anukritii Singh would be seen making her Punjabi movie de-



but, she will be playing the role of an NRI. She said, she has been born and has completed her education from Delhi, but her mother is from Punjab and she felt the need to get back in touch with her mother culture. She tells that she has been raised in a Hindi-English speaking family and now she's learning her mother tongue, Punjabi. Punjabi Cinema's ever-green and senior artist Guggu Gill will be seen playing a character of a landlord, who is full of Principles and is the guard of Punjabi Culture. After the most talked about character, in a movie as "Nikka Zaildar", we will once again see Nirmal Rishi in a strong role. While interacting with the media, senior actor, Hobby Dhaliwal, said that he is playing a very different character in this film. In spite of a negative character in the film, he will showcase people who are ready to sacrifice their life for the lands they have. His commanding and authoritative character will be seen giving lot of respect to the women. According to the team, this film is full Punjabi Culture and traditions. The shooting of the film will get started from 20th of April.

Ramsays and the birth of 'desi' horror



For over 40 years, the Ramsays have churned out a steady supply of 'daayans' and 'chudails', creaky staircases and haunted houses. A new book celebrates the uniquely trashy aesthetic of the undisputed masters of Indian horror cinema. Lounge presents exclusive excerpts

None of the brothers actually admit to having butterflies in the stomach when Do Gaz Zameen Ke Neeche was released (in 1972), an 'A' certificate giving it a sort of illegitimacy—and 'B'-grade status—straightaway, making sure that a large chunk of the general audience was not going to give it a second chance. The family audience, as the industry calls it, was not going to watch Do Gaz Zameen Ke Neeche

at all, as they wouldn't most of the Ramsays' later films either.

"We knew that," says Tulsi Ramsay (the third of the seven Ramsay brothers). "We had made a low-budget film and we knew that only some young boys and girls would come to watch it. You know, they will get a bit scared, they will cuddle a bit, thoda darr, thoda romance (a little fright, a little romance)." Sri Ram Raghavan, the director of Johnny Gaddaar (2007) and Badlapur (2015), was one of that darr-romance brigade. "One new movie would release every seven-eight months; I thought of them as clutter breakers. They had a dedicated audience already. The fun I had when the

Ramsay movies came! My first date—I took a girl out for a date, and we went to watch Guest House (1980) in Alankar theatre in Pune. The chills, the thrills, the girls, shadows in the dark. It was great fun and great value for money."

'India's first horror movie,' screamed the posters. The film released in 20-30 theatres in Bombay. The details are a bit fuzzy after all these years. But that it made around Rs50 lakh in profits is fresh in the brothers' memory. "People said that Hitchcock's brother had come to India to make a film," Arjun (the fourth of the brothers) laughs. "It was a good film, it came out well, yes," Gangu (the second of the brothers) says, going quiet for a while. Then he asks me how old I am. I tell him. "So you were not even born when Do Gaz Zameen Ke Neeche came out. You must have grown up seeing such slick films, all show-shaa. But at that time, remember this was 1972, no one had seen a film like this."

Raveena Tandon's 'Maatr' banned by CBFC? Here's what you should know

Bollywood's one of the popular actresses Raveena Tandon has featured in a hard-hitting narrative 'Maatr'. The film deals with the sensitive and most pressing issue of rape. Apparently, the film has reportedly been banned by the Central Board Of Film Certification



Bollywood's one of the popular actresses Raveena Tandon has featured in a hard-hitting narrative 'Maatr'. The film deals with the sensitive and most pressing issue of rape. Apparently, the film has reportedly been banned by the Central Board Of Film Certification (CBFC).

According to Times Of India.com, the film has been denied certification due to some objectionable scenes which the CBFC deemed inappropriate. The report quotes the actress as talking to a leading daily that the Censor Board is bound by 'archaic laws' and it should consider changing with the times. She further went on to say that

a film like 'Maatr' needs to be told without sugar coating the content.

Meanwhile, ANI quoted CBFC CEO Anurag Shrivastava denied such claims and said that the examination committee is still in process and the result will be conveyed in a day or two. "The screening of the movie 'Maatr' for CBFC was done yesterday evening and at the moment there is no screening of 'Maatr' again. The ban on the movie is false, as the examination committee is still in process and the result will be conveyed in a day or two," he said.

'Maatr' has been directed by Ashtar Sayed and the thriller is written by Michael Pellico. It is slated to release it on April 21, 2017.

'Begum Jaan' is an assault on the senses

Srijit Mukherji's magnum opus 'Begum Jaan' is an utter travesty to feminism, cinema and female actors in the Hindi film industry



It's a double-edged sword when Chunky Pandey is the best thing in a film starring Vidya Balan, Naseerudin Shah, Ashish Vidyarthi and Rajit Kapur. On one hand, it means we never realized Chunky's talent (I do not want to call him Pandey, simply because his anecdote about why he is named Chunky is so spectacularly amusing). On the other, it means that cinema and what we have come to consider as cinematic talent have both been shot dead at the altar of my Bengali brethren Srijit Mukherji's

magnum opus—*Begum Jaan*. This hurts especially because a couple of weeks ago, on the stage of the fabulously branded film awards show, Fair & Lovely Zee Cine Awards, five female members of the *Begum Jaan* cast came on stage. They spoke of the feminist film that it was, the almost all-female cast and how in their dedication to reality, while playing sex workers in 1947, they had stopped going to the parlour and getting themselves tweezed and waxed. I was most impressed, not just by their lack of beautification,

which is a big deal in an industry in which Priyanka Chopra playing a specially-abled girl in *Barfi* sported waxed legs and perfectly coiffed hair. But also by the fact that here was yet another film in which women played the protagonists. *Begum Jaan* is a remake of Mukherji's own Bengali film, *Rajkahini*. And here he was, a multiple national award winner with a film helmed by Vidya Balan, who I suspect is trying to be our generation's answer to *Shabana Azmi*.

But all my excitement turned to horror when I saw the assault on the senses and the utter travesty to feminism, cinema and female actors in the Hindi film industry, which is *Begum Jaan*.

Let me count the ways in which this is an assault on the senses (literally as well, because all the women keep screaming and shouting at each other). The film is about a brothel run by Vidya Balan as *Begum Jaan*, which finds itself bang in the middle of the Radcliffe Line which was to divide India and Pakistan. *Begum Jaan* stays in this haveli with her motley crew of sex

workers, two Great Danes and two male henchmen. She refuses to vacate her haveli and the film is about what ensues as a woman had stood in front of her and undressed for the rapists. The sight of the old naked woman (Ashish Vidyarthi would have made the representative of would-be rapists and run away. All this is shown to us, with a visual of the Indian flag flying in the background. This lack of understanding that rape is as much—if not more—about establishing power, as it is about sex, is displayed twice. Later in the film, a

Everything should warm the cockles of any feminist's heart. That is, till you see

Rajinikanth, Akshay Kumar, Ajay Devgn and Aamir Khan set to clash THIS DIWALI!

Bollywood clashes are not a new thing now, but three big films releasing on the same day certainly calls for attention. You possibly could have never imaged a Rajinikanth-Akshay Kumar, Aamir Khan, and Ajay Devgn starrers respectively to hit the screens on the same date.

New Delhi: Bollywood clashes are not a new thing now, but three big films releasing on the same day certainly calls for attention. You possibly could have never imaged a Rajinikanth-Akshay Kumar, Aamir

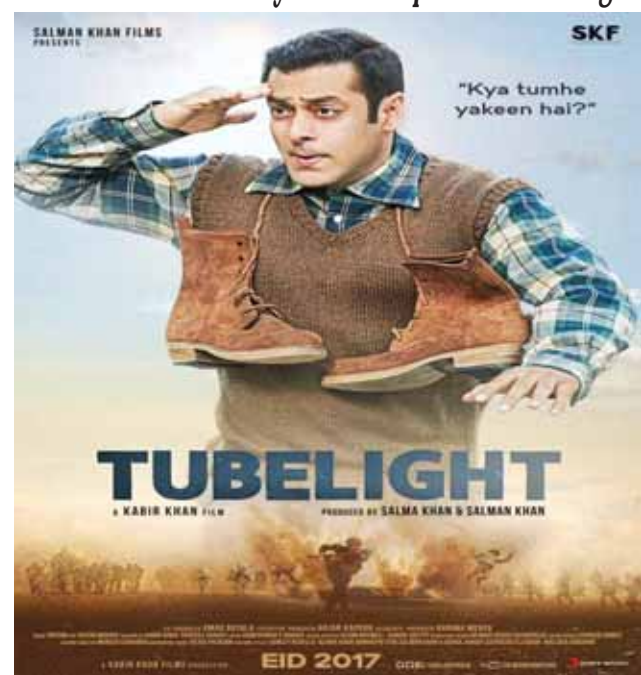


Khan, and Ajay Devgn Twitter and just constarrers respectively firmed the big to hit the screens on clash. Rajinikanth and the same date. Imagine Akshay Kumar's '2.0' is isn't it even bigger the sequel to 2010 than 'clash of the titans'. Well, in this the latter play a negative character on fans will really have to screen. The film stars shell out a lot of Amy Jackson as the female lead. And is Trade analyst and sceduled to hit the noted Bollywood critic screens on October Taran Adarsh took to 18, 2017. Ajay Devgn's

comic caper 'Golmaal Again' directed by Rohit Shetty is currently being shot. It has an interesting star cast Arshad Warsi, Tushar Kapoor, Tabu, Prakash Raj, Shreyas Talpade, Kunal Kemmu and Neil Nitin Mukesh while Parineeti Chopra plays the female lead.

Then Aamir Khan's 'Secret Superstar' is another one which is releasing on Diwali. It stars 'Dangal' fame Zaira Wasim in the lead while Aamir plays an extended cameo role. Is the audience ready for a triple delight this Diwali?

Salman Khan releases yet another poster of 'Tubelight'



After sharing the new poster of 'Tubelight' on Wednesday, Salman Khan shared yet another poster of the Kabir Khan's upcoming Eid release on Thursday morning. Salman Khan posted the photo and wrote, "Peace, Respect, Love and Light in your life from the Tubelight team." Director Kabir Khan, on Tuesday unveiled the teaser of 'Tubelight' and wrote, "Eid manao Tubelight ke saath!..." Sung by young kids, 'Jaljaa Jaljaa' is constantly seen ringing in the background.

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