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Kashmir unrest

Alienated and resentful, the youth and women of the Valley are a ticking timebomb

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Baahubali 2 will make film-makers look like TV serial directors: Ram Gopal Varma



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India's New Face



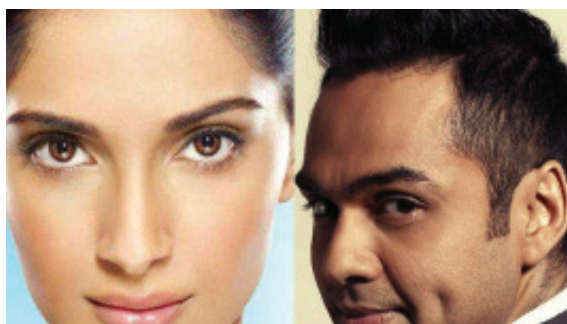
(NY Times) New Delhi — On a recent evening I was watching the video of a news feature a Hindi language television network broadcast about Yogi Adityanath, who was elected chief minister of India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, last month. The frame shows a man with a shaved head cloaked in saffron, the color of Hindu monasticism, sitting on a saffron-backed armchair. A voiceover described the scene: "Whoever comes before him sits at his feet, but he makes sure every supplicant goes away satisfied; he does not discriminate."

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Ugly Fraud In Fairness

In a country not comfortable with its own genes, fairness creams sell a lie

(Special Report) First things first, in black and white and all the greys. The science is as dubious as the sociology. The Indian market is flooded with fairness products. If all of them had made the



promised effect, we'd have become a country of Icelanders close to realising again that old pop notion of the North Pole having been in India. "The truth should be out," says Paras Jain, a -Delhi law student, who is on the verge of securing a verdict that could forever change the way personal care products and fairness

creams market themselves in India even if attitudinal changes will take longer.

Depending on the verdict, the industry could still find grey areas to work around the law. But from an uncontrolled run, it has at least come to a pass where a willingness to question their claims—and the collective inferiority complex it panders to—is visible. Bollywood actor Abhay Deol unleashed a refreshing send-up of his colleagues just last week for endorsing fairness products. But the legal story began in 2013, when young Paras decided to take on the Rs 10,000-crore personal care giant, Emami Ltd. A two-and-a-half-year court battle awaited him, but he was firm on seeing it through.

Paras was goaded into this by his brother Nikhil's experience with a product called Fair and Handsome. The fairness cream, (Contd on page 21)

Meet the court on the Mexican border

Where illegal immigrants are shown no quarter - and which Trump might use as model for rest of country



(News Agencies) One by one, the Mexican men stood in the jury box, shackles rattling as they fidgeted slightly and pleaded guilty to crossing the U.S. border illegally. They had come for better jobs, many to earn more money to help raise their children, their defense lawyer told a federal magistrate in a quiet west Texas courtroom about 3 miles north of the Mexican border. The magistrate (Contd on page 21)



Republican Jack Martins Announces run for Nassau County Executive

By S Thind- (Garden City, Long Island) On the steps of Mineola Village Hall, former Mineola Mayor and State Senator Jack Martins today announced his candidacy for Nassau County Executive. "For the first hundred years of its existence,

Nassau County was the nation's preeminent suburb and a magnet for investment, growth and prosperity," said Martins. "Unfortunately, Nassau County's second century has been marred by high taxes, corruption and fiscal instability."

Surrounded by dozens of supporters including Mayors from across Nassau County, Martins articulated his vision to restore the public's trust and re-imagine county government. Through fiscal responsibility and accountability,

Martins stressed the importance of making Nassau County more affordable for

County and the last thing we need is another career politician like Jack Martins

Mineola."

Laura Curran, in response to report of Budget Surplus in

Nassau County, said "George Maragos must really think taxpayers are dumb. If he borrowed \$100 to pay a \$20 bill, he'd expect us to believe he earned an \$80 'surplus.' And that's what he's doing now. Borrowed

money -- which taxpayers will be paying back for years -- is not 'a surplus.' We need to fix the mess in Mineola, and that starts with telling taxpayers the truth."

Nassau Comptroller George Maragos, is campaigning for county executive as a Democrat, after changing party affiliation from Republican to Democrat sometime back. Assemblyman Charles Lavine, a Democrat from Glen Cove, is also running for Nassau County executive.



LAURA CURRAN
DEMOCRATIC
CANDIDATE

middle class families and returning local control of the county's finances.

"One hundred and eighty-nine days ago, I called for a change in leadership in Nassau County," Martins said. "Today, that change begins and we turn the page to begin a new chapter in Nassau County's history."

In another development; Laura Curran, Democratic County Executive Candidate said in a Press Release, "There is a culture of corruption in Nassau

who stood silently by, until it was politically convenient not to, as Ed Mangano sold out taxpayers. As a foot soldier of the corrupt Albany establishment, Jack Martins did nothing as crooked politicians stole taxpayer money and stifled ethics reform at every turn. We need wholesale change in Nassau County and Jack Martins is just more of the same. That's why I'm running for County Executive - to bring a fresh start to Nassau County and clean up the mess in

United is rated as the WORST large airline in the US



(News Agencies) United Airlines has been rated as the worst among its peers for customer satisfaction even before the scandal over a doctor who was dragged off a plane. Those responding to an American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) study ranked United lower than all large airlines in the survey, which analyzed data from across all sectors.

Last month, Dr David Dao was violently dragged from his seat on a United flight after the airline oversubscribed the plane, but the survey was conducted before the unsavory incident.

The airline industry found itself in the bottom third of all businesses, in line with hospitals and private utilities and just above health insurers.

Despite the worldwide condemning of Dr Dao's treatment by both the airline and the police, ACSI director David VanAmburg said customers are unlikely to be swayed by a business' brand image and tend to rely on their personal experience to form opinions.

'Flying is just not a terribly comfortable experience,' he told CBS.

He added that consumers often feel 'as long as you can make it affordable, I will suffer through the rest of it knowing that I'll get to where I want to go quickly'.

Of the legacy airlines, United is ranked bottom with a score of 70 points, up two points on last year's score of 68.

On the other end of the scale, American Airlines was top of the pile among its peers with a score of 76.

The problems encountered by flyers, which would be among the reasons to mark an airline down, included delays, cancellations and fees.

Almost four out of 10 economy class passengers said they paid a fee this year to check in their luggage, while a third of business class travelers filed a complaint with the company they flew with, making them by far the most likely to grumble.

Seat comfort, or lack thereof, is the most common reason for complaints, behind the selection of drinks, food, movies and music offered.

JetBlue scored as the top-rated airline, based on interviews with more than 180,000 customer

Gift Of Life USA Annual Fund Raiser Gala Held



Left to Right (Back) - Paresch Parekh, Eric Kumar, Lal Kwatra, H.K. Shah, Kamlesh Parekh, Dr. Harshad Bhatt, Bakul Matalia, Mom Speaker Kimberly Gilgeours, Harshil Parekh

Left to Right (Front) Mr. Swaminathan, Pam Kwatra, Flora Parekh, Malti Shah, Manjari Bhatt, Dr. Hetal Gor, Madhu Parekh, Neela Pandya, Rupal Sehgal

(Agencies) Gift Of Life USA Inc., a 501 (c) (3) Non-profit organization, for health and education benefits for specially-abled, founded by President Flora Parekh & Chairman Paresch Parekh, launched the organization with a Grand Gala Dinner Night at

Leonard's Palazzo, on April 23, 2017. The organization aims at supporting the specially-abled, creating awareness - health and education and encouraging talent of the specially-abled followed by specially-abled services and much more in the long

run.

A kick start of the event, celebrating month of autism, included attendees, key supporters and leaders from the South Asian & American community. Hosted by Harshil Parekh, the event brought together the re-

sources available and need under the same umbrella to raise the awareness of it's vision, mission and goals.

Founders, Paresch & Flora Parekh, presented a detailed overview of the inspiration, mission and vision of the organization.

H-1B Visa Interview, Other Processes To Be Reviewed

The H-1B visa allows US firms to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise in specialised fields.

(Agencies) Washington: Days after Finance Minister Arun Jaitley raised the issue of tightening of the H-1B visa regime with his American counterpart Steven Mnuchin, a Trump administration official has said that the US has been looking at ways to strengthen the processes like visa interview and admission processes. The official also said that the new administration greatly values investments by Indian companies and wants to see bilateral business ties remain strong. "We want to see US-India busi-

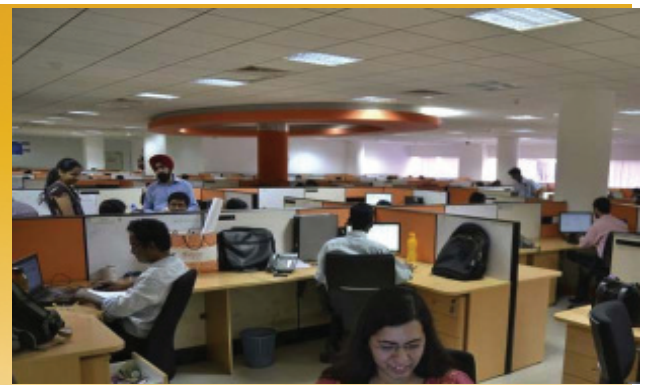
ness-to-business ties remain strong," State Department Acting Spokesman Mark Toner told reporters at his daily news conference. He was responding to questions on the ongoing review of H-1B visas by the US administration and its impact on the Indian IT companies, who are heavily dependent on it. "We greatly value Indian companies' continued investment in the US economy, which also, of course, supports thousands of US jobs," Mr Toner said.

"With respect to any

new requirements on visas, I'd have to check and see if that's been updated," he said, adding that under the current government, the US has been looking at ways to strengthen the processes like visa interview and admission processes. Mr Toner said that this had been the case from the beginning of the Trump administration and certainly with respect to immigration and with refugee flows. "Those processes are ongoing," he said. On being asked about the visa review process, Mr Toner said, "It's

important to remember that this is always a part of how our consular bureau works and our consular officers work overseas, and our embassies and missions work overseas, and that is we're always reviewing the processes that are in place to issue these visas and finding ways to strengthen them, because we want to ensure the security of the American people." During his US visit, Mr Jaitley had on Saturday raised the H-1B visa issue with Treasury Secretary Mr Mnuchin and highlighted the contribution

Indian companies and professionals were making to the US economy. He had also raised the issue with US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross earlier. US President Donald Trump had signed an executive order earlier this month for tightening the rules of the H-1B visa programme to stop its 'abuse', a decision that would impact India's \$150 billion IT industry. The Indian IT industry had expressed serious concerns over this as these visas were mainly used by domestic IT professionals for short-term work in America.



India-born doctor, wife charged in US genital mutilation probe 5 Indians jailed for fraud in Singapore



(Insider Bureau) New York : An India-born doctor and his wife have been arrested and charged with helping another Indian-origin doctor perform genital mutilations, a procedure that is criminalised in the US, on minor girls. Fakhruddin Attar, 53, and his wife, Farida Attar, 50, both from Michigan state, were charged with conspiring to perform female genital mutilations (FGM) on minor girls out of Fakhruddin Attar's medical clinic in Livonia. The Attars were arrested on Friday.

The charges come a week after Indian-origin doctor Jumana Nagarwala, 44, of Michigan, was charged with performing FGM on minor girls. Nagarwala, Fakhruddin and Farida are believed to be the first people charged under federal US law, which criminalises FGM. According to an online physician directory, Fakhruddin graduated from the Baroda Medical College in Gujarat, India in 1988. The charges say that Nagarwala used to perform the medi-

cal procedure on minor girls at Burhani Medical Clinic (BMC) in Michigan that was owned and operated by Fakhruddin. Fakhruddin's wife was employed at BMC as an officer manager. The complaint against the Attars said that the couple arranged and assisted in the female genital mutilation

of minor females performed by Nagarwala. While they allowed their clinic to be used by Nagarwala to perform the procedures, Farida assisted Nagarwala during the female genital mutilation procedures. Fakhruddin told federal agents this month that he has known Nagarwala and she occasionally saw patients at his clinic even though she was not employed there. He said Nagarwala only saw the patients at BMC when the clinic was closed and that Farida used to be present in the examining room while Nagarwala treated the minor girls. The investigation revealed that several minor girls informed forensic personnel that Nagarwala had performed procedures on their genitals and one minor girl said Farida had been present when Nagarwala did the FGM procedures. According to the complaint, some of the minor victims travelled interstate to have the procedure performed.

(Insider Bureau) Singapore : Five Indian nationals were jailed here on Monday for making fraudulent Goods and Services Tax (GST) refund claims amounting to 167,253 Singapore dollars (US \$120,422) between January 2015 and May last year, a media report said. Kothandaraman Gnanam (29), Karunanidhi Rajesh (32), Ramaiyan Karthikeyan (44) and Waithiyalingam Karunanidhi (61) were each jailed for three years and three months. Their accomplice, Karunanidhi Saravanan (37) was jailed for three years and two months, the Strait Times reported. The men were also fined between 14,000 Singapore dollars (\$10,080) and 70,000

Singapore dollars (\$50,400). Each man also had to fork out 51,952.71 Singapore dollars (\$37,405) as a penalty. The court heard that the men loitered in and around jewellery shops in Little India to obtain invoices and jewellery tags from customers such as Singapore permanent residents and work pass holders, who are not entitled to GST refunds. Then they would buy the invoices from the customers but no mention was made on the amount they paid for each invoice. Tourists visiting Singapore can claim GST refunds on goods they bought when they leave the country.

38 Indians Detained In United Kingdom For Visa Breach In Factory Raids

(Insider Bureau) London - Britain's immigration officials have detained 38 Indians, including nine women, for overstaying their visas or working illegally after conducting raids in two clothing factories in the city of Leicester. The UK Home Office Immigration Enforcement team raided MK Clothing Ltd and Fashion Times UK Ltd in the city in the East Midlands region of England last week and held 38 Indians and one Afghan man.

Of those detained, 31 had

outstayed their visas, seven had entered the country illegally and one was working in breach of their visa conditions, Leicester Mercury reported.

The officials took 19 people into detention pending their removal from the UK, while remaining 20 were ordered to report regularly to the Home Office while their cases are dealt with.

"Using illegal labour is not victimless. It cheats the taxpayer, undercuts honest businesses and denies legitimate

job seekers of employment opportunities, said assistant director Alison Spowage, from East Midlands Immigration Enforcement.

"The penalties for businesses that do not play by the rules are rightly severe. This operation, one of the largest-scale my team has conducted, sends a clear message that we have the resources to tackle immigration abuse. All of our operations are intelligence-led and I would encourage people with detailed and specific informa-

tion about illegal immigration to contact us, she said.

Immigration officials were accompanied by Leicestershire Police and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) officers during the raids.

The two firms could face fines of up to 20,000 pounds for each illegal worker if it is proven they did not take steps to establish their employees' legal status. This translates up to 240,000 pounds for MK Clothing Ltd and 180,000 pounds for Fashion Times UK Ltd.



Silence on vigilantism is not an option

to take its own course'. The law is, however, brushed aside as a slight inconvenience, as mercenaries attack the most vulnerable in our society, the Dalits and Muslims. This viciousness and this savagery is the new normal. And we watch in silence!

Vigilantism takes vicious shapes. In 2011 M.F. Husain died in loneliness and in exile, separated from his beloved country and its mythologies, to which he paid poetic homage on canvas. Some years before his death, London-based vigilantes ransacked an exhibition in Asia House that showcased some of Hussain's paintings, and damaged priceless pieces of art. In India, the works of the gifted artist were not allowed to be exhibited, warrants were prepared for his arrest by the police, and Hussain had to leave the country of his birth. We live in an age when anyone, with no understanding, let alone appreciation, of aesthetics, metaphors, and allegories, can rule which painting, which book, which

film can enter the public domain.

Deepa Mehta could not shoot her film on widows in the ashrams of Varanasi. And now Sanjay Leela Bhansali, known more for his lavish presentations than serious cinema, has been put on notice by the activist group Rajput Karni Sena. Bollywood producers, directors and actors have for long genuflected before the leadership of the Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena to ensure that their films could be released. The process has reached its natural culmination point, and now self-appointed censors force film-makers to follow 'this' and not 'that' script.

The need to speak out

For readers of newspapers these are stories of vigilantes wreaking their perverse notions of correctness on culture, art, and society. But we cannot afford to be silent. Martin Niemöller, the well-known German Lutheran pastor and theologian, initially supported the Nazis, subsequently opposed them, and was ban-

ished to a concentration camp. Reflecting on his own silence in the face of social suffering, he authored a famous Holocaust poem: First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Socialist. / Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Trade Unionist. / Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Jew. / Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me. Michael R. Burch, a poet, editor and publisher of Holocaust poetry, has authored a new version of this poem for contemporary America. 'They', he writes, came for the Muslims, then the homosexuals, and then the feminists, and I did not speak out because I belonged to none of these groups. He ends on a sombre note: "Now when will they come for me, because I was too busy and too apathetic, to defend my sisters and brothers?" Sages tell us that silence is a virtue, but silence when confronted by social

oppression is tantamount to acquiescence.

There is a need to speak out, because vigilantism has now spilled over from the domain of the creative arts to regulate the daily lives of people. Nowhere is this more visible than in Yogi Adityanath's Uttar Pradesh. The Hindu Yuva Vahini, founded by him to enforce his writ on his home turf, now rules the State and polices relationships. The group stalks courting couples, forces closure of slaughterhouses, and sparks off communal riots. A few days ago, its members broke into a home in Meerut and barged into the bedroom of a couple.

Can we afford to be silent? Our basic right to privacy is at stake. Also at stake is our status as mature citizens who possess the capacity to decide what kind of life we want to lead, who to befriends with, who to love, and what kind of food should be on our dinner table. Abjuring silence, we have to ask basic questions about our own society, and about our role as fellow citizens.

AIADMK Could Split Into 4 Factions; What To Expect



The Amma soap opera continues. For a while, I thought I had gone wrong in thinking the Edappadi Palaniswami (EPS) government could not last and that the end must come later if not sooner. Now, it would seem the end is likely sooner than later. And even if that does not happen, Amma's party stands irrevocably discredited in the public eye in consequence of the continuing shenanigans that pit EPS against OPS (O Panneerselvam), Amma's repeated choice for acting Chief Minister

when she was out of sorts or out of the good books of the judiciary.

OPS has with him less than a dozen of Amma's MLAs elected last May, under a year ago. An overwhelming majority, running to some 122 MLAs, are with EPS - principally because they do not want to forego the remaining four lip-smacking remunerative years in power. But it will take the defection of only about eight of these 122 MLAs to open the door to the DMK and its allies in the Opposition (plus the

OPS faction) successfully moving a no-confidence motion against the EPS government in the Tamil Nadu assembly. That this has not already happened is the surprise; that it will inevitably happen is the certainty. When, is the question?

The general expectation is that the denouement will come in the wake of the postponed local body elections that the courts have ordered the EPS government to hold before the end of July. While such elections ought to be about issues of local self-government, the focus, in the surcharged political climate of Tamil Nadu today, will be on ascertaining how an Amma party without Amma will fare; indeed, as at the time of writing, the local body elections might well take place without Amma's symbol of "two leaves" be-

ing displayed anywhere as the Election Commission has frozen the symbol pending a determination as to whether the EPS or OPS faction (or neither) is entitled to it. Local body elections in Tamil Nadu are very much more a political affair than a matter of local governance because the principal Dravidian parties assiduously cultivate strong roots stretching through well-manned, disciplined cadres into every village, indeed even every hamlet of the state. The outcome of the local body elections will thus gauge the electoral mood in the state far more accurately than any TV-channel commissioned poll. All of Tamil Nadu's municipal and metropolitan corporations, the district panchayats and intermediate panchayats, and town panchayats, will be up for grabs (Contd on page 20)

When was the last time the Hindu community asked itself the question 'who are we'? The last of the interrogators of Hindu society was, arguably, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He catapulted to the forefront of the political agenda the many oppressions, discriminations, and exclusions of Hinduism, and thus compelled at least public intellectuals to investigate tradition and reflect on the malaise of the community. After him no one has really looked within the collective self, reflected, and considered.

This is a great tragedy, because unless a society asks fundamental questions of itself, it is doomed to complacency and stagnation, or simply doomed. Disdaining the stimulating intellectual exercise of examining the collective self, we have swept the failings of our society under the metaphorical carpet. Lulled into complacency by meaningless assertions — 'say with pride we are Hindu', or a 'New India', or a 'sanitised India', or a 'digital India' — few people ask why we still practise caste discrimination, why we continue to be disgracefully hostile to religious minorities, or why we are indifferent to the plight of our own people.

In a democratic political community, citizens owe obligations of justice to their fellow citizens. If the basic rights of an individual or a community are systematically violated, there should be pain, there should be empathy and outrage, and a determination to do something about the fundamental infringement of what is owed to human beings: dignity and respect. But we follow our own star; indifferent to the deplorable lack of solidarity in our community.

This is our tragedy, a double tragedy, because we are the inheritors of a rich history of public intellectuals, philosophers, social and

religious reformers, and national leaders asking crucial questions of Indian society since the beginning of the nineteenth century. This was the beginning of the Indian Renaissance, and these questions escalated till the middle of the twentieth century. But no more.

Today, Hindu society is complicit in massive crimes perpetrated against Dalits, Muslims, and women, because it is silent in the face of atrocities practised by vigilantes who single-handedly define what they consider 'morality', and who punish people merely on suspicion that they violate codes of Hinduism. Backed by powerful political patrons and a compliant police force, vigilantes are legislators, prosecutors, juries and executioners rolled into one. Reports in our daily newspaper bring stories of horrific violence perpetrated by vigilantes masquerading as the keeper of the keys to the Hindu kingdom. This abnormality in our political life has become a normal way of doing politics. We should realise that democracy has been subverted, the rule of law has become redundant, and that our representatives are responsible for this serious deviation in political life. But we are silent.

Rising vigilantism

In early April, cow vigilantes attacked 15 Muslim men in the district of Alwar because they were transporting cows. One person died in the appalling violence, others were hospitalised. The Rajasthan Home Minister, Gulab Singh Kataria, defended vigilantes on the plea that cow smuggling is banned in Rajasthan. Apart from the fact that the victims possessed government documents allowing them to transport cows, the Minister's words trivialise the system of justice. If people break a law, they should be hauled up before a court of justice for 'the law

Ethics is the answer

France's Voters Keep Hope for Europe Alive

We need liberation theologians, like Ambedkar and Gandhi, who can help people discard the worst features of their inherited religious culture and replace them with ethical interpretations

With fiery orange hidden under a newfound tricolour, Narendra Modi's rise to power saw a mushrooming of the RSS and affiliates like the ABVP. Pseudo "nationalism" invaded every campus. The state-induced suicide of Rohith Vemula triggered a broad Dalit-Left unity against the hegemonic designs of the RSS/ABVP. But despite initial success, the unity was short-lived. The fault lay as much with the Left (of all shades) for being unable to overhaul its internal dynamics, as with Dalit groups that fell prey to red-baiting and exclusivist identity politics.

On one side were traditional Marxists, brought up to believe that caste would automatically wither away once the economic base became socialist. On the other were Dalits who understandably did not trust largely upper caste-led formations. Sadly, the idea that individuals are indelibly marked by birth gained currency.

Identity politics is a double-edged weapon. As long as identifiable groups are oppressed, the oppressed unite according to identity. "Black is beautiful" was a necessary movement for Afro-Americans in the US, just as pride in Dalit or Buddhist identity is necessary in India. The trouble begins when this turns into an exclusivist movement. Malcolm X went through a black Muslim phase when he described all white people as "devils". But in his later years, he completely rejected this for a much more inclusive critique of injustice and inequality. That is when the American "deep state" killed him. Similarly, while a broad section of Dalits are inclusive and understand the distinction Ambedkar made between the ideology of Brahminism and individuals who happen to be born "upper" caste, there is a tiny section that sees birth as all-defining. The fact that Western post-modernists encourage identity politics in preference to class analysis has given separatist politics international acceptance.

The Left and Dalits should have been natural allies. People like Comrade Govind Pansare, Kanhaiya Kumar and Jignesh Mevani have represented this unity and HCU, JNU and many Indian campuses saw its amazing potential. Into this mix, I would add progressive Gandhians — a Narendra Dabholkar, a Medha Patkar, who adhere to non-violence but always fight for the oppressed.

Both Gandhi and Ambedkar recognised that this country was so steeped in religion that atheism or pure rationality would not reach the masses. Each in his own way became a liberation theologian. Unlike Ambedkar, Gandhi did not choose his religion but inherited it. But to this, he applied post-Enlightenment ethical values that were essentially modern. When he began manual scavenging, he destroyed the very basis of the pollution/purity dichotomy at the heart of the caste system. Theoretically, for a long time, he infamously clung to the concept of Varnashrama Dharma, but in actual deed, he destroyed it the day he took up manual scavenging, a job reserved for so-called "untouchables".

As time went on, Gandhi became ever more radical. He clearly learned from Ambedkar as well as from his own intuition. Later in life, he refused to attend any marriage that was not an inter-caste marriage. He fashioned out of his inherited Hinduism something entirely new. Only the idiom remained, not the original Sanatan Dharma. Whether his reluctance to discard the idiom stemmed from a desire to speak to the Indian masses in a language they could easily follow, or from his own belief system, is debatable. What is unmistakable is that Gandhi's ethical code bears little resemblance to the hierarchical, vengeful structure of traditional Hinduism.

Unlike Gandhi, Ambedkar clearly saw how oppressive the religion of his birth was, being a direct victim. So, he searched for its best alternative. After examining many religions, he finally chose the one closest to Reason. Buddhism is one world religion that does not posit an external, all-knowing God. While retaining Buddhism's strong ethical core, Ambedkar discarded irrational tenets like reincarnation that traditional Buddhists follow. So I see Ambedkar and Gandhi as liberation theologians. In the same way that radical Left priests like Ernesto Cardenal in Latin America re-interpreted Jesus Christ as a revolutionary who fought and died for justice to the poor, Gandhi and Ambedkar gave new ethical meaning to the religions they adapted or adopted.

I am not equating the two. Their differences are obvious. One came from a privileged caste, the other from the most oppressed. One was steeped in traditional religion in his formative years, while the other came from a caste denied the right to education but rose to become the best-read, greatest intellectual of modern India.

(Contd on page 22)

Back in February, President Trump spoke at a conservative convention about a friend named Jim, a "very, very substantial guy" who "loves the City of Lights" but does not go there any more because "Paris is no longer Paris." Maybe Jim should consider coming back.

And Mr. Trump himself, who coldly tweeted two days before the first round of France's presidential election that the latest terrorist attack would have "a big effect" on the vote and told The Associated Press it would help Marine Le Pen of the far-right National Front, should also consider visiting France. He needs to get to know it better.

On Sunday, Paris still being Paris, Ms. Le Pen did not even reach 5 percent of the vote in the City of Lights. Campaigning on a nationalist, anti-globalization, anti-immigration platform, she made it into the second round with 21.3 percent of the vote nationwide, according to official final results that reported her achieving a better showing in rural and small-town France than in the cities.

She was outpaced, though, by Emmanuel Macron, a 39-year-old political upstart who won 24 percent of the vote despite having never held elected office; his movement, En Marche! — Onward! — has existed for less than a year. He scored best in the cities, where urban, educated voters embraced his pro-Europe, open-borders, progressive agenda.

To New Yorkers and Londoners, this strong territorial divide may look familiar. There are undeniable echoes of the Brexit-Trump 2016 electoral insurrection in this first round. France is not immune to the powerful populist wave that has engulfed Western democracies over the past few years, starting with Hungary and Poland. Here, anger over inequality and unemployment, resentment over globalization and immigration, and discontent with a political system that has run its course contributed to a notable statistic: Of the 11 candidates who competed on Sunday, eight were either critical of the European Union or squarely against it. Together they attracted 49.6 percent of the vote — almost half the electorate. Yet the French vote has confirmed a trend apparent in recent elections in two other European Union member states, Austria and the Netherlands: Across the Channel from Britain, the dikes are holding. In all three countries, anti-populist forces managed to put forward a candidate or a platform offering an alternative innovative enough to counter the anger. In Austria, it was an ecologist presidential candidate. In the Dutch parliamentary election, it was two small, firmly pro-European parties. In France, it was a young man who portrayed his lack of political experience as an asset and promised to transform the discredited system. Let's face it: Old Europe is looking more resilient than the Anglo-Saxon world. In the end, in France, neither Donald Trump nor Vladimir Putin — who ostentatiously welcomed Ms. Le Pen at the Kremlin a month before the election — had a decisive influence on the election. Nor did the Islamic State. What mattered was Europe. This remains the major issue, superseding all others because so much depends on it now.



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Why India Should Not Be Vegetarian

Sunita Narain

Recently at the release of our book *First Food: Culture of Taste*, which discusses the link between biodiversity, nutrition and livelihoods, I was asked a question. "Why do you not, as an environmentalist espousing the cause of traditional and local diets that are sustainable, condemn meat eating? After all, meat production is bad for climate-agriculture contributes roughly 15 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions and half of this comes from meat production. It also has a huge footprint in terms of land and water consumption since an estimated 30 per cent of the world's land not covered with ice is used to grow food, not for humans but for livestock. A 2014 University of Oxford study on British diets found that meat-rich diets - defined as eating more than 100g of meat per day per person - emitted about 7.2 kg of CO2 per day as compared to

2.9 kg of CO2 emitted by vegan diets." So, figuring out the sustainable diet should be a non-brainer, I was told.

I differed. As an Indian (I underline Indian) environmentalist, I would not advocate vegetarianism for the following reasons. One, India is a secular nation and the culture of eating food differs between communities, regions and religions. This idea of India is non-negotiable for me as it reflects our richness and our reality. Two, meat is an important source of protein for a large number of people, hence critical for their nutritional security.

Thirdly, and this is what distinguishes my Indian position from the global, meat-eating is not the key issue, it is the amount that is consumed and the manner in which it is produced. A recent global assessment, for instance, finds that Americans on an average eat 122 kg per year per person and Indians 3-5 kg per

year per person. This high meat consumption is bad for health and for the environment. In fact, the average American consumption of meat is 1.5 times the average protein requirement.

It should not surprise us that the bulk of the 95 million tonnes of beef produced in the world comes from cattle in Latin America, Europe and North America - all produced with extremely high environmental impacts. Meat production in the developing world is very different, says this assessment by the International Livestock Research Institute, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization and the International Institute for Applied System Analysis. Here, livestock subsists largely on grasses and crop residue.

But the most important reason I, as an Indian environmentalist, would not support ac-

tion against meat is that livestock is the most important economic security of farmers in our world. Indian farmers practise agro-silvo-pastoralism, that is, they use the land for crops and trees as well as for livestock. This is their real insurance system, not the banks. Livestock is also not kept by large meat businesses. but by big, small, marginal and landless farmers. It works because the animals have a productive purpose: first, they give milk and manure and then, meat and leather. Take that away and you will take away the base of economic security of millions in the country, greatly impoverishing them.

Let's get the facts straight. In the past, cattle were kept for draught purposes. In the 1980s, the late N S Ramaswamy, the country's (only) expert on animal energy, had calculated that the installed capacity of 90 million work animals was equal to the

installed capacity of the electric power in the country. All this changed with mechanisation. By 2000, livestock was primarily kept for milk. This is why the males of cows and buffaloes have drastically reduced in each livestock census. Males are now roughly 28 per cent of the total cattle population. Their main purpose is breeding.

But cows and buffaloes give milk for seven-eight years of their 15-20 years of life. Farmers use this productive phase for the birth of calves and for milk sale. Maintaining animals is not cheap. My colleagues have calculated that if the animals are fed properly and looked after well, it costs about Rs. 70,000 per animal per year. This is why farmers need options to take care of the animals not producing milk. Or they will have no options but to leave the animal stray, to eat the plastic cities throw away and die.

(Contd on page 20)

China's Newest Aircraft Carrier Should Worry India

Mihir Sharma,
Bloomberg

The launch of China's second aircraft carrier, expected as soon as this week, will be an important and depressing moment for India. The "Type 001A" -- likely to be named the "Shandong" -- will give China an edge for the first time in the carrier race with its Asian rival, a literal two-to-one advantage. After decommissioning the INS Viraat earlier this year, the Indian Navy is down to a single carrier, INS Vikramaditya. Worse, the Shandong has been built at China's own giant shipyard at Dalian; Vikramaditya is merely a repurposed 1980s-era Russian carrier formerly known as the Admiral Gorshkov. Even more telling than the raw numbers is what China's progress says about India's ability to provide security in its own backyard. Chinese naval strategists have open designs on the Indian Ocean: According to one, "China needs two carrier strike groups in the West Pacific Ocean and two in the Indian Ocean." The govern-

ment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has talked a great deal about revitalizing the Indian military; it's opened the defense sector up to greater foreign investment and is building a much-closer relationship with the U.S. military, largely with China in mind. But spending has lagged. Worse, successive governments simply don't seem to have thought through where best to direct those scarce resources.

For its part, the Indian Navy has gone all-in on a strategy that emphasizes carrier battle groups. The idea is that India must dominate the ocean that bears its name and needs carriers in order to project power well beyond its shores. As a result, it wasted far too much time and treasure on the Admiral Gorshkov, which arrived from Russia six years late and at three times the cost that had initially been promised. Its efforts to develop a homegrown carrier have been even more misbegotten. The Navy plans to name, commission and float the INS Vikrant next year. At that point, the ship report-

edly won't have its aviation complex in place, or even anti-aircraft missiles. The Navy has puzzlingly refused to buy India's indigenous light fighter, the Tejas, saying it's too heavy. Meanwhile, the MiG-29s being used instead are enormously troubled, according to India's government auditor; more than 60 percent of their engines were withdrawn from service or rejected in just four years. The Vikrant will only be properly combat-ready by 2023 -- eight years behind schedule.

No one would expect India to match China's defense spending head-to-head. China's economy is four times the size of India's; not surprisingly, its defense budget is at least three times larger. But the People's Republic faces a parallel dilemma when confronting the U.S., whose military budget is about three times as big as China's. China has approached this disparity with a much clearer strategy in mind, as well as a far more rational evaluation of its relative strength. Rather than focusing on matching America's carrier fleet, China

first emphasized asymmetric weaponry such as ballistic missiles and submarines, a reflection of the Soviets' successful Cold War strategy. Only now -- as its interests and capabilities have grown -- is it pouring resources into developing carrier groups.

By contrast, India's carrier-first strategy has drained the Navy of resources and left it with just 13 conventional submarines in service. Eleven of those are more than a quarter-century old. The two new ones, amazingly, were commissioned and sent out to wander the deep sea without their main armament, torpedoes. Nor has India tried to counter China's numerical superiority -- 70 to 15 -- in terms of submarines with specialized anti-submarine weaponry, including helicopters. The Indian fleet has less than 30 superannuated medium-sized anti-sub helicopters, the first of which was bought in 1971.

India's problem isn't ultimately a shortage of money; it's a lack of forethought and political courage. Carriers are big and

showy, and bolster national pride; diesel submarines don't, or at least not to the same degree. A more rational strategy for India -- and its peers in Asia and the Pacific Rim who fear China's growing military might -- would ensure that India's submarine fleet and its anti-submarine armaments are capable enough on their own to deter attempts to control the Indian Ocean, while closer ties with other navies fill in the gaps.

That would require a clear-eyed appraisal of India's defense and economic capabilities and requirements -- a problem when India doesn't have an outline of its strategy on the lines of American or Chinese white papers, nor even a full-time defense minister. The Navy is fortunately starting to train more closely with the U.S. and other partners such as Japan, which should increase its effectiveness. But until it thinks harder about where its money should go, it's going to have a tricky time keeping China out of its backyard.

For Indians, America under Trump is a land of vanished opportunity

Generations of Indians have admired the United States for almost everything. But many are infuriated and unnerved by what they see as a wave of racist violence under President Donald Trump, souring the United States' allure.

The reaction is not just anger and anxiety. Now, young Indians who have aspired to study, live and work in the United States are looking elsewhere. "We don't know what might happen to us while walking on the street there," said Kanika Arora, a 20-year-old student in Mumbai who is reconsidering her plan to study in the United States. "They might just think that we're terrorists." Recent attacks on people of Indian descent in the United States are

explosive news in India. A country once viewed as the Promised Land now seems for many to be dangerously inhospitable. Further alienating Indians, especially among their highly educated class, is the Trump administration's reassessment of H1-B visas given mostly for information technology jobs. More than 85,000 are granted a year, the majority to Indians. "America was the land of great opportunity," Sanket Bafna, 21, said as he emerged one afternoon last week from an exam at K.C. College, where he is studying financial management. "It's not the same land."

This year, undergraduate applications from India fell at 26 percent of U.S. educational insti-

tutions, and 15 percent of graduate programs, according to a survey of 250 U.S. universities by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. The number of applications for H1-B visas also fell to 199,000, a nearly 20 percent decline, according to data kept by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Like many others, Indians were offended by Trump's promises to block the Mexico border with a wall and bar people from six predominantly Muslim countries. Some took solace that India was not targeted. But they soon saw that anti-immigrant rage in the United States did not discriminate. In February, two Indian immigrants were shot, one fatally,

at a bar in Kansas by a man who witnesses said had shouted ethnic slurs and told them they did not belong in the United States.

Since then, several more attacks on Indian immigrants have been closely covered by the Indian news media. While officials have not linked all to anti-immigrant bigotry, the belief that Indians are under attack in the United States seems cemented in the minds of many. About 3.2 million people of Indian descent live in the United States, slightly more than 1 percent of the population, a Pew Research Center report found. Most hold green cards and H1-B visas, and are far more affluent and educated than the average American. Indian-Americans play an outside role in Silicon Valley, where some, including Google Inc.'s chief executive, Sundar Pichai, have founded or run some of the most successful companies.

But success stories like Pichai's no longer inspire the jealousy they once did in India. Arora, leaving H.R. College of Commerce and Economics, where she had finished an exam, said her parents had reservations about sending her brother to the United States, where he had been planning to enroll in college this year. Arora said she, like her brother, "did aspire to work and study in America, but I'm reconsidering."

The biggest reason, she said, was the violence directed against Indians. "Every day, there's a new headline about an Indian or Asian getting killed," she said. Now, Arora said, she and others in India are looking more favorably on Europe for study and work, despite the upheaval over Britain's planned exit from the European Union. "Comparatively, it's considered safer," she said. In the end, Trump's policies may benefit their home country by cutting off the brain drain, Arora and other Indians said. "All the intelligent

people are coming back and can work here," she added. As students of Mumbai's colleges reviewed dog-eared question papers with friends on the sidewalk, after finishing their exams, they returned again and again to astonishment that someone like Trump could be elected.

"I was like, 'Wow, how did you elect somebody like him,'" said Shantanu Sivan, 20, who studies mass media at Wilson College. "I think I lost hope in the people of America."

Ananya Gupta, 21, who studies financial management at K.C. College, laced his disappointment with contempt. "That just shows where they stand intellectually, electing a person of Trump's nature as a president," he said. When asked if he had an opinion on the United States under Trump, Gupta, standing across the street from his college, among other students at a beverage stand, replied "Who doesn't?"

"Of course as a child, I used to dream about going to America, the land of opportunity. But today," he said, "I wouldn't want to go there."

Not everyone is so negative about the United States under Trump. Devanshu Jain, 21, said he still planned to study and work there. "There's racism in India, too," he said. "Who doesn't want to work for Goldman Sachs in New York City, right?" But he said some friends were "so shaken up about what's happening" that they have transferred from American universities to Canadian institutions in recent months. At Mumbai's Todi Mills, an old mill area converted in recent years into restaurants, bars and office space for young entrepreneurs, Trump's America is also viewed with trepidation. "People are really thinking America's going downhill," said Shikha Mittal, 33, founder of Be.artsy, a nine-person firm specializing in using art for marketing.

Zombies of Voodoo Economics



so much so that revenues will actually rise — as "voodoo economic policy." Yet it soon became the official doctrine of the Republican Party, and still is. That shows an impressive level of commitment. But what makes this commitment even more impressive is that it's a doctrine that has been tested again and again — and has failed every time.

Yes, the U.S. economy rebounded quickly from the slump of 1979-82. But was that the result of the Reagan tax cuts, or was it, as most economists think, the result of interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve? Bill Clinton provided a clear test, by raising taxes on the rich. Republicans predicted disaster, but instead the economy boomed, creating more jobs than under Reagan. Then George W. Bush cut taxes again, with the usual suspects predicting a "Bush boom"; what we actually got was lackluster growth followed by a severe financial crisis. Barack Obama reversed

many of the Bush tax cuts and added new taxes to pay for Obamacare — and oversaw a far better jobs record, at least in the private sector, than his predecessor. So history offers not a shred of support for faith in the

According to many reports, Donald Trump is getting frantic as his administration nears the 100-day mark. It's an arbitrary line in the sand, but one he himself touted in many pre-inauguration boasts. And it will be an occasion for numerous articles detailing how little of substance he has actually accomplished.

Yet many of these reports will, I suspect, miss half the story. It's important to note just how little the tweeter-in-chief has managed to achieve; but we also need to focus on what, exactly, it is that he hasn't achieved. For Mr. Trump sold himself to voters as unorthodox as well as effective. He was going to be a different kind of president, a consummate deal-maker who would transcend the usual ideological divide. His supporters should therefore be dismayed, not just by his failure to actually close any deals, but by the fact that he evidently has no new ideas to offer, just the same old snake oil the right has been peddling for decades.

We saw that on Trumpcare,

where the administration outsourced its policy to Paul Ryan, who produced exactly the kind of plan you might have expected: take insurance away from millions, make it worse for the rest, and use the money to cut taxes on the wealthy. Populism!

And now we're seeing it on taxes. Mr. Trump has promised to unveil a "massive" tax cut plan next week. This announcement apparently came as a surprise to his own Treasury officials, who obviously don't have a plan ready. Still, one thing is clear: Whatever the details, Trump tax will be a big exercise in fantasy economics.

How do we know this? Last week Stephen Mnuchin, the Treasury secretary, told a financial industry audience that "the plan will pay for itself with growth." And we all know what that means.

Back in 1980 George H. W. Bush famously described supply-side economics — the claim that cutting taxes on rich people will conjure up an economic miracle,

(Contd on page 20)

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The Spending Bill Was Supposed to Be Easy. Then Trump Intervened.



(News Agencies) WASHINGTON — To be clear, it isn't that hard to keep the government's lights on. Fights over short-term spending bills have long been used by

Republicans and Democrats as proxies for broader policy fights. But with Republicans fully in control of Washington, President Trump has turned a sure thing into a

major drama, with a Friday night deadline before much of the government shuts down.

Congressional appropriators, always happy to spend money together, seemed on a glide path to do so, until Mr. Trump intervened, insisting on using the bill to get a down payment on a wall at the Mexican border that even many Republicans are leery of and that he has long insisted would be paid for by Mexico. He appeared to soften his demand late Monday, saying he would settle for additional funds for border security — potentially including at least part of the wall, according to a senior administration official who

spoke on condition of anonymity.

Suddenly, a spending bill that was meant to be a mere legislative grace note to much larger health care and tax policy bills has become the centerpiece of another down-to-the-wire battle.

"The Wall is a very important tool in stopping drugs from pouring into our country and poisoning our youth (and many others)!" Mr. Trump said Monday on Twitter.

What Trump's Budget Could Mean for the Affected Agencies MARCH 16, 2017

The president's habit of tossing hornets into Republican policy picnics has hampered his agenda and demonstrated the lack

of experience among his staff in working with Capitol Hill to get things done. His lack of early engagement on the health care bill helped lead to its demise, and his early efforts at a tax bill were disorganized — he announced he had one even though critical staff members

and congressional leaders knew nothing of it. Those stumbles and his current flirtation with a government shutdown demonstrate a continued pattern of playing to his base rather than governing. Democrats — whose votes will be needed to pass any spending bill — and plenty of Republicans have no interest in building a wall, certainly not in paying for it

with a short-term spending bill. "Donald Trump threw a monkey wrench with the wall," said Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader. "We believe that the Republican leaders should tell Donald Trump that we can do this at a later time."

On Monday, as senators returned to Washington from a two-week recess to confirm Sonny Perdue for secretary of agriculture, Republican congressional leaders were negotiating with White House officials, who have been pressing for wall funding and a mechanism to take some funding from the Affordable Care Act.

North Korea nuclear White House calls Senate to briefing



(News Agencies) In an unusual move, the entire US Senate is being called to the White House for a briefing on North Korea. Washington has become increasingly concerned at North Korean missile and nuclear tests and threats to its neighbours and the US.

The briefing, involving 100 senators as well as Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Defence Secretary James Mattis, is being held on Wednesday. China, North Korea's main ally, has called for restraint from all sides.

China's call came in a phone conversation between President Xi Jinping and President Donald Trump on Sunday. Mr Xi urged all parties to "maintain restraint and avoid actions that would increase tensions", according to the Chinese foreign ministry. Why Beijing should lead on

North Korean crisis For his part, Mr Trump said North Korea's "continued belligerence" was destabilising the Korean peninsula. White House officials regularly go to Congress to brief on national security matters, but it is unusual for the whole Senate to go to the White House. Alongside Mr Tillerson and Gen Mattis will be National Intelligence Director Dan Coats and Gen Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Questioned by reporters at his regular briefing, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer referred further inquiries to the Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell. Aides, quoted by Reuters, say the House of Representatives is seeking a similar briefing on North Korea. Washington says a flotilla, led by the aircraft carrier USS Carl

Vinson, is expected to arrive off the peninsula within days, despite conflicting messages last week on its exact whereabouts. Mr Trump has also told United Nations Security Council ambassadors, meeting at the White House, that the UN must be ready to impose new sanctions on North Korea. The US is pursuing a multi-pronged strategy to make its point on North Korea, the BBC's Gary O'Donoghue in Washington says. First it wants the UN to tighten sanctions even further, and to ensure those in place are properly enforced. Secondly, it is attempting to put fresh pressure on China to rein in its communist neighbour. The third aspect is the sending of an aircraft carrier to the Korean peninsula - making clear military action is an option.

US submarine arrives in South Korea as tensions rise



(News Agencies) A US submarine has arrived in South Korea, amid worries of another North Korean missile or nuclear test.

The missile-armed USS Michigan is set to join an incoming group of warships led by aircraft carrier Carl Vinson.

North Korea is celebrating its army's 85th founding anniversary on Tuesday. It has previously marked similar occasions with missile tests.

Tensions have risen on the Korean peninsula in recent weeks as the US and North Korea exchange heated rhetoric.

Meanwhile in an unusual event, the entire US Senate has been asked to attend a briefing on North Korea on Wednesday at the White House.

The USS Michigan is a nuclear-powered submarine carrying 154 Tomahawk cruise missiles and 60 special operations troops and mini subs, reported the South Korean newspaper Chosun Ilbo.

It is expected to take part in military exercises with the Carl Vinson warship group dispatched by the US in a show of force.

The warships were briefly at the centre of some confusion when they did not immediately head to the Korean peninsula, but US Navy officials said it is now proceeding to the region as ordered. Pyongyang has reacted angrily, threatening to sink the aircraft carrier and to launch a "super-mighty pre-emptive strike" against what it calls US aggression.

US President Donald Trump said earlier this month in a TV interview he was sending an "armada" and that the US had submarines which are "very powerful, far more powerful than the aircraft carrier".

China has repeatedly urged for calm, with President Xi Jinping speaking to Mr Trump on Tuesday urging all parties to "maintain restraint and avoid actions that would increase tensions".

In Paris, Wine, Brie and – Silicon ?

(News Agencies)PARIS — Imagine having a friend who really knows the City of Lights and who always — literally, 24 hours a day, seven days a week — has time to chat.

Louisa Mesnard, a Franco-Irish 25-year-old businesswoman is making sure it's not just a dream. Together with her team, she created Citron, a Facebook ChatBot that makes its business knowing every hidden jewel in Paris: the café in Montmartre where the fictional Amélie Poulain worked as a server, the hole-in-the-wall bar with the working phonograph and the old-fashioned cocktails, or the lunch place on the Left Bank that has both good Wi-Fi and a fireplace.

On top of knowing all those things, Citron is unfailingly polite, witty and

interactive. After being tested in French for months, Citron earlier in April began bantering and suggesting places in English, too.

With its social-media dependent, millennial-targeting and highly scalable profile, Citron seems to come from Silicon Valley. But it is actually being developed in France, a place that Mesnard says is one of the best places on the globe to start a business.

This summer Citron and its team will move to Station F, an ambitious project being billed as the world's biggest incubator. The space also is emblematic of a larger cultural shift taking place in France. The land of the three-hour lunch is poised to become the

European hub of the frenzied-paced, hyper-capitalistic world of start-

ups, according to experts here on entrepreneurship.

"Given the situation with Brexit, given the situation in the U.S. with Donald Trump, we see a lot of entrepreneurs re-evaluating the go-to places," says Roxanne Varza, an American who is a Silicon Valley veteran and the director of Station F.

With its 35-hour workweek, lifelong employment contracts and heavy social taxes, France was once perceived as decidedly business unfriendly. The country has weathered the financial crisis, but its unemployment rate of nearly 10 percent is one of the worst in Western Europe and is a major issue in this spring's presidential elections.

Youth unemployment in France is even worse, hovering just below 24

percent, a sign of what experts call the dual labor market, where insiders are protected and "outsiders" — young people, foreigners or the uneducated — face greater obstacles finding long-term and well-paid work. When finished, Station F will be a 366,000-square-foot space that will help incubate up to 1,000 start-ups, have room for 3,000 desks, house more than 10 international start-up programs and an onsite "fab lab," a workshop where prototypes of new products can be built.

Setting the conditions for Station F are a changing work culture, an increase in investment, tax directives supporting research and development, a good — and relatively inexpensive — supply of top-notch engineers and, above all, a powerful nascent culture of



entrepreneurship, say experts.

"The main asset in a start-up company is people, and there is real entrepreneurial drive in France in these last years," says Etienne Krieger, a director of the entrepreneurship program at HEC Paris, one of the top business schools in France and a partner in the incubator. France is fertile ground for entrepreneurs, says Patrick Riley, an American venture capitalist and the head of the Global Accelerator Network, a global network of investment accelerators that has been responsible for more than \$4 billion of funding. "The laws are

good, the regulations are good and the people starting those operations in France are really good operators," he says, conceding that funding is still an issue. Still, more work remains to foster a start-up culture in France. The country ranks No. 29 on the World Bank's annual "Ease of doing business" ranking, well behind competitors such as the U.S. (8), the U.K. (7) and slightly behind Germany (17). The Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute, which compiles a Global Entrepreneurship Index, ranks France at 13, still behind the U.S., the UK and Germany.

The Emptiness of trump's "Buy American Executive order"

(News Agencies)When Donald Trump unveiled his latest executive order, titled "Buy American and Hire American," he made only the barest effort to conceal the fact that the announcement was nearly entirely one of theatrics and not of substance. He held his talk in Kenosha, Wisconsin, at Snap-on Tools, a firm that buys Chinese and hires Chinese, Argentinian, Brazilian, and Swedish. Seventy per cent of Snap-on's sales are in the U.S., but many of its plants are in other countries. There is nothing wrong with Snap-on putting its factories overseas, it just makes it an odd place to hold a Buy American announcement. It's reminiscent of President Trump's celebration of jobs at a Boeing plant while the company was laying off workers.

The executive order itself is even more puzzling. It's not clear what, if anything, it will change. The order states that "it shall be the policy of the executive branch to maximize, consistent with law . . . the use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United

States" without setting any measurable definition of "maximize." This is followed by a confusing timeline—in sixty days, the Secretary of Commerce will lead a team, advised by the Secretary of State and others, that will issue guidance. Then, within a hundred and fifty days, the heads of agencies will explain what they are doing in keeping with that guidance. Sometime in mid-September, we will (or we won't) hear what the hundreds of agencies in the federal government are doing to meet a confusing mandate, with no obvious targets, that will (or won't) mean that more Americans have jobs.

Snap-on Tools is actually a good example of why Buy American is a fairly meaningless phrase. It is no easy feat to find a product manufactured entirely of material from the U.S., produced by people in the U.S., using tools made in the U.S. In this sense, the executive order recognizes that no blanket order to buy only American will work. The products we buy are made of raw materials transformed into intermediate goods that are then assembled into a

finished product. It's not possible, or even advisable, to insure that an entire production chain will occur in one country. So a politician who wants to increase the percentage of American-made content in the products that are sold here needs to dig deeper. How will the U.S.-made content of a good be defined? Will it be by weight, by dollar value, by labor hours involved? Each metric would have different findings. A car's bulk, for example, is primarily made up of steel, aluminum, and glass produced by huge machines with not much labor. However, some of the smaller, fussier bits are made by hand in the U.S. Gas tanks, for example, because of strict emissions laws, are surprisingly complex and require a lot of engineering and manual assembly and are often made in the U.S. A gas tank might be relatively cheap and light, but for American workers it's worth a lot more than many tons of steel. Very quickly, any discussion of the U.S.-made content of any product will turn to the value of intellectual versus physical content. The U.S. does very well in the

intellectual work—the engineering, industrial design, marketing, and distribution—that goes into creating, manufacturing, and selling products. Our Chinese-made iPhones and apparel return much higher profit margins to American designers than to Chinese manufacturers. Many firms now run their design, marketing, and engineering work in the U.S. and move the manufacturing abroad. This makes perfect economic sense, but it adds to the core challenge of the U.S. economy: there are increasing opportunities for people with the kinds of education and skill that lead to new ideas, but there are diminished opportunities for those who turn those ideas into physical products. Trump focussed on two types of jobs in his executive order: U.S. manufacturing jobs and computer professionals. It was an odd pairing, but both fell, in his logic, under the broad umbrella of increasing work for Americans. The order calls for a review of America's H-1B visa program, under which eighty-five thousand



foreigners, each year—most of them computer professionals of one sort or another—are permitted to work in the U.S.

The question of H-1B visas has rhetorical importance far beyond its actual economic relevance. The unemployment rate for computer and mathematical occupations is, currently, 2.1 per cent. This is what economists consider full employment, meaning that pretty much everyone who wants a job has a job or is in a brief hiatus between positions. The number of jobs in those fields is growing fast—by about twelve per cent a year—and the number of qualified workers is not growing enough to catch up. In short, the plight of computer professionals is on few

people's list of urgent concerns. Yes, there have been rough times in the past, when basic computer-programming work was outsourced to India, Ireland, and Eastern Europe, and Americans with those skills lost work. But, on balance, it is a great time to have a computer-science background. Many American businesses are in the process of transferring their data to the cloud and embracing mobile applications, and we are in the very early stages of the "Internet of Things," and all these developments require lots of computing expertise. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, ten thousand computer professionals start a new job every working day.



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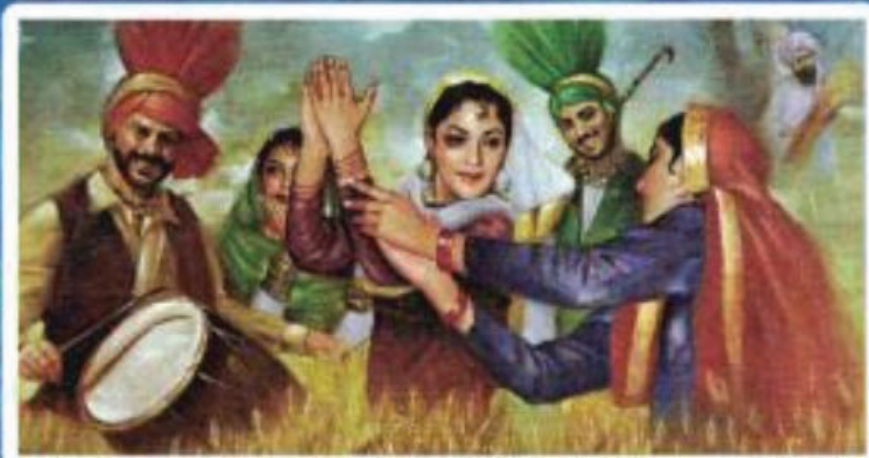


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A strategic encirclement

India's political and security establishment needs a strategy in light of China's naval expansion.

(Agencies) China's state-owned Global Times newspaper reported last month that the People's Liberation Army Navy's (PLAN's) second aircraft carrier, referred to as "Type 001A" is nearing completion and that another carrier, dubbed "Type 002", is also under construction. The Type 002 represents not only a much bigger class of ship but will incorporate modern design and operational features, including a catapult and early-warning aircraft. A senior Chinese official was quoted as saying: "China needs two carrier strike groups in the Western Pacific and two in the Indian Ocean. So we need at least five to six aircraft carriers." Other manifestations of China's unfolding grand strategy abound. It has built runways and fortified seven artificial islands created in the Spratly group in the South

China Sea (SCS), thereby leapfrogging the mental and physical barrier posed to the PLAN by the "first island chain". India is encircled by a growing ring of Chinese power and influence. To the north, garrisons, airfields and missile sites linked by modern road-rail networks underpin China's dominant posture on the Tibetan plateau. Ominously, the Xining-Lhasa rail link is progressing towards Nepal, where China has made significant political inroads. To our east, China's Yunnan province will gain access to the Bay of Bengal via rail, highway and pipeline, linking it to the deep-water port being built by China at Kyaukpyu in Myanmar.

A parallel endeavour on India's western flank, dubbed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), will create access to the Arabian Sea

from Xinjiang to the Pakistani port of Gwadar via Gilgit-Baltistan. Described by Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar as violative of "...Indian sovereignty because it runs through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir", CPEC forms the bedrock of China's South Asia strategy, with a commitment of over \$50 billion.

Further west, China has set up its first overseas military base at Djibouti on the Bab el Mandeb. To our south, China has built a new harbour in Hambantota and modernised Colombo port for Sri Lanka. All three ports could provide bases or sanctuaries to PLAN ships and submarines deployed in the Indian Ocean. There is already news that the PLAN intends to deploy its expanded marine corps to Djibouti and Gwadar. The recent Chinese sale of

eight diesel submarines to Pakistan and two to Bangladesh provides conclusive evidence of India's "strategic encirclement".

India's decision-makers are, almost certainly, receiving divergent counsel about the Dragon's actions and intent. China's left-leaning sympathisers scoff at the "encirclement" thesis and maintain that China neither wants war, nor seeks further territorial gains, but only economic engagement and tangible proof of friendship, which India has consistently failed to provide by playing the Dalai Lama card, cosying up to the US

and withholding cooperation on the "Belt and Road" initiative. Before the recent re-naming of Indian towns by Beijing, the demand for Tawang was explained away as a "bargaining ploy", and India was advised to find a modus vivendi to somehow befriend China.

Even as we dismiss these inducements to appeasement, we must note the many serious dichotomies that distort our perception of this Asian hegemon. While China looms large in India's security perspectives, the former does not regard India as a threat — or even a competitor. For Chinese

strategists, asymmetry is inherent in such relations; they bluntly advise that rather than obsessing with futile dreams of parity, India must reconcile itself to a subaltern status vis-à-vis China.

In a novel explanation of China's conduct, American scholar John Garver has termed it an "autistic state". The analogy refers to an individual whose delusions and fantasies prevent him from comprehending the motivations and emotions of others due to this neurological disorder. For example, there is firm conviction in China that the root causes of the 1962 conflict were India's "forward policy" and its putative ambition to seize Tibet.

There is also evidence of Chinese schizophrenia. While dismissing India as a weak and effete state, ideologues also vilify it as an ambitious and expansionist power, waiting to avenge its 1962 military defeat. Most irksome to them is India's "proprietary" attitude towards the Indian Ocean and its growing maritime relations with the US, Japan and Australia. While China's self-perception has always been that of a benign and benevolent great power ("Middle Kingdom"), in another example of Freudian self-deception, the Chinese simultaneously nurture a deep-seated "victim mentality" as a relic of China's subjugation and humiliation by foreign powers during the 19th century. And yet, a strong streak of realism has ensured that China's post-Civil War leadership retained a crystal clear vision of their aims: Hegemony in Asia, acquisition of nuclear weapons and the incorporation of Tibet into the People's Republic.



Three decades of mistrust

Pragmatic approach and sustained border diplomacy could help Delhi remove apprehensions in Sri Lanka about economic cooperation with India

As Delhi and Colombo intensify their high-level political engagement, new opportunities for elevating the partnership are coloured by enduring suspicions in Sri Lanka. The country's prime minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, is travelling to India this week and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will head to Sri Lanka next month to join the special international celebrations of the Buddha Jayanti in Colombo.

For Modi, it will be the second visit to Sri Lanka in barely two years and it reflects his determination to overcome the unfortunate legacy of three difficult decades that saw a cruel civil war, India's failed intervention and the accumulated distrust of Delhi in Colombo. This is not the mo-

ment to delve into those difficult decades, but Modi was dealt an impossible hand on India's Sri Lanka account. A strong political mandate in the 2014 elections and a pragmatic approach to foreign policy, however, gave Modi some room to push for a restructuring of ties with Sri Lanka.

India's new possibilities have been highlighted by media reports from Sri Lanka, that Wickremesinghe is bringing proposals for the development of the Trincomalee area as a regional hydrocarbon hub in the Bay of Bengal and the eastern Indian Ocean. These proposals include the construction of a new LNG terminal and the renewal of the Second World War-era oil tank farms in Trincomalee in

partnership with India.

That these ideas provide a neat fit between India's massive consumption of hydrocarbons and Sri Lanka's location atop the Indian Ocean sea lines of communication is hardly in doubt. Yet, the resistance in Sri Lanka to economic cooperation with India remains entrenched. Protesting the modernisation of the Trincomalee oil tank farms, the workers of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation have announced a strike this week. Deep political reservations in Sri Lanka, in fact, held up the implementation of a 2003 agreement with India on the development of tank farms.

The twists and turns in this story are part of a familiar but unfortunate South

Asian pattern — the politicisation of economic projects. Our neighbours in East Asia, for example, have learnt to separate political differences from mutually beneficial economic engagement. China and Taiwan don't even recognise each other's political legitimacy, but that has not stopped them from productive commercial cooperation.

But, in the Subcontinent, we have overloaded even the simplest trans-border economic questions with ideological arguments and conspiracy theories. A new factor has now begun to animate the default negative discourse in South Asia — the idea of an all-encompassing Sino-Indian rivalry for regional influence.

Most recent reports on a potential Indo-Lankan partnership for the development of Trincomalee present it as part of Colombo's balancing act between Delhi and Beijing. Since Sri Lanka has given port projects in Colombo and Hambantota to China, the story goes, it is now trying to compensate an unhappy India with infrastructure projects elsewhere in the emerald island. That China is a major economic partner for Colombo and other regional capitals can't be a surprise. After all, China is now the world's second largest economy. Beijing has encouraged its companies to embark on a "go out" strategy and has infrastructure projects underway all across the world.

25 CRPF personnel killed in Maoist encounter in Chhattisgarh, PM Modi calls attack 'cowardly'

(Agencies) Suspected Maoist militants killed 25 paramilitary personnel and injured six in Chhattisgarh's south Sukma region on Monday, police said, in an ambush possibly to thwart a crucial road link the government believes would break the back of the insurgent group. The midday attack, which occurred between the Burkapal-Chintagufa

area in the Maoist hotbed of Bastar, is the worst in seven years. In 2010, rebels killed 75 CRPF troopers in the same region.

Monday's victims were part of a 99-strong team providing security to workers building the road.

"Security forces will move with ease in the area after this road is built and this is troubling the

Maoists. We are entering their core through this road," said DM Awasthi, special director general of police (anti-Maoist operations).

Survivors of the attack said about 300 militants waylaid them, firing with rifles from hilltops. Senior police officers said the security party was having lunch when they were attacked. "First Naxals sent villagers to trace our loca-

tion, then almost 300 Naxals attacked us. We also fired and killed many," news agency ANI quoted CRPF constable Sher Mohammed as saying.

The security personnel were evacuated by air force choppers and a rescue team. The deceased were from the 74th battalion of the CRPF and included an inspector-rank officer. Fatal attacks by Maoists on se-



curity forces were once frequent, and the government says the success of recent security operations against them have frustrated the rebels. Still, Monday's attack demonstrated the vulnerability of the government forces in an insurgency that

former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh once called India's biggest internal security challenge. The rebels say they are fighting for the rights of tribal people and landless farmers, and want to overthrow the government to establish a more egalitarian society. Sources in the Indian Air Force said they received a request to airlift victims at around 3pm, and dispatched two Mi-17 helicopters. "Immediately casualties were air-lifted to Raipur and shifted to hospital. One of the casualty succumbed to injuries in flight on the way," a spokesperson said, adding that several choppers were subsequently sent for the evacuations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned the attack in posts on his Twitter profile.

Delhi govt orders probe into 'leak' of LG's order on AAP ad spending

(Agencies) New Delhi : The Delhi government has ordered an inquiry, including examining call details of suspected staff, who might have "leaked" copies of Lt Governor's order on recovery of Rs 97 crore from the AAP for ads spendings.

It has also ordered examining of the call details of suspected staff who might have "leaked" the copies of the same.

The Delhi Cabinet had last month directed Chief Secretary M M Kutty to find out the source

behind the leak and examine the call details of relevant staff members and visitors' register.

"Chief Secretary will conduct an inquiry to ascertain as to how the copies of file notings in which the LG had directed recovery of Rs 97 crore from Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) were leaked to the media.

"If needed, call details of relevant staff members and visitors' register etc may be examined to find out the source of the leak," the Cabinet order accessed by PTI

said.

Lt Governor Anil Bajjal had last month directed the Chief Secretary to recover Rs 97 crore from AAP that was allegedly "splurged" by the Delhi government on advertisements in violation of the Supreme Court guidelines.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had said that the LG's order will be challenged in the court. Apart from this, the Delhi Cabinet had also directed the Chief Secretary to present a complete list of all the files sent by him (on subjects

other than police, law and order, services) directly to the Lt Governor bypassing respective ministers and quote the law under which the files were sent and the reason for bypassing the ministers. Last year on the direction of the Supreme Court, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry had formed a three-member committee, headed by former Chief Election Commissioner B B Tandon, to address issues related to content regulation in government advertising.

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Subrata Roy in trouble: SC order in Sahara case a stern message for other corporate crooks

(Agencies) Yesterday, 17 April, 2017 would go down as a watershed day in the annals of India's judiciary. The three-member bench of the Supreme Court walked its talk, and ordered the official liquidator of the Bombay High Court to auction Sahara's Aamby valley township project. The purpose of the article is not to repeat the facts leading up to the stern order to auction the property worth Rs 34,000 crore which in addition is a symbol of lavish opulence rivalling for parallel attention of those who eyed Dubai's Palm Grove project raised on sea that was dried up first.

It is significant to note that the Court has repeatedly used the word contemnor to describe Sahara promoter Subrata Roy and his misdemeanours. Indeed a person who has the gall to look askance at the highest court of the land and seeks indefinite parole merits no sympathy. The SC knows that acceptance of deposits aggregating to some Rs 24,000 crore by two Sahara group companies Sahara India Real Estate Corporation (SIRECL) and Sahara Housing Investment Corp Ltd (SHICL) that were conveniently converted into bonds in defiance of listing norms was a calculated and

careful attempt to launder black money of the rich and famous using gullible village folks as cat's paw. It expected Roy to spill the beans through means that bore resemblance to custodial torture without actually subjecting him to one because in Delhi's Tihar jail he has been enjoying all the creature comforts and more. But the threat of incarceration can dispirit anyone especially free-birds. One suspects that the 17 April, 2017 order is just the prelude to events that are going to unfold. Once the Aamby Valley property is disposed off, the Court would logically

follow it up with transferring the same to the Sebi-Sahara fund with a view to repaying the so-called bondholders. In all likelihood the true owners are not likely to surface for the fear of courting ignominy nor are all of them benami holders living persons, with ghosts pitching in for many of the real owners. Indeed, the SC would be enacting its own version of the benami law and confiscating for the government huge amounts of money from the Sahara group, long suspected of being money launderer to the nation.

And SC is using the Sahara

case to send a stern message to other crooks. Already, Vijay Mallya must be shaking in his boots in his London hideout. The two cases are not on all fours but both have cheated the nation in their own distinct ways. If money-laundering and hiding black money is a crime, the crime committed by Mallya is to blithely use banking system and listing to finance his luxurious life style and vaulting ambition with repayment figuring only tangentially in his scheme of things. Hiding behind corporate veil is no longer a ready escape route for crooks, certainly not if what the SC is doing

Barely out of teens, girls are the new face of protests in Kashmir

The Kashmir Valley has woken up to fresh violence sparked by the killing of whom people describe as innocent civilians by the security forces. The anger has been fanned by several video clips which purportedly show human rights abuse by security forces, including the use of a Kashmiri man as a human shield.

(Agencies) They are young, most of them in their school or college uniforms. Some of them wear burkhas while many of them have their heads and faces covered. Their school bags slung on their backs, now they also have stones in their hands.

Young girls barely out of their teens have become the new face of protests in Kashmir, adding a new dimension to the story of a valley wracked by years of violence and brutal retaliation government forces.

This April, the valley has woken up to fresh violence sparked by the killing of whom people describe as innocent civilians by security forces. The anger has been fanned by several video clips which purportedly show human rights abuse by security forces, including the use of a Kashmiri man as a human shield.

The anger has spilled out on to the streets and young women are leading the charge.

Dozens of pictures have gone viral on social media -- of groups of girls and women pelting stones on police and CRPF person-

nel. A young girl seen kicking an armoured police vehicle has drawn particular attention for the anger it represents -- she is said to have reacted in the manner after a college girl was injured on April 21 in Srinagar's Old City.

"Why should we fear? Things can't get worse than what has already happened in Kashmir. We have seen dead and mutilated

bodies. We have seen many of our brothers and sisters defaced by pellets. At the most we will also die," said Neelofar Jabeen (name changed on request), a 21-year-old arts student of Women's College in Srinagar. Protests by women and girls, even at the verge of violence, is not new to India.

Thousands of students, most of them girls, had

taken to the streets in 2012 after the Delhi gang rape and murder of a paramedic student on a moving bus. The protesting girls had broken through police barricades and clashed with security forces seeking safety for women and punishment to the accused in the case that had numbed the country. A police official in Kashmir described the new trend as "teenage



aggression". "These things happen everywhere. Students come out in all parts of India to protest. Some where they come out for students' rights and somewhere they come out for 'azadi'. The aggression is same. And women have been protesting in Kashmir even before," the official said. Kashmir witnessed

one of the worst summers in 2016 when more than 90 people lost their lives during violent street protests following the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen leader Burhan Wani in July. Hundreds of people, many of them children, lost their eyesight to pellet guns fired by government forces, attracting international outrage.

Bihar adopts GST; CM Nitish Kumar calls it 'a historic moment'

(Agencies) PATNA: Both the Houses of Bihar Legislature on Monday unanimously adopted the Goods and Services Tax (GST) bill along with the Bihar taxation (Amendment) Bill, becoming the second state after Telangana to pave the way for roll out of the GST from July 1.

Bihar legislative assembly as well as Legislative Council adopted the Bills related to GST with one voice.

Bihar became the second state after Telangana to ratify GST which needs nod of the states after its clearance in Parliament.

Chief minister Nitish

Kumar speaking in the state Legislative Council described the passing of GST by all the parties together as "a historic moment." Expressing thanks to all the members, Kumar said Bihar has been in favour of GST from the beginning.

"Even after change of government, Bihar continued with its support to GST," Kumar, who is heading the Grand Alliance government of JD(U), RJD and Congress, said.

He said the budget session of the two Houses were prorogued on March 31 in anticipation of passing of GST in Parliament and its coming to the state for the same.

Leader of opposition in legislative council Sushil Kumar Modi, who had headed a ministerial committee on GST during NDA rule in Bihar, expressed happiness over adoption of GST related bills with the help of all the parties.

He expressed thanks to chief minister Nitish Kumar for standing in favour of GST from the beginning. "On his advise, I had accepted chairmanship of GST as finance minister of the state during NDA rule," the senior BJP leader said.

In the legislative assembly, bills related to GST were taken up in pre-lunch session

and with ruling JD(U), RJD, Congress and even opposition BJP and its NDA partners in support of GST bill, it was adopted through voice vote.

Commercial Tax minister Bijendra Prasad Yadav had moved the Bihar Goods and Service Bill, 2017 and the Bihar Taxation (Amendment) bill, 2017. While all the major parties were in favour of GST, JD(U), BJP and Congress tried to score over each other in taking credit in state Legislative Assembly over it. Sushil Modi praised Nitish Kumar for continuously being in support of GST even when BJP was opposed to it when he was heading a NDA ministry in Bihar.



Is the US immigration court system broken ?

Since 2002, funding for immigration enforcement has quadrupled, from US\$4.5 bn to \$20.1 bn in 2016

(Agencies) In the US today, a single immigration case takes an average of 677 days simply to get to the initial scheduling hearing. There are more than half a million cases in the system, and just over 300 judges working on them. The Trump administration's push to aggressively enforce immigration laws will make this backlog worse. Since 2002, funding for immigration enforcement has more than quadrupled, from US\$4.5 billion to \$20.1 billion in 2016. During the same time period, re-

sources for immigration courts have increased by much less – 74 per cent. President's budget for fiscal 2018 and request for supplemental funds for fiscal 2017 indicate he will continue this trend of funding immigration enforcement but not adequately funding immigration courts. His budget requests would add to the more than \$40 billion that the Department of Homeland Security will receive this year. It would include \$4.1 billion to start building a border wall and \$2.65 billion to increase the

number of immigration detention beds. In comparison, the fiscal 2018 budget requests \$80 million to add 75 new immigration judges. As a law professor, I have devoted my career to representing asylum seekers and studying our nation's immigration courts. I witness the daily effects of the immigration court backlog on the lives of immigrants. The US has 57 immigration courts nationwide. The judges in these courts preside over cases in which an individual is in the US and the US government alleges that they may be removable. This includes immigrants who have recently arrived and

are seeking asylum protection, lawful permanent residents rendered potentially removable due to a criminal conviction and undocumented immigrants who may be allowed to stay in the US

In 2015, the TRAC Immigration Project out of Syracuse University estimated that full resolution of cases in the backlog would take from 2 to 6 ½ years. Asylum applicants who are seeking US protection from persecution in their home countries may wait five or more years simply for an interview to assess their claim.

The backlog has arisen largely because of an in-

crease in the number of Central American women and children seeking asylum. Many families without authorization are sent to detention centers to be held while they undergo expedited removal.

The expedited removal process was created to bypass the immigration court system and allow for the swift removal of undocumented immigrants. However, if those immigrants say they're afraid to return home, the Department of Homeland Security must give them a "credible fear interview" to determine if they are eligible for asylum.

These individuals can then take their cases to immi-

gration court.

Asylum officers are sent to detention centers to conduct credible fear interviews. Approximately 85 to 90 percent of families interviewed are granted the right to present their case in immigration court.

Asking asylum seekers to present their cases before both asylum officers and judges is repetitive and time consuming. It would be more efficient to either allow asylum officers to grant asylum after a credible fear interview when they see a strong case, or simply bypass this step and allow all asylum seekers to present their cases in court.



(Agencies) The digital world is ruining our eyes. Given all the time we spend connected to electronic devices these days, scientists recommend caution when it comes to the hours de-

voted each day to staring at computers, tablets, and phones. Most of the offending screens are backlit with LED light, which as it turns out, is far easier on the eyes than

UV light, but the copious hours we spend staring at them has some experts worried. "All data indicate screens are indeed affecting our eyes," says Dr. Celia Sanchez-Ramos, a professor at the Department of Optometry and Vision at the Complutense University of Madrid. And when people experience red eyes, itchiness, and eyestrain after long hours looking at screens, Sanchez-Ramos says to pay attention: these are defense mechanisms signaling potential retina damage. "All evidence, from in-vitro to animal tests, indicates that the

All those little, glowing screens are destroying our eyes

combination of the light emitted from the screens of smartphones, tablets, laptops, consoles and monitors, the intensity of the light, the time exposure (more than eight hours a day), and the distance between the eyes and the screen are creating the 'perfect storm' for our eyes," she said. "These factors are destroying different structures of the eye, in some cases in an irreversible way." While it may be im-

possible these days to avoid so much screen time, there are ways to protect our eyes, Sanchez-Ramos says. Among them are:
-Reduce light and glare from screens using screen protectors, wearing yellow-tinted computer glasses, and dimming the brightness.
-Keep your distance — sit approximately 20-28 inches from your computer monitor.
- Follow the 20-20-20

rule: Every 20 minutes, stare at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
-Use night mode settings on mobile sites/screens. Twitter's Night Mode paired with iPhone Night Shift is a game changer.
-Make sure your eyes stay moist — dry eyes are an indicator that your eyes are suffering.
- Step away. "The best preventive measure would be to avoid the use of screens," Sanchez-Ramos says.



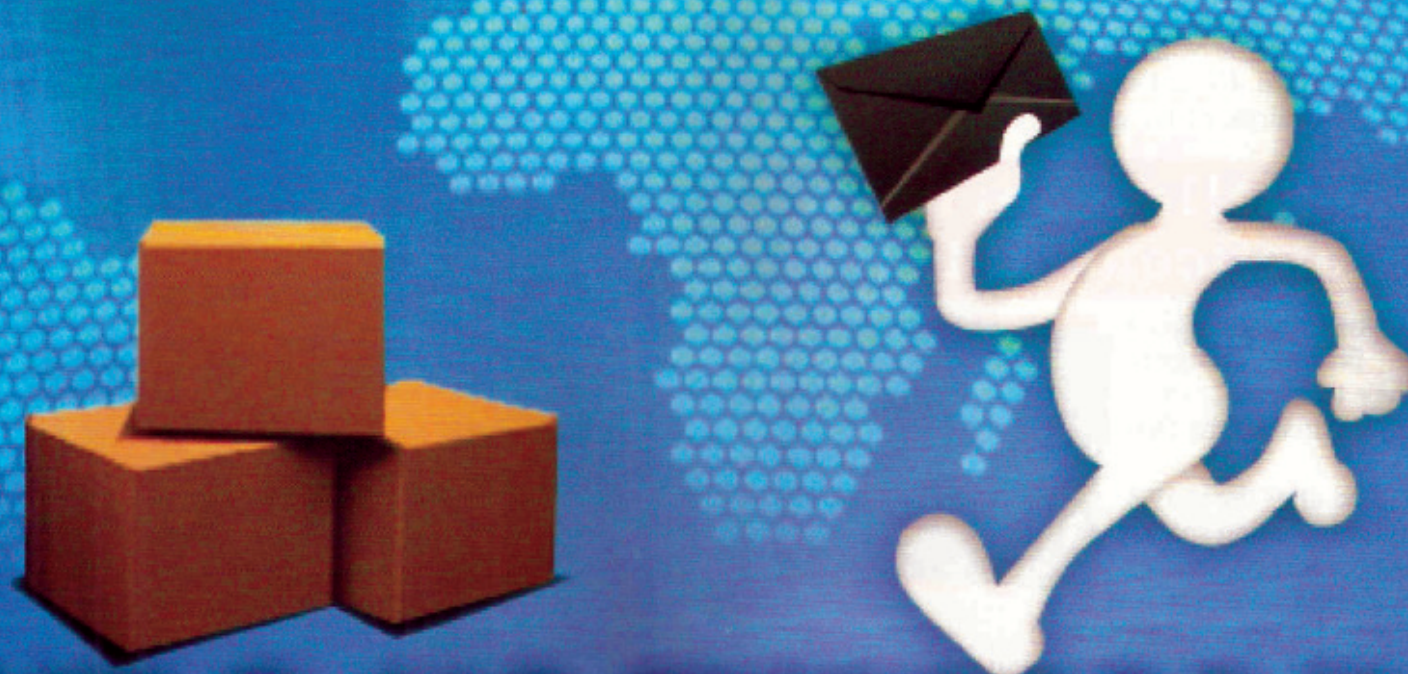
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Trump's H-1B tweaks to Aussie visa

India's middle class must reinvent itself, again

The great Indian middle class must now reconcile to the fact that 'globalisation as we know it' is dead. The global workplace has delivered a blow to the job seeker from India.

This has been an uneasy week for the "great Indian middle class" — especially for those who think that history is full of lessons and irony. When the Soviet Union dissolved in the winter of 1991, a pronounced ideological shock wave ripped through India's then incipient middle class. Their assured world of the mixed economy, the pre-eminence of government jobs, the commanding heights of the public sector and the boring world of Doordarshan news began to wobble.

But after a few years of social and psychological disorientation, there was a surging return. By the late 1990s, the Indian middle

class acquired a new story based on market-led growth, jobs for the asking in the private sector, the fresh youthful economic energies unleashed by digital technologies and, above all, the rise and rise of aspirational thinking. Children were not only expected to be financially better off than their parent's generation but the outlook was going to be global rather than local. In all these changes, the United States and Americanism acquired the full force of a powerful winning imagination. The US, for the Indian middle class, beckoned not simply as a place to go to, but became the desired future itself. More so, the manner in which Indian students vig-

orously and ambitiously sought educational prospects in American universities. Interest in clearing the SAT and TOFEL easily surpassed the previous middle class enthusiasm for the UPSC, more popularly called the IAS exam. From the early 2000s, for many, getting a loan, admitting oneself into an American university and then taking up a job in the US was a neat hop, skip and jump formula for landing the coveted Green Card. From about 65,000 in 1995, the number of Indians leaving for the US had gone past 100,000 by 2014, riding primarily on the H-1B visa programme. Americanism acted as a psychological and ideological frontier for the Indian middle class — providing a mix of hope, opportunity, aspiration and the idea of a better future. But last week, globalisation was dealt an unceremonious set of legal twists. While Brexit and Trump had already raised anxieties, the final blow was delivered with the executive decision to tweak the H-1B rules. This was, as if on cue, followed by the Australians scrapping the 457 visa programme and New Zealand's decision to institute the "Kiwi first" programme. Indians account for nearly a third of the visa holders under Australia's 457 category of



visas for foreign skilled workers, while 85% of the H-1B visas issued in the information technology sector in the US goes to Indians.

Earlier, the UK, where about 60% of visas for foreign skilled workers are held by Indians, has also tightened its entry rules by raising the salary thresholds for employing outsiders. It had already begun the process of making it impossible for Indian students to exceed their stay through jobs. Singapore, another popular destination for the upwardly mobile Indian middle class, has ordered its companies to advertise any vacancy for two weeks before seeking employment passes for jobseekers from overseas. While shrinking job prospects in the advanced West have been making headlines, few have paid attention to what is happening in the oil-producing Gulf region that has been a preferred destination for many unskilled or semi-skilled Indian workers from relatively lower economic strata. Jobs for Indians in the Gulf region fell sharply by 33% in 2016. For many Indians, the petrodollar dream is fast drying up. Remittances, according to World Bank estimates, saw an

8.9% drop in 2016, recording a contraction for the second straight year.

The great Indian middle class must now reconcile to the fact that 'globalisation as we know it' is dead. It needs a fresh and hopeful script for its growth story. But while it reworks its ideas about the neo-liberal moment, there is one house fire that needs to be immediately doused — higher education. Many students will be returning from universities abroad with unpayable loans and many will be unable to find the quality within India that they so critically desire to create new futures.

It is no secret that higher education in India is in a mess and the private sector is in no way anywhere close to closing the gap between expectation, education and employment. If the recent tumult in Panjab University over a steep hike in fees is any indication, the rising costs of education and the lack of jobs to cover loans is potentially the most dangerous political challenge that stares at this government and the ruling political class. We will be ignoring it, if we choose to, at our own peril.

Vanishing jobs

Indians face a shrinking job market abroad

GULF

33% dip in jobs for Indians compared to last year
50% drop in Saudi alone

UNITED STATES

86% of H-1B visas issued for workers in computer space go to Indians; this may drop to 60%

UNITED KINGDOM

60% of skilled foreign worker visas are held by Indians who are facing problems after salary thresholds for visas were raised

AUSTRALIA

457 category visa, meant for foreign skilled workers up to 4 years, abolished. Indians constitute 30% of these visa holders

SINGAPORE

25 workers or more mean employer must advertise vacancy for 2 weeks before seeking employment pass for an international worker

Defence canteens remove Ramdev's Patanjali amla juice after adverse lab report

The Ministry of Defence's canteen stores department (CSD) has suspended the sale of Patanjali Ayurved's amla juice

it to be 'unfit for consumption'. Soon after the report was declared, the CSD asked all its depots to make debit notes for their existing stock so that the product can be returned. The Department has 34 depots located across India.

"The batch was tested at the Central Food Lab in Kolkata and was declared unfit for consumption. Patanjali has withdrawn amla juice from all army canteens," The ET quoted two officials as saying. However, the detailed findings of the report are yet to be



after receiving an adverse state-laboratory test report on the product, the Economic Times reported.

The move came after the product was tested at the central food lab that found

known.

Incidentally, this is the same lab that found almost two years ago lead levels above permissible limits, and the presence of MSG in the samples of Nestle

Maggi noodles.

According to a report by PTI, CSD has immediately suspended the sale of the particular batch of the item and sent a show cause notice to the company to examine the deviations and explain about them. They said "further action" will be taken on receipt of reply from the firm. The CSD had sent samples of Amla Juice having index no. 85417 and batch No. GH1502 to the laboratory in Kolkata, they said. The Patanjali Ayurveda said its amla juice is an ayurvedic medicine and test on it should be conducted as per the norms of the AYUSH ministry. The firm said norms prescribed by the country's food regulator—Food Safety and Standards Authority of India—were not applicable to the juice. The latest development could hurt the Patanjali's image as its Amla juice was the product that helped

it strengthen its foothold in the Indian consumer market. However, Patanjali Ayurved has not reacted yet to the news.

This is the second time when Patanjali is facing such adverse situation. Last year in December, a local court in Haridwar slapped Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved's five production units with a fine of Rs 11 lakh for "misbranding and putting up misleading advertisements" of their products. Patanjali Ayurved was found guilty of misbranding as the products being shown by the company as produced at its own units were in fact manufactured somewhere else. A case had been filed in the court against the company in 2012 by the District Food Safety Department after samples of mustard oil, salt, pineapple jam, besan and honey produced by Patanjali had failed quality tests at Rudrapur laboratory.



India is fifth largest military spender with outlay of \$55.9 bn: SIPRI

India was at fifth place on the list of the world's highest spenders on defence in 2016 as global military expenditure rose for a second consecutive year to \$1,686 billion, according to a new report.

New Delhi's military expenditure grew by 8.5% last year to \$55.9 billion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's annual report on defence spending.

The United States remained at the top of the list, with its military spending growing by 1.7% between 2015 and 2016 to \$611 billion. Military expenditure by

China, the second largest spender, increased by 5.4% to \$215 billion, a "much lower rate of growth than in previous years", the report said.

Russia hiked its spending by 5.9% to \$69.2 billion, making it the third largest spender. Saudi Arabia was the third largest spender in 2015 but dropped to fourth position in 2016 as its spending fell by 30% to \$63.7 billion despite its involvement in regional conflicts.

Total global military expenditure in 2016 rose by 0.4% over 2015 in real terms, according to the new figures from SIPRI.

In February, India hiked its allocation for defence in 2017-18 by 6% to Rs 2.74 lakh crore, including Rs 86,488 crore for modernisation. However, experts said the modest increase could hurt the military's modernisation plans, crucial to keeping up with China's expanding might.

India's military spending has averaged an annual increase of 10% during the past three years, much to the disappointment of the military that is struggling to scale up its capabilities. The armed forces are currently negotiating several big-ticket deals for Rafale fighter jets, Apache, Chinook and Kamov helicopters and the M-777 lightweight howitzers.

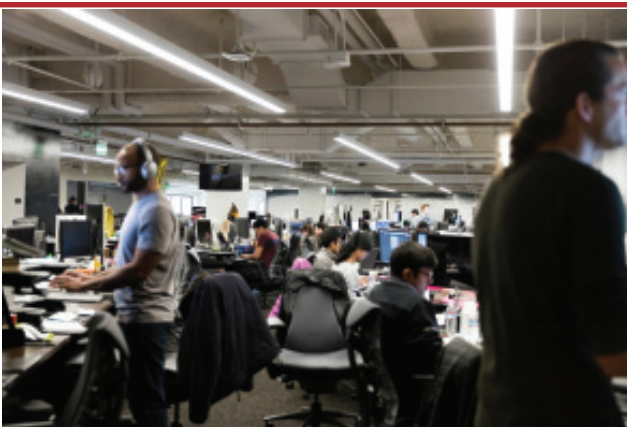
The SIPRI report also said military spending in North America saw its first annual increase since 2010, while spending in Western Europe grew for the second consecutive year.

Global military expenditure rose for a second consecutive year to a total of \$1686 billion, marking the first consecutive annual increase since 2011, when spending reached a peak of \$1,699 billion. The report said spending continued to grow in Asia and Oceania, Central and Eastern Europe and North Africa. By contrast, spending fell in Central America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, South America and sub-Saharan Africa. "The growth in US military expenditure in 2016 may sig-

nal the end of a trend of decreases in spending, which resulted from the economic crisis and the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and Iraq," the report said. US spending last year remained 20% lower than its peak in 2010. "Despite continuing legal restraints on the overall US budget, increases in military spending were agreed upon by Congress," said Aude Fleurant, director of the SIPRI Arms and Military Expenditure (AMEX) programme. Military expenditure in Western Europe rose by 2.6% in 2016 and experts said this was linked to growing threat perceptions. There were spending increases in all but three countries in the region. Italy recorded the

highest increase, with spending rising by 11%.

"The growth in spending by many countries in Central Europe can be partly attributed to the perception of Russia posing a greater threat," said Siemon Wezeman, senior researcher with the SIPRI AMEX programme. There were also large falls in military spending by many oil-exporting countries. "Falling oil revenue and associated economic problems attached to the oil-price shock has forced many oil-exporting countries to reduce military spending," said Nan Tian, a researcher with SIPRI. "For example, between 2015 and 2016, Saudi Arabia had the biggest absolute decrease in spending of \$25.8 billion."



Uber's C.E.O. Plays With Fire

Travis Kalanick's drive to win in life has led to a pattern of risk-taking that has at times put his ride-hailing company on the brink of implosion.

Travis Kalanick, the chief executive of Uber, visited Apple's headquarters in early 2015 to meet with Timothy D. Cook, who runs the iPhone maker. It was a session that Mr. Kalanick was dreading.

For months, Mr. Kalanick had pulled a fast one on Apple by directing his employees to help camouflage the ride-hailing app from Apple's engineers. The reason? So Apple would not find out that Uber had been secretly identifying and tagging iPhones even after its app had been deleted and the devices erased — a fraud detection maneuver that violated Apple's privacy guidelines.

But Apple was onto the deception, and when Mr. Kalanick arrived at the midafternoon meeting sporting his favorite pair of bright red sneakers and hot-

pink socks, Mr. Cook was prepared. "So, I've heard you've been breaking some of our rules," Mr. Cook said in his calm, Southern tone. Stop the trickery, Mr. Cook then demanded, or Uber's app would be kicked out of Apple's App Store.

For Mr. Kalanick, the moment was fraught with tension. If Uber's app was yanked from the App Store, it would lose access to millions of iPhone customers — essentially destroying the ride-hailing company's business. So Mr. Kalanick acceded.

In a quest to build Uber into the world's dominant ride-hailing entity, Mr. Kalanick has openly disregarded many rules and norms, backing down only when caught or cornered. He has flouted transportation and safety regulations, bucked against entrenched

competitors and capitalized on legal loopholes and gray areas to gain a business advantage. In the process, Mr. Kalanick has helped create a new transportation industry, with Uber spreading to more than 70 countries and gaining a valuation of nearly \$70 billion, and its business continues to grow. But the previously unreported encounter with Mr. Cook showed how Mr. Kalanick was also responsible for risk-taking that pushed Uber beyond the pale, sometimes to the very brink of implosion.

Crossing that line was not a one-off for Mr. Kalanick. According to interviews with more than 50 current and former Uber employees, investors and others with whom the executive had personal relationships, Mr. Kalanick, 40, is driven to the point that he must win at whatever he puts his mind to and at

whatever cost — a trait that has now plunged Uber into its most sustained set of crises since its founding in 2009.

"Travis's biggest strength is that he will run through a wall to accomplish his goals," said Mark Cuban, the Dallas Mavericks owner and billionaire investor who has mentored Mr. Kalanick. "Travis's biggest weakness is that he will run through a wall to accomplish his goals. That's the best way to describe him." A blindness to boundaries is not uncommon for Silicon Valley entrepreneurs. But in Mr. Kalanick, that led to a pattern of repeatedly going too far at Uber, including the duplicity with Apple, sabotaging competitors and allowing the company to use a secret tool called Greyball to trick some law enforcement agencies.

That quality also extended to his personal life,

where Mr. Kalanick mixes with celebrities like Jay Z and businessmen including President Trump's chief economic adviser, Gary D. Cohn. But it has alienated some Uber executives, employees and advisers. Mr. Kalanick, with salt-and-pepper hair, a fast-paced walk and an iPhone practically embedded in his hand, is described by friends as more at ease with data and numbers (some consider him a math savant) than with people.

Uber is grappling with the fallout. For the last few months, the company has been reeling from allegations of a machismo-fueled workplace where managers routinely overstepped verbally, physically and sometimes sexually with employees. Mr. Kalanick compounded that image by engaging in a shouting match with an Uber driver in February, an incident recorded by the driver and then

leaked online. (Mr. Kalanick now has a private driver.)

The damage has been extensive. Uber's detractors have started a grassroots campaign with the hashtag #deleteUber. Executives have streamed out. Some Uber investors have openly criticized the company.

Mr. Kalanick's leadership is at a precarious point. While Uber is financed by a who's who of investors including Goldman Sachs and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, Mr. Kalanick controls the majority of the company's voting shares with a small handful of other close friends, and has stacked Uber's board of directors with many who are invested in his success. Yet board members have concluded that he must change his management style, and are pressuring him to do so.

AIADMK Could Split Into 4 Factions; What To Expect

(but it will take a little while longer to figure out what has happened at the gram panchayat level because those elections are held without party symbols but with fierce competition at the grassroots between the major political parties). Hence, little doubt will remain about which way the wind is blowing once the local body results are out. Indeed, there is little doubt even now that the DMK-led alliance will be in the clear lead, more than enough to persuade eight EPS MLAs to jump ship. Indeed, there may well be a Gadarene rush from the AIADMK end of the Dravidian spectrum to the DMK end because most AIADMK MLAs are first-timers owing to Amma's deliberate policy of keeping her flock in the fold by denying tickets to experienced hands and believing that MLAs are and should be lambs pretending to be sheep. A huge share of the current crop of AIADMK MLAs can barely yet believe that they have been plucked from obscurity - before being returned, of course, to that same obscurity once they had served Amma's purpose.

It was a deliberate strategy

to keep a second-line leadership from growing. Now that she is no more, it is the very absence of any line of succession that is causing all the confusion. Sasikala believed the growing restiveness in her ranks could be quelled by anointing herself General Secretary (the highest position in the AIADMK) and then appointing OPS as her figure-head Chief Minister, much in the manner Amma had repeatedly done. But apparently after someone (in saffron?) persuaded her that the courts would look more benevolently on a Chief Minister than a mere General Secretary, she sowed the seeds of her own destruction by replacing OPS with herself. Not only were the courts not amused, the worm turned and she found herself fighting a rearguard action from behind bars. That rearguard action consisted principally of putting EPS in charge while quarantining all her MLAs except the few that flew the cuckoo's nest.

EPS won his vote of confidence handsomely but remained under siege because all it would take for the reprieve to end was for eight of his camp to

defect. Were that to happen, neither all the Queen's horses nor all the Queen's men would be able to put Humpty-Dumpty together again. The time, therefore, had come for the Queen to put a surrogate regent in her place. She chose a thoroughly reliable close relative, TTV Dinakaran, not only promoting him as her Man on the Spot, but also fielding him as her candidate in the prestigious RK Nagar seat lying vacant as a result of the demise of the incumbent, J Jayalalithaa. Dinakaran's election from Amma's own constituency, she conjectured, would give him a political legitimacy he has certainly not earned in AIADMK circles. His credentials for the job were seen by the faithful as being anchored principally in his sure knowledge of where the loot lay. From the party's Alladin's cave, the treasures were brought out till the Dhritarashtra-like eyes of the Election Commission were forced open when the going rate rose to Rs. 4,000 a vote! (Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the famed philosopher and second Rashtrapati, must be immensely grateful in Paradise to the Election Commission for

having saved his name and reputation by cancelling the election). The final quietus was delivered when the Election Commission linked Rs. 1.5 crore found in an intermediary's hotel room in New Delhi to a plot to bribe its members into giving a favourable verdict on Dinakaran and restoring the "two leaves" symbol to the Sasikala/EPS wing of the erstwhile AIADMK. Even EPS and his cohort came out against Dinakaran and agreed that he and Sasikala should be "distanced" from the party. Feelers were sent out to OPS to return home (ghar wapsi); yet, hard-core differences remain not only unresolved, but also aggravated. OPS insists on his precondition that Sasikala and Dinakaran be sacked from the party. Insisting that her "election" as Election Commission was not in accord with the AIADMK constitution. EPS baulks at actually expelling Amma's closest friend and companion.

That becomes the main stumbling block in EPS accepting OPS' second precondition for merger talks to commence, namely, OPS' demand for a probe into the circumstances of

Amma's death. Her being kept completely isolated from everyone other than Sasikala and her doctors in her last 75 days, and the unseemly haste with which she was buried, are regarded among her impassioned core supporters as circumstantial evidence that her death was "unnatural". Among her voters, it is widely believed that Jayalalithaa was poisoned - and a wild rumour circulates that Sasikala was complicit in this assassination. What feeds this otherwise unbelievable rumour is Jayalalithaa herself having removed Sasikala from her Poes Garden residence when doctors informed her some years ago that toxic substances in her blood stream were causing her to feel unwell. Since Sasikala was wholly and solely in charge of her diet, suspicion grew in Jayalalithaa's mediaeval mind that the dreaded deed must be the doing of Sasikala. Summarily, Sasikala was sent packing from Poes Garden, and ordered to take with her the "Mannargudi Mafia" (the clan named after her home town that she was shamelessly promoting).

Meet the court on the Mexican border

Collis White, warned that a guilty plea would mean jail time and they couldn't return to the United States legally for years.

Speaking in Spanish, each of the 15 men said they understood and took their chances. They faced up to six months in jail, but most were sentenced to just a few days.

The men had the misfortune of landing in America's toughest courthouse when it comes to dealing with people who cross the border illegally.

In other jurisdictions, authorities routinely skip the criminal charges and simply order quick deportations. But for the last decade, just about everyone arrested near Del Rio gets prosecuted.

That tough approach is a model President Donald Trump hopes to replicate as part of his sweeping plans to stop illegal immigration, the cornerstone of his campaign. He wants to prosecute many more people caught crossing the

border illegally.

Doing so wouldn't be cheap. Immigration cases already account for more than half of federal prosecutions.

Trump is seeking hundreds of million dollars more for more jail cells, prosecutors and marshals to transport prisoners. It's unclear if Congress will give him the money.

Civil libertarians object to the prosecutions, saying those arrested are rushed through the legal system without having a chance to exercise their rights.

And a previous attempt to expand the Del Rio approach had mixed results. Prosecutions spiked at the end of the Bush administration and during the first few years of the Obama administration, but later declined.

Part of the decline is likely because of the drop in arrests at the border. But limited resources, including jail space to house people and prosecutors to try cases, were also issues.

Still, Trump administration officials have made clear they plan to press ahead. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly made the point as they've been touring the border in recent weeks, saying that those who enter the United States illegally will be arrested, prosecuted and deported.

Earlier this month, the Justice Department released a memo calling on prosecutors to appoint border security coordinators in every judicial district.

'This is a new era. This is the Trump era,' Sessions said during a visit to the border in Nogales, Arizona, this month. In White's Del Rio courtroom each case of someone charged with crossing the border illegally was handled in under a minute. Only one was sentenced to more than a few days - a man who had been deported in 2013 was sentenced to 120 days in prison.

Why India Should Not Be Vegetarian

This is why I would not support a ban on meat or leather. By doing this, we are literally taking away half the potential income the livestock owner possesses. It is stealing from the poor, nothing less. Just imagine if the government entered our homes and took away half our assets or made them valueless. What would we say? Banning meat is cruel demonetisation. But I do also understand that religious sentiments are strong. These demand that cattle (not buffalo) should not be killed. In this case, the answer is to buy back each cow from the farmer, build large gaushalas that can take care of them; and find ways of dealing with the remains so that even after death, no product is sold or used. The answer is not militant vegetarianism. The answer is definitely not vandalism and violence.

Zombies of Voodoo Economics

pro-growth effects of tax cuts. Oh, and let's not forget recent experiences at the state level. Sam Brownback, governor of Kansas, slashed taxes in what he called a "real live experiment" in conservative fiscal policy. But the growth he promised never came, while a fiscal crisis did. At the same time, Jerry Brown's California raised taxes, leading to proclamations from the right that the state was committing "economic suicide"; in fact, the state has experienced impressive employment and economic growth.

In other words, supply-side economics is a classic example of a zombie doctrine: a view that should have been killed by the evidence long ago, but just keeps shambling along, eating politicians' brains. Why, then, does it persist? Because it offers a rationale for lower taxes on the wealthy — and as Upton Sinclair noted long ago, it's difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it. Still, Donald Trump was supposed to be different. Guess what: he isn't. To be fair, it's not clear whether Mr. Trump really believes in right-wing economic orthodoxy. He may just be looking for something, anything, he can call a win — and it's a lot easier to come up with a tax reform plan if you don't try to make things add up, if you just assume that extra growth and the revenue it brings will materialize out of thin air. We might also note that a man who insists that he won the popular vote he lost, who insists that crime is at a record high when it's at a record low, doesn't need a fancy doctrine to claim that his budget adds up when it doesn't. Still, the fact is that the Trump agenda so far is absolutely indistinguishable from what one might have expected from, say, Ted Cruz. It's just voodoo with extra bad math. Was that what his supporters expected?

Kashmir unrest

(Agencies) It is frightening. It is uncomfortable for policymakers in Delhi who feed themselves on half-truths. It is a dangerous reality for 'nationalists'. But it is a fact that no one denies: Kashmir is sitting on a powder-keg.

The flare-up in Pulwama and the continuing student protests could well become the matchstick needed to set the Valley aflame, again. One watches with bewilderment and awe when girl students, barely out of their teens, hit the streets, raise slogans of freedom, throw stones and out of sheer frustration, kick bulletproof vehicles to vent their anger at police and paramilitary forces on the streets — the face of bad times in Kashmir these days.

In seven years of chronicling street protests of Kashmir, I have seen on countless occasions middle-aged women as part of the protests, but very rarely witnessed incidents in which they threw stones. But never before have I seen or heard, except for the decade I spent outside the Valley, young teenage girls as equal members of the protesting groups who throw stones at forces, march on the streets and raise slogans with equal pitch. It is a spectacle.

The sense of alienation and resentment among both young men and women is too deep. The protests might subside in few days but the scars are too deep to heal so soon. On Monday morning, before hundreds of students hit the streets and pro-freedom cries pierced the cool air in Srinagar, the Kashmir Police had done a spectacular job of keeping them at bay and confined within the four walls of the SP Higher Secondary and College.

But then the slogans soon filled Lal Chowk, the city centre, and the thuds of exploding tear-gas canisters created panic. The streets of Lal Chowk turned into a battleground within minutes. Those boys and men who throw stones and participate in protests on a regular basis must have been watching in awe the way these teenage girls were giving a tough time to the police.

So are we missing something here? How come we reached the point of absolute lawlessness today? Are these protests just an outburst of anger or is there something deep here that we are failing to observe? Or don't want to,

because it's not convenient? Why hasn't Pakistan been blamed for "funding" these "agitational terrorists"?

It is not that the students have not protested previously. It is not important how many colleges and universities are part of this student uprising that is building slowly and steadily. What is important is why students are on the streets in the first place. Incidents like the one at Degree College Pulwama have occurred in the past too. Why has the reaction been so violent this time around?

"We had a reason to fight the Indian State for 100 years, but now the country has provided us with enough suffering to hate it for thousands of years," Akib Nisar, a Class XII student in SP

School told me on Monday morning.

The anger, frustration and sense of loss is building up and it is much dangerous than the armed militancy. If this agitation survives a few more days in Srinagar and the forces that have shown extreme restraint so far decide that enough is enough, mark my words, Kashmir is going to see another uprising and this time, it will be bigger and led by students themselves, leaderless and more chaotic than we have seen previously.

The new generation of Kashmiris are brutal and blunt in their utterances; they hate political correctness. They are not afraid of dying: The fear of death is long gone. Today, death is a wish in the Valley. It tragically brings you fame and gives another reason for future generations to never forget what India has done. The sense of fearfulness has gone from most of the

youths today and the Indian State should worry now before it gets out of hand.

Most of the boys and girls you see on television screens these days were born much after the insurgency broke out. They have only seen guns, violence, funerals, militants and forces in their life. Their social media feeds are full of political brutalisation. As for what normal life means, they know nothing about it.

No amount of 'Khelo India', no 'Tourism versus Terrorism' binary, no 'your role model versus mine' worries them. They are against the status quo. They want their leaders to deliver. If they fail them, they don't shy away from writing or criticising even a tall leader like Syed Ali Shah Geelani, and that too openly on social media platforms. Like the generation born just before the insurgency erupted, they are not shy or cowardly. They have

grown up in times of crack-downs, torture and illegal detention. My generation would look for ways to run when an army vehicle would approach, but today's generation runs after these vehicles and throw stones at them.

So when even their own, supposedly "freedom-loving" student unions call to return to their classrooms, they defy it. Even a shout by Kashmir's most popular separatist leader like Geelani has not brought them back to class. On Geelani's call, even mainstream political leaders used to shut their shops. But this is another generation of Kashmiris, a generation that likes playing the guitar, but songs of defiance and freedom. They will play the santoor and even a run-down traditional rabab, and the songs are anything but pro-India.

We are losing this generation rapidly to disillusionment and hatred. We must act before it's too late.

Ugly Fraud In Fairness

which Nikhil believed would eventually make his skin tone lighter with diligent use, hadn't made a whit of a difference in years. For a looks-conscious young adult, this naturally was cause for a great deal of frustration. But Paras, who had just been initiated into the world of torts and the Consumer Protection Act, saw more than a random failure. For him, this was a "seriously unfair trade practice". How is it, he muttered to himself, that cosmetic companies get away with "lies, damn lies".

The budding lawyer decided to step into the courts even before he was a graduate. Since it didn't require a lawyer to initiate a plea in a consumer court, Paras did the honours himself and sued Emami Ltd for selling a product (Fair and Handsome) that just wouldn't do what it promised to. "The first thing that came to my mind is...this is unfair, this is cheating. Fairness creams don't work," he says. What's worse, Emami Ltd claimed the product had a 'technology'—which they called "American peptide"—that ensured it settled deep into the skin and made a person fair in four weeks flat.

The product he had taken on had created for itself a big brand cachet. In a now-withdrawn ad for Fair and Handsome, Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan is seen talking about how he toiled to make it big as a movie star. He then tosses a tube of Fair and Handsome to a dark-looking man, suggesting it would help him get ahead in life. In real life, thousands of Nikhils would have fallen for it.

"I was keen on seeing how a judge would look at this. So I pleaded before the district consumer court that Emami had duped my brother with its product," Paras said.

Things got interesting when Emami joined the case and claimed there was scientific evidence to demonstrate its product worked. It submitted tests from private labs and individual experts. But the verdict by the north Delhi district consumer court in 2015, not surprisingly, was damning. "It uses the word 'gorapan' in advertisement No. 1, which means 'fair complexion'," the court ruled. "This is in direct contrast with the defence taken by the OP (opposing party, i.e. Emami Ltd) wherein it has claimed that the use of the product improves the health and quality of skin by providing protection and nourishment to the facial and neck skin which are more exposed to the vagaries of nature: sunlight, dust, wind, etc."

Then came the operative part of the damning verdict. "We are therefore of the considered opinion that the advertisements published by the OP as referred to above make a misrepresentation to the public at large about the effectiveness of the product to change the complexion of the skin from dark to wheatish or wheatish to fair."

The consumer forum ordered Emami to pay damages of Rs 15 lakh, besides Rs 10,000 towards legal costs. Since the company's lawyer had argued that the case may have been brought with an eye on lucrative compensation money, Paras said he did not want

a paisa other than the cost of litigation of two years. The court then asked Emami to deposit the Rs 15 lakh in the state-run consumer welfare fund. It also asked Emami to withdraw all ads with the "fairness" hook. Emami, which has gone into appeal at the next level of consumer courts, did not respond to Outlook's e-mail query.

Black Science?

All this while, scientific evidence has been in plenty short supply on whether fairness creams work at all—and if so, how. Globally, few studies have been carried out to discern if cosmetic non-prescription products can have an impact on skin tone. Not a very satisfactory situation from a consumer rights point of view because, as market research firm Euromonitor International says, the potential market is still very large as "products still have only a limited penetration".

A May 2016 report by Euromonitor, titled 'Beauty and Personal Care in India', says demand is being driven by factors such as "rising disposable incomes, increasing product penetration, the growth of modern retailers, increasing awareness of beauty and personal care products, the rising aspirations of consumers, and strong economic growth". As a result, it states, the industry's constant value growth over the forecast period is expected to be higher than during the review period. Firms such as L'Oreal, Unilever, Lakme, Maybellene, Emami and Nivea control a majority of the sales pie.

The science, however, is sketchy. "There is not much study possible anyway in the West because you can't test their efficacy on people who are naturally fair. So, whatever study you have to do, you have to do on Asian skin types," says Dr Monika Agarwal, who teaches pharmacology at New Delhi's Maulana Azad Medical College.

Agarwal and her colleague Vandana Roy conducted a landmark clinical study to test the efficacy of fairness products. Their results were published in the peer-reviewed Indian Journal of Clinical Practice in 2012. Its objective was to assess the composition, pharmacological basis of various constituents, cost and scientific evidence for claims made for the efficacy of three commonly used fairness creams. For reasons of objectivity, the brands weren't disclosed. The total number of individual constituents was 54; of these, 14 were common in all three creams, while seven more were common in two creams. The study recorded 22 pharmacological actions.

About 85 per cent of the ingredients in fairness creams are sunscreens, moisturisers, skin softeners and emollients or opacifying agents. It is the opacifying agents in a fairness cream that make users appear instantly brighter. Only 15 per cent of the constituents directly affected melanin synthesis—and on a temporary basis at that. This means their chemical activity has some short-term potential to suppress melanin, the pigment that makes people appear dark.

India's New Face

Until he became chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Adityanath, 45, was primarily known as a firebrand Hindu leader who had created a volunteer force, the Hindu Yuva Vahini, or Vehicle for Hindu Youth, a group repeatedly accused of stoking and participating in religious violence. The best chronicled of such incidents took place in 2007 in Gorakhpur, Mr. Adityanath's hometown, in eastern Uttar Pradesh. After the death of a Hindu youth in clashes between Hindus and Muslims on the day of the Shia festival of Moharram, Mr. Adityanath publicly addressed his men: "In times to come, if one Hindu is killed, we won't go to the police. Instead we will make sure we will kill 10 Muslims." He was arrested and kept in custody for 15 days after his men destroyed a roadside Sufi shrine and violated prohibitory orders.

Some rather craven sections of the Indian press have been at work to build a softer public persona for Mr. Adityanath since he assumed office. A report in one of India's largest-selling English language newspapers spoke of his pets: the calves Gauri, Ganga, Narmada and Yamuna, and the dog Raja. The paper described how Mr. Adityanath's pets have become restive in his absence as they await a move to his official residence. A journalist working for a major television network, who claims to specialize in reporting conflict, tweeted Mr. Adityanath's visit to his cowshed: "Several calves ran to Yogi Adityanath as he reached and

gave them Gur (jaggery) and their feed." Photo essays of Mr. Adityanath and his calves were published by numerous newspapers.

Mr. Adityanath rose to power because of his association with the Gorakhnath sect, a 1,000-year-old Hindu sect with its headquarters in Gorakhpur. Mr. Adityanath is the current head of the sect. In 1998, when Mr. Adityanath was 26, he was designated as the religious and political successor to Mahant Avaidyanath, the previous head of the sect. Mr. Avaidyanath joined the Bharatiya Janata Party and was elected to the Indian Parliament three times as its candidate from Gorakhpur from 1989 to 1998. He had already been elected to the Parliament once in the 1970s from another Hindu party. Mr. Adityanath succeeded him to the Indian Parliament in 1998 and became head of the sect after Mr. Avaidyanath's death in 2014.

The Gorakhnath sect's overt involvement with the politics of the Hindu right began in 1935 when Digvijai Nath, an orphan who had been brought to the sect at age 8, came to lead it. In 1939, Mr. Nath joined the Hindu Mahasabha, a body formed in 1909 to safeguard the interest of "all Hindus." Initially, its leadership included senior members of the Congress, but this changed when Vir Savarkar, an early-20th-century Hindu radical thinker, took over. After the assassination of Mohandas Gandhi, Digvijai Nath, along with Mr. Savarkar, was arrested for a speech he had given three days before calling for Mr. Gandhi's murder. They were let off on grounds of in-

sufficient evidence to connect them to the assassination. A year after his release from jail, Mr. Nath told a newspaper that if his party attained power, "it would deprive the Muslims of the right to vote for five to 10 years

Mr. Adityanath, the Uttar Pradesh chief minister and the new poster boy of Hindu nationalism, has inherited this worldview. These exclusionary ideas sit well with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who led the B.J.P. campaign in the Uttar Pradesh elections. The campaign combined a pitch that promised economic development with a divisive message that targeted the Muslim minority. Muslims constitute 20 percent of the state's population. Mr. Modi's party did not field a single Muslim candidate; it won 313 of the 403 seats in the state legislature.

Most Indian analysts saw the divisiveness of the campaign as a ploy to win the elections so that Mr. Modi could get on with the job of governance with a strengthened mandate. But the selection of Mr. Adityanath is a reminder of the willful blindness on the part of the Indian commentariat to the essential nature of Mr. Modi's party. The choice had much to do with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, or National Volunteers Association (R.S.S.), the parent body of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The R.S.S., which was founded in 1925, is unambiguous about its aim of transforming India into a Hindu nation, where India's non-Hindu minorities would have a secondary status.

Ethics is the answer

Neither am I blind to Gandhi's paradoxes, like his life-long demonisation of sexuality. His insistence on chastity puts him in the same irrational, patriarchal boat as the priests, monks and nuns of many world religions. And yet, by introducing the charkha as a weapon of non-violent resistance, Gandhi brought thousands of women into the mainstream of the Indian freedom movement.

Can Gandhi's Sarva Dharma Samabhava (all religions are equal) take the place of Ambedkar's constitutionally guaranteed democratic rights? I think not. We need the Constitution much more than we need holy books. And yet, as many in our country are still hooked to holy books and unholy pretenders, we need liberation theologians who can help people discard the worst features of their inherited religious culture and replace them with ethical, non-exclusivist interpretations. Waiting for everyone to become rationalists may take centuries. Ethics is the answer. Small wonder that Ambedkar and Gandhi, each in turn arrived at individual definitions of ahimsa.

Egalitarian humanists at heart, their affinities are greater than their differences. Take the act of "satyagraha", a term coined by Gandhi. Ambedkar used this very term and form of struggle to launch his Mahad Satyagraha to claim drinking water rights. There are many other examples of common ideas and action. I was pleasantly shocked to read what Ambedkar had to say in 1932 immediately after concluding the now-infamous Poona Pact (where the idea of separate electorates for Dalits was abandoned in favour of reserved seats for Dalits). The popular theory is that Ambedkar was blackmailed by Gandhi's fast-unto-death into accepting a bitter compromise. But Ambedkar's tone in 1932 after signing the pact was totally different. He had high praise for Gandhi and stated that the "Mahatma" (yes, contrary to popular belief, Ambedkar used the term "Mahatma" at this point) offered a much better deal for Dalits in terms of reserved seats than Ambedkar himself had asked or hoped for. There is no denying that Ambedkar did get disgusted with the Congress in later years. How much of the blame for the failures of the Congress is attributable to Gandhi is questionable. We know that Gandhi's writ did not work in

preventing Partition or the bloodshed that preceded and followed it, and that Gandhi did not attend the flag hoisting on Independence Day. He was busy fighting the communal inferno in the countryside.

Gandhi had a lot of obscurantist ideas to start with, but, as time went by, he kept evolving. In the end, I see him as a great humanist who died for his belief in non-violence and universality. He was also an inventive anti-imperialist (though much earlier, he had supported the British Empire) and an organic naturalist that today's consumerist, globally warmed world desperately needs.

Throughout his life, Ambedkar fought for reason and justice without resorting to violence. Today, his followers, like the Ambedkar Students Association, are leading the resistance against religious and caste hatred.

North Korea on a bun

What the legendary Koryo Burger tells us about the isolated nation, and ourselves

On Air Koryo, North West's fascination with the Koryo Burger says less about the Koryo Burger than it does about the West? The burger is "huge" in terms of public fascination, said Simon Cockerell, general manager of the Beijing-based travel company Koryo Tours. "It's something that people are absolutely blown away by. And it's a piece of meat between two buns." (Koryo refers to an old Korean dynasty; the two companies are unrelated).

The burger is always served cold, and always on a paper doily. Inside the bun is a piece of unidentified meat, a slice of processed cheese, a dash of shredded cabbage or a lonely lettuce leaf, and a dollop of sweet, brown sauce. The "Koryo Burger" features in countless Instagram feeds and online reviews, not many of them complimentary. It has "gained cult status among passengers," the British tabloid Daily Mail remarked in 2015. Many wonder: Why a burger, of all things? What's with the doily? What exactly is that meat?

"The Air Koryo burger was the worst example of soft power I've ever tasted," said Alec Ash, a writer in Beijing who sampled the burger on a flight to North Korea last year. But there's another side to the phenomenon. What if the

The burger is "huge" in terms of public fascination, said Simon Cockerell, general manager of the Beijing-based travel company Koryo Tours. "It's something that people are absolutely blown away by. And it's a piece of meat between two buns." (Koryo refers to an old Korean dynasty; the two companies are unrelated).

"I think it's just the incongruity of having a burger on a quote-unquote 'communist' plane," added Cockerell, who has visited North Korea 161 times in the past 15 years. "But what else would they serve? You can't give everyone a bibimbap (a Korean mixed rice dish), and serving kimchi on a plane would be horrifying. 'I think it's just that North Korea, to tourists, is so inherently sinister and funny at the same time,' he continued. 'That 'Oh,



my God, it's a burger!' — that'd be an absurd reaction on any other airline. But on Air Koryo, it's a normal thing to do."

The meat, Cockerell added, is chicken. If true, that would settle years of speculation on the Internet that until now had never managed to end in a verdict. (A man who picked up the phone at Air Koryo's Beijing office confirmed that the airline "normally" serves burgers. He could not confirm the type of meat).

From 1994 to 1998, North Korea was ravaged by famine. Hundreds of thousands of people starved to death, according to best estimates. People ate bark and leaves to survive. Although malnutrition remains common in North Korea, starvation is now rare.

Since the Communist country's public food distribution system collapsed in the mid-1990s, its citizens — with the state's tacit approval — have turned to the gray market to survive. Supermarkets have proliferated — as have restaurants. Some sell Western meals.

"If you have a growing capitalist economy, somebody is buying jets and diamonds, and somebody is eating a nice protein-rich meal every day," said Andrei Lankov, a North Korea expert at Kookmin University in Seoul. "Of course they are not buying diamonds constantly, and a protein-rich meal is still beyond the means of most people — even if the diet of the masses is improving fast."

Now, desi doodh is the new health fad



(Agencies) The best reason to save the desi cow has nothing to do with bovine politics. It is milk. Desi doodh, or A2 milk from indigenous cows, is becoming the latest health fad, with small dairies and big brands like Amul entering the market.

Much of the cow milk available

in the market is A1, from cross-bred or foreign cows. Though research is not conclusive, some studies have shown that A1 can trigger inflammation in the body, potentially leading to ailments like diabetes and heart disease. A2, on the other hand, has found favour with the health-

conscious and the lactose-intolerant who say it is easy to digest.

In fact, it's already got takers abroad. A Sydney-based company, a2 Milk Company, has found an international following in New Zealand and China and is expanding to the United States. Back home, Amul has responded to the new interest in A2. It recently launched a premium desi cow milk product in Ahmedabad and plans to add the Surat market next. However, Amul managing director R S Sodhi admits that the market is niche. "When you want to sell it at a premium price, the market is very small. But gradually, awareness is growing."

A small but growing band of dairy farmers is also catering to this new market. V Shivakumar,

a former Wall Street programmer, realized the difficulties of sourcing A2 milk because of a lactose-intolerant newborn. He went on to form the Coimbatore-based Kongu Goshala to preserve Tamil Nadu's Kangeyam and Tiruchengodu breeds. He also runs a mobile app Kongu Maddu, where people can place orders for A2 milk. Gurgaon-based Back2basics breeds Gir cows for A2 milk which it supplies to households in Delhi, Noida and Gurgaon. When retired market researcher Titoo Ahluwalia first started keeping cows at his farm in Nandgaon, a coastal village near Mumbai, he was more interested in generating dung for his organic vegetables and ensuring his children grew up around "these gentle, giving animals". When he read up on desi

cows, he realised the benefits of the milk. "Regrettably, many desi varieties of cow are already close to extinction," says Ahluwalia. While most dairy owners deny any problems related to consumption of A1 milk, they do admit that local cows are much more in tune with India's climate conditions, and therefore remain healthier. "Desi cows are heat-tolerant and tick-tolerant, and they have good immune systems, so we hope to have more of our European cows cross-breed with them." says Aniket Thorat of Bhagyaxmi Farms in Pune which prides itself on keeping its Holstein-Friesian cows in a controlled space of wellness -that includes playing Indian and western classical music to them and following organic processes.

This ignored move is the quickest way to get abs: Harvard doctors



(Agencies) In the dreams of a glamour body and a washboard tummy, many of us are doing nothing less than 100 crunches a day. If you are one of them, Harvard scientists have news for you: Crunches are not the best way to go about for a six-pack. And they decode what is.

The best way to get a washboard tummy is through planks, not crunches. This was established by a health report titled 'Core Exercises' by Harvard Medical School.

It says that the reason planks may be the more effective way to get a tighter core is because this exercise, unlike crunches which only target abdominal muscles, targets several groups of muscles. These include muscles in your sides, front and back. Only tar-

geting your abdominal muscles will not give the desired strong core.

"Sit-ups or crunches strengthen just a few muscle groups. Through dynamic patterns of movement, a good core workout helps strengthen the entire set of core muscles you use every day," wrote the authors of the Harvard Healthbeat newsletter, in the summary of the report's takeaways. Crunches took a beating not only because of their fewer benefits but also because they can be harsh on your certain body parts. This includes your back as when during a crunch you push against the floor, your back gets under pressure. Also, when you do a sit-up, a group of muscles called the hip flexors, which run from the lumbar vertebrae in your back to your

thighs, work. If it gets over-stressed or too tight, it may yank your spine, leading to pain and discomfort in the lower back. Your guide to do planks The best part about planks is that they do not need any additional equipment, which may be needed in case of crunches. Start by lying down on your face, legs extended backwards, elbows bent directly under your shoulders. Keep your feet hip-width apart and keep your elbows shoulder-width apart. Now, try to keep your core tight and tuck your toes and keep your forearms touched to the ground. Maintain your body to remain in a straight line starting from your head till your heels. Start by holding it for 30 seconds. As you get stronger, you can increase the duration of your plank.

Is your social drinking hurting your liver?

(Agencies) "First the man takes a drink; then the drink takes a drink; then the drink takes the man."

Liver is the second largest human organ. It removes toxins in your body, controls cholesterol levels, fight infections, aids digestion among other key functions. Sadly, liver diseases don't show any signs or symptoms until it reaches an advanced stage.

Dr Amrish Sahney, Associate Consultant, Gastroenterology and Hepatology, BL Kapur Super Specialty Hospital writes about alcoholic liver disease on World Liver Day.

Magnitude of Problem

- Alcohol related toxicity is the third most common cause of morbidity and the fifth most common cause of disease burden worldwide.

- It is the leading cause of mortality in people aged 15-49 years, and the total expenditure amounts to billions of dollars.

- WHO estimates that 140 million people worldwide suffer from alcohol dependency, causing damage to lives and economies.

- The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism recommends that both males and females should not drink more than 28 g and 14 g per day, respectively.

- In addition, steady daily drinking, as compared with binge drinking, appears to be more harmful

- Persistent and heavy for long period more risky than sporadic heavy drinking.

- In USA, 2nd leading cause for liver trans-



plantation is alcoholic cirrhosis.

- In India alcoholic liver disease occurs a decade early compared to west.

- Women had greater susceptibility to ALD at any given level of intake.

What is the spectrum of alcohol related liver disease?

There are three main types: alcoholic fatty liver, alcoholic hepatitis and alcoholic cirrhosis.

Alcoholic cirrhosis leads to complications of ascites, blood in vomitus, liver cancer at advanced stage.

Alcohol related fatty liver

Excess alcohol consumption leads to accumulation of excess fat in the liver in 90% of individuals. This is the earliest stage of alcohol-related liver disease and usually there are no symptoms. Although reversible, cirrhosis may develop in 10% of heavy drinkers.

Patients who drink alcohol and are overweight or have diabetes have a higher risk of progressive liver damage.

Alcoholic hepatitis

In Alcoholic hepatitis, there is inflammation and swelling of the liver. It develops in individuals who are heavy drinkers and those who indulge in binge drinking. Symptoms include loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever and jaundice.

350th Birth Anniversary of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Celebrated At The Indian Consulate



Sikh community leaders with Consul General Riva Ganguly Das and the guest speaker Dr. Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh



A young Sikh boy presented a bouquet on behalf of the community to Dr. Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh



A young girl in Sikh traditional dress presented a bouquet on behalf of the community to Consul General Riva Ganguly Das



Prof. Indrajit S Saluja, President of Indo-US Foundation introduced the program and the Consul General



A view of the audience

New York (Insider Bureau) : The Indian American community and their friends from the mainstream came together, on April 8, to celebrate the 350th birth anniversary of the Tenth Master of the Sikhs, Shri Guru Gobind Singh. It was for the first time that the birthday of a Sikh Master was celebrated at the Indian Consulate in New York. Welcoming the gathering, the Consul General Riva Ganguly Das

characterized Guru Gobind Singh who created Khalsa as the savior of the people against the tyranny of the rulers of the time.

She recalled that as a young girl in Delhi she would often visit with her parents Gurdwara Bangla Sahib and Gurdwara Sisganj Sahib and listen to Gurbani which she found extremely soothing. She said she learnt about the wonderful

traditions of the Sikhs from her visits to gurdwaras and from her readings on Sikhism. Consul General Das, who is a Bengali, said Guru Rabiindra Nath Tagore, one of the greatest writers who was the first Indian to be honored with a Nobel Prize, the greatest name among Bengali writers, and one of the greatest sons of India, was influenced by Guru Nanak and wrote a couple of poems dedi-

cated to the First Sikh Guru. Consul General spoke appreciably of the great contribution of the Sikh community in India and abroad and said she was delighted to host the 350th birth anniversary celebration of Guru Gobind Singh at the Consulate.

She added that she looked forward to many such events being organized to focus on Sikhs. Ambassador Das chose to heap her praise on Prof. Indrajit S Saluja, President of Indo-US Foundation for organizing the event. Welcoming the guest speaker, Dr. Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh, the endowed Crawford Professor of Religious Studies at Colby College, Waterville, Maine, the Consul General said Dr. Singh was a great scholar and an authority on religions and that it was a momentous occasion to have her at the Consulate to speak about the great Sikh Guru. Earlier, welcoming the Consul General Prof. Indrajit

S Saluja said Ambassador Das, in just over a year, had taken significant steps to streamline working at the Consulate, with the result that the image of the Consulate was refurbished. The consular services improved.

Prof. Saluja attributed the rising approval rating of the consular services to the efforts made by the Consul General who has been traveling extensively in all 10 States under her jurisdiction and reaching out to people, under the "Consulate at your doorstep" program. Another significant step she had taken was to reach out to administration and politicians which helped not only in strengthening of relations between the administration and the Indian Community but also in strengthening of relations between the US and India. Dr. Nikky Guninder Kaur Singh spoke at length about the personality and philosophy of Guru Gobind Singh and took questions.

Sequoia Capital invests \$20 million in Awfis, a shared workspace start-up

Shared workplace start-up Awfis Space Solutions will use Sequoia Capital's \$20 million investment to fund its expansion plans

(Agencies) New Delhi: Awfis Space Solutions, a start-up that provides shared workspaces, has raised \$20 million from Sequoia Capital India to fund its expansion plans. Awfis, which operates 21 workplaces across the National Capital Region (NCR), Bengaluru, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Pune and Kolkata, will use the funds to expand to more than 100 centres in two years, the firm said. It plans to raise the total seat count in its centres to 35,000 from about 7,500 now.

Sequoia's investment displays the growing investor interest in the area of shared offices, which has seen a number of branded co-working facilities mushroom in metropolitan cities in the past few years.

Currently, the biggest entities in the segment are 91springboard (present in NCR, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Bengaluru), Y Combinator-incubated Innov8 (Delhi, Chandigarh and Bengaluru) and InstaOffice (Gurgaon, Bengaluru and Delhi), besides smaller region-only firms like CoWork India (Bengaluru), AltF Coworking (Delhi and Gurgaon) and Blume Ventures-backed BHIVE (Bengaluru).

WeWork, a leading shared workspace provider with a presence in 15 countries, has also entered the subcontinent.

The New York-based firm will open its first centre in Bengaluru this year and has leased a 16-storey building, representing almost 190,000 sq. ft area, in Mumbai's

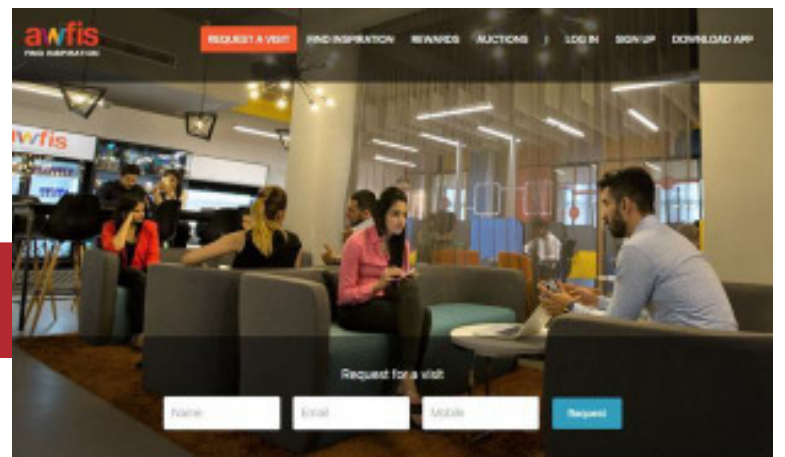
Bandra Kurla Complex, Mint reported in January.

Awfis, which opened its first facility in Delhi in 2015, is a joint venture between Amit Ramani, the founder and managing director of real estate design consulting firm Nelson India, and The Three Sisters: Institutional Office, a family-run investment firm managed by Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor's daughters.

Both parties had invested \$11 million in Awfis in April 2015.

Awfis has since expanded its footprint to six of the eight metros in India, with a facility in Chennai expected to come up in three months, CEO Ramani said.

He said the focus is to place smaller co-working centres in the vicinity of the user rather than to



have fewer big facilities. "We have identified a sweet spot of 350-400 seats per centre, where our unit economics works and this kind of scale gives us the best-suited setting for a community-based environment," Ramani said.

Awfis co-working centres are typically of the size of 15,000-20,000 sq. ft. and offer facilities like high-speed internet, video conferencing and printing and have cafeterias. The space is rented out on a per-seat per-month basis. One seat is priced at Rs3,500-5,500 under the flexi plan (where the seat position is not defined) and Rs8,500-10,000 for a fixed seat. A seat in a pri-

vate cabin starts at Rs13,000; besides clients have the option of booking an entire cabin or meeting room. Awfis takes a property on lease typically for a five-nine year period and invests in its renovation and refurbishment. It has also deployed what it calls a 'managed aggregation model' wherein the property owner offers its property to Awfis for no upfront cost and takes a higher share of the revenue. Ramani said that over 50% of its facilities are on the latter model and expects to sign up at least 70-80% of the new properties on this model. He claims that Awfis spaces see about 90% occupancy.

With Jio, Mukesh Ambani Bets On 'Winner Takes All' Effect



(Agencies) India's most valuable business is earning money hand over fist from oil. Yet what's exciting investors about Reliance Industries Ltd. are its telecoms losses.

Those should go some way toward creating the Indian equivalent of Verizon Communications Inc., the largest U.S. wireless carrier. Or at least that's what the stock's 38 percent jump this year in dollar terms is all about.

Over the past 12 months, Reliance's refinery on India's western coast has garnered \$11 from each barrel of crude oil, beating the Singapore refining benchmark by an impressive \$5 a barrel. With neither domestic gas production nor overseas shale output doing much, Chairman Mukesh Ambani, India's richest man, is betting on his almost-completed investments in refining and petrochemicals to shore up earnings and cash flow. The strategy is working, but it's a mere footnote compared with Ambani's more daring gamble on Reliance Jio, the recently launched telecoms unit that's already supplying more than 1 billion gigabytes of data a month, almost as much as all U.S. networks put together.

While a haul of 100 million users over 170 days isn't to be scoffed at, it's thanks to a free trial that only recently turned into a paid-for (though attractively priced) introductory offer. The steady-state average revenue per user is still the big unknown.

Alibaba launches program to help 1 million U.S. businesses sell to China

(Agencies) SAN FRANCISCO — When Jack Ma, executive chairman of Chinese mega-company Alibaba, met with President Trump in January, he made a promise — the online sales platform would give 1 million U.S. small businesses entrée to the Chinese market.

On Tuesday, Ma will announce he's launching a program to make good on that promise. Alibaba plans a conference in Detroit on June 20 and 21 to teach U.S. businesses how to sell to the company's 443 million customers in China.

The two largest small business markets in the world are the United States and China, and "connecting them seems like a good idea — good for the United States and good for China," Alibaba President Michael Evans told USA TODAY.

While Americans are familiar with the idea that most of their consumer goods come from China, China does import some consumer goods from the United States. Alibaba sees an opportunity to greatly increase those.

Currently, the site has 7,000 U.S. businesses, mostly large companies and big-name brands. Over the next five years, Alibaba hopes to increase that to more than 1 million, with the vast majority made up of small businesses. When Ma met with then president-elect Trump, he said the plan would create 1 million U.S. jobs. As a first step to-



wards that, the company hopes to invite as many as 2,000 U.S. small business owners, entrepreneurs, and farmers to Detroit, focusing on products it believes Chinese consumers want. The aim is three-fold. First, Alibaba needs to educate attendees about the business opportunity that China represents.

Next it plans to tell them how the nuts and bolts work of selling to China is done, everything from finding a partner company in China to the logistics of shipping, to dealing with foreign exchange. Finally it will play matchmaker, introducing Americans to small Chinese businesses that maintain digital storefronts on Alibaba's Tmall site. "We're going to be very involved in the end-to-end process, establishing the connection and the facilitating it," said Evans.



The RS 5 Cabriolet has the elegant look of Audi's other 5-series convertibles, and it is powered by a 450 hp V-8

(Agencies) SINCE its arrival, the Audi 5 series — the standard (A5) and sport (S5) coupés and convertibles — has presented some of the most subtle and elegant shapes on the road. It is a popular choice among technically-inclined, design-conscious drivers who value understatement almost as much as they value performance. Not too big and not too small, the A5 and S5 were conceived with the driver at the top of the mind. The cars fit like gloves and feel as much at home on twisting hill roads as they do on the highways.

It was only a matter of time before Audi provided an even more powerful model for the 5-series sporting set. First came the RS 5 coupé, and then the Cabriolet. Both 2014 RS 5 models replace the 3-litre, supercharged 333 hp V-6 of the S5 with a 4.2-litre, 32-valve aluminium V-8 that develops 450 hp at 8,250 rpm and 430 Nm of torque from 4,000 to 6,000 rpm. The coupé's base price is \$ 69,600; the Cabriolet's is \$ 77,900. The RS 5's mesh grille, flared fenders, and oval exhaust tips are the design elements that subtly distinguish it from the A5 and S5. The Misanored- pearl Cabriolet that Audi provided for a testdrive had optional 20-inch, five-spoke aluminium wheels, plus other trim and navigation upgrades that raised its price to just under \$ 90,000.

The interior offers few thrills — a notable exception being the available 505-watt Bang & Olufsen sound system — but no design faux pas. The 12-way power sport seats, which are also available on the S models, can be a welcome feature on long road trips. They certainly were on the test-drive, which covered the route from Los Angeles to central California's Monterey Peninsula in the US, and back after a visit to the annual classic-car fest at and around Pebble Beach. With the black-fabric roof down during the drive home along the highway, wind buffeting was minimal. With the top up and the car at speed, the cabin was dead quiet. The engine — which is mated to Audi's superb S tronic 7-speed dual-clutch transmission and delivers power through Audi's Quattro all-wheel drive — provides the RS 5 with plenty of speed. The car accelerates from zero to 100 kmph in 4.9 seconds on its way to 280 kmph. The V-8 revs like a banshee, and in sport mode the RS 5 sheds its diplomatic personality and demonstrates an alpha aggression that is more befitting of a single-purpose automobile.

SHOW OF RESTRAINT



Robb Report is considered the world's final word on luxury. It covers supercars, private jets, yachts, bespoke travel, exclusive fashion, watches and jewellery. In India, it is distributed 'By Invitation Only' to a select readership of ultra-high net worth individuals.

The Audi RS 5 Cabriolet displays its power only when provoked



A passion for survival

How reproducing sexually makes us much more resistant to infections

(Agencies) Birds do it, bees do it, and of course, humans. But exactly why we all have sex has been one of the mysteries of science. Now researchers believe they have found the answer. Reproducing sexually makes us much more resistant to infection as we are better able to adapt to the threat of a changing environment.

On the face of it the advantages of reproducing by cloning oneself, as practiced by some animals species such as

komodo dragons and starfish, are many and varied. While it may be less fun, from a human perspective, it removes the need for finding a partner, as well as the potentially awkward business of courtship, wooing and falling in love.

And among humans or animals, sexual displays designed to entice a partner can be elaborate. In humans they may involve driving flashy cars or wearing revealing clothing. In the animal world, flamboyant feathers

or violent clashes of antlers may spring to mind. It is already known that sex allows genes to mix, allowing populations to quickly evolve and adapt to changing environment. However, for sex to beat cloning as a reproduction strategy, there must be 'large-scale benefits' that make a difference to the next generation. But the theory has been difficult to test as most organisms are either wholly sexual or clonal so cannot be compared easily.

To settle the question, researchers from the University of Stirling studied the waterflea, an organism that can produce offspring both sexually, and through cloning. They found that the waterfleas born from sexual reproduction were twice as resistant to infections as those that were born clonally. While some animal and plant species can reproduce without sex, such as starfish and bananas, sex is still the dominant mode of reproduction in the natural world. The researchers studied more than 6,000 waterfleas that had been collected from the wild in



the Scottish Borders. In the laboratory, sexual and clonally produced offspring were harvested from the wild waterfleas and exposed to a bacterial infection that afflicts waterfleas under controlled laboratory conditions.

The sexually produced offspring were more than twice as resistant to the infection as their cloned offspring. Dr Stuart Auld of the university's Faculty of Natural Sciences, said: 'One of the oldest questions in evolutionary biology is, why does sex exist when it uses up so much time and energy? 'Sex explains the presence of the peacock's tail, the stag's antlers and the male bird of paradise's elaborate dance. 'But if a female of any of these species produced offspring on her own, without sex, her offspring should come to dominate, because cloning can double a population with every new generation whereas with mating, females have to go out

and find a male, who themselves have to invest in traits such as fighting and dancing. 'So, why are we not surrounded by clonal organisms? 'By comparing clonal and sexual daughters from the same mothers, we found sexually produced offspring get less sick than offspring that were produced from cloning.

'The ever-present need to evade disease can explain why sex persists in the natural world in spite of the costs. Cloned organisms are genetically identical to their mothers which means any parasite, or bacterial infection, that can infect the mother can infect the offspring. 'The best explanation we have for why sex evolved is it allows resistance to disease. It evolved to help future generations fight infection. The paper 'Sex as a strategy against rapidly evolving parasites' is published in the Royal Society journal 'Proceedings B'.



'He took four or five bites at a time BEFORE chewing'

(Agencies) Sometimes it's the simplest of things that ruin what was an otherwise enjoyable first date.

Whether it's irritating eating habits, drunken confessions or unexpected differences in opinion, it doesn't take much to completely destroy a first impression.

Now, a number of singles have taken to social media to share their own experiences and the simple yet memorable things their dates did to ruin the evening.

Poor eating habits were one of the most common issues, with one woman saying her date's restaurant manner was a complete deal breaker.

'Date was going great, nice guy, really sweet, very smart,' she wrote on Reddit, before detailing the moment the date spiralled out of control.

'When he ate he took like 4 or 5 bites at a time before chewing. He filled his face as full as legally possible. His cheeks would bulge out and he could barely keep his lips shut.

'You could see all the food mashed up and grinding around through his little mouth hole. I knew in that moment that I hated him.'

Another woman described her horror when she realised her 30-year-old date had no cups at home.

'He invited me over to his place for dinner. He filled us each a plastic cup with of some kind of grape wine. I asked for a glass of water, and he grabs a large

Styrofoam Smoothie King cup, fills it with water, and hands it to me,' she wrote.

'This cup had obviously been around the block a few times, because it had those teeth indentions [sic] everywhere on the brim of the cup.

'I ask, "Do you not have cups?". His response, "...that is a cup." He also only owned one knife, did not have any tables or chairs to sit at, and did not own any plates. He ate out of the skillet, I ate my food on the box it came on.'

In some cases, the date was only ruined when it came time to pay.

'He made reservations at one of the most expensive restaurants in our city. When I sheepishly offered to split it, he says, "oh, you didn't think I was going to pick this all up right? I don't have that kind of money",' a woman wrote.

'I don't care about how much money you have bro, but if we're splitting it, I get to have a say in where we are going. I was in college and could barely afford my half. I never answered him again after that.'

Other stories involved dates passing out drunk, declaring their love, being too forward, constantly interrupting and texting the entire way through dinner.

Men also shared some of the things women did to ruin their first dates.

'I took a gal I knew from high school out on a date when I happened to be in her neck of the woods at one point,' one man wrote.

'When it was finally time to order, she tells me she had already ordered for herself so I ordered a chicken sandwich.

'When the food arrives I discover she had ordered 80 wings - and she proceeded to eat JUST THE SKIN off the wings, leaving the meat behind, and downed 5 beers in the process.'



LAND OF POLO



UNTOUCHED and undiscovered — this is Manipur's unique attraction. And it was to this little corner of paradise that we were headed. Lying in an oval valley encompassed by the most exotic blue-green hills, we were continuously greeted by the most magnificent vistas: cascading rapids, meandering rivulets and lush green grass that showcased a carpet of flowers.

Lying to the south of Nagaland, Manipur shares an international boundary with Myanmar on its west and south. "The Manipuris claim to have invented Polo," my daughter told me as we sped through the countryside on our way to Loktak

The north-eastern hills of India are home to a Shangri-La called Manipur



The war cemetery with its stone markers, bronze plaques and stone tablets record the sacrifice of the men who died during World War II

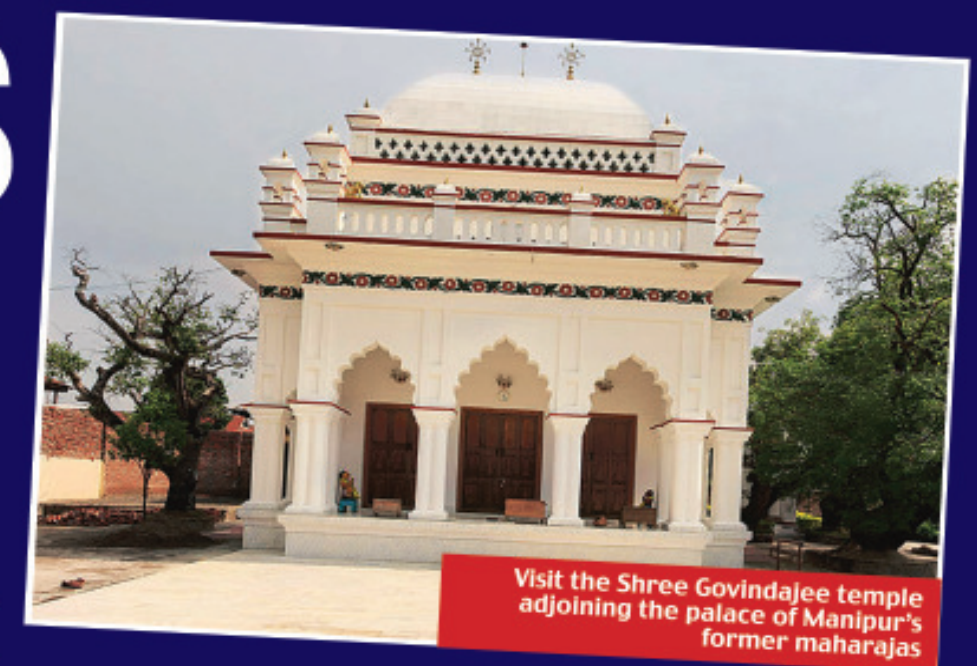
INDIA'S LITTLE JEWEL

Lake that is about an hour's drive from Imphal. Indeed, the sturdy little ponies we had seen being ridden by the locals who were playing Sagol Kangjei was ample testament to this fact. "Sagol means horse and Kangjei hockey stick," informed my husband. "This indigenous sport was popular from the time the first Meitei King ruled Manipur between 33 AD and 153 AD. In fact, polo was first played in England as a modified form of this traditional Manipuri sport," he added. We were now almost at Loktak Lake — a saucer-shaped fresh water body that forms a rare ecosystem and is like a miniature inland sea. There was a gentle breeze blowing, tiny islands of grassy vegetation 'floated' on the water and a long, slender canoe bobbed about gently. If I were a painter I would have captured the sheer beauty of the surroundings, making the lone fisherman

casting his net in the water, the focal point of my canvas.

Sadly, I had to be content with my camera. We had some refreshment in a cafeteria in the middle of the lake before we headed onwards, but not before we had covered ourselves with mosquito repellent! Situated on the fringes of the Loktak Lake is the Keibul Lamjao National Park. And since we had an Inner Line Permit, we decided to pay this habitat of the endangered dancing deer a visit. The only 'floating' National Park in the world, Keibul Lamjao shelters a whole host of wildlife from the Hoolock Gibbon to the Clouded Leopard.

The park is perfectly placed: surrounded by marsh land, hills and of course the lake itself. We spotted the brow-antlered 'sangai' deer that is a much-loved creature in Manipuri folklore and dance tradition, in fact that's how it



Visit the Shree Govindajee temple adjoining the palace of Manipur's former maharajas

got its name — the dancing deer! On our drive back we noticed that orchids seemed to grow everywhere — in the soil, on trees and on shrubs. In fact, the Central Orchidarium, which covers an area of about 200 acres, showcases over 110 rare varieties of orchids.

One morning we set off to see the Shree Govindajee temple, said to be a historic Vaishnavite centre. Adjoining the Royal Palace of Manipur's former maharajas, this is a simple, elegant structure with twin golden domes, a paved courtyard and a raised large congregation hall.

No trip to Manipur is complete without a visit to Khwairamband Bazar — a unique all-women's market replete with the hustle and bustle of Indian market places. With vegetable and grocery stalls on one side and handloom stalls on the other, the market was alive with

colours of all descriptions and incessant chatter. We went to have a look at the war cemeteries. Managed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, stone markers, bronze plaques and stone tablets record the sacrifice of the men who died during World War II. If you're anything like me, a museum freak, do go to the Manipur State Museum; here you can get an overview of the state's rich tribal heritage and see the portraits of Manipur's former rulers. And try and visit Red Hill — a hillock about 16 km from Imphal — where a fierce battle took place between the British and the Japanese forces during World War II. As for shopping — well no visit is complete without a souvenir or two! And as looms seem to form an integral part of most Manipuri homes, I picked up a rather intricately-woven shawl and some interesting weed mats!

COLOUR THERAPY

Make sure your colour game is strong this season, by taking a cue from these Bollywood beauties. After all, it's the perfect balance to those dull, rainy days

By Radhika Bhalla



PRINCESS VIBES: Actress **JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ** is certainly channelling the pretty-in-pink look, as she flaunts her collarbones and perfect figure in this off-shoulder dress by Rutu Neeva. Take some pointers from her, as she keeps it interesting yet feminine with a messy side-braid and an untidy, wavy end. Adding strength to the bubbly-gum hue are her chunky earrings and maroon peep-toe heels with matching pink straps. Well done.



PURPLE PROMISE: While a pretty smile is always a winner, **DIA MIRZA** looks equally great in this geometric purple and white shift dress by Payal Khandwala. Make the colour pop with a pastel yellow clutch bag as she has, along with a soft pink or orange lip colour. Though the strappy golden heels may not be everyone's first choice, you can opt for another metallic tint or colourful ones if you're aiming for a younger style altogether.



ROYAL BLUE: What's not to love about **SONAM KAPOOR**'s navy blue coat by Oscar De La Renta? The deep colour keeps her style sophisticated, especially with the thick black lapel, cuffs and bag. The plain white top underneath keeps the look chic, while the winged Webster boots add serious fashion points to her look. Take a cue from her and keep your make-up simple, with emphasis on a red pout and an updo that allows all visual focus on the ensemble.



SKY IS THE LIMIT: Beautiful in blue is **KATRINA KAIF** who sports this Prabal Gurung dress with such aplomb. The texture on the sky-coloured ensemble amps up the simplicity of the look — thus ensuring that the snooze siren doesn't go off — as do the plastic detailing to her white heels. Though her straight blow-dried hair could do with smart layering, you can wear your hair in a loose braid or with more volume around the crown.

Aamir attends award function after 16 years, felicitated by RSS chief Bhagwat

Aamir Khan has not attended award functions for past 16 years. However, he could not refuse singer Lata Mangeshkar when she invited him for Master Dinanath Mangeshkar Awards where he was also honoured with Vishesh Puraskar for his outstanding work in Dangal.



Bollywood star Aamir Khan broke his record of not being part of any awards functions when he attended the Master Dinanath Mangeshkar Awards ceremony in Mumbai on Monday. He received a special award given to the city's eminent personalities in various fields from RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat.

Aamir was selected for the recognition for the success of his film Dangal, one of the biggest hits of 2016.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, Bhagwat, who was the chief guest at the event, said the award winners are a source of inspiration and their good work in respective fields will help in nation building.

Aamir reportedly attended the Master Dinanath Mangeshkar Awards after singer Lata Mangeshkar invited him. This is a huge honour for me, director Nitesh Tiwari and the entire team of Dangal. I am very thankful to Lata Mangeshkar and

Deenanath Mangeshkar Trust and entire Mangeshkar family," he said. The event also commemorated Dinanath Mangeshkar's 75th death anniversary.

The PK star last attended an award show 16 years ago at the Academy Awards when Lagaan was nominated in the Best Film category.

After receiving the award, Aamir said, "Today wherever I am, the credit goes to all the writers who

have written my films. I am here because of the directors and writers for the wonderful work they've done. I thank all of them." Director Nitesh Tiwari, who was also present at the event, thanked the audience for making the film a huge hit.

Kapil Dev was given the award for his outstanding contribution to the Indian cricket.

Legendary actress Vyjayanthimala Bali was honoured with Master

Dinanath Vishesh Puraskar award for her editorial work while Kaushiki Chakraborty for her endeavour in the field of music.

Other awardees included Kishore Deshpande, presented with Anadmayee Puraskar for his work in social service, Vishwanath Karad, Founder,

Vishwashanti Kendra, presented with Samarpit Jeevan Puraskar, Vijaya Rajadhyaksha, conferred with Vagvilasini Puraskar for her work in literature. Uday also stars Amitabh

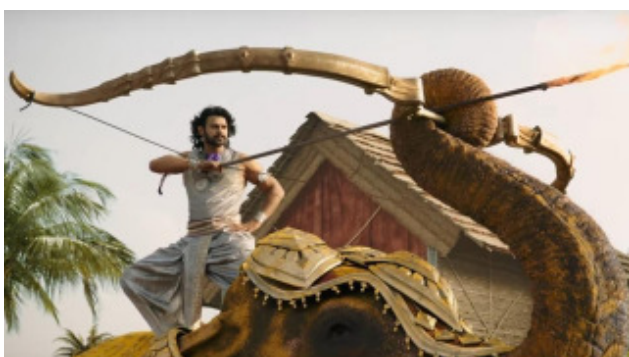
award for his editorial work while Kaushiki Chakraborty for her endeavour in the field of music.

'Mohan Wagh Award' for best drama was presented to Sunil Barve for Amar Photo Studio – Subak Sanstha.

On the professional front, Aamir Khan will soon be seen in Secret Superstar and is also prepping up for 'Thugs of Hindostan' that also stars Amitabh Bachchan.



Baahubali 2 will make filmmakers look like TV serial directors: Ram Gopal Varma



Ace filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma on Tuesday said SS Rajamouli's magnum opus Baahubali 2: The Conclusion will make most filmmakers feel like amateurs. "I have a strong feeling Rajamouli's Baahubali 2 will make rest of all filmmakers in the country feel like amateur TV serial directors," Varma tweeted. The second part in the Baahubali franchise is slated for release on Friday. The movie will finally shed the light on why Kattappa killed Baahubali, the question that has plagued film-goers for the last two years. The film stars Prabhas, Rana Daggubati, Tamannaah Bhatia, Anushka Shetty, Ramya Krishnan and Sathyaraj. Meanwhile Varma is busy wrapping up Sarkar 3.

CBFC needs to come to consensus: Sonakshi Sinha

After the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) demanded that "Noor" makers edit a reference to veteran journalist Barkha Dutt in the film, its leading lady Sonakshi Sinha says the censor body needs to have a uniform approach towards movies. In "Noor", Sonakshi plays a journalist who idolises Barkha Dutt, but the CBFC has asked the makers to edit the surname Dutt. When asked about it, Sonakshi told



media: "The censor board really needs to come to a consensus within themselves on what is right in one film... Is not right in another film." "There is no consistency in what

they censor or what they uncensor, so I think they first need to come to a consensus." Directed by Sunhil Sippy, the crime thriller comedy is an adaptation of Pakistani novel "Karachi,

You're Killing Me!" by Saba Imtiaz. The novel centres around a 20-year-old reporter Ayesha Khan, living in Karachi, and her misadventures and finding a nice lover.



Prince Harry recently talked publicly about the hardships he faced after mother Diana's death.



Princess Diana with little Harry. (below) Prince's girlfriend actor Meghan Markle.

PRINCE Harry won widespread praise last week by breaking royal protocol to make a series of deeply personal revelations about coping with the death of his mother.

But according to insiders, he may never have spoken out about his mental health if it wasn't for his girlfriend Meghan Markle.

Friends have suggested it was the American actress who urged the royal to speak publicly about his experience of coping with grief at a young age.

Harry, 32, revealed last week that he had sought counselling after two years of 'chaos' following the death of his mother Princess Diana, who died in 1997 when he was just 12 years old.

Insiders say Meghan Markle made Prince a different person

And a royal source has suggested Meghan, 35, is responsible. "Harry feels for Meghan partly because she's so open, and has that American attitude of saying, 'Let's talk about our feelings,'" they told *Closer* magazine.

"He comes from such a stiff-upper-lip culture, but Meghan helped him open up."

Meghan's mother Doria Ragland is a yoga therapist, and until recently the actress ran a glossy lifestyle blog called *The Tig*, packed with "inspirational" memes and messages of support for her followers.

The source added: "Meghan encouraged Harry to see that, by speaking publicly about his difficult experience, he would really help others, and how being honest might even be a relief."

"No other woman has helped Harry so much emotionally."

The source hinted that *Suits* star Meghan, who has been tipped in with the Prince at his London home this year, has also helped Harry feel at ease in front of cameras for the first time and made him "a different person".

Harry hit headlines with a poignant interview last week, when he admitted to ignoring his grief over Diana during his teenage years, only addressing it when he was "on the verge of punching someone in later life". He joined the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in

encouraging people to talk about mental health as part of their Heads Together campaign.

Meanwhile, insiders have hinted that the pair, who have been an item for just less than a year, are expected to announce their engagement

with Meghan having been accepted into the royal family. The actor has reportedly booked time off filming hit legal drama *Suits* next month to fly to England for the wedding of Pippa Middleton.

Daily Mail

She helped Harry open up on Diana



Meghan Markle

Ashley whips up a storm against Montreal skyline

ON Thursday she was in New York for Vanity Fair's Founders Fair. By Monday, Ashley Graham had jetted across the Canadian border to Montreal in British Columbia.

The voluptuous plus-size model was there for a photoshoot of bras and panties from her latest Ashley Graham lingerie collection.

The 29-year-old stripped down to her very beautiful undies as she strutted back and forth in a stripped down room with floor to ceiling windows, perched high above the city.

Naturally, it offered stunning 360 views.

But the best view of all was Ashley showing off her sexy 42-30-46 body in a black lace bra and matching panties.

The beautiful brunette, the first plus-size model to appear on the covers of *Sports Illustrated* and *British and American Vogue*, couldn't resist sharing a short video clip with her fans on Instagram.

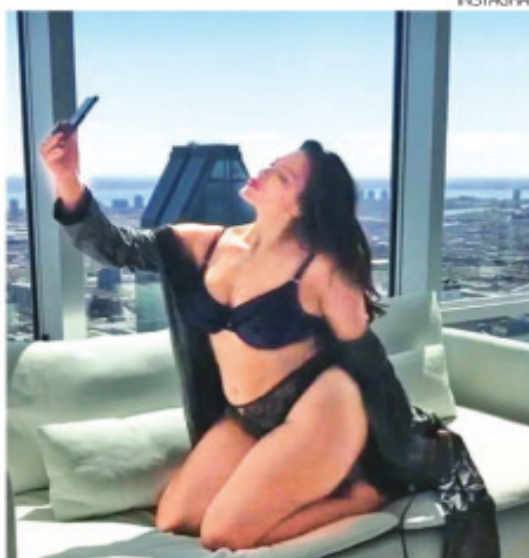
In one, she knelt on a white sofa as she took a selfie wearing an open robe over her barely

there lingerie with the Toronto cityscape behind her. Her complexion was china white while her cheeks were given a rosy glow and lips were red.

In another, the supermodel snapped a very small salad and

a Coca-Cola with the words, "Feed the models. We want carbs" stamped across the front — a clear message to the super-skinny clothes horses that young girls see as the ideal body shape.

Daily Mail



INSTAGRAM

Bella Thorne flashes sheer treat for fans

SHE has a penchant for leaving little to the imagination. And Bella Thorne did it again as she exposed herself in a sizzling snap on social media Monday.

The 19-year-old actress gave her fans a treat as she flashed her pierced nipples through a sheer white top.

The former Disney star let it all hang out in the top that opened in the center.

She paired the number with tight black leather pants and a dog collar with a key.

As usual, Bella had all the makeup on and let her wild colored hair lay long and loose over her petite shoulders.

She has modelled this risque top before as she posted very similar photos last Tuesday on the social network.

Recently, she has also revealed how she would want to date actress Kristen Stewart.



SNAPCHAT

Actor Bella Thorne

"She's so hot. She seems like the raddest chick, I'd be so down," said Bella, who casually came out as a bisexual on Twitter in 2016.



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