



# INSIDER

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## Searching Son For Dad's Dirt

*A recent income-tax search hasn't shaken Karti or PC. Rivals claim the duo is in real trouble this time.*



## Donald of Arabia

Story on page 20

*He didn't do anything embarrassing. But he did commit the United States to a deeper alliance with the very leaders who are part of the problem.*



(Agencies) Nonchalance has remained the hallmark of Karti Chidambaram, the only son of former Union finance minister P. Chidambaram. The 45-year-old businessman-politician could always afford to be so, having grown up amidst wealth, political power and even readily available legal advice (his parents are top lawyers). "What do you think they can do? Nothing will come of that! All this is just empty posturing." These are some of Karti's favourite responses when confronted with a tricky situation.

(Contd on page 21)

### Indian-American CEO sentenced to 15 years in prison



New York : A 44-year-old Indian-American has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for duping over a 100 investors of USD 33 million through fraudulent schemes.

Navin Shankar Subramaniam Xavier, a resident of Florida, was the former Chief Executive Officer of Essex Holdings, the company through which he carried out two fraud schemes.

He was sentenced yesterday to 15 years in prison by US District Judge Darrin Gayles in Miami.

The first scheme involved nearly 100 investors who purchased USD 30 million worth of promissory notes purported secured by interests in iron ore mining in Chile. (Contd on page 20)

## Should India Relook Its Neighborhood Policy?

*India needs to enhance its engagement with the neighbours to fulfil its vision for shared growth and prosperity – a key mantra of the nation's neighbourhood policy.*

(Agencies) Questions are being raised about India's neighbourhood policy after the majority of its neighbours participated in China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) summit held on May 14-15. Representatives from 60 countries, including six South Asian countries, participated in the meeting, which India excused.

A large section of the country's strategy experts felt the move has left India in isolation, and its position as a regional power has been challenged.

However, such events should not disturb India's ties with its neighbours. Contrarily, India needs to enhance its engagement with the neighbours to fulfil its vision for shared growth and prosperity – a key mantra of the nation's neighbourhood policy.

The OBOR or Belt Road Initiative (BRI) is a major initiative by China that stresses on improving connectivity and cooperation among Asian countries, Europe and Africa. The project is a strategy to boost China's economy since



it has been excluded from the G7.

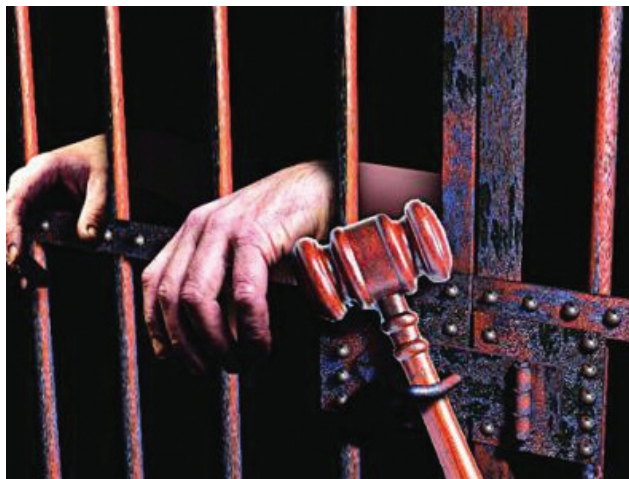
South Asian countries that sent their representatives to the OBOR meeting were Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Sri Lankan counterpart Ranil Wikramsinghe

also represented their respective countries. Precisely, all of the South Asian countries except India and Bhutan refrained from attending the meeting. Hence, most of India's neighbourhood are now part of the OBOR.

(Contd on page 21)



# Indian nuclear scientist in US jail for stalking female student



(Agencies) Meerut : An Indian nuclear scientist has been lodged in a detention centre in Texas, United States, since December 2016 on serious charges of harassing and stalking a female student and preventing a police officer from carrying out his duty.

The scientist, Tarun K

Bhardwaj, 38, himself didn't see anything wrong in his actions and told TOI that he "liked" the girl, a student at A&M University, Texas. "I am a victim of racial discrimination and have been framed for highlighting high level corruption. Charges of harassment of a female student

is not such a big deal in my case as I liked her."

Indian consular officials in Houston told TOI that the man has been accused of similar acts in the past and after court proceedings would be deported to India. Bhardwaj's family back home in Bulandshahr, meanwhile, has alleged that he is "merely the victim of a racially-motivated conspiracy".

After a PhD from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Bhardwaj left for the US in 2007 as a researcher. He then specialized in "chemical characterization of special nuclear materials, separation of fission products from spent nuclear fuel and high-level nuclear waste," according to the website of Texas A&M Uni-

versity where he last worked. His profile has now been removed from the website.

While working as assistant research scientist at the university in College Station, Texas, Bhardwaj was arrested several times between January and August 2015. According to documents accessed by TOI of the court at Brazos County, under which the university falls, the researcher was accused of harassing a girl student, for which he had to sign surety bonds, which he allegedly violated several times. Later he was even directed to wear a GPS ankle monitoring device which he allegedly removed illegally. Since December 29, 2016, he has been lodged at

Brazos County Detention Centre.

The scientist's family in Shikarpur town of Bulandshahr has alleged that he is a victim of "high-level corruption and racial discrimination". Prasoon Bhardwaj, his elder brother, associated with the basic education department in Bulandshahr, said, "Tarun exposed corruption and racial discrimination there. He was then charged with sexual harassment and sacked in September 2015. He went to court and had been facing pressure to withdraw the case. When he didn't agree, he was arrested."

Bhardwaj's family also believes the charges against him stem from jealousy among his peers. "He

has been persecuted because of his meteoric rise in his field. He has been framed by his contemporaries," said Tarun's father, Ram Kishan Bhardwaj. The family has since written to the PMO, the ministry of external affairs and other arms of the government seeking assistance in "clearing" Bhardwaj of the charges and bringing him home. Government officials told TOI that there was very little to indicate the scientist's innocence. A senior official in the Consulate General of India's Houston, Texas office, said the current detention of Bhardwaj was the fifth in a row "and every time he has been booked for harassing the same female student, which is a serious charge".

## Indian Cabbie Abused And Assaulted In Australia

(Agencies) In a shocking incident, an Indian cab driver suffered injuries and fell prey to a racist attack in Sandy Bay, Tasmania, on Friday. The couple abused and assaulted the cab driver and screamed "You f\*\*\*\*\* Indian, you deserve it." The driver is currently undergoing treatment in a nearby hospital and has reported that the man hit him from behind, and pushed him to the ground and kicked him repeatedly. The driver claimed that he had picked up the couple on Friday night around 10.30 pm and was heading to a McDonald's drive-thru. According to him, the woman allegedly kept opening the door to throw up even though he kept warning her about other cars. After his repeated objections in opening the car door, the couple started hurling profanities and racial slurs



at the driver. The couple allegedly started abusing the driver and started kicking the vehicle to damage it, while screaming, "You f\*\*\*\*\* Indian" and "bloody Indian".

However, the victim has alleged that the police have not checked CCTV footage from the drive-thru, which could have

helped identify the couple. Currently Pardeep Singh (cab driver) is undergoing treatment at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Adding to the rising number of cases against racial discrimination, this incident has counted itself to be the third attack on an Indian taxi driver in Australia in less than a year. Earlier a similar case was lodged when another Indian cabbie Li Max Joy was assaulted by four teenagers in the Argyle St McDonald's in the early hours of March 25 and a third driver was assaulted by four men in June last year.

Wilson said charges have also been laid in relation to the March assault on Joy but no "special investigative unit" has been established. Singh said he will not drive taxis again "because it's so dangerous".

## Indian-origin Cornell

### University student found dead in US

(Agencies) New York: A 20-year-old Indian-origin Cornell University student was found dead here after going missing this week. Aalaap Narasipura, a senior electrical engineering student at Cornell's College of Engineering was reported missing on Wednesday. Cornell University Police, working with the New York State Police, the Ithaca Police Department and the Ithaca Fire Department, recovered his body on Friday from Fall Creek, a short distance upstream from Ithaca Falls. Cornell University Police confirmed Narasipura's identity. Police said the circumstances of Narasipura's death are still under investigation, but no foul play is suspected. No other information is available at this time.

Police had searched gorges and adjacent natural areas in Ithaca. Earlier authorities had issued an advisory describing Narasipura as a dark-skinned male, 5-feet-9 inches tall. He was last seen in the early morning of May 17 on Cornell's campus, and was wearing shorts and a flannel shirt with bright blue socks and leather sandals. Vice President for Student and Campus Life Ryan Lombardi expressed "profound sadness" at the death of Narasipura. He described Narasipura as an "ambitious student" who was scheduled to graduate early this December. "He was active on the Ultimate Frisbee team, enjoyed taking photos, and planned to continue at Cornell to pursue a Master of Engineering degree," he said in a statement.

## Dilip Chauhan, receives another honor

(By Our Staff Reporter)

Recently, Dilip Chauhan, a South Asian Community Leader was honored with "Kings of Long Island Award" organized by Star Network. Dilip Chauhan was recognized as one of the most prominent and dedicated advocate for the South Asian-American community. Dilip has touched the lives of so many people through his unwavering support for those in his community. Through his "Gateway to South Asian American Community Presentation" Dilip has connected countless corporate, nonprofit, academic, faith-based, and government leaders to the South Asian-American community. He currently serves as a Senior Advisor to the Nassau County Comptroller George Maragos. In his previous role as the Director of Southeast Asian Affairs for the Nassau County Comptroller's office, he educated small business owners about govt.



(from Left) Virendra Patel, Dilip Chauhan and Nassau County Comptroller George Maragos

business opportunity available for MWBE. Dilip currently sits on the Boards of Service Now for Adult Persons (SNAP) and South Asian American Voice. In recog-

nition of his accomplishments in his community, Congresswoman Grace Meng designated November 12th 2016 as "Dilip Chauhan Day" within the 6th Congressional

District. More ever, Dilip's stellar service recently earned him New York State and City Hall's Political Rising Star "40 under 40" award among other prestigious honors.

# Indian-Americans shine at Intel science fair in the US



(Agencies) WASHINGTON: While four Indian-Americans received top awards in various categories, an Indian boy has won the world's largest pre-college science competition in the US in environmental engineering category for his project on biodegradation of pesticides.

Prashant Ranganathan, a 12th grader from

Jamshedpur, along with over 20 high school students from various parts of India, participated in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair.

"My project will actually help farmers in biodegrading the pesticide which is plaguing the country," Prashant told PTI after he

was declared winner in the environmental engineering

category at this year's competition.

In all, more than 1,700 students from across the world participated in the week-long event which concluded here on Friday.

Student of Carmel Junior College in Jamshedpur, Prashant's project 'Biodegradation of Chlorpyrifos using native bacteria' said that farmers should not use pesticides.

Prashant who bagged the coveted award for his innovation for fighting against pesticide and getting rid of its side effects through biodegradable use.

"In almost all the states, like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, Haryana and Bihar and Jharkhand, there's extensive farming. Using excessive amounts of pesticides, is affecting the health and the environment around

them," he said.

While the topmost Gordon E Moore Award of \$75,000 went to Ivo Zell, 18, of Germany for designing and constructing a remote-control prototype of a new "flying wing", almost every participant of the Indian delegation returned from the annual competition with one award or the other.

"India really boasts really extraordinary mathematics, science, physics, education," Maya Ajmera president and CEO of Society for Science and Public, told PTI in an interview.

In fact, every section the award ceremony had the budding Indian scientists on the stage.

So were the Indian American high schoolers, prompting one of the Intel official to say "Indians and Indian Americans rock to-

day" as the awards ceremony concluded at the Los Angeles Convention Center in downtown Los Angeles. Indian-American Pratik Naidu from Virginia bagged an award in the category of computational biology and bioinformatics, Adam Nayak from Oregon was declared the winner in earth and environmental sciences, Karthik Yegnesh from Pennsylvania in Mathematics and Rahul Subramaniam from Connecticut in the microbiology category. As a result, Indians and Indian Americans accounted for nearly one-fifth of the top categories of the awards. "I think that many generations of Indian scientists and engineers and computer scientists, have truly paved the way of this generation of young people do-

ing extraordinary things," Ajmera said referring to the incredible and innovative projects of Indian students who participated in this year's science competition. For instance, a sister-brother team - Sairandi Sathyanarayanan & Sacheth Sathyanarayanan - from the National Public School in Chennai have invented a gearbox that generates electricity when a fisherman's boat is lying idle at night, which they said is enough to meet the energy needs of a fisherman's house for a day. The team not only received accolades from the judges but were on the stage on Friday for receiving awards in various categories.

# Indian-origin gay minister frontrunner in Irish prime ministerial race



(Agencies) London : An Indian-origin doctor and Ireland's first openly gay minister has emerged as the frontrunner in the Irish prime ministerial race.

Leo Varadkar, 38, the Dublin-born son of a Mumbai-born father and Irish mother, is expected to become the country's first homosexual prime minister.

Varadkar, who is Ireland's welfare minister, has won early support for his leadership bid from several senior Cabinet members and a majority of his parliamentary colleagues have publicly backed him.

He announced his

candidacy after Prime Minister Enda Kenny announced his

resignation, a title referred to as Taoiseach in Ireland.

Varadkar faces

housing minister Simon Coveney in the race as nominations closed for the leadership of the governing Fine Gael party this week.

"I am not counting my chickens. I am really humbled at the level of support I have received from my colleagues and I am really looking forward to the hustings and the debates," he said.

Kenny's successor is due to be elected by June 2 and Ireland's Parliament is set to vote in the new leader as prime minister a few days later.

Varadkar came out as

a gay in 2015 when Ireland became the first country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage through popular vote. In a coming-out speech he gave in a radio interview, he said, "It is not something that defines me. I am not a half-Indian politician, or a doctor politician or a gay politician for that matter. It is just part of who I am, it does not define me, it is the part of my character I suppose". The popular minister has campaigned on same-sex marriage and liberalising abortion

laws.

Varadkar worked as a general practitioner (GP) before winning a seat in the Parliament in 2007 and has rapidly risen through the party ranks, holding several ministerial portfolios including minister for social protection and minister for transport, tourism and sports. "Leo has got off to a good start but there are two weeks to go so we will see how that plays out," said his opponent Coveney.

Fine Gael is Ireland's centre-right political party, seen as taking liberal positions on several social and economic issues.

# Over 30,000 Indians overstayed in America last year: Report

(Agencies) Washington : A total of 1.4 million Indians travelled to the US on various visas last year, out of which over 30,000 overstayed in the country, according to an annual official report on departures and overstays released today. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) submitted the report to the Congress on foreign visitors who entered the US on various visas, including including business, tourists, students and visitors exchange, as non-immigrant

visitors. The report covers about 96 per cent of the total non-immigrant visitors. As per the report, more than 50 million non-immigrants were expected to depart from the US in 2016. Of these, 739,478 overstayed their admission, resulting in a total overstay rate of 1.47 per cent.

Of the more than 739,000 overstays, DHS said 628,799 were suspected "in-country" overstays, meaning there is no record of these foreign nationals leaving the US. The rest left the country after the

expiry of their lawful admission period, which is called out-of-country overstay. According to the figures, more than 1.4 million Indians who entered the US were expected to leave the country in 2016, but more than 30,000 overstayed. Of these 30,000, a little over 6,000 Indian nationals left the US after the expiry of their visas, the report said. In 2016, more than one million Indians who came to the US on business, tourist or pleasure were expected to leave the country. Of these

17,763 have overstayed in the country, it said. Among the overstayed are 2,040 Indians who departed the US only after the expiry of their visas. Similarly, in 2016, as many as 9,897 Indian students or exchange scholars were expected to depart by the end of the year and of which, 4,575 overstayed their legal period. As per available records, 1,561 Indian students and exchange visitors left the country after their visas expired, while 3,014 of them have overstayed in the country, the report said.

# A case of two Donalds but one quack!

I've quoted Wikipedia on the Duck but it could just as easily have been Washington commentary on the President.

Not so long ago the best-known American called Donald was Walt Disney's lovable duck. Today there's also President Trump. I've been familiar with the comic book character since childhood. The other Donald is relatively new to me.

Let me, therefore, start with the original one. For those who don't know him he's a white duck with a prominent yellow beak. He usually wears a sailor's shirt and cap. Although he never wears trousers he always sports a bow tie. Along with his beloved Daisy Duck and three nephews, Huey, Dewey and Louie, he was a reassuring companion on hot summer afternoons in the '60s and '70s. We literally beat the heat together!

The Duck is some 10 years older than the President but they were both born in June. I wonder if this is why they seem so similar.

Let me quote from Wikipedia's biography of Donald Duck. "Donald is most famous for his semi-intelligible speech and his mischievous and temperamental personality ... Donald's two dominant personality traits are his short temper and his positive outlook on life." Would I be unfair if I said this could also be a description of Mr. Trump?

In fact, the similarities run deeper. Wikipedia writes: "The Duck gets a big kick out of imposing on other people or annoying them, but he immediately loses his temper when the tables are turned. In other words, he can dish it out but he can't take it." Now, doesn't that remind you of the President?

But wait, there's more. "Donald is also a bit of a show-off. He likes to brag, especially about how skilled he is at something ... his love of bragging often leads him to overestimate his abilities, so that when he sets out to make good on his boasts, he gets in

over his head, usually to hilarious effect." Now, which Donald would you say best fits that description? I've quoted Wikipedia on the Duck but it could just as easily have been Washington commentary on the President.

Of course, both the Duck and the President are great achievers. The Duck has won an Oscar and played a major part in the war effort of the 1940s. Such is his fame that in Finland voters register a protest by marking the name Donald Duck. The President is, of course, a billionaire and, as Americans love to tell you, the most powerful man on

earth.

Whenever they appear both the Duck and the President dominate the situation but they're usually never alone. The Duck family includes Daisy, the three nephews and Uncle Scrooge McDuck. The President's entourage comprises Melania, Ivanka and Jared. He also has three sons but they're rarely seen.

Asked about his creation, Walt Disney once said: "Like many large families we have a problem child. You're right, it's Donald Duck." However, beyond Daisy there are no other female ducks in Donald's life. The President, as we



know, is somewhat different. Not only is he a much married man but his affection for the female sex is legendary. Of the Duck it's been said he's irascible when

things don't go his way but he has a heart of gold and is devoted to his friends. Now, irascibility is not a quality unknown to the President and, at the

moment, things certainly aren't going his way. But will we ever find out if he has a heart of gold or is devoted to his friends? Time could be running out.

## Why Air India cannot remain a national burden on taxpayers anymore

JRD Tata once said that watches could be set on the basis of Air India flight arrivals. Based on recent news, now it would be faulty. In fact, time is fast running out for Air India as a viable airline. We hear the familiar commentary – the "in our time it was perfect", the corruption charges, and shockingly even the "needed for our national security". For nearly three decades, we were told that all Air India needs is debt restructuring, professional management and "some" capital.

The three requirements are valid – but cannot be met by the government: for 30,000 crore reasons. Each paisa of the Rs 30,000 crore committed to propping up Air India has better use elsewhere. Air India will soar only if the governmental umbilical cord is severed and the ownership privatised. Divestment in this context has to be real, which is minimising government influence, and maximising value realisation from assets. Moreover, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has to be

released from the inherent conflict of interest in running Air India and given the bandwidth to focus on the sector's policy and development in terms of infrastructure, financial viability, service and safety. To begin with, doomed "highways to nowhere" solutions need discarding. Temporary holding structures don't work. Likely to fail also is a "Hail Mary" transfer to bank ownership hoping banks can "realise" value. Banks have enough on their plate, they have a patchy record of resolving NPLs and their ability to take independent, unpopular decisions is doubtful. Finally, seeking an investor willing to take on Air India with modified liabilities is a naive bet on finding an investor devoid of rational economic decision-making!

Successful divestment will have three stages: curating and valuing non-core assets, disposing of non-core assets and then a sale of airline operations.

Air India is sitting on prize real estate and

other assets. As a first step, a top international firm should make a detailed inventory of all Air India's real estate assets, and value them to nip malafide attempts to sell assets cheap. The same firm should review expected office requirements for the pure air operations of Air India and suggest rationalisation through consolidation and moving out of premium locations. This will create a "disposable pool" of real estate assets.

The second stage involves selling non-core assets. Maintenance, repair and operations (MRO), ground handling and catering subsidiaries should be immediately sold with existing employees and their core operating assets i.e. no real estate, hotels etc. The joint venture with SATs should be offered to SATs at reasonable premium for control - or put to bid if SATs declines. Simultaneously, based on identified "disposable pool", Air

India's real estate assets need to be put on the block starting with excess land and hotels, and gradually covering prime office buildings that can be released over time. Air India metro head offices are a gold mine. The disposal process should be run independently by the department of disinvestment, albeit in cooperation with the ministry of civil aviation. Potential proceeds from non-core sales may run into thousands of crores.

This sets the base for stage 3 or airline sale. The three "revival" requirements were capital, restructured debt and professional management. Given poor financials especially the nearly Rs 50,000 crore debt, our expectations from the sale should be stopping further outflows. To attract buyers, 75% of the estimated proceeds of sale of non-core assets may be offered as restructuring pool to potential bidders. Bidders should then be asked to tender for 100% of Air India's flight operations on the basis

of minimum additional support (MAS). The MAS will be paid out to the investor after the bank restructuring has been agreed. Similarly, the bid conditions should also define both the compensation structure for use of Air India on national duty like evacuations. The lowest MAS wins. The winning investor would then negotiate with the banks on a restructuring package using the MAS and the restructuring pool of funds.

This will still leave the question of serving remote areas – but that is a relatively easy problem to solve, and for much less than Rs 30,000 crores.

While difficult, the certain alternative is never-ending government bail-outs in a hyper-competitive industry. Or in other words, death by a thousand cuts. Privatisation will potentially create a new Air India under the control of new management and will cap government support.

Air India must remain our national airline, just not as a nationalised burden on taxpayers.

# Tired of New York's Subways? Blame Andrew Cuomo

When the Metropolitan Transportation Authority opened the Second Avenue Subway extension in January, Gov. Andrew Cuomo was quick to put his stamp on the new line. At news conferences, inaugural rides and even a star-studded New Year's Eve party, the governor branded the project as his own.

Five months and innumerable subway breakdowns later, riders can hardly be faulted for asking: Where's Governor Cuomo now?

New Yorkers have recently been treated to repeated subway meltdowns. This month, two power failures in Brooklyn caused delays and reroutings on seven lines. On April 24, a signal failure and track fire led to significant delays. And three days before that, a power failure in Midtown Manhattan led to a near systemwide breakdown.

These wholesale disasters come on top of all the minor breakdowns and delays that characterize a typical rush hour in New York these days. And each time these failures occur, we leave hundreds of thousands of riders stuck underground, sometimes for hours. The economic costs of these delays are enormous. But the human cost of missing work or school, or being late to pick up your kids from day care, or canceling appointments, is just as important.

Yet the governor has been conspicuously absent as riders vent their frustrations about our subway system. And when the M.T.A. finally announced a plan this week to tackle subway delays, Governor Cuomo was nowhere to be seen. Instead, the agency's acting executive director talked about a \$20 million investment to try to address the problem — a far cry from the billions of dollars the governor has promised the agency and so far failed to deliver.

As a state agency, the M.T.A. is ultimately run by Governor Cuomo — yet rather than face its challenges, he has instead taken up other priorities: rebuilding the Tappan Zee Bridge, redesigning La Guardia Airport, revamping Penn Station. In short, he has done an excellent job funding projects to help people flee New York City, but has been content to keep an arm's length from a crumbling subway system that carries 1.7 billion passengers a year.

One reason is obvious: Governor Cuomo can use the M.T.A. as a shield from criticism from commuters, who blame the agency for their commuting woes instead of pointing the finger at the man behind the curtain. This misdirection gives the governor cover to raid tens of millions of dedicated transit dollars to fund other projects, spend two years refusing to fund the M.T.A.'s ambitious 2015-19 capital plan to invest in subway and bus infrastructure and — just a few months ago — wipe \$65 million a year from our subways and buses with the stroke of a pen. The consequences of years of disinvestment have been severe: Riders now have to contend with more than 70,000 delays a month (well over a delay every minute) and record levels of overcrowding on trains.

The other reason for Mr. Cuomo's avoidance is that fixing mass transit is difficult. It's expensive, it's complicated and the benefits often don't accrue until long after the elected officials who funded them have moved on. Many a politician takes a hard look at public transit and decides to find an easier fight.

But right now, New Yorkers don't need a politician. We need a leader like those who had the foresight to build this sprawling, messy, utterly essential system and sustain it for over a century. If we want to keep public transit running for another century, Governor Cuomo must make necessary investments now. As a first step, he should give the M.T.A. the full \$8.3 billion he has promised for its capital program, rather than make it wait years and borrow billions of dollars more.

Governor Cuomo can think big when building bridges or airports. He should apply the same grand vision to our vital public transit system. Installing modern signals should take years, not decades — the current plan stretches beyond 2050 to implement 20th-century technology. He should replace all cars that are past their useful life; some of today's trains date to the 1960s. He should make buses an attractive alternative for riders, as they are in London or Seoul, by investing in inexpensive improvements like all-door boarding and traffic light priority. And most important, he should announce an influx of state funding above and beyond the M.T.A.'s existing capital budget to pay for these necessary improvements, instead of making riders shoulder the cost through ever-increasing fares.

Over a year ago, my organization, the Riders Alliance, collected hundreds of "subway horror stories" from riders. Sadly, since that time, the problem has grown only worse. But there's still something we can do: When you're stuck this summer on a hot platform waiting for a train that seems as if it'll never come, let the person most responsible for the success or failure of our public transit system know you're upset. Use that newly installed subway Wi-Fi to tweet @NYGovCuomo. There are nearly 8.5 million rides on the system every day; if we speak with one voice, we can save our subways.

# What Trump gets wrong about the Middle East?

In his speech before dozens of Muslim leaders who had gathered in Saudi Arabia on Sunday, President Donald Trump toned down his harsh rhetoric against Islam and urged the leaders to "drive out" Islamic extremists from their societies.

Trump even distinguished between the majority of the world's 1.8 billion Muslims, and the Islamic militants who wreak havoc, at one point noting that most of their victims have been Muslim. "This is not a battle between different faiths, different sects or different civilizations," he said in the Saudi capital. "This is a battle between barbaric criminals who seek to obliterate human life and decent people, all in the name of religion, people that want to protect life and want to protect their religion. This is a battle between good and evil."

The speech was lauded as a foreign policy success for Trump, but that's largely because the bar was so low. As a presidential candidate, Trump had called for a temporary ban on Muslim immigration to the United States and declared in a TV interview that "Islam hates us." In his speech, Trump steered clear of such invective, but he echoed former President George W. Bush's famous declaration after the September 11, 2001 attacks, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." More broadly, Trump's speech — like his administration's muddled strategy to fight Islamic State and other jihadist groups — failed to address one of the root causes of extremism: the very monarchs, autocrats and strongmen who assembled to hear Trump. For decades, America pursued the path that Trump seems to favor in the Middle East — stability and security cooperation, at the expense of democracy. And that approach failed. Previous U.S. presidents, including Bush and Barack Obama, had urged Arab and Muslim leaders to adopt political reforms and respect human rights. But on Sunday, Trump changed course and pledged a new approach: he would no longer chide authoritarian U.S. allies for failing to advance democracy and safeguard political rights in their societies. "Our partnerships will advance security through stability, not through radical disruption," he said. "And, wherever possible, we will seek gradual reforms — not sudden intervention."

Trump declared that defeating extremist ideology and terrorism "transcends every other consideration." That's the kind of rhetoric the authoritarian leaders in the room longed to hear from the Obama administration, which urged its Arab allies to respect the desires of their people.

Obama inherited a decades-old U.S. policy of supporting autocratic regimes — like Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and several other Arab monarchies in the Persian Gulf — in exchange for political stability, security cooperation and access to oil. Virtually all governments in the Middle East rely on vast security agencies to keep them in power, using the U.S.-led "war on terror" as a cover to silence any opposition. These regimes put on a veneer of stability for the West, but their political systems are corrupt and calcified.



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Gagandeep Singh (INDIA)

Editorial Intern: Aman Thind

Web Coordinator : Jatinder Kumar

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P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

TelFax : 516 342 1076

editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

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# Monica Lewinsky: Roger Ailes's Dream Was My Nightmare



This is not another obituary for Roger Ailes, who died last week 10 months after being ousted at Fox News. It is, I hope, instead an obituary for the culture he purveyed — a culture that affected me profoundly and personally.

Just two years after Rupert Murdoch appointed Mr. Ailes to head the new cable news network, my relationship with President Bill Clinton became public. Mr. Ailes, a former Republican political operative, took the story of the affair and the trial that followed and made certain his anchors hammered it ceaselessly, 24 hours a day.

It worked like magic: The story hooked viewers and made them Fox loyalists. For the past 15 years, Fox News has been the No. 1 news station; last year the network made about \$2.3 billion.

Some experts have noted that viewers found Fox for the first time because of the crisis. John Moody, a Fox executive editor, reflected on that period: “The Lewinsky saga put us on the news map.” As he put it in another interview: “Monica was a news channel’s dream come true.

Their dream was my nightmare. My character, my looks and my life were picked apart mercilessly. Truth and fiction mixed at random in the service of higher ratings. My family and I huddled at home, worried about my going to jail — I was the original target of Kenneth Starr’s investigation, threatened with 27 years for having been accused of signing a false affidavit and other alleged crimes — or worse, me taking my own life. Meantime, Mr. Ailes huddled with his employees at Fox News, dictating a lineup of talking heads to best exploit this personal and national

tragedy.

For myriad reasons — information gathering, boredom (I couldn’t leave my home without being trailed by paparazzi) and a touch of masochism — I watched the news around the clock. On Fox, it seemed, no rumor was too unsubstantiated, no innuendo too vile and no accusation too abhorrent.

Let’s not pretend that Fox News was the only network to cover this story in the gutter. Mr. Ailes’s station may have

pioneered this new style of television reportage, but the other cable news channels didn’t hesitate to join the race to the bottom. In fact, in late 1998, when Keith Olbermann briefly left MSNBC, he expressed disgust with the frequent Lewinsky coverage.

Just as television news was devolving into a modern coliseum, the internet came along and compounded this culture of shame and vitriol. Remember: The story of my affair was not broken by The Washington Post, The New York Times or the networks, but online by the Drudge Report. The comments on television and online were excruciating. I ceased being a three-dimensional person. Instead I became a whore, a bimbo, a slut and worse. Just days after

the story broke, Fox asked its viewers to vote on this pressing question: Is Monica Lewinsky an “average girl” or a “young tramp looking for thrills”?

Our world — of cyberbullying and chyrons, trolls and tweets — was forged in 1998. It is, as the historian Nicolaus Mills has put it, a “culture of humiliation,” in which those who prey on the vulnerable in the service of clicks and ratings are handsomely rewarded. As the past year has revealed, thanks to brave women like Gretchen Carlson and Megyn Kelly, it is clear that at Fox, this culture of exploitation wasn’t limited to the screen. The irony of Mr. Ailes’s career at Fox — that he harnessed a sex scandal to build a cable juggernaut and then was

brought down by his own — was not lost on anyone who has been paying attention.

There are some positive signs that the younger generation at Fox — James and Lachlan Murdoch — seem to want to change the culture Mr. Ailes created. Last week Bob Beckel, a Fox pundit who made a racist remark to an African-American Fox employee, was dismissed. Would this have happened in the Ailes era?

Although I imagine the desire by the Murdoch brothers to present a clean record to the European Commission reviewing their proposed takeover of Sky News played a role in their thinking, the Murdochs deserve praise for their part in the decision to fire Bill O’Reilly, whose

show brought in \$100 million a year in ad revenue but who harassed and bullied women he worked with. I hope the Murdochs understand that Americans will no longer tolerate a corporate culture that views hate and harassment as part of running a successful news business.

None of this is to say that we shouldn’t have a credible conservative point of view in our media — quite the opposite. If we’ve learned nothing else from the 2016 presidential election, it’s that we must find a way to foster robust and healthy discussion and debate. Our news channels should be just such places.

So, farewell to the age of Ailes. The late Fox chief pledged Americans fair and balanced news. Maybe now we’ll get it.

## China's Smug Forecast About India Proves Right

The Belt Road Initiative Forum in Beijing has begun and ended. We have had our say — outside the Forum. The Chinese have had theirs — inside the Forum. How does the score-card read?

The MEA spokesman said the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) does not meet “universally recognized international norms”. 29 heads of state/government begged to disagree when they decided to personally attend the forum. Nor did 130 participant countries, representing two-thirds of the UN’s membership, endorse the Indian view. Nor did the 68 countries and international organizations that have signed “belt and road” agreements with China. Nor did any participant object when, at his press conference at the end of the Forum’s deliberations, President Xi treated himself to putting icing on the cake he has baked by institutionalizing the Forum’s deliberations. He announced that there would be a second round of the Forum two years down the line — in 2019. Perhaps by then there will also be a new government in India.

Modi can comfort

himself by noting that Bhutan too did not attend. But Nepal did. So did Sri Lanka. And so did Myanmar. So also Trump who, despite his reservations about China, decided at the last minute to send a top aide, Mathew Pottinger. Two other “friends” of India, Japan and Vietnam, who have serious maritime territorial disputes with China, were very much present.

So, what’s with our argument that “international norms” were being flouted by China’s BRI? Our spokesman also faulted BRI for not adhering to Modi’s Five-Fold Path of “good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality”. Not one of two-thirds of the international community who attended the Forum echoed that view, and no one, not even Bhutan, explicitly endorsed our stand.

Although our spokesman rambled over a large ambit of objections, his principal gripe was with issues of “sovereignty and territorial integrity”. The Chinese responded by saying that BRI was “devoid of sovereignty issues”. To India’s insistence that these

issues were involved in a project that takes in the Karakoram Pass, filched from India by Pakistan and gratuitously handed over to China, the Chinese have replied that their position on Kashmir has not changed because of CPEC (the China Pakistan Economic Corridor) or BRI. They limit themselves to restating their stand that this is an “issue left over from history” and should, therefore, be “properly addressed by the two countries through consultation and negotiation.” We, of course, neither consult nor negotiate with Pakistan. And however much we might “huff and puff” over CPEC/BRI, we are unlikely to “blow the house down”.

An interesting sideshow is Ambassador PS Raghavan’s clever suggestion in The Hindu that India’s concerns might be met by declaring that CPEC is not part of BRI. Well tried, Raghavan, but, sorry, there are no takers for that sleight of hand.

China is not only in illegal occupation of the Karakoram Pass, but it has also been, since 1950, in illegal occupation of two-thirds of Aksai Chin and areas to the south of the

McMahon line. None of this has prevented India, certainly not since Rajiv Gandhi’s breakthrough visit to China in 1988, from assiduously cultivating trade relations with China to the point where China is just about our biggest trading partner and a major potential investor. Indeed, we were hoping for ten times as much Chinese investment than we got from Xi in 2014 after Modi botched things up between sharing a swing with Xi in Ahmedabad and reaching Delhi. The whole India-China relationship is bedeviled with issues of sovereignty and territorial issues. Yet, that has not stood in the way of burgeoning business ties. Will not attending the BRI forum change any of that?

The MEA spokesman furthered damned BRI for placing an “unsustainable debt burden” on participating countries. The semi-official Chinese journal, Global Times, tartly replied, “It is strange that the onlooker is more anxious than the players” and added, for good measure, that while Pakistan will be paying back \$ 5 billion a year, it would have recovered more than that by way of transit

fees.

Our spokesman had also sanctimoniously warned of the “adverse impact on the environment” for participating countries. Xi himself answered that saying the BRI would ensure “low carbon development” backed by a “sustainable financial safeguards system.” This may, of course, be a pipe dream but even the most skeptical participant, Germany, was principally fixated on pushing for “free tendering” so that her country too could get a big bite of the \$900 billion on offer. Some of that is to come from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, of which India is a member. Are we going to play a blocking role in AIIB or that of a facilitator?

Where we seem to regard BRI as a manifestation of Chinese neo-colonialism, an instrument of “political control”, as our spokesman put it, our erstwhile “time-tested” friend, Vladimir Putin, believes BRI “corresponds to modern development trends” and is “extremely necessary and highly demanded”.

(Contd on page 22)

# The End For Indian Outsourcers - Or A Chance For Rebirth ?

*China is well aware of the threat to its industry and is taking the lead in building zero-labor manufacturing plants, with robots doing practically all of the work.*

Carnage in Indian IT," read the headlines in India about job losses in its outsourcing industry as markets stagnate and U.S. visa restrictions erode profits.

The Indian information technology industry generates \$150 billion in revenue but is facing an existential crisis largely of its own making because it became complacent and overconfident even as technologies and markets changed. It can survive only if it exits the business that brought it success and reinvents itself.

India's outsourcing boomed in the late 1990s run-up to the Y2K crisis because there was an urgency in updating corporate IT systems to fix a bug dealing with the difficulty some computers might have had with dates beyond Dec. 31, 1999. Once chief information officers became comfortable with having their systems maintained from across the globe, they started outsourcing large-scale projects to Indian companies, and billion-dollar contracts were announced almost every week.

But with the advent of tablet computers, smartphones and their applications in the 2010s, users gained access to better technology than the companies' IT departments could provide. They could download cheap, elegant and powerful apps to their mobile devices that made their corporate systems look primitive.

Via cloud computing, companies such as Amazon.com, Microsoft and Google began to take over the functions of data centers. (Amazon founder and chief executive Jeffrey P. Bezos owns The Washington Post.) So CIOs lost power, and the importance of outsourcers declined. The billion-dollar outsourcing contracts evaporated.

Modern-day applications also do not require large teams of engineers doing software

development: They are user-customizable and can be built by anyone with basic programming skills. To offer more value, the outsourcers worked to reduce costs by improving back-end processes. They offered low-cost offshore development and cheap labor in the United States, and this fomented a backlash by displaced workers.

The same technology advances that decimated the Indian advantage offer a new opportunity that could allow the Indian IT sector to reinvent itself and even gain the support of Americans who have been rallying against it. The opportunity is to help United States modernize its aging infrastructure and enable it to bring manufacturing back from China. Technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence and inexpensive and powerful sensors enable development of smart cities and automated factories, and a

wholesale upgrading of national infrastructure.

Robots, for example, have advanced so far that they can now do the work of humans in manufacturing. With the computing advances and dramatic price drops of hardware components such as a core part of most robots' inner workings, the single-axis controller, robots have acquired the dexterity to assemble circuit boards and build cars. They now cost less to operate than the wages of workers in China. And connected devices and sensors in the Industrial Internet of Things enable monitoring of every aspect of a manufacturing plant's operations.

China is well aware of the threat to its industry and is taking the lead in building zero-labor manufacturing plants, with robots doing practically all of the work. But its robots have no advantage over American robots; all of

them work equally hard and consume nothing more than energy. Manufacturing can now return to American shores without raising costs.

There is, however, an obstacle. American businesses are not geared to take advantage of manufacturing robots because they simply do not have the know-how.

This is where India's outsourcers could help.

They could master the new technologies and help American firms design new factory floors and program and install robots. They could provide management consulting in optimizing supply chains and inventory management. And they could manage manufacturing-plant operations remotely.

This is a higher-margin business than the old IT services. And Americans would cheer India for bringing manufacturing back to their shores rather than

protest its taking their IT jobs away.

No, there will not be as many jobs in each manufacturing plant as there were before. But many new high-paying jobs would be created to build factories and manage them.

It is also possible to build smart cities, with sensors monitoring every aspect of a city's functioning, including parking, traffic congestion, lighting, waste management, pollution and water leaks. The installation and design of these require managerial and analytical skills; their monitoring functions are no different from those of managing data centers.

And then there are opportunities to create applications that can revolutionize fields such as health care and education and to build technologies for the underprivileged - something that Silicon Valley's entrepreneurs

do not focus on because they do not understand the dire needs. These are all things that Indian IT companies can do.

It is not that Indian companies do not recognize the threat. Tech Mahindra's chief executive, C.P. Gurnani, told my class at Carnegie Mellon's College of Engineering in Silicon Valley on May 1 that he was working hard to change the focus of his company from services to technology products and to solve problems outside information technology. He talked about the rapidly changing markets and urgent need for his company to build offerings in areas such as health care, manufacturing, retail and managed services. Will India's IT sector finally wake up and smell the opportunity? It remains to be seen. One thing is certain: The backlash will build if it does not - and the Indian IT sector will accelerate its decline into oblivion.

## Modi's Approach To China Has Done Us Proud

The Narendra Modi government's decision to not send an envoy to China's big Belt and Road Forum (abbreviated, incredibly, BARF) has been the cause of much wailing and gnashing of teeth in New Delhi. Given the fact that India is practically the only large economy to not be represented there - and that dozens and dozens of countries have sent representatives, many the heads of their governments - it has come across to some people as the Modi government deliberately choosing to isolate India. It has been criticised thus as stubborn opposition to an initiative that has seized the world's imagination.

Well, if Modi has isolated India on this issue, so be it. He and his foreign policy establishment deserve praise for taking a bold stand of dissent on grounds that are both principled and realist.

The government's thinking on this issue is unusually clear and well-articulated. The Ministry of External Affairs released a statement that "connectivity initiatives must follow principles of financial responsibility to avoid projects that would create unsustainable debt burden for communities; balanced ecological and environmental protection and preservation standards; transparent assessment of project costs; and skill and technology transfer to help long term running and maintenance of the assets created by local communities." It is worth noting that India's legitimate objections to the path of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC - one of the sub-initiatives of One Belt One Road or OBOR - also got a mention, but were clearly rhetorically subordinate to the larger, principled

objection about the sustainability issues involved.

While India is the only large economy to not send a representative to BARF, it is not as if it has received universal acclaim among those who have gone. The Guardian reported that the European Union has abstained from some of the resolutions the Chinese expected them to sign up to, citing environmental reasons. Nor has the United States sent a senior official. So even the talk of "isolation" is not entirely true. Not every large country is willing to sign up to Beijing's vision of a Middle Kingdom-centric global economy, but India is the only major country willing to take a clear and visible stand on the subject, and of that we can be proud.

Let's be clear: this does not mean that Indian companies may not take advantage of OBOR

connectivity, wherever it does get built. This is a free country and a (relatively) free economy, and nobody will stop an Indian manufacturer from using railway lines somewhere else in the world paid for by China, if it helps their business. The private sector is not the government. It is for the government, however, to take the long strategic view on what OBOR connectivity will mean for the world, our neighbourhood, and our own position in the global economy - and they have correctly decided that it will not, on balance, be beneficial. Nor is this about particular. India is more than willing to cooperate with China on infrastructure finance - witness its decision to sign up to the AIIB and BRICS Bank - and on the many issues being taken up in the BRICS and other forums. This is,

presumably, because it does not believe that those forums inherently violate the principles that it believes OBOR, as currently structured, would fail to uphold.

This is, frankly, the first time that I have felt that the Modi government has taken a stand that the preceding government would have balked at doing. In almost all cases, the Modi government foreign policy has been an extension of Manmohan Singh's policies - which is entirely to its credit. Consistency in such matters is the sign of a mature nation. But one of the errors that the Singh government consistently made was to be extra-careful of Beijing's sensitivities. It failed, in essence, to reap any reward for that attitude: Beijing's foreign policy continued to be made with no thought of India's "core interests".

# Why writing obituary of AAP won't be wise

**The party, despite all the internal chaos and graft allegations, had managed to garner more than 25 per cent votes in municipal polls, hinting that it still has public support**

(Agencies) The Aam Aadmi Party had immensely benefited by launching a vilification campaign against its opponents and promised a culture of righteousness. Ironically, its own leaders have ganged up against the party resorting to mud slinging. It was then that trial by media began which without substantiating the charges went gaga with sacked minister, Kapil Mishra's allegations. For Kejriwal, it must be a déjà vu moment as he had built a career by hurling un-substantiated accusations at political opponents. If the allegations are to be believed on the face value, Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal took 2 crore in cash from Health Minister Satyendra Jain after a 50 crore land deal was settled for a relative of the Chief Minister. Satyendra Jain is currently under CBI scanner.

The allegations come after party's poor performance in recently held Municipal Corporation elections where BJP swept the poll thanks to the vote catching prowess of the Modi-Shah combine. AAP's display of snags in Electronic Voting Machines has led to animated discussions that Arvind Kejriwal and AAP are losing sheen and are finding excuses for their failures. Many have jumped to the conclusion that the party may not even last its full term in Delhi. To add to its woes, the party after losing the battle in Punjab and Goa is staring at serious crisis as some fresh appointments in Punjab have angered a major section of the party. There are rumours in the corridors of power that at least 11 of its recently elected legislators are in touch with the Congress and Bharatiya Janta Party. Convener of AAP in Punjab, Gurpreet Singh Ghuggi has resigned from the primary membership of the party couple of days after he was replaced by party leader and comedian Bhagwant Mann alleging that the party had ditched its ideas. He alleged that the entire process of appointment of the new state chief was "fake and unfair" and the party had

adopted a "pick and choose policy". Meanwhile, Mann has expelled Upkar Singh Sandhu who was the party candidate for Amritsar Lok Sabha bypoll from AAP for anti party activities.

The result is that questions are already being raised if AAP Government would last its full term in Delhi? Will the party disintegrate?

**AAP's comeback ability**  
Still jumping to hasty conclusions and attempting an obituary for AAP and its leader Arvind Kejriwal, just based on the outcome of MCD elections, charges of corruption and misgivings among Punjab leadership would be a figment of imagination of some because the party has tremendous comeback ability. We all know that AAP came as a movement against corruption and raised expectations of masses but saying that it is out forever would be wrong. Although Anti Corruption Crusader, Anna Hazare was strictly against entering electoral politics, Kejriwal assured his supporters that if they were to change the way the political leaders think and act, they themselves had to enter politics. As a result an army of such like-minded people who wanted to become

politicians to change the fate of nation got together. Not in agreement, Anna Hazare confined himself to Ralegan Siddhi in Maharashtra. However, what went wrong for Kejriwal from day one was that he entered the political playground with the sole intention of winning. In the process, AAP compromised on the very principles on which it rode to power. Many of his ministers and MLAs were booked in cases of land grab, extortion, wife bashing and so on. It is here that Kejriwal committed a series of mistakes. He sacked Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav, two of the four MPs in Punjab turned against him and divergent opinion was curbed. All this filled negative perception in the public mind that all was not well with the party that was supposed to offer panacea to all the ills of society. The situation has culminated to a level that now even Kejriwal finds himself embroiled in allegations of corruption.

Many people who spoke to this writer observed that it would be almost necessary to have a party like AAP in mainstream politics. However, they agreed that party had lost connect with the masses and it needs to



resurrect itself. Its critics should remember that the party was still able to get over 25 percent votes in MCD.

Past record of AAP shows that after being routed in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls during Modi juggernaut by drawing a blank in Delhi, the party won 67 Assembly seats out of a total 70 in Delhi. All AAP needs to do is to go to masses and its core vote bank comprising middle class, lower middle class and poor instead of Modi bashing and putting blame for everything that does not work in Delhi on Centre. Even when the MCD results began pouring in, the Aam Aadmi Party blamed EVMs and reacted that "It isn't a Bharatiya Jantata Party wave but an EVM wave". Time is running out for AAP and the party has to concentrate on delivery and show Delhi as an example of good governance. It could be the question of women safety, better roads, promised Wi-Fi zones and corruption free government.

#### Filling the vacuum

Focus area for AAP would be introspection as to why friends

of Kejriwal had left him. It could be top leaders like Dr Yogendra Yadav and Prashant Bhushan in Delhi or Dr Dharamvir Gandhi in Punjab. Whether it was result of the style of functioning of Kejriwal or lack of internal democracy in party or both is anybody's guess? AAP is a product of anti-corruption movement and this party promises alternative politics based on clean governance. It was happening at a time when Modi Model of Development in Gujarat was making waves. It may again be a co-incidence that both the AAP and Narendra Modi emerged on the national scenario almost at same time. It was time of reformation in India's national politics. Both campaigned against corruption, exposed scams during the UPA regime and promised to ameliorate the sufferings of common people. This was the space that BJP and AAP could capture. It is here that the green horn AAP failed while Modi-Amit Shah duo emerged victorious to grab the space and fill the vacuum. It is time AAP finds its moorings and fills the vacuum.

## Rajinikanth, Modi to meet? Speculation over superstar's political debut with BJP

**BJP leaders have been speaking to national president Amit Shah saying the veteran Tamil actor was welcome to the party if he decided join the state politics.**



(Agencies) Talk that Rajinikanth could visit New Delhi soon to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi has intensified speculations that the Tamil superstar is set to take the plunge into politics. Rajinikanth has not said anything yet about his Delhi visit, but BJP leaders are optimistic that the star with a huge fan following would join the party, helping it to make inroads into the state so long dominated by the DMK and the AIADMK. State BJP leaders say Rajinikanth and Modi enjoy a personal rapport. The superstar was one among the three people that the prime minister had called upon during his last visit to the state. The other

two were the then-ailing chief minister J Jayalalitha and political commenter Cho Ramaswamy. BJP leaders have already been making the right noises about Rajinikanth with national president Amit Shah saying the veteran actor was welcome to the party once he made up his mind to join politics. Local party leaders including senior office bearer H Raja have also appealed to the star to join the BJP. Speculations about Rajinikanth joining politics have swept the state in recent days after the actor called on his fans to "prepare for war". The actor, however, did not elaborate what exactly he meant. But a close associate of the actor from his

earlier days as a bus conductor told a local TV channel that Rajinikanth has made up his mind to join politics. Raj Bahadur said he met Rajinikanth a couple of days ago. "I asked him if he had made up his mind and he said yes, now I am ready, having deeply studied politics for the last 20 years". Raj Bahadur and Rajinikanth have been friends for 57 years, since the days when they operated a city bus on Route No 10A. Raj Bahadur was a driver while Rajinikanth was the bus conductor. The Congress is hoping that the superstar will not join the BJP. "He will float his own party," Tamil Nadu Congress president S Thirunavukkarasar said.



# IT Industry Body Nasscom Steps Up US Lobbying On Visa Concerns

**Indian IT industry body Nasscom paid a total amount of \$1,50,000 (nearly Rs. 1 crore) to its two registered lobbyists in the first quarter of 2017.**

(Agencies) New Delhi: 2017 - the same as the Facing rough weather amid large-scale layoffs and visa curbs in the US, Indian IT industry body Nasscom has stepped up its lobbying with the American lawmakers significantly with an over one-third increase in money spent on such activities. According to the latest lobbying disclosure reports filed with the US Senate, the National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) paid a total amount of \$1,50,000 (nearly Rs. 1 crore) to its two registered lobbyists in the first quarter of 2017.

This marks a significant rise from \$1,10,000 paid to the two lobbyists in the previous quarter ended December 2016. The amount was same for each of the four quarter of 2016.

Among the two lobbyists, The Lande Group was paid \$50,000 in January-March quarter of

2017 - the same as the money paid in each of the four quarters of 2016. However, the other lobbyist, Wexler & Walker, a unit of Hill+Knowlton Strategies, LLC, was paid \$100,000 in the first quarter of 2017, as against \$60,000 in the previous three-month period and in many of the previous quarters.

As per the lobbying disclosure report, the "specific lobbying issues" undertaken by this lobbyist included those related to immigration. The "general issues" included tax and trade matters.

The houses of Congress and federal agencies with whom it lobbied on behalf of Nasscom, which itself acts as a lobby group for the \$150 billion Indian IT industry, included the US Senate and the US House of Representatives.

On the other hand, The Lande Group covered a larger number of "specific lobbying issues", including with several federal agencies, as per its first quarter disclosure report.

These included "high skill immigration, green cards, visa processing, US-India relations, US-India matters, tax reform, (and) border adjustment tax".

In addition to the Senate and the House of Representatives, The Lande Group also did lobbying with the White



House Office, the US Trade Representative, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services and the departments of state, commerce and homeland security.

Nasscom took a delegation of the Indian IT industry earlier this year to the US to engage with members of the Trump administration on issues like clampdown on work visas and flow of skilled manpower between the two nations.

During the visit, Nasscom president R Chandrashekar had said the debate in the US over H-1B visas had become a political and emotive issue as there is a "yawning gap" between the facts and perception and the Indian IT firms contribute immensely to the US economy and jobs creation.

He met several influential American lawmakers, opinion builders, members of the

think-tank community and government officials to discuss H-1B visa issues, among other matters.

The visit of the Nasscom delegation came in the wake of the ongoing debate in the US and moves to curtail the use of H-1B visas, widely used by Indian IT majors.

The US recently also accused top Indian IT firms Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Infosys of "unfairly" cornering the lion's share of the H-1B work visas by putting extra tickets in the lottery system, a charge vehemently countered by Nasscom. Close on the heels of this accusation, Infosys went on to announce plans to hire 10,000 Americans, though this move was described by some as an act to appease US President Donald Trump's administration which has tightened the rules of H-1B visa programme to stop its 'abuse'.

## Coffee On Tap, TV, Scenery: Mumbai-Goa Tracks Go One-Up On Flights

**The bright yellow Superfast Tejas Express will redefine rail travel between Mumbai and Goa with fancy LHB coaches fitted with LED screens, coffee vending machines and Wifi connectivity among other things.**

(Agencies) A flight-like experience on the tracks - this is what the new luxurious train Tejas Express, which was unveiled this morning, has to offer. The bright yellow Superfast Tejas Express will redefine rail travel between Mumbai and Goa

with fancy LHB coaches fitted with LED screens, coffee vending machines and WiFi connectivity among other things. It will be flagged off on Monday by Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu

ultra-modern amenities like onboard infotainment, Wi-Fi, CCTV, Fire and Smoke detection facilities, CCTV cameras for security. The modern air-conditioned train will aim to attract tourists travelling between Mumbai and Goa.

"This Tejas will take rail travel to a different level altogether. This is a first of



its kind on Indian Railway. It will be a game changer and we want people to have a different feeling and we are

blessed that PM Modi and Rail minister have decided to start it from Mumbai," DK Sharma, General Manager of Central Railway told NDTV. The train will have

thirteen coaches including one executive coach. The Rail Coach Factory (RCF) General Manager RP Nibaria said the cost of each coach is Rs. 3.25 crore. The LCD screens in each coach will display entertainment options and there will be a call button to summon attendants for

help. "It is better than air travel. When you travel by air you don't see anything outside. But here you have beautiful surroundings as you will be passing through the beautiful Konkan region," Mr Sharma added. The Tejas Express will be introduced for the first time on Indian Railways. The train will run between Mumbai and Karmali in Goa for five days a week. During monsoon, it will run for three days. Regular services of the train will start from Tuesday next week. The train will stop at Dadar, Thane, Panvel, Ratnagiri and Kudal on the way to Goa. The railway has also announced to run Tejas Express on Delhi-Chandigarh and Surat to Mumbai sections.

## Would've Been In Jail: Arvind Kejriwal Responds To Kapil Mishra's Charges

(Agencies) Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has responded to allegations of money laundering and corruption levelled by suspended Aam Aadmi Party member Kapil Mishra and said that he would've been in jail had there been an "iota of truth" in his charges. This is the first time Mr Kejriwal has directly confronted Mr Mishra's allegations. "I would have been in jail had there been an iota of truth in his allegations," the AAP chief said at a party meeting. "They ask me why am I silent? Why I am not responding? How does one respond to these allegations! No one believes them - even the opposition doesn't believe the charges," Mr Kejriwal added. "When your own betray you, it hurts a lot," he further said. Kapil Mishra was sacked as a minister in the Delhi government by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal earlier this month. The AAP had then said that the decision was taken due to Mr Mishra's "poor performance". Earlier, Mr Mishra had alleged that he saw Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain pay Rs. 2 crore to the AAP chief at his house.

# NDA Government Will Find Permanent Solution To Kashmir Issue: Rajnath Singh

*Rajnath Singh said Pakistan had been trying to destabilise India by fomenting trouble in Kashmir.*

(Agencies) PELLING: Amidst the ongoing unrest in Jammu and Kashmir, Home Minister Rajnath Singh said today that the NDA government would find a permanent solution to the Kashmir issue.

Addressing a public reception in this western part of Sikkim, Mr Singh said Pakistan had been trying to destabilise India by fomenting trouble in Kashmir.

"But I want to tell all of you that our government will find a permanent solution to the Kashmir issue," he said, without elaborating.

The home minister's statement assumes significance as it comes at a time the Kashmir valley has been witnessing widespread

unrest since April 9 when the bypoll to the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat was held.

Eight people were killed in firing by security forces on the day. The turnout was a mere 7.14 per cent.

The April 12 bypoll to the Anantnag Lok Sabha seat had to be postponed by the Election Commission in view of the "scary" situation in Kashmir.

Students in large numbers have hit the streets, staging protests against alleged atrocities by the security forces.

Last year, around 80 people lost their lives in the unrest following the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani. "Kashmir is ours, Kashmiris are ours and Kashmiriyat is also ours. We will

find a permanent solution to Kashmir," Mr Singh said.

Referring to the 2014 swearing-in ceremony of the Modi government, the home minister said leaders of all neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, were invited to show that the new government wanted to have friendly relations with all countries.

However, he said, there had been no change in Pakistan's attitude towards India and it wanted to destabilise India.

"We hope that Pakistan will change. If it does not change, we have to change them. After globalisation, one country can't destabilise another country as the security



international community will not forget it," he said. The home minister is on a three-day visit to Sikkim during which he attended a conference of Himalayan states to review the security situation and

development activities along the Sino-Indian border. He had also visited the Nathu La border post, besides visiting a few posts of Indo-Tibetan Border Police and SSB along the Sino-Indian and Indo-Nepal border respectively

## Muslim law board recommends social boycott of those who resort to triple talaq



(Agencies) New Delhi : From "social boycott" of Muslims who resort to triple talaq to the appointment of an arbitrator to settle marital disputes are some features of the new guidelines issued by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) for married couples.

The AIMPLB on Monday told the Supreme Court that it has issued "guidelines for the husband and wife at the time of dispute" which has to be followed, days after the court reserved its verdict on a clutch of pleas challenging triple talaq.

Giving details of the guidelines framed by it, the AIMPLB told the apex court that if there are differences between a husband and his wife, they should first try to

mutually resolve the issues by keeping in mind the provisions of the Shariat (Islamic law) and try to overlook the mistakes of others.

It said in the second step, if the dispute is not resolved mutually and no desired results are achieved, then there may be a "temporary withdrawal".

"In case of failure of the first two steps, then senior members of both families should try to reconcile or one arbitrator may be appointed from each side for resolution of the differences," the fresh AIMPLB guidelines said.

It said "the Muslim community should boycott such persons socially who have pronounced three divorces (talaq) in one go, so that such incidents may be minimised".

The affidavit of AIMPLB said that only if the dispute still remained unresolved, the husband may pronounce one divorce during the period of purity of his wife and leave his wife till the time her waiting period

(iddat) ended.

"If a favourable situation arises during the waiting period, the husband should retain her and then both of them should live as spouses. If the husband does not retain his wife during the waiting period, then the marriage will be automatically dissolved after the lapse of waiting period and both of them will be free and authorised to start a new life," the board said.

It, however, clarified that if the wife is pregnant during the waiting period, then the period will extend till the time of delivery and the husband will have to bear the expenses incurred during waiting period and in case the dower (dowry) has not been paid, then he has to pay it immediately. "If they reach any amicable settlement after the wait period, then both of them may restore their relationship by the solemnisation of their marriage afresh with mutual consent along with a new dower," the guidelines said.

## Army moves in as RBI begins note verification



(Agencies) NEW DELHI: After the Army and the IAF helped the government with security during the printing of new currency notes and their airlift to different parts of the country after demonetisation, the former has once again been deployed for help in the exercise. Sources said over 500 soldiers will this week provide security and vigilance at RBI and other offices at 17 locations with currency verification and processing system (CVPS) machines. "The Army has been requisitioned under the mandate of aid to civil authorities, to basically cater for the effect of demonetisation and the double-shifts being done for currency verification," said a source. The move comes at a time when the Reserve Bank of India is undertaking the shredding of the Rs 1,000 and the old Rs 500 notes at its different offices.

## Rs 20,000 in bank accounts to be rural poverty barometer

(Agencies) New Delhi : A gram panchayat's success in reducing poverty will be judged by the number of households with over Rs 20,000 in savings bank accounts or percentage of families with Aadhaar-linked bank accounts. Or, by the percentage of its households which have availed over Rs 20,000 as bank credit.

Interestingly, higher the number of households with

bank loans for "diversified livelihood", the better the village would be assessed on the scale of progress. It will also be a positive if greater number of families are in nonfarm jobs with skilled work, or are selling their products in markets. Another key indicator of positive change will be the number of families using compost as the primary source to fertilise crops.

Progress of a village will also be measured against the prevalence of malnutrition among children up to three years, percentage of children with full immunisation, number of girls completing secondary education and skilling courses.

These are among the parameters being considered by the rural development ministry to

monitor its coming plan to create 50,000 poverty-free gram panchayats, its success to be measured against the "wellbeing of households" of a village.

Around 20 criteria for development will be clubbed into three categories: infrastructure, social development and economic development. A senior official said the scale to measure poverty-free

panchayats Mission Antyodaya was being According to the plan in the works, the target 50,000 gram panchayats will be bunched together in clusters of 5,000, the idea being that development or economic activity best happens in a collection of villages, be it dairy development or manufacturing or horticulture or tourism.

# Army rewards 'human shield' Major, declares intent

(Insider Bureau) NEW DELHI: Major Leetul Gogoi, in the eye of a storm after he controversially decided to truss up a civilian on his jeep's bonnet as a "human shield" to rescue over a dozen security and election personnel from a stone-pelting mob in Jammu & Kashmir in April, has been awarded by Army chief General Bipin Rawat. The award of the chief of army staff commendation card, which is just a notch below gallantry medals, to Gogoi is a deliberate statement of intent by the government and the Army about their hard-nosed policy in dealing with the worsening situation in the Kashmir Valley. It also brushes aside criticism that the act of Gogoi, who rose from the ranks as a jawan to get

commissioned as an officer in the Army Service Corps, violated human rights and the Geneva Convention. The government and Army are of the belief that no space should be given to either militants or stone-pelters, who actively try to disrupt counter-insurgency operations," a senior officer said. Rawat, during his visit to the Kashmir Valley last week, told his top commanders that he decided to award the COAS commendation card to Gogoi, who is in his late-30s, for "his sustained efforts in counter-insurgency operations as well as his presence of mind and initiative to prevent bloodshed" during the human shield episode in Budgam district on April 9. Interestingly, the Army court of inquiry (Col) into the episode is

still not complete, even though the brass from the very beginning maintained that the Major chose the "safest course of action" to save lives in a volatile situation, as was earlier reported by TOI. "While awarding Major Gogoi, all factors including notable performance of the officer and overall emerging indicators of the court of inquiry have been well-considered," the officer said. Major Gogoi had led his company of 53 Rashtriya Rifles (Punjab Regiment) to Beerwa after receiving an SOS from the ITBP, police and election personnel trapped in a polling booth there, which was surrounded by angry stone-pelters, some of whom were positioned on rooftops, during the byelection for Srinagar Lok

Sabha seat on April 9. Army officers contend that Major Gogoi showed "effective out-of-the-box thinking" to rescue the trapped personnel without firing a shot in a situation that could have easily spiralled out of control.

But after J&K chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, National Conference leader Omar Abdullah and others demanded action against the soldiers involved in the incident, J&K Police had lodged an FIR in the case on April 13. Military personnel, however, cannot be prosecuted without the Union government's sanction due to the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act being in force in the strife-torn state. The Army said the Col, a fact-finding body headed by a colonel, is ascertaining the

circumstances that led to the incident. "The Col is examining the veracity of the complaints and the video footage, while also recording the statements of the personnel rescued from the polling booth as well as some civilians," an officer said. Coming at a time of consistent demand from certain sections of the opposition to initiate talks with separatists, the commendation card for Major Gogoi is a statement that the government does not want security forces to be hamstrung as they try to establish "strategic dominance" in parts of the Valley worst-affected by militancy. Earlier, the Army chief had said that those who pelt stones to disrupt operations against terrorists would be treated as terror collaborators.

## Indian rocket that US once 'grounded' will put Isro-Nasa satellite in space



(Insider Bureau) New Delhi : In 1992, the US under President George Bush had slapped sanctions on Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) and prevented Russia from sharing cryogenic engine technology with the Indian space agency so as to check India from making missiles.

Two decades later, US space agency Nasa has joined hands with Isro to co-develop the world's most expensive earth imaging satellite that will cost the two countries over \$1.5 billion. The irony is GSLV, which is likely to place this Nasa-Isro Synthetic Aperture Radar+ (NISAR) satellite into orbit in 2021, is the same rocket for whose cryogenic engine the US put sanctions on India. Leaving the past behind, Isro and Nasa are busy building the 2,200kg NISAR satellite, which will provide a detailed view of the earth by using advanced radar imaging. It

is being designed to observe and take measurements of some of the planet's complex processes, including ecosystem disturbances, ice-sheet collapse and natural hazards.

Nasa became interested in Isro when the Indian space agency in April 2012 launched the country's first indigenous radar imaging satellite+ (Risat-1), some called it a spy satellite, which enabled imaging of the earth's surface during day and night under all weather conditions.

The negotiations went on for two years but the formal agreement for NISAR satellite happened when Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed a declaration with former US President Barack Obama during his visit to the US in 2014. The objective behind the collaboration was to use the satellite for the "benefit of humanity" as the mapping data from this

satellite will be available for all. Currently, the Ahmedabad-based Space Application Centre (SAC) is flight testing the "mini version" of the radar satellite over the city skies. The "mini radar" developed by SAC has been fixed on a Beechcraft Super King B 200 — owned by Isro — for the flight-testing primarily to 'understand weather and geographical conditions'.

SAC director Tapan Misra said, "We are testing the radar by taking images from about 8km above the sea level. The same area will be further studied by scientists from the ground level to understand the radar's accuracy level." He

added, "For ground level data analysis, we are roping in NGOs, academic institutes, government departments and people with scientific expertise. This process of aerial data analysis will continue in Gujarat for three months until the crop season ends. We plan to conduct the same aerial-cum-ground exercise for three years in 39 places of the country, including over the Himalayan glaciers, Ganga, Sundarbans, Rann of Kutch, Andhra, Kerala and Karnataka, to study the geological changes in forests, vegetation, rivers and glaciers."

## Sri Lankan smuggler swallowed gold coins, arrested from the airport



(Insider Bureau) On the airport where Security personnel detained a smuggler who swallowed 12 pieces of gold at the airport here. A person named Mohammad Ibrahim after that he was taken to the R.N. Kapoor hospital, where 18 pieces of gold worth 505 grams worth Rs 14.9 lakh were extracted from his body. The remaining 6 pieces were hid in the right limb. Customs officials said that Ibrahim, who was traveling from Colombo to Mumbai, was questioned. After this, he was passed through a metal detector, where his crime came under his control.

## India Considering Punitive Actions Against Pakistan: Top US Official

*The statement came a day after the Indian Army launched "punitive fire assaults" on Pakistani positions across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir*

(Insider Bureau) India is moving towards isolating Pakistan diplomatically and is considering punitive actions against Islamabad for its support to cross-border terrorism, a top American defence intelligence chief has told lawmakers. "India has sought and continues to move to isolate Pakistan diplomatically and is considering punitive options to raise the cost to Islamabad for its alleged support to cross-border terrorism," Lt Gen Vincent Stewart, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency told members of the powerful Senate Armed Services Committee during a Congressional hearing on worldwide

threats. His statement came a day after Indian Army launched "punitive fire assaults" on Pakistani positions across the Line of Control. India, he said, is modernising its military to better posture itself to defend New Delhi's interests in the broader Indian Ocean region and reinforce its diplomatic and economic outreach across Asia. Bilateral relations between India and Pakistan worsened following several terrorist attacks in India, he said. "Continued threat of high-level terror attacks in India, violence in Jammu and Kashmir and bilateral diplomatic recriminations will further strain India-

Pakistan ties in 2017," he said. Following a terrorist attack on an army base in Jammu and Kashmir last September, New Delhi conducted a highly publicised operation against terrorists across the Line of Control, he added. "In 2016, Indian and Pakistani forces exchanged some of the heaviest fire in years along the Line of Control in Kashmir, and each expelled a number of the other's diplomats amid growing tension," Lt Gen Stewart said. He also told lawmakers that in 2017, Islamabad is likely to slowly shift from traditional counterinsurgency operations along Pakistan's western border to more counter-terrorism and paramilitary operations throughout the country.

# Indrani Mukherjea says she knew Karti Chidambaram

*Sheena Bora murder accused Indrani Mukerjea told reporters that she knew former Union finance minister P Chidambaram's son Karti. Last week, the CBI registered a case against Karti, Indrani and her husband Peter, charging them with criminal conspiracy, cheating and graft.*

(Insider Bureau) The prime accused in the Sheena Bora murder case, Indrani Mukerjea and her husband Peter Mukerjea who have also been named by the CBI in a case of criminal conspiracy, cheating and corruption allegedly involving former Union finance minister P Chidambaram's son Karti, said on Monday that she knew the father and son duo, but denied any wrongdoing.

Indrani spoke briefly to reporters on her way back to jail from the city civil and sessions

court where she and Peter had been brought for a hearing in the murder case. Karti had allegedly facilitated the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) approval to INX Media when the Mukerjeas when they were directors in the company. Chidambaram was then the finance minister.

When a journalist asked Indrani about the case while she was being taken to the van to take her back to jail, she said, "I know Karti and Chidambaram. But the case I guess is about his

investments and deals. I don't know much about it though." Indrani refuted allegations of cheating and corruption in connivance with Karti and described the charges as rubbish. The Sheena Bora murder case was adjourned for next month as the court had not received any order or direction from the High Court on separate petitions filed by Indrani and Peter challenging the part of deposition of the police officer who arrested Indrani's driver Shyamwar Rai.



The judge who had been hearing the case also has been transferred and the next hearing in the case will now come up before a new judge.

On the way to the jail van, Indrani also spoke about her willingness to go for lie detector test, her divorce plans and to the case where the CBI has named

the couple along with Karti.

Karti allegedly received kickbacks for using his influence with the FIPB in 2007-08. He had allegedly got approval from the board to a "fallacious" proposal by INX Media. Indrani said she was going slow on the divorce as she wants an amicable process and her focus was on the bigger case.

## Build tunnels under Brahmaputra river to outfox enemy forces, says Army

*Lt General DS Ahuja, commanding officer of an Army setup in Shillong, said enemies invariably target strategic bridges in a bid to snap communication and disrupt the movement of troops, supplies and weaponry.*

(Insider Bureau) The Army has asked the government to consider building tunnels akin to the English Channel under the Brahmaputra because bridges can be targeted by enemy forces.

This recommendation comes less than a week before Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the 9.15-km Dhola-Sadiya bridge over the Lohit – a tributary of the Brahmaputra – on May 26. Once opened, it will be the longest bridge in the country.

Lt Gen DS Ahuja, commanding officer of an Army setup in Shillong, said enemies invariably target strategic bridges

in a bid to snap communication and disrupt the movement of troops, supplies and weaponry. "Bridges become primary targets during wars. We could do with tunnels under the Brahmaputra, which virtually divides much of the Northeast into equal halves," he said at a two-day road show of the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) in the Assam capital on Monday. Constructing two tunnels near Guwahati and Dibrugarh would be ideal, he added. India has witnessed a palpable straining of ties with Pakistan and China in recent times, and air chief marshal BS

Dhanoa has already asked IAF officers to be combat-ready.

Naveen Verma, secretary of the Department of North Eastern Region, said the idea of building such tunnels had come up during an informal discussion. "It may be taken forward," he added. While India already has three bridges across the river, a fourth – Bogibeel – is under construction. The IWAI is also focussing on reviving river shipping, which was the most popular mode of transportation in the Northeast before India's partition in 1947. An agreement on passenger and cruise services along coastal and



protocol routes between New Delhi and Dhaka has fuelled hopes of reviving river routes in the region. "We are promoting business opportunities in areas such as dredging and cargo service on the Brahmaputra through Bangladesh. We are also negotiating with Bhutan to establish transport facilities on

important national waterway. rivers such as Aie, Beki and Manas," IWAI chairperson Nutan Guha Biswas told HT. An 891-km stretch of the Brahmaputra, from Dhubri in the west to Sadiya in the east, has been designated as national waterway no 1. Southern Assam's Barak river, which caters to Mizoram and Manipur, is another

## Trafficking or conversion ? 71 tribal kids stopped en route Nagpur

*Vishva Hindu Parishad leader Sohan Viswakarma alleged that the children were being taken to Nagpur for conversion and demanded stern action against those involved in the incident.*

(Insider Bureau) In the last 24 hours, more than 70 tribal kids have been detained by police and railway authorities on the suspicion that they were being taken to Nagpur for religious conversion. Eleven tribal children from Madhya Pradesh's Alirajpur were stopped near Indore railway station by local police on Monday. Two of their escorts have also been arrested. Choti Gwaltoli town inspector Sanju Kamle claimed that all the children were Hindus and were being taken for conversion.

Two cases have been registered

against the children's escorts - Harun, who is from Alirajpur and Alpesh, from Jhabua, under the MP Freedom of Religion Act Section 3,4 and also Section 363 of Indian Penal Code (punishment for kidnapping).

"Acting on a tip off, police caught 11 children and their escorts near the Indore Railway Station. When police asked Harun and Alpesh about their relationship with the children, they said that they were escorting the children to Nagpur to attend a religious ceremony," Kamle said.

On late Sunday night, 60 tribal

children from MP's Jhabua, who were being taken to Nagpur, were also stopped in Ratlam after doubts were expressed by right wing activists about their possible "religious conversion". The Railway protection force (RPF) also detained nine people accompanying the children.

The suspects, however, said that the children were being taken to Nagpur for a cultural function and picnic as part of a summer camp with due permission of their parents. However, the Police were not convinced of their claim and

detained them for further questioning. RPF sources said that the children also claimed that they were on their way to a picnic in the Maharashtrian city during questioning. Police have asked the parents of the children to come over to Ratlam to shed some light on the whole episode. Some right-wing groups continued to maintain that it was a case of religious conversion. Vishva Hindu Parishad leader Sohan Viswakarma alleged that the children were being taken to Nagpur for conversion and demanded stern action against those involved in the incident.



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# No change in stand on India's entry into NSG: China



India as new membership in the NSG+ is guided by the consensus principle.

"China's position on the non-NPT members' participation in the NSG has not changed," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing.

She was responding to a question about the chances of India's admission into the grouping during the next month's plenary session expected to take place in the Swiss capital, Bern.

"We support the NSG group following the mandate of the 2016 Seoul plenary session and following building consensus as well as inter-governmental process is open and transparent

to deal with the relevant issue in a two-step approach," Hua said.

After India applied for membership in the NSG, Pakistan — the all-weather ally of China — also submitted its membership bid with Beijing's backing.

While India is backed by the US+ and a number of western countries, China maintained that new members should sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

India is not a signatory to the NPT. India says it will not sign the NPT as it regards it discriminatory.

After a series of meetings between officials of India and China, Beijing backed a two-step approach which stipulates that

the NSG members first need to arrive at a set of principles for the admission of non-NPT states into the NSG and then move forward with the discussions on specific cases. Analysts here say that with the bilateral discord between India and China increasing, especially after India's boycott of last week's Belt and Road Forum+ (BRF), China's stand on India's admission into the NSG as well as on the UN listing of JeM leader Masood Azhar+ will be further hardened. China's Belt and Road (BR) initiative is being opposed by India as it includes the \$50 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor+ (CPEC) which traverses through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

(Insider Bureau) BEIJING: China (NSG), marring India's chances on Monday said there is no change in its stance on admission of non-NPT states into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) club at its crucial meeting next month+ . China's support is crucial for

## Donald Trump's Saudi embrace complicates scene for India

(Insider Bureau) WASHINGTON: Exactly a year to the day since Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Iran to advance India's interests through the Chabahar port on the heels of the Obama-engineered US-Iran nuclear deal, President Donald Trump has thrown a monkey wrench into the works. By fully backing Saudi Arabia, Iran's regional rival, at the head of what is virtually a Sunni alliance against a Teheran-led Shia bloc, the US President appears to have heightened the internecine battle between the two Islamic sects playing out in the middle-east, rather than the professed aim of bringing peace to the region.

Whether or not this gambit gives breathing room for the US and Israel, it certainly sets the stage for greater tension, particularly with Washington lining up a \$110 billion arms package for the Saudis that will ostensibly boost job creation in America. Trump made no secret of his antipathy towards Iran -- a country his predecessor engaged extensively to arrive at a nuclear accord - by calling on the Saudi-led Sunni alliance to isolate a nation he said has "fueled the fires of



sectarian conflict and terror."

Commentators across the world have been quick to point out that Saudi Arabia is no less - if not more - culpable in this matter. "Trump promises jobs for Americans to build weapons for Saudi regime that enabled 9/11 murderers and blocked FBI investigation of 9/11 crimes," filmmaker Micheal Moore tweeted on Sunday, even as several analysts pointed out that 15 of the 19 hijackers on 9/11 were Saudis.

Human rights activists are also appalled. In a snarky follow-up that spoke to the Kingdom's medieval mindset, Moore tweeted: "Trump Saudi Arabia schedule Sun morn: 7am: Breakfast/ Beheading,

8am: Melania "ceremonially" to be dragged out of car she attempts to drive.

Beheadings are common form of punishment in Saudi Arabia and women are forbidden to drive.

Trump's Saudi outreach has astonished even his hardcore supporters. Roger Stone, Trump's one-time campaign adviser, said seeing the President accept an award from the Saudi monarch "makes me want to puke." The Washington Post called aspects of the visit "bizarre and un-American," pointing out that while other US Presidents made it clear that they had to deal with Saudi Arabia, they did not endorse the Saudi culture, which Trump and his

delegation did by participating in a "sinister" all-male sword dance.

The whole-hearted Trump tilt towards Saudi Arabia vis-a-vis Iran also complicates things for New Delhi, which tries to maintain equal distance between the two Islamic powers, in part because New Delhi has extensive trade ties with both, and India's syncretic Muslim population has large numbers of both Sunnis and Shias.

The US-Saudi embrace also draws in Pakistan, a Saudi client state that is trying to worm its way back into Washington's fold after being put out in the cold during the Obama years. Although Pakistan's prime minister Nawaz Sharif did not receive due attention at the U.S-Sunni summit in Riyadh - he was neither given a platform to speak nor did he get a one-on-one with Trump that the Pakistani media had projected -- the country's former Army chief, Gen. Raheel Sharif, was seated prominently at a dinner table with Saudi Crown Prince and Defence Minister Muhammad Bin Salman and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, a key figure in the \$110 billion arms deal

## Rise of radical groups in Maldives raises fear of terror attack in India



(News Agencies) New Delhi : Maldives, India's southernmost neighbour, is fast becoming a radical state with high degree of intolerance encouraged by the regime of President Abdullah Yameen, alleged Hussain Rasheed, father of the slain blogger Yameen Rasheed. The father who visited Delhi this week to talk about the circumstances leading to the brutal murder of his son, a liberal and popular blogger, told ET that President Yameen is encouraging radical forces in the name of religion.

"Days after my son's murder, the President stated that God will punish those who abuse religion. This implied that the regime is giving tacit support to radical groups. Maldives is fast becoming a haven for radicalism with support from certain quarters abroad." Hussain alleged that over 200 Maldivian youths have travelled to Syria to join the ISIS, and hardline preachers have a free run in the remote

islands of Maldives. He sought India's intervention to prevent Maldives from becoming a radical state . There were earlier reports that Maldivian youth are being lured by madrassas in Pakistan through scholarships. While the Chinese presence in Maldives is a cause for worry in Delhi, the rise of radical groups in Maldives yet again raises the fear of terror attack in India through the seas. Hussain will travel to Geneva next month to move the UN Human Rights Council to seek justice for his son's murder. "Yameen was an impassioned critic who reported on issues related to corruption and radicalism, mainly through his popular blog The Daily Panic... His witty and relentless condemnation of systemic injustice earned him praise, but also drew the attention of religious extremists and government officials who felt threatened by his social and political commentary," said Hussain.

# 'Why did Nawaz Sharif even go to Riyadh?'

## Pakistan humiliated at US-Arab-Islamic Summit

*Media and Opposition leaders in Pakistan are criticising Nawaz Sharif after facing humiliation at the US-Arab-Islamic Summit.*



(News Agencies) Mortified - that is the word used by The Nation, a major Pakistani newspaper, on how Pakistani delegation, led by its prime minister Nawaz Sharif, looked like at the just concluded US-Arab-Islamic Summit in the Saudi Arabian capital Riyadh.

According to another story, published in The News today, "something has gone terribly wrong as the Summit didn't mention Pakistan's role against global terrorism and its prime minister Nawaz Sharif was not given chance to put forth the country's point of view' whereas Pakistan has lost over 70,000 civilians and 6000 security forces personnel in terrorism related violence."

The article that defines Pakistan as a 'frontline state' and the 'sole Muslim nuclear power' rakes up the Kulbhushan Jadhav case and says such a treatment becomes more pinching when you find that US President Donald Trump mentioned India in the list of terror victims but ignored Pakistan that "is trying to convince the world of New Delhi's role in fanning terror through spy-terrorist Kalbhushan Jadhav's case at International Court of Justice." The article summed up the mood at the summit, "The popular sentiment among the majority of Pakistani media delegation was that of a total humiliation."

Pakistan's treatment at the summit has started making headlines in the country with opposition parties

targeting Nawaz Sharif. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan has taken on Nawaz Sharif for letting Pakistan and other Muslim communities down with his ineffective presence at the global forum. We can feel the heat of the royal snub that Pakistan was given in

Khan's words, "The most important thing is that he [Trump] did not even mention Pakistan, the country that fought America's war and lost 70,000 people".

A release by Pakistan's Foreign Office informs us that Nawaz Sharif did interact with "Saudi King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz, President Donald Trump and other leaders from the Arab and Islamic countries", but if we go by the words of Imran Khan, Sharif wasn't even invited to speak. "Nawaz Sharif had practiced 6 hours for his speech at the Riyadh Summit but he wasn't even invited to speak. Why did Nawaz Sharif

even go to Riyadh?" a Samaa TV report said.

And how can media and politicians in Pakistan forget about their Kashmir rant, something that defines the agenda of the country, its overzealous media and narrow-visioned politicians, back home or at global, multi-lateral forums.

So, being comfortably unmindful of Pakistan sponsored terror in Jammu & Kashmir and in India, that has taken over 45,000 lives in the state of Jammu & Kashmir alone, The Nation's article writes that "terming India a victim of terrorism was a deeply

painful insult to innocent, unarmed Kashmiris who are fighting for their just cause of liberating their land from the oppressive India and facing worst kind of state terrorism at the hands of its armed forces." Imran Khan, while blaming Sharif for disgracing Pakistan at the summit, said that "Nawaz Sharif should have talked about the plight of Kashmiris and Palestinians" and went on to criticise Donald Trump for praising India and for ignoring "the atrocities being committed by India against the Kashmiris." Meanwhile, the geopolitical reality is every successive US

government, including the present one of Donald Trump, sees Kashmir as a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and squarely blames Pakistan for promoting terror in India. On May 11, in its 'Worldwide Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community' report, the US Government blamed Pakistan for deteriorating India-Pakistan ties and batted for India's growing intolerance over Pakistan's state-sponsored terrorism. And in April, Gen HR McMaster, the US National Security Advisor, who was in Pakistan, bluntly told Pakistan to stop using terror as state policy.

## US must rethink strategy in Afghanistan as Daish infiltrates South Asia - expert

(Agencies) KUALA LUMPUR: The US must re-evaluate its policy towards Afghanistan after its 15-year stint in the country as South Asia faced extremist infiltration from the Daish terrorist group that will only worsen the current security



challenge in the region, an expert said at the 31st Asia Pacific Forum (APR), here Tuesday. Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty, said that due to the failure of the US' objectives to establish a stable post-Taliban regime and defeating forces of extremism in the country, the region was now vulnerable to groups like Daish. "Daish has maximum penetration in Afghanistan and the north-west

of Pakistan. If not checked Daish can become a new security challenge for the region by collaborating with other homegrown extremist groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"Although the relations between Daish and Taliban, and Daish and Al Qaeda are not very good, these are very loose organisations with elements between them that tend to gravitate towards each other, such as their local interest," he said at the APR session titled "In Conversation: Asian Views on America's Role in Asia". Citing India as an example, the New Delhi-based expert said that even as the country tried to contain extremism, it still experienced Daish infiltration activity, especially targeting India's large Muslim population and that this has been affecting India's domestic programmes, and the society.

Daish, also known as ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), is an infamous militant group that was based in Iraq since 1993 before spreading to Syria and proceeded to making its mark worldwide with terrorism attacks throughout the world.

The Taliban existed since 1994 in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It governed Afghanistan since 1996 before losing power in 2001 through the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom. According to reports, Daish started gaining a foothold in South Asia in 2015 through Afghanistan, but has now established its presence amidst continued instability in the war-weary country. The group had claimed responsibility over several major attacks in Afghanistan.

Chakravarty said that he believed the Indian government was doing a great job to control the rise of Daish extremism, by having one of the largest outreach programmes, including stopping their citizens from leaving the country to join extremist groups in foreign lands. To contain the rise of extremism in the region, India also supported Afghanistan through development aid between US\$2 billion and US\$3 billion to support the building of infrastructure like schools and medical facilities in the neighbouring country after the Taliban was toppled in 2001. The former Indian

envoy to Bangladesh and Thailand highlighted that to tackle extremism in the region, the US administration must also bring Pakistan to the table as seven of the 20 US-designated terrorist organisations in the Afghanistan-Pakistan sub-region are reported to be in Pakistan.

Citing the 5th edition of the Asian Voices on America's Role in Asia (AVARA) report, which he participated in, and was published in February, Chakravarty said that the South Asian countries are deeply concerned with the prospect of a US retreat from the global stage, and hoped that it would not abandon Afghanistan. "They believe that a precipitous reduction of US engagement would be dangerous, hence deep concern about Washington's political will to sustain its longstanding international security commitments," he said. South Asia comprises eight countries with a population of about 1.8 billion and a gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$2.6 trillion. Apart from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the other countries are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

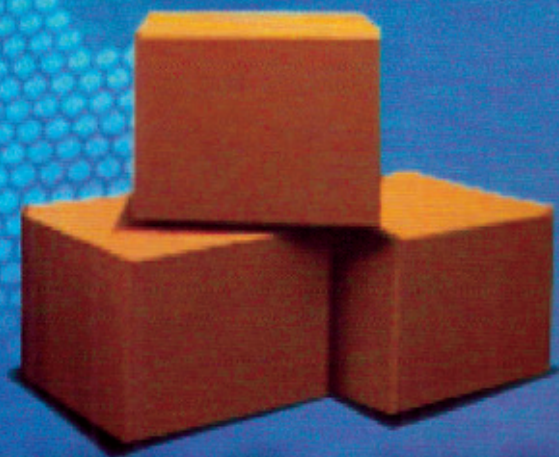
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# Trump seeks to slash \$3.6 trillion of spending in austere budget



Federal Budget, a nonpartisan policy organization, said the plan relied on gimmicks, unrealistic cuts and "rosy assumptions" of economic growth that would reach 3 percent annually by the end of Trump's first term. The Congressional Budget Office projects the economy to grow at an annual pace of 1.9 percent over that period. The White House said its

proposed tax cuts would help fuel higher growth and pay for themselves by generating an additional \$2 trillion in revenue over 10 years. Lawrence Summers, a former economic adviser to Democratic President Barack Obama, said the Trump administration was double-counting that money by saying it would help close budget deficits while also offsetting the

revenue lost by cutting tax rates. "It appears to be the most egregious accounting error in a presidential budget in the nearly 40 years I have been tracking them," Summers wrote in the Washington Post. Mick Mulvaney, Trump's budget office director, said his office made other assumptions that were probably too conservative. "We stand by the numbers," he said.

## Manchester attack: 'Fury' at US 'evidence' photos leak

(Agencies) The UK government and police have reacted with anger after a US newspaper published photos apparently showing the scene of the Manchester bomb attack. Counter terror police chiefs said the leak undermined their investigation and victims' and witnesses' confidence. A Whitehall source added: "We are furious. This is completely unacceptable." Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham said he had raised the leaks with the US ambassador. Earlier UK Home Secretary Amber Rudd said she was irritated with the US for releasing information about bomber Salman Abedi. Ms Rudd said she had told Washington "it should not happen again". But the New York Times then published photos it says were gathered by UK authorities at the scene of the attack, including the remnants of a backpack, nuts and screws, and a device identified as a

"possible detonator". The paper said the alleged evidence suggested "a powerful, high-velocity charge, and a bomb in which its shrapnel was carefully and evenly packed". The photos were subsequently published in the UK media. "These images leaked from inside the US system will be distressing for victims, their families and the wider public," the Whitehall source added. "The issue is being raised at every relevant level by the British authorities with their US counterparts." The UK's National Police Chiefs' Council said it valued its relationships with "trusted intelligence, law enforcement and security partners around the world", saying this allowed "privileged and sensitive information" to be shared in the fight against terrorism.

(Agencies) U.S. President Donald Trump asked lawmakers on Tuesday to cut \$3.6 trillion in government spending over the next decade, taking aim at healthcare and food assistance programs for the poor in an austere budget that also boosts the military. Republicans who control the U.S. Congress - and the federal purse strings - will decide whether to make politically sensitive cuts, and the proposal is unlikely to be approved in its current form. Although it is not expected to survive on Capitol Hill, the proposal puts numbers on Trump's vision of a government that radically cuts assistance to lower-income Americans. The biggest savings would come from cuts to the Medicaid healthcare program for the poor, which are embedded in a Republican healthcare bill passed by the House of Representatives. Trump wants lawmakers to cut at least \$610 billion from Medicaid and more than \$192 billion from food stamps over a decade. He seeks to balance the budget within 10 years. The Committee for a Responsible

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# The jihadi clan: Is Manchester bomber's family part of global terror network?



BOMBER



BROTHER



FATHER

## THE JIHADI FAMILY

(Agencies) The family of the Manchester suicide bomber have links to terror networks around the world, it was revealed last night.

Salman Abedi, who killed 22 people and injured at least 119, had possible links between the Manchester Arena atrocity and the Paris and Brussels terror attacks, detectives have said.

One theory is Abedi may have been part of a larger cell that included Mohamed Abrini, the 'Man in the Hat', with connections to the mass murders in Paris and Brussels. Abrini is known to have visited Manchester in 2015.

His father Ramadan and younger brother Hashem were in custody in Libya last night after being arrested by counter-terror police. Detectives said Hashem had links to ISIS and was planning to carry out a terror attack in Tripoli.

Hashem was accused of having known about his brother's murderous plans for more than a month, while it emerged his father had been a revolutionary fighter against Gaddafi who publicly voiced support for an Al Qaeda-linked group in Syria.

A third relative, Abedi's older brother Ismail, was arrested in Manchester. It is not known what his involvement, if any, was. He was once reported to a counter-terrorism unit after concerns were raised by

members of the Muslim community.

Last night, attention focused on how the bomber had been allowed to slip through the net. Key warnings about his descent into jihadism were apparently overlooked.

Yesterday it was alleged that two calls about his conduct had been made to a police anti-terror hotline and that his family had repeatedly raised concerns he was 'dangerous'.

It was also claimed the university drop-out had travelled extensively in the Middle East and received terror training in Syria; and that he returned to the UK from Libya just days before the attack.

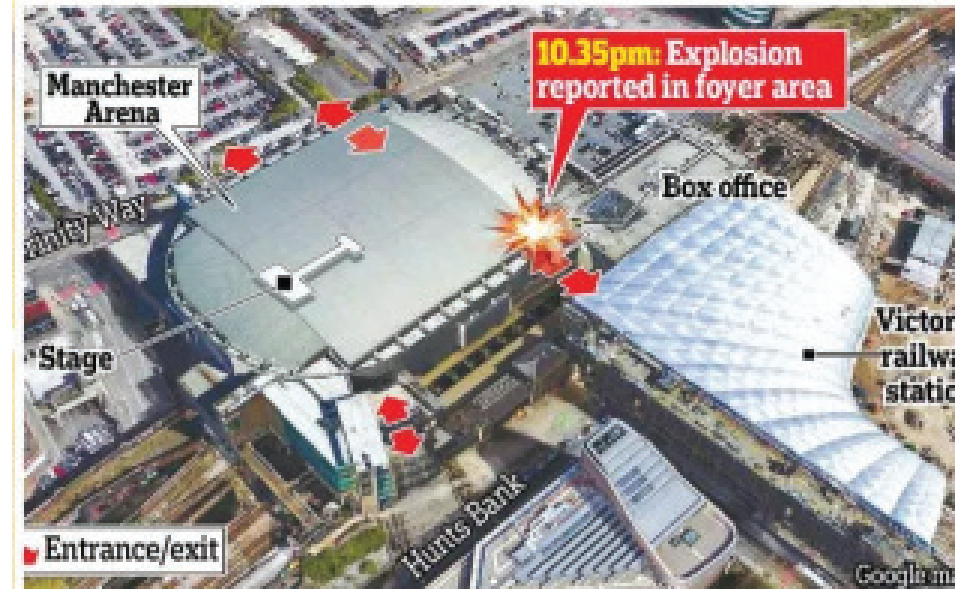
Elsewhere tonight it was revealed:

- His sister Jomana said her brother was kind and loving and that she was surprised by what he did this week. She said she thought he was driven by what he saw as injustices - Akram Ramadan, 49, part of the close-knit Libyan community in south Manchester, told the Daily Telegraph Abedi had been banned from Didsbury Mosque after he had confronted the Imam who was delivering an anti-extremist sermon

- Sources told The Daily Telegraph that there were two separate bomb factories, with the chemicals mixed in the

rented Airbnb flat in Granby Row before the bomb itself was assembled elsewhere. It was not clear if the second flat had been discovered.

- Authorities tell ABC News they found a kind of bomb-making workshop in Salman's home and he had apparently stockpiled



enough chemicals to make additional bombs

- It was also reported last night that Abedi telephoned his mother - Samia Tabbal, 50, in Tripoli shortly before the massacre, after asking his brother to put them in touch with each other.

- The Independent reported that Samia had been arrested in Manchester, although that contradicted earlier reports a white woman had been arrested.

- It was also reported Salman had been deeply affected by the death of a



friend, Abdul Wahab Hafidah, a Briton of Libyan descent, in May 2016. He died after being run down by a car and then stabbed in Manchester. Abedi viewed the attack as a hate crime, a family friend said, and grew increasingly angry about what he considered ill-treatment of

terror attacks. Sources said officers are exploring whether the same cell was responsible for all three outrages.

One theory is Abedi may have been part of a larger cell that included Mohamed Abrini, the 'Man in the Hat', with connections to the mass

plotting further bloodshed.

It was also claimed last night that he had travelled by train from London to Manchester on Monday in advance of the attack. This has raised suspicions that he may have met co-conspirators or been supplied with his explosive device.

The device, a metal container stuffed with bolts and nails, was apparently hooked to a powerful battery and featured a remote, cell-phone detonator with built-in redundancies to ensure a blast even if a first attempt failed.

The design was sophisticated enough to bolster the theory that Abedi did not act alone.

Speaking to ABC, a terrorism expert said this suggested 'there's a bomb maker on the loose.'

Yesterday armed police and the military stormed a series of addresses in Manchester as Britain went into an unprecedented security lockdown, with up to 1,000 troops outside some of the country's most historic sites.

Muslims in Britain.

As police prepared to make a number of 'significant' arrests last night, it emerged that detectives were probing possible links between the Manchester Arena atrocity and the Paris and Brussels

murders in Paris and Brussels. Abrini is known to have visited Manchester in 2015.

Detectives believe Abedi, 22, may have just been a 'mule' and that the specialist who prepared his sophisticated device is

**ARIANA Grande** said she's 'broken' and 'so so sorry' after 22 people died and 120 were injured in a terrorist attack at her Monday evening concert at Manchester Arena in England. The singer, 23, wrote in an emotional tweet, 'Broken. From the bottom of my heart, (I) am so so sorry. (I) don't have words.' Ariana has since suspended the entire European leg of her The Dangerous Woman Tour, with TMZ reporting the singer is 'incapable' of performing her next planned date in London on Thursday night. Organisers are said to be



'deeply concerned about security' in the wake of the attack. The singer was due to perform in England, Belgium, Poland, Germany and Switzerland over the coming weeks.

**So many young beautiful innocent people, they were murdered by evil losers. I won't call them monsters because they would like that term. I will call them losers.**  
— Donald Trump, US President

**This attack stands out for its appalling, sickening, cowardice - targetting children who should have been enjoying one of the most memorable nights.**  
— Theresa May, British PM

# Donald of Arabia

Those who expected Donald Trump to fly into Riyadh and insult his Saudi hosts with the kinds of broadsides he delivered on the campaign trail against Islam and Muslims needn't have worried.

Those who once accused Saudi Arabia of complicity in the 9/11 attacks praised its "magnificent" and "sacred land." He looked comfortable trading pleasantries and sipping coffee with King Salman, the aging scion of the country's founding ruler, King Abdulaziz Ibn Saud. He soaked up the gaudy chandeliers, the gilded wall trimmings. Trump even bobbed up and down during the ardash, the traditional sword dance that desert tribes once performed before they went into battle.

The images on TV and on Twitter looked like a Michael Moore fever dream — and Democrats couldn't stop harping on the "curtsy" Trump made as he accepted an award from the Saudi king, just as Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush did before him.

The pageantry was not subtle, but the real import of Trump's visit, and especially his carefully crafted speech, was to announce a new alliance between America and the Sunni autocrats of the Arab world, aimed at Shiite Iran.

No more Bush-like paeans to "freedom" or even Obama-esque warnings about being on the "right side of history" — Trump dispensed with the usual presidential to-be-sures about the democratic shortcomings of America's regional allies and said flatly that defeating terrorism "transcends every other consideration."

"This is a battle between good and evil," Trump declared in one of the speech's more striking passages, which bore the unmistakable echo of Bush's famous September 2001 declaration, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." Elsewhere, he demanded that his audience "drive out the terrorists and

extremists," repeating the words "drive them out" several times for emphasis. He spoke of combating "wicked ideology" and "foot soldiers of evil," phrases that would be right at home on an old David Frum notepad.

Indeed, the speech had the flavor of an early Bush address, before his administration needed a rationale for spending billions to rebuild a shattered Iraq and the "Freedom Agenda" became the ostensible organizing principle of his second-term foreign policy.

Trump only hinted at the complicity of Gulf Arab regimes in promoting a radical, sectarian version of Islam, praising their apparent newfound willingness to crack down on extremism and terrorist financing. But he was explicit in condemning Iran, Saudi Arabia's sworn enemy, for stoking "the fires of sectarian conflict and terror" in the region.

"Until the Iranian regime is willing to be a partner for peace," he said, "all nations of conscience must work together to isolate Iran, deny it funding for terrorism, and pray for the day when the Iranian people have the just and righteous government they deserve."

There was little effort to reach out to the 40 million Iranians who had just voted to reelect Hassan Rouhani, the pragmatic president who won by pledging greater openness to the world, albeit within the severe constraints of Iran's theocratic system.

As for the Sunni monarchies and military dictatorships like that run by Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt, Trump promised to stop pestering them about human rights and political freedoms. "Our partnerships will advance security through stability, not through radical disruption," he said. "And, wherever possible, we will seek gradual reforms — not sudden intervention."

All that is exactly the kind of rhetoric the Sunni strongmen of the region yearned for during the Obama years, when the United States dialed back

its usual criticism of Iran as it pursued the much-maligned nuclear deal, while pressuring Arab leaders to respond to the demands of their people.

Still, parts of the speech could have been given by either of Trump's predecessors — respectful language about religion, the observation that Muslims have suffered the most from terrorism, the patronizing evocation of past civilizational glories, like the pyramids. What was missing, though, was any sense of why Trump thinks terrorism is on the rise, and how he plans to combat it.

It was as if, as former Bush administration official Elliott Abrams put it, the terrorists were aliens from outer space, rather than the twisted product of broken societies that have yet to divine how to stop churning them out. "He offered no explanation of what was producing this phenomenon," Abrams noted in an email to my

colleague Annie Karni. "Trump had no theory, and therefore could not suggest what might be done to prevent more extremists from rising."

Bush, and advisers like Abrams, had a theory — that a lack of freedom and human development had created a malignancy in the Arab world, which in turn was spawning religious radicalism and terrorists. Obama seemed to buy into the idea, too — just ask Egypt's Hosni Mubarak — though he sanded off the sharper edges of Bush's rhetoric and lacked his messianic fervor. But where the Bush team spoke expansively about defeating Islamist ideology, Obama's more risk-averse advisers aimed for narrower victories, like the "degradation" of specific terrorist groups. And they also made much of the need to curb the abuses of the Bush years, though an internal revolt against practices like waterboarding had already taken hold in his second term.

Very little of any of it, as Trump suggested on

Sunday, has seemed to work, and he promised to "apply new approaches informed by experience and judgment." But he also warned several times that the United States wouldn't be bearing any burden or paying any price to vanquish the terrorists that he had once boasted would be quickly and easily defeated. "The nations of the Middle East cannot wait for American power to crush this enemy for them," Trump said. "The nations of the Middle East will have to decide what kind of future they want for themselves, for their countries, and for their children." Trump is offering, in short, a war on terror without the pretense of idealism. There has always been a strong odor of hypocrisy hanging over the U.S. relationship with regimes like Saudi Arabia, and perhaps there's something refreshing in Trump's "we are not here to lecture" candor. The United States has, after all, very little real leverage or will to remake

Arab societies in America's image — particularly ones that buy \$110 billion of our weapons. All too often, U.S. criticism of the democratic failings of its allies seems meant more for our domestic consumption than for foreign audiences, who have learned to tune it out. And presidents of both parties have almost always prioritized core U.S. interests — like the Iran nuclear deal over suffering Syrians — when forced to make a choice.

Ben Rhodes, Obama's former speechwriter and foreign policy alter ego, got an earful on Twitter when he complained that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was foolish to slam Iran's record on human rights while standing next to the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, whose record is arguably worse. "Really undercuts US credibility when it looks like we only raise human rights issues for geopolitical purposes," he wrote.

## Indian-American jailed for \$33 million fraud in US

The second scheme involved unlawfully obtaining USD 1.2 million in economic development funds as well as valuable industrial property from the State of South Carolina.

Xavier was convicted by guilty plea in January on two counts of wire fraud. One wire fraud count related to the investment fraud scheme and the other count to the South Carolina economic development scheme. According to documents filed in court, from September 2010 through May 2014, Xavier operated Essex Holdings from an office in Miami and raised more than USD 30 million from nearly 100 investors for supposed investments in sugar transportation and shipping, as well as iron ore mining in Chile. He used false financial statements, forged documents and false promises of fixed rates of return, to induce people to invest in company. Most of the money was used for purposes other than what was promised, including to support lavish spending

by Xavier and his wife for expensive jewelry, luxury vehicles, wedding expenses, and cosmetic surgery. Eventually, Xavier used new investor money to pay old investors in a Ponzi-like fashion before the scheme collapsed. Evidence filed in court showed that the actual investor losses from the scheme exceeded USD 29 million. The second scheme involved Xavier using Essex Holdings to obtain USD 1.2 million in

payments and approximately USD 1.5 million worth of commercial real estate from the South Carolina Coordinating Council for Economic Development (SCCED), a division of the South Carolina state government, that was supposed to be used to develop a dilapidated industrial property into a diaper plant and rice packaging facility. According to documents filed in the court, he

provided false financial documentation to SCCCED in order to obtain the contract, and later provided fake contractor invoices and fake bank statements in order to get paid under the contract. As with the investment fraud scheme, Xavier spent a significant portion of the development money for his personal expenses, and wired some of it to the same overseas accounts used in the investment fraud.

## China's Smug Forecast About India Proves Right

A Russian academic, Viktor Lavin, points to the "fresh dynamism" that BRI will impart to Putin's favourite project, the Eurasian Economic Union, to match the European Union. He further emphasizes that BRI will make up for the lags in the work of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (of which India is a member). Of course, there are concerns over hegemony and defence, but are any of these overcome by refusing to join what Xi triumphantly calls "the project of the century" that will "add splendour to human civilization" and help build "a new era of harmony and trade"? President Xi Jinping's opening address seemed sometimes to have been ghost-written by Jawaharlal Nehru. First, he invoked the Panchsheel, the call that used to be emblazoned on the standard of our foreign

policy. Then he talked of the world "pulling together like an airborne skein of long-necked geese," and added, "The best way to meet challenges and achieve better development is through cooperation" — quintessentially Nehruvian. And at least two of his key sentences sounded as if they might have been pinched from Nehru: one from his address to the Asian Relations Conference he convened in Purana Qila, New Delhi on 23 March, 1947 even before India became independent: "so that mankind will move closer to the community of a shared future"; and, second, what he might have said at the UN: "We will not base cooperation on ideological grounds, nor will we make a political agenda or make any exclusive arrangements".

# Searching Son For Dad's Dirt

Like, when the CBI father for financial knocked on the doors of his family's Chennai residence on May 16. He has been booked for corruption and conspiracy to help INX Media get an FIPB clearance circumventing foreign equity limits in a media company. (Indrani and Peter Mukherjee, who floated INX in 2007, later became accused in the case on the 2012 murder of Sheena Bora murder.) In its FIR, the CBI alleges that Chidambaram as finance minister allowed the Mukherjees to get foreign investment of Rs 305 crore although the Foreign Investment Promotion Board had sanctioned only Rs 4 crore. The probe agency further claims that Karti, in return, got kickbacks of over Rs 3 crore through the companies linked directly and indirectly to him.

Karti, with characteristic insouciance, brushes away the raids at his home in downtown Nungambakkam as act two of the Narendra Modi government's drama to fix him and, through him, his

and growth. And that his successor in the present cabinet, Arun Jaitley, has unleashed the power of the governmental agencies to silence him through periodical raids on his son's business.

Columnist S. Gurumurthy isn't amused. "Chidambaram can wallow in all the self-importance at his command about his pearls of wisdom, but the fact remains that both father and son were involved in dubious deals during his tenure as the finance minister," he says. "It is only a matter of time before the entire picture of their wrongdoings emerges," adds the Swadeshi Jagran Manch functionary, pointing out how Karti-controlled Advantage Strategic Consulting Pvt Ltd keeps cropping up in various deals—Aircel-Maxis, Vasan Eye Care, INX Media and various overseas investments. "If what I have written or Dr Swamy has exposed is not true, why haven't they dared to sue us for defamation?"

Chidambaram feels he has irked the Modi regime with his weekly newspaper columns that picked holes in the NDA's claims of development, governance

## Post OBOR, Should India Relook Its Neighbourhood Policy?

India's absence at the meeting, however, wasn't that surprising considering its objection over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that runs through Indian territory of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan and this is a serious breach of sovereignty -- it is part of the OBOR project. It was unilaterally decided by China and did not take India into confidence. India's external affairs ministry feel all connectivity initiatives must be based on the international norms. Besides, there are issues of security. The two countries have disputed border and already there was a war in the 60s and border skirmishes continue till date. Also, China's role in insurgency in India's Northeastern region cannot be ignored.

The economic ramifications need to be considered since most of this money invested will be a form of loans has the debt burden. Another issue that makes India worry is the geostrategic implications, mainly in the context of the neighbourhood.

India maintains a friendly relationship with most of its neighbours barring Pakistan. The neighbourhood has been one of the key focuses for India's foreign

policy. It maintains an active involvement with the countries by cooperating with them in a wide variety of areas including security, economic, cultural etc. India by dint of asymmetry of its size, economic and military might and stature in the world is considered as a leader in the region. For long, it enjoyed its position of influence uncontested. Although the Chinese influence in the region has been growing in past few years but India is able to maintain its dominance.

India's neighbours, mostly small countries with a large numbers of the poor population, are under pressure of developing their socio-economic status and for which they need large capital which they do not have.

Hence, they are looking for investments externally. China's offer of the OBOR has come as a handy to them. China plans to invest around \$900 billion for creating infrastructure under the OBOR.

Among the South Asian nations, Maldives was the first to join the initiative. Since China has built the Hambantota port in 2010 that is part of the OBOR, Sri Lanka became a partner automatically. Bangladesh and Nepal followed the suit in 2016

and 2017 respectively.

China will be developing various infrastructure projects in the India's neighbourhood.

We cannot overlook the political considerations that had drawn our neighbours to China. For most of the regional countries, India had been a consideration in their China policy. Since India has often been perceived as a hegemon, they often played China card to counterbalance India. Some of the strategic thinkers believe that India's new thrust to involve in the neighbourhood by its policy like neighbourhood first and various developmental initiatives are aimed at largely to countering Chinese influence in the region. It is hard to assess the legitimacy of such claims. But the reality is China has the money and which no countries in the world can match for the time being.

It's time for changing the narrative. Improving relationship with neighbours need to be highlighted as the crux of the neighbourhood policy. Already there have been many initiatives such as BBIN (Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal) or BIMSTEC which are mostly initiated by India looking for development independent of OBOR. Competition is not India's focus in the neighbourhood.

While Chidambaram, as a seasoned lawyer, knows the power of silence when it comes to refuting allegations, Karti has been trigger-happy. In October 2012, when someone tweeted that Karti's corruption was bigger than Congress chief Sonia Gandhi's son-in-law Robert Vadra's, the junior Chidambaram filed a complaint against the little-known businessman from Puducherry. The man, Ravi Srinivasan, was even arrested under the infamous section 66A of the IT Act, thanks to a friendly government in the union territory. "The choice and timing of filing a complaint are mine. I need not react the same way my father does," Karti had retorted when pointed out that PC had brushed aside bigger pinpricks from his political opponents.

Even though the Congress has got downgraded after every election in Tamil Nadu, Karti and PC have managed to remain the state's most famous political father-son pair after the DMK duo of M. Karunanidhi and M.K. Stalin. Chidambaram's national image has kept them in the limelight even if the local Congressmen do not look up to them for leadership. "In Chidambaram, the Tamil Nadu Congress has a deputy prime minister candidate and not a chief minister-in-waiting," jokes a former Congress MLA, pointing to a disconnect between the party cadres and the high-profile pair.

Chidambaram, after the narrowest win of his political career in 2009, vacated Sivaganga Lok Sabha seat for Karti, who finished a distant fourth- and lost deposit. Yet the son took pride as only the second Congress candidate in the state to get more than a lakh votes (out of the ten lakh cast in the constituency). "Even though Chidambaram had won the seat seven times since 1984, if this is the kind of performance from the son, it only shows how popular the family is and how little Chidambaram has done for his people," observes BJP leader H. Raja, who finished third ahead of Karti in the 2014 LS poll.

PC did take an electoral sanyas, but that was short-lived as he nudged into the Rajya Sabha after sensing the need for his presence in Parliament to remain in political contention. "It is

easier to catch Rahul Gandhi's eye in Parliament than wait for days for an appointment with the scion," quips a Congress functionary, referring to the party's vice-president. "Also, you get reported in the media if you make the right intervention in Parliament. Of course, PC got upset that he was not allowed to open the debate on demonetisation as an ex-finance minister. It only proves that even a sharp brain has to toe Rahul's illogical decisions."

Karti, meanwhile, has been attempting to reinvent the Congress as a party that measured up to the aspirations of present-day voters. "The slogan of bringing back Kamaraj rule is outdated as the present lot of voters do not even know who MGR is, leave alone Kamaraj," the Jr Chidambaram had said, referring to late chief ministers

M.G. Ramachandran and K. Kamaraj. "After 1967, when it had lost power to the DMK, the Congress has found itself in a time warp. By riding with the DMK or the AIADMK it had reduced itself to a small time ally and it needs a new face, a fresh identity and a catchy slogan to re-emerge as a political force," he had proposed—like

a copy-writer—at a meeting of a ginger group of his supporters called G-67, implying the post-1967 generation. The group has so far met only twice and has come up with only two proposals: campaigns against liquor and cash for votes. Karti even suggested that G-67 volunteers should campaign against voters taking money during the RK Nagar byelection. Ironically, the money flow was so heavy that the poll itself got cancelled. "How can Karti propagate clean politics when there is a strong whiff of corruption and kickbacks hanging around him," wonders a Congress ex-MP. "If he is serious about winning a fair election, he should pick one assembly constituency, work on its problems, find solutions and then seek votes. He is simply not cut out for the rough and tumble of electoral politics for which he has to carry the cadres with him. If only Karti had inherited his father's intelligence and not his arrogance, he could be better placed to lead the Congress in Tamil Nadu."

# A Millionaire, A Hotel Maid And An Arrest After Inauguration

*John Joseph Boswell, the chief executive of a barrel manufacturing company, pleaded guilty last month to misdemeanor sexual abuse. He was sentenced to 10 days incarceration and six months probation, although the jail time was suspended.*

(Agencies) He was a millionaire, in Washington, D.C., to toast President Donald Trump's inauguration. She was a maid, tasked with cleaning rooms that cost more in a few days than her monthly rent. On Jan. 19, as the nation's capital



swelled with tourists and protesters, the millionaire and the maid met on the 10th floor of the Mayflower Hotel downtown, in Room 1065. As she made his bed, he approached from behind and began rubbing her buttocks, according to a police report. "This is very nice stuff," he said, according to the report. "I like that!"

Such incidents are all too common in an industry where about half of employees say they have been sexually assaulted or harassed by a guest, union surveys have shown. Many go unreported because the housekeepers, often immigrants or women of color, fear losing their jobs. In 2011, the plight of hotel housekeepers became international news when Dominique Strauss-Kahn, then the head of the International Monetary Fund, was accused of sexually assaulting a maid at a luxury hotel in New York. Criminal

charges were dropped, but the incident spurred New York hotels to provide maids with panic buttons.

Six years later, the devices only now are reaching many other parts of the country, including the District, a city with 32,000 hotel rooms and about 3,000 maids. More than 30 hotels in the Washington area have introduced panic buttons in the past year under an agreement with Unite Here Local 25, said John Boardman, the union's executive secretary-treasurer. The Mayflower introduced the devices on April 1, he said.

The agreement was reached in 2012, but it has taken five years to put in place reliable technology, Boardman said. When pressed, the panic buttons send a maid's location to hotel security. Hotels pay for the devices and monitoring systems, which generally cost between \$40,000 and \$50,000. In November, voters in Seattle approved a measure providing hotel workers with panic buttons and other protections. And in Chicago, the city council is considering a measure that would require panic buttons. "These women deal with a constant fear when they work by themselves," said Alderman Michelle Harris, the ordinance's sponsor. "Will they be next?" Vanessa Sinders, a senior vice president for the American Hotel & Lodging Association, which represents most of the country's biggest chains, said the industry is committed to using technology to keep its employees safe. "Unfortunately, when it

comes to sexual harassment," she said, "no industry is immune." Perhaps the only thing unusual about what happened in Room 1065 was that the man was arrested. John Joseph Boswell pleaded guilty last month to misdemeanor sexual abuse in D.C. Superior Court. He was sentenced to 10 days incarceration and six months probation, although the jail time was suspended. The maid declined to comment. The Washington Post generally does not name victims of sexual assault. In an interview with The Post, Boswell maintained his innocence. "I patted her on the lower back," said Boswell, 70, who is married and has three young children. "It was just a friendly gesture." The prosecutor in the case saw things differently.

"He took advantage of [her] while she was working, vulnerable, and alone," Vivian Kim, an assistant U.S. attorney, wrote in an email to Boswell's attorney. Two different Americas collided at the Mayflower that afternoon. The woman is an African immigrant who cleans strangers' rooms for \$20 an hour. Boswell is the chief executive of Independent Stave Company, the world's largest wine-and-whiskey barrel manufacturer. He lives in a 14,000-square-foot, \$7 million mansion in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, 20 miles from Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate. Boswell - who has contributed more than \$120,000 to Republican candidates and conservative groups over the past 25 years - wasn't always a Trump backer. In the 2016 presidential election, he supported Ben Carson and Sen. Marco Rubio, Fla. But by the time of Trump's inauguration, Boswell had embraced the new president and booked a room at the Mayflower.

## Infamous Fyre Festival Under FBI Investigation For Fraud

(Agencies) The disaster known as Fyre Festival has been surrounded by controversy for basically the entirety of its short existence. Now, the music festival intended to take place over two weekends in the Bahamas this spring is reportedly the subject of an FBI investigation.

The FBI has launched a criminal investigation into the infamous festival, looking at "possible mail, wire and securities fraud" committed by parent company Fyre Media in relation to the festival, The New York Times reports.

According to the outlet, "The investigation is being conducted by the United States attorney's office for the Southern District of New York and the F.B.I.; it is being overseen by a prosecutor assigned to the complex frauds and cybercrime unit."

Billy McFarland, one of the festival co-founders, did not comment on specific allegations to The Times, but did apologize for the failed event.

"I'm committed to, and working actively to, find a way to make this right, not just for investors but for those who planned to attend," he told the outlet. A lawyer for McFarland's co-founder, rapper Ja Rule, told the paper he "would never participate in anything fraudulent; it's simply not in his DNA."

A representative for the FBI declined HuffPost's request for comment, as did a representative for the U.S. attorney's office for the Southern District of New York.

The investigation comes after numerous lawsuits have been filed against Fyre, McFarland and Ja Rule since the end of April.

# Fossils cast doubt on human lineage originating in Africa



(Agencies) Fossils from Greece and Bulgaria of an ape-like creature that lived 7.2 million years ago may fundamentally alter the understanding of human origins, casting doubt on the view that the evolutionary lineage that led to people arose in Africa. Scientists said on Monday the creature, known as

Graecopithecus freybergi and known only from a lower jawbone and an isolated tooth, may be the oldest-known member of the human lineage that began after an evolutionary split from the line that led to chimpanzees, our closest cousins. The jawbone, which included teeth, was unearthed in 1944 in

Athens. The premolar was found in south-central Bulgaria in 2009. The researchers examined them using sophisticated new techniques including CT scans and established their age by dating the sedimentary rock in which they were found. They found dental root development that possessed telltale human characteristics not seen in chimps and their ancestors, placing Graecopithecus within the human lineage, known as hominins. Until now, the oldest-known hominin was Sahelanthropus, which lived 6-7 million years ago in Chad. The scientific consensus long has been that hominins originated in Africa. Considering the Graecopithecus fossils hail from the Balkans, the eastern Mediterranean may have given

rise to the human lineage, the researchers said. The findings in no way call into question that our species, Homo sapiens, first appeared in Africa about 200,000 years ago and later migrated to other parts of the world, the researchers said. "Our species evolved in Africa. Our lineage may not have," said paleoanthropologist Madelaine Böhme of Germany's University of Tübingen, adding that the findings "may change radically our understanding of early human/hominin origin." Homo sapiens is only the latest in a long evolutionary hominin line that began with overwhelmingly ape-like species, followed by a succession of species acquiring more and more human traits over time. University of Toronto paleoanthropologist David Begun

said the possibility that the evolutionary split occurred outside Africa is not incongruent with later hominin species arising there. "We know that many of the mammals of Africa did in fact originate in Eurasia and dispersed into Africa at around the time Graecopithecus lived," Begun said. "So why not Graecopithecus as well?" Graecopithecus is a mysterious species because its fossils are so sparse. It was roughly the size of a female chimp and dwelled in a relatively dry mixed woodland-grassland environment, similar to today's African savanna, alongside antelopes, giraffes, rhinos, elephants, hyenas and warthogs. The findings were published in the journal PLOS ONE.

# Petrol And Diesel Cars Will Vanish In 8 Years: Study

*Stanford economist, Tony Seba, thinks that the global oil business will end as soon as 2030. In less than a decade consumers will find it difficult to search for petrol pumps, spares and even mechanics who have the knowledge of internal combustion engines.*



(Agencies) There has been a lot of talk about fossil fuels going extinct and though there are companies like Shell who have demonstrated that the true potential of fuel based cars remains untapped, there's no denying that electric cars are going to have a significant impact on the way the transportation business will function.

A Stanford economist, Tony Seba, thinks that the global oil business will end as soon as 2030. In a study released recently, Tony talks about the revolutionary changes soon to be

wrought by electrification of the transportation. The study published by Stanford University says that fossil-fueled cars will vanish within eight years and the people who want to buy cars will have no choice but to invest in electric vehicles or vehicles working on similar technologies. Tony says that this is because the cost of the electric vehicles; which includes cars, buses and even trucks will decrease and this will result in the collapse of the petroleum industry.

Titled 'Rethinking Transportation 2020-2030', the study details how

people will ultimately switch to autonomous electric vehicles, as they will eventually be ten times cheaper to maintain than cars that run on fossil fuels and have a near-zero marginal cost of fuel. He goes on to mention that electric vehicles will have a life span of 1 million (16,09,344 km) miles and in comparison, fossil fuel based cars have a lifespan of just about 2 lakh miles (3,21,000 km approximately)

He goes on to suggest that in less than a decade consumers will find it difficult to search for petrol pumps, spares and

even mechanics who have the knowledge of internal combustion engines. Finally, he says that modern-day car dealerships will disappear by 2024 as the long-term price of oil falls to \$25 USD a barrel. He even says that there will be a 'mass stranding' of existing vehicles.

According to Seba "We are on the cusp of one of the fastest, deepest, most consequential disruptions of transportation in history. Internal combustion engine vehicles will enter a vicious cycle of increasing costs. What the cost curve says is that by 2025 all new vehicles will be electric, all new buses, all new cars, all new tractors, all new vans, anything that moves on wheels will be electric, globally."

The Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) has come a long way since 1910. But the biggest challenge now has been to control the air quality. Reduction of CO2 and NOx levels as also hydrocarbons has made engineers innovate and we, therefore, have engines today which are not only fuel efficient but also environment-friendly.

"Our research and modelling indicate that the \$10 trillion annual revenues in the existing vehicle and oil supply chains will shrink dramatically.

Certain high-cost countries, companies, and fields will see their oil production entirely wiped out. Exxon-Mobil, Shell and BP could see 40 per cent to 50 per cent of their assets become stranded," says Professor Sebastian in his report. That's a big claim but not one without fact. We've already heard countries like Norway moving towards pushing out cars with an internal combustion engine in the next decade. In fact, India too is looking at introducing norms which will see phasing out petrol and diesel cars by 2032. It's simple to explain how quick this will happen with the example of Digital cameras. With the advent of digital cameras, the ones working on the film were phased out almost immediately. It was swift and brutal and we expect something similar to happen to cars. Car companies like Audi, Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz and even Volvo have already started working on autonomous technology and electric cars and probably the 'no internal combustion engine scenario' has been already envisaged by them. It, frankly, scares us a bit because we are after all petrolheads. As electric cars take centre stage, it looks like we might have to coin a new word for people like us as well.



## WINZONE

REALTY INC.

# Baldev Singh

146-20 34 av. Flushing NY 11354

Cell: 917 224 7395

Email: [josanbaldev@yahoo.com](mailto:josanbaldev@yahoo.com)



Associate Broker/Notary Public

# Student, 18, is suspended for two days and barred from her Christian high school's graduation ceremony because she is PREGNANT

(Agencies) A high school senior will not be allowed to participate in her high school's graduation ceremony because she is pregnant.

Maddi Runkles, 18, from Boonsboro, Maryland, goes to Heritage Academy, a small private Christian school



in Hagerstown.

She discovered she was pregnant in January, just a few days after receiving a college acceptance letter, according to the New York Times.

But after she announced her pregnancy, Runkles was suspended for two days.

School officials also removed the 18-year-old from her position on student council and told her she wouldn't be able to join the rest of the senior class at graduation in June.

She says she feels she has been treated more harshly than students who have been suspended for other reasons. 'Some pro-life people are against the killing of unborn

babies, but they won't speak out in support of the girl who chooses to keep her baby,' Runkles told the Times, speaking about her school. Honestly, that makes me feel like maybe the abortion would have been better. Then they would have just forgiven me, rather than deal with this visible consequence.'

Her situation shows the tension within Christian organizations that oppose abortion and don't support sex before marriage. They have difficulty dealing with pregnant teens.

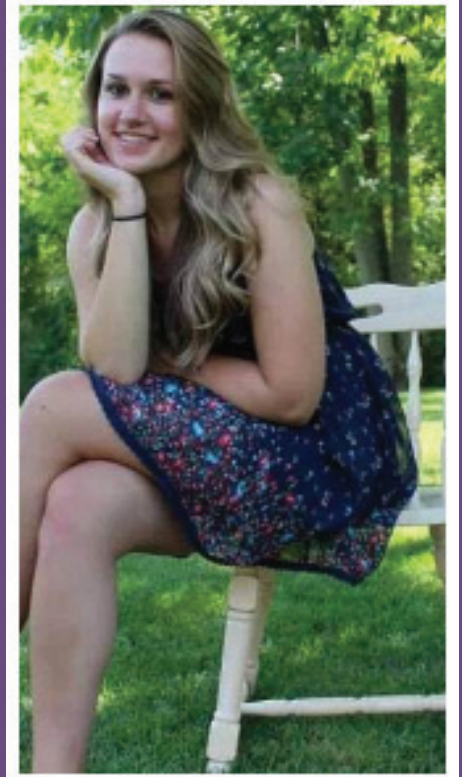
Anti-abortion organization Students for Life says Runkles shouldn't be punished for her pregnancy, but should be praised for

choosing to keep the baby.

'There has got to be a way to treat a young woman who becomes pregnant in a graceful and loving way,' Students for Life president Kristan Hawkins told the Times.

According to the paper, she tried unsuccessfully to persuade Heritage Academy to change the decision.

Heritage Academy Administrator David Hobbs issued a statement calling Runkles' pregnancy 'an internal issue about which much prayer and discussion has taken place'. The 18-year-old told the Times that the child's father does not go to Heritage and the two do not plan on getting married.



# Now internet hacker Kim Dotcom claims HE was involved in Wikileaks Clinton emails storm



(Agencies) Hacker Kim Dotcom is saying that he knew murdered Democratic National Committee staffer Seth Rich – and Rich gave the political party's trove of emails to Wikileaks.

'I knew Seth Rich. I know he was the Wikileaks source. I was

involved,' Dotcom cryptically tweeted on Saturday.

Conspiracy theories surrounding the death of Rich, who was gunned down in D.C. last July, are again swirling thanks to

Dotcom's bold, and unsubstantiated claims, and a debunked news

report from local station Fox5. Last Monday, Fox5 ran a piece in which an individual, Fox New legal commentator, Rod Wheeler, said it was 'confirmed' that Rich had ties to Wikileaks.

Wheeler was identified as the Rich family's investigator. In reality, Wheeler's investigation has been funded by a third-party, and the Rich family sent him a cease and desist.

'As we've seen through the past year of unsubstantiated claims, we see no facts. We have seen no evidence. We have been approached with no emails and only learned about this when contacted by the press,' Rich's family said in a statement. 'We are a

family who is committed to facts, not fake evidence that surfaces every few months to fill the void and distract law enforcement and the general public from finding Seth's murderers.'

People on the right have been trying to connect the dots between

Rich and Wikileaks, as it would provide an explanation for why Rich was killed, and also taint the storyline that Russia was behind the Democratic National Committee hack.

Since the Fox5 story came out, not only did Rich's family refute the claims, but D.C. officials pushed back. This is a robbery that ended tragically,' Deputy Mayor Kevin Donahue told the local NBC affiliate News4. 'That's bad enough for our city, and I think it is irresponsible to conflate this into something that doesn't connect to anything that the detectives have found.'

'No Wikileaks connection,' he enunciated.

But just as NBC, along with CNN and the Washington Post – including a deep dive by the Post's Dave Weigel on how the Rich story really is 'fake news' – tried to drown the conspiracy theories, Dotcom and several figures on the right brought it back.

Dotcom, a German-Finnish internet entrepreneur known for founding Megaupload, jumped into the conversation Friday, four days after the Fox5 story ran.

'If Congress includes #SethRich case into their Russia probe I'll give written testimony with evidence that Seth Rich was Wikileaks source,' Dotcom tweeted.

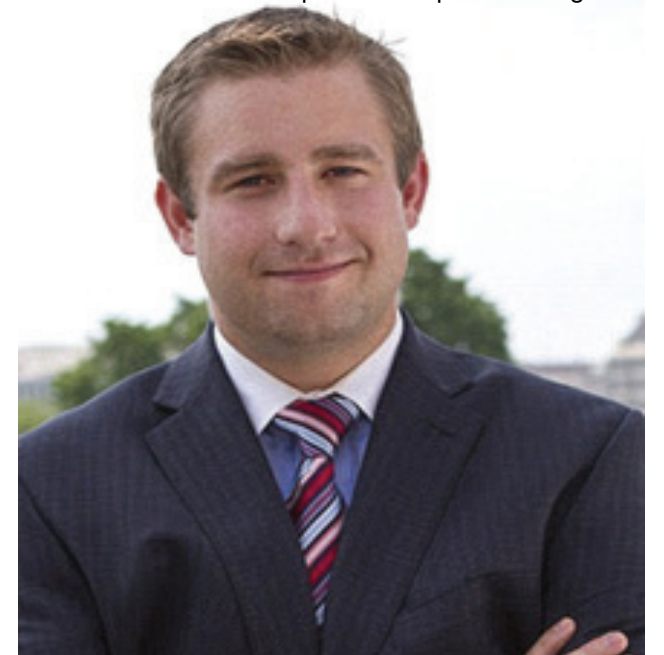
It was then a back-and-forth on Twitter with Fox News host, and prominent President Trump

supporter Sean Hannity, that got Dotcom to articulate a second time, that Rich was Wikileaks' source.

Shortly thereafter, Hannity called on Dotcom to be a guest on his television and radio shows and demanded that Congress look into the young staffer's murder.

'Is it possible that one [of the] greatest lies ever told is soon exposed?'

Hannity mused, previewing an 'announcement' that Dotcom planned to give.





# Who's the Trump aide FBI identified as a 'person of interest' in Russian probe?

*Morning Joe host identifies Jared Kushner as one of two people he thinks it could be and cites Bannon*



White House, his rivals, Steve Bannon, who was going around telling reporters he didn't have to worry about Kushner because Russia would take care of him,' Scarborough said to back up his case.

Then he hedged, bringing up White House counsel Don McGahn – though he immediately backed off.

'That's there. Also you have to look at — since we've said Jared's name, we might as well — the other person, Don McGahn has been in the middle of everything from the very beginning. I'm not suggesting that he is one of those, but if you were narrowing it down to one, two, three, four,' he said.

On Monday's show on MSNBC, Washington Post columnist David Ignatius declined to identify the person of

interest, indicating that the newspaper didn't know – but then proceeded to speak about Kushner meeting with the Russian ambassador to the U.S. and fired national security advisor Mike Flynn. 'Without talking about who this significant person of interest is, because we don't know,' Ignatius said, 'there are some facts that emerged weeks ago that I think are going to get more attention.'

He continued. 'Jared Kushner, now senior advisor to the president, we know met with Ambassador Kislyak, accompanied by Mike Flynn back during the transition period.'

'Jared's purpose in those meetings was to see if he could find a channel to the Russians to talk about the scope

of possible policy that the new administration,' he said.

He noted that Kushner has offered to testify to a congressional panel conducting its own probe of Russian election interference.

Another Post reporter taking part in the discussion, Robert Costa, declined to speculate.

'It's an important story, because the Post is not yet ready to report the name of the significant person of interest,' he said. 'Top leaders on Capitol Hill know that there are new turns in this federal investigation into Russian interference,' he added.

Kushner is a senior advisor to the president. He was traveling with President Trump in Israel on Monday, and

accompanied him to visit holy sites in Israel including the Western Wall.

South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham said last week the probe was now a 'criminal investigation,' after attending a closed briefing with deputy attorney general Rod Rosenstein.

"The shock to the body is that this is now a criminal investigation."

Following his meeting with Kislyak during the transition, Kushner met with Sergey Gorkov, president of Russia's largest state-owned commercial bank, CNN reported in March.

It has been under U.S. sanctions for three years. Gorkov got promoted to his post as chairman of Vnesheconombank, or VEB, by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

(Agencies) Days after the Washington Post reported investigators have identified a senior White House advisor as a significant person of interest in the Russia probe, 'Morning Joe' Scarborough said Donald Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner was the likely target.

The Post report Friday identified the official as someone close to the president, and also characterized the person as a senior White House advisor – effectively

narrowing down the choices to a very small number of people.

A New York magazine contributor tweeted on Friday, 'It's Jared Kushner have confirmed this with four people. I'm not speculating'

Scarborough hosted a discussion about the possible identity of the person – saying at one point: 'I would have it narrowed down to two.'

I had also picked up and reported several weeks ago that there were people inside the

# Israel and U.S. talk tough about Iran as Trump says Arab nations now have 'common cause' with Jews



(Agencies) U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday in Israel that the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran is so great that other Arab nations are finding themselves siding with the Jewish state.

And Israeli President Reuven Rivlin told reporters that his nation's 'dream' of living in peace with its neighbors could easily become 'a nightmare' if radical Islamists aren't held in check.

'The United States and Israel can declare with one voice that Iran must never be allowed to possess a nuclear weapon – never ever!' Trump said outside the president's ceremonial residence in Jerusalem.

He demanded that Tehran 'must cease its deadly funding, training and equipping of terrorists and militias. And it must cease immediately.'

The two men had just

finished a bilateral meeting about regional security issues. Iran was on both of their minds.

Rivlin said Israelis 'must be sure that we don't go to sleep with a dream and wake up with a nightmare – with Iran, ISIS and Hamas in our borders.'

'In order to dream, we need to be sure that Iran is out! Out of our borders, out of Syria, out of Lebanon.'

Iran has spent years building a nuclear program with the goal of producing a weapon capable of reaching Israel, according to international observers.

A staple of annual military parades is a medium-range ballistic missile rolling on a truck, with the words 'Death to Israel' painted on it in Arabic.

ISIS, too, has become an existential threat to Israel as it operates in parts of Syria that are as close as 25 miles from the border. You marked the defeating of ISIS as one of your top missions,' Rivlin told

Trump on Monday, reflecting on their private talks.

'This is a most important objective. Israel will do everything in its power in order to assist you in this mission,' he said.

The Israeli president also praised Trump's April decision to strike a Syrian air base that had been used to launch chemical weapons against civilians – and called for more military action in the future.

'There are "red lines," as it happened in Syria, that must never be crossed,' Rivlin said.

'There is a price that must

be paid by those who violate the most basic values that make us human. Further action must be considered in [the] face of the horror that is still taking place on the other side of our border.'

Trump pledged greater cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem.

'Both Israel and America face common threats,' he said, 'from ISIS and other terrorist groups, to countries like Iran that sponsor terrorism and fund and foment terrible violence, not only here but all over the world.'





# The Secret of Roger Ailes' Billion-Dollar Bubble

*When I was surrounded by people chanting "Fox," I knew something had changed in media.*

(Agencies) I didn't fully understand what Roger Ailes had wrought until the 2004 Republican National Convention. I was at the CNN anchor site high above Madison Square Garden, a position located smack in the middle of delegates and alternates, with no glass separating us—the better to capture the energy of the event.

As we were wrapping up our coverage, we found ourselves surrounded by departing participants, who began to chant: "Watch Fox News! Watch Fox News! Watch Fox News!" At the time, I'd been a part of the TV network news business for a quarter of a century. Never had I heard any group of partisans cheer for a specific news source; never, for instance, had I heard of delegates at a Democratic convention surrounding a Fox floor reporter chanting; "Read The New York Times!" For these delegates, however, Fox was much more than another news organization: It was the one reliable island of honest news in a sea of biased, distorted misinformation.

I ran across that same conviction often over the next several years. When I covered the massive tea party rally in Washington a few years later for CBS, many of the people I tried to interview turned me down for the same reason: "I'll only talk to Fox."

How did Ailes achieve such devotion? At root, it flowed from one key fact: He approached his task not as a journalist, but as a political warrior. The years he spent helping Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush made him fundamentally different from those who had built every other broadcast news giant.

CBS News, for example, grew to prominence in the 1930s, as Hitler was conquering Europe;

ABC News became a major player when Roone Arledge used the network's prime-time profits in the late 1970s to hire star talent and create new vehicles, most notably "Nightline." CNN's Ted Turner used the new technology of communications satellites to smash the broadcast network monopoly over long-range video transmissions.

Whatever the accuracy of the "liberal" bias criticism that began to be aimed at broadcast news, the mission of these networks—as understood by those of us who worked there—was very different. An example: I joined CNN the day the Monica Lewinsky story broke. Over the next year-plus, up through President Bill Clinton's impeachment, I never had any sense that our coverage was being pulled, pushed, or even tilted in any one direction. I'd worked Democratic political campaigns a couple of decades earlier, but I can remember more than once offering a plausible case for Clinton's impeachment.

It was the singular success of Fox News that it convinced its viewers that those other networks, forged in the consensus of American postwar politics, were rigged for the Democrats, and Fox was the place for "fair and balanced" news. Ailes built a kind of feedback loop that strengthened the bonds between Fox and its viewers—enough of them to bring the network a billion dollars a year in profits. And the fact that its owner's news empire was a fountainhead of conservative advocacy; the fact that its creator and boss had spent much of his life in the service of Republican candidates? That wasn't a bug. It was a feature.

The network's whole philosophy was forged in the crucible of conservative identity

politics as they took shape in the '60s and '70s. It was Nixon who embodied the resentment that ordinary "forgotten" Americans felt toward the cultural and political elites. It was Reagan who made an uncritical love of country a keystone of his appeal. It was George H.W. Bush's 1988 campaign that made "liberal" a slur, effectively portraying Michael Dukakis as a card-carrying member of the soft-on-crime, furloughs-for-criminals American Civil Liberties Union. Ailes had helped these campaigns navigate the new tides of media, changing politics in the process. When he brought the sensibility of each of these political campaigns into the media, he changed the media.

He offered, in Fox, a constant reaffirmation of some core cultural assumptions. Did many of its viewers believe there was a

secular culture eroding traditional values? Then cover the annual "War on Christmas," decrying the "seasons' greetings" trend. (And if the Bush White House used a similar phrase in its holiday cards—well, no matter.) Did permissive parenting lead to the decline of civil behavior? Then crank up another panel telling us to spank our children.

There was one more significant way that Ailes positioned Fox News in a manner unlike any other news organization. In just about every other place, journalistic mistakes and malpractice were dealt with openly. Jayson Blair's fictitious

stories in the New York Times, Janet Cooke's non-existent young heroin addict in the Washington Post, CBS' suspect documents about George W. Bush's military service, CNN's "Tailwind" story about the U.S. military's alleged use of nerve gas in Laos, Brian Williams' war stories on NBC—all resulted in exhaustive investigations, mea culpas and the loss of jobs by anchors and top executives. Fox, by contrast, lived under the mantra: "never apologize, never explain." Whether it was Bill O'Reilly's "war coverage" (he saw pictures of atrocities, as opposed to on-the-scene witnessing) or Geraldo Rivera's wartime whereabouts, charges of bad journalism were met by a battle-ready P.R. department's scornful dismissal of biased liberal

critics. (Gabriel Sherman of New York magazine was the subject of particularly intense pushback.) It may be no coincidence that this combative response to critics is a hallmark of the 45th president, whose campaign Ailes advised both before and after his forced pasture as Fox News chief.

Ailes' political instincts aren't the only story behind Fox News' success. There were and are real journalists who did and do yeoman's work. Chris Wallace is the equal of any Sunday host; Bret Baier does an hour's worth of news which, even if it does tilt right when it comes to panels, delivers a solid broadcast. Shep Smith, Carl Cameron and many others would be at home at any network news operation.

But taken as a whole, from "Fox and Friends" in the morning to "Hannity" at night, the network Ailes built provides a comforting bubble to viewers who cannot find their view of the world validated so thoroughly anywhere else on the airwaves. It turned out to be an exceptional business insight as well as politically astute. And if its creator, and then its most prominent anchor, were dispatched from the network for egregious personal misbehavior? Well, let's just file that away.

Perhaps the best way to think about what Ailes built is to recall a comment by a liberal U.S. senator some years back who found great comfort in watching the liberal rants of Keith Olbermann, then on MSNBC. Why, I asked, after hours on Capitol Hill, would you watch an hour of political rhetoric?

Because, came the answer, "it's like sinking into a nice warm bath." That's just what Roger Ailes gave millions on the other side of the political spectrum.

## Trump Reportedly Asked Intel Chiefs To Publicly Deny Russia Ties

(Agencies) Another account of President Donald Trump attempting to push back on the investigation of his campaign's ties to the Russian government emerged Monday evening, as The Washington Post reported that the president asked two top intelligence officials to deny any evidence of collusion. According to the report, Trump asked Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats and National Security Agency Director Michael Rogers to publicly deny that there is any evidence of connections between Trump's team and Russia. Those requests reportedly came in late March, after then-FBI Director James Comey confirmed that his bureau was looking into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia.

Coats and Rogers reportedly rejected the requests. The Post also said that White House officials sought to influence Comey directly: "The White House does not confirm or deny unsubstantiated claims based on illegal leaks from anonymous individuals," a White House spokesperson said in a statement emailed to HuffPost in response to the Post article. "The

president will continue to focus on his agenda that he was elected to pursue by the American people." At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing Tuesday, Coats declined to comment on the report.

"It's not appropriate for me to comment publicly on any of that," he said. Rep. Adam Schiff (Calif.), the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said the report raised "troubling" possibilities: The Post's article is the latest in a series of revelations indicating that Trump and his associates have sought to intervene in the FBI's Russia probe.

The cascade of news began May 9, when Trump fired Comey, at first citing his conduct during the investigation of Hillary Clinton's private email server. Trump later said he considered the Russia investigation while weighing Comey's future at the Justice Department. One week later, multiple news outlets reported that Trump had asked Comey during a private meeting on Feb. 14 to stop the investigation of Flynn, whom Trump had fired the day before.

# What Donald Trump Needs to Know About Bob Mueller and Jim Comey

*The two men who could bring down the president have been preparing their entire lives for this moment.*



(Agencies) When Jim Comey first learned that Andrew Card and Alberto Gonzales were on their way to the George Washington Hospital room of John Ashcroft, his first call for help was to Bob Mueller. Comey knew that the White House chief of staff and the White House counsel would try to push the attorney general to renew the National Security Agency's Terrorist Surveillance Program, code-named STELLAR WIND. Comey, who was then Ashcroft's deputy, had spent the preceding weeks leading the charge against the White House and especially Vice President Dick Cheney against the program, which the Justice Department's lawyers had determined was illegal. For days, Comey had weathered intense pressure to reauthorize STELLAR WIND, the debate escalating as the program's expiration date neared. Cheney's office had told Comey in no uncertain terms that if the program wasn't OK'd, Americans would die—and their blood would be on Comey's hands.

That night, though, Comey knew he had an ally to call. He asked Mueller, the ramrod-straight FBI director, to meet him at the hospital, but as his own car raced toward the hospital—its grill lights flashing and siren wailing—Comey realized that Mueller wouldn't make it before the White House officials, so he asked for help: Don't let them remove me, he asked Mueller. Comey knew that Card would have Secret Service protection with him, and he was worried about being forcibly ejected by agents from Ashcroft's hospital room. Ashcroft, weakened from gallbladder problems, was in no condition to sign off on STELLAR WIND—he'd legally turned the reins over to Comey while he was incapacitated—but, Comey feared, if the White House could

isolate Ashcroft, who knew what it would do? Comey thought fast: Ashcroft had his own FBI security detail, and so he asked Mueller to call ahead and tell them not to allow the attorney general to be left alone. It was, in an extraordinary showdown between the White House and Justice Department, perhaps the single most extraordinary moment of the tumultuous Bush years: The FBI director ordering his agents to resist the Secret Service if they tried to remove the deputy attorney general from the attorney general's bedside. As motorcades converged on the hospital from across Washington, everyone involved wondered: Just how far would this situation escalate?

It was all the more remarkable because no one outside of a tiny circle of high-ranking officials had any idea the cinematic showdown was playing out. It would be more than three years before Comey first mentioned that night's drama, and the full details would trickle out only in the years thereafter.

The story of that March 11, 2004, showdown—how it came to light and what it says about the motivations and the moral compass of the two men now at the heart of a new Washington showdown—should deeply worry the Trump White House.

Donald Trump, as it turns out, has stumbled into taking on two experienced Washington players on their home turf—in skirmishes that will play out in public Capitol Hill hearings with Comey even as Mueller slogs along with what is likely to be a quiet, tenacious and by-the-book investigation into the heart of the Trump campaign's relationship with Russia. Robert Mueller might just be America's straightest arrow—a respected, nonpartisan and fiercely apolitical public servant whose only lifetime motivation has been the search for justice. He was the most influential

and longest-serving FBI director since J. Edgar Hoover himself, and someone who has settled since his retirement from government in 2013 into being that rare voice-beyond-reproach that companies and organizations recruit to lead investigations when they need to tell shareholders or the public that they've hired the most seasoned and respected person they can find, someone who will pursue a case wherever it leads without fear or favor. He became the first FBI director to serve a complete 10-year term since Hoover, only to then see Barack Obama reappoint him for a special two-year term, a decision that required a special act of Congress and made him the only person to be appointed head of the FBI by two different presidents, of different parties.

"His gift is that he's decisive without being impulsive," Comey told me several years back, recalling his years working alongside Mueller. "He'll sit, listen, ask questions and make a decision. I didn't realize at the time how rare that is in Washington."

To understand what they're now up against, Trump's embattled White House aides should spend the day reading Mueller's 2015 report to the NFL, which recruited him to investigate the league's culpability in Ray Rice's domestic violence case. Mueller's subsequent lengthy report oozes thoroughness and the unique gravitas of an experienced prosecutor—his team, some of whom will now be working alongside him in the Russia investigation, devoured millions of documents, text messages and emails; tracked down nearly every person who had been in the building; and called all 938 telephone numbers that called in and out of the

league headquarters during the period in question. His rundown of the NFL headquarters' procedures for receiving mail and packages alone runs to five pages—he almost surely learned things that the NFL's own mailroom staff didn't know about who signs for what packages when.

That thoroughness and Mueller's strong independence should terrify the Trump White House. President Trump impulsively fired Comey in the hope that it would shut down the Russia investigation; one week later, though, he finds himself facing not just one esteemed former FBI director but two: the first a wronged martyr for the bureau, and the second a legendary investigator without a hint of politics.

What unfolds ahead will be territory all too familiar to both Comey and Mueller—the field of play where they have made their careers and risen to the highest levels of government—yet the way that a Washington scandal takes on a life of its own amid independent investigations and looming prosecutions is deeply unfamiliar to Trump and many associates around him. Few in Washington know this landscape better than Comey, who as deputy attorney general appointed his friend Patrick Fitzgerald as special prosecutor to lead the leak investigation surrounding Valerie Plame, a case that ultimately led to the dethroning of Cheney's top aide, Scooter Libby.

It is as if, after having an unrelated disagreement over movie trivia in a bar, Trump has challenged Usain Bolt to a 100-yard dash or John Cena to a cage match to the death. When, nearly a decade

ago, I started writing a biography of Mueller, one of the director's associates suggested that I wouldn't fully understand that hospital showdown until I could answer why Mueller was present at Ashcroft's bedside that March night. As this colleague said, "I was never able to figure that out—it wasn't an FBI program and the FBI had nothing to do with the legal advice, so why was Bob Mueller in the hospital room?"

Comey himself eventually told me the answer, years after he left the Justice Department for the private sector.

Seated in his office in Bethesda, Maryland, at Lockheed Martin, his lanky 6-foot-8-inch frame draped over a chair, Comey told me he'd enlisted Mueller's help because of his reputation for integrity and also because of the political power and righteousness inherent in the nonpartisan position Mueller held. "I knew that no one cared about losing a deputy attorney general," he said, "but no president could weather losing an FBI director."

It's a phrase, ordinary and self-explanatory at the time, that's been rattling around in my mind with a renewed urgency over the past week, as Washington has watched the testimony of Sally Yates—the acting attorney general Trump fired on January 30—and now is anticipating what seems to be Comey's inevitable, and inevitably dramatic, appearance on Capitol Hill himself.

Back then, Comey understood in the heat of the crisis that his office and recommendation alone might not carry the weight he needed with the White House. But no one in government or in either party could question Mueller's motives, politics or his dedication to the Constitution.



# Hey Parents, Surprise, Fruit Juice Is Not Fruit

(Agencies) Many American children consume more than half of their fruit as juice, and the American Academy of Pediatrics has issued new guidelines clarifying its stance on that substitution: For most kids, it's a bad thing.

The new guidelines aren't just intended to persuade pediatricians to talk to parents about the disadvantages of the ubiquitous juice box. They also take aim at the federal government's Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which are the basis for the nutritional guidelines in the Department of Agriculture's School Lunch Program — guidelines that allow for the replacement of half of the recommended daily servings of fruits with 100 percent fruit juice, a substitution that has been enthusiastically embraced by the food and beverage industry and school lunch programs nationwide.

Language in the Dietary Guidelines points back to the American Academy of Pediatrics' earlier recommendations with

respect to fruit juice (last updated in 2001), which could best be described as disgruntled acceptance of a fruit-juice-for-fruit substitution. In them, the academy danced around the question of whether whole fruit was better for children than its juice, backing gently up to the issue by noting that juice "offers no nutritional benefits over whole fruit" while at the same time accepting the inclusion of a significant amount of juice in the diets of children over 6 months of age. Juice, they said, was fine if served as part of a snack or meal, although "easily over consumed" especially if offered in an easily transportable form that encouraged consumption throughout the day.

That call to moderation didn't work. To the American food industry, fruit juice is profitable, fruit is not. Companies like Coca-Cola, Pepsico and Nestlé took the American Academy of Pediatrics' dubious endorsement of

fruit juice and ran with it, competing to offer 100 percent fruit juice in more and more easily transportable forms, from boxes to pouches to

disposable bottles that can be topped with a reuseable favorite cartoon character's head. Juice consumption among all children in the age range of 6 months to 5 years old went up while milk consumption went down, especially by infants and children in lower-income families. American consumer parents, urged on by enthusiastic advertising, became even more likely to offer their kids what they were assured was "equivalent to one serving of fruit." School lunch programs also embraced the juice-instead-of-fruit plan.

Juices and juice

products offer the same advantages over whole fruits for schools as they do for parents: They're convenient, require no preparation and can be consumed quickly. Those are qualities Americans have been taught to love. Give us an inch (by appearing to "recommend" juice) and we will take a mile because it's so easy to toss a juice box to our kids on the go instead of peeling, slicing or washing whole fruits and sitting down to appreciate them.

everyone should endorse: more whole fruits, less juice, for every child, every day, everywhere.

The American Academy of Pediatrics stops short of condemning 100 percent fruit juice, because a little fruit juice is fine. Fruit juice can be delicious, another way to experience fruits and their flavors, to expand children's palates and to help them enjoy fresh foods. It can be, the academy still says, a healthy part of an

can't recommend a strategy of balance unless they also speak up against the inevitable tipping of the scales toward ease and profit. At a time when the federal government is relaxing its nutrition requirements for children, health providers need to become advocates not just for patients but also for policy. They need to help us to see when someone out there is O.K. with our kids "eating crap" and to ask ourselves why — and



And there's a lot of money in the form of marketing and lobbying out there designed to encourage us to do just that.

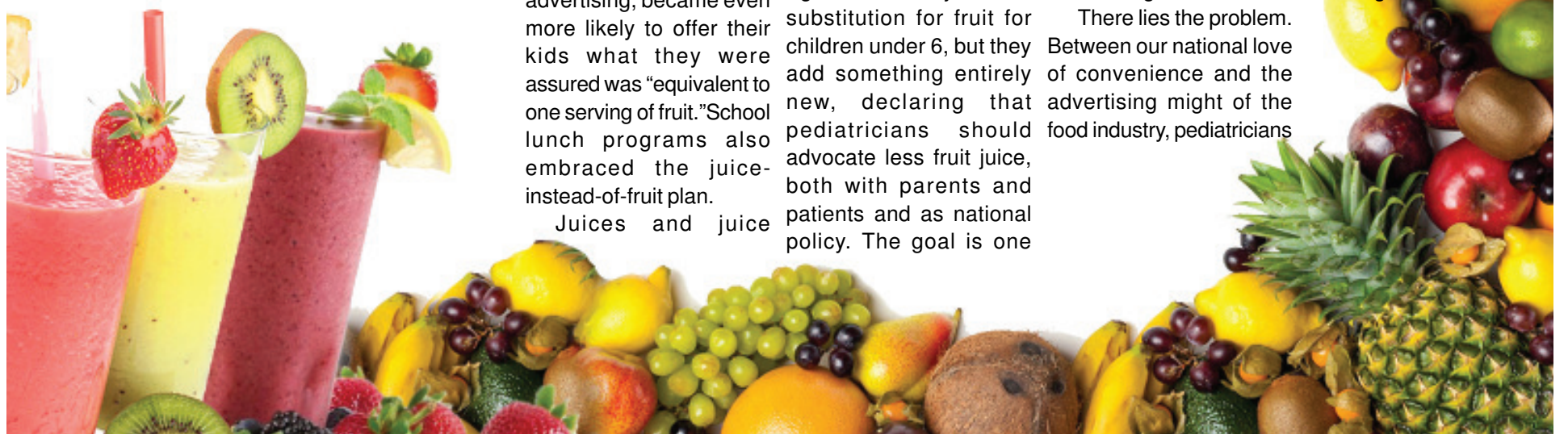
The new guidelines reveal the American Academy of Pediatrics' distaste for having been implicated in that scheme. Not only do they dial back on the amount of juice advised for children at all ages and reject its substitution for fruit for children under 6, but they add something entirely new, declaring that pediatricians should advocate less fruit juice, both with parents and patients and as national policy. The goal is one

otherwise well-balanced diet. Or it can be a corporate amalgamation of the most cheaply available and sweetest juices, labeled to emphasize the more expensive and exotic ingredients and offered up with a blitz of reassuring but ultimately meaningless phrases like "all natural" and "no artificial ingredients."

There lies the problem. Between our national love of convenience and the advertising might of the food industry, pediatricians

then to resist the forces that push us away from what we know to be the better choices.

When we substitute juice for fruit, at home or at school, we're cheating children out of the healthful diet they need to thrive in the name of convenience and consumerism. Fruit juice is not fruit, and we've been fooling ourselves for too long.



# 8 Things The Happiest Couples Do Before Bed

Your bed should be a place for sleeping, sex and conversation not for scrolling mindlessly through your Instagram feed.



(Agencies) We live in a busy world and between work, kids, bills and other daily stressors, many couples struggle to find time to connect.

That's why it's so important for couples to make the most of whatever alone time they have together? whether it's an hour or just 10 minutes. We asked relationship experts to tell us what the happiest couples do before bed to keep their bond strong. See what they had to say below.

## 1. They exchange "I love you."

"Despite all the hassles of the day, the quirks and annoyances you

experience from one another and ominous feelings about the day ahead, make the effort to let your partner know they are loved. And rather than just heave it out with your last sigh of the night, say it like you really feel it." ? Ryan Howes, psychologist

## 2. They go to bed at the same time if possible.

"Too many couples go to bed at different times, leading disconnected lives in the evening after already having spent all day apart. Happy couples, however, are intentional about coming back together at bedtime and reconnecting, if only for the few minutes of brushing

teeth and getting under the covers. Going to bed together builds connection and provides opportunity for more intimate connecting." ? Kurt Smith, therapist who specializes in counseling for men

## 3. They unplug from their phones and other devices.

"We live in a wired world, and more often than not, this takes away from the time couples could spend connecting through dialogue, affection or intimacy. What's more is that when your partner is on their phone, you feel like they're not in the room and are somewhere else instead. In my therapy practice, couples who become aware of this intrusiveness sometimes create general rules such as 'no phones past 9 p.m.' or 'no phones in the bed' to counter such dopamine-inducing but oxytocin-suppressing social media habits. This can really set a couple up for feeling close

throughout the entire next day."

## 4. They prioritize getting a good night's sleep.

"Although this isn't very romantic, beyond the usual advice? i.e. kiss goodnight, have sex, and say, 'I love you'? getting a solid night's sleep fosters good mental health, which in turn, makes people more emotionally available during the day. If sleep is hard to come by, get professional advice to develop good sleep habits." ? Michele Weiner-Davis, therapist and author of Divorce Busting

## 5. They take a few minutes to practice gratitude.

"Gratitude has been shown to have a wonderfully positive effect on mood and mindset, so why not share that together? Whether it's something specific you appreciate about one another or a positive experience from the day, share something you're thankful for to end the day on a bright note." ? Howes

## 6. They don't try to settle arguments that aren't easily resolvable.

"It may not seem logical, but happy couples don't actually settle disagreements before going to bed. We've all heard the adage, 'do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,' but it's actually misunderstood. Trying to address heavy subjects, especially those you disagree on, at the end of the day when you're both tired and short on patience is not smart. Too many couples make the mistake of starting fights at this time of day when they should be building connection? not creating division." ? Smith

## 7. They set aside time to chat about the day and open up about their feelings.

"The happiest couples regularly discuss the external stressors in their life and allow their partner to vent often. This doesn't mean going into negativity overload all evening, but it

does mean setting aside 15 to 30 minutes to unwind and lean into the relationship by showing support for the other relationships and experiences in your partner's life. In my practice, I help couples listen to their partner's stresses without feeling the need to take them on or problem-solve. Their partner tends to be appreciative of this opportunity and just feeling understood empowers them to be ready to tackle the next day's stresses." ? Carroll

## 8. They keep the kids out of the bedroom.

"Your bedroom should be a sanctuary for the two of you. Although nightmares and illnesses might trigger children to climb into bed with you, in general, if intimacy and connection is your goal, encourage children to stay in their own rooms. Couples need privacy and boundaries to stay connected." ? Weiner-Davis

# How working out affects your hormones



(Agencies) Hormones are biochemical messengers which form the signalling system in our body. Hormones control your sex drive, metabolism, sleep, fertility, and mood. They are also responsible for the growth and development of your body's muscles. They affect the way you feel and function and that is why it's important to keep them balanced.

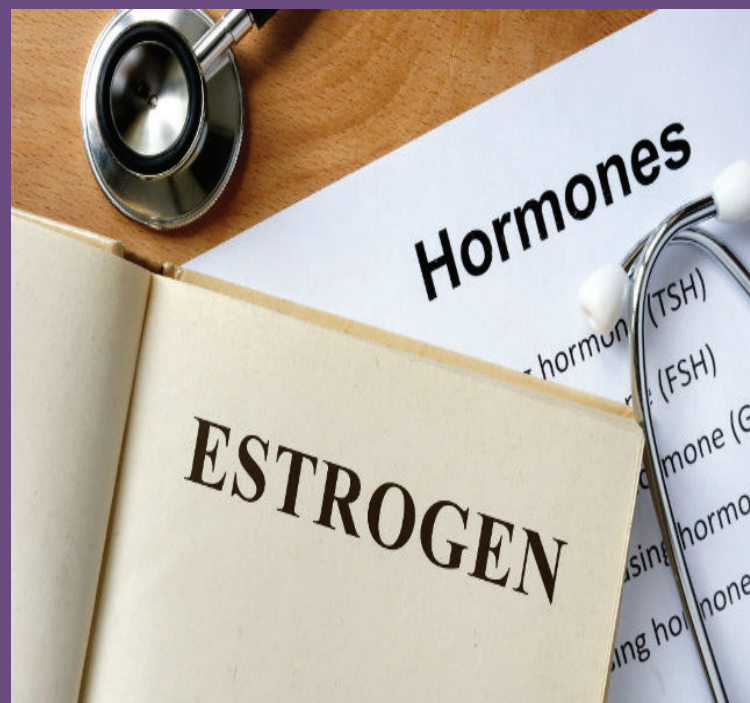
An easy and natural way to keep your hormones in balance is by exercising regularly. Here are five hormones that are affected by your fitness routine and how you can keep them in

check. Irisin Its function is to protect the brain cells from ageing and injury. Irisin is called the exercise hormone which makes it our biological workout buddy. Exercising affects this hormone by stimulating its production due to sweating. This hormone battles with our fat in two ways; one, by activating the genes which converts bad white fat into good brown fat and second by regulating similar stem cells to become bone building cells instead of storing fat. Estrogen The term estrogen refers to a group of three chemicals - estrone, estradiol and estriol. These are responsible for the development of female sexual (uterus and breasts) body parts

and reproductive function. It also affects the growth and function of bones, liver, brain, heart and other tissues and helps in maintaining strong bones. In most women, levels of estrogen start declining at the age of 30 and after menopause the production gets even lower. Women need estrogen but excess of it becomes a risk for breast cancer. Exercise helps to reverse this process as it lowers the production of estrogen. Exercising also reduces mortality after diagnosis and among survivors. Reason for excess estrogen production can be anything from pills to pesticides. Testosterone Testosterone is the male sex hormone but it is also produced in the female bodies, though in lesser amount. Testosterone helps to grow and repair muscles along with having a smooth intercourse. It also helps to improve muscles mass, boosts sex drive and reduces excess belly fat. Exercise helps in stimulating the production of testosterone.

Human growth hormone (HGH) plays an important role in basic functioning of your body. It contributes to muscle and bone strength and regulates fat metabolism. Your body releases HGH on its own while you sleep, but certain kind of exercise have been shown to stimulate its production. For example, high intensity workout that involve

heavy weight and explosive movements (which leaves you breathless really quick). Cortisol It is also called as stress hormone as it regulates the changes that occur in our body in response to stress and anxiety. It converts protein into energy, releases glycogen and counteracts inflammation.



# Sack Shatrughan Sinha, Says BJP's Sushil Modi In Twitter War With Actor



*Shatrughan Sinha congratulated Nitish Kumar and Lalu Yadav when their alliance defeated the BJP in assembly elections in Bihar two years ago.*

(Agencies) Shatrughan Sinha, called Shotgun by fans and critics, fired seven tweets in a row today aimed at the BJP's most senior leader in Bihar Sushil Modi, after the latter sought that the actor-turned-politician be sacked from the party.

Mr Modi had used two tweets to attack Mr Sinha for defending rival politicians Lalu Yadav and Arvind Kejriwal. "Its not necessary that the most famous people are the most trustworthy. The sooner 'traitors' are thrown out of the party the better," Sushil Modi tweeted today. He also punned on the word "shatru" or enemy when he said, "The Lalu who even Nitish Kumar did not defend is backed by the BJP's 'Shatru.'" Shatrughan Sinha, who is a BJP member of Parliament, had this morning called for an end to "negative politics and mudslinging by opponents on our political leaders, be it Kejriwal, Lalu (Prasad) Yadav or Sushil Modi." He did not name Sushil Modi as he advised him to "substantiate your claims..or pack up! Can't just keep feeding media with one night stories & sensationalising. Enough is enough!" Sushil Modi has spearheaded his party's attack on Lalu Yadav, alleging the veteran Bihar politician and RJD chief's involvement in corrupt land deals worth 1,000 crores. Mr Modi shares icy vibes with Mr Sinha, who has been sidelined for months and has seemed for all that time to be on the verge of being thrown out of the BJP owing to his controversial comments on social media, often attacking his own party. He has also made no effort to mask his admiration for Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and had prominently congratulated him and his partner Lalu Yadav when their alliance soundly defeated the BJP in assembly elections in Bihar two years ago. Today, he had fulsome praise for another bitter BJP critic, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party, who has been accused by a former minister of corruption. "Individually I hold all political leaders, especially Kejriwal, in high esteem for their credibility, struggle and commitment towards society," Mr Sinha tweeted. Hours later, his tweets took on Sushil Modi, who he blamed for the BJP's loss in the Bihar assembly elections.

# Paresh Rawal Says 'Tie Arundhati Roy To Army Jeep', Fuels Outrage



*Hindi film veteran and BJP MP Paresh Rawal has provoked a Twitter storm after suggesting that author Arundhati Roy should be tied to an army jeep, in a reference Kashmir's 'human shield' incident.*

(Agencies) Veteran actor and BJP lawmaker Paresh Rawal has provoked a storm after commenting on social media that Arundhati Roy should be tied to an army jeep, a reference to the incident last month of the army in Kashmir strapping a protester to its vehicle as a "human shield" against stone-throwers.

"Instead of tying stone pelter on the army jeep tie up Arundhati Roy!" tweeted Mr Rawal, a Lok Sabha parliamentarian from Gujarat, on Sunday night. In response to a comment, he also said, "We have a wide variety of choices." The comments have been retweeted nearly 7,000 times within 21 hours. The tweet has received over 12,000 likes so far. The human shield footage was among a series of videos that surfaced in Kashmir last month, showing clashes between protesters and security personnel in Kashmir. A young man was strapped to the front of an army jeep as protection from stone-throwers in the footage that was widely condemned. The army has ordered a court of inquiry. Mr Rawal's comment was criticised by many who accused him of inciting violence. Among those who reacted to the actor's posts was senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh. It is not yet known what spurred Mr Rawal's outrageous tweets targeting Arundhati Roy, an award-winning writer known to be outspoken about her views. Union Minister Smriti Irani, commenting on Mr Rawal's tweets, said: "Nowhere will we, in any way, support any violent message by anybody, against any individual of the country." Ms Roy's second novel, "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness", will hit bookstores next month, almost two decades after her first, "God of Small Things" - for which she won a Booker prize.

# Cannes Film Festival: Deepika Padukone Reveals The Secret Of Her Red Carpet Success



*Cannes Film Festival: Deepika Padukone said, "I won't say I am a pro at walking down the red carpet. I think fashion has to be fun"*

(Agencies) Deepika Padukone, who rocked her first go at Cannes Film Festival as L'Oreal brand ambassador, says red carpet is all about having fun and following the instinct. The 31-year-old actress attended Cannes for another brand earlier in 2010 but this was her first time as a delegate of the make-up giant, which is also represented by Bollywood actresses Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Sonam Kapoor. Deepika told reports in a Facetime session that it is important to follow one's instinct and mood while choosing an outfit, reports news agency PTI. "I won't say I am a pro at walking down the red carpet. I think fashion has to be fun. It's a team work, you have a stylist, then someone is designing your hair, doing your make up," she said. "One can plan things in advance but when the day comes, you might feel like wearing something else. It is about following your instinct, your energy and mood and having fun," Deepika added, reports PTI. Deepika wore a sheer and embellished risque Marchesa dress on the opening day of Cannes and followed it up with a high-slit bottle green number by Brandon Maxwell. Fashion critics had no complaints. Deepika picked safer styles for the media interactions like the satin Galvano London shift or yellow Solace dress or the red Johanna Ortiz maxidress. All was well. Deepika walked the Cannes red carpet on May 17 and May 18. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan took over from Deepika on May 19 and her last red carpet appearance was on May 20. Tonight, Sonam Kapoor will walk the red carpet for L'Oreal. Deepika Padukone was last seen in Hollywood film xXx: The Return OF Xander Cage and her next is Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Padmavati.



# Huma Qureshi on nepotism

**If I had chosen to sell kebabs, it'd be easier for me**

*Speaking on the alleged favouritism in Bollywood, actor Huma Qureshi says that it exists, but while 'not all are starting from the same line', everyone's 'finishing line is certainly the same'.*

(Agencies) Actor Huma Qureshi doesn't mince her words when taking a stand. She was among the first few actors who openly spoke about favouritism in Bollywood. Not long ago, when the issue really caught fire, following actor Kangana Ranaut describing filmmaker Karan Johar as the "flag-bearer of nepotism", Huma had been vocal on the subject. "Anybody who says that favoritism doesn't exist in Bollywood would be lying. I can completely understand that nobody chooses to be born into a given family. It's not a blame game where I'm trying to put down another person and say that somebody else does not deserve [to be] where they are in their career and life," says Huma, 30, adding that it takes a lot of hard work, talent and determination to become successful and admired. The actor points out that even if a person is a 'star kid', success won't come easy and that person still has to work for it. "However, the opportunities that come to you are far easier; the projects that are offered to you are far bigger; the budget sanctioned for your

films would be much bigger," says Huma. "There are so many talented people out there who don't get the same kind of opportunities. My father runs a restaurant business in Delhi, so if I had chosen to sell kebabs, it would be far easier for me than for anybody else," adds the actor. Her father Saleem Qureshi runs a chain of restaurants. Huma recently made her Hollywood debut with Gurinder Chadha's Viceroy's House, and in Bollywood, she has been

steadily building up a notable body of work. Her breakout movie was Gangs of Wasseypur (2012), and she was also seen in Dedh Ishqiya, Badlapur and Jolly LLB 2. With all that experience, she maintains that it's not a level playing field. "Not all are starting from the same line; however, the finishing line is certainly the same. We all have to show how much money our films make, or how many awards we win, or what critical acclaim and commercial success our films have," she points

out. Recalling her initial days when she first came to Mumbai in 2009, Huma says that she went through the usual struggle while giving auditions and clearing screen tests. "For all ad campaigns and all my films till Dedh Ishqiya (2014), I've auditioned for every single role that I've played on screen, and I look at this with great pride," says the actor. "People think that it would be cooler to say that I didn't audition. But today, thankfully, I've earned my right not to audition for films and it didn't come easy."

## Half Girlfriend earns Rs 32.04cr, Hindi Medium slogs at Rs 12.56cr

(Agencies) After a great opening at the ticket windows on Friday, Arjun Kapoor-Shraddha Kapoor-starrer Half Girlfriend had a good weekend collection of Rs 32.04 crore, while Saket Choudhary's Hindi Medium earned Rs 12.56 crore in three days of the release on Friday. Mohit Suri's Half Girlfriend had an impressive opening with Rs 10.27 crore collection and maintained the success ride collecting Rs 10.63 crore on Saturday and Rs 11.14 crore on Sunday. The Irrfan Khan-starrer had a slow start with an opening collection of Rs 2.81 crore. The collections jumped to Rs 4.25 crore on



Saturday and further rose on Sunday to Rs 5.50 crore. Trade analyst Taran Adarsh tweeted, "#HalfGirlfriend has a GOOD weekend... Fri 10.27 cr, Sat 10.63 cr, Sun 11.14 cr. Total: ? 32.04 cr. India biz. #HindiMedium goes from strength to strength with each passing day... Fri 2.81 cr, Sat 4.25 cr, Sun 5.50 cr. Total: ? 12.56 cr. India biz." While Hindi Medium was made on an estimated cost of Rs 22 crore, Half Girlfriend had an estimated budget of Rs 35 crore. Starring Arjun Kapoor and Shraddha Kapoor in lead roles, Half Girlfriend is an onscreen adaptation of Chetan Bhagat's bestseller by the same name.

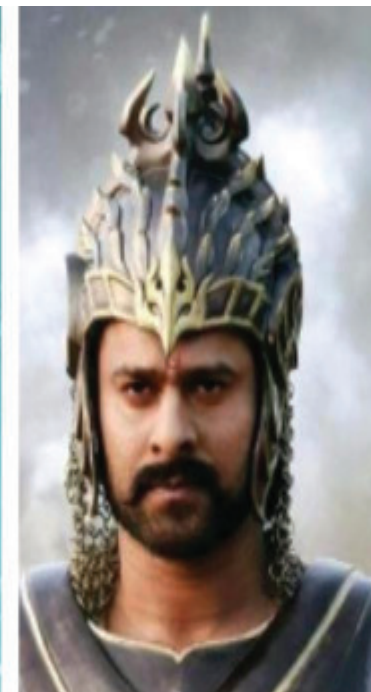
# Baahubali's Prabhas will charge Rs 30 cr a film, but Salman, Shah Rukh way ahead

*Not many in the Telugu film industry would be able to match Prabhas' salary, but he is still nowhere close to the big shots of Bollywood.*

(Agencies) The astounding success of Baahubali 2: The Conclusion, the final instalment of a two-part fantasy-adventure, has made its producers richer by a few hundred crores, but they are not the only ones to reap benefits. Most of the crew members, including the actors, have raised their remuneration for future projects. The epic battle movie has trumped Bollywood by becoming the country's highest-grossing film to date. Baahubali 2 has made more than Rs 10 billion (\$156 million) worldwide since hitting screens on April 28,

according to experts. Reports said Prabhas, who was paid Rs 25 crore for Baahubali 2, is now asking for Rs 30 crore per film. He will soon start shooting for Saaho that will hit the screens in 2018. Not many in the Telugu film industry would be able to match Prabhas' salary, but he is still nowhere close to the big shots of Bollywood. Salman Khan, the reigning king of Bollywood, is charging a whopping Rs 60 crore per film. Most of the time he produces his own films so his actual profit could be much higher. Aamir Khan also charges in

the bracket of Rs 55-60 crore and Shah Rukh Khan is asking for Rs 40-45 crore for each film. Akshay Kumar, the master of the Rs 100 crore club, goes for Rs 35-40 crore every film, but he releases 4-5 films in a year, so his actual profit could be way more than most of the actors listed here. Among actresses, Kangana Ranaut (Rs 10-12 crore) and Deepika Padukone (Rs 8-10 crore) are leading the charge. Kareena Kapoor Khan, Priyanka Chopra and Anushka Sharma also figure in the list of highest paid Indian actresses.





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