



INSIDER


Voice of South Asian Community Since March 2002

Vol. 14 Issue 37 Wednesday 31 May to 6 June, 2017 \$1 www.thesouthasian.info

Mass extinction of life on Earth



(Special Report) London : Humans are bringing about the sixth mass extinction of life on Earth, according to scientists writing in a special edition of the leading journal Nature. Mammals, birds and amphibians are currently becoming extinct at rates comparable to the previous five mass extinctions when "cataclysmic forces" such as massive meteorite strikes and supervolcano explosions wiped out vast swathes of life, including the dinosaurs. The growing human population which has increased by 130 per cent in the last 50 years and is set to rise to more than 10 billion by 2060 and our increasing demand for resources as we become wealthier is ramping up the pressure on the natural world. Tens of thousands of species including 25 per cent of all mammals and 13 per cent of birds (Contd on page 13)



Trump To Planet: Drop dead

By David Andelman.
"America First" is becoming increasingly America alone. Somehow, Donald Trump has managed, with a single, desperate and ill-conceived stroke, to sever the United States from the rest of the world.
Contd on page 13

Freedom Health of Florida agrees to pay \$32.5 Million Fine

COO Siddhartha agrees to pay additional fine



(Agencies) Florida : Freedom Health Inc., a Tampa, Florida-based provider of managed care services, and its related corporate entities (collectively "Freedom Health"), agreed to pay \$31,695,593 to resolve allegations that they violated the False Claims Act by engaging in illegal schemes to maximize their payment from the government in connection with their Medicare Advantage plans, the Justice Department announced recently.
(Contd on page 13)

Three Nigerians Sentenced in International Cyber Financial Fraud Scheme



2015, were sentenced to prison this week for their roles in a large-scale international fraud network. Officials from Department of Justice, FBI & ICE made this announcement. Oladimeji Seun Ayelotan, 30, was sentenced to 95 years in prison. Rasaan Aderoju Raheem, 31, was sentenced to 115 years in prison. Femi Alexander Mewase, 45, was sentenced to 25 years in prison.
(Contd. on page 14)

Air India sale planned with Rs 30,000cr debt write-off

(Agencies) New Delhi : Niti Aayog, the government's think tank, has recommended strategic disinvestment of loss-making Air India, so that the Centre does not have to sink in more money into the airline and can allocate more funds for health and education. The report completes the groundwork for the Centre to initiate the sale of the airline and comes in the wake of finance minister Arun Jaitley's support for stake sale in the bleeding carrier. Sources told media that a decision on the future course of action would be taken by the cabinet. Niti Aayog's fourth report, which was submitted recently, has detailed a possible roadmap for Air India disinvestment+, which includes writing off loans to the tune of Rs 30,000 crore+. AI has debt of around Rs 60,000 crore, which includes around Rs 21,000 crore of aircraft-related loans and around Rs 8,000 crore working capital, said aviation sources.
(Contd on page 14)



Golden Temple, Swad, and Maya Flour Recalled in the U.S. Due to Possible E. Coli



(Agencies) Ontario : In collaboration with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Smucker Foods of Canada Corp. Recently announced a voluntary recall on specific production codes of Golden Temple®, Swad®, and Maya® flour products in the U.S. due to possible E. coli O121 contamination. The impacted product was produced by Ardent Mills located in Saskatoon, SK Canada. Additional flour and flour products have been voluntarily recalled in Canada in cooperation with the Canadian Food Inspection (Contd on page 14)



HR Shah's Honor For Padma Award, Celebrated by FIA



TV Asia chairman H R Shah, center right, with India's Consul General in New York, Riva Ganguly Das, center front left, at an event FIA hosted in New Jersey to honor Shah, who was recently awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian honor.



H R Shah, center, with Consul General Riva Ganguly Das and Rohit Patel, Gujarat's minister of finance and industries, at the FIA event.



H R Shah, with, from left, Ramesh Patel, FIA chairman, Dr Sudhir Parikh, a past recipient of the Padma Shri and Andy Bhatia, FIA president.

(By a staff reporter) New Jersey: The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut hosted an evening of music and celebration recently honoring HR Shah, TV Asia chairman, who was recently awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian

honor. The cavernous ballroom of Royal Albert's Palace in Fords, NJ, saw an 8-member New Jersey State Police Pipe Band welcome more than 250 guests, who stood in awe of the man whose largesse had touched many. Shah was led into the ballroom by ladies

of the FIA, many of whom were past and current FIA officials, with a glowing flower tribute. FIA chairman Ramesh Patel and president Andy Bhatia, along with more than 25 former and current FIA executive committee members welcomed Shah. India's Consul General in New York, Riva

Ganguly Das paid a glowing tribute to Shah. "It's a nice Indian tradition to celebrate the honoring of your friend," she said, adding, "HR Shah's Padma Shri is a recognition of the role diaspora plays in shaping India's future." Also in attendance was Rohit Patel, Gujarat's minister of finance and industries.

Cricket Fans to Compete for Cash during 2017 MoneyGram Cricket Bee



(By a staff reporter) - NEW YORK- Cricket fans will soon test their expertise of the game for a chance to win \$10,000 during the second annual MoneyGram Cricket Bee competition. The game includes trivia questions about the history of cricket, key moments, teams, players and other general knowledge.

"We are thrilled to sponsor the 2017 Cricket Bee and as always we enjoy being a part of an initiative that our customers are passionate about," says Ivy Wisco, MoneyGram's

global marketing strategy leader. "Our South Asian consumers are some of the top senders in the world and we know how much cricket means to them. Sponsoring the Cricket Bee allows us to say thank you to our customers, and build relationships with new customers as well."

The Cricket Bee was created by leading multicultural firm, Touchdown Media which strives to bring cricket enthusiasts together from across North America.

"Cricket is a passion

point for many immigrants and whether one plays the game or not, one always knows a lot of trivia. We hope to bring all cricket lovers together on this platform and encourage the spirit of the game," said Rahul Walia, CEO, Touchdown Media Inc.

Open to those 18 and older, the contest will begin in July with regional rounds in San Francisco, Dallas, Chicago, New Jersey and Toronto. The top two finalists in each regional round will move on to the finals which will be held in New Jersey on

My Magical Meeting with the Dalai Lama



Shahnaz Husain (centre) seen with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Her daughter, Nelofar Currimbhoy, is on the left

By Shahnaz Husain

It was a magical moment.....my meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at an event held at Hotel Taj Mansingh. My daughter, Nelofar, and I attended an interaction, comprising of dialogues with the spiritual leader on several contemporary issues. I met him at the foyer and felicitated him with flowers. As he smiled and blessed me, I felt a great sense of peace. He certainly has great charisma and there is a sense of joy in his presence. When he spoke, he touched on human values, like compassion, forgiveness,

tolerance, self-discipline. I too believe that these values are much needed in today's world, to bring about peace and unity. The Dalai Lama said that even schools should inculcate a calm mind in their students, so that there can be a peaceful world in the future. It was a great privilege to hear him and share his views. From my own experience, I know that meditation is one of the best ways of calming the mind and finding inner spiritual strength. The silence and calm already exist within us; all we have to do is discover them.

The Danger Of Becoming Jammu vs Kashmir

I spent most of last week in Kashmir with a team from the Kolkata-based Centre for Peace and Progress led by its chairman OP Shah, meeting everyone we could. That, of course, included four Hurriyat leaders - Mirwaiz Omar Farooq; Shabbir Ahmed Shah; A.M. Bandey - and the one who's got everyone's goat: Syed Ali Shah Geelani.

But we also met Governor N.N. Vohra, who not only spent 90 minutes briefing us in detail, but also thanked us most generously for making the visit, underlining the need to reach out to all sections of Kashmiri opinion. Indeed, he even asked us to convey to Geelani his request that Geelani appeal to the youth to not jeopardize their own education and their future employment prospects by taking to the streets, even as Geelani had helped last year to calm things down.

We were also received for over an hour by the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti, who got her secretariat to issue a press notice expressing her gratitude to our group and thanking us for advocating and undertaking dialogue with all concerned in line with the commitment made jointly by her party and the BJP in their Agenda of Alliance. (Rising Kashmir, 26 May 2017)

There was not a single political party that we left out. The BJP spokesperson, Hina Bhatt, joined our deliberations at the Round Table we convened on May 23 and had her say. It was very brave and commendable of her to have accepted our invitation, as she must have known that hers would be a somewhat lonely voice. I felicitate her democratic and open spirit. At the other end of the spectrum, we had the participation of A.M. Bandey of the Hurriyat. And, in between, participants of every other Kashmiri political party - the ruling PDP, the opposition Congress and National Conference, the CPI (M) veteran, Mohammed Yousuf Tarigami, and Er. Rashid, the independent MLA who hates the Congress and the BJP in equal measure, and denounced both in no uncertain terms. Besides, our round-table was graced by

the pick of the Valley's intellectuals, lawyers, university professors, businessmen, civil society activists, social workers, thinkers, writers, and press representatives, as also representatives of the two most important minority communities, the Kashmiri Pandits and the Sikhs.

Our principal objective was to demonstrate to governments at the centre and the state, and skeptics and hard-liners around the country, that every shade of political opinion and every section of society could be brought together around a table. We succeeded. And our reward was that at the high tea that followed at the nearby home of Muzaffar Shah, grandson of Sheikh Abdullah, he pulled me aside to whisper in my ear that it was the first time in more than thirty years that a Hurriyat representative had crossed the threshold of his home!

What followed was a veritable flood of individuals, delegations calling on us or inviting us to their homes and offices - the small newspapers association; the J&K Chamber of Commerce & Industry; tour operators; agriculturists; academics; lawyers; doctors; retired civil servants; and hordes of media, including media proprietors, leading editors and reporters/correspondents; plus families of Kashmiri Pandits and the oft-ignored but vitally important Sikh community; as also highly respected clerics of both the Shia and Sunni faiths. And, of course, the "separatists".

No one, not one, in this wide spectrum of Kashmiri opinion had anything commendatory to say about the Government of India's handling of Kashmir. In most cases, the criticism extended back to Jawaharlal Nehru and Delhi's favoured leaders of Kashmir, from Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed to Mehbooba Mufti (Sheikh sahib excepted), but the condemnation was most virulent about the present national leadership. One highly respected opinion-maker put it succinctly: hitherto, he said, it was Kashmiris getting alienated from India, now it is Indians getting alienated from Kashmiris.

Everyone we met - with-

out exception - stressed that nothing has been more damaging to mainland India's image in the Valley than TV coverage, particularly two channels, one of which has not even started airing in the Valley but whose anchor has earned notoriety amounting to hatred from his earlier role in the second despised channel. "Why can't those channels be closed?" we were repeatedly asked, while we struggled to explain that it cannot and must not be done in a democracy, and asking them to view other channels such as the one I am at present writing for.

Our claims to democracy were often met with mockery. What democracy? Kashmir, they said, is virtually under military rule. Someone gave the figure of 13 lakh security personnel - ranging from the army to the cop on the beat - to control what I later heard a former army chief boast on TV were some 90 remaining militants, just ninety, down, thanks, he said, to military action, from thousands at the height of the militancy. Then why have our security personnel grown so exponentially if the number of militants has been pruned so drastically? The certificate of commendation given by the army chief to Major Gogoi, who tied an innocent man to a jeep to parade him around as an example to others, despite the poor devil having been one of the miniscule number who actually voted in the recent Srinagar parliament-by-election, has spread such loathing right across the Valley that the good work done by the armed forces, incidental to the principal purpose of their presence there, has been virtually wiped off Kashmiri reckoning. And when Amit Shah talks the language of Viceroy Linlithgow about only three-and-a-half districts of the Valley being disturbed, it only provokes a sneer on most Kashmiri faces and a conviction in their minds that they are under a form of colonial rule. For Linlithgow similarly dismissed the Quit India movement, until the Brits themselves were dismissed from the subcontinent just five years later.

Let that not happen to us

in Kashmir. We cannot have Kashmir and not want its people. That was powerfully brought home to me as I went on my morning walk past the Chief Minister's Private Office near which stands the Church of All Saints. A hoarding outside the Church is emblazoned with a line from a psalm: "Zeal for your House consumes me." Zeal for Kashmir certainly consumes Modi - but not apparently for its people, who, in the last three years since the BJP came to power at both the centre and in the state, have been distanced as never before from the rest of the country by ghar wapsi, love jihad, beef bans, cattle slaughter bans, gau rakshak excesses, Yogi Adityanath and his private army, the Hindu Yuva Vahini - plus the overwhelming military presence wrapped in the security blanket of AFSPA. Hindutva and army domination of the Valley is certainly no way of winning hearts and minds.

Begging pardon, for this is a site for family reading, the present government's Kashmir policies call to mind Nixon aide Chuck Colson's notorious advice during the Vietnam War: "Catch them by the balls and their hearts and minds will follow." Inevitably, the Americans lost. So will we, if this continues.

Governor's rule was much talked about while we were in the Valley, as it was tangentially hinted at in unattributed briefings emerging from New Delhi. The nonchalant reply we received was: "What difference would that make?" For, Governor's rule or no, it is the army that is calling the shots. "We are," said many, "under army occupation." One wit added that Governor's Rule would put Kashmir under army rule even as Ayub Khan had put all of Pakistan under military dictatorship. In any case, the unanimous view was that when the BJP national leadership was overwhelming and undermining the state government, there would be little to distinguish Dilli Raj through a subordinated state government from Dilli Raj through Governor's rule.

Perhaps the point that

raises the most concern is that the youth, all born in the troubled decade of the 90s or the even more troubled 21st century, are under no one's control and are operating at no one's behest other than their own volition. Even the Hurriyat and its chairman, Geelani, are being sidelined. Notwithstanding hot denials by the Hurriyat itself and its many sympathizers, Zakir Musa's is the rising voice and influence, threatening to overtake even Geelani, thundering that he, Musa, will behead any Hurriyat leader who describes the Kashmir issue as a "political issue", when it is in fact an "Islamic" issue. Musa has since withdrawn his threat but any observer can see the looming danger, for if we do not want to settle with the Hurriyat, we may find ourselves confronted with Musa and his ilk.

As the Mirwaiz underlined to us, the greatest danger is of the political issue of Kashmir being converted into a Hindu-Muslim issue. In a telling aphorism, and in impeccable English, he said that what was once the issue of Jammu & Kashmir is now being communalized into the issue of Jammu v/s Kashmir.

That is what makes it imperative that we talk now, while there is yet time, than find a fundamentalist Islamic revolution unfolding in our midst. The most chilling words I heard were that we have so far confined ourselves to Kashmir, we may need to move on to Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. The speaker did not spell out what he meant. To those who have ears to listen, the unstated implication is clear.

The Round-Table

The 23d May Round-Table was opened, after brief introductory remarks, by the veteran and frequently elected CPI (M) leader, Mohammed Yousuf Tarigami, who explained his participation by saying that Kashmir's voice must reach the Indian mainstream since the major lacuna in the Kashmir discourse had been that the Valley had failed to communicate with India's intelligentsia and the generality of Indian public opinion. Turning then to the Home Minister's claim that problems in the Valley would

be resolved within a year, he asked what could we expect Rajnath Singh to do in a year that he had failed to do in three years? He further asked, with reference to Amit Shah's statement the previous day, why, if everything was normal in Kashmir except for 3½ districts, were there 1.3 million security forces stationed all around the state?

He was followed by the Congress leader, Saifuddin Soz, who said the Prime Minister must understand Kashmiri outrage at the Government of India rewarding Major Gogoi when "everyone", including the "international community", was condemning using an innocent Kashmiri as a "human shield". He added that TV channels were "vilifying" Kashmir and Kashmiris, and strongly underlined that there was a "Revolt" underway in Kashmir.

The PDP's representative, Nizamuddin Bhatt, voiced the Valley's anger at the "humiliation" being inflicted on the state. He felt that governmental conduct at state, national and regional levels had to be "changed" so that a national consensus is evolved on "nationally important issues". Describing the Manmohan Singh period as one that shed a little "light" on the Kashmir and Pakistan issues, he called for dialogue with all stakeholders, adding that the PDP-BJP Agenda of Alliance (AoA), which commits both parties to dialogue, must be regarded as the irreducible "bottom line". He concluded that TV channels were seriously misleading the nation.

Engineer Rashid, MLA, opened by remarking that Geelani was "irrelevant" and that what should concern everyone was the rise of Zakir Musa. He warned that if you do not talk to the Hurriyat, and keep calling anyone who advocates such dialogue as "anti-national", you will end up having to talk to Musa, the militants and the students on the street. He demanded to know how the state government reconciled its efforts to "facilitate" the annual Amarnath Yatra with preventing Geelani from mounting the pulpit.

Indian Govt.'s New Cattle Trade Rule Infringes Upon Constitutional Rights Of Citizens

The notification of the Centre framing new rules for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act on Friday, making it rather impossible to buy or sell cattle for slaughter in the country, is an indirect beef-ban that infringes upon the constitutional rights of the states as well as the citizens.

By a simple gazette publication, the government has met a long-pending ideological demand of the RSS and the BJP with little consideration of its far-reaching socio-political consequences. In the process, it has also begun the decimation of an industry that's worth about Rs 100,000 crore, besides rendering thousands of people jobless overnight.

If the states abide by this order, people in the country cannot eat beef unless they raise their own cattle or procure meat from exclusive cattle farms, that are a rarity in India. More over, people who raise cattle for agricultural and dairy purposes now have to bear the burden of taking care of them for many years after their utility is over. In the long term, the care of the cattle will cost more than what they could earn because on an average a cow lives for 20-25 years, but provides milk only for 10 years.

The only relief possible now, that too not uniformly across India, is resistance by some states asserting their rights and challenging the new rules legally because cattle-slaughter is a state subject that the Government of India is trying to contravene by using its concurrent jurisdiction on prevention of cruelty to animals. More over, a government deciding what people should or shouldn't eat is a violation of the constitutionally guaranteed fundamental right to life (Article 21). Legally, it has long been established that right to food is an integral part of right to life.

Kerala, which is one of the top consumers of beef with a very small stock of locally raised cattle and

buffalo, has decided not to implement the new rules, and protestors have started organising "beef festivals" across the state. The state which consumes about 3.6 million kg beef a year, which is the highest in India as a proportion to the population, and slaughters the largest number of cattle, excluding buffalos, gets most of the animals from other states.

In fact, Kerala's beef consumption sustains part of the cattle-economy of the neighbouring Tamil Nadu. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called the new rules an attack on the essence of India while MK Stalin, the DMK leader in Tamil Nadu, demanded a repeal of what he called the "beef ban law" because it infringes on the right of citizens to make food choices.

Many other states such as West Bengal, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Sikkim, where people eat

Don't Look Back In Anger: Running To Keep Manchester United

It's bank holiday weekend and on the streets of Manchester this Sunday there's a buzz in the air. We make our way to the city centre, past young families with children clutching balloons, past fitness freaks in neon sneakers with Fitbits strapped to their wrists and elderly churchgoers returning from service. An enterprising salesman has set up a stall selling vintage LPs at bargain prices, an absolute steal for music buffs in this culture loving city. The ubiquitous Lotto lottery sign on pavements enticingly holds out the promise of disproportionate wealth. The chance of winning a million-pound jackpot is one in 139 million, says a daily newspaper. I wonder what the chances were of being killed at a music concert - improbable but not impossible, as the loved ones of 22 numbered lives fatally found out this week.

This is no ordinary Sunday and today's Great Manchester Run is no ordinary marathon. Each one here has defied the severe threat warning called after the concert carnage and is here to display the famed Northern grit. It's a gamble they are willing to wager to keep the spirit of this inclusive, historic, shaken city aloft. They spill out on the streets - thousands of run-

ners, their teens displaying the causes they are fighting for. Running for Alzheimer's, running for cervical cancer, running for dementia, running for teenage diabetes, running for whatever threatens to tear families and lives apart. But the cause of causes today is to beat the wave of despair, anger and fear triggered by a killer from hell with a backpack who targeted concert goers at the Manchester arena foyer on May 22.

So they run, the marathon runners, past police vehicles and gun toting cops. Past souvenir shops and flags that defiantly say "I Heart Manchester". They run to the beat of 'Don't look back in anger', a song by Oasis, that's become like a post attack anthem. Thousands running together to beat the wave of angst that has coursed through the streets of this mortally wounded city. Running to keep the peace. Running to keep Manchester united. buffalo, has decided not to implement the new rules, and protestors have started organising "beef festivals" across the state. The state which consumes about 3.6 million kg beef a year, which is the highest in India as a proportion to the population, and slaughters the largest number of cattle, excluding buffalos,

beef and cow-slaughter is not illegal, also may challenge the cattle-order. In terms of violating Article 21, the order affects the religious minorities such as Muslims and Christians the most because together they account for about 68 per cent of the people who eat beef in India, according to an analysis of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data by The Hindu and India Datalabs. Hindus account for only 1.39% of the beef-eaters and the trend has been on the decline over the last decade. Clearly, it's a move that almost exclusively affects the minorities and hence has an unmissable political significance.

Expectably, the state also slaughters the highest number of buffalos in India - 6.2 million, according to the latest Basic Animal Husbandry Survey. With the new rules coming into play, none of them could be bought from the market. In other words, unless people violate law, it's practically impossible to slaughter them. More over, by law, all these animals need to be protected and cared for by their owners. At a minimum of Rs 3000 per animal, per month, this will be an unprecedented burden on top of massive economic losses that the slaughter-ban will cause.

It will make raising cattle unviable, and sooner than later will affect milk production as well as agriculture. Mandatory long-term maintenance of an uneconomical animal will be the biggest disincentive for cattle-owners and milf farmers. This disincentive is highly like to lead to a reduction of livestock that will affect India's preeminent position as the world's highest producer of milk. What's under threat is a "mixed crop-livestock farming system, with the livestock segment supplementing farm incomes by providing employment, draught animals and manure." as noted by the 2015-16 Economic Survey. It's not just cattle-meat based economy, state's autonomy, people's rights, food habits, nutrition, jobs and direct export earnings (of about Rs 23,000 crore) that the de facto ban will affect, but also other industries such as leather and pharmaceuticals. Leather and leather goods, that's solely dependent on cattle-slaughter, earn about US\$ 5.85 billion a year and twice as much from the domestic market. India accounts for nearly 13 per cent of the global market in hides/skins and more than half of its leather industry employees are less than 35 years

of age. Unremarkably, leather is a major pitch in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Make in India campaign. With inflexible restrictions on sourcing the fundamental raw material, this pitch is just hot air. Above everything else, as Vijayan described, the "ban" is an "attack on our plurality". Although politically the new rules may satisfy a certain ideology and seem to affect only certain sections of people that this ideology wants to marginalise, including those who are employed in the sector, a closer look clearly shows that the new rules will have far-reaching socio-economic impact that a struggling country will be unable to cope with. Just like the baffling mid-night announcement of demonetisation, this notification also betrays an impulsive trait of a government that makes little sense.

gets most of the animals from other states. In fact, Kerala's beef consumption sustains part of the cattle-economy of the neighbouring Tamil Nadu. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called the new rules an attack on the essence of India while MK Stalin, the DMK leader in Tamil Nadu, demanded a repeal of what he called the "beef ban law" because it infringes on the right of citizens to make food choices. Many other states such as West Bengal, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Sikkim, where people eat beef and cow-slaughter is not illegal, also may challenge the cattle-order. In terms of violating Article 21, the order affects the religious minorities such as Muslims and Christians the most because together they account for about 68 per cent of the people who eat beef in India, according to an analysis of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data by The Hindu and India Datalabs. Hindus account for only 1.39% of the beef-eaters and the trend has been on the decline over the last decade. Clearly, it's a move that almost exclusively affects the minorities and hence has an unmissable political sig-

nificance.

Among the Indian states, the worst affected will be Uttar Pradesh that consumes the highest quantity of beef, which incidentally is only buffalo meat because cow-slaughter is banned in the state. Expectably, the state also slaughters the highest number of buffalos in India - 6.2 million, according to the latest Basic Animal Husbandry Survey. With the new rules coming into play, none of them could be bought from the market. In other words, unless people violate law, it's practically impossible to slaughter them. More over, by law, all these animals need to be protected and cared for by their owners. At a minimum of Rs 3000 per animal, per month, this will be an unprecedented burden on top of massive economic losses that the slaughter-ban will cause. It will make raising cattle unviable, and sooner than later will affect milk production as well as agriculture. Mandatory long-term maintenance of an uneconomical animal will be the biggest disincentive for cattle-owners and milf farmers. This disincentive is highly like to lead to a reduction of livestock that will affect India's preeminent position as the world's highest producer of milk.

has an unmissable political sig-

nificance.

Decoding a blast

The timing and location of the latest attack in Kabul may be significant. The dots can be joined to the Haqqani Network

Exactly a decade after 9/11, on September 11, 2011, a truck pulled up next to the US military base in Wardak province in eastern Afghanistan. Within minutes, there was a huge detonation and the truck turned into a fireball. The explosives stored in the tanker truck had ripped apart the entire wall of the US base and caused grievous injuries to dozens of US soldiers. Later in the month, Admiral Michael "Mike" Mullen, the then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made his four decade-long career's last deposition before a Congressional panel in Washington DC, in which he bluntly said, "The Haqqani network acts as a veritable arm of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency". When a similar truck bomb ripped through the main diplomatic square in Kabul on Wednesday, killing around 90 people and injuring several hundreds, suspicion naturally turned to the Haqqani network. In fact, the Afghan intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), has directly accused the Haqqani network for the dastardly act that came just days into the Muslim religious month of Ramadan.

The timing and location of the attack are significant. The blast took place merely a few yards from the German embassy in Kabul, injuring several staff members of the embassy and killing the lone Afghan security guard at the gate. It happened at a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was issuing a stern statement jointly with his German counterpart Angela Merkel, vowing to take "strong measures" against those who encourage, support and finance terrorism. Describing terrorism as the single biggest problem facing future generations, Modi promised that "both our countries will work together to tackle this problem together and cyber security and intelligence sharing is a very important aspect of this cooperation". In recent years, Europe has seen several terrorist incidents, from Paris to Manchester. European countries have been participating in the NATO forces in Afghanistan. Germany itself has around 1,000 soldiers handling various security responsibilities in Afghanistan. In such a scenario, it is not possible to completely dismiss the timing of the latest Kabul attack as a mere coincidence. The Kabul attack is one of the worst attacks in the last many years. It is not the first though, nor might it be, however much we all may wish, the last. Pakistan has issued its ritualistic condemnation. President Mamnoon Hussain, in his speech to the Pakistan Parliament, condemned Wednesday's extremist attack, saying that the people and the government of Pakistan will continue to support all efforts aimed at ensuring peace in Afghanistan. However, one need not be in any doubt about the Pakistani sponsorship of the dreaded Haqqani network. The saga of the Haqqani network is mired in such secrecy that no one really knows who its leader is. Founded by the Pashtun warlord, Jalaluddin Haqqani, the group came into prominence during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. It is believed that the CIA had a hand in the rise, if not creation, of this terrorist group. After the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Afghanistan, Haqqani became a henchman of the Taliban on the one hand, and the Pakistani ISI on the other. He came to the lawless lands of North Waziristan and set up his headquarters at Miranshah, spreading his sprawling criminal empire across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Sometime in 2015, the BBC reported, based on inputs from sources, that Jalaluddin Haqqani had died at least a year ago. Sirajuddin Haqqani, a hardcore Taliban commander, is said to be the present head of the network. But nobody has any doubt that the real force behind the network is none other than the ISI. When Mike Mullen gave his categorical statement accusing Pakistan of sponsoring the Haqqani Network, he had his own inputs. One of them came from the top US commander in Afghanistan, General John Allen. The movement of suspicious trucks across the Pak-Afghan border was noticed by the US army and brought to the attention of Pakistan's then-Army Chief, General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani. Allen was rudely shaken when Kayani told him that he would "make a phone call" to prevent any disaster. Allen, for sure, realised that the Haqqani network was just a "phone call away" from the Pakistan army. In fact, it was reported that American spy agencies have intercepts of a telephone call made sometime in 2008, in which General Kayani was heard referring to the Haqqani network as a "strategic asset". The unending bloodbath in Afghanistan is singularly the handiwork of the ISI through its proxies like the Haqqani network.

When will it end? To understand that, we have to know about another warlord from the same region. "He lived and died like a true Pashtun," reads the sign on a mud grave at Shakai in South Waziristan. The man resting in the mud grave is Nek Muhammad, a leader of the Afghan Taliban, who subsequently became unquestioned leader of the tribesmen in Pakistan's Waziristan tribal belt. He would rise in prominence and brutality to a level which forced General Parvez Musharraf to buy truce with him. However, this truce was short-lived. At some point, the ISI and the CIA had come to an agreement under which the ISI agreed to provide necessary intelligence to the Predator drones. Finally, in mid-June 2004, a Predator succeeded in firing a missile accurately into the compound where Nek Muhammad was staying, killing him instantly. Would Pakistan do the same to the Haqqani network or continue to use it as a "strategic asset", is the question.

India and US are seeing the rise of poisonous politics and attacks on minorities

I'm vegetarian, so the pleasures of beef are unfathomable to me. I find infinitely more unfathomable the vindictiveness of the gaurakshaks. The closest I've come to belonging to a mob is when I've attended football matches and experienced that rush of dissolving into a collective, into a single, rolling roar. But those passions are light years removed from the perverse sense of righteousness that allowed people to kill Pehlu Khan and to beat, maim, hound, and humiliate Dalits, Muslims, and others in the name of the cow.

It's not really about cows. The supposed causes of mob violence are rarely ever their true cause. The once routine lynching of African Americans in the United States (4,743 blacks were lynched between 1882 and 1968) had very little to do with its various alleged reasons: The protection of white women, theft, vagrancy, or (yes, even in the US) the killing of livestock. No, instead, white mobs were putting blacks in "their place", cowering and terrorising them through the spectacle of brutality.

The cliché has it that history doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes. One cannot but hear the awful rhyme of history in the words of one gaurakshak in Rajasthan when speaking to a TV news network recently: "Without getting beaten up, people from the minority community will never learn."

Incidents of mob violence — with the collusion of the State — have dissipated in the US. But as in India, majoritarian energies are on the loose. I use that clunky word "majoritarian" because it captures the poisonous politics at play: A bullying, braying insistence on the supremacy of one larger group over all others. In some parts of American society, there is anger at the changing nature of the country, where whites are gradually losing their age-old position of dominance. Over the weekend, an avowed white supremacist and "free speech activist" killed two men on a train in the northwestern city of Portland. The victims — who were white men — had tried to intervene as the murderer harassed a young Muslim girl. Muslim organisations in the US have since raised over \$500,000 for the victims' families.

These deaths are only the latest in a spate of Right-wing majoritarian violence. Many Indians know about the bigoted killing of Srinivas Kuchibhotla in February. Here are a few episodes that may be less well known.

Just a few weeks ago in May, a student with far-Right connections at the University of Maryland walked up to Richard Collins III, a black lieutenant in the army, and stabbed him in the chest, killing him. In March, a white man from Baltimore came all the way to New York City with the intent to "kill black men". He prowled the streets and chose to murder 66 year-old Timothy Caughman with a sword. He has been indicted on terrorism charges. Last November, police in Kansas thwarted a group of far-Right white men that had dubbed itself the "Crusaders" and planned a bomb attack on a housing complex full of Somalis. Several US law enforcement agencies consider the greatest domestic security threat to come from these far-Right, white supremacist organisations, not Islamist terrorists. And yet in the public messaging of the president, they remain conspicuous in their absence. Though Donald Trump rushes to tweet after any Islamist terrorist attack around the world, he is slow or often unwilling to react to incidents of horrific Right-wing violence. They don't fit in his narrative of setting the American people against the foreigners and minorities in their midst.



ISSN No. 1554 06X

Chairman & Publisher : Karam Singh Thind

Editor in Chief : Bhupinder Kaur Thind

Editor (Political Affairs-India) : Aruna Singh

Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah

Special Correspondent :

Photographers: Ruth Alvarez/Hamad

Gagandeep Singh (INDIA)

Editorial Intern: Aman Thind

Web Coordinator : Jatinder Kumar

A Publication of NuWay Media Group

REGD & MAILING OFFICE :

P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

Tel/Fax : 516 342 1076

editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com
www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Disclaimer The South Asian Insider is a weekly newspaper published every week by The South Asian Insider. It's available in community & religious centers, ethnic grocery stores and also available by mail, email & online to subscribers. The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various writers, authors and forum participants in The South Asian Insider do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Editor. All advertisers advertising in The South Asian Insider assume responsibility for accuracy of their advertisements. The South Asian Insider and/or people associated with it are not responsible for any claims made by the advertisers and don't endorse any product or services advertised in The South Asian Insider. We strongly urge consulting your lawyer before buying/contracting/hiring through the ads published in the newspaper. We are in the business of selling space and claims made by the advertisers are not authenticated or confirmed by an independent source

How Mamata's Recent Proximity With Sonia-Rahul Will Influence The Upcoming Presidential Election

It might also affect the Rajya Sabha MP election and the Left-Congress alliance in Bengal.

(Agencies) West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had called on Congress President Sonia Gandhi at her residence on 16 May, in presence of Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi. She will meet them again in the national capital on 24 May.

Banerjee's recent proximity with Sonia-Rahul will have far-reaching impact in both national and Bengal politics in the coming days. To begin with, the meeting was primarily, officially, held to discuss the upcoming presidential election. But the meeting also has a bearing on the election of Rajya Sabha MPs prior to



that.

There are 16 Rajya Sabha seats from West Bengal, out of which election for six will be held on 8 June. Of these six, TMC has four MPs – Derek O'Brien, Debabrata Bandopadhyay, Dola Sen and Sukhendu Sekhar Roy. Congress has Pradip Bhattacharya and CPM has Sitaram Yechury. In the last Assembly election of 2016 in West Bengal, TMC had won 211 seats, the

Congress had won 44 and the Left parties had 32 seats. Since then, five Congress MLAs and one Left MLA has joined the TMC, making the latter's tally 217 Assembly seats. Therefore, TMC already has the adequate number of seats to send five Rajya Sabha MPs out of the six vacant seats from Bengal.

However, neither Congress – with 39 MLAs – nor the Left parties – with 31 MLAs – have the

adequate number of Assembly seats to elect an MP for the Rajya Sabha (the minimum number of MLAs required for electing an MP will be 42) on their individual strength.

However, considering the Left and the Congress had formed an alliance before the 2016 Assembly election and their ties are still warm, there is a possibility that either a Congress or a Left candidate may be

chosen through mutual agreement. It is this alliance that Mamata Banerjee wants to break. Banerjee is said to be discussing with Sonia and Rahul the larger picture of an alliance both in terms of the Rajya Sabha MP seat and in terms of the Congress' role in West Bengal in future. All this, under the backdrop of the Presidential election.

Sonia wants Mamata's

nod for the support of a common Opposition candidate for the coming presidential election.

They are also keen that the camaraderie will remain beyond the presidential election. Banerjee on her part wants to ensure three things at this point. One, she is keen on sending all six Rajya Sabha MPs from her party and is thereby seeking Sonia Gandhi's support for the sixth candidate.



Madras HC stays notification on cattle trade ban

The Madras HC order comes at a time when the opposition parties have gone on a warpath against the central government's notification banning sale of cattle for slaughter.



(Agencies) The Madras high court suspended on Tuesday a controversial central government rule that outlawed sale of cattle for slaughter at animal markets and triggered a political storm in India.

Even as the court ordered a four-week stay on the notification, the Centre said it was examining the points raised by several states, including Kerala and West Bengal, which call the order an attack on

India's federal structure. The government, however, denied trying to restrict food habits of the people through the notification that has led to protests and staging of beef festivals in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Congress activists in Kerala killed a cow in a public square on Saturday, an act that sparked outrage and forced party leaders to condemn the incident.

A PhD scholar who participated in a campus

beef festival at the IIT-Madras was allegedly assaulted by some students on Tuesday, police said.

Millions of Hindus consider the cow to be holy and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) – the ideological mentor of the ruling BJP – has been pushing for a countrywide ban on cow slaughter.

Critics say the rule – banning the sale of cows, bulls, bullocks, buffaloes, steers, heifers, calves,

and camels for slaughter – violates individual rights and will hurt millions of cattle and meat traders.

"The slaughtering of animals for food, the food and culinary (items) made out of such animal flesh and offering sacrifice of animals are part of cultural identity of most communities in India, protected under the Constitution," petitioners Selvagomathy and Asik Ilahi Bhava told the Madurai bench of the high court.

Regulating cattle trade is a state subject but animal welfare is overseen by the Centre. The new rules didn't amount to a blanket ban on cattle trade or their slaughter. But the move was expected to choke supplies to the country's Rs 1-lakh crore meat and allied industries that source about 90% of their requirements from animal markets.

Beef and buffalo meat is a common delicacy in some south and northeastern states. Activists and opposition political parties say the rule discriminates against Muslims, Christians and lower-caste Hindus who rely on the cheap meat for protein.

Union information and broadcasting minister M Venkaiah Naidu defended the move saying the notification was in response to a Supreme Court observation on preventing cruelty to animals and "breaking the nexus in animal markets, including for smuggling". Though Naidu said the government was examining the representation by states, he refused to comment on whether the notification will be reconsidered.

Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday asked the state police not to comply with

the Centre's notification. "What someone will eat is his or her personal choice. No one has the right to dictate. Don't follow that order. The state has not given any such order. The administration should ensure that there is no confusion," she told officials in Barrackpore.

Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday termed the ban "anti-federal, anti-democratic and anti-secular". He also wrote to his counterparts in other states asking them to "stand together" and oppose it.

Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah said his government was analysing the developments.

"We are examining devpmts & awaiting Govt Order on Centre's recent curb on sale of cattle for slaughter, esp since this is a State subject (sic)," he tweeted.

(Agencies) LUCKNOW: Senior BJP leaders LK Advani, Union Minister Uma Bharti and Murli Manohar Joshi faced a court in Lucknow today in the 1992 Babri mosque demolition case and were charged with criminal conspiracy. They had argued that they had no role in the mosque razing and had tried to stop it, but their discharge petition was rejected. The special CBI court, asked by the



In Babri Masjid Case, Court Rules Against LK Advani, Others On Conspiracy Charge

Babri Masjid Demolition Case: The Supreme Court had directed that BJP leaders including LK Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti, would face trial for conspiracy charges in Babri case.

Supreme Court to wrap up the case within two years, will now begin trial but the leaders do not have to attend the daily hearings. Mr Advani, 89, made his second court appearance in the case in 25 years.

Here is your 10-point cheat-sheet to this story:

1. Mr Advani and the other leaders spent nearly three hours in court. Before the hearing, they stopped at the VVIP guest house in Lucknow where UP Chief

Minister Yogi Adityanath greeted Mr Advani with flowers.

2. Uma Bharti, the Water Resources Minister, told reporters: "I don't consider myself an accused...There was no

conspiracy, it was an open movement like it happened against the Emergency."

3. The BJP backed its leaders. "We are sure that our leaders are innocent and will come out unscathed," said Union

Minister Venkaiah Naidu. 4 The special court was given a month by the Supreme Court to frame conspiracy charges against Mr Advani and a dozen other leaders for the demolition on 6 December 1992 of the 16th century Babri mosque.

5 The leaders are already facing trial for making provocative speeches from a platform near the Babri mosque before it was pulled down by karsevaks, or right-wing volunteers. Stating that the two cases cannot be separate, the court transferred the hate speech case from a Rae Bareilly court to Lucknow for a joint trial.

6 The conspiracy charge against Mr Advani and others was dropped by the special CBI Court in 2001, which sought to distinguish between the main demolition case and the case related to the hate speeches. The decision was endorsed by the Allahabad High Court in 2010.

7 Restoring the charge last month, the Supreme Court described the

demolition of the 16th century mosque as a "crime" which shook the "secular fabric of the Constitution".

8 The court had also strongly rebuked the CBI for a delay of 25 years in the trial and said, "The accused persons have not been brought to book largely because of the conduct of the CBI in not pursuing the prosecution of the aforesaid alleged offenders in a joint trial, and because of technical defects which were easily curable, but which were not cured by the State Government."

9 The demolition of the mosque followed a nationwide movement led by Mr Advani and others for a temple at the site where the mosque was constructed by the Mughals. Many Hindus believe that the mosque was built over the birthplace of Lord Ram; they want a temple to be built there.

10 The razing of the Babri Masjid incited nationwide riots between Hindus and Muslims; around 2,000 people were killed.

CBI files 3 FIRs over probe into aviation ministry decisions during UPA tenure

(Agencies) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered three FIRs pertaining to the affairs of the civil aviation ministry under the previous Congress-led government.

The First Information Reports (FIRs) relate to the purchase of 50 Boeing aircraft for the erstwhile Air India, leasing of aircraft, and handing over of lucrative international airline routes to private airlines, while the merger of Air India and Indian Airlines has been registered as a preliminary enquiry, a source in the CBI told Hindustan Times on condition of anonymity.

The cases come on the heels of the CBI raiding former finance minister P Chidambaram's son Karti. The FIRs do not mention any public official by name but are built around a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) submitted to Parliament in 2011 and a subsequent report by the Parliamentary Accounts Committee (PAC). Both reports pointed out glaring gaps in the acquisition process, which experts believe led to the national air carrier bleeding financially.

In January 2017, the Supreme Court had also asked the CBI to complete the probe on the same matter by June while hearing a public interest litigation filed by activist-lawyer Prashant Bhushan on the Boeing purchase.

"The Supreme Court had asked the attorney general to look into the allegations in a time-bound manner. We examined the evidence and decided to register three separate cases. We will finish the investigation soon," said a senior CBI official privy to the development.

Gurudongmar glacier in Sikkim recedes one-fourth, says study

It implies down-stream impact on hydro-power projects and livelihood of people in Bengal and Bangladesh.

(Agencies) The Gurudongmar glacier in Sikkim — the source of one of iconic lakes in the world by same name — has receded one-fourth since 1989, a new study has found, implying down-stream impact on hydro-power projects and livelihood of people in Bengal and Bangladesh.

The Gurudongmar lake, named after founder of Tibetan Buddhism in the 8th century Guru Rinpoche, is the main source for Teesta river that flows from Himalayas in Sikkim to Bangladesh.

The sharing of Teesta river water is a contentious issue between India and Bangladesh with Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee refusing to provide even "single drop of extra water" to the neighbouring country where it is main source of irrigation. The river has

major hydel potential for Sikkim with projects over 5,000 MW either proposed or under construction.

A new study published in American Geophysical Union this week says the Gurudongmar glacier retreat has increased by nearly four times between 1965 and 1989.

"Between 1989 and 2016, the size of Gurudongmar lake has grown by one-sixth of its size in 1989," said Mauri S Pelto, professor of environmental studies at Nichols College in Dudley, Massachusetts, in a study on Sikkim glaciers.

The study found that terminus of the glacier has retreated by about 600 meters (one-fourth of the total length) since 1987 and the lake has moved upwards. "The retreat distance is substantial given the length of the glacier is 25% of the 1996



glacier length of 2.4 km," the study based on satellite images of the glacier in the last 20 years found.

Gurudongmar like all glaciers in the region is different from other winter accumulating Himalayan snow-sheets. It is summer accumulation type which receives 80% of its snowfall during monsoon months between July and September. "Following the summer monsoon which ends in early September there is a transition period with some colder storm

events where the snowline drops. Than November-February is the dry winter monsoon with limited precipitation," the study says. The study also said between 2003 and 2012 the glacier lakes in higher reaches of Sikkim has increased with 85 new one detected in addition to existing 320. Increase in lakes indicates faster melting and fragmentation of glaciers, a sign of climate change impact on the Indian sub-conditions biggest water source.

Ramdev's Patanjali products fail quality test, RTI inquiry finds

An RTI query revealed that Patanjali's Divya Amla Juice and Shivlingi Beej failed to meet the quality standards. The lab report said 31.68% of foreign matter was found in Shivlingi Beej and amla juice had less than the prescribed limit of pH value.

(Agencies) Nearly 40% of Ayurveda products, including items from Baba Ramdev's Patanjali, were found to be of substandard quality by Haridwar's Ayurveda and Unani Office, a Right to Information (RTI) reply revealed.

Out of the 82 samples collected between 2013 and 2016, 32 failed the quality test. Patanjali's Divya Amla Juice and Shivlingi Beej were among the products that failed to meet the quality standards.

Last month, the armed

forces' Canteen Stores Department (CSD) had suspended the sale of a batch of Patanjali's amla juice after it 'failed' a quality test carried out at West Bengal Public Health Laboratory.

According to Uttarakhand state government lab report, the pH value- which measures the alkalinity of water soluble substances- was found to be less than the prescribed limit in the amla juice. Products with pH value less than seven could lead to acidity and other medical

complications.

The RTI reply also revealed that 31.68% of foreign matter was found in the Shivlingi Beej.

Ramdev's associate and Patanjali's managing director, Acharya Balkrishna, denied the lab report. "Shivlingi Beej is a natural seed. How can we adulterate it?", he said and claimed that the report was an attempt to malign Patanjali's image.

Besides Patanjali products, 18 samples of Ayurveda drugs such as Avipattikara Churna, Talisadya Churna,

Pushyanuga Churna, Lavan Bhaskar Churna, Yograj Guggulu, Laksha Guggulu were also found substandard.

Over the years, Uttarakhand has emerged as a major hub of Ayurveda products. Haridwar and Rishikesh have more than 1,000 dealers, manufacturers and suppliers of Ayurveda medicines.

One of the manufacturers, Minor Forest Produce Processing And Research Centre (MFP-PARC), said the drugs were supplied



only after Uttarakhand Ayush wing's approval.

Ayush minister Harak Singh Rawat said the department was in the process of carrying out more regular tests to ensure product quality.

"We have a lab in Haridwar to test the samples but it lacked the required staff. We have now appointed five new chemists and are in the process of recruiting more," he said.

Zakir Naik, wanted on terror charges, seeking Malaysian citizenship: NIA sources

Zakir Naik, who is believed to have Permanent Residence status in Malaysia, has now sought its citizenship but no decision has been taken so far on his application, according to NIA sources

(Agencies) Controversial Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, wanted by the National



Investigation Agency (NIA) on terror charges, has applied for Malaysian citizenship, according to agency sources. Naik has been changing his base quite frequently after the

arrest warrant, against him, they said. The preacher, who is believed to have Permanent Residence status in Malaysia, has now sought its citizenship but no

decision has been taken so far on his application, the sources said.

The Indian government is planning to use its diplomatic channels to frustrate all attempts by the controversial preacher to get citizenship in any country, they said. The Malaysian authorities were aware about terror cases pending against the controversial Islamic preacher, they said.

Naik is being probed for terror and money laundering charges. He had fled India immediately after an investigation against him was initiated. His present place of stay is unknown and it is believed that he has been shuttling between the UAE, Saudi Arabia, African and Southeast Asian countries, the

sources said.

The controversial preacher is accused of spreading hatred by his provocative speeches, funding terrorists and laundering several crores of rupees over the years.

The Interpol was approached against Naik after a year-long probe during which the NIA gathered evidence of his NGO — Islamic Research Foundation - and Peace TV, being used to allegedly promote hatred between different religious groups.

The central government has already banned his NGO and taken his TV channel off air. During the probe, the NIA claimed to have found 37 properties owned by Naik and companies run by him, which are estimated to be worth more

than Rs 100 crore.

A Special NIA court in Mumbai, while issuing a non-bailable warrant against Naik, had said that "there are reasonable grounds to believe that Naik is evading arrest and that he will not voluntarily appear before the court or before the agency."

The NIA alleged that Naik has been promoting enmity and hatred between different religious groups in India through his speeches and lectures on various platforms and inciting Muslim youths and terrorists in India and abroad to commit terrorist acts.

Naik had fled from India on July 1, 2016 after terrorists in neighbouring Bangladesh claimed that they were inspired by his speeches on waging jihad.

Traffickers swallowing condoms filled with liquid cocaine: Interpol



(Agencies) Traffickers are increasingly swallowing condoms filled with liquid cocaine to cheat traditional detection methods, Interpol said Tuesday as it pointed to West African and Asian gangs driving the Asia-Pacific narcotics trade.

Interpol's Singapore office, which said methamphetamine remains the region's most trafficked substance, highlighted the rising trend in a report on an international anti-drug

operation in May.

The campaign, called Operation Lionfish - ASEAN, involved more than 2,000 police and customs officials in 14 countries, said a statement from the Interpol Global Complex in Singapore which coordinated it.

It focused on drug trafficking through airports while a second phase will target land and sea borders.

The operation "revealed a network of West African

and Asian organised crime groups behind trafficking in methamphetamine — one of the most smuggled drugs in the region," the statement said.

Of 59 seizures during the two-week period, nearly a quarter of the drugs confiscated was methamphetamine, of which nearly 80 percent was in crystalline form known as "ice".

Cocaine, cannabis, heroin and amphetamine

stimulants were also among the drugs seized, it said, adding that smugglers were becoming more innovative.

Authorities in the United Arab Emirates have identified a rising trend of liquid cocaine being trafficked, Interpol said.

"Smugglers would swallow condoms packed with liquid cocaine," it said, adding that this type of concealment is harder to detect using traditional methods like X-rays.

INDO US EXPRESS INC. IS A LEADING PROVIDER OF AIR FREIGHT SERVICES TO AND FROM THE US AND INDIA.

WE OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF AIR FREIGHT SERVICES TO AND FROM THE US AND INDIA.

FROM CHICAGO TO NEW YORK AND FROM NEW YORK TO CHICAGO.

TO BANGALORE AND FROM BANGALORE TO CHICAGO.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US AT

1-800-888-8888 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT



INDO US EXPRESS INC.

INDO US EXPRESS INC. IS A LEADING PROVIDER OF AIR FREIGHT SERVICES TO AND FROM THE US AND INDIA.

WE OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF AIR FREIGHT SERVICES TO AND FROM THE US AND INDIA.

FROM CHICAGO TO NEW YORK AND FROM NEW YORK TO CHICAGO.

TO BANGALORE AND FROM BANGALORE TO CHICAGO.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US AT

1-800-888-8888 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT

www.indousexpress.com

CALL US TODAY TO GET THE BEST AIR FREIGHT RATES TO

INDIA

**2017
INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC NIGHT
SERIES**



**2017
INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC NIGHT
SERIES**



**2017
INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC NIGHT
SERIES**

Nassau County Executive **ED MANGANO** presents
International Music Nights

Eisenhower Park, East Meadow • Parking Fields 6 & 6A



**INDIAN
AMERICAN
NIGHT**

Monday, June 5th • 7:30pm

**Health Fair Starting at 6:00pm
Musical Night Under the Stars**

Dance and Vocal Performances by Local Schools and Talent / Bollywood Performances

Sponsors

VJ Technologies, South Asian Times, Sterling Bank,
Arya Samaj of Long Island, TV ASIA, IVS TV, ITV, South Asian Insider, Hum Hindustani,
Indian Express, Indian Panorama, Rajbhog Sweets, HAB Bank,
Indus American Bank, India Association of Long Island, AAPI QLI

Presented by Indian American Forum Inc.

Chairperson Indu Jaiswal (516) 248-7241

Sharanjit Singh Thind (917) 612-3158

Co Chairperson Mohinder Singh Taneja (516) 840-7968

Vijay Goswamy, Anu Gulati, Jaya Bahadkar, Bina Sabapathy, Bhavani Srinivasan,
Sunita Sadhnani, Roopam Maini, Shilpa Jhurani, Jyoti Gupta

THE NASSAU COUNTY PARKS, RECREATION & MUSEUMS IS COMMITTED TO MAKING ITS SERVICES, PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS ACCESSIBLE TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. IF YOU NEED AN ACCOMMODATION OR ASSISTANCE DUE TO A DISABILITY, TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SERVICES, PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES AND/OR EVENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, PLEASE CONTACT MARY JANE PALMA AT 572-0218 (VOICE) 572-0226 (TTY) OR THE OFFICE FOR THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED AT 227-7399 OR FOR PERSONS WITH HEARING LIMITATIONS AT TOD 571-3108.

FREE ADMISSION — Bring Blankets or Chairs

For info call: 516 572-0200 • Day of Event Weather info: 516 572-0355



NASSAU COUNTY EXECUTIVE

ED MANGANO

www.nassaucountyny.gov

Grand Sponsor



**NASSAU COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND MUSEUMS**



INDIA ASSOCIATION OF LONG ISLAND (IALI)

presents

38th Annual Fund Raising Gala Dinner

Sunday , June 4th 2017, 6pm -11pm

Hilton Huntington

598 Broad Hollow Road, Melville, New York

Tickets: \$100 per person.

For Tickets, Sponsorship, Advertising & Details contact

Bina Sabapathy

(516) 965-2931

Gunjan Rastogi

(718) 490-0736

Lalit Aery

(917) 750-2473

Vimal Goyal

(516) 978-7125

Prasad Kambhampaty

(516) 991-7671

Shashi Malik

(516) 633-5229

Mukesh Modi

(917) 215-1491

Honorees;

Dr. Rakesh Dua (AAPI President)

Dr. Saroj Gupta (Physician)

Dr. Preeti Mehta.

(Physician and Philanthropist)

Leela Maret (Community Activist)

Mr. Tejinder Gill (INOC)

Mr. Chintu Patel (CEO - Amneal)

Sahil Ananad (Student)

Mr. Prashantt Guptha (Actor)

WANT A STYLISH & SUSTAINABLE HOME?



At the heart of the new home is a commitment to sustainability. The house is built with eco-friendly materials and features a range of energy-saving technologies. The interior is designed to be both stylish and functional, with a focus on natural light and ventilation. The house is a perfect example of modern living that is both beautiful and responsible.



WELLINGTON

For more information on this and other properties, visit our website at www.foxconnor.co.nz. We are currently accepting applications for this exciting project. Contact us today to learn more about the opportunities available. The house is a perfect example of modern living that is both beautiful and responsible.

FOXCONNOR
Real Estate
Wellington
04 488 8888
www.foxconnor.co.nz

Trump To Planet: Drop dead

I was astonished 18 months ago to witness at the Le Bourget conference center outside Paris the extraordinary spectacle of nearly 200 countries actually agreeing on one central aspect of life on our planet -- the need to control the pollutants that are wreaking havoc on our decaying atmosphere and our climate. Suddenly, now, it's the United States against everyone else on Earth.

It didn't have to be that way. Short of a total withdrawal -- an in-your-face slap to every world leader who signed the COP21 climate accord -- were any number of half-measures. Indeed, Trump had already taken several of them.

He effectively neutered the Paris Agreement through a series of executive orders, including his March 28 order that directed the Environmental Protection Agency to begin the process of withdrawing the Obama-era Clean Power Plan and reviving the nation's coal

industry. "C'mon fellas," Trump beamed triumphantly to a group of coal miners at the signing ceremony. "You know what this is? You know what this says? You're going back to work."

This assumed there'd be many customers for the coal these workers would now be authorized to mine. But, according to a CNN report this week, there has been no boom in coal jobs since the signing of the executive order. Notably, the climate pact did not require formal national ratification as a treaty. It might not have gotten through the Senate, even back then. But it would have been more difficult to abrogate unilaterally, as the President has now done, since only Congress would have the power to retire from a formal treaty it had ratified.

Indeed, there are no formal penalties for nations that violate COP21. Even so, it would be impossible for the United States to formally withdraw from the pact before

November 2019 unless it also withdrew from the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change -- effectively thumbing our noses at not only climate change but the entire UN process, sadly not an impossible eventuality.

We might have been able to survive a hostile NATO, even a skeptical G7. But consider the consequences of our reneging on our commitments to COP21. Let's start with boycotts of goods from America produced in climate-denying factories, even tariffs against all such products; denials of American companies seeking to acquire or partner with foreign firms in virtually every industry. There would be considerable motivation to have World Trade Organization rules restructured to make certain that no companies from the United States would ever again be able to do business in the international marketplace. To date, more than 300 American

companies have already gone on the record opposing withdrawal, including Tesla's Elon Musk pledging to withdraw from all Trump advisory councils. None of this is likely to happen immediately. Seas will not begin to rise uncontrollably. We can manage our sharply increased intensity of dramatic weather events. We can even -- as millions of Chinese must do -- breathe through masks when pollution become heavy enough to cut.

But when might we really begin to worry about our position on the planet? Just hours before the President's Rose Garden speech, the European Union and China announced they'd be teaming up: "Our successful cooperation on issues like emissions trading and clean technologies are bearing fruit. Now is the time to further strengthen these ties to keep the wheels turning for ambitious global climate action." Still, in the wake of

the Trump decision, the United States risks being labeled "America the Ugly," while scientists, motivated by their own desire to preserve the deteriorating environment, will be accumulating any possible evidence of our contributions to the global environmental crisis.

Recall, for a moment, Chernobyl. When the atomic cloud from the catastrophic meltdown of that Soviet nuclear plant in Ukraine began drifting westward across Europe and the entire Northern Hemisphere, the Kremlin remained unresponsive. The Soviet Union suffered an international ostracism that took years to repair. And that was a single cloud from a single event.

H.R. McMaster, the White House national security adviser who has morphed almost overnight from a respected general and global thinker to a Trump apologist, observed with fellow White House adviser Gary D. Cohn after the President's first trip across Western Europe that "America first does not mean

America alone." Clearly both had little understanding of what awaits our country on the global scene once it sinks in what Trump's actions are doing to the rest of the global population -- the air and water we all breathe and consume. For there is a far broader and deeper issue at stake here. The question now is one that even German Chancellor Angela Merkel danced around after Trump's comments at NATO. How can any nation ever trust America again? If America's elected President has such profound powers to wreak havoc on the world in this fashion all but unilaterally and with a stroke of a pen or a poorly worded tweet, how can any nation take our word on any international agreement we might sign?

Trump now risks plunging America into the position of the lone bully in the lunchroom -- sitting all by himself as the world passes him by, lashing out sporadically in a fit of pique or violence (59 Tomahawks in Syria). Our paramount fear should be that "Trump World" will last an irreversibly long time for the planet.

Humans are ushering in the sixth mass extinction of life on Earth, scientists warn

(Contd from page 1) are now threatened with extinction because of over-hunting, poaching, pollution, loss of habitat, the arrival of invasive species, and other human-caused problems. But the researchers said it was not "inevitable" that this process would continue. There is still time for humans to turn the situation around by protecting habitats, changing our diets to less land-intensive food, and taking other forms of conservation. In one of a series of papers in Nature, a team of international scientists wrote: "The ever-increasing and unprecedented extent and impact of human activities on land and in the oceans over the past few centuries has dramatically reduced global biodiversity. There is overwhelming evidence that habitat loss and fragmentation, over-exploitation of biological resources, pollution, species invasions and climate change have increased rates of global species extinctions to levels that are much higher than those observed in the fossil record."

And we are not immune from such problems. This loss of biodiversity could "substantially diminish the benefits that people derive from nature", they warned. In order to preserve such "ecosystem services", policies should be designed to "secure the valuable and often irreplaceable benefits of biodiversity for future generations, even under conditions of rapid global change", the paper added. Another paper painted a bleak picture of humans' long history of wiping out other animals. "Human-influenced extinctions began when modern humans moved out of Africa," it said. "Successive waves of extinctions in Australia (50,000 years ago), North America and South America (10,000-11,000 years ago) and Europe (3,000-12,000 years ago) were driven largely by a combination of hunting by humans and natural climate change. By 3,000 years ago, Earth had lost half of all terrestrial mammalian megafauna species (with a mass of more

than 44kg) and 15 per cent of all bird species." The researchers said that since 1500AD, human destruction of wildlife had "accelerated". "Extinction rates for birds, mammals and amphibians are similar at present to those of the five global mass-extinction events of the past 500 million years that probably resulted from meteorite impacts, massive volcanism and other cataclysmic forces," they wrote. The paper said "urgent" action was needed to ensure that "sufficient habitats will remain to preserve the viability of ... species in the long term and to guarantee that such habitats are well managed". "All species could benefit from the intensification of current conservation policies, as well as from policies that reduce underlying anthropogenic threats," the paper added. "Developing and enacting such policies, however, will require an unprecedented degree of engagement between stakeholders, policymakers, natural scientists and social scientists."

Freedom Health of Florida agrees to pay \$32.5 Million Fine

In addition, the former Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Freedom Health Siddhartha Pagidipati, has agreed to pay \$750,000 to resolve his alleged role in one of these schemes.

"When entering into agreements with managed care providers, the government requests information from those providers to ensure that patients are afforded the appropriate level of care," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Chad A. Readler of the Justice Department's Civil Division. "Today's result sends a clear message to the managed care industry that the United States will hold managed care plan providers responsible when they fail to provide truthful information."

The government alleged that Freedom Health submitted or caused others to submit unsupported diagnosis codes to CMS, which resulted in inflated reimbursements from 2008 to 2013 in connection with two of their Medicare Advantage plans operating in Florida. It also alleged that Freedom Health made material misrepresentations to CMS regarding the scope and content of its network of providers (physicians, specialists and hospitals) in its application to CMS in 2008 to expand in 2009 into new counties in Florida and in other states. The government's settlement with Mr. Pagidipati resolves his alleged role in this latter scheme.

"Medicare Advantage plans play an increasingly important role in our nation's health care market," said Acting U.S. Attorney Stephen Muldrow. "This settlement underscores our Office's commitment to civil health care fraud enforcement."

"Medicare Advantage insurers must play by the rules and provide Medicare with accurate information about their provider networks and their patients' health," said Chief Counsel to the Inspector General Gregory Demske of the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG). "OIG will investigate and hold managed care organizations accountable for fraud. Moving forward, the innovative CIA reduces the risks to patients and taxpayers by focusing on compliance issues unique to Medicare Advantage plans."

The allegations resolved by these settlements were brought in a lawsuit under the qui tam, or whistleblower, provisions of the Federal False Claims Act and the Florida False Claims Act. These statutes permit private parties to sue on behalf of the government for false claims and to receive a share of any recovery. The whistleblower in this action is Darren D. Sewell, who was a former employee of Freedom Health. The whistleblower's share in this case has not yet been determined.

Three Nigerians Sentenced in International Cyber Financial Fraud Scheme

After a three-week trial in early 2017, a federal jury found each defendant guilty of offenses involving mail fraud, wire fraud, identity theft, credit card fraud and theft of government property. Ayelotan and Raheem were also found guilty of conspiracies to commit bank fraud and money laundering.

A total of 21 defendants were charged in this case, 12 of whom have pleaded guilty to charges related to the conspiracy, and 11 of whom have been sentenced to date. One of the leaders of the conspiracy, Teslim Olarewaju Kiriji, 30, of Nigeria was previously sentenced to 20 years in prison. Six other defendants were previously sentenced to 10 years in prison each for their roles in this conspiracy: Adekunle Adefila, 41, of Nigeria; Anuoluwapo Segun Adegbejigun, 40, of Nigeria; Gabriel Oludare Adeniran, 30, of Nigeria; Olufemi Obaro Omoraka, 27, of Nigeria; Taofeeq Olamilekan

Oyelade, 32, of Nigeria; and Olusegun Seyi Shonekan, 34, of Nigeria. Genoveva Farfan, 45, of California, was sentenced to 9 years in prison, and Rhulane Fionah Hlungwane, 26, of South Africa, to five years in prison for their roles in the conspiracy. Olutoyin Ogunlade, 41, of New York, was sentenced to four years in prison. Dennis Brian Ladden, 75, of Wisconsin was sentenced to time served and six months' home confinement. Susan Anne Villeneuve, 61, of California, pleaded guilty earlier this month and is awaiting sentencing.

According to the plea agreements and evidence at trial, the defendants and their co-conspirators carried out numerous internet-based fraud schemes dating back at least to 2001. These schemes involved using unsuspecting victims to cash counterfeit checks and money orders, using stolen credit card numbers to

purchase electronics and other merchandise and using stolen personal identification information to take over victims' bank accounts. As a whole, the conspiracy involved tens of millions of dollars in intended losses.

To accomplish their fraud schemes, the conspirators recruited the assistance of U.S. citizens via "romance scams," in which the perpetrator would typically use a false identity on a dating website to establish a romantic relationship with an unsuspecting victim. According to trial evidence and plea documents, once the perpetrator gained the victim's trust and affection, the perpetrator would convince the victim to either send money or to help carry out fraud schemes. For example, the defendants admitted that they used romance victims to launder money via Western Union and MoneyGram, to re-package and re-ship fraudulently obtained merchandise and to cash counterfeit checks.



Air India sale planned with Rs 30,000cr debt write-off

The proposal is to transfer the aircraft-related loans and the working capital to the new owner, while taking care of half the liability.

Similarly, Niti Aayog has suggested that the real estate assets, which includes prime properties in Mumbai's Nariman Point and some places in Delhi like Vasant Vihar, be hived off into a separate company before offering up to 100% equity to a strategic partner.

The buyer will also get several other rights that Air India currently enjoys, with officials suggesting that there is no need to have a designated national carrier. Several countries have exited the airline business as it is not a core sovereign function.

Since Air India will be sold as a going concern, employees will move to the privatised entity.

The airline has accumulated losses of about Rs 40,000 crore and has projected a cash deficit of Rs 3,000 crore for the current financial year with a gap narrowing to around Rs 1,700 crore annually in the coming years. Although Air India reported operating profit of Rs 105 crore in 2015-16, it is not seen to be sustainable given that the annual interest burden is estimated at around Rs 4,000 crore.

The government has already sunk Rs 25,000 crore into the airline over the last five years and is required to provide a similar amount in the coming few years.

"The Aayog's recommendation is very clear: find a strategic investor for AI. Now that is a call for the owner (government of India) to take. Some initial clarity on the future course may come in the next 15

days or so," said a source.

Aviation minister A Gajapati Raju and his deputy Jayant Sinha confirmed that Niti Aayog had submitted its report, but did not disclose the details. "We are very proud of AI and will consider all possible alternatives for it. All options are open. Niti Aayog has suggested steps for a strong and viable airline," said Raju at a press conference to mark three years of the Modi government.

Foreign airlines are allowed to have up to 49% stake in Indian JV carriers — as Singapore Airlines and AirAsia do with Tata Group in Vistara and AirAsia India, respectively, while Etihad has a 24% stake in Jet. Asked if foreign airlines would be allowed to pick up a stake in AI, the ministers said the government is "open to all options". Qatar Airways has recently stated it

wants to have an airline in India but is yet to make an application for a startup carrier here. AI is supposed to get Rs 25,000 crore more from the government over the next 15 years. "It is not correct to see us as a domestic airline alone with 14% market share. We are essentially an international airlines with a very robust foreign network. Our share of international travel to and from India last year was close to 17%. AI has a critical network and it should not be seen as a burden. We are a victim of wrong decisions by previous governments. Luckily, there is a clean administration determining our future now," said an AI insider, reflecting the widespread mood in the airline.

A ministry source said Niti Aayog's recommendations are not binding on it and it will choose

the path that is most suited for having a strong AI in future. "We hugely respect finance minister Jaitley's views. What we can assure everyone is that there will be visible action in AI very soon as Niti Aayog's recommendations and the FM's statement have been made in all seriousness that will lead to the future path for the airline being laid out in three months," said the official.

Golden Temple, Swad, and Maya Flour Recalled in the U.S. Due to Possible E. Coli

Agency as part of their ongoing E. coli investigation.

Impacted product is packaged in 20 lb. paper bags and was distributed nationwide to 19 distributors and two small retailers.

Some strains of E. coli create potentially deadly bacterium that can cause bloody diarrhea and dehydration. Although most healthy adults can recover completely within a week, some people can develop a form of kidney failure called Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS). HUS is most likely to occur in young children and the elderly and those with compromised immune systems. The condition can lead to serious kidney failure and even death. Any consumers concerned about an illness should contact a physician. If you have any of the products listed below, please dispose of them immediately. Consumers with impacted product are urged to contact the company at 1-888-569-6728 Monday through Friday 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET for a product replacement coupon.

Two-thirds of 12 lakh students flunk Class 12 Bihar board exams

PATNA: A year after the Class XII topper scam rocked the state and prompted the Bihar School Examination Board (BSEB) to take strong measures against cheating during exams, a mere 35.25% students passed their Class XII examination in 2017+, with nearly two-thirds of 12.40 lakh students flunking+. The pass percentage in 2016 was 67.66%.

Stringent steps were taken this year after BSEB's Class XII results in 2016 were marred by allegations of brazen favouritism to help undeserving students top the exam. The scam came to light after a topper, Ruby Rai, of Vishun Roy Inter College+ in Vaishali gave absurd answers to simple questions from her syllabus in TV interviews.

An FIR was later lodged and several BSEB functionaries, including then chairman Lalkeshwar Prasad Singh+, were jailed, along with certain college officials and students. The results of the "toppers" were

also cancelled. While Ruby Rai is out on bail, Lalkeshwar and four others are still behind bars. BSEB chairman Anand Kishor said the pass percentage went down by a staggering 32%, and despite moderation, apparently because of the introduction of barcoding in answer sheets and strict invigilation.

"Students who've failed should not think this is the end of their lives. Those eligible for compartmental exam will get another chance to improve their scores. Hard work should be their mantra as there is no shortcut to success," Kishor said. The overall pass percentage of boys was 55.53% against 44.47% of girls in science, commerce and arts streams. According to BSEB sources, 8.34% students passed with a first division, 23.65% with a second division and 3.26% with a third division. The first-divisioners include 4.77% boys and 3.57% girls. Khushboo Kumari of Simultala Awasiya Vidyalaya-Jamui topped the science stream

with 86.2% while Gulshan Kumar of RKMGG College-Samastipur and Kunal Kumar of S S College-Begusarai ranked second with 85.8% each. Priyanshu Nandan of R K Dwarika College-Patna finished third, scoring 85.4%. In the science stream, the pass percentage of boys was 68.85% while it was 31.15% in case of girls. College of Commerce, Arts and Science-Patna student Priyanshu Jaiswal's 81.6% was the highest score in commerce whereas Pallavi Sinha and Soni Kumari of Gaya College obtained 81.4% to share the second rank in the stream. Yamini of Government Women's College-Gulzarbagh (Patna) stood third with 80.4%. The pass percentage of boys was 67.38% and that of girls 32.62% in commerce. While boys outperformed girls in science and commerce, girls outshone boys in arts, recording a pass percentage of 61.92%. Only 38.08% boys could pass the BSEB's Class XII examination in the stream.



Distressing images showed victims lying in blood, crying and shocked from the site.

AT LEAST 90 people are dead and 350 more are injured after a massive bomb concealed in a water tanker ripped through Kabul's diplomatic quarter Wednesday morning. Bodies littered the street and a towering plume of smoke could be seen over the Afghan capital after the truck attack blew out the windows in a number of foreign missions and residences nearby.

Officials said most of the casualties this morning were civilians and "many women and children" were among the victims.

BBC Afghan driver Mohammed Nazir had been killed in the explosion and that four BBC journalists have been wounded. Their injuries are not life threatening.

A number of employees at the German consulate have also been hurt and an Afghan security guard stationed outside the building was killed in the suicide bomb, which was also close to the British, French and US embassies.

The Afghan Taliban has denied responsibility for the attack, which comes just days into Ramadan. No group immediately claimed to have carried out the atrocity, but both the Taliban and ISIS have staged large-scale attacks in Kabul in the past.

Amid the chaos and confusion in the aftermath of the blast, officials initially said 50 had been killed. Agencies later reported the country's health ministry as saying the death toll was at least 90.



The blast, which shattered windows and blew doors off their hinges in houses hundreds of yards away, was unusually strong, with some reports saying it was caused by explosives concealed in a water tanker.

A statement from the NATO-led Resolute Support (RS) mission in Kabul said Afghan security forces had prevented the vehicle from entering the heavily protected Green Zone that houses many foreign embassies as well as RS headquarters, suggesting it may not have reached its intended target.

The explosion caused carnage during rush hour when roads are packed with worktime commuters. The interior ministry was calling on Kabul residents to donate blood this morning, saying hospitals were in "dire need".

A statement from the ministry of interior affairs says it "condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist attack" that killed so many, including women and children.

"These heinous acts go against the values of humanity as well as values of peaceful Afghans," the statement added. "These attacks also demonstrate the extreme level of atrocity by terrorists

KABUL HORROR



90

killed as truck laden with explosive blows off

350

injured in the blast at the Kabul diplomatic zone

BLASTS IN KABUL THIS YEAR

JANUARY 10: Twin blasts near the Afghan parliament kill 38 people and wound 86.

FEBRUARY 7: A suicide bomb rips through a crowd of Supreme Court employees, killing at least 20 and wounding 41.

MARCH 1: Sixteen people are killed in simultaneous Taliban suicide assaults on two security compounds.

MARCH 8: Gunmen disguised as doctors storm Afghanistan's largest military hospital in a six-hour attack officially claimed by IS. The official death toll is 50 but security sources say it exceeded 100.



MAY 3: A powerful blast targeting a foreign forces convoy near the US embassy and NATO headquarters kills at least eight people and wounds 28 during morning rush hour.



Afghan Taliban did not take responsibility for the blast that took place on Wednesday morning.



against innocent civilians."

It appeared to have gone off close to a busy intersection in the Wazir Akbar Khan district but Najib Danish, deputy spokesman for the Interior Ministry, did not have a more precise location.

The neighbourhood is considered Kabul's safest area, with foreign embassies protected by dozens of 10-foot-high blast walls and government offices, guarded by security forces.

Daily Mail



WINZONE REALTY INC.

Baldev Singh

146-20 34 ave. Flushing NY 11354

Cell: 917 24 1085

Email: jsingh@winzone.com



Associate Broker/Real Estate

REAL ESTATE INSURANCE COMMERCIAL LOANS

Real Estate Services Offered

Exchange Transfer Mortgage Refinance

Commercial Loans | Home Mortgages

Insurance Services Offered

Business Auto | General Liability

EROL | Home | Personal | Corporate



WHITESTONE

10000 100th Ave, Suite 100
Flushing, NY 11354
Tel: 718 224 1085

Email: info@whitestone.com | www.whitestone.com
Whitestone Insurance Agency, Inc. is an Equal Opportunity Employer

All Commercial Loans arranged through our partner Poly Bank



Birthday gift from fans

R Madhavan turns 47 today and to make his big day memorable, fans have planned a screening of his last release, *Saala Khadoos* (2016) at a multiplex in Mumbai. The actor, who is currently stationed in Chennai, will fly down to the city for the screening and also interact with fans.

Acting bug



After **Karan Johar**, **Anurag Kashyap** and **Tigmanshu Dhulia**, another filmmaker has turned actor. **Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra**, who has helmed hits like *Rang De Basanti* (2006) and *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* (2013), features in *Dear Maya*. The film marks **Manisha Koirala**'s comeback to Bollywood. Director **Sunaina Bhatnagar** had narrated the script to Mehra, who loved it so much that he agreed to act in it. His short role is rather sweet.

Alia upset over Sid's bonding with Jacky?

Jacqueline Fernandez and **Sidharth Malhotra**, who will romance each other for the first time in **Raj and DK's Reload**, continue to remain friendly even though they wrapped up the shoot long ago. They occasionally meet for coffee and drinks, and their bonding seems to have irked Sid's rumoured girlfriend **Alia Bhatt**. A birdie chirps to say that Sid and Alia recently had a massive



argument over it, and called off a joint vacation that they had planned last month. Hope the lovers' tiff is short lived.



Dippy sexier than PeeCee!

Deepika Padukone and **Priyanka Chopra**, who have made it big in the West with their Hollywood outings, have now been featured on the 2017 **Maxim Hot 100** list, topped by supermodel **Hailey Baldwin**. The list includes **Emma Watson**, **Emma Stone**, **Dakota Johnson** and **Kendall Jenner**. While Deepika is placed at No. 10, Priyanka features on the 32nd spot.



PeeCee trolled, responds in style

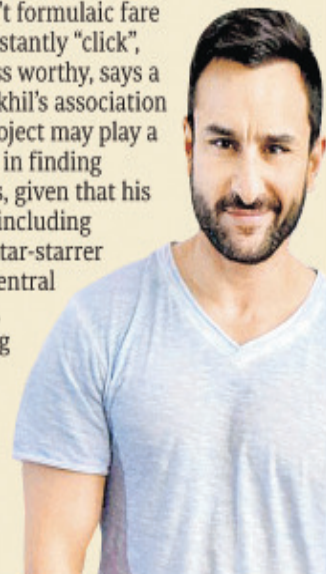
Snaps of **Priyanka Chopra's** meeting with Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, whom she met in Berlin on Tuesday, have gone viral. Tweeple, however, feel she was not appropriately dressed for the occasion. PeeCee chose a short number, which showed

off her toned pins. The actress, however, has now made it sufficiently clear that she cares two hoots about trolls. She posted a snap with mom **Madhu** flaunting their legs on Instagram yesterday. She wrote, "Legs for days. It's the genes." PeeCee was in Berlin for the premiere of *Baywatch*.



Saif not safe for BO?

Filming for **Akshat Verma's Saif Ali Khan-starrer Kaalakandi** was completed earlier this year, but the debutante director has been unable to take his film to theatres. The trade circuit is abuzz with talk that producer **Nikhil Advani** will have to sell the film at a considerably lower price than estimated, given that distributors are wary of banking on Saif, whose previous outings, including **Vishal Bhardwaj's Rangoon**, failed to set the cash registers ringing. That Verma's dark comedy isn't formulaic fare that may instantly "click", makes it less worthy, says a source. Nikhil's association with the project may play a crucial role in finding distributors, given that his next films, including **Farhan Akhtar-starrer Lucknow Central** and **Bazaar**, also starring Saif, are creating sufficient buzz among cinegoers.



Hilly retreat

After wrapping up the shoot of his upcoming web series, **Tanuj Virwani** took off to his family bungalow in **Lonavala** to spend time with mom **Rati Agnihotri**, dad **Anil Virwani** and his pet dogs. The property offers a breathtaking view of hills. So, whenever he needs to switch off the city life mode for some serenity, he drives down to Lonavala and makes sure his family is also with him.

Akki to be managed by Sallu's ex

After ending long association with Khan, celebrity manager Reshma Shetty now hired by Khiladi to handle busy schedule

THE HITLIST TEAM
hitlist@mid-day.com

AKSHAY Kumar has finally handed the reins of his super busy career to a professional firm. The action star has hired a talent management company led by Reshma Shetty, who until recently handled Salman Khan's work. Reshma will now manage personal PR as well as Akki's films and endorsements.

For the past few years, Akki has had a packed diary, but this year, he felt he needed professional as-

sistance, says a source. After Jolly LLB 2, he has three more releases this year — 2.0, Toilet – Ek Prem Katha and Padman. He also has two other films on hand, Reema Kagti's Gold and Neeraj Pandey's Crack, apart from several ad deals.

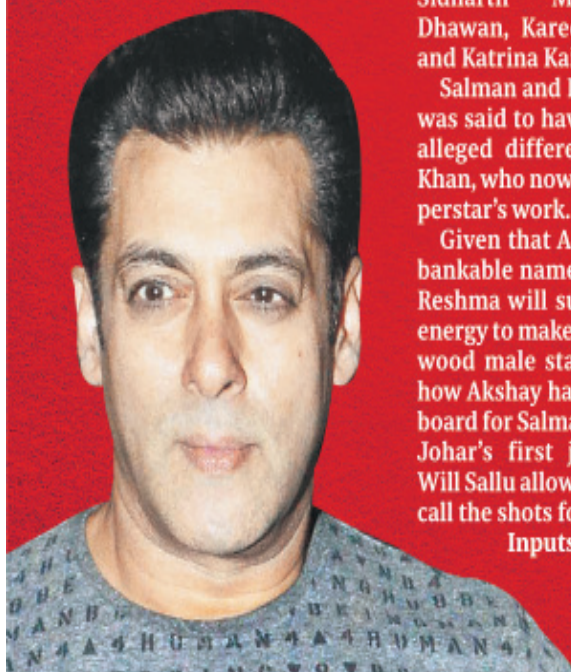
Says a source, "Akshay has too much on his plate and was keen to hire a professional agency to handle the workload."

Reshma is credited with giving Salman a dramatic makeover and helping him bag several endorsements, TV and film projects. Her clientele includes Alia Bhatt, Sidharth Malhotra, Varun Dhawan, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Katrina Kaif.

Salman and Reshma's equation was said to have soured over her alleged differences with Sohail Khan, who now looks after the superstar's work.

Given that Akshay is already a bankable name at the box office, Reshma will surely focus all her energy to make him the top Bollywood male star. But, remember how Akshay has been brought on board for Salman Khan and Karan Johar's first joint production? Will Sallu allow his ex-manager to call the shots for that project?

Inputs by Bharati Dubey



Tiger on wall!

Graffiti artist creates 10-foot artwork as publicity material for actor's dance-drama

MOHAR BASU
mohar.basu@mid-day.com

THE first cut of Munna Michael's trailer is up for release and to make it special, the makers roped in a graffiti artist to add a creative touch to it.

Ravi Kaul, who operates under a pseudonym in the underground graffiti circuit, is primarily an activist and

doesn't usually take up mainstream work. But being a die-hard Michael Jackson fan just like lead actor Tiger Shroff, he couldn't pass up the offer. He will create his interpretation of the film's poster on a 10-foot canvas.

Says Ravi, "This was my way of bringing together my love for graffiti and MJ through the film," he says.

Producer Viki Rajani calls it a first-of-a-kind attempt and says Tiger's solo poster "captures the essence of the dance-drama." The film's director, Sabir Khan, is confident that the artwork will resonate with urban young India. "The idea is to take Tiger's fans on a journey to discover the story of Munna Michael as we present the poster in form of graffiti," he adds.



Birth of a new storyteller

FILM REVIEW

MOHAR BASU
mohar.basu@mid-day.com

THE last time I watched a Mukul Sharma story on screen was Ek Thi Daayan, four years ago. A novel attempt to revive original horror stories of India, the film had Konkona SenSharma effortlessly bring alive a daayan from folklore. In her directorial debut, Death In The Gunj, Konkona uses one of her father's memorable stories to spin a tapestry of intrigue, keeping it brimming with emotions of dejection, hurt, passion and love. She sets her story in the quaint town of Mc Cluskieganj, with a bunch of conflicted characters.

What starts off as a bland family vacation ends in a tragedy. It could have been a thriller, but Konkona doesn't focus on the suspenseful strands. She rather lets her story unfold like poetry where characters matter more than the tale itself. There is Suttu aka Shyama, a timid, aimless child bullied like the youngest one in the family always is. He is snapped at, made to do menial jobs and is the butt of all jokes. Vikrant Massey plays the part to the tee. He is grappling with depression, coming to terms with his father's death. His vacation is an attempt to alienate from the pain, but as the events unfold, his hurt and anger only fortify.

The beauty of this film is that it

allows you to empathise with each character in equal measures, never painting any of them in a singularly homogeneous bold stroke. With the underlying emphasis on masculinity, the film decodes how the concept and its tropes have far reaching effects on people and their confidence. Ranvir Shroey as a uber cool man helps

decode how the alpha male thinks — guns, punches and infidelity. Kalki is stuck with a tricky part, a woman way too fickle to commit but her eyes are filled with hurt every time she finds her lover with his socially acceptable wife. She makes out with the next guy in her drunken state, but gets over it as quickly.

Supporting actors Om Puri, Tanuja, Tillotama Shome, Jim Sarbh and the young Arya Sharma are top notch. But the man you can't take your eyes off is Vikrant, who shines in the potent

part. His pain shows in his eyes and his trembling voice brings out his low confidence. He desperately wants to belong with the cool gang of his household, but he never can — a reality he can't accept.

What doesn't work for the film is the death itself, one you can spot from a distance. But the film must be devoured for other reasons. Why not laud a brave first-timer who dares to think out of the box? The film is testimony to Konkona's grand vision and penchant for experimentation. Who knows what experience can do to her skills?

DEATH IN THE GUNJ

A; Thriller

DIR: Konkona SenSharma

CAST: Vikrant Massey, Ranvir Shorey, Kalki Koechlin, Tillotama Shome



Celebrating a life

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



Karan Beri

JAN 7, 1979 - MAY 6, 2017

**THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SOUL, ALWAYS LOVED,
NEVER FORGOTTEN, FOREVER MISSED**

**Please join us at a memorial meeting to honor the life of the dear departed
Karan Beri who left us grieving for his heavenly abode on May 6, 2017**

**SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2017: 5 to 7 PM
260 W OLD COUNTRY ROAD, HICKSVILLE, NY 11801
(On rear left of Antun's Catering Hall Driveway)**

**Prof. Indrajit S Saluja, family and friends.
Staff of The Indian Panorama, New York & Dallas; Opinio Media Inc. USA;
RIC Technology & Services, Bengaluru, India**

RSVP.

646-247-9458

Editor@theindianpanorama.com



Business Development
 Strategic Marketing Campaigns
 Branding and Identity Design



Business Plan
 Market Research
 Financial Modeling
 Investment Pitch Deck
 Executive Summary

