



# INSIDER

Voice of South Asian Community Since March 2002

Vol. 14 Issue 38 Wednesday 7 June to 13 June, 2017 \$1 www.thesouthasian.info

## The Great Indian Growth Slowdown

(Agencies) Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said the country's growth has slowed down mainly because of demonetisation and the economy is running on just one engine of public spending. He expressed serious concern over the situation, particularly the impact on job creation. Singh, in his intervention at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meet, talked about the decline in the economic growth as depicted in the last quarter GDP numbers. He said the slow down was primarily due to demonetisation announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 8 last year. He said the Gross Value Addition (GVA) is the true sub-measure of economic activity and it has experienced a steep and sustained fall. "Private sector investment has collapsed and the economy is running on just one engine of public spending," he said at the meeting, chaired by Congress President Sonia Gandhi. Singh said the GVA growth of industry has fallen from 10.7 per cent in March 2016 to just 3.8 per cent in March 2017, a decline of nearly seven percentage points of growth. "The most worrisome aspect of all this is the impact on job creation. Jobs have been extremely hard to come by for the youth of the nation," he said.



## Uncle Sam In The Kashmir Valley



(Contd on page 19)

### Drinking is Not Always Bad



(Agencies) Drinking in moderation can help our health, some research has showed. Many doctors recommend a glass of wine or beer a night as part of diet plans such as the Mediterranean diet and the DASH diet, which have been proven to keep your heart and brain healthy. However, a new study suggests that even moderate drinking may not be great for your brain. As part of the study, which was published Wednesday in the BMJ, researchers looked at people's weekly alcohol intake from the Whitehall II study, which tracks disease and social behaviors in a group of British civil servants for 30 years.

(Contd on page 18)

## Fooled By Russians. Again?



(Insider Bureau) The Qatari government says recent troubles with its Gulf neighbors - who have broken off relations over alleged Iran ties and connections with terror groups - were spurred by a fake news report planted by Russia.

On May 23 hackers planted a news report on its Qatar News Agency that attributed fake quotes to the country's leader that appeared sympathetic to Iran and Israel, both Qatar and US officials claim.

The 'fake report' also questioned whether Donald Trump was cut out for the presidency. The hack is believed by FBI to have originated in Russia, US officials told CNN.

That raises questions over recent tweets by president Trump, who boasted Tuesday that his meeting with Middle East heads in Saudi Arabia had led to the diplomatic breaks.

He said that 'all reference was pointing to Qatar' as a source of funding for 'extremism'. The president weighed in on Twitter amid the diplomatic standoff, after the Saudi-led bloc of Arab nations cut off diplomatic relations with Qatar.

(Contd on page 18)

## Macy's in Big Trouble?

(Insider Bureau) Macy's Chief Financial Officer Karen Hoguet warned analysts Tuesday that the department store's gross margin could be below a forecast given in February.



Gross margins are now expected to be about 60 to 80 basis points below last year. The company plans to offset this pressure with cost savings, and

forecast it provided in February.

But the pressure on margins was a sign to investors that the pressure on department stores hasn't eased in the second quarter of the year. Following Hoguet's comments, Macy's shares began (Contd on page 19)

ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾਨ

PUNJABI DUNIYA

# India to get next President on July 20, announces EC

(Agencies) New Delhi : India will have a new President on July 20. The Election Commission sounded the gong on Wednesday on the electoral process, which will be notified on June 14. Nominations of candidates will close on June 28.

The EC's announcement is expected to quicken consultations in the NDA and opposition camps over their respective nominees for the post. Both sides have begun discussions but are yet to decide their candidates even though the numbers in the electoral college decisively favour BJP.

With President Pranab Mukherjee's term ending on July 24, Chief Election

Commissioner Nasim Zaidi said voting for the presidential election will be held on July 17. Counting of votes and the declaration of results will take place on July 20.

The EC will scrutinise the nomination papers on June 29. The BJP brass has held a few rounds of consultations and decided to reach out to regional parties to boost its tally and counter the Opposition's claim of an anti-NDA consolidation. The BJP is banking on the support of parties like TRS, YSR Congress and two factions of the AIADMK. It feels discussions with the BJD can also be fruitful. The party has claimed it has the support of 54% of the electoral comprising MPs and state legislators.

In the BJP camp there has been speculation over the names of senior leaders, like Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan and social justice and empowerment minister Thawarchand Gehlot. BJP leaders are understood to be considering whether a "moderate" political face in the saffron camp can forge a wider consensus outside the NDA. With the vice-president's election also due soon, BJP could look to balance caste equations between the two posts. The opposition, comprising parties like the Congress, Trinamool, Left, RJD, DMK and NCP, have decided to put a nominee and use the campaign to highlight and oppose BJP's "majoritarian" policies. A

sub-committee chaired by NCP chief Sharad Pawar is to identify a "secular" consensus candidate. Some prominent names being spoken of as opposition candidates are former West Bengal governor Gopal Krishna Gandhi and JD (U) leader Sharad Yadav. Names of former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar and NCP chief Sharad Pawar are also in the reckoning. Pawar has, however, dismissed the speculation. Polling will be done through secret ballot and candidates will have to support nominations with signatures of 50 electors as proposers and 50 as seconders. A security deposit of Rs 15,000 has been mandated for each nomination.

## Congresswoman Kathleen Rice Endorses Candidate Laura Curran for County Executive



(Agencies) (GARDEN CITY, NY) - Today, at a press conference, Congresswoman Kathleen Rice endorsed Democratic Candidate Laura Curran to be Nassau's

next County Executive. Congresswoman Kathleen Rice released the following statement upon endorsing Laura Curran: "Laura Curran is the independent leader we need as the next Nassau County Executive. She has a real vision for our future, she has the courage to take on the rampant corruption in Nassau County, and she knows how to make tough decisions, work with both parties and bring people to-

gether to solve big problems. At a time when so many people have lost faith in their local government, Laura is the public servant we can count on to restore the public's trust and do what's right for the people she serves. That's why I'm proud to endorse her and I'm excited to join her on the campaign trail." After receiving

the endorsement, Laura Curran released the following statement: "I am honored to be endorsed by Congresswoman Kathleen Rice, an independent trailblazer who always puts those she serves first. Kathleen is a role model for me, a model public servant unafraid to make the tough decisions or reach across

the aisle to get things done. We've got a culture of corruption in Nassau County, and we're in desperate need of a fresh start. I'm grateful Kathleen is putting her faith in me to provide that. I look forward to campaigning with her this year and to working together for our mutual constituencies into the future.

**Congressman Tom Suozzi, Nassau County Legislators, Endorse Laura Curran, Jack Schnirman, and Dean Bennett**  
*Endorsements comes on the heels of Curran earning the support of Assemblyman Chuck Lavine*



(PORT WASHINGTON, NY) - Today, at a press conference, Congressman Tom Suozzi, and Nassau County Legislators Arnold Drucker and Delia DeRiggi-Whitton, endorsed Democratic Candidate Laura Curran to be Nassau's next County Executive, as well as Jack Schnirman and Dean Bennett for Comptroller and County Clerk, respectively. (Contd on page 15)

## 4 Indians, 1 Pakistani plead guilty in 'massive' US call centre scam

(Agencies) WASHINGTON: Four Indians and one Pakistani have pleaded guilty to the charges for their role in a massive telephone impersonation fraud and money laundering scheme in the US perpetrated by India-based call centres, the US Department of Justice has said.

Three Indians - Rajubhai Patel (32), Viraj Patel (33), Dilip Kumar Ambal Patel (53), and a Pakistani national Fahad Ali (25) - pleaded guilty to money laundering conspiracy before US District Court Judge David Hittner of the Southern District of Texas.

Hardik Patel (31) an Indian national pleaded guilty to wire fraud conspiracy before the same court on June 2.

Sentencing dates are pending for all five defendants, the Department of Justice said.

Based on the statements in his June 2 guilty plea, beginning August 2012, Hardik owned and managed the day-to-day operations of an India-based scam call centre before later leav-

ing for the US. While in India, in his capacity as a manager, Hardik communicated extensively via email, text, and other means with various India-based co-defendants to operate the scheme and exchange scripts used in the scheme, coordinate the processing of payments from scammed victims, obtain and exchange lead lists used by callers to target US victims, and exchange spreadsheets containing the personal identifying information (PII) of US persons misappropriated by the scammers to register reloadable cards used in the scheme. He also managed worker payroll and kept detailed records of profits and expenses of various associated scam call centres. According to his June 6 guilty plea, Rajubhai Patel operated as a runner and assisted a co-defendant in managing the activities of a crew of other runners, based primarily out of Illinois, who liquidated victim funds in various locales in the US for conspirators from India-based call centres.



Dr Hetal Gor and Healthmedia hosted the Bollywood based dance show called "Journey-MYSTIC INDIA" which was Colorful, Musical, Journey of Bollywood as Indian Film industry's dance myths from India thru High Energy Dances performance at the Bergen Performing Arts Center in Englewood, NJ on Jun 02, 2017. Mystic India is a Bollywood Dance Spectacular featuring live musicians, brilliant dancers, breathtaking acrobats, and 750 opulent costumes. The Dances were Spectacular with renowned acrobats, brilliant dancers, breathtaking acrobats, opulent costumes, and stunning visual effects creation by AATMA Performing Arts. (By Vijay Shah) New Jersey

# “Ekal Sur Ekal Taal” – A Splendor of India’s Rural-Tribal Artistry



(By a staff reporter)  
Nine artists from tribal regions of India are currently touring the U.S. for five months as part of a dazzling stage presentation, titled- ‘Ekal Sur, Ekal Taal’ for “Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation”. It is a musical splendor of rural culture depicting epic folklore, devotional songs, and regional dances reflecting national unity. For the first time in its history, ‘Ekal’ has brought the best talent from Ekal-school alumni for fundraising entertainment, in a series of concert, all across U.S. The main objective of this bold step is to connect with the people here to highlight the need for education in tribal India. They are all travelling by bus accompanied by Ekal’s ‘Global Coordinator’, Ramesh Shah who was recently felicitated by the President of India for his community work. The trip is partially supported by the Cultural Ministry of India. “Ekal Sur Ekal Taal” concert is on the East Coast in June (2017). They have already completed almost 50 shows out of 58 and they all have been runaway smash-hit, with audiences crazily mobbing the Artistes. In essence, this musical extravaganza highlights our traditional backwoods treasured artistry.

All the artists of this year’s troupe are from very small villages of India’s tribal belt. The artists, include Dileshwar Yadav, Sumitra Kakodia, Sandip Yadav, Gitmala Boraik, Tilak Chandra, Neena Pandey, Johan Singh Markam, Radheshyam Yadav, Sampa Shill and they are being

cared, stage-managed by N.P.Amoli. They all hail from remote areas of Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Sikkim, and Assam and come from economically disadvantage background where basic sustenance is a challenge.

Although it is hard to tell from the artistic versatility of these artistes that they are not of professional cadre, it is, surprisingly, true. For this tour, they were trained, groomed and molded by the best professionals in ‘stage performance’, for 18 months in New Delhi. They not only endured rigorous coaching, but also, exhibited incredible potential of so many young dreamers of rural India. The artists also received fast-track training in ‘make-up’ and ‘costume’ designing to make them totally independent at event-preparedness while on this U.S. tour. Each one of

them has unique personal story to tell which exhibit nothing but their resolve, resilience and courage to face the adversity to succeed in life. Let’s peek into senior artists Sampa Shill’s life.

Sampa Shill’s maternal and paternal grandparents were refugees from East Pakistan (modern day Bangladesh) who walked all the way to Assam with other villagers like them. A kind benefactor gave the family enough land to build a makeshift home and plant some crops. Sampa Shill is the fourth of five children. She was only 16 years old and in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade when her father died of cancer. The family struggled hard to make ends meet. Desperate to survive, Sampa’s brother left for a labor job in the neighboring state of Mizoram, leaving behind three women (mother and

younger sisters) to ward off for themselves. Sampa remembers long hungry passages of life when she had to survive on only one meager meal a day, which sometimes she had to pass-on to her younger brother who was always hungry. Sampa has been involved in ‘Ekal Abhiyan’ (an umbrella Organization of ‘Ekal’) for almost a dozen years. To make the long story short, she is a prime example of empowerment that Ekal has brought to women folks in villages. She oversees many of the schools in Silchar, Assam region and guides the unfortunates to be successful by picking up skills at ‘Ekal Centers’. She says that Ekal has expanded her horizons so much so that even if she eventually gets married, she would continue to be a part of the Ekal family and groom others. “Ekal Sur

Ekal Taal” tour finishes on the East Coast with stops in Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. This team has mesmerized audiences all over the country. What is equally notable is that no ethnic grass-root troupe has promoted the rustic Indian culture in U.S. so beautifully, the way this talented assemble has done.

Avani Mehta from Chicago said, “Ekal Sur Ekal Taal is better than any Bollywood program, I have seen. Not only the artists have great voices, but also, there is intimate authenticity to this show which is unmatched”. For the tour and ticket information kindly refer to <www.ekal.org>

## Labriola Earns Reform Party Endorsement Two Ballots Positions Secured, with More Expected in Coming Days

(Insider Bureau) (Press Release) Massapequa Park, NY – Fresh off the Republican Party’s endorsement, Nassau County Comptroller candidate Steve Labriola today earned the support of the Nassau County Reform Party. Labriola, a former State Assemblyman, Town Clerk and Chief Deputy Comptroller, has earned a reputation for reforming government practices and protecting taxpayers wallets. “I am honored that the Reform Party has chosen to endorse me as their candidate for Nassau County Comptroller,” said Labriola. “I am confident that my plan to restore the

taxpayers trust by creating accountability, strengthening transparency and rooting out corruption, reflects the core ideals of the Reform Party. Our residents demand reform and I have a proven record of transforming government to protect taxpayers.” The Reform Party believes that government has become too dominated by special interests, lobbyists, big money and professional politicians. They feel a more civically engaged and better

informed citizenry is necessary for government to function more effectively. They seek to reform the political process in order to eliminate corruption and special interest control of policy making. “I am proud to endorse Steve Labriola for Comptroller - a man with experience and fortitude to fix Nassau Counties woes,” said Scott D. Diamond, Chairman of the Nassau County Reform Party. “Labriola’s three point plan will prevent corruption and restore integrity. He has the

experience that makes him the best person for the job.” Labriola’s reform plan includes: Creating a Whistle-Blower Hotline, where employees and citizens can anonymously leave voice, text and social media tips; Creating an Anti-Fraud Unit with Forensic Accountants and Investigators to prevent shady companies from doing business with Nassau; Doubling the number of audits conducted annually, ensuring that any organization receiving taxpayer dollars is held accountable for how your money is spent. Nobody will rip off the taxpayer’s on his watch!



# Four arrested for Sale and Supply of the Deadly Drug Fentanyl



(Insider Bureau) (Press Release) Long Island, NY - Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano, District Attorney Madeline Singas and the Nassau County Police Department today announced that the Long Island Heroin Task Force arrested four subjects for dealing and supplying a mixture of heroin - with the deadly drug known as fentanyl - and causing overdoses in the Massapequa area. The deadly drug fentanyl is a synthetic narcotic painkiller and 100 times more potent than morphine. It is clinically used

for the treatment of end-stage Cancer pain. County Executive Mangano stated, "Fentanyl is a serious drug and we issued a Deadly Drug Alert several times over the past two years at it reached our borders. Last year, 190 people died from opiate overdoses - of which 62 were caused by fentanyl. I commend the men and women of Long Island's Joint Heroin Task Force for tracking down the sources of heroin overdoses, arresting drug thugs and removing them from our streets." According to the Long Island Heroin

Task Force, two individuals were arrested at 2:55pm on Monday, June 5, 2017 and two additional individuals at 1:10pm on Tuesday, June 6, 2017 in Copiague. According to Detectives, an investigation of a non-fatal overdose on May 30, 2017 led to the arrest of defendants Randall L. Robinson, 31, and Lilliana M. Vasquez, 27, both of 196 Meucci Avenue Copiague. The defendants were in the parking lot of Rite Aid, 901 Merrick Road Copiague, when they possessed and intended to sell a quantity of a substance believed to be heroin

to another person with the knowledge that the drug was going to be brought into Nassau County. Defendant Robinson was seated as the front seat passenger in a 2003 Mercedes Benz, defendant Vasquez was operating the said vehicle. In the rear of the auto, properly restrained, was defendant Vasquez's twenty-one month old child. On Tuesday June 6, 2017 in the vicinity of Meucci Avenue defendants Robert P. Evanson, 30, of 24 Prince Street Deer Park and Kevin Forrester, 29, of 102 Brefini Street Amityville did possess and intended to sell a substance believed to be heroin. Defendant Evanson was the driver of a 2015 Nissan Altima, defendant Forrester was the front passenger of said vehicle where a plastic bag containing the substance was recovered from the center console.

Defendant Randall L. Robinson is charged with Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance, Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance

and Endangering the Welfare of a Child. He was arraigned in First District Court 99 Main Street Hempstead. Defendant Lilliana M. Vasquez is charged with Criminal Facilitation and Endangering the Welfare of a Child. She was released on an Appearance Ticket returnable to First District Court on Wednesday June 28, 2017. Defendants Robert P. Evanson and Kevin Forrester are each charged with Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance and Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance. Both defendants were arraigned on Wednesday, June 07, 2017 in First District Court 99 Main Street Hempstead.

County Executive Mangano urges family and friends to stay alert, watch for the warning signs of drug abuse and get their loved ones help before they overdose. If you or a loved one is struggling, Nassau County has a 24/7 help and referral line at 516-227-TALK.

# INOC USA Elects New President



(Insider Bureau) The Indian National Overseas Congress recently held a meeting of the National Executive Committee and Chapter Committees in Queens (NY). Members unanimously elected the veteran leader Shudh Parkash Singh as the

National President of INOC USA. Shudh will serve as President of INOC for second time. A few other candidates were in talks but Shudh emerged as the only consensus choice. The Indian National Congress Vice President Hon. Rahul

Gandhi congratulated the new President. Honorable Dr. Karan Singh, Chairman Foreign Affairs Dept of AICC in his official communique (attached herewith) congratulated INOC USA for a unanimous election and

complimented Shudh, "This is a recognition of the valuable services that you have rendered to the INOC (I) over many years. This being the only recognized organization by the Indian National Congress in the United States, its functioning has a special

significance. The First Lady of Punjab Mrs. Preet Kaur expressed her pleasure over the elections and hoped "Shudh will continue to work with same dedication and serve as the goodwill ambassador of Punjab to spread the word on the good work being done by the Punjab government at a rapid pace." Hon. Sunil Jakhra, President of Punjab Pardesh Congress Committee complimented, "Shudh hails from my constituency. We are proud of him."

## Long Island's Southern State Parkway portion renamed after Det. Steven McDonald

(Press Release) Albany, New York -- Senator John Brooks (SD-8) released the below statement following the passage of S. 6549, which renames the Southern State Parkway as "Detective Steven McDonald Memorial Highway." Senator Brooks said, "I am so proud, yet

deeply humbled, to co sponsor the bill to rename the Southern State Parkway in honor of Detective Steven McDonald. Detective McDonald exemplified a life of service and goodwill towards others. As a man who embodied the healing

power of forgiveness, we hope to inspire all who travel this parkway to rise to their better selves, whether that be in service to others, or, in choosing forgiveness as a personal quality to embrace. Simply, the world is a better place because of Detective McDonald."

## New FBI nominee Chris Wray is an ointment to our cherished Republic

"President Trump's selecting Christopher Wray to be F.B.I. Director is an ointment to our Republic, buffeted as we are by domestic and foreign challenges to the very integrity of our sovereignty: untainted presidential electoral process. Nominee Chris Wray is a man cut from the same impartial and independent cloth, that Bob Mueller and Jim Comey are made of. Given the 10 year term, POTUS just made a durable gift to our cherished Republic, and insures that Public Safety and Law Enforcement will remain top notch and politics-free." By Ravi Batra

# Top 7 Indian Outsourcing Companies Got Fewer H-1B Visas In 2016: Report



**The companies experienced a drop of 5,436 approved petitions (37 per cent) in 2016 as compared to previous year, a report by the National Foundation for American Policy - a Washington-based non-profit thin-tank said.**

(Agencies) Top seven India-based outsourcing companies in the US received fewer H-1B visas in 2016 as compared to 2015, and as a group their numbers dropped by 37 per cent, according to a new report.

The companies experienced a drop of 5,436 approved petitions (37 per cent) in 2016 as compared to previous year, a report by the National Foundation for American Policy - a Washington-based non-profit thin-tank said.

It said, the 9,356 new H-1B petitions for the top seven India-based companies approved in fiscal 2016 represent only 0.006 per cent of the US labour force.

"While the threat of job loss has long been exaggerated by critics, it reaches illogical proportions when discussing fewer than 10,000 workers in an economy that employs 160 million workers nationwide," the National Foundation for American Policy said in a statement after releasing the report.

According to the report, the number of approved new H-1B petitions for Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) declined by 56 per cent from FY 2015 to FY 2016, from 4,674 to 2,040, a drop of 2,634.

For Wipro, the petitions declined by 52 per cent between FY 2015 and FY 2016, a drop of 1,605, going from 3,079 to 1,474 approved petitions for initial employment during those years.

For Infosys, it declined by 16 per cent (or 454 petitions), with 2,376 approved H-1B petitions for initial employment in FY 2016, compared to 2,830 in FY 2015, said the report, which based its research

from government data.

"The drop in new H-1B visas for India-based companies, which is expected to continue when data are released on cases filed in April 2017 for FY 2018 start dates, is due to industry trends toward digital services such as cloud computing and artificial intelligence, which require fewer workers, and a choice by companies to rely less on visas and to build up their domestic workforces in the US," the report said.

"H-1B petitions approved for initial employment in FY 2016 were filed by employers in April 2016, which means the drop in H-1B visa use by these companies is not due to Donald Trump's election."

"In the past, US policymakers have used the number of visas going to India-based companies as a political or policy rea-

son to propose new immigration restrictions and to not raise the low annual supply of H-1B visas, which has been exhausted every year for the past 15 fiscal years," said NFAP executive director Stuart Anderson, former head of policy at the Immigration and Naturalisation Service under President George W Bush.

An analysis of US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) data on FY 2016 H-1B petitions shows, similar to FY 2015, approximately 25,000 different US employers hired at least one high-skilled foreign national on a new H-1B petition in 2016.

National Foundation for American Policy said the April 2017 unemployment rate in the US for "computer and mathematical science" occupations was 2.5 per cent - a very low rate, even lower than the 4.4 per cent for "all occupations," according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

The unemployment rate for "architecture and engineering" occupations is even lower at 2.1 per cent, it said, adding this illustrates a disconnect between reality and claims that high-skilled foreign nationals are preventing US workers from pursuing careers in tech fields.

According to Code.org, Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicate there will be "1.4 million more software development jobs than applicants who can fill them by 2020 and there are more than 500,000 open computing jobs nationwide."

An analysis by Glassdoor shows 9 of the 10 highest paying majors for US students 5 years out of college are in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields, the report said.

The report disputed the figures of the Trump Administration that about 80 per cent of the H-1B workers are paid less than the median wage in their fields.

"This statistic is misleading as it relies on a Department of Labor database that includes multiple applications for the same individuals, since a new filing is generally required when an H-1B professional moves to a new area," the report said.

"That means it "double or triple counts anyone who works in more than one geographic location (primarily younger workers sent to multiple offices)." Moreover, it may not reflect what employers actually pay individual workers, only the minimum required to be listed for government filing purposes.

The median salary in 2015 for H-1B computer-related recipients who have worked about three years (listed as "continuing employment" in DHS data) was about USD7,000 higher than the median salary in the industry," the report said. The foundation argued that H-1B temporary visas are important as they

are typically the only practical way a high-skilled foreign national working abroad or an international student educated in the United States can work long term in America.

At US universities, 77 per cent of the full-time graduate students in electrical engineering and 71 per cent in computer science are international students.

Reforms to increase the labor mobility of H-1B visas, raise the employment-based green card quota and eliminate the per country limit would be welcome but are not currently on the agenda. New restrictions on high skilled immigration are more likely, it said.

"In today's global economy, companies and high-skilled professionals possess many options," said Mr Anderson. "The United States should maintain an openness toward high-skilled immigration or those options likely will not be in America," he added.

## Arab nations cut ties with Qatar over 'terror links', MEA worried about 6.5 lakh Indians living there



(Agencies) Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE severed ties with Qatar on Monday and moved to cut off land, sea and air routes to the energy-rich nation, accusing it of supporting regional terror groups and Iran. Yemen, Libya's eastern-based government and the Maldives joined the ban later, plunging the international travel hub into chaos and igniting the biggest diplomatic crisis in the Gulf since the 1991 war against Iraq.

Global equity markets dipped along with oil prices amid concerns that the diplomatic rift may weaken a multi-national pact on crude output cuts. Qatar, which

will host the 2022 Fifa World Cup and is home to a major US military base, is the world's biggest supplier of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and a major supplier of condensate.

Foreign minister Sushma Swaraj said India didn't foresee any problems for its own relations in the Gulf as it "is an internal matter of GCC (Gulf Coordination Council)". "Our only concern is about Indians there. We are trying to find out if any Indians are stuck there," she said, steering clear of the Islamic world's latest implosion.

The government's response is surprising given that at last count there are over 6,50,000 Indian nationals living and working in Qatar, who outnumber native Qataris by almost 2:1. "They (Gulf nations) have done this before, we hope things will get better soon," she said. But it highlights the challenges and diplomatic balancing that India will have to conduct es-

pecially as it deepens economic and security relationship with the Gulf Arab states. Qatar's stock market tanked today while there are reports of people queuing up outside grocery stores to stock up if the Saudi blockade gets worse. Earlier, the traffic to Qatar was mainly from Kerala, but now the top source state is UP, followed by Bihar.

Qatar came under attack by the Saudi-led grouping+ of Bahrain, Egypt and UAE, Yemen (whatever exists of it) and surprisingly, Maldives, which cut off diplomatic ties as well as civil aviation and shipping ties days after a Qatar news agency report quoted the Qatar emir Sheikh Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani criticizing the growing targeting of Iran by the Sunni alliance. Qatar, sharing the world's largest gas field with Iran finds itself particularly vulnerable, although ironically Qatar follows the orthodox intolerant version Wahhabi Islam, just like Saudi

Arabia. In 2014, Saudi Arabia UAE and Egypt had isolated Qatar again, in protest against its support to the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The blockade ended 10 months later, but Qatar continued on its path. In recent weeks, Qatar has apparently evicted Hamas activists from its country, and is fighting an unlikely duo, Israel-Saudi Arabia to get the US to move its base from Qatar.

In recent years, it has been clear that Qatar has been one of the biggest funders to the ISIS, though there have been reports of its ties to Hamas and Hezbollah, which puts it on collision course with Israel. Although it's equally true that Saudi Arabia has also supported hardline Islamist groups in and outside the region, so no moral superiority applies to either side. The Saudi action against Qatar+ is mainly targeted at Iran, and seeks to punish any country that gets close to or acknowledges Iran's growing power.

# Art of Living should not be allowed to get away with damaging the Yamuna

***A strong precedent requires to be set in order to send out a message that safeguarding the environment is not a matter of convenience.***

The World Culture Festival, organised by the Art of Living (AOL) Foundation in March 2016, has been mired in controversy since before it happened. Even as the event was being scheduled, the preparations prompted a case in the National Green Tribunal accusing the organisers of destroying the ecosystem around the floodplain of the Yamuna in east Delhi. By building ramps and flattening the area around it, environmentalists claimed, the Art of Living foundation was worsening an already bad situation.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) had asked the foundation to deposit Rs 5 crore as initial compensation, before giving a go-ahead for the event. The remaining amount was to be decided after a committee assessed the damage. At that time, the AOL had first paid only Rs. 25 lakhs, and after much dithering, coughed up the remaining amount in June 2016.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's response to the allegations at that time was to promise to build a biodiversity park in the place in which this 35 year anniversary of his foundation was being held. So far, no such efforts have been seen. Instead, the World Culture festival, which was an extravaganza of dance, music and celebrity (even the prime minister, Narendra Modi spoke at the event), left behind a mountain of garbage. To make matters worse, the floodplain that is usually made up of porous sand had been covered with mud and flattened by road rollers to prepare for the festival. Since compacted mud does not allow water to seep through, it would adversely affect the groundwater replenishment. Activists have also

claimed that the event had destroyed birds' nesting sites and choked the already polluted Yamuna with construction debris. Now that the NGT appointed panel has estimated the damage and suggested restoration and rehabilitation of the flood plains would require at least Rs 42 crore and 10 years; the AOL has refused to accept the report, going so far as to call it "completely flawed, unscientific and biased". Sri Sri Ravi Shankar even suggested that it was the NGT that should be fined instead, for allowing the event to take place at all. The case is still being

heard in the NGT, and no final decision has been made, but it will be an important case in the history of environmental legislation in India. Organisations that try to get around environmental regulations tend to think that they can get away with paying token fines or postpone it at least by taking recourse in complicated court cases. The Art of Living Foundation appears to be doing exactly that. Far from working towards building a biodiversity park and helping clean up the dying river that the Yamuna is; it is now trying to wash its hands off the problem



by claiming that no one can tell what the state of the floodplain was before the event.

The problem is not one of how much degradation has exactly taken place, or of hypothesising what the space would have been like had the event not taken place. The problem is that organisations that have

friends in high places feel entitled to do as they please and play fast and loose with regulations meant to safeguard the environment; knowing full well that they can eventually get away with it.

A strong precedent requires to be set in order to send out a message that safeguarding the environment is not a matter

of convenience. Given this government's commitment to cleaning up India's dying rivers evidenced by setting up of the Namami Gange and Yamuna revitalisation projects; it would do well to take a strong stand on organisations who try to get away with subverting environment and pollution rules.

## ***Shalabh "Shalli" Kumar as America's Ambassador to India***



Dear President Trump,

I serve the best interests of these United States, as every Citizen must, and have been involved with geopolitics since 1984 when I was made a Member of both Speaker Tip O'Nei11's Club and the National Advisory Council South Asian Affairs, which advised Department of State; I chair the later since 2007, and expanded it to include the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee. A year after Russia invaded Ukraine and

took Crimea and helped blow up MH17 on July 14, 2014, I agreed, on a Pro Bono basis, to become the Humanitarian and Legal Advisor to the Ukraine Mission to the UN as my protest of Russia's continuing destabilizing activity (while Amb. Samantha Power was our PR to the UN). I am a registered Democrat, and still voted for you in 2016.

For decades, I have believed that India needs to be prompted to become worthy of a "special relationship," as

that which exists between us and United Kingdom. After all, in 1773, Indian Tea starred in the Boston Tea Party, and Lord Charles Comwallis lost "the Colonies" to our General George Washington, managed to be sent to India as her Viceroy - and upon landing ordered the death of 5,000 men, women and children of India - so he could, and did, rule with an "Iron Fist." Such historical ties between the Oldest and Largest democracies yearn for history to be made together as best of friends - citizens and nations. This is beyond merely outsourcing of war, in part.

Given all that is amiss, India seems even more worthy of warmer and nearer relationship. I therefore recommend an Indian-American "across the aisle," Shalabh "Shalli" Kumar, who has embraced the American Dream with strong success in business and manufacturing, and I believe will serve American Sovereignty, as an un-conflicted fiduciary, and cause India to become even closer to the United States than she otherwise would. India's desire for "the best deal" always notwithstanding, she can rise to cher-

ish long-term mutuality of opportunities, and a joint peace and security when America's face, is a face everyday hardworking Indians in India will celebrate.

Shalli will enhance the bilateral trade between United States and India, and creating millions of jobs over time in both nations. I recall everyday Chinese reaction to Gov. Gary Faye Locke when he served as our ambassador to PRC.

That India and Indians know that Shalli was an early supporter of your presidency, and caused you, as then-candidate Trump, to visit with Indian-Americans and get their support with "Abki baar Trump Sarkar." Indians will welcome Shalli as a person close to POTUS. Indeed, I believe that Shalli's well known distinguished record of achievement and involvement, here and in India, speaks to his tenure as a proactive US Ambassador, beyond mere ribbon-cuttings and Photo Ops.

I recommend Shalabh "Shalli" Kumar to be nominated without any reservation, albeit, he is registered across the aisle, as both of us are Americans First, beyond party labels. Warm regards,

By Ravi Batra

## *The Politics of Clan: The Adventures of Jared Kushner*

Jared Kushner deserves a bit of sympathy. All his life he's been serving his father or father-in-law. All his career he's been thrust into roles he's not ready for. His background has ill prepared him for national government. Now he is in a realm where his instincts seem to lead him astray and where there's a chance he will end up in disgrace and possibly under indictment.

The Kushner family drama begins in the Holocaust. In 1941, Rae Kushner was living in Belarus and was among the teenage girls selected to clean blood from the cobblestones after one of the Nazi mass executions. Rae and other family members tunneled out from the ghetto and joined an armed resistance camp. After the war they eventually made it to New Jersey, where her husband set up a successful construction business that flourished under their son.

So far this is an inspiring story of family struggle and immigrant hustle. But as riches rained down on the family, so did betrayal. The feud between Jared's father and uncle was over grabbing family money, and from the various accounts it's hard to tell who betrayed the family most.

We do know that Jared's father, Charles, hired a prostitute to have sex with his brother-in-law so he could send a tape of the act to his sister, and ended up pleading guilty to 18 felony counts.

"I believe that God and my parents in heaven forgive me for what I did, which was wrong," Charles once told an interviewer, according to Politico. "I don't believe God and my parents will ever forgive my brother and sister for instigating a criminal investigation and being cheerleaders for the government and putting their brother in jail because of jealousy, hatred and spite."

Jared's brother was very young while all this happened and has since gone on to a fantastically successful independent career. But Jared interrupted his studies to take over the family business. He lived out his family-first devotion, his loyalty to kith and kin. He may have lacked wisdom but not audacity. In a Trumpian move, he sold the family's New Jersey apartment complexes and bought 666 Fifth Avenue for \$1.8 billion, then the most ever paid for a Manhattan office building. He seems to have vastly overpaid. The Met-Life building sold at roughly the same time for \$600 a square foot, according to reporting in The Times, but Kushner bought his building for \$1,200 a square foot. Kushner worked feverishly to save the deal, and has built his company despite it, but it's been a financial albatross ever since, one reason Kushner has spent so much time looking for Chinese investors, and possibly Russian ones.

We tell young people to serve something beyond self, and Kushner seems to have been fiercely, almost selflessly, loyal to family. But the clannish mentality has often ill served him during his stay in government.

Working in government is about teamwork, majority-building and addition — adding more and more people to your coalition. It is about working within legal frameworks and bureaucratic institutions. It's about having a short memory and not taking things personally. Clannishness, by contrast is about tight and exclusive blood bonds. It's a moral approach based on loyalty and vengeance against those who attack a member of the clan. It's an intensely personal and feud-ridden way of being.

Working in government is about trusting the system, and trusting those who have been around and understand the craft. But the essence of clannishness is to build a barrier between family — inside the zone of trust — and others, outside that zone. Consequently, Kushner has made some boneheaded blunders in the White House. He reportedly pushed for the firing of F.B.I. Director James Comey even though anybody with a blip of experience could have told you this move would backfire horribly. He's allowed his feud with Steve Bannon to turn into a public soap opera.

We don't know everything about his meetings with the Russians, but we know that they, like so much other clan-like behavior, went against the formal system. We also know that they betray rookie naïveté on several levels — apparently trusting the Russians not to betray him, apparently not understanding that these conversations would be surveyed by the American intelligence services, possibly not understanding how alarming they would look to outsiders.

We seem to now be entering the paranoia phase of the Trump presidency, as insiders perceive that everybody else is out to get them. As The Times's Glenn Thrush, Maggie Haberman and Sharon LaFraniere detailed in some amazing reporting, Kushner's role in this White House may be in peril. This turmoil, for both Trump and Kushner, was inevitable. Our forebears have spent centuries trying to build a government of laws, and not of hereditary bloodlines. It's possible to thrive in this system as a member of a clan — the Roosevelts, the Kennedys and the Bushes — but it's not possible to survive in this system if your mentality is entirely clannish. That mode, whether in the Donald Trump or Jared Kushner version, simply self destructs in the formal system and within the standards of behavior that now surround us.

## *Merkel wants to look beyond the United States. Modi can help*

Germany wants to assert itself as an independent power. Investing in India is a way to show that it is.

Europe has often declared its intention to be an independent player on the world stage. The European Union has been variously described as a postmodern State, the civilian power and even, bizarrely, as the metrosex power. In every case, Europe has fallen far short of its promise and, in times of crisis, gone back to the Atlantic alliance and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. What makes German Chancellor Angela Merkel's comments after the latest Group of Seven summit that Europe should no longer be "completely" dependent on the United States is that it was given by a German leader and someone as cautious as Merkel. Brussels and Paris have a long record of similar statements. However, they were always treated as sound and fury, signifying nothing, because the beating heart of the EU was in Berlin. However, after a disastrous G-7 summit in which the US president, Donald Trump, declined to join the others on climate change and denounced Germany for its trade policies, Merkel felt that it was necessary to at least throw a few straws in the wind.

It is almost fortuitous that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has come for the intergovernmental consultations held every two years between New Delhi and Berlin at this point. The flip side to Merkel's concerns at the Atlantic alliance is that Germany needs to reach out to new and rising powers. Almost by default, India should be first among equals in such an outreach. Russia is seen as a source of trouble by Europe. China, while economically extremely important to Europe, has a political system that is almost the antithesis of the post-sovereign, liberal democratic order of which the EU believes it is the bellwether. India is not without its flaws, but its trajectory both economic and political is much closer to what Europe and Germany would feel comfortable with.

The problem will be whether Merkel's doubts about the US and even Great Britain mean that Germany will be able to regress back into the mindset of a 19th century European power again. New Delhi has long treated the EU only as an economic partner because European countries seemed incapable of understanding that in places like Asia concepts the balance of power and realpolitik were alive and kicking. Germany has a chance to show it understands this and begin using its considerable financial and technological capacities to enhance Indian economic and even military power. Japan is already well done this path. Merkel has a chance to show a similar strategic understanding.



ISSN No. 1554 06X

Chairman &amp; 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 &amp; MAILING OFFICE :

P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

Tel/Fax : 516 342 1076

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

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# India, Singapore kick off major naval exercise in South China Sea



(Insider Bureau) New Delhi: India and Singapore on Thursday kicked off a major naval exercise "SIMBEX" in the contentious South China Sea, where China is locked in

INS Kamorta and fleet replenishment tanker INS Jyoti as well as one Poseidon-81 long-range maritime patrol aircraft, under the overall command of Eastern Fleet commander Rear Admiral Biswajit Dasgupta, for the SIMBEX exercise. Singapore, in turn, has fielded warships Supreme, Formidable and Victory as well as F-16 fighters and Fokker F50 maritime patrol aircraft. "This year's edition of SIMBEX, the 24th such bi-

lateral combat exercise, is aimed at further increasing interoperability between the two navies as well as developing common understanding and procedures for maritime security operations," said Navy spokesperson Captain D K Sharma. "The thrust of the exercise, with the harbor phase scheduled from May 18 to 20 and the sea phase from May 21 to 24, will be on anti-submarine warfare, integrated operations with surface, air and sub-surface forces, air defence and surface encounter operations," he added. India has renewed

its air force training agreement with Singapore for another five years. With land and airspace being a scarce commodity in Singapore, the city state has been utilizing Indian military facilities to train its own small but high-tech armed forces under special agreements signed in 2007 and 2008. India, for instance, provides facilities to Singapore for exercises of mechanised forces at Babina and artillery at Deolali ranges as well as for fighters at the Kalaikunda airbase in

West Bengal. The two countries also regularly hold the Simbex naval wargames, which have graduated from being purely anti-submarine warfare exercises to complex ones involving multiple facets of operations at sea. As for the South China Sea, India has repeatedly stressed the need for all to respect the freedom of navigation in international waters, right of passage and overflight, unimpeded commerce and access to resources in accordance with the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the

## PM Narendra Modi-Nawaz Sharif SCO talks unlikely, says Sushma Swaraj

(Agencies) New Delhi : External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj on Monday said the time was not right for any engagement with Pakistan, suggesting it was unlikely PM Narendra Modi would have a meeting with his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif on the sidelines of the SCO summit later this week in Astana.



There was no proposal from either side for a meeting, Sushma added.

While she said India remained committed to resolving all outstanding issues through dialogue, Sushma reiterated India's position that talks and terror can't go together. "Our policy on Pakistan has been consistent in the past three years. We believe talks are important to resolve the issues, that these talks can take place only between the two parties and also that talks and terror can't happen together," Sushma said, outlining the government's Pakistan policy.

She further said India was opposed to the "One Belt, One Road" project on the issue of sovereignty because the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor passed through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Asked about the reported remarks of a Pakistani law officer that Islamabad will take the Kashmir issue to ICJ after India approached the global court in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case, the minister said Pakistan cannot take Kashmir issue to ICJ as the Shimla agreement and Lahore dec-

laration were very clear on Kashmir that it could only be resolved bilaterally. "The two countries are bound by these bilateral agreements," she said. The minister also referred to some cases pending in other foras such as the Hyderabad Nizam funds case in the UK court and issues pertaining to Indus Waters Treaty before the World Bank.

Rejecting suggestions that the government had a "flip-flop" policy in handling Pakistan, she said India is very clear that "it wants to hold dialogue, resolve all issues bilaterally without mediation from any third country, organisation or anyone else. But at the same time terror and talks cannot go together." The minister also emphasised

that the government was asking other countries not to see cross-border issue or terrorism emanating from Pakistan through the prism of India but see if international terrorism was in any way linked with that country. "Finally, where was Osama bin Laden found? In Pakistan," she said, adding it was time to finalise the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the UN and define terrorism. On Pakistan's contention that it will raise the issue of ICJ jurisdiction on Jadhav, she said India has a very strong argument and it will win the case. She also made it clear that India's case was based on Pakistan's violation of Vienna Convention under which consular access was not only "essential but compulsory".

## 'Will seek Russia's help to convince China on NSG'



(Insider Bureau) NEW DELHI: India wants Russia to use its influence with China to convince Beijing to drop its opposition to India's NSG membership bid, foreign minister Sushma Swaraj said Monday.

This is one of the rare occasions India has openly sought Moscow's support to make Beijing understand that India's application for membership wasn't about criteria but India's credentials. "We are not putting any pressure but we feel, since Russia and China share good relations, Moscow should talk to China. Our effort is to convince China on the issue and also involve nations friendly with both the countries," the minister added. India has in the past at several levels sought support from Russia to convince Beijing to not oppose India's membership. Russian authorities were, in fact, worried that India was delaying the signing of an agreement for two additional reactors at Kudankulam only because it felt Moscow was not being of much help on the NSG issue. The agreement was finally signed recently during PM Narendra Modi's visit to Russia but not before it missed two deadlines. India can now be expected to pursue the NSG membership issue with Russia even more vigorously.

## India is not exploiting Paris deal, minister rubbishes US allegation

(Agencies) New Delhi : India said on Monday that it did not sign the Paris climate agreement under pressure or out of greed with foreign minister Sushma Swaraj emphatically dismissing US President Donald Trump's allegation that India was exploiting the deal. Swaraj reiterated India's position that it will remain a part of the agreement with or without the US.

"We didn't sign the Paris agreement under pressure from any country or because we wanted money from some country," said Swaraj, addressing a press conference on the comple-

tion of three years of government. "We signed it because of our belief, a 5,000-year-old belief in environment and our commitment to protecting it. If someone says we signed it for money or under pressure, I'll reject it. It is wrong," she added. Trump, while talking about US decision to pull out of the agreement, had accused India of seeking "billions and billions and billions" of dollars through the Paris deal. Swaraj, however, said that such issues will not affect Indo-US relationship which was of "mutual benefit". "PM Modi has spoken to President Trump thrice. I've also spoken to my counter-

part. Our officials have also had talks with theirs on many occasions. Every interaction has been positive and good. The US is India's major defence partner. And there has been no intimation from their side that might suggest diluting this special relationship we share," the minister said.

On Trump's executive order for tightening the rules of the H-1B visas, the minister said New Delhi was in talks with Trump administration officials. She said the relationship between India and the US since Trump took charge were growing with the "same speed" as was the case when Barack Obama was President.



# 'Baahubali' rocket GSLV Mk-III has perfect launch



(Agencies) SRIHARIKOTA: The country took another step towards establishing itself in the global heavy payload market, successfully launching its most powerful rocket, GSLV Mk III, on Monday .

After the rocket, nicknamed "Fat Boy", fired by a high-thrust indigenous cryogenic engine, lifted off at 5.28pm from the second launch pad at the Satish

Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, a fourtonne communications satellite, GSAT 19, the country's heaviest, was placed in geosynchronous transfer orbit 15.53 minutes later, a few seconds earlier than scheduled.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has now demonstrated its mastery in developing a cryogenic engine, a technology denied to it years

ago. The launch also proves the homegrown launch vehicle's capability of hurling up to four payloads into higher orbits. Isro chairman A S Kiran Kumar said, "The GSLV Mk III needs just one more developmental flight, planned in a year, before it can be declared operational."

The boosters of satellite GSAT 19 would be fired at 9.30am on Tuesday to make a

series of manoeuvres in the next two days so that it would be placed in its orbital slot in two weeks, he said.

The launch demonstrated an indigenous cryogenic engine, in the works since 2002, a strong foundation for ambitious future projects, including Chandrayaan II, scheduled for the first quarter of 2018, and a manned mission. It also showed the capability to make a next-generation satellite with a high reach. The satellite contains 50 new technologies which will be its mainstay in the next decade.

The mood was upbeat at mission control where scientists burst into applause when the cryogenic stage started to burn. On its maiden flight, the CE-20 engine was operational for 640 seconds. Congratulating the scientists and others involved in the mission, Kiran Kumar said it was a historic day . "The entire team has worked since 2002. The vehicle carried the next-generation satellite."

Dr K Sivan, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre director, said it was the commencement of complex technologies - a vehicle that can carry twice the payload weight and a high throughput satellite. "It is the continued efforts of the team and industry contribution."

Satish Dhawan Space Centre director P Kunhikrishnan said Isro had made two new technologies for GSLV MkIII at the launch pad. "We made an acoustic suppression unit, which is a tower containing 600 tonnes of water, and a solid propellant plant to prepare the 200 tonnes each of propellant loaded in each of the motors. The suppression unit splashed the water on the rocket when it lifted off." Satish Dhawan Space Centre director P Kunhikrishnan said integration for the next launch of PSLV C38 was on simultaneously at the first launch pad. "It is planned for the next half of the month. The next GSLV Mk III will be integrated in the new vehicle assembly , which will be three times bigger," he said.

## Half of India's under 18 population lives in poverty: Study



(Agencies) London: At least half of India's under 18 population lives in acute

poverty, reveals a "deeply disturbing" study from Oxford University.

Across the 103 low and middle income countries surveyed, children were found to

constitute 34 per cent of the total population, but 48 per cent of the poor, based

on a measure that assesses a range of deprivations in health, education and living standards.

The international definition of a child, used in the study, was anyone less than 18 years of age.

"These new results are deeply disturbing as they show that children are disproportionately poor when the different dimensions of poverty are measured," said Sabina Alkire, Director of Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford.

The research examined the latest figures for the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) by age group to analyse the particular situation of 1.8 billion children who live in 103 countries.

MPI complements traditional income-based poverty measures by capturing the severe deprivations that each person faces at the same time with respect to education, health and living standards.

The MPI assesses poverty at the individual level. If someone is deprived in a third or more of ten (weighted) indicators - nutrition, child mortality, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, improved sanitation, safe drinking water, electricity, flooring, assets - the global index identifies them as "MPI poor".

The extent - or intensity - of their poverty is measured by the number of deprivations they are experiencing.

According to the OPHI, nearly two out of every five children - a total of 689 million children - are classed as multi-dimensionally poor.

## Modi government to replace UGC, AICTE with one higher education regulator

(Agencies) New Delhi: Big-bang education reform is on its way - the Modi government is all set to scrap the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and replace them with one higher education regulator, tentatively christened Higher Education Empowerment Regulation Agency (HEERA).

The decision to go ahead with this radical change, long advocated by experts but never implemented, was taken after a meeting on education chaired by the prime minister in early March. If required, and since setting up a new regulator may take some time, amendments to existing rules will be considered as an interim reform measure. Senior officials who spoke off record told ET that work is on at a rapid pace to frame the HEERA legislation. The human resource development (HRD) ministry and the Niti Aayog are working on the new law. A committee that has, among others, Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant and higher education secretary KK Sharma as members, is working on the detailed blueprint. One senior official said replacing UGC and AICTE by a single regulator will be the "cleanest, most sweeping reform" that will "eliminate all overlaps in jurisdiction and also do away with regulatory provisions that may no

## Editors Guild of India condemns CBI raid on NDTV's Prannoy Roy

(Agencies) NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday raided the residence of co-founder of New Delhi Television (NDTV) Prannoy Roy and other premises linked to the organisation. The investigation agency has registered a case against Roy, his wife and NDTV co-promoter Radhika Roy, their private firm RRPR Holdings. The Editors Guild of India has expressed its 'deep concern over the raids conducted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on the offices of NDTV and its promoters today.' In a statement it said: 'Entry of police and other agencies into the media offices is a serious matter. NDTV, in various statements, has denied any wrong doing and termed the raids as "stepping up the concerted harassment" of the news channel and an attempt to "undermine democracy and free speech" and "silence the media." While the Editors Guild maintains that no individual or institution is above the law, the Guild condemns any attempt to muzzle the media and calls upon the CBI to follow the due process of law and ensure there is no interference in the free functioning of news operations.'



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# Gay son of Indian immigrant likely to be Ireland's next leader

(Agencies) He was 22 when he entered Irish politics. At 27, he was elected to parliament. At 36, he publicly came out as gay. And now, at 38, Leo Varadkar, the son of an Indian immigrant father and an Irish mother, appears on course to become Ireland's next prime minister.

The young Dubliner, currently serving as Ireland's Minister for Social Protection, announced his campaign to succeed Taoiseach Enda Kenny, prime minister since 2011 and leader of the ruling Fine Gael party since 2002, shortly after Kenny announced he would be stepping down earlier this month.

Varadkar's only opponent is Housing Minister Simon Coveney, who hails from a family of Fine

Gael stalwarts. While Coveney appeals to the party's more conservative membership outside of the capital city, many see Varadkar as a fresh face for urban voters while still appealing to the party's rural base.

Leo Varadkar (left) and Simon Coveney are seen in 2015 celebrating the victory of a Yes vote after the marriage equality referendum was won.

Varadkar has managed to shore up the support of many of his fellow Fine Gael parliamentary members, whose say counts for 65% of the final vote; the party members and local politicians make up the other 35%. A decision is expected by June 2.

Although Varadkar appears to be a step away from traditional Irish

politics, a check of his voting record and of his campaign, promises more of a makeover than an overhaul. As Ireland prepared to cast a historic vote that legalized same sex marriage in 2015, Varadkar came out publicly on Irish national radio. "It's not something that defines me. I'm not a half-Indian politician, or a doctor politician or a gay politician for that matter. It's just part of who I am, it doesn't define me, it is part of my character I suppose," the fiercely private politician said speaking on RTE 1. Although Varadkar has tried to steer attention away from his sexuality to his politics, for a country that is increasingly trying to focus on a more liberal European identity and shake off the hangover of re-

ligious involvement in politics, a coming-out speech like Varadkar's, whatever its tone, is still

ground-breaking. Homosexuality was only decriminalized in Ireland in 1993. In 2015, Ireland passed the Marriage Equality Bill, allowing same-sex couples to marry. Senator David Norris, 73, the first Irish politician to publicly come out as gay told CNN that he understands why Varadkar wants to focus on policies and not his personal life. Speaking of his own experience, Norris said, "I never made a big deal out of it, because I didn't want to be treated as a 'freak'. I didn't want to be stuck just with issues of sexuality." "What Varadkar does in bed is irrelevant," Norris said. But he also

noted that if Varadkar becomes Ireland's next prime minister or taoiseach, it would signal another stride forward for equality rights in Ireland. "For people of my generation, there were no role models at all. Now to be able to have a young, able, good-looking gay man as prime minister of the country, it says to young people, 'you can be anything you want, your sexuality doesn't matter,'" he said. If elected, Varadkar would be one of two openly gay heads of state currently in office -- Luxembourg's prime minister Xavier Bettel being the other. In the past, two other world leaders went public with their sexuality: Former Belgian Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo and former Icelandic Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir.

# Washington may make an issue of 30,000 Indians overstaying in 2016



(Agencies) New Delhi: More than 30,000 Indians overstayed in the United States in 2016, according to a new report by the US Department of Homeland

Security (DHS) becoming the latest hobble for Delhi-Washington ties after President Donald Trump tightened norms for Indian H-1B visa holders.

The annual "Entry/Exit" report of DHS provides country-wise data of entry, departure, and overstay of people who came to the US as non-immigrants and were expected to leave the country in 2016.

The report is divided into six segments: temporary workers and families, students, exchange visi-

tors, temporary visitors for pleasure, temporary visitors for business, & other non-immigrant classes of admission. According to the report, the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) processed 50,437,278 in-scope non-immigrant admissions at US air and sea Port of Entries (POEs) who were expected to depart in 2016. More than 1.4 million Indians who entered the US were supposed to leave in 2016. Of these at least 30,000 are reported to have

overstayed. The report also indicated that close to 6,000 Indians left the US in 2016 after reportedly overstaying the time they were allowed while entering.

The Indians who lawfully entered the US as non-immigrants for business or pleasure reasons indicate that more than one million entered of which 17,763 overstayed. At the same time, the overstay numbers for Indian non-immigrant students and exchange visitors touched 4,575, which includes males and females admitted to the United States via air and sea. The report also says that 339,076 Indians who entered the US in other categories of visa were supposed to depart in 2016 but 8,061 of them overstayed. It said that 2,402 Indians left the US after their visas expired. A 2015 report said of 881,000 Indians who came to the US for business or pleasure, 14,348 of overstayed, including 1,463 who left the US after the expiry of their visas.

Of 50,437,278 non-immigrant admissions, more than 739,478 overstayed, resulting in a total overstay rate of 1.47%. Of 739,000 overstays, DHS determined 628,799 were suspected "in-country" overstays, resulting a suspected in-country overstay rate of 1.25%.

# Hindu girls are not safe Pakistan



(Agencies) Hindu girls are not safe Pakistan. There are frequent discussions about the Hindus in Pakistan and their disappearance in danger. Occasionally the events that occur, it seems that there is a deep crisis in the existence of Hindus. A recent case has emerged in the municipal area of Tharparkar District. Hindu girl was kidnapped by the villagers. Talking to the local media, the victim's family said that her 16-year-old girl, Ravita Meghwar, was kidnapped when she was sleeping. Ravita's parents said that when Ravita was

kidnapped, she was in the hospital. They said that the people of the Syed community have kidnapped their daughter and she might have forced to marry with Syed Nawaz Ali.

Syed Nawaz Ali has been harassing Ravita for the past several months. Local PPP Samitra Manjini met Ravita's family members and assured full cooperation. Samitra Manjini assured Ravi's family that their daughter would be found soon. Police have started raids in several villages, but no clue has been received. Hindu girls in Pakistan are forced to change their religion. According to the report of the Human Rights

Commission of Pakistan, there are 20 to 25 Hindu girls being kidnapped every month and forcibly converted into Islam. But surprisingly, in such cases as soon as a report is lodged, on the other the kidnappers also file a report.

It is said that these girls have changed their religion voluntarily. Which keeps the case buried here? On May 25, Indian citizen Ujma was allowed by the High Court return to India from Pakistan. She has been forced to marriage with Pakistani man.

After which she returned to her country. After getting the permission of the High

## Bomb blast in Afghan mosque, 7 killed, 16 wounded



(Agencies) Heavy bomb blasts in the mosque of Afghanistan, According to the information heavy bomb blast in Jam-e-Masjid in Afghanistan's western Herat. About 7 people died on the spot and more than 16 were injured. The injured were admitted to a nearby hospital for treatment. So far, no terrorist organization has taken responsibility for the blast. Police have encircled the area.

## London bridge attack: Third attacker identified



(Agencies) London bridge attack: Third attacker identified. The British police identified the third attacker of the terrorist attacks yesterday as Yusuf Jagba of Italy. Earlier, Britain's police had released the names of two people involved in Saturday's terror attacks in



London. The first name was of Khurram Butt of 27 years. Khurram is the father of two children who had been living in East London for many years. The name of the other attacker is Rashid Ridwan, 30, years old. All 12 arrested people in connection with the attack have

been left without any charge. Among them are seven women and five men. According to the police, both these attacker rented a van and carried them on the people on the London Bridge, later they attacked people with knife on the people of brow market area.

## One Blood Test To Detect Cancer Possibilities In 10 Years



(Agencies) American Scientists Invented Universal Cancer Test To Detect all kinds of Cancer, named Liquid Biopsy Test. In This Blood Test, Symptoms Of Tumor In Humans can be detected 10 years before. Scientists said that this test Provide Facility To The Patients. Due to this invention, many lives can be saved and Number Of deaths by

Cancer can be reduced to some level. Now-a-days Liquid Biopsy Test Costs Rupees 96000. But when this Technique comes, this test Cost Rupees 10,000 Which is very reasonable. This week in World Cancer Conference At Chicago all the results found Positive regarding this Test which Is Very Good Sign. It will available to the whole world

## Whatsapp scam spreading virus by claiming your subscription has expired

(Agencies) Whatsapp scam spreading virus by claiming you subscription has expired. In this era of social media, the Whatsapp is playing important role in spreading news and information at a fast pace to people all around the world. But now it is becoming a

validate your account and subscribe the Lifetime, spend £ 0.99 (about Rs 90) and tap this link. . . . If you have



headache for the people. In fact, many of the fake reports and rumors are spreading in this matter. Under it, a fake news that is trending on Whatsapp now a days. This message is claiming that the memory of app has been expired and you will have to pay to get it started again. To

received similar messages, then delete it immediately. But if you click on the link, you should also see that the antivirus is not running on your phone so that the device cannot install. Users should be careful that the Whatsapp is free message service, which does not charge for it

## Improvement By Canadian Government In Canada Express Entry Program

(Agencies) The Government of Canada has made some changes to the Express Entry Immigration Program. Those applicants who are in Canada and who have a French language skills will be given more ducks. Immigration Minister Ahmad Hussain announced new rules On Monday in Toronto. From Tuesday, New points will be awarded to candidates with siblings in Canada. Studies have shown that as newcomers build a new life in Canada, those with siblings benefit by having improved integration into Canadian society. Canada's Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Minister Ahmed Hussain said that due to the help of the resident of Canada, foreign students get help in getting settled in the country, so their immigrants are being simplified. In November 2016, students were given the opportunity to apply without applying a job offer, due to which a large number of students were getting permanent immunity through Express Entry. A relief from students from today is also being given that names will not need to be registered in 'Job Bank' for jobs and at the same time, those who are proficient in French Language will be given additional points.

## Pakistan more of a threat than an ally: US think tank



(Agencies) A top US think tank says, Pakistan is more of a threat than an ally. In a report released yesterday, the Center for Strategic and International Studies

(CSIS) said Pakistan is still a sanctuary for the Taliban and the Haqqani network and the Trump administration should make it clear to Islamabad that it will face sanctions

if it continues to support them. The report said US should make it clear to Pakistan that it faces a total end to aid, and the imposition of sanctions, if it continues to support the

Taliban and tolerate the Haqqani network. The report also said Afghanistan is currently doing badly both in the fighting and in its civilian politics, governance, and poverty.

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# Global survey on oil and gas finds 'the world wants more Canada'



further. Thirty-one per cent saw Canada as a preferred source of oil and gas imports—topping a list of 11 producing countries. “We were really quite surprised with that. When you look at all the countries around the world, there are so many oil and gas suppliers. But when we asked people around the world — if you can’t make it yourself, where would you want to buy it from? — the answer was clear, and Canada was number one in the world,” said Gaulin.

Another 54 per cent were neutral or admitted they didn’t know enough about Canada’s industry to make an informed decision. CAPP says that finding means the industry needs to do a better job of selling itself to the world.

“It’s time we start to share

Canada’s energy story with the rest of the world. We are leaders in environmental stewardship, responsible development and sustainability. We have high expectations of our industry and so does the rest of the world,” said Gaulin. The top five countries with the greatest interest in importing Canadian oil and gas included Israel, the U.S., Algeria, India and South Africa.

The 2017 Global Energy Pulse also found 68 per cent of Canadians agreed Canada’s oil and gas supply should be the primary source to meet our own energy needs, rather than imports from other nations.

In 2016, Canada imported 609,000 barrels of oil per day, and 1.7 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day from the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Angola,

and Norway to supply Atlantic Canada, Ontario and Quebec. Gaulin said the survey also asked questions about the environmental impact of oil and gas development. He says the majority of respondents said they would prefer to buy their oil and gas from a country with a climate change plan and one that invests in innovation and technology. Gaulin said now that the industry knows the world “wants more Canada,” it’s got to go out and expand its market, even though the competition is fierce. The International Energy Agency estimates global energy demand will rise by 31 per cent by 2040, with China and India becoming the largest consumers. Canada is home to the third-largest oil reserves and is the fifth-largest natural gas producer in the world.

(Agencies) A new research survey for the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (CAPP) found Canada is seen by people around the world as a preferred supplier in meeting growing global oil and gas needs. More than 22,000 people in 32 countries were polled by Ipsos on behalf of CAPP. Jeff Gaulin, vice-president, communications with CAPP said they embarked on the research, after questions about whether Canadians even want to see the oil and gas sector developed

## Mexico Now World's Deadliest Conflict Zone After Syria: Survey



(Agencies) Mexico has surpassed Iraq and Afghanistan to become the world’s second-most deadly conflict zone after Syria, according to a study of wars around the globe.

The number of fatalities from the expanding war among Mexico’s criminal cartels grew to 23,000 in 2016, compared with 17,000 in Afghanistan and 16,000 in Iraq, according to the annual Armed Conflict Survey by the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

That level of bloodshed was all the more surprising, because “Mexico is a conflict marked by the absence of

artillery, tanks or combat aviation,” IISS director general John Chipman said in remarks at the survey’s launch in London on Tuesday. Virtually all of those deaths were caused by small arms.

The largest number of fatalities occurred in Mexican states that have become “key battlegrounds for control between competing, increasingly fragmented cartels,” he said, with violence flaring as gangs try to clear areas of rivals so they can monopolize drug trafficking routes.

The Middle East in general and Syria in particular remained the most lethal

regions on earth, with the nearly six-year-old-Syrian conflict claiming a further 50,000 lives. That brings the total number of deaths during the civil and proxy war to an estimated 290,000, almost three times the number killed in Bosnia, in the early 1990s.

Sub-Saharan Africa was a relative bright spot, with the number of deaths in war falling by more than a third since last year. Overall, the number of people killed in armed conflicts around the world fell slightly last year to 157,000, from 167,000 in 2015. Yet the figure remains high compared with the previous decade and the number of civilians displaced

by war continued to rise, according to the survey.

Chipman and the report’s authors were downbeat about the prospects for reducing these levels of violence on several counts.

One is that conflicts are becoming more urban, with siege warfare increasingly common, according to the survey. That’s especially true in Syria, where that approach proved brutally effective for the regime of President Bashar al-Assad in Aleppo.

A second reason is that as new conflicts emerge, old ones tend not to get resolved but rather subside into a “simmering” state, capable of boiling over again at any moment. Chipman cited Turkey’s more than three-decade-old battle with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK, which exploded again last year into an urbanized insurgency that killed 3,000 people. That was the highest annual death count from the conflict since 1997, and a dramatic increase from near peace of recent years. The low-level war in Eastern Ukraine also looks like falling into this “simmering” category, Chipman warned.

A further cause for concern is that even though the Islamic State terrorist organization lost a quarter of its territory and a higher proportion of its fighters last year, the toll on civilians is

likely to increase as the group returns to more traditional insurgent tactics, rather than try to hold territory as a conventional army, according to the IISS.

Finally the main tool available for the international community to try to reduce bloodshed — the \$8 billion-a-year United Nations peace-keeping forces — are increasingly overstretched and ineffectual, said Mats Berdal, of King’s College London. Peacekeeping has become overly ambitious, focused on preventing civilian casualties and peacemaking since the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica in the 1990s, rather than just policing ceasefires and political settlements, according to Berdal. The UN is also by its nature too politically riven to carry out effective military operations, he said.

“There are real limits to how you can make a UN peacekeeping force effective,” said Berdal, citing the varied and often poor quality of troops, as well as the UN’s lack of real disciplinary control over them. He recommended the number and ambition of blue helmet missions should be scaled back, and that the UN refocus on the diplomacy of securing political settlements.

# Agent train workers to perform on demand acts before webcam for live streaming to chatrooms, sites and apps Sex Trade Gets Digital Viagra



**Cyber sex is a new menace, where minors are exploited on the Internet by online pimps in the disguise of escort agents or model coordinators. This is illegal and amounts to abetment of prostitution.**

— Prashant Mali,  
Mumbai HC lawyer & cyber security expert

(Agencies) Sex industry in the country is taking the web route to expand its network and experts fear the women taking up the bait for easy money face a high risk of cyber exploitation.

"Various escort agencies now prefer to operate from the safety of a small make-shift studio using digital payments than risking a physical contact or cash transaction with their potential customers," says Rajib K Haldar, regional coordinator (South Asia), ECPAT International, a global network of civil workers to stop sexual exploitation of children.

Haldar has been studying cyber-related exploitation of children in India and feels that teenagers are at risk of being exploited by these agencies which cater to a wide market of fantasies. "The demands on these websites often boast of showing school or college girls in the act. It is believed that not only sex workers but also girls from moderate backgrounds are being exploited by these agents on the pretext of fast buck."

There has been a rise in the

number of adult websites and mobile apps that offer a choice of sexual acts to be streamed live on one's mobile phone or computer, a trend borrowed from the Philippines which is growing at a fast pace in India. Experts point out that it could be difficult for law enforcement agencies to bring the perpetrators to book in the absence of relevant laws.

"Cyber sex is new a menace where minors are exploited on the Internet by online pimps in the disguise of escort agents or model coordinators," Prashant Mali, Mumbai High Court lawyer and a cyber security expert said. "This is illegal and amounts to abetment of prostitution. Transmission of sex videos, chat or nude pictures amounts to crime under Section 67B of The IT Act, 2000 and the punishment is up to seven years of jail and Rs 10 lakh of fine."

Another worker of an NGO, which rescues young girls from sexual exploitation, quoted several cases where women were first given training to perform before a web camera,

read out scripted text for their potential clients and fix appointments.

"In some of these cases, many women did not know that the live-streaming was also being recorded and would later be uploaded at various porn sites or used for continued exploitation," said the NGO worker who requested anonymity.

The rates for a live-streaming are decided on hourly basis depending upon the type of act and age or ethnicity of the 'performer'. The cost may range from Rs 500 to 2,000. Some of these websites active on the internet are [www.cam4.com](http://www.cam4.com), [www.cams.com](http://www.cams.com), [www.delhisexchat.com](http://www.delhisexchat.com), [m.locanto.com](http://m.locanto.com). These service providers have categorised the performances under various categories like 'Online HD', 'Party Chat', 'Cam LIVE' etc. A client can select the person of his choice from the site's album or promotional clips.

The mode of payment is either by choosing membership or one-time online payment option. A member gets regular

notifications about the show times with multiple options to select from joining a group chatroom or a private act.

"There have been instances where several such acts were recorded with the consent of the performer, using special software, and later uploaded on adult sites or YouTube," said Haldar, who said while courts are seized of the matter, stringent laws are needed to curb exploitation.

This reporter, with the help of a male colleague, when contacted several escort services providers, the agencies offered to arrange 45-minute 'performance' by a Delhi University girl on Skype for Rs 1,750.

Police officials said in such cases the site owners operate from areas outside their jurisdiction. "Besides, the force can only act on a

complaint or a tip-off, which are rare to come by in such cases," an official with the Cyber Cell of Delhi Police said.

The official agreed that cyber sex trade was growing fast. "This is easy money for the agent or performer and offers privacy to a customer. You have presumably no identity on the net, so it makes you lose inhibitions," said the police official.

Cyber experts also warn that many criminals may use sex as bait for stealing vital personal data from one's computer or phone. "They can infect your machine on the pretext of allowing access to their cam-software for streaming. One never knows

when one may be playing into the hands of cyber blackmailers," said an expert working with Delhi Police Cyber Cell.

**Congressman Tom Suozzi, Nassau County Legislators, Endorse Laura Curran, Jack Schnirman, and Dean Bennett**

Congressman Thomas Suozzi released the following statement with regards to his endorsement of Laura Curran, Jack Schnirman, and Dean Bennett:

"Everyday there is another announcement of another scandal or indictment of elected officials at all levels of local government. We need a county executive who will fix the fiscal mess Nassau is in right now. Laura Curran is the person for that job. She will take a no-nonsense and responsible approach to the county's finances and operations, and Laura has shown that she will take on anyone to do the right thing for the people of Nassau.

"I am proud to endorse the ticket of Laura Curran, Jack Schnirman, and Dean Bennett. Nassau needs a refresh and we need leaders like Laura, Jack and Dean who can fix all that is wrong right now in our county government."

County Legislator Arnold Drucker released the following statement with regards to his endorsement of Laura Curran:

"I am proud to endorse Laura Curran to be our next County Executive - she will bring the new leadership and fresh vision that Nassau County desperately needs. To continue Republican leadership

in Nassau is simply dangerous to County taxpayers who need to be better protected from the high cost of corruption that has been the status quo for too long in our County. We need someone like Laura who has the independence and courage to make the tough decisions our County needs. Laura is the right candidate with the right vision at the right time, and I look forward to joining her on the campaign trail." After receiving the endorsements, Laura Curran released the following statement:

"I am grateful and honored to be endorsed by my fellow Democrats from the federal to the municipal level. Our Party is united, energized, and eager to turn Nassau County around. After eight years of corruption, scandals, and terrible mismanagement, Nassau County residents are ready for wholesale change and a fresh start. It's time we forged a new path forward, where the government works for all taxpayers, not just the elected and the connected. I am excited to join Congressman Tom Suozzi, and Legislators Drucker and DeRiggi-Whitton on the campaign trail. Together, I know we can end the culture of corruption, take back our government, and finally fix the mess in Nassau County."



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PHOTOS: AGENCIES

# LAUNCHED

## Next, ISRO geared for manned mission

**640**  
tonnes is  
the weight of  
GSLV Mk 3

**3,136**  
weight in kilogram  
of GSAT-19 commu-  
nications satellite



### SELF-DEPENDENT

- The satellite was launched to an altitude of around 179 km above the earth after just over 16 minutes into the flight.
- India can now launch four-tonne satellites on its own instead of paying huge amounts to foreign space agencies.
- It uses two 25-m long S200 solid rocket boosters for propulsion. They were developed at Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre.

THE Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Monday launched its GSAT-19 communication satellite into space using a monster launch vehicle GSLV Mark-III. The GSLV-Mark III, or the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle-Mark III, took off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

The GSLV Mk 3 weighs 640 tonnes and is 43.43 metres tall. Today, it is carrying a satellite but actually GSLV Mk 3 is a rocket that is expected to power India's whole space programme, including travel of Indians into space, in the near future.

The GSLV-Mark III carried a 3,136-kg GSAT-19 communication satellite — the heaviest to be lifted by an Indian rocket till date — to an altitude of around 179 km above the Earth after just over 16 minutes into the flight.

"It is a historic day... Both GSLV Mk-III and GSAT-19 launch have been successful..."



Congratulations to the dedicated scientists of ISRO for the successful launch...

— NARENDRA MODI

Heartiest congratulations to ISRO on the historic launch...

— PRANAB MUKHERJEE

We are looking forward to its (GSAT-19) operations," ISRO chairman AS Kiran Kumar said.

The GSAT-19's successful launch today will now pave the way for the launch of GSAT-11 — a heavier communication satellite — into the space in the near future.

Following the GSLV-Mark III's success, India can now launch four-tonne satellites on its own rocket instead of paying huge amounts of money to foreign space agencies to execute the operation.

*India Today*



# Drinking is Not Always Bad

University of Oxford and University College London scientists studied how participants fared with regular brain function tests and an MRI.

What they noted was that the people who drank the most had the highest risk of hippocampal atrophy, a form of brain damage that can impact spatial navigation and can be associated with memory-loss conditions like Alzheimer's and dementia. The heavier drinkers saw a faster decline in language skills and had poorer white matter integrity, which is crucial to processing thoughts quickly.

Some studies have shown that the brains of heavier drinkers change over time, and not in a good way, but this research suggests that the brains of even moderate drinkers were changing, too. They also had a higher risk of hippocampal atrophy than those who didn't report any drinking at all.

If you're starting to worry and are afraid to drown your sorrows, note that there are many caveats, and more research needs to be done. Some experts suggest you shouldn't change your drinking behavior based on this one study, but the results of these brain scans and memory tests for moderate and lighter drinkers were not what researchers expected.

"We were surprised that the light to moderate drinkers didn't seem to have that protective effect," said study co-author Dr. Anya Topiwala, a clinical lecturer in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Oxford. "These are people who are drinking at levels that many consider social drinkers, so they are not consuming a lot."

Even the heaviest of the drinkers aren't big nightly bingers. The "drank the most" group in this study consumed about 30 units of alcohol a week, with a unit considered to be 10 milliliters or 8 grams of pure alcohol. A medium glass of wine has about two units of alcohol, and so does a pint of some beers, depending on the alcohol content.

If you do the boozy math, the study's heaviest drinkers had a little more than two medium glasses of wine or two beers every night of the week.

The moderate group was drinking about 14 to 21 units of alcohol per week, or about a medium glass of wine each night, plus a little extra on the weekends.

Researchers discovered that

the moderate group was three times more likely to have hippocampal atrophy compared with people who didn't drink at all. However, in the heavy and moderate drinkers, there is no evidence to show how clinically significant this change is, and there is no evidence linking this loss to any negative general cognitive effects, even the ones for which the participants were tested.

With the light drinkers, those who had a small glass of wine a night or up to seven units per week, researchers didn't see a significant difference compared with the abstainers, but they didn't see any protective qualities, either.

The abstainers may be one subject that needs further development, according to Eric Rimm, a professor of medicine and director for the program in cardiovascular epidemiology at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Rimm, who was not involved in the new study, has researched the impact of alcohol for years. He said that although the study has an interesting hypothesis, the abstainer group (22 men and 15 women) is tiny and may be throwing off the results.

If you are a moderate

drinker, he said, you don't have to give up the booze based solely on this report.

"There are so many other lifestyle factors that are not taken into account in this study, like nutrition. Eating whole grains and fruits and vegetables have been linked with slower cognitive decline," Rimm said. Attributing mental decline to alcohol is too limited, he said.

Tom Dening, a professor of dementia research and Director of the Centre for Old Age and Dementia at the University of Nottingham, called the study "most impressive" and suggests it may be a good reminder that "perhaps we should all drink a bit less," but he also questioned its results. People typically are not honest about how much they really drink, he noted.

"People tend to underestimate their actual consumption, partly to appear more respectable," Dening said. "If actual consumption was under-reported, then the apparent adverse effects of modest amounts of alcohol could have been magnified."

Earlier studies have also shown that people tend to drink less as they age, said Carl Heneghan, director of the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine at the University of

Oxford, who was not involved in the new research.

"These type of studies also cannot account for all the (factors), and therefore they cannot, and should not, conclude causation," Heneghan said. "Using all the available evidence provides a much more balanced approach for the public on deciding how much to drink."

Although drinking can increase your cancer risk, Rimm points out that many studies have showed that people who consume moderate amounts have much better overall health. Moderate drinkers have a 30% to 40% reduction in the risk of type 2 diabetes compared with those who don't drink, studies show. There are cardiovascular benefits, and moderate drinkers seem to live longer than abstainers.

Rimm wondered whether there were so few abstainers in the study because, after 30 years, they hadn't lived as long as the others.

When it comes to the brain, this is not the first research to question whether drinking even moderate amounts had an impact, though results have been mixed. One 2008 study found that unlike with the heart, for

which alcohol has protective qualities, the more people drank, the smaller their total brain volume, meaning their brains aged faster.

"An observational study cannot truly prove that alcohol causes dementia, but the findings are in keeping with my clinical experience," said Dr. Elizabeth Coulthard, a consultant senior lecturer in Dementia Neurology at the University of Bristol who was not involved in the new research. "Hopefully this research will contribute to a greater understanding of true safe limits for alcohol consumption that ensure protection from future dementia. Until we have further studies, the good news is that low alcohol intake was not associated with brain or memory decline in this sample."

Topiwala said she and her co-authors want to try to replicate the results, particularly with a more diverse population. Most in this study were men with similar backgrounds, with generally higher IQs than the population as a whole, all factors that can affect the results.

"We think, though, this study asks some really important questions in an area that does have a knowledge gap," Topiwala said.

## Fooled By Russians. Again?

'During my recent trip to the Middle East I stated that there can no longer be funding of Radical Ideology. Leaders pointed to Qatar - look!' he wrote in a pair of tweets, referencing his trip to Riyadh on his first international trip as president.

'So good to see the Saudi Arabia visit with the King and 50 countries already paying off. They said they would take a hard line on funding extremism, and all reference was pointing to Qatar.

'Perhaps this will be the beginning of the end to the horror of terrorism!' he concluded.

US officials said that a team of investigators was sent to Doha, the Qatari capital, to look into the placement of the controversial report.

They believe that Russia hacked the country - which houses one of the US's largest military bases in the region, with 11,000 personnel - in an attempt to cause rifts between the US and its allies. Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman al-Thani echoed those thoughts.

'Whatever has been thrown as an accusation is all based on misinformation and we think that the entire crisis being based on misinformation,' he told CNN.

'Because it was started based on fabricated news, being wedged and being inserted in our national news agency

which was hacked and proved by the FBI.'

Sheikh Saif Bin Ahmed Al-Thani, director of the Qatari Government Communications Office, said that the UK's National Crime Agency was also assisting the investigation.

It's not known whether the hacks have been traced to either Russian criminal organizations or to the Russian security services that were blamed for the US election hacks.

The FBI and the CIA both declined to make an official comment. The diplomatic move Monday threw Qatar into crisis.

As well as being a US ally, the tiny nation has strong relations with Iran, which backs Hezbollah and other terror groups.

It backs rebels fighting Syrian President Bashar-al-Assad, it has backed the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, and it pumps funding into Al Jazeera, which has angered neighboring regimes at times.

'We certainly would encourage the parties to sit down together and address these differences,' Rex Tillerson said Monday, the New York Times reported. The decision to part ways with Qatar was announced by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates.

Yemen, Libya's eastern-based government and the Maldives joined in later - opening up one of the worst rifts in years.

It was revealed on Monday that one of the tipping points for Qatari-Gulf Arab relations could have been a ransom Qatar officials paid earlier this year.

A ransom of up to \$1 billion paid by Qatar to Iranian and Al Qaeda-linked forces in Syria to release kidnapped members of the country's royal family may have been a trigger behind the effort to cut off Doha. Qatar paid the ransom to al-Qaeda affiliate fighting in Syria and Iranian security officials, a person involved in ransom negotiations said in April.

The incident was sparked when the group was kidnapped December 16, 2015 from a desert camp for falcon hunters in southern Iraq.

A person involved in the ransom negotiations said in April that 11 of the captives were members of Qatar's Al Thani ruling family.

As the fallout continued Tuesday, Qatar's state-of-the-art Hamad International was virtually deserted, as many of the nations had blocked air travel to the oil rich country.

Trump called for united efforts against Islamic extremism during a speech on his trip last month.

The US air base in Qatar is critical to military efforts battling ISIS in Iraq and Syria, and to the overall security posture.

# Uncle Sam In The Valley

Recently two American diplomats landed in Srinagar. Nothing unusual as American diplomats had been visiting Kashmir Valley since 1990, when armed insurgency backed by mass -uprising broke out in the region. This time, though, the civil society groups and others who met them say they were "more concerned and worried" about the escalating tension between the armies of India and Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to an intelligence report, the diplomats—David P. Arulanantham, political affairs head of the US Embassy in Delhi, and another diplomat Robert Jacob Duval—stayed at the Lalit Grand Palace, Srinagar, once the Maharaja's residence, on the foothills overlooking Dal lake. The diplomats met a cabinet minister and a senior police official, and also visited the house of a civilian near the Dal. "They knew what is going on along the LoC between the two armies, especially in Rajouri sector," says a Kashmiri interlocutor who met the diplomats. "They also knew about happenings in the Valley and were concerned and worried."

Like in their previous visits, the diplomats ignored the separatist leaders. "It doesn't matter whether American diplomats meet us or not," says Prof Abdul Gani Bhat, former Hurriyat Conference chairman. "What matters is that they hear noises and the noises have started producing music in terms of the urgency in addressing Kashmir." Nikki Haley, the Indian-origin US ambassador to the UN, is one reason behind this growing optimism. In April, Haley generated much expectation in the Valley and controversy in New Delhi when she said the Donald Trump administration was concerned about tension between India and -Pakistan and would not wait for things to go worse. She said the US might offer to mediate between India and Pakistan to "de-escalate" the tension and even Trump might come forward to play an active role.

India dismissed Haley's offer saying, "The government's position for bilateral redressal of all India-Pakistan issues in an environment free of terror and violence hasn't changed."

But for Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, the chairman of Hurriyat's moderate faction, "the indication by America, being the -superpower, to play a positive

role in the region is satisfactory for the people of Kashmir". Pro-independence Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chairman Yasin Malik, who says US mediation had led to JKLF's decision to disarm itself in 1994 and take to unarmed means of agitation, also welcomed Haley's statement. "The statement of US envoy to the UN is welcome. We appreciate it and hope it would be translated into action," says Malik. Shabir Ahmad Shah of Hurriyat's Geelani faction believes US diplomats should engage with the separatists now. During the 1990s, they would meet Shah regularly. "Once George Bush senior invited me for a dinner in New Delhi," he recalls. "I have had meetings with then US ambassador, Frank Wisner and US senator Frank Brown. Whenever they visited Kashmir, they met us."

The separatist leaders have always seen a role for the international community, especially the US and the UN, in the resolution of the Kashmir conflict. "We have been asking them to play their role before it is too late," says Shah, a strong votary of US involvement, who believes the growing international importance of the

Indian economy has forced a shift in US policy. In the post-9/11 world, when the then ambassador Robert Blackwill visited Jammu and Kashmir in 2002, he ignored the separatists and condemned armed insurgency. Unlike his predecessors, Wisner and Richard F. Celeste, who would interact with journalists, visit hospitals and talk to separatist leaders, Blackwill met the then governor G.C. Saxena, the then CM Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and former CM Farooq Abdullah. And he stayed at 15 Corps headquarters in Badamibagh. US interest in Kashmir saw a revival of sorts when Barack Obama, in his presidential campaign in November 2008, said almost the same thing that Haley said this April, suggesting that the US should try to help resolve the Kashmir conflict so that Pakistan can focus on battling Islamist militants on its north-western frontier. Richard Holbroke, whom Obama appointed as special Af-Pak envoy, met Mirwaiz in Dubai, say Hurriyat sources. Then, in 2011, US senator John McCain visited Ladakh and Srinagar. That time the state government spokesman had said the US senator held discussions "on various

important issues" with the then CM Omar Abdullah and Governor N.N. Vohra. The senior Rep-ublican senator was accompanied by two foreign policy advisers and diplomats from the US embassy in New -Delhi. When he called on Vohra, Lt Gen K.T. Parnaik, the then General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (Northern Comm-and), and Lt Gen S.A. Hasnain, the then commander of the army's Srinagar-based 15 Corps, were also present. In Haley, the separatist leaders see a Robin Raphel moment. "Haley's statement indicated that the Trump administration understands the threat of an unresolved Kashmir issue," says Prof Bhat. In 1993, when the then US president Bill Clinton appointed Raphel as the first Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, she was already a frequent traveller to the Valley while serving at the US embassy in Delhi since 1991. She had described Kashmir as dispute at a diplomatic event and suggested a referendum, causing quite a storm in Delhi. Activists in the Valley still remember Raphel fondly. "During one of her visits, some lawyers started telling her what happened in 1947 in Kashmir.

She cut them short, saying, 'I know what happened in 1947, you tell me what is happening now,'" recalls a senior lawyer. Raphel used to meet separatist leaders regularly. When the All Parties Hurriyat Conference was formed on July 31, 1993, many believed she had a role in its formation as she was a strong advocate of having such a conglomerate. However, Shabir Shah says, "I don't think the US had any role in the formation of Hurriyat Conference." This January, the visit of "India expert" Lisa Curtis, seen as close to the Republican Party, to Srinagar created some noise. She met CM Mehbooba Mufti, commander of 15 Corps and Mirwaiz. Some analysts in Srinagar described her visit as "Trump's mission Kashmir". Now that Curtis is deputy assistant to the president and senior director for South and Central Asia at the National Security Council, many presume Americans are interested once again in matters Kashmir. "The Americans cannot ignore Kashmir anymore," says Prof Bhat. "The Trump administration has accepted that it is a problem. China too is saying it. Remember, CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) is going through the Kashmir region. The involvement of powerful countries in the region and the shaping of new alliances have made it urgent to resolve Kashmir."

## Macy's in Big Trouble ?

to sell off and ended the day down more than 8 percent. Other department store stocks also were trading lower on the news, including J.C. Penney, which closed down 4 percent, and Kohl's, which ended the day down nearly 6 percent.

Hoguet and Macy's new CEO Jeff Gennette were meeting with analysts to discuss the department store's future strategy. It's Macy's first analyst meeting in four years, and it comes little more than 10 weeks into Gennette's tenure.

"I have tremendous faith in the power of the Macy's brand and brand's ability to strengthen its bond with customers," Gennette said as he shared his personal observations as a 34-year veteran of the department store. "We don't have all the answers, but we are working hard to figure it out."

Gennette further detailed his "North Star Strategy," which was shared with Macy's 140,000 employees in March. He used the five points of the Macy's star logo to illustrate his strategy on changing marketing, merchandise, experience, the interplay between stores and online and lastly "what's new, what's next," or where Macy's is experimenting.

"We don't always communicate

effectively with our customers," Gennette said, as he explained that Macy's is tweaking its marketing message, adding that the retailer doesn't "get credit for our great pricing."

He said while Macy's will continue to be a department store that offers special event sales, it's working on simplifying the pricing for shoppers and targeting different shopper groups for different events.

Later in the year, the department store will begin to roll out a new loyalty program but didn't share much on its details just yet.

Macy's has been changing the merchandise it offers, both cutting back the amount by eliminating some duplicate items and focusing on its more trendy fashion items than basic clothing.

Macy's is also working on improving its exclusive brands like Tommy Hilfiger and DKNY and its private label brands like I.N.C., Hotel Collection and Martha Stewart. Since these brands can only be purchased at Macy's, they can also be more profitable because there aren't identical items to comparing pricing with at other retailers.

Right now its exclusive and private label brands together represent 29 percent of sales.

Gennette's goal is for that to grow to 40 percent by 2020. As the percentage of private and exclusive products grows, so too will Macy's gross margin. The retailer also said it has added "BackStage" sections to 26 stores, and plans to add 19 more this year. The goal of these sections is to offer shoppers a similar pricing structure to what they would find at an off-price retailer like T.J. Maxx or Burlington. To complete the experience, some merchandise categories with BackStage are supplemental, including home décor and beauty options, not found in the rest of the store. Gennette explained that while the addition of a Backstage section in Macy's stores is lifting net sales by an average of 6.4 percent in locations opened in 2017 and 4.6 percent lift in those opened in 2016, it hasn't yet brought in new customers. Instead, it is generating additional trips to stores.

Off-price retailer have been on challenge for Macy's. The other has been the shift of consumers to buying more online and spending less time at the mall. When asked about how Macy's plans to combat Amazon as it grows its expertise and share in apparel, Gennette replied: "There is a place for both Macy's

and Amazon to succeed with our customer. "As [Amazon] develop(s) competency in apparel we will stay ahead in fashion," he said.

But right now, Macy's is struggling. The retailer's stock has tumbled more than 34 percent over the past year but is down 37 percent in the year-to-date period. "While we appreciate these strategies, [near-term] fundamentals matter most to us, which are challenged with declining comps and deteriorating margins," said Randal Konik, an analyst at Jefferies, in a research note, following the meeting.

Konik said he remains cautious given the industry's headwinds, and that it will be difficult for Macy's to improve its margins (and boost its profitability) when it's having to invest in long-term initiatives. "The lack of upward EPS revisions, offset by further real estate monetization, keep us hold-rated," he said. In the fiscal first quarter, Macy's reported a 39 percent drop in quarterly profit. The earnings were hurt by slumping sales and higher inventory, which weighed on its margins. Same-store sales — a closely watched metric for retailers — fell 4.6 percent during the quarter.



# WINZONE REALTY INC.

# Baldev Singh



146-20 34 av. Flushing NY 11354

Cell: 917 224 7395

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

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# 5 Reasons This Still Isn't Watergate

*Read this before you start printing tickets for an impeachment trial.*

(Agencies) Ever since President Donald Trump fired FBI Director James Comey—precipitating the appointment of a special prosecutor to continue the investigation into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election, and hijacking several weeks' worth of news cycles—the president has hiked far into the land of scandal, and the parallels to Watergate have grown more striking by the day.

Trump's political opponents have been quick to make comparisons: A president paranoid about loyalty and victory tries to obstruct an investigation into his associates once it reaches too close to the Oval Office. They see Comey's firing as Trump's own version of Nixon's "Saturday Night Massacre" (only this time, nobody at the Justice Department resigned in protest).

Trump himself has seemed to welcome the analogy, lobbing his own Nixon-era allusions: hinting at the existence of "tapes" recording his ostensibly private White House meetings with Comey; insisting that all Russia-related allegations are part of a scurrilous "witch hunt" dreamed up by his opponents; invoking the "silent majority" and "forgotten Americans" he's fighting for; contending that the frequency of leaks is the real scandal; casting the news media in the role of his mortal enemy. Trump's purpose for doing all of this remains, like many of his actions, mysterious.

But aside from the parallels raised intentionally, any analogs are generally coincidence. History sometimes rhymes, says the old axiom, but it never repeats; it can instruct, yet people and times change drastically.

This isn't Watergate—at least not yet. There are major differences between the two scandals. Some favor Trump; others do not. But it is best to keep them in mind regardless—and to remember how quickly and drastically things can change in U.S. politics—before the Senate starts printing tickets for an impeachment trial.

**Difference No. 1: During Watergate, Republicans Didn't Control Congress**

Unlike Trump, whose fellow Republicans currently control the House and Senate, Richard Nixon faced a Democratic Congress in 1973 and 1974.

Ironically, this was partly Nixon's doing. To pad his historic landslide in the 1972 election, he and his aides had purposefully run a campaign independent of other Republicans' efforts and refused congressional candidates' requests for aid.



Among those asking the White House to help was House Minority Leader Gerald Ford. The Michigan Republican believed that if Nixon were willing to invest in strengthening his coattails, Ford could well emerge as the speaker of the House. Nixon was not moved: Until his claim on history was secured, the president ordered his staff to take a "very low profile" in the House and Senate races that fall. "We do nothing at this point," White House chief of staff H.R. Haldeman told the Nixon staff in September 1972.

In a conversation before he died, Ford told me that this was one of Nixon's biggest mistakes—and emblematic of the 37th president's selfishness and insecurity. With the House—and the House Judiciary Committee—in Republican hands, and a few more Republican senators as jurors, the outcome might have been different. Today, however, Congress is on Trump's side. It will be hard enough for the opposition to marshal the simple majority in the House required to impeach a president. But even if it does, when the impeachment trial moves to the Senate, 67 votes are required to convict a president and remove him from office. Presidents Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton both survived after being impeached by the House. If Republicans continue to hold majorities in the House and Senate, it is difficult to imagine Trump becoming the first American president to be both impeached and convicted.

It's also possible, though, that some in his own party will eventually turn on Trump. That happened to Nixon when the Republican "three wise men"—Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona, Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania and House Minority Leader James Rhodes of Arizona—conveyed to him in the

hours before he resigned that he would lose a Senate trial.

Once Nixon lost a Supreme Court battle over custody of his White House tapes, and the world was treated to the recording of the president instructing Haldeman to use the CIA to obstruct the FBI investigation into Watergate—on the so-called "smoking gun" tape of June 23, 1972—the crumbling of Republican support accelerated.

Today's Republican lawmakers, donors and voters may be similarly "troubled." Trump has refused to govern his behavior and remains a loose cannon. It worked for him in the campaign—it helped give the Manhattan media hound his bona fides as an "outsider"—but in the eyes of many Americans, his persona doesn't meet the solemnity and duties of the Oval Office.

One may concoct a scenario in which, alarmed at the prospect of losing the House and blowing the advantage conveyed by a favorable card of Senate races in 2018, today's Republicans call on Trump to step down. If that happened, Nixon would be an apt comparison: Trump would become the second U.S. president to resign in disgrace. But we're a long way from that happening.

**Difference No. 2: Our Media Environment Is Very Different**  
In the weeks after the Watergate burglars were arrested in the Democratic National Committee's headquarters in June 1972, Nixon profited from quite generous press coverage that focused on his domestic policy agenda and international stewardship while approaching the Watergate break-in as a minor story disconnected from the president.

For the most part, the Washington press corps disdained the amateurism and ideological militancy of Democrat George McGovern's campaign. In No-

vember, Nixon won every state save for liberal Massachusetts, a feat all but unimaginable had the media lined up against him.

Bob Woodward, Carl Bernstein, Ben Bradlee and the others at the Washington Post became legends because they were outliers. The Post wasn't all alone: Sandy Smith at Time magazine, Jack Nelson and Ron Ostrow at the Los Angeles Times, and a few other newsmen had big Watergate-related scoops in 1972. But most of the top columnists, editors and newsmen in Washington just didn't believe that Nixon could be so stupid as to be involved with a bugging and a break-in. The Post itself had skeptics, and proceeded with caution.

Then Judge John Sirica blew the case open. Influenced by the Post's reporting, he threatened the burglars with oppressive prison sentences unless they came clean about their superiors' involvement in the Watergate caper. Burglar James McCord, a security expert for the Nixon campaign, was the first to crack. In March 1973, he confessed to Sirica, and then to Senate investigators, that the break-in had been ordered by the campaign and White House higher-ups, who were covering up the crime. The frenzy was on. "Watergate was a bloody body in the water. And every other newspaper became a shark," the Post managing editor, Howard Simons, later remembered. "They would take a bite, and swallow it without chewing."

In the White House, the din was stunning, as the media corrected for its earlier lassitude. Nixon and his aides were staggered. "If I had to depend for my information on the Washington Post, the New York Times and CBS, I'd hate the son of a bitch too," Nixon speechwriter Ray Price told a friend.

Trump's relationship with the media has followed a similar pattern. He benefited from blanket coverage, much of it servile, during the presidential primary season—but now is routinely bludgeoned in the press.

The big difference between Watergate and Kremlingate? Notably absent, in Nixon's day, was today's conservative media. Nothing like it existed at the time. In fact, today's conservative media partly grew out of the lessons the right took away from Watergate. Fox, Breitbart and other right-leaning outlets now act as an umbrella for Trump, shielding his base from the most critical reporting.

This bodes well for Trump. But, in the end, news is news. The Trump presidency is a big, fascinating story, and so are his woes. If the right-wing media ignore his travails, viewers and readers may turn elsewhere to find out what is going on. At Fox, in particular, the departure of CEO Roger Ailes and prime-time star Bill O'Reilly opens a door for newer, younger leadership, which may want to stanch the drain of viewers by lifting the blackout and entering, with gusto, the fray. **Difference No. 3: Congress Didn't Face a Backlash Over Impeachment**

Democrats in Congress like House Majority Leader Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, the myriad independent counsels and the press all emerged as heroes in 1974. Books and movies glorified their performances, as in the Oscar-nominated "All the President's Men" and Jimmy Breslin's paean to O'Neill's role in the impeachment process, "How the Good Guys Finally Won." Representatives like Democrat Paul Sarbanes of Maryland and Republican William Cohen of Maine used the scandal as a platform for victorious Senate races. Those who supported impeachment didn't face a backlash.

Not so in 1998, the most recent time that Congress seriously weighed impeaching a president.

The effort to drive Bill Clinton from office was seen by the public and many in the media for what it was: a partisan, tawdry, overreaching display by congressional conservatives and their prudish Javert, independent counsel Kenneth Starr. The Republicans suffered in the 1998 midterm elections, losing seats in the House and causing Speaker Newt Gingrich to resign. The independent counsel statute was discredited and allowed to expire.

# Thinking the Unthinkable With North Korea



President Trump has promised the world that he will “solve” the North Korean nuclear crisis before the country’s leader, Kim Jong-un, can screw a nuclear weapon onto a missile that can reach San Francisco or Los Angeles, a grim feat that experts say he is on track to achieve during Mr. Trump’s first term. The president is right to point out that his predecessors succeeded only at kicking this problem down the road. But Mr. Trump hasn’t said how he plans to solve the problem.

History suggests that as Mr. Trump comes to understand the risks involved, he will settle for constraints on North Korean testing to stop it from being able to reach the American homeland with a nuclear-tipped missile. President Xi Jinping of China pointed him in that direction at the Mar-a-Lago summit meeting in April, proposing a freeze on United States military activity on the Korean Peninsula in exchange for suspending North Korea’s long-range missile tests.

An approach that requires the United States to accept what it longed deemed “unacceptable” will strike many people in Washington as irresponsible. Is United States national security really strengthened if a 33-year-old dictator with a record of executing his enemies and defying red lines is left with an

arsenal of 20 warheads and missiles that can deliver nuclear strikes against Seoul and Tokyo? It would be a hard pill to swallow, as Secretary of State Rex Tillerson acknowledged in South Korea two months ago, when he noted that such a freeze was “premature” since it does not readily solve anything.

But as Mr. Trump and Mr. Tillerson review the choices that Mao Zedong made in 1950, and John F. Kennedy made in 1962, they will come to appreciate the risks of cornering an adversary — and find the clearest clues for a deal that Washington and Beijing could support.

Start with Mao. In the Korean War, American policy makers assumed that if the United States went to the defense of South Korea, a China exhausted by years of civil war would not respond. They were wrong. Mao did not hesitate to unleash a huge counterattack on a nuclear superpower when United States soldiers in Korea neared the Chinese border. Overwhelmed, Gen. Douglas MacArthur’s men retreated.

Could that happen again? Maybe. The United States intelligence community believes that American military strikes against North Korea would almost certainly trigger retaliation that would kill up to a million citizens in Seoul. The South Korean government would respond with a full-

scale attack on the North. The United States is committed to support South Korea. But would Mr. Xi ever allow the Korean Peninsula to be reunified by a government allied with the United States?

And history is working against us. A Harvard study I led found 16 cases over the past 500 years when a rising power threatened to displace a ruling power. In 12 of them, the outcome was war. Today, as an unstoppable rising China rivals an immovable reigning United States, this dynamic — which I call Thucydides’s Trap — amplifies risks.

What we see unfolding now is a Cuban Missile Crisis in slow motion. In the most dangerous moment in recorded history, to prevent the Soviet Union from placing nuclear-tipped missiles in Cuba, John F. Kennedy was prepared to take what he confessed was a one-in-three chance of a nuclear

war with the Soviet Union. What risk will Mr. Trump run to prevent North Korea acquiring the ability to strike the United States?

As Kennedy approached the final hour in which he would have to attack, risking nuclear war, or acquiesce to a Soviet nuclear presence in America’s backyard, both he and Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet leader, began to examine previously unthinkable options. In the popular American narrative, Khrushchev capitulated. But we now know that both sides blinked. Kennedy agreed secretly to remove American missiles from Turkey, an option he and his advisers had earlier rejected because of its impact on NATO — and because he would look weak.

Kennedy’s central lesson from the crisis still offers wise counsel for Mr. Trump. “Above all,” Kennedy said, “while defending our own vital interests, nuclear pow-

ers must avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating retreat or a nuclear war.”

At Mar-a-Lago, Mr. Xi reportedly urged Mr. Trump to accept “suspension for suspension.” For Mr. Kim’s freeze on additional ICBM tests, the United States could postpone or modify military exercises in the region. Some people in Mr. Xi’s circle have even proposed that the United States and China consider a new East Asian security architecture.

Indeed, they note that America’s presence in South Korea is an accident of history. Had North Korea not attacked the South in 1950, the United States would never have intervened. So if China were to assume responsibility for removing the Kim regime, denuclearizing the peninsula under a government in Seoul friendly to



# Venezuela Needs International Intervention

The huge protests rocking Venezuela, which began in early April, were triggered by a decision of its Supreme Court to assume the powers of Venezuela's National Assembly in violation of the country's Constitution. In response, President Nicolás Maduro has responded with an iron fist. More than 50 people have been killed, 1,000 injured, and 2,700 arrested, and that last figure doesn't include the country's more than 180 long-term political prisoners. The Organization of American States is considering action against Venezuela under its Democratic Charter for Mr. Maduro's brazen transition to authoritarian rule.

But the international community also has a responsibility to protect the people of Venezuela and to respond urgently to its economic and humanitarian crisis.

It is hard to overstate the severity of the suffering of the 31 million people of this once-rich country. Today Venezuela faces acute hyperinflation, which has led to widespread shortages of basic supplies, including food. A recent national study showed that an astonishing 75 percent of Venezuelans have lost 19 pounds in weight from food shortages and one-third of Venezuela's people, some 10 million, are eating no more than two meals a day.

The Venezuela Medical Federation estimates that hospitals lack 98 percent of needed medical supplies and 85 of 100 drugs are totally unavailable. As a result, in the last year, some 11,500 infants died before their first birthday and maternal mortality rose 65 percent. Cases of malaria are up 76 percent and diphtheria, which had been eradicated 20 years ago, has returned to Venezuela. Mr. Maduro fired his health minister after she recently made these statistics public.

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Despite the severity of the situation, the government has retreated into angry denial rather than seek urgent assistance. Mr. Maduro lashed out at President Trump, telling him to "Get your pig hands out of here." And Foreign Minister Delcy Rodríguez recently derided the notion of humanitarian assistance as "a theory constructed by the Pentagon so that the U.S. can intervene."

Even worse, when aid has nonetheless arrived in the country, it has been regularly confiscated by the military or police before it could be delivered to the people.

The world isn't even close to being ready to respond at the scale required, even if access was available. This must be remedied — and fast. First,

the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, should appoint a humanitarian coordinator to oversee preparations for assisting the people of Venezuela and begin mobilizing financial and other support from donors. Second, the United Nations should publicly insist on being given access to Venezuela to conduct a comprehensive assessment of its needs. And finally, the international community must demand that Mr. Maduro not only allow assistance to enter Venezuela, but that it be distributed exclusively by reputable international organizations on the basis of need.

While aid cannot be provided forcibly without Mr. Maduro's assent as long as he maintains effective control over

Venezuela's borders, the world must develop and be prepared to execute a major relief operation the moment permission is granted or otherwise becomes possible.

Furthermore, in 2005 the United Nations adopted the doctrine of the "responsibility to protect," which built on existing international legal obligations of states to reaffirm that each state's sovereignty carries a duty to protect its citizens from mass atrocities, including crimes against humanity — and that if a state is committing atrocities, the international community must respond, through action by the Security Council if necessary. By his policy choices, Mr. Maduro has created and is dramatically magnifying the enormous human tragedy in Venezuela. This conduct

constitutes a prima facie case of crimes against humanity under the category of "other inhumane acts" that intentionally cause great suffering or death.

While the Organization of American States focuses on addressing the political crisis in Venezuela, the United Nations and the world must pressure Mr. Maduro to allow outsiders access to ameliorate the suffering of the Venezuelan people and also send an unmistakable signal that the commission of mass atrocities will have severe consequences.

Venezuela is part of the International Criminal Court, which has the jurisdiction to investigate, prosecute and imprison anyone committing mass atrocity crimes within its borders. As such, its prosecutor,

Fatou Bensouda, should immediately open an investigation into the conduct of Mr. Maduro and other senior government officials with regard to whether they have culpability in crimes against humanity. The initial focus of such an investigation should be on the widespread and systematic refusal of access for humanitarian assistance to civilian populations.

But with the death toll and mass detentions in response to the nonviolent protests mounting swiftly, opening such an investigation would serve another important purpose. It would tell senior leaders in the military and police at this very dangerous moment in Venezuela's history that if they follow orders to massacre hundreds or thousands to keep Mr. Maduro



# It is all too easy to shoot the messenger

(Agencies) The responsibility of telling the truth to make a living is carried out by vernacular journalists on their own. They have to work in terrain and circumstances that are often labelled as 'jungle raj' by their urban brethren.

On May 30, Hindi journalism will celebrate its 188th birth anniversary. On birthdays the convention is to look back and take stock of your achievements. On this occasion, why shouldn't one look at the entire language press in the country?

Newsmen are grappling with an unprecedented credibility crisis these days. Since last week the disciples of a jailed godman have laid siege to the Twitter accounts of journalists, lawyers and some other people. They began by asking why their guru was behind bars. They alleged it was happening because of the media and they claimed the media had been bribed for carrying out such misdeeds. One of the guru's imbecile followers was asked: Does the judiciary pronounce its decisions based on the media's reports?

As expected, the gang of locusts began taking swipes at the judiciary itself. I felt those who are attacking the essential pillars of democracy should be left to their devices. But why don't they themselves reveal the names of the people who've bribed these journalists and the journalists who've taken the bribe. What evidence do they have against the media and the judiciary? If they have the evidence, why don't they put it forward? I know that in response they can just spew profanities because these anonymous conspiracy theorists make allegations, without the backing of facts.

They should also be asked about the girl, allegedly raped by this man, who has now grown up. Her family and she have been punished for a number of years for raising their voices against him. At an age when she should be

reading, writing and learning, she has been confined indoors. Her family has been subject to victim-shaming. Not just this, who is behind the murder of one of the witnesses and a life-threatening assault on another?

Godmen tell us that the truth cannot be destroyed. If not today the facts will come out tomorrow. Why can't they wait till then? Why display such impetuosity? The issue that arises is whether the media would have treated the matter in a similar fashion had the accused been a journalist from their own fraternity? Here are some examples. An editor who was a flag-bearer of investigative journalism was accused of harassment by a lady colleague. As a result, he had to spend many months behind bars. The editor of a TV channel went to jail for allegedly extorting money from an MP of the last Lok Sabha, belonging to the

then ruling party. Some media houses as well as businessmen who made meteoric rises in their profession went the same way. In each of these cases, the media kept exposing them with unflagging energy. Point to note: the kind of debate that journalists indulged, in all these cases, was not done even by lawyers in courts.

Clearly, if one of us indulges in any immoral behaviour, the entire community will unite to challenge the person. Why don't the self-styled guardians of morality take lessons from this?

The social media explosion has begun to dismantle all established norms. Where does the media stand a chance against it — religion, deities, power structures, styles of governance, nations, tribes and clans — have all fallen victim to this epidemic. Unfortunately, these social media soldiers are bent upon de-



stroying the edifices of propriety built by their forefathers. The responsibilities of every individual increase in such a scenario. The media and its supporters are no exception to this.

For journalists — neither bestowed with any special rights by the constitution nor with any special resources by the society — the times are particularly challenging. Governments, politicians and devotees of power have always been inimical to them. Who wants to look at

one's own reflection in the mirror? That's why there are attempts to shatter the mirror from time to time. With respect I would like to state that the English media is relatively luckier than its vernacular counterparts because English is still the language of the cities. The responsibility of telling the truth to make a living is carried out by vernacular journalists on their own. They have to work in terrain and circumstances that are often labelled as 'jungle raj' by

their urban brethren. The venomous backlash for this is also borne by the language press. The question is: What does society give in return to journalists who make numerous sacrifices trying to uphold societal values? Our fellow travellers in society tolerate the excesses of tyrants but pretend to be oblivious to the excesses on journalists and unblinkingly move on. I object to their indifference.

## 20 Days in Marriage 20 yrs for Divorce *Man Lived in Separation for two decades after learning about wife's arrest in fraud case; court cites new ground for*



(Agencies) A city court has granted divorce in a rare case to a couple following a near 20-year legal battle between the husband and wife who were together for less than a month.

**T h i r u m o o r t h y** Ramakrishnan, 53, and Subhashini Bala Subramanian, 49, got married in 1998 but separated after 20 days when the wife was arrested in a fraud case, which she claimed she was wrongly implicated in.

The couple were then locked in a court fight over the separation for more than 19 years until the



dispute was brought to a close this week. While delivering the order, principal judge of the family court Dharmesh Sharma observed that the slow pace of the justice delivery system 'casts a very sickening feeling in my mind' but added that the parties and their counsel too were perhaps responsible for the delay. Millions of cases are pending in India's courts, draining litigants of resources and pointing

towards an urgent need for more judges and judicial reforms.

Courts too are encouraging such couples to first try mediation instead of getting into lengthy legal fights. The judge said: 'Unfortunately as it may look, this case is coming up for final decision after 19 years of its institution initially before the family court. 'Most unfortunate aspect of this case is that the parties cohabited hardly for about 20 days before calamity

struck the newly married bride, having pernicious repercussions on the mindset of her husband. 'The marriage has irretrievably broken down despite the fact the parties are quite educated and hail from an affluent class of the society, and I only wish they should have settled their differences in an amicable manner instead of suffering the agony of a protracted matrimonial litigation.' The couple tied the knot after meeting through a matrimonial advertisement in a newspaper. But police arrested the wife in Ooty when the newlyweds were on their way to visit South Indian temples as part of a custom that says a couple can't consummate their

marriage unless they have taken their blessings at these shrines. She was allegedly involved in a case of misappropriation of funds. The woman, who was then 29, was brought to Delhi for trial. On the last day of the remand, she told her husband that she was carrying his child. The man moved court, seeking dissolution of marriage on the grounds that following the arrest of his wife, he was interrogated by the police on a number of occasions. Inquiries were conducted at his workplace and his accounts were checked, causing deep mental and physical cruelty, making him subject of ridicule among his friends, colleagues and relatives, he argued.

**Protracted legal battles in our system end up destroying a person's life. A marriage going bad is an accident. Had the divorce been granted in a year or two, my client could have remarried, led a normal life.**

— Subhash Chauhan, counsel for the husband



# THE FAULT IN OUR APPS



**O**UR mobile phones can reveal a lot about ourselves: where we live and work; who our family, friends and acquaintances are; how (and even what) we communicate with them; and our personal habits. With all the information stored on them, it isn't surprising that mobile device users take steps to protect their privacy, like using PINs or passcodes to unlock their phones.

The research that Narseo Vallina-Rodriguez, Research Assistant Professor at IMDEA Networks Institute in Spain and Srikanth Sundaresan, Research Fellow in Computer Science at Princeton University (and their colleagues) are doing identifies a significant threat that most people miss: More than 70 per cent of smartphone apps are reporting personal data to third-party tracking companies like Google Analytics or Crashlytics.

When people install a new Android or iOS app, it asks the user's permission before accessing personal information. Generally speaking, this is positive. And some of the information these apps are collecting are necessary for them to work properly: A map app wouldn't be nearly as useful if it couldn't use GPS data to get a location. But once an app has permission to collect that information, it can share your data with anyone the app's developer wants to.

An app doesn't just collect data to use on the phone itself. Mapping apps, for example, send your location to a server run by the app's developer to calculate directions from where you are to a desired destination. The app can send data elsewhere, too.

As with websites, many mobile apps are written by combining various functions, pre-coded by other developers and companies, in what are called third-party libraries. These libraries help developers track user engagement, connect with social media and earn money by displaying ads.

However, in addition to their valuable help, most libraries also collect

sensitive data and send it to their online servers or to another company altogether. Successful library authors may develop detailed digital profiles of users.

The research by Vallina-Rodriguez and Sundaresan seeks to reveal how much data are potentially being collected without users' knowledge, and to give users more control over their data.

To get a picture of what data are being

collected and transmitted from people's smartphones, a free Android app called the Lumen Privacy Monitor was developed. The app analyses the traffic apps send out, to report which applications and online services actively harvest personal data. Because Lumen is about transparency, a phone user can see the information installed apps collect in real time and with whom they share these data.

In particular,

Lumen keeps track of which apps are running on users' devices, whether they are sending privacy-sensitive data out of the phone, what internet sites they send data to and what types of personal information each app sends to each site.

It was discovered that 598 Internet sites are likely to be tracking users for advertising purposes, including social media services like Facebook, large internet companies like Google and Yahoo, and online marketing companies under the umbrella of internet service providers. Also, it was found that more than 70 per cent of the apps

that were studied connected to at least one tracker, and 15 per cent of them connected to five or more trackers. One in every four trackers harvested at least one unique device identifier, such as the phone number or its device-specific unique 15-digit IMEI number. Unique identifiers are crucial for online tracking services because they can connect different types of personal data provided by different apps to a single person or device.

Most users, even privacy-savvy ones, are unaware of those hidden practices.

— Daily Mail

*The apps we use in our mobile phones often report personal data to other companies*



## SMARTPHONE THUMB PROBLEM

A condition that used to only be seen in factory workers is affecting smartphone users in increasing numbers, experts have warned. It's called 'smartphone thumb', and it's caused by the repetitive motion of typing on a smartphone keyboard.

The movements that ones' thumbs have to make while texting require force, and researchers say that this abnormal thumb bone movement could be causing pain and eventual arthritis. The formal name for smartphone thumb is tendinitis — an inflammation or irritation of a tendon, a thick cord that

attaches bone to muscle, according to WebMD. It's most often caused by repetitive, minor impact on the area, or it can be caused by a sudden, more serious injury. It can be caused by gardening, house cleaning, painting and other physical activities involving repetitive arm and hand motions, including texting.

Dr Kristin Zhao, a biomedical engineer at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, told CBS Minnesota that smartphone thumb could be caused by the joint becoming loose and lax, which causes the bones to move differently than they would normally.

Once an app has permission to collect information, it can share your data with anyone

## New Launches

### ASUS ZENFONE LIVE

On the front, the ZenFone Live comes with curved 2.5D glass and a 5-inch 720p display. It also features Android 6.0.1 Marshmallow (based ZenUI), a quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 400 processor clubbed with mere 2 gigs of RAM and only 16GB of internal memory (only 10GB of it will be available for the end-users). The phone, priced at ₹9,999m, also supports an expandable storage of up to 128GB via a micro-SD card slot, 4G LTE (VoLTE-ready) and USB OTG.



### IPAD 2017

The 2017 iPad is a spiritual successor to the 4th-gen iPad, which was released in 2012. It has new and updated internals packed in the body of the original iPad Air at a price which is the cheapest yet for a full-sized iPad. The iPad 2017 comes with a design reminiscent of the original iPad Air. It is thicker (7.5mm vs 6.1mm) than the iPad Air 2, which is somewhat compensated by the bigger battery. The Wi-Fi 32GB model retails for ₹28,900, the Wi-Fi 128GB for ₹36,900, the 32GB Wi-Fi + Cellular for ₹39,900 and the 128GB Wi-Fi + Cellular for a substantial ₹47,900.



### TECNO i7

At ₹14,999, the Tecno i7 has a 16MP front camera, front LED flash, earpiece and primary sensors above the display. In terms of specifications, the Tecno i7 packs quite the punch. It comes with 4GB of RAM, a 4,000mAh battery, 32GB of internal storage which can be expanded via a microSD card and a 5.5-inch fullHD display. The Tecno i7 also comes with a 13MP camera at the rear with a Quad LED flash. The battery life is one of the strong points, featuring a 4,000mAh battery with fast charging support.





## The 18th Edition of IIFA Weekend & Awards in New York is all set to bwe the grandest celebration of india film, music, fashion and daznce from 13th-15 july 2017

(By Vijay Shah) also purchase the tickets at Mumbai, 1st June 2017: The International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) announced the 18th Edition of the most spectacular celebration of Indian Cinema worldwide that will be hosted in the city of New York, from 13th – 15th July 2017 this year! The NEXA IIFA Awards Powered by VIVO is among the most coveted and highly anticipated award celebration that honors the very best of Indian Cinema with the highest level of achievement seen through the glamorous IIFA statuette.

With the excitement growing across the world, people can now get that hot seat for the spectacular 2017 IIFA Weekend & Awards at New York events to be hosted at MetLife Stadium as tickets are LIVE to the general public available online only at ticketmaster.com or by calling (800) 745-3000 or by simply clicking the 'Buy Tickets Tab' on the official IIFA website <http://www.iifa.com/>. Fans can

also purchase the tickets at MetLife Stadium Box Office (Box Office hours: M – F, 11am – 5pm). For VIP Club Experiences, e-mail us at [vipclub@iifa.com](mailto:vipclub@iifa.com). IIFA has a special treat for its fans, "The Double Dhamaka Offer". Get two shows for the price of one. Buy any IIFA Awards premium seating tickets for Ground Level and Level 100 seats and get free tickets to IIFA Rocks.

The NEXA IIFA Awards will air exclusively on COLORS – the Broadcast Partners, with the Title Sponsor NEXA, Official Airline Partner- AIR INDIA and Powered by VIVO.

To reveal some of the exciting details about the upcoming NEXA IIFA AWARDS POWERED BY VIVO, Bollywood's superstar Salman Khan was joined by leading ladies Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt at the official IIFA press conference in Mumbai today at Taj Lands End. Additionally, encapsulating IIFA's aim to build bridges across

cinemas, businesses, communities and nations, creating everyone's dream: "One People. One World" a LIVE Video Conference with 5 Cities globally- New York, London, Dubai, Chicago and Houston was also held post the press conference. Commenting on the occasion, Salman Khan says, be "It always feels great to be a part of the IIFA Movement and I look forward to the 2017 IIFA Awards."

Katrina Kaif added saying, "I'm really excited and looking forward to performing at the IIFA Awards this year. It is such a great platform that not only showcases the celebration of cinema globally, but also it's a great opportunity for us to reach out to our fans worldwide. I am excited that this year, it is happening in one of my favorite cities – New York!"

Speaking about her debut performance at IIFA, Alia Bhatt shares, "I am very excited to be a part of IIFA 2017, as this is going to be my debut at the IIFA

### The star-studded NEXA IIFA Awards Powered by VIVO to witness power-packed performances by Bollywood Megastars Salman Khan, Alia Bhatt, Katrina Kaif, Shahid Kapoor, Sushant Singh Rajput, Kriti Sanon among others

Festival after 5 years in the industry. I am super excited that IIFA is being held in the beautiful city of New York. IIFA is all about togetherness and the celebration of the Indian cinema globally and I eagerly look forward to this celebration".

IIFA Rocks has always been a star-studded affair with a mélange of glitz, glamour and star power. It is a celebrated global event that has been growing each year. This year, IIFA Rocks will celebrate 25 years of A. R. Rahman in the industry. The show is set to feature a never seen before medley of musicians that includes Diljit Dosanjh, Benny Dayal, Javed Ali, Neeti Mohan, Jonita Gandhi and Haricharan Seshadri. IIFA Rocks will be hosted by the charismatic duo Riteish Deshmukh and Manish Paul. The highly anticipated

NEXA IIFA Awards Powered by VIVO will witness stunning performances from Bollywood megastars such as Salman Khan, Alia Bhatt, Katrina Kaif, Shahid Kapoor, Sushant Singh Rajput and Kriti Sanon, to name a few. The host for NEXA IIFA Awards Powered by Vivo is the talented Karan Johar.

The International Indian Film Academy recently announced the list of winners in the Technical categories of India's most prominent awards celebration. Leading films Ae Dil Hai Mushkil, Pink, Fan, Sultan, Kapoor & Sons, Mirzya and Sultan took home the prestigious IIFA Statuette as they were awarded for their excellence in the technical field.

The popular category nominations are available for the global audience to participate in the voting process. The IIFA Global Voting went LIVE on 20th May 2017 and will be open till 18th June 2017. The final winners of the IIFA Awards are revealed on the night of the Awards ceremony. The results are surrounded by secrecy and the credibility of the voting process is one of the key parameters of this prestigious award.

Wizcraft International Entertainment Pvt Ltd, known for pioneering

many extravagant and mesmerizing events in India and across the world, conceptualized IIFA 17 years ago, by the creative genius of the trio of masterminds - Andre Timmins, Viraf Sarkari and Sabbas Joseph. The vision was to celebrate Indian cinema outside India; and IIFA (International Indian Film Academy) the flagship brand is the accomplishment of that dream. IIFA is dedicated to building bridges across cinema, businesses, communities and nations, creating everyone's dream: "One People. One World". The journey over these past 17 years has seen the brand evolve from a one night affair to a weekend, which celebrates and hosts various events and activities related to cinema, business, culture, music and fashion. Hosting a variety of events during the weekend IIFA helps bring together a global community of people from all walks of life.

Speaking on the occasion, Wiz Viraf Sarkari Director- Wizcraft International, the producers and creators of the IIFA movement, says, "It is amazing to see the excitement growing as we move closer to the biggest IIFA ever. For the first time in the Big Apple, IIFA will be a truly memorable



**IIFA Rocks 2017 – The show will celebrate 25 years of A. R. Rahman in the industry and is set to feature a never-before-seen medley of musicians that includes A. R. Rahman, Diljit Dosanjh, Benny Dayal, Javed Ali, Neeti Mohan, Jonita Gandhi and Haricharan Seshadri**



experience for the audience with a mix of music, dance, culture and cinema. Capturing the very best of India with the use of world class production and a lineup of some of the most sought after Bollywood celebrities, IIFA promises to be a great show at the spectacular MetLife Stadium. We are grateful for all the support and cannot wait for fans to see the Bollywood extravaganza come to life in July!"

said, "I am delighted that IIFA is coming to New York this year. This is an extremely timely initiative and will no doubt help in giving further visibility to Bollywood in this lively cultural capital of the world. Bollywood films speak a universal language which everyone across cultures and languages can relate to. I am sure New York will be dazzled by the glamour, sheer beauty, charm and power of our films and what they stand for."

Ambassador Riva Ganguly Das, Consul General of India



# Anupam Kher to play Manmohan Singh in movie based on Sanjaya Baru's book 'The Accidental Prime Minister'

(Agencies) Mumbai : Veteran actor Anupam Kher will play Manmohan Singh in a movie based on a memoir by the former prime minister's media adviser Sanjaya Baru.

The release of Baru's book, *The Accidental Prime Minister: The Making and Unmaking of Manmohan Singh*, was critical of Singh's first term as PM and had coincided with the 2014 parliamentary polls. The movie is expected to hit the screens in December 2018, just ahead of the next general election in 2019.

The film's first look will be unveiled on Wednesday. Producer Sunil Bohra said it will be a political drama grander than Richard Attenborough's *Academy*

award-winning *Gandhi*. National award-winning director Hansal Mehta has written the screenplay for the film, which will be directed by debutant Vijay Ratnakar Gutte.

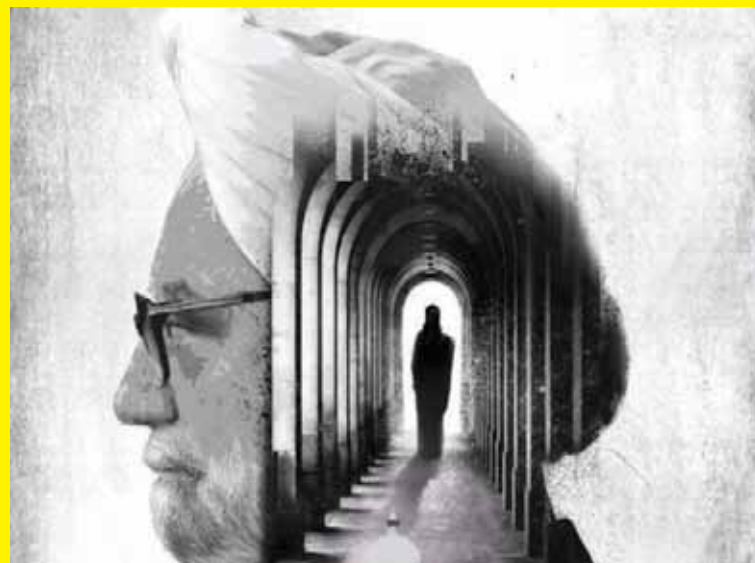
While Kher has been finalised to play Singh, the remaining cast is being decided.

"The research on the movie is already over. Auditioning (for the remaining cast) is in its final lap. The movie will hit the screens next year," said Bohra, who has co-produced films like *Gangs of Wasseypur* and *Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster*.

Kher confirmed that he has taken up the role. "Acting the role of anyone in contemporary history is extremely challenging, as comparisons are bound to be instant



and inevitable. But as I have always revelled in challenges, right from my first film *Saaransh*, I look forward to the experience of portraying PM Manmohan Singh," he told ET. Director Gutte is looking forward to making his Bollywood debut with a unique project. "I am obliged to get a hold on the story that I truly believe has to be



told with utmost honesty and integrity," he told ET. "A script as magnanimously relevant as this needed a perfect actor. I feel that the depth of maturity and

demeanour required to portray the prime minister could have only been embodied by the versatile veteran, Anupam sir."

## Dobaara movie review: You won't want to mess with Huma Qureshi, Saqib Salim's mirror

**Dobaara See Your Evil**  
**Cast:** Hume Qureshi, Saqib Saleem, Adil Hussain, Lisa Ray  
**Director:** Prawaal Raman  
**Rating:** 3/5

(Agencies) Whatever is done can be done again. There is nothing new in this world.

With this prophecy arrives a possessed mirror that can manipulate your mind even before you sense it. It has happened many times before and it's going to happen again. Your natural instinct is to destroy it but the mirror knows how to trick your subconscious. It's a self-defence tactic it has mastered over centuries. However, this time the potential victims, Natasha (Huma Qureshi) and Kabir (Saqib Salim), have braced themselves with the latest gadgets and a plan. They might not have realised it yet but the audience knows where they are headed.

Based on Mike Flanagan's supernatural thriller *Oculus* (2013),



*Dobaara* is the re-imagination of startling events that took place in Natasha and Kabir's childhood. Their parents, Alex (Adil Hussain) and Lisa Merchant (Lisa Ray), are going through a bad marriage and Alex is fast losing touch with reality.

There on, it's a see-saw between minds and you witness it with bated breath and tightly clutched seat handles. Director Prawaal Raman knows the usual reasoning the average movie buff does around such films. Also, we are long past the era of

the Ramsay brothers and even Ram Gopal Varma's ghost theories. So, Prawaal doesn't spend much time in establishing mostly anticipated backstories. He states them in a matter of fact tone with the help of sepia-coloured images and a voiceover.

But he successfully establishes an eerie atmosphere which stops you from laughing it off out rightly. He appears on the weaker foot initially but it's a ploy that works tremendously in his favour. He is slowly making you realise the full potential of this otherwise simple looking story.

Unlike most supernatural stories, he prefers to tread a non-linear path and keeps inter-cutting between different time zones. *Dobaara* gradually begins to acquire pace. You don't meet new characters but they peel off their minds. The picture perfect family fades right in front of your scared eyes. You secretly want it all to turn out a farce but the cat is already out of the bag. Think of preventive measures

now than simply burying head in the sand.

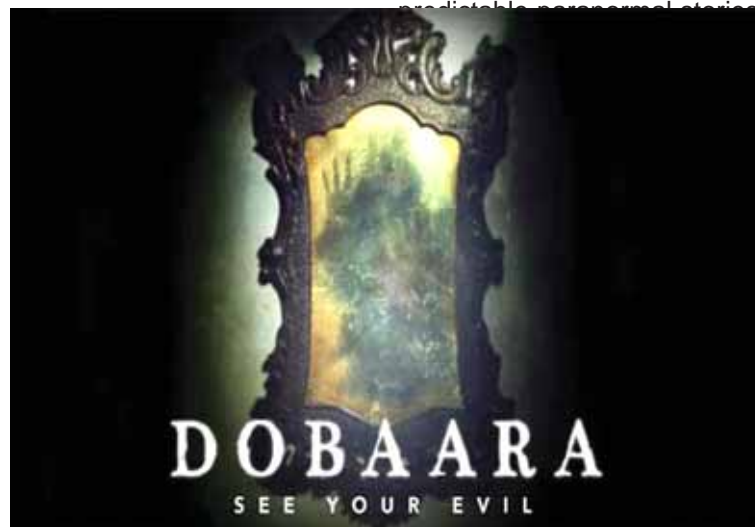
British author Ian McEwan's book on the shelf doesn't help either. The atheist writer's presence on the frame doesn't stop us from believing in black magic and witchcraft. We decide to go along Prawaal's way, who wants us to take notice of his narrative style.

His techniques are simple but need solid acting chops. His two leads, Huma and Saqib, keep reminiscing in the past. Their chemistry is fine tuned. One looks vulnerable and the other provocative. And then they switch their roles. Somebody is definitely messing up with their intelligence. With bone chilling moments thrown in between, we are in for a surprisingly sleek film. Barking dog, hypnotic eyes, whispering beautiful models, gloomy cellars, masks and a life-size mirror. All the conventional elements are there in *Dobaara*

and are used judiciously and in right proportions. Then there is Adil, who never drops an expression. His Jack Nicholson (*The Shining*) inspired rumblings send shivers down the spine and authoritative figure provides a blanket creepy tone to the film.

The sad part is that the other actors don't reach the same level of commitment. Their expressions flicker when the viewer demands a final call. Sometimes the logic of not leaving the dangerous spot fails to convince. At other times, actors take it too casually and do not look scared. Prawaal knows his strength and focusses more on jolt-giving scenes, but two scenes need a cohesive factor. However, *Dobaara*'s 145-minute duration saves him to some extent on this front.

It's a faithful remake of *Oculus* and can make your hair stand at times. Hindi filmmakers rarely achieve such finesse in mostly predictable supernatural stories.





PHOTOS: AGENCIES

# FAIRY FIESTA!

**N**ICOLE Kidman certainly looked like a million dollars while attending the CFDA Awards in New York on Monday. The 49-year-old Hollywood actress dazzled in a strapless black Oscar de la Renta gown, which retails for nearly \$12,000 (₹7 lakh).

She accessorised her elegant look with a ruby-encrusted diamond necklace.

Desi Girl Priyanka Chopra did double duty as she showed off her cleavage and generous backside in a skintight black dress at the do. The shimmering noir dress had a mermaid finish.

Supermodels Hailey Baldwin, Bella and Gigi Hadid cemented their It girl status at this year's CFDA Fashion Awards, displaying their unique fashion sense, with Hailey and Gigi reaching for white and Bella posing up a storm in a bright pink mini.

Baldwin carried a furry blush toned clutch with white heels fea-

turing pink feathers.

When hitting the tony event in New York City, Victoria's Secret model Lily Aldridge showed off plenty of flesh in her light pink gown by Jason Wu. The star made her naked back a focal point with her beaded wonder. The gown made it obvious she left her bra at home as she showed off her flawless back.

Stunning brunnete Sara Sampaio opted for a pop of color. She wore a flowing J. Mendel gown with a half-length cape flowing down the back.

The plunging number showed off the gorgeous model's enviable décolletage and appeared semi-sheer, which offered a hint of her thin pins.

She was heralded as a sex symbol in her heyday, and has reached phenomenal success in her acting and modelling career. And Brooke Shields, 52, looked as gorgeous as ever as she stunned in a dramatic floor-length gown at the event.

**Hailey Baldwin chose a white dress, teamed up with furry clutch and pink feather heels**

Daily Mail



**Bella Hadid (right) was in a hot pink jacket with seemingly precious little else.**

Lily Aldridge (above) made her naked back a focal point with her beaded wonder that showed off her naked flawless back.

Brooke Shields, 52, (right) stunned in a dramatic sweeping floral gown and proved age is but a number for the star.

**While Sara Sampaio (in blue) opted for a pop of colour & flowing number, Nicole Kidman (right) displayed slender waist in a black draped velvet gown**

**GiGi Hadid (above) opted for a more modest ensemble — a silky white duster coat over a floor-length dress**





PIC/YOGEN SHAH

## PeeCee's back in the bay

**Priyanka Chopra** arrived in Mumbai from New York last night. She was spotted at the city's international airport making an exit in black dungarees and a printed shrug. As reported yesterday 'B-Town pukaara, PeeCee chali aayi', the Baywatch actress is in town for four days to ink her next Bollywood outing and oversee her ongoing and upcoming productions. She will also fulfill brand commitments.

## Tough call

**Alia Bhatt** was apparently in two minds before she gave her nod to Meghna Gulzar's film based on Harinder Sikka's book, *Calling Sehmat*. Since it is the story of a Kashmiri woman married to a Pakistani army officer set against the 1971 Indo-Pak war, Alia had reservations over the controversial subject. Buzz is her dad, filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt convinced her to accept the offer. He feels Alia needs to take on films with diverse subjects. We are certain that Alia got an okay from godfather Karan Johar too before signing on the dotted line.



## Do not disturb

**Vidya Balan** wants to leave no stone unturned to get into the skin of her character as a radio jockey in Suresh Triveni's *Tumhari Sulu*. The powerhouse performer has refrained from using a mobile phone on set. This move is to ensure Vids stays focussed and gives her best shot. Unit hands reveal the actress switches off her phone as

soon as she arrives since she doesn't want any sort of distraction during work hours. Constant text message alerts and the occasional ring of her phone annoy her to no end when she is in character mode. Besides, being an RJ requires voice modulation and therefore, it's crucial that she stays focussed, say unit sources.



## What rattled Ranveer?

A video doing the rounds of social media has **Ranveer Singh** interacting with fans and playing to the gallery until one of them says, "Deepika ki jai ho!". The actor is then seen getting irritated and telling the fan, "Arey hatt tu peechhe." This pesky fan sure got him rattled by taking his ladylove's name.

## Sailing in the sea of style

Dangal (2016) girl **Fatima Sana Shaikh** took the internet by storm yesterday by sharing a snapshot from the set of Vijay Krishna Acharya's *Thugs of Hindostan*. The film, which pairs Aamir Khan and Amitabh

Bachchan for the first time, is currently being shot in Malta. In what is said to be a photo shoot on set, Fatima is seen relaxing by the beachside in swimwear. She sure looks smoking hot in this vintage look.



## Singin' in the rain

**Adah Sharma** shot for a music video with rapper **Raftaar** at the Kharghar Valley Golf Course in Navi Mumbai over the weekend. Since it started raining, it was spontaneously decided to turn the romantic hip-hop ballad into a dancing-in-the-rain video. The *Commando 2* actress has also filmed at various locations in Mumbai with Raftaar for the song.



## Singer in the making

Mohenjo Daro (2016) actress **Pooja Hegde** is also a musician. Yesterday, Pooja posted a video of her playing the guitar and singing *Papa Kehte Hain* from the 1988 Aamir Khan-starrer *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* on Instagram. She wrote, "Here it goes, my love for music takes me further... a beginner... pretty new to this but taking it one step at a time (sic)." The actress has done a fairly decent job. What's next? Singing in her next film?

### TELLY TATTLE

## Show me the money

After starring in *ABCD — Anybody Can Dance* (2013), dancer-choreographer **Salman Yusuf Khan** is making his solo debut in *Love You Family*. But he is allegedly refusing to promote Vipul Diwani's film. It is alleged that Salman is demanding an extra ₹15 lakh for the promotions. He also feels that the film has turned out more to be the launchpad of South actress Aksha Pardasany with more focus on her.





# Sonam, Bebo rev up their engines

Long-delayed road trip drama, *Veere Di Wedding*, will finally roll out this September; to be filmed across Thailand, Malaysia and four Indian cities

**MOHAR BASU**  
mohar.basu@mid-day.com

AFTER encountering a few bumps, Sonam Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor Khan-starrer *Veere Di Wedding* will finally roll out in September. Sources close to the production reveal director Shashank Ghosh recently conducted a week-long recce of Thailand and Malaysia, and has zeroed in on a few locations.

A source close to Ghosh informs, "The locations are almost as significant as the characters. Of all the places he visited, he found Bangkok most appropriate from the story's point of view. That will be the first overseas schedule. The film is essentially a road trip, so it will also move to a few other locations in Thailand followed by Malaysia and four cities in India."

While the film was

originally slated to go on floors last October, it was postponed following Kareena's pregnancy. It was rescheduled to December, and then the first quarter of this year, but producer Rhea Kapoor clarified last month that shoot will begin only in August. However, the source explains the principal shoot will kick off only in September. "That's because rains in the east could affect filming. Before that, individual portions of the four actresses will be shot in Mumbai." Sonam and Bebo's girl gang includes Swara Bhaskar and Shikha Talsania too.

The full cast will be announced only next month, adds another insider. "The plan was always to shoot across three countries. However, budgetary constraints required the film to be shot over just one schedule."

The producers, though, have now managed to stretch the budget, allowing the film to be shot on a lavish scale. "It will be a straight 50-day schedule with no breaks in between," adds the source.

**'Before that [the principal shoot in September], individual portions of the four actresses will be shot in Mumbai'**

A source close to director Shashanka Ghosh



## Spy Taapsee back on duty

Actress likely to play Kashmiri undercover agent in adaptation of military thriller

**MOHAR BASU**  
mohar.basu@mid-day.com

AFTER earning rave reviews for her high-flying stunts in Naam Shabana, Taapsee Pannu is set to slip into the role of an undercover agent once again. She is rumoured to have been cast for the cinematic adaptation of Shiv Aroor's bestseller, *Operation Jinnah*. The book, chronicling events in Kashmir, Delhi and New York, is based on a Kashmiri woman being abducted by Pakistani terrorists.

An insider says, "A major film studio has approached

Aroor as well as the publisher to secure rights to the story. It has also reached out to Taapsee to play the lead. She was the top contender for the part since she has done two action films. She has verbally committed to the project and is yet to sign the papers."

Interestingly, a Twitter user recently pointed out that the model on Aroor's book cover bears an uncanny resemblance to Taapsee. The actress responded by dropping a hint: "Since the poster is ready, can we start making the movie now?"

Taapsee didn't respond to calls and messages.

## 'Copycat' verdict on Raabta today

**THE HITLIST TEAM**  
hitlist@mid-day.com

WHETHER Sushant Singh Rajput and Kriti Sanon-starrer *Raabta* will hit screens tomorrow will be decided by a Hyderabad court today. Dinesh Vijan's directorial debut is embroiled in a legal tussle with makers of the 2009 Telugu blockbuster *Magadheera*. It was helmed by Bahubali director, SS Rajamouli.

On May 25, makers of *Magadheera* filed a plagiarism case against *Raabta*, approaching the City Civil

Court in Hyderabad to seek an injunction on its release. They alleged that from the film's trailer made it evident that it was themed around the concept of reincarnation, which formed the crux of *Magadheera*.

The legal team representing *Raabta* argued for over

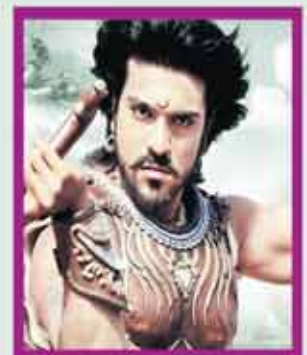
five hours in court on Tuesday and Wednesday, citing several differences in the script and storyline of the two films. Lawyers representing *Raabta* makers said the only similarity was purely the generic subject of reincarnation of two lovers, listing over 100 films that have been

made on the same theme.

Ankit Relan, lawyer for producer T-Series, said the injunction application has been reserved for further orders. He said, "We have filed the script of our film along with a comparative chart showing how the two films are different in terms of the story, treatment and expression, something that the plaintiff ought to have done in the first place as part of his pleadings to show comparative similarities. The entire suit, which has been filed at the eleventh hour despite the trailer com-

**'The entire suit, which has been filed at the eleventh hour, is based on conjectures'**

Ankit Relan, lawyer for Raabta makers



ing out more than six weeks ago, is based on conjectures." Relan pointed out that the *Magadheera* makers responded to their offer of a private screening of *Raabta* very late, just a day before the first hearing on June 1. "They rejected the offer to see the

film, of course," he added.

The warring sides have requested the court to pass the order by this afternoon, so that they have sufficient time to approach the appellate court if needed. However, the court refused to be bound by any such timeline.



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