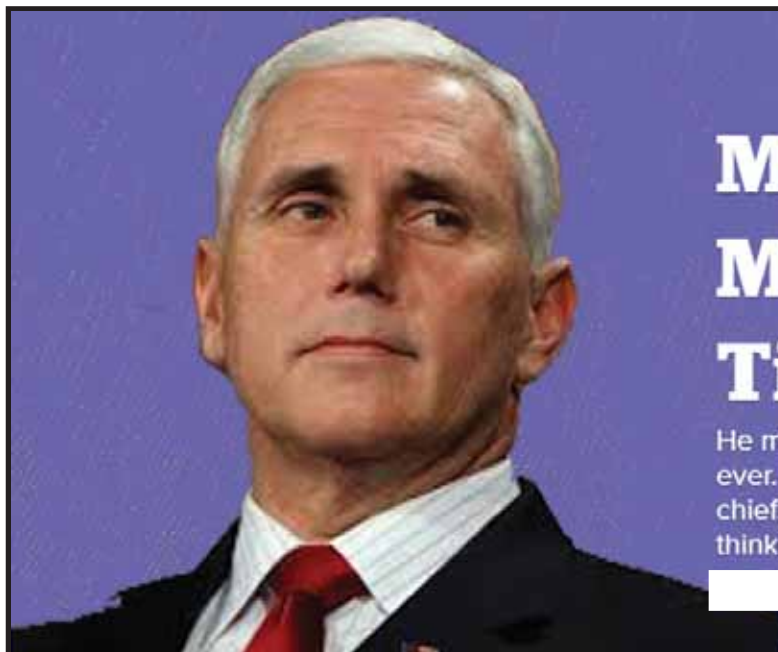




# INSIDER

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## Man on a Wire: Mike Pence's Tightrope Act

He might be the most consequential vice president ever. He could well be the next commander in chief. And the one person in America he can't have thinking about that is his boss.

Page 20



## International Yoga Day Celebrated

Page 2

## Farmers Aren't Beggars

*As a society we have been terribly cruel to our cousins whom we have left behind in the farms to feed us in the cities...*



(PHOTO COURTESY : (AP/DEEPAK SHARMA))

(SAI Bureau) Many years ago in a debate on agriculture in the Rajya Sabha, Eknath Thakore, a low-key Shiv Sena member, made an impassioned speech pointing out that we were all children of farmers, once, twice or thrice removed from the farm. How true! But the fact is that we have (Contd on page 21)

## Jehadi Chickens Coming Home

*The US lit the fires in West Asia. India must learn from its errors.*



(By a Staff Reporter) Who was the 20th century catalyst for the global jihad, which is now on a rampage? Sayyid Qutb, Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-zawahiri or Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi? No, it was Zbigniew Brzezinski, the 20th century catalyst for the global jihad, which is now on a National Security Adviser, who died on May 26, 2017. In January 1998, Brzezinski boasted to the French magazine

Le Nouvel Observateur that he was responsible for Carter's July 3, 1979 order asking CIA to provide secret aid to topple the Communist regime in Kabul by using Afghan extremists (Mujahideen). As a result, CIA and allies raised and directed (1979-89) the largest army of Islamic radicals (50,000) in recent history for anti-Soviet jihad and equipped them with 65,000 tonnes of arms. Global jehadi high priest Osama bin Laden was prominent among them. The US and allies made big mistakes. The 9/11 Commission called it a failure of 'insight' and 'imagination'. First, they underestimated the destructive jehadi potential. Brzezinski downplayed it even in 1998 by asserting that the collapse of Soviet Union was more important than "some stirred-up Moslems". This was countered in 1998 itself by well known New Yorker columnist Eqbal Ahmad, who asserted that "jehad as an international violent phenomenon" had disappeared in the last 400 years

(Contd on page 20)

## Muslims Terrorist or Disturbed Loner?

(By a Staff Reporter) When a 48-year-old man rammed a van into a crowd near a London mosque on Monday morning, controversy quickly erupted over whether the attack would be treated as less significant than others because it was committed against Muslims but not by them. Such debates have typically played out over whether anti-Muslim violence is labeled terrorism. Though Monday's attack appears to fit scholarly and

### The Contentious Politics of a Label



legal definitions for terrorism, past incidents have been called hate crimes or attributed to disturbed loners with far-right leanings but no real agenda. Prime Minister Theresa May called the attack terrorism. But debate has continued, suggesting it is about more than labels, but a suspicion that society grants greater importance to non-Muslim than Muslim victims and to Islamist than far-right or other threats. (Contd on page 22)



# International Yoga Day Celebrated



(By a staff reporter) New York- Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh in cooperation with various organizations celebrated the IYD in Long Island, NY. In his opening remarks Mr

jagdish Sewhani said that Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India 5000 year ago. The word 'yoga' derives from Sanskrit and means to join

or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness. He further stated that , On December 11 in 2014, the United Nations General Assembly declared June 21st as the In-

ternational Day of Yoga. The declaration came after the call for the adoption of June 21st as International Day of Yoga by Hon'ble Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi during his

address to UN General Assembly on September 27, 2014 "175 nations, including USA, Canada and China co-sponsored the resolution." It Had the "highest number of co-sponsors ever for any UNGA Resolution of such nature." Art of Living, Braham Kumaris, Sadguru Isha foundation, ranju Narang of Om Meditation and Sanjay Participated in the IYD .

## Conversation on Yoga for Health

**Historic Pledge by HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Executive Director of WHO, Bollywood Actor Anupam Kher, Former NFL Player turned Yogi, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji on taking Yoga from global to local, from one day to every day**



(By our staff reporter) NEW YORK: On the occasion of the 3rd International Day of Yoga, a special event on 'Conversation on Yoga for Health' was organized at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, in the prestigious ECOSOC Chamber on 21 June 2017. The event was organised by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in association with the World Health

Organization (WHO) and the Department of Public Information of the United Nations. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), Co-Founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, President, Divine Shakti Foundation, Mr. Keith Mitchell, Former NFL

(USA football) athlete turned yogi, Mr. Stanton Kawer, CEO, Bluechip Marketing Worldwide, USA, Swami Sivadasananda, Sivananda Yoga Retreat, Austria and Mr. Anupam Kher, Actor and Social Activist, India were on the distinguished panel. The ancient science of Yoga continues to be practiced by millions across the globe as it 'works'. The regular practice of

Yoga has a direct and visible impact on improving physical and mental health and contributes to social harmony and wellbeing. By helping us tune our inner selves with our surroundings comprising all nature including fellow human beings, Yoga contributes to wider societal wellbeing. Yoga promotes the practice of sustainable lifestyles leading to a better harmony between people

and the planet. The United Nations endorsed the vision of Prime Minister Modi by adopting the UNGA resolution A/Res/69/131 that proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga. The resolution notes 'the importance of individuals and populations making healthier choices and following lifestyle patterns that foster good health'. (Contd on page)



# International Day of Yoga

**Spiritual Luminaries, Celebrity Yogis & UN Dignitaries Celebrate the 3rd Annual International Day of Yoga at the United Nations (NYC)**

**Free Public Event Features Interactive Yoga Demos, Sacred Chanting, Meditation, Inspiring Talks, Divine Music, & Much More –Historic Event Honors India’s Ancient Tradition of Yoga.**



(By our staff reporter) New York— More than 1,000 people participated in the International Day of Yoga at the United Nations in New York City on June 20th-21st, celebrating the ancient tradition of Yoga brought to the West from India. This historic gathering was led by one of India’s most revered and beloved Spiritual Leaders, His Holiness Swami Chidanand Saraswati, President of Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), Co-Founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), along with Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Director of the International Yoga Festival at Parmarth Niketan, and Secretary General of GIWA. Both luminaries, known for their altruism and global interfaith endeavors, have curated some of today’s leading yoga talent to join them in illuminating the myriad gifts yoga brings to the world. This unprecedented

spiritual gathering featured today’s most renowned yoga experts including: Jivamukti’s Sharon Gannon; Off the Mat founder Seane Corn who will join Kirtan Master Jai Uttal; spoken word artist and social media phenom Prince EA. They will be joined by representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as, UN delegates, ambassadors and dignitaries from around the world. Organized by the Indian Mission to the UN, this FREE event is open to the general public and it’s expected to gather nearly 2000 people, united in the mission to create a more peaceful world through the “true” practice of yoga, which extends beyond the mere physical practice of asanas to every moment and every minute of our lives. Said HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati (Pujya Swamiji), “During

International Yoga Day, the sun reaches the highest point in the sky, and people from New York to New Zealand will similarly be reaching to the sky with Yogic techniques developed by India’s ancient sages to ease the pains, strains and stresses of daily life. How symbolic then, that the United Nations will be holding this unifying event on its very lawn, for all to participate and appreciate. With so much turmoil, conflict and challenges in our world today, Yoga is the key to a healthier, happier and more harmonious future.” President of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Peter Thomson shared that the age old practice of Yoga guides people towards being in harmony with fellow humans and with nature. Pointing out towards the fast-paced ways of the 21st century, Thomson said it is important for us to ensure

that we look after ourselves through healthy lifestyles and choices and that which helps us sustain physically and mentally, adding that Yoga connects our bodies with nature and leads us in a better balance with the world around us. Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin said that more than 170 countries have supported the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in recognizing the important role of Yoga in bringing peace and prosperity in the world. He said that not only yoga is restricted to India but the whole world is doing yoga, which shows the importance of our country in the world. Said Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji, “The practice of “yoga” leads automatically to a life in which our choices are ones made in an awareness of unity and oneness. This is what our world needs. As individuals, to overcome

our depression, loneliness and numbness, we need to feel connected. As a society, in order to function well, we need to be connected and in harmony. As an international, global world family, we need to realize that we are inextricably connected. Yoga, a true realisation of union, could save not only our health, but also our planet.” Said Sharon Gannon, “The Earth does NOT belong to us—we belong to the Earth.” “A yogi is someone who is striving to live in harmony with the Earth and ALL beings, including humans, animals, forests, rivers, oceans.” Said Seane Corn, “The time is now for all souls to “wake up” and participate in social change. Let’s take all that we have learned on the mat - including focus, commitment, resiliency, strength, balance, compassion and love-and bring it out into our world,

where it truly matters, and create a world that is free, fair, equal, safe, loving and peace-filled for ALL!” A beautiful commemorative Yoga Day stamp was released on the occasion with H.E. Peter Thomson, Hon’ble Mr Syed Akbaruddin, Pujya Swamiji, Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji, joined by yoga teachers and experts. A beautiful plant was given to the hon’ble diplomats as a symbol of allowing the roots and essence of Yoga keep our lives grounded and centered, allowing our lives to bring health and well being to all. A very special pledge and water blessing ceremony also took place, bringing together all of the Yoga Masters, teachers and experts to encourage and inspire yoga practitioners and enthusiasts from every corner of the world to lead greener, healthier and more harmonious lives.

# An unpredictable voyage

**T.P. Sreenivasan**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be on the most hazardous journey of his political-diplomatic life towards the end of June for his maiden encounter with U.S. President Donald Trump. Not only is Mr. Modi's greatest achievement, the new heights India-U.S. relations had scaled in 2016, in jeopardy but also the White House itself is in turmoil with former FBI director James Comey's testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee and the Senate's invitation to Mr. Trump to testify. The results of Mr. Modi's visit could be as unpredictable as the personality of Mr. Trump, regardless of the charm offensive that the Prime Minister is capable of. India had identified several streaks in the personality of Mr. Trump, even in the days of the election campaign, which held out a glimmer of hope for better bilateral relations.

Foremost among them was an indication that he would follow a policy of containment against China, in contrast to his predecessor Barack Obama's policy of calibrated cooperation. Mr. Trump had called China a currency manipulator that had to be countered in the interests of the U.S. economy. But the moment the North Korea crisis became critical, he embraced China.

**Targeting terror**  
Another straw in the wind was Mr. Trump's extreme antagonism towards the Islamic world, which found expression in the travel ban against designated countries. The stated reason for the ban was terrorism, but the worst exporters of terrorism, like Pakistan, were excluded. Later, Mr. Trump surprised everyone by making his first visit abroad to Saudi Arabia, where he gave many other Muslim-majority countries a sermon on terrorism

without uttering a word of criticism on Riyadh's human rights record. Further, another tranche of reimbursement was made to Pakistan for fighting terror in Afghanistan. Mr. Modi's concerns over cross-border terrorism are not likely to get a sympathetic hearing in Washington.

Mr. Trump's business interests in India were another reason for optimism. But his 'America first' approach may well contradict Mr. Modi's 'Make in India' and 'Digital India' initiatives. Even co-designing and co-production of defence equipment, which formed the basis of the new symphony in India-U.S. relations, may not stand Mr. Trump's scrutiny by his own standards of what is considered to be in the U.S.'s interests.

The litmus test of Mr. Trump's goodwill towards India was to be his policy on the information technology (IT) industry,

but it has failed because of the restrictions he has imposed on H-1B visas. Replacing Indian IT professionals with American ones will only hurt the U.S.'s business interests. In any case, it will take six to seven years for the U.S. to replace all Indians. This may be on the top of Mr. Modi's agenda and a setback on this issue may sour bilateral relations. A reason for India's likely disillusionment on these issues is that Mr. Modi is expected to seek a reinstatement of Mr. Obama's architecture on India-U.S. relations, an edifice Mr. Trump is determined to demolish. He did not spare India even while disowning the Paris Agreement on climate change as he said that one reason for his decision was that India was demanding "billions and billions and billions" of dollars to implement the pact. The remarks were unwarranted as India has always been



sensitive to the views of developed countries during climate negotiations. Offering an arms deal The real test for Mr. Modi lies in whether he has anything in his bag to offer Mr. Trump to overcome these hurdles. His penchant for personal chemistry may be counterproductive with Mr. Trump. The experiences of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and French President Emmanuel Macron in shaking hands with Mr. Trump have been disastrous. One way to handle the visit is to steer the discussion towards matters of primary interest to Mr. Trump. His visit to

Saudi Arabia has shown that huge arms sales agreements are his weakness. Though we may not be able to match the Saudi figures, purchase of arms may help even if it contradicts our efforts to escape our reputation as the biggest importer of weapons. Mr. Modi will do well to collect the shopping lists of our service chiefs before boarding his flight. Since creating jobs in the U.S. is Mr. Trump's first priority, a few good orders for U.S.-made weapons may gladden his heart.

(Contd on page 21)

# The Truth About The Darjeeling Trouble

The unrest in Darjeeling has reminded some people of the Gorkhaland agitation that erupted against the CPI(M) government in Bengal in the 1980s. This led to a demand for a separate state and a call for greater development. Are we seeing a repeat of it? The short answer is "No". The context and circumstances are very different. The demand for a separate state in Darjeeling is just not viable. The area is so small it comprises one parliamentary seat and two assembly constituencies. If such parameters were accepted for forming new states, India would not have 29 states but 290. And it would be completely chaotic and ungovernable. In the early 1980s, though, it was clear the CPI(M) was ignoring the hill districts of North Bengal and there was a genuine sense of neglect. This time, quite to the contrary, Mamata Banerjee and the Trinamool Congress are gaining popularity in the hills of

North Bengal. Discredited and disgruntled elements are fighting a last-ditch battle by sabotaging the developmental process and causing disruption in peak tourist season.

It all began in May when Trinamool swept the municipal election in Mirik, winning six of the nine seats. This stunned the GJM, which has been running the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA). Elections to the GTA are expected in the near future. The Mamata buzz is evident in Darjeeling and its neighbourhood and Trinamool is widely expected to do well in the GTA elections as well. Honestly, this is not about parties winning or losing, but about democracy flourishing in the north Bengal hills. For Trinamool, this electoral success is a validation of hard work. Mamata Banerjee has personally overseen developmental projects in the region. Between May 2011, when she became Chief Minister, and June

2017, she has visited Darjeeling 17 times, easily a record for a head of government from Kolkata. As part of her initiative, Uttarkanya, the secretariat for North Bengal, has been opened. Local people no longer need to travel to Kolkata to interact with the state administration. Much more has been done. The Kalimpong sub-division has been made into a district and Mirik upgraded to a sub-division. Fifteen separate development boards have been established for the Lepcha, Sherpa, Bhutia, Tamang and other communities. There is a new medical college being set up in Kurseong. Over 850,000 people have benefited from discounted medicines available at a wide network of fair price shops. Under the Khadya Suraksha Scheme, 1.4 million people in the Darjeeling area are receiving foodgrains at Rs. 2 per kg. Hundred per cent electrification, a long-standing demand in the hills of Bengal, has been

achieved. Contrast this with the GJM's record. Since 2012, the GTA has received Rs. 900 crore from the state government and Rs. 600 crore from the central government. It has not submitted documents on how the money was spent. Recently, the Trinamool government has asked for a special audit of GTA funds. This has rattled the GJM, which believes its misdeeds are about to be exposed and its electoral future is in jeopardy. That is why it has gone back on a key clause in the Memorandum of Agreement on the GTA signed in 2011 by the centre, the state government and the GJM. The clause reads: "The GJM agrees to ensure that peace and normalcy will be maintained in the region." Today, the GJM is inciting violence. The GJM is taking to the streets under false pretexts, by claiming the state government is imposing Bengali on the local people. This, even after the Chief

Minister has made it very clear that Bengali in schools is optional for people in the hills, not at all compulsory. In recent days, from students to office-goers to business people, everybody has been affected by the GJM's criminal actions. Darjeeling receives half a million domestic tourists and 50,000 foreign tourists a year. This summer, in holiday season, a tourism economy worth hundreds of crores has been crippled. From the ordinary roadside vendor and the tourist guide to the hotel owner and the tourist bus operator, thousands have been affected. All because the GJM is worried its corruption will be exposed and ordinary people want peace and development. Mamata Banerjee is a fighter. She had camped in Darjeeling, roamed the streets to help ordinary people and gave them confidence that the administration will not let things go out of hand. As

she so emotionally and eloquently put it, "Shops are closed and people have to suffer without any fault of theirs. Snatching someone's livelihood is not politics but hooliganism. We will bring an end to it for the sake of peace in Darjeeling... I will give my blood, but will not allow anyone to conspire to push Darjeeling into danger." This is the hard reality of Darjeeling and of the betrayal of the residents of that beautiful part of Bengal and of India by the GJM. The Trinamool government will not allow the North Bengal hills to be hurt further. To quote Mamata Banerjee again: "Development work will continue and there should be an end to this deep-rooted conspiracy." If there are misgivings, dialogue works best, within the framework of the Indian constitution. But before that violence has to stop. There can be no negotiations at gunpoint.

## Setting up gaushalas on surplus jail land will not help prisoners

***BJP-led State governments cannot be totally focused on cow protection and promotion at the cost of other pressing issues***

When we think of Indian jails, what comes to mind is overcrowding, lack of proper sanitation and human rights violations. So, the move by the Uttar Pradesh government to set up gaushalas on jail premises comes as a bit of a surprise. Last year, Haryana announced that it would set up gaushalas in jails. The rationale is that this will provide another form of productive activity for prisoners and will also utilise surplus land on jail premises. But this is clearly a case of misplaced priorities. The state governments which are planning to set up these facilities should first take a long hard look at the conditions in jails that need to be set right first. At the all India level, the occupancy rate at the beginning of last year was 114.4%. Two-thirds of all prisoners are undertrials, people not convicted of any crime and who are packed like sardines into small spaces. Of these, an average of four dies every day. Two-thirds of these deaths are deemed to be suicides and some are murders at the hands of other inmates. Seventy per cent of convicts are semi-literate or illiterate and the plight of women prisoners is particularly worrying. They are at risk of violence both from other inmates and prison guards. A major problem that most inmates face is lack of sleep thanks to overcrowding and excess heat or cold. These are some of the issues that should exercise state governments. If there is surplus land, it could be gainfully used to set up literacy or computer centres with an aim to dispense rehabilitative justice as opposed to retributive justice. The idea should be to enable the prisoner to be gainfully employed once he has served his term and reintegrate into society. The setting up of gaushalas is part of a political agenda in most BJP-ruled states. But to use surplus land on jail grounds in no way helps the prisoners. Dairy farming is certainly a skill but this would also suppose that the prisoner once freed would have access to livestock in order to earn an income. The government could think also of using the land to set up counselling centres for prisoners. In fact, surplus land can also be used to expand the prison facilities so that overcrowding can be lessened. The government cannot be totally focused on cow protection and promotion at the cost of other pressing issues.

## The office of the President must be above caste, religion and gender

***The candidate should not be part of a larger political agenda on the part of either the government or the Opposition. No one doubts the credentials of Ram Nath Kovind or the fact that him being chosen is a victory for equal opportunity***

It is par for the course that most appointments to high office are needlessly politicised these days and it would seem that the presidential post is no exception. It is unfortunate that Union minister and Lok Janshakti Party leader Ram Vilas Paswan should have chosen to drag the discourse down by saying that anyone opposing the candidature of Ram Nath Kovind as president will be seen as anti-Dalit. He went on to say this choice was a 'tight slap' for those who branded the Modi government as anti-Dalit. The Opposition meanwhile is said to be trying to put up another Dalit candidate to counter this, further reducing the level of the debate. The office of the president should be above all caste, religious or gender considerations. The candidate should not be part of a larger political agenda on the part of either the government or the Opposition. No one doubts the credentials of Ram Nath Kovind or the fact that him being chosen is a victory for equal opportunity. Similarly, when KR Narayanan became president much was made of his Dalit credentials, quite overlooking his distinguished diplomatic career. The media is adding to the politicisation by terming the choice as a masterstroke and one which has taken the wind out of the Opposition's sails. The president ultimately presides over the government and armed forces and should not be a partisan or divisive figure. If the government and Opposition were serious about giving the Dalits a level playing field, they must go much beyond this move. The Dalits need education, healthcare and jobs, something which politicians pay lip service to come elections. They are also often subject to caste violence and ostracisation in a hidebound casteist society. This should be addressed. In recent times, we have seen attacks on Dalits in various parts of the country. This is what should exercise political parties. As of now, it would seem that the NDA has the numbers to carry the day. Even if the Opposition were to put up a candidate, and it seems likely that it will, all parties should resolve to keep the discussion from degenerating into a political fight. As of now, the NDA is being accused of playing the Dalit card. This is to do a disservice to Kovind who has come up on his own merit and has not played any card. The office of the first citizen should really float above the fray and if going forward, the debate can be kept as non-partisan as possible, this would set the right benchmark for the future.

## A US-Russia stand-off in Syria will have dangerous global implications

***The escalation of military activity in Syria, especially by the US and Russia, is unprecedented and could have dangerous global implications***

A United States fighter downed a Syrian military aircraft for the first time when it bombed a Syrian rebel faction backed by Washington. Russia, which backs the Syrian government, responded angrily and warned that US aircraft and drones could be targeted by Russia. Moscow, for good measure, cut off the hotline designed to avoid



accidental run-ins between the US and Russia military in Syria. Iran meanwhile has fired missiles on an Islamic State (IS) base in eastern Syria. All of these actions are unprecedented and represent an escalation of the military activity of almost all the major external players in the Syrian civil war. In the overall carnage that continues in Syria and the related conflict in western Iraq these actions may not amount to much. But in the larger geopolitical game they indicate that the defeat of IS in its present territorial form is now being seen as inevitable. With their enemies closing in on their capital Raqqa and their forces being pushed out of their largest city, Mosul, even the 'caliphate' leadership accepts the end is nigh. On the Iraqi front, the political map is largely clear. Baghdad will restore sovereignty over Iraq's accepted borders. There is a major internal issue of the status of the Kurdish area, but even there it is an issue of autonomy, not independence. That is not the case with Syria.

The Bashar al-Assad government is backed by Iran and Russia but physically holds only a strip of western Syria. His military successes are wholly dependent on his external backers. The regime remains actively opposed by the US, Turkey and various Sunni regimes. These governments support a pantheon of rebel groups ranging from the secular to Al-Qaeda affiliates. The postwar map of Syria, in other words, remains highly uncertain.

The various external players have begun jockeying for position – and capture of territory is an important part of this – as IS retreats in Syria. The Assad government, for all its claims otherwise, has spent more time attacking rebels who are not affiliated to IS. This is partly true even for Russia's airstrikes. The entry of the US into the equation is the most uncertain variable. It has used its military power sparingly but could easily become the most powerful player, irrespective of Russia's warnings. As one Syrian conflict is winding down another one, unfortunately, seems to be hotting up. And this one, in terms of its global implications, could be even more dangerous.



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# Why UP CM Yogi Adityanath could do the trick for the BJP in Bihar 2019

*Nitish Kumar has never fought an assembly election since 2004. Yogi Adityanath has won elections every five years. This could generate moral pressure on the Bihar CM to face the electorate*



**By Sunita Aron**

A few days ago when Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath took a vow to oust Bihar's much-touted Grand Alliance by 2020, it became amply clear that the BJP's blueprint for the 2019 General Election was ready.

It will be a direct face-off between the two chief ministers – Nitish Kumar of Bihar and UP's Adityanath, instead of Nitish versus Narendra Modi, as projected in the previous two electoral battles in the state.

The new rising star of the party, Yogi is a polarizing figure, something that can easily cut through the caste equations of the Grand Alliance that had turned the tables on the BJP in the Bihar assembly polls held soon after the 2014 general election.

The saffron-robed Yogi still carries the aura of a Mahant, which blurs his Rajput caste and charms both the backwards and the forwards.

Political observer Prof Rajesh Singh says the BJP needed a fresh face to match the stature of

Bihar's two regional satraps – CM Nitish Kumar and RJD chief Lalu Prasad. Yogi fills that vacuum.

Despite the loss of face by Nitish's decision to stand by his scam-tainted partner Lalu Prasad, both remain undisputed leaders of their respective castes – Kurmi and Yadav.

Other observers point out that contrary to speculation about a realignment between the BJP and the JD(U), it is now clear that the saffron leadership is keen to decimate Nitish, who could become the rallying point for expanding the Grand Alliance from Bihar to Delhi. Second, while Nitish has never fought an assembly election since 2004, Yogi has won elections every five years. This could generate moral pressure on the Bihar CM to face the electorate.

The BJP leadership has seemingly realised that

only Hindutva could counter the social equations in caste-conscious Bihar where even Modi's development model had failed to cut ice with the voters in 2015.

That leaves the BJP with the same formula that clicked in Uttar Pradesh – consolidate upper caste and other backward castes and scheduled castes. Political expert HV Shahi says Yogi's deployment in Bihar will help in two ways. First, Yogi will have traction for the forward castes that somehow cannot relate to Sushil Modi. Second, Yogi will be able to reach out to the OBCs, break their hegemony that had hurt the BJP's prospects in the assembly elections.

However, more than the political planning it is the cultural and dialectical bonding of Gorakhpur with Bihar that will play out. Yogi who heads the Gorakhnath Peeth clicks in Bihar as he seen as one of

their own, embedded in the same bati-chokha and sattv culture. Besides, the craze for home-grown leaders also gets stubbed by their 'very own' Yogi leading the BJP campaign.

Lakhs of politically dominant Bhumihars, when facing the heat during Lalu Prasad's first stint as chief minister had shifted their base to Gorakhpur. Many later moved out their businesses too.

Bihar leaders often campaign in UP and vice versa, so much so that film star Shatrughan Sinha had even addressed rallies in a mayoral election in Gorakhpur few years ago.

Political expert Abhay Kumar says, "A polarising figure from western UP or even home minister Rajnath Singh would not have worked for the BJP as Mahant Yogi will."

That Yogi will lead a team of UP ministers, who will campaign for the 2019 elections, was spelt out by

Sushil Modi himself when he had said, "Yogi has been deputed to Bihar as part of the nationwide programme."

Yogi will soon visit almost every district in Bihar, before other parties hit the campaign trail by mid-2018. Already, his Hindu Yuva Vahini has spread its wings in Bihar.

Interestingly, Yogi is also targeting Nitish's strong constituency of women voters. While addressing a rally at Darbhanga recently, he said, "My government has banned illegal slaughterhouses, launched anti-Romeo squads and started collecting opinion on triple talaq. Women feel safe in UP." Yogi was of course challenging Nitish to spell out his stand on the issue of triple talaq.

Clearly, from all indications, it is going to be Hindutva laced with development on Yogi's platter for Bihar.

## Pakistan's India-centric foreign policy based on geopolitical lies is backfiring

*The repeated snubs Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif has suffered internationally is a result the contradictions in Islamabad's foreign policy*

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is used to humiliation. Traditionally, those who put banana skins under his feet are his own generals. In recent weeks, however, it has been the foreign governments who Pakistan sees as its friends who have left him red-faced.

First there was the United States president, Donald Trump, who declined to meet Mr Sharif when the two were in Riyadh together last month. Mr Sharif reportedly carefully worked on his speech on the flight to Saudi Arabia only to be told, on arrival, that the US

president had better things to do. Then Chinese leader Xi Jinping pointedly did not hold a bilateral meeting with Mr Sharif at the recent Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit, held at the Kazakhstan capital Astana. Reportedly Mr Xi was unhappy at the recent

deaths of two Chinese in Pakistan. This week Mr Sharif was put on the spot by the Saudi ruler who asked whom he supported in the present fight between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. A foreign policy built around hanging a 'For Sale' around your sovereignty runs into problems when you have multiple buyers. For decades, Pakistan has sought to balance India's preponderance by wooing external allies. During the early half of the Cold War its preferred friend was the US. In the 1960s, Islamabad developed a taste for Chinese. A few decades later it began positioning itself as the sword arm of Islam to Saudi Arabia. Amid all this it has also flirted with Iran, Bangladesh, and recently with Russia. There were two contradictions in this policy. One, Pakistan's reasons for alignment were



all centred on countering India. However, other than China, none of its other allies shared this interest and signed up with Pakistan for other reasons. Two, many of the countries Pakistan has sworn fealty are today at daggers drawn. The worst contradictions are in the rising friction between Saudi Arabia and Iran, a subset of which is the present boycott of Qatar. It has had to walk a tightrope on the US and China relationships as well. Unlike India, which has always made it clear that its

closeness to specific countries is about a convergence of interests, Pakistan's has been based on thinly-veiled geopolitical falsehoods. With global faultlines becoming sharper, Islamabad is finding it harder to avoid injury. Afghanistan is an example of where Pakistan has had to juggle a variety of patrons. There is evidence that similar contradictions are spilling over into Balochistan. The humiliations of Mr Sharif are an almost comic harbinger of worse things to come.

## Muslims targeted by violence in wake of ISIS-claimed attacks

London: The attack on Muslim worshippers outside a London mosque on Monday follows a rising wave of violence and harassment directed against Muslims across Britain and around the world. This month alone, a Muslim woman wearing a head scarf told police in Lancashire her car was struck by a bag of vomit. (Contd on page 19)



# Donald Trump may crack down on Pakistan with possible strikes on terror safe havens



(Agencies) WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump's administration appears ready to harden its approach toward Pakistan to crack down on Pakistan-based militants+ launching attacks in neighboring Afghanistan, US officials told news agency Reuters. Potential Trump administration responses

being discussed include expanding US drone strikes, redirecting or withholding some aid to Pakistan and perhaps eventually downgrading Pakistan's status as a major non-NATO ally, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Some US officials, however,

are skeptical of the prospects for success, arguing that years of previous US efforts to curb Pakistan's support for militant groups have failed, and that already strengthening US ties to India, Pakistan's arch-enemy, undermine chances of a breakthrough with Islamabad.

US officials say they seek greater cooperation with Pakistan, not a rupture in ties, once the administration finishes a regional review of the strategy guiding the 16-year-old war in Afghanistan.

Precise actions have yet to be decided. The White House and Pentagon declined to comment on the review before its completion. Pakistan's embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request

for comment.

"The United States and Pakistan continue to partner on a range of national security issues," Pentagon spokesman Adam Stump said. But the discussions alone suggest a shift toward a more assertive approach to address safe havens in Pakistan that have been blamed for in part helping turn Afghanistan's war into an intractable conflict. Experts on America's longest war argue that militant safe havens in Pakistan have allowed Taliban-linked insurgents a place to plot deadly strikes in Afghanistan and regroup after ground offensives.

Although long mindful of Pakistan, the Trump administration in recent weeks has put more emphasis on the

relationship with Islamabad in discussions as it hammers out a regional strategy to be presented to Trump by mid-July, nearly six months after he took office, one official said.

"We've never really fully articulated what our strategy towards Pakistan is. The strategy will more clearly say what we want from Pakistan specifically," the US official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Other US officials warn of divisions within the government about the right approach and question whether any mix of carrots and sticks can get Islamabad to change its behavior. At the end of the day, Washington needs a partner, even if an imperfect one, in nuclear-armed Pakistan, they say.

## India-Afghanistan air freight corridor now operational



(Agencies) New Delhi : India and Afghanistan established a direct air freight corridor with the first flight from Kabul to Delhi received on Monday by foreign minister Sushma Swaraj. The flight, which carried 60 tonnes of cargo (mainly asafoetida) from Afghanistan, was flagged off in Kabul by President Ashraf Ghani. A similar cargo flight from Delhi to Kabul had earlier carried 100 tonnes of cargo (mainly pharmaceuticals, water purifiers, medical equipment) on June 18, 2017 from Delhi to Kabul. "The arrival of the cargo flight from Kabul to Delhi marked the inauguration of the dedicated air freight corridor. The decision to establish an air freight corridor between Afghanistan and India was taken in the meeting between PM Narendra Modi and President Ghani in September 2016 during the President's visit to India," said the ministry of external affairs in a statement. The connectivity established through the air freight corridor will provide Afghanistan greater access to markets in India, and will allow Afghan businessmen to leverage India's economic growth and trade networks for its benefit.

## China to build dam in Pakistan that World Bank, ADB refuse to fund

(Agencies) NEW DELHI: Pakistan claimed on Monday that China has offered to make a dam project on the Indus River that India objects to, a part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)+ , said the state-run Radio Pakistan. The information about the project, the Diamer-Bhasha Dam, was conveyed by Pakistan's state-run power utility to a committee of the country's National Assembly on Monday. Earlier this month, Pakistan's planning minister Ahsan Iqbal told Reuters in an interview that "Pakistan expects China to fund" the project. The Diamer-Bhasha Dam is a project that both the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have refused to touch because India objects to its location, which is in the Gilgit-Baltistan region. India claims the region is a part



of Kashmir. A little over a year ago, the US was making noises about supporting the project and India didn't shy away from showing it was peeved. Muzamil Hussain, the chairman of the state-run power utility said that currently no mega hydro-power

projects are included in CPEC, which is why both Pakistan and China are seriously considering making the Diamer-Bhasha a part of it. Two years ago, the World Bank refused to come on board as a lender for the dam project, because Pakistan didn't

want to seek a no-objection certificate from India for the project. And last November, the ADB too declined to fund what's said to be a \$14 billion project.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif last December approved "in principle" the financing plan+ for the 4500 megawatt Diamer-Bhasha dam. He told his Water and Power secretary to begin preparations to start work on the dam before the end of next year. The Diamer-Bhasha Dam was first announced in 2006 and the foundation stone for it was laid in 2011. Pakistan envisages the dam project will generate 4,500 megawatts of electricity, Reuters reported earlier this month. A vast new reservoir is also expect to regulate the flow of water to farmland that is vulnerable to increasingly erratic weather patterns, the news agency added.

## China hints at blocking India's move on JeM chief Masood Azhar in UN again

(Agencies) BEIJING: China on Tuesday hinted at blocking a UN ban on Pakistan-based JeM leader Masood Azhar once again+ , saying that disagreements continue to prevail in the UN Committee related to terrorism issues in this particular case. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang's comments came in response to a question on the Azhar issue ahead of its review by the 1267 Committee of the UN next month.

China says that solid evidence is required to implicate the JeM leader. India has been asserting+ that it produced "solid evidence" for securing a ban on Azhar and actions of Pakistan-based terrorist is well documented.

"We have talked about our position many times. We believe that the principles of objectivity and professionalism and justice shall be upheld," Geng told media briefing

here. Geng was responding to a question whether there can be a forward movement over China's repeated technical holds to block India's move to get a UN ban on Azhar.

"At present, some members have disagreement over the listing matter. And China stands ready to remain in coordination and communication with the relevant parties on this issue," he said.

Beijing put a technical hold to a move in the UN by the US and other countries to declare Azhar a terrorist for his role in the Pathankot terror attack+ . Last year China had put technical holds on India's application to designate Azhar as a terrorist.

Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar, who held strategic dialogue with Chinese officials in February here, said, "in the case of Azhar, Jaish itself is proscribed under 1267. So the proof is in 1267 committee action.

In this case what he has done, extent of his actions are well documented." "It is not that the burden of proof is on India to convince. The sponsors (US and other countries) seem to be very well convinced otherwise they would not have taken the initiative to move the proposal," he had said, referring to the US, the UK and France pressing for action on Azhar.

The 1267 Committee is consist of members of the UN Security Council. Geng's response to the Azhar issue followed a two-day meeting of the BRICS Foreign Ministers who took a strong stand on countering terrorism and working out international mechanisms to curb terrorism.

Minister of State for External Affairs V K Singh, who took part in the meeting, said BRICS should back a comprehensive convention on terrorism in the UN shedding ambiguity about good and bad terrorists.

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## Presidential polls: Sena extends support to Ram Nath Kovind

(Agencies) New Delhi: Shiv Sena on Tuesday extended their support to National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) presidential candidate Ram Nath Kovind, ANI reported. "Shiv Sena to support Ram Nath Kovind for Presidential Election," Uddhav Thackeray was quoted as saying by the news agency. This comes a day after the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announced Bihar governor Ram Nath Kovind as NDA's presidential candidate. Addressing a press conference, BJP president Amit Shah had said that the party reached out to all its allies, including Shiv Sena, and Kovind will be NDA's choice for the country's top post. While reacting to the update, Shiv Sena chief had said, "his party won't back NDA's presidential nominee, a Dalit, if he has been chosen to tap into the Dalit vote bank. We have never played politics using anybody as a shield. We had suggested the name of MS Swaminathan so that farmers get benefited. We will always support the cause of farmers."

## Evading former Justice CS Karnan arrested from Coimbatore

(Agencies) COIMBATORE: Justice (ret'd) C S Karnan, who had been absconding since May 9+, was arrested by the West Bengal police with the assistance of the Tamil Nadu police from an apartment near Coimbatore around 7.30pm on Tuesday evening. After the West Bengal police came to know on Sunday that the 62-year-old former Calcutta high court judge was hiding somewhere near Coimbatore, they traced him to be hiding at an independent house at Machegoundan Palayam, a suburb near Coimbatore. The Coimbatore police sent special team of experts to track the whereabouts of the former judge who has been evading arrest after being sentenced to a six-

month term of imprisonment for contempt of court offence by the Supreme Court. Coimbatore city commissioner of police A Amalraj said that Justice Karnan had been found staying in the house when he was picked up by the West Bengal police. "We provided technical assistance to the West Bengal police, and they arrested him from the apartment," he told TOI. Justice Karnan had allegedly argued with the police refusing to get into the police car, citing that he wanted to speak to the media first. He was later arrested and taken to the Coimbatore airport to be flown to West Bengal. Justice Karnan, who was transferred to Kolkata after

he had kicked up a row by raking up issues against other judges of the Madras High Court, including the Chief Justice, has been untraceable ever since the apex court sentenced him for contempt on May 9. A seven-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar held Karnan guilty of contempt+ and ordered six months imprisonment for him. A team of West Bengal police had rushed to Chennai and other places in Tamil Nadu looking for him but without success. Probably the police may lay its hands on the controversial judge now that he has retired. Reacting to the situation, senior counsel and former president of the Supreme Court Bar Association Dushyant Dave told IANS that "it reflects failure on the



part of the police in not having found him. .. It shows complete lack of respect of the Supreme Court by the Executive." "Right or wrong the Supreme Court judgment has to be implemented and the state is fully responsible for the lapses and must be held accountable," Dave said, pointing out that "The whole saga reflects the sorry state of affairs in the judiciary." Justice Karnan had left Kolkata on May 9 itself and remained elusive thereafter even though Director General of West Bengal Police constituted teams of police personnel which went to Chennai and other places looking for him. He moved the top court for the suspension of his sentence and sought review of the May 9 order but he did not get any relief. His plea for review was declined on technical grounds without its coming before the seven judges bench. Justice Karnan's counsel Mathews J Nedumpara had repeatedly told the top court that the detailed order holding him guilty of contempt was never made available to him after May 9 - something he was entitled to like any other litigant. The failure of West Bengal police to arrest Justice Karnan in the last one a half months has saved a situation of a serving judge of a High Court being arrested and sent to jail. Now, if Justice Karnan is arrested in pursuance of the top court order then it would be an arrest of a former judge of a High court - who post retirement is like any other ordinary citizen.

## GST roll-out will be historic, will make India self-reliant in defence: PM Modi



(Agencies) Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday the roll-out of the Goods and Services (GST) tax from July 1 will be "historic" and the world will witness how political parties of different ideological hues came together to usher in this major reform. He also strongly favoured making the country self-reliant in defence and technology sectors. Addressing a gathering at the APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University (AKTU) here after inaugurating its new building, Modi said, "The roll out of the GST from July 1 will be historic. It will set an example for the world." The prime minister said he was grateful to all those who had contributed towards the formation of a consensus over the tax reform. I am grateful to all the vidhan sabhas, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and political parties, Modi said. "The world will witness a transformation (in India) and how all the political parties subscribing to different ideologies united for the implementation of the GST," he said. The biggest tax reform since Independence, GST will re- shape India's

business landscape by making the country an easier place to do business in and would bring down barriers between states. It is all set to be launched at a grand function in the Central Hall of Parliament on the midnight of June 30. GST over the medium to long term is expected to lead to higher revenues for the Centre and the states while also increasing the size of the economy and having a positive impact on the GDP. It would unify the USD 2 trillion Indian economy and 1.3 billion people into a single market. In his speech here, Modi also strongly favoured making the country self-reliant in defence sector. "We are moving forward with the dream of how to make India self-dependent in the field of defence and security," he said. Presently India imports upto 65 percent of its

defence requirements, it is estimated. Can we not make India self-reliant in defence sector?, the prime minister asked here. "We are marching ahead with this dream and for this we have made policy changes and allowed 100 per cent FDI in defence sector," Modi said. His impassioned plea to make the country self-reliant in defence sector came against the backdrop of the government recently finalising a policy under which private sector companies will be roped-in to manufacture hi-tech defence equipment like submarines and fighter jets in India in partnership with foreign entities. Modi also lauded the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) saying that "the world took notice when India launched 104 satellites. We have such potential and have to take it forward." He said that India "reached Mars in a budget less than that of a Bollywood movie due to the technological advancement. Our expense to reach Mars was Rs 7 per kilometer." Lauding scientists, Modi called them "modern rishis". "Scientists are facing a challenge to produce cheap but effective drugs for the poor and needy. They are devoted to the objective of ridding the humanity of pain. Science is universal, but technology is local. We have to defeat diseases with science," he said. Speaking here, Modi also appreciated the efforts of UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in taking the state forward. "Everyone is watching the developments in UP. They are curious about what is happening here. The Yogi government has initiated steps to check the diseases and various hindrances prevalent in UP for years. I congratulate Yogi and his team for this," he said. Earlier Modi also visited the premier CSIR-Central Drugs Research Institute (CDRI) here and evinced a keen interest in the research work conducted by the state-run institute. Soon after arriving here on a two-day visit, the prime minister flew in a chopper from the Amausi airport to the CDRI complex. During his 40-minute stay at the institute, he took a round of the two laboratories. The prime minister even used a microscope to follow the experiments and also had a brief interaction with senior scientists. CDRI officials briefed him about certain new drugs being developed by the institute for treatment of diseases like osteoporosis and malaria.

(Insider Bureau) Lucknow : Will both Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party endorse the candidature of Ram Nath Kovind as the President+ ? With leaders from two principal opposition parties giving their consent to attend the dinner hosted by chief minister Yogi Adityanath in honour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday evening, the



## Akhilesh, Maya to attend dinner with PM Modi

possibility of their support has got stronger. PM Modi is arriving in the city at 4.50pm on Tuesday to take part in International

Yoga Day event on Wednesday morning. On Tuesday evening, he would inaugurate the new building of Abdul Kalam

Technical University and also visit the Central Drug Research Institute. Thereafter, he would also attend the dinner hosted

by the CM. CM office had sent invite to all prominent leaders of the Opposition parties including SP

patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav and BSP chief Mayawati. Now, it is learnt from highly placed sources that all the three leaders have accepted the invitation and would attend the dinner. Leader of opposition in UP assembly Ram Govind Chaudhary will also be present.

Political observers say that their acceptance to the invite itself indicates that both SP and BSP had made up their mind to support Dalit leader Kovind's candidature+ . While Mulayam has been giving clear indication that he would back the NDA candidate even before the

announcement of the Bihar governor's name Mayawati on Monday had said that she was happy that BJP had proposed the name of a dalit leader, but she also said that the opposition might put up a 'better' dalit candidate.

Nominations for the Presidential elections, to be held on July 17, ends on June 28. On Monday, the BJP stumped the opposition parties by announcing the name of Kovind, a Kori from Uttar Pradesh. LJP chief and NDA partner Ram Vilas Paswan had commented on Monday that now anybody opposing Kovind's candidature would be seen as anti-Dalit.

## Centre not to look at farm loan waivers: Jaitley



(Insider Bureau) New Delhi : Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said on Tuesday that the central government has no intention to provide farm loan waivers on the lines of the dole-outs handed out by state governments of Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Punjab. "No, we have FRBM (Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management) and fiscal-deficit targets. We will adhere to them," Jaitley said when asked about the loan waivers extended by state governments and on whether the centre plans to follow suit. Talking about the new GST regime, the government warned businesses that it will not tolerate any excuses for being unprepared to comply with the new tax era that kicks in from July 1.

"We have been saying for the last six months it would be July 1 - nobody has any business not to be ready," Jaitley said. "If he's still not ready, then I'm afraid he does not want to be ready."

The minister said that there could be "some challenges (in the new tax regime) at switch-over", though it would be incremental to the economy in the long-term. "I anticipate that over the medium- to long-term, being a more efficient system that checks evasion, the revenues will grow... It will have a positive impact on the GDP. The size of the formal economy will increase." The new tax regime is a "result-yielding reform" in the long-term, Jaitley said, adding that the transition for businesses is "not a complicated process". Of the 80 lakh assesses, around 65 lakhs have already registered.

## India at BRICS meet: There's no 'good' terrorist



(Insider Bureau) BEIJING: India has sent out a clear message to the BRICS countries, including China, that they should not believe in the Pakistani narrative about making a distinction between "good" and "bad" terrorists. Pakistani leaders have been trying to propagate this theory to protect a section of extremists, and China has shown no signs of discomfort

about this narrative. "I have pointed out that terrorism remains the most potent global menace and threatens global peace... And terrorists cannot be differentiated by calling them good or bad," V K Singh, minister of state for external affairs, said at a joint press conference after the meeting of BRICS foreign ministers in Beijing on Monday. The meeting comes

ahead of the BRICS summit of the heads of governments, which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Xiamen city of southern China in September. Pointing out that there was a need to expedite the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the United Nations, Singh said all the BRICS countries

are supporting this move. "The BRICS agenda has witnessed steady expansion," Singh said. "The joint working group on counter-terror concluded its meeting in May. Our NSAs are scheduled to meet next month. In their meeting last year, they reached significant understanding to enhance BRICS cooperation in security and counter-terrorism." India has been unhappy about China's continued efforts to defend Pakistan on the issue of terrorism. Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said, "China and India are both major countries with great influence, and that they should boost cooperation in the BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and all other multilateral frameworks to make a contribution to peace and stability in the region and the world at large."

## Punjab 3rd state to waive farm loans, to take Rs 24,000 crore hit

(Insider Bureau) Chandigarh : The farm loan waiver fever is spreading across the country, threatening to place a huge additional burden on the already creaking finances of state governments. On Monday, Punjab became the third state this year — after UP and Maharashtra+ — to announce a total waiver of all crop loans up to Rs 2 lakh for small and marginal farmers (up to 5 acres) and a flat Rs 2 lakh relief for all other marginal farmers, irrespective of their loan amount. Punjab chief

minister Amarinder Singh announced the waiver, one of his key poll promises, in the assembly. He said the move would benefit 10.25 lakh farmers. Some 8.75 lakh farmers have farms of up to five acres. The waiver+ will cost the debt-ridden state Rs 24,000 crore, according to one estimate. Singh said his government had not decided on whether to take a fresh loan or generate more revenue for the purpose. The CM refused to say how much the state would need to raise to meet the waiver

requirements. "These are all figures which will be given in the state budget," he told reporters after announcing the waiver. The state budget is to be tabled on Tuesday. Punjab had got just 0.8% of the Rs 52,520 crore loan waiver that the UPA-I government had announced in 2008. Effectively, this is the first major debt waiver for the state. The Punjab CM had been under pressure to announce a loan waiver after UP CM Yogi Adityanath had waived loans+ of up to Rs 1 lakh on April 4. Capt Singh,

however, insisted his waiver would provide double the relief announced by UP and Maharashtra. The decision is based on the interim report of the expert group headed by wellknown economist T Haque. Capt Singh added his government had decided to take over the outstanding crop loans (from institutional sources) of all families of farmers who committed suicide in the state. The government has also decided to raise the ex gratia for suicide-affected families to Rs 5 lakh from the existing Rs 3 lakh.

# Made-in-India F-16 ?

## Lockheed inks JV with Tatas in fight for Indian skies

(Agencies) New Delhi : The fight among global aviation majors over Indian skies is once again set to take off. Ahead of PM Narendra Modi's visit to the US early next week, the world's largest armament company Lockheed Martin on Monday signed a pact with Tata Advanced Systems to produce the latest version of its F-16 fighter jets in India if the joint venture actually bags the multi-billion-dollar project. With India last month finalising the new "strategic partnership (SP)" policy in defence production, which envisages joint ventures between global armament majors and Indian private sector companies under the "Make in India" framework, the Lockheed-Tata tie-up now firmly pitches the F-

16 against the Swedish Gripen-E fighter manufactured by Saab. Both F-16 and Gripen were the only single-engine jets (less expensive than twin-engine ones) among the six contenders in India's original MMRCA (medium multi-role combat aircraft) project to acquire 126 jets, in which the French Rafale fighter had eventually emerged the winner. But the Modi government had gone in for the direct purchase of only 36 Rafales for Rs 59,000 crore after scrapping the deadlocked and exorbitant MMRCA project in 2015. The defence ministry now wants a second single-engine fighter production line in India to supplement the long-delayed indigenous Tejas fighter in the backdrop of IAF grappling with

just 32 fighter squadrons when it needs 42-44 squadrons for the "collusive" China-Pakistan threat. As reported earlier by TOI, the F-16 and Gripen-E fighters are the main contenders for this second line, under which at least 100 fighters will be produced and the order could go up to over 200 jets, since the F-18s, Rafales, Eurofighter Typhoon and MiG-35s are all twin-engine.

MoD sources on Monday said the "actual deal or contract" for the second assembly line is "still a long way off" since the process for the selecting the Indian private sector firm as the "strategic partner" for production of fighters will itself take "several months", which will be followed by the extensive bidding and negotiation process. Under the



SP policy, foreign original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) will be selected in a parallel process. But the Lockheed-Tata venture, announced at the Paris Air Show on Monday, has made its intention clear to "produce, operate and export the F-16 Block 70 aircraft" (the latest technologically-advanced version of the jet that first made its debut almost four decades ago) under the "Make in India" framework if selected. The US itself has not ordered F-16s since 1999, shifting to the advanced fifth-generation F-35s, but has exported them to other countries. Of the over 4,500 F-16s manufactured over the years, with production lines in Europe and other countries like Turkey and South Korea apart from the US, around 3,200 are still flown by 26 countries, including Pakistan. But it is still not clear how Modi's "Make in India" drive will square with US President Donald Trump's hard-nosed policy to not allow jobs and factories to be shifted out of America+. Lockheed and Tata, on their part, said moving the F-16 production base+ from Fort Worth in Texas to India would still retain jobs in the US.

## Presidential poll: Why PM Modi chose Ram Nath Kovind over senior ministers



(Agencies) New Delhi : PM Narendra Modi on Monday refused to relieve any member of his Cabinet as NDA's presidential candidate, tilting the scales in favour of Bihar governor Ram Nath Kovind+ .

Sources said Modi told the BJP's parliamentary board that sparing members of the Cabinet — home minister Rajnath Singh, foreign minister Sushma Swaraj or social justice minister Thaawarchand Gehlot — would weaken him.

The PM is learnt to have mentioned the departure of Manohar Parrikar, who quit as defence minister to take over as chief minister of Goa+ , as well as the death of environment minister Anil Madhav Dave+ , to argue that he needed to hold on to senior members of his team.

Finance minister Arun Jaitley has been holding additional charge of the defence ministry, while the environment ministry is being looked after by science and technology minister Harsh Vardhan.

Members of the

parliamentary board also discussed party veterans L K Advani and Murl Manohar Joshi, who were speculated in certain circles as probables for the presidency, but the twin names did not generate enough conversation. Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, another speculated probable, figured in the deliberations but failed to find traction with BJP's top decision-making body. Jharkhand governor Draupadi Murmu, seen as a probable in certain quarters, was discussed along with former deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha Karia

Munda. Murmu and Munda, tribals from Odisha and Jharkhand respectively, were seen as possibilities in view of the party's desire to expand its constituency. Significantly, UP governor Ram Naik was also on the shortlist BJP chief Amit Shah put up before the parliamentary board, sources said. But while he failed to get the nod, his counterpart in Bihar, Kovind, emerged as the choice+ in keeping with the focus of Modi and Shah to woo Dalits. The outreach has seen BJP trying to identify itself with the legacy of Dalit icon B R Ambedkar and align itself with Dalit players like Ramvilas Paswan, Ramdas Athavale and former Bihar chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi. No wonder, Shah emphasised Kovind's caste background as he announced the parliamentary

board's decision. I&B minister Venkaiah Naidu also spoke along similar lines. "He (Kovind) is from a weaker section and belongs to a family of farmers. He has a legal background+ , and twice served as member of Rajya Sabha. He understands social, political and constitutional issues. He is humble and non-controversial," Naidu said as he appealed to all political parties to support Kovind for the top constitutional office. Paswan too welcomed Kovind's candidature. "He is the best choice. It's a brilliant move by the PM. All parties should support him," he said.

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## Tata Group may buy Air India: Report



(Agencies) The Tata Group in partnership with Singapore Airlines may be looking at buying India's national carrier Air India from the government, business news channel ET Now reported on Wednesday citing sources. If the deal comes through, it would be a homecoming of sorts for Air India, which was originally owned by the Tata Group before being nationalised in 1953. Tata Group chairman N

Chandrasekaran has held informal talks with the government, expressing preliminary interest in buying a controlling stake in Air India with 51 per cent equity, the report stated. Read this story in Bengali The government has been talking about its interest in privatising the beleaguered airline that has been in losses for a decade. Recently, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had said the aviation ministry has

to explore all possibilities "as to how the privatisation of Air India can be done". Air India has a whopping debt of over Rs 52,000 crore. Air India has already received bailout packages worth about Rs 24,000 crore out of a total Rs 30,000 crore approved Back in 2013, the then chairman of Tata Group Ratan Tata had said the group would "be very happy to look" at Air India "as and when it (privatization) happens." The Tata Group is already present in the Indian civil aviation space with two of its joint ventures including low-cost carrier AirAsia India in partnership with Malaysia's Air Asia, and full service airline Vistara in partnership with Singapore Airlines. Air India's original avatar was as Tata Airline which was launched in 1932 by Tata Group patriarch JRD Tata. Post independence, it was incorporated as Air India International in 1948 as a joint venture between the government and the private sector to start overseas services. Five years after this, the government would nationalise the aviation industry bringing the airline under its control.

# Planning to buy property in Punjab?

## Stamp duty cut comes as relief to reeling realty sector

The state exchequer has registered consistent decline in stamp duty collections in the wake of a slowdown in the property market. This has impacted the collections particularly from major cities like SAS Nagar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar.

(Agencies) In a move that is expected to help revive the recession-plagued real estate sector in the state, Punjab finance minister Manpreet Singh Badal, in his budget speech on Tuesday, proposed a cut of 3% in the stamp duty on the registration of property, from 9% to 6%. The duty reduction is applicable only for the current

financial year and only to urban areas, though. The state exchequer has registered consistent decline in stamp duty collections in the wake of a slowdown in the property market. This has impacted the collections particularly from major cities such as SAS Nagar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Amritsar. Even after the reduction, the stamp

duty in the state is higher than that in Chandigarh, where it is 5%. Neighbouring Haryana has stamp duty at 8% for urban areas now. Welcoming the move, Anil Chopra, chairman of the Punjab chapter of CREDAI (Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India), said, "It will also help

encourage property buyers to declare the actual value of a property purchased at the time of registration. At present, in order to save on duty payment, buyers underreport the value."



**The shifted industries will be provided with treated water from the sewage treatment plants. It will also help in augmenting the water supply to the households, he added.**



government's drive to clean the river," Sharma said.

The shifted industries will be provided with treated water from the sewage treatment plants. It will also help in augmenting water supply to households, he added.

Soon after coming to power at the Centre in 2014, the Modi government had launched 'Namami Gange' programme aimed at cleaning the holy river but has not been able to meet its target so far.

The BJP had blamed this for the alleged lack of cooperation from the then Samajwadi Party government in Uttar Pradesh and the Congress government in Uttarakhand, the state from where Ganga originates.

The BJP came to power in the two states in March following the assembly elections.

## Uttar Pradesh govt plans to shift polluting industries away from Ganga

(Agencies) The Uttar Pradesh government plans to shift water-polluting industries away from Ganga as part of

the Centre's ambitious drive to clean the river.

The state government's spokesperson and its power

minister Shrikant Sharma told reporters on Tuesday that the Yogi Adityanath dispensation has drawn up plans to move

such industries, which are a major source of pollution to the river. "We are now working in a big way to join the central

## India wants to be a trade, transit hub; inks UN pact in bid to counter China's OBOR



(Agencies) New Delhi : India became the 71st country on Monday to join the United Nations TIR Convention, the international customs transit system, to position itself as a regional trading and transit hub. The TIR system is the international customs transit system with the widest geographical coverage. As other customs transit procedures, the TIR procedure enables goods to

move under customs control across international borders without the payment of the duties and taxes. TIR Convention is more than a transport agreement and has a strong foreign policy element. In a world where China's 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR)+ is the dominating project straddling economics and geopolitics, India has no option but to play a better game if it wants to be counted as a serious rising power. Read this story

in Gujarati Welcoming India into the global transport arrangement, Umberto de Pretto, the secretary general of IRU which manages the TIR Convention, told TOI from Geneva that India's accession would have a big impact on regional connectivity. "TIR can help implement the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement by addressing policy incompatibility among the BBIN group. For example,

Bangladesh does not recognise insurance policies made in India, Nepal or Bhutan. With TIR, there would be no need for bilateral arrangements as guarantors are covered by the global guarantee chain." One of the persistent problems for India's connectivity projects has been the disconnect between transport and customs systems with different countries. Once the systems are integrated with global norms, India reckons it will become easier to service African and Asian markets when the DMIC (Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor) comes online. It will breathe life into the International North-South Transport Corridor and the Chabahar project that India has been working on for some time. China joined the TIR in 2016 when its giant inter-regional connectivity projects

began to take off. As India ramps up its connectivity ambitions this is a necessary step. For instance, the BBIN motor vehicles agreement needs this convention to make it operational. "BBIN MVA lacks any guaranteeing mechanism to protect customs revenue in the event of goods getting diverted to the national territory of the state through which it is passing. Without such mechanism, the MVA could not be operational," he said. Joining the convention "would be a major economic boost to South Asia, eventually connecting the region to the rest of the world. It could become a key link between South and South-East Asia, particularly as China is already a TIR member, and connects transit routes east to Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and beyond".

# Brooklyn's Latest Craze: Making Your Own Electric Grid

*Using the same technology that makes Bitcoin possible, neighbors are buying and selling renewable energy to each other.*

(Agencies) When Michael Guerra, a blunt-talking Brooklyn real estate broker, installed 24 solar panels on his Park Slope rooftop in 2012 during a home renovation, all he knew was that he liked the idea of being able to supply his own green electricity—and to run his air conditioning in the summer without paying exorbitant charges. So he got as many panels as his utility and the state would allow.

"I'm the guy who wanted solar panels on his roof since Jimmy Carter was president," says the 54-year-old.

Then one day in 2016, he got a knock on his door. Sasha Santiago had been on a nearby rooftop and spied Guerra's solar panels; he used Google Earth to home in on the right building.



"A strange man rang my bell and—I'm not kidding—said, 'Hi, I'm Sasha. Can I talk to you about a microgrid?'" Guerra says. "I said, 'What's that?'"

Santiago explained that the company he worked for, Brooklyn-based LO3 Energy, was running a pilot program that would permit renewable energy users like Guerra to sell power directly to their neighbors. In effect, the neighbors would become their own small power grid in

the middle of the most populous city in the country. "Oh, this is shared economy. This is Airbnb, this is Uber, this is 21st century," Guerra remembers thinking. He agreed to be part of the project on President Street. Residents with solar panels on one side of the street sold environmental credits to residents on the other side of the street who had no solar of their own. New York state allows electricity

consumers to use their own solar panels to supply their electricity, but any power produced that the customer doesn't use feeds back into the larger grid, with consumers being paid for those kilowatt hours. The microgrid system that LO3 had devised would essentially cut out the middleman, using a phone app and smart meters to enable neighbors to strike deals for how much electricity they want to buy

from one another and at what price. The technology that makes this possible, Santiago explained to Guerra, is blockchain, the same secure information exchange that makes bitcoin trading possible.

"The idea with blockchain is that everything is done peer to peer," says Duke University economist Campbell R. Harvey. "With a microgrid, people that have solar panels can actually trade amongst themselves. They don't have to have a centralized person in the middle that is taking a piece of the action." In a time when the national electricity grid could be vulnerable to terrorism and climatic events, a new technology "could potentially resolve some of these problems," he says. Brooklyn, he says, is "a glimpse of the future."



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# Phoenix flights cancelled because it's too hot for planes



(Agencies) As temperatures climb in Phoenix, Arizona, more than 40 flights have been cancelled - because it is too hot for the planes to fly. The weather forecast for the US city suggests temperatures could reach 120F (49C) on Tuesday. That is higher than the operating temperature of some planes. American Airlines announced it was cancelling dozens of flights

scheduled to take off from Sky Harbor airport during the hottest part of the day. The local Fox News affiliate in Phoenix said the cancellations mostly affected regional flights on the smaller Bombardier CRJ airliners, which have a maximum operating temperature of about 118F (48C). The all-time record for temperatures in Phoenix is just slightly higher, at 122F, which hit on 26 June 1990. The cancelled flights were scheduled to take off between 15:00 and 18:00 local time. Why can't planes fly? At higher temperatures, air has

a lower density - it is thinner. That lower air density reduces how much lift is generated on an aircraft's wings - a core principle in aeronautics. That, in turn, means the aircraft's engines need to generate more thrust to get airborne. It's a well-known problem - a 2016 report from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) even warned that higher temperatures caused by climate change could "have severe consequences for aircraft take-off performance, where high altitudes or short runways limit the payload or

even the fuel-carrying capacity". Those problems are why many countries in the Middle East, and some high-altitude airports in South America, tend to schedule long flights for the evening or night, when it is cooler. Bigger aircraft like Boeing 747s and Airbus models have a slightly higher operating temperature, and have not been affected by the heat in Phoenix. An American Airlines statement provided to The Arizona Republic newspaper said those jets should be fine up to 126-127F (53C) - just a little higher than what is expected.

## Syria conflict: US jet 'downs Iranian-made drone'

(Agencies) A US jet has shot down an Iranian-made drone operated by forces backing the Syrian government in the south of the country, American officials say.

The drone was thought to be armed and threatening US-led coalition troops on the ground, officials said.

But Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said the action amounted to "complicity with terrorism".

The incident comes after the US shot down a Syrian fighter plane on Sunday and another drone earlier this month.

The F-15 plane downed the drone around 00:30 on Tuesday (21:30 GMT Monday) north-east of Tanf, an outpost of the US-led coalition, according to a US military statement.

The incident underscores the growing tensions in the region as a battle develops for the control of eastern Syria, BBC defence and diplomatic correspondent Jonathan Marcus says.

In another development, the US military announced officially that coalition forces had killed the top cleric of so-called Islamic State (IS), Turki al-Binali, in an air strike in Syria last month. IS supporters have also reported his death. It is said by the River Iranians to have a range of 2,000km (1,240 miles) and be capable of carrying bombs and missiles.

"They were threatening our forces on the ground," the US official quoted by AFP said. "Their course was on a run toward our folks to drop a munition on them."

The last drone the US says it shot down was also reportedly destroyed near Tanf after firing on coalition forces. Tanf has been used by Western special forces as well as Syrian rebel forces.

The Syrian plane destroyed on Sunday, a Su-22 fighter bomber, was hit after reportedly dropping bombs near the town of Tabqa in Raqqa province.

In response, Russia, one of Syria's main allies, announced that US-led coalition warplanes flying west of the River Euphrates would be tracked by Russian anti-

aircraft forces in the sky and on the ground and treated as targets. It suspended a hotline set up to avoid clashes between US and Russian aircraft in the region.



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## Man jailed for dangling baby from window in Algeria

(Agencies) A court in Algeria has sentenced a man to two years in prison for dangling a baby out of a window in order to attract

"likes" on Facebook.

The man posted a picture of himself holding the baby out of a window in a high-rise building with

the caption: "1,000 likes or I will drop him."

It prompted other social media users to demand his arrest for child abuse.

He was charged with endangering the baby's safety following his arrest on Sunday, police said.

The child was dangled out of the 15th-floor window of an apartment

block in the capital, Algiers, news site Al Arabiya reported. The man, who is a relative of the child, denied he put his life at risk, saying the image had been altered by social media users, Algeria's privately owned Ennahar TV reported.

"The picture was taken in a balcony with protective

barriers. These were removed," he was quoted as saying. The child's father urged the court to forgive the man, saying he had just been playing a game. However, the judge ruled against him, saying the picture was clear and the child's life was in danger. Articles shared on social media about the

incident got thousands of mostly angry reactions, reports BBC North Africa correspondent Rana Jawad. Many Algerians insulted the man, and praised the authorities for arresting him and sentencing him, she adds. Earlier reports incorrectly described the convicted man as the child's father.

## Warmbier death: Will people still travel to North Korea?

(Agencies) Travelling to North Korea has always been a niche adventure for those seeking something off the beaten track.

It's also been one of the few doors left for any exchange with the country.

But the death of US student Otto Warmbier might make travellers think twice whether the novelty factor of travelling to the world's most secretive country is really worth it.

The 22-year-old held in North Korea for stealing a

propaganda sign has died a week after returning home in a coma.

The picture emerging from online travel forums is one of quite divided opinions. It's a country that people either really want to see or that they condemn travelling to.

Comments against travelling range from safety concerns to condemning the whole idea for "subsidising a brutal regime" and calling for a boycott of the tour groups.

Those who still want to go remain intrigued by the "bizarre" nature of the destination and suggest that sticking closely to the rules should keep tourists safe. 'A magical country' Travel companies that offer trips also often play along those lines in their advertising, describing it for instance as "a hermit and magical country", "one of the last untouched places in the world" or "a surreal and lifetime experience". Aware of the

concerns over possible risks, most travel agencies explicitly address those worries and unanimously stress that North Korea is a safe place to visit. Following the death of Mr Warmbier though, most agencies that the BBC contacted were not willing to talk, referring to statements they put out to the media but unwilling to give information beyond that. They're faced with what potentially could be a great problem for their

business. The US student had his trip booked with Young Pioneers, a Beijing-based agency founded by Briton Gareth Johnson in 2008.

While mainly focussing on North Korea, the agency also offers different destinations, equally "off the beaten track" as for instance the Chernobyl exclusion zone, promoting it with the hash tag "#darktourism". Young Pioneers has since put out a statement expressing its

"deepest sympathies" to Mr Warmbier's family, adding that "the way his detention was handled was appalling". In an interview with website nknews.org, the company said it still believed that the country was safe as long as precautions were taken. It also pointed out that Mr Warmbier's arrest was the only one in the past 10 years, and that the company had taken over 8,000 tourists to the country.

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# Trump's Not Ready for a Crisis

*The White House national security team is still in transition, nearly five months on.*



Inside the 18-acre nerve center of the White House compound, the National Security Council process—making key decisions and overseeing their execution—is still in transition nearly five months after President Donald Trump took office. The sooner this transition concludes, the better for our security. In the long run, getting this transition right is far more important than any of the administration's discrete decisions that have dominated the news since January 20. Based on my firsthand experience in the White House coordinating the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan during the last such transition—the departure of the Bush administration and the arrival of the Obama team in 2009—there are two fundamental challenges.

First, the national security team must be built. This goes far beyond the early presidential memorandum specifying the members of the NSC and the supporting principals and deputies committees. With the departures of Michael Flynn and K.T. McFarland, the NSC staff is now settling in, with H.R. McMaster at the helm. The 10 to 12 “senior directors” reporting directly to McMaster lead small cells of professionals drawn largely from across the government. But, this is only the

apply. McMaster will set the example in his relationship with the other principals, especially Tillerson, Mattis, Kelly, Coats, Pompeo and Dunford. Good process builds trust among the players and leads to good policy. Everyone must feel he has a voice in the process, that there will be no rush to judgment, that there is a regular order to decisions and that discussions will remain confidential. A good process will deal with routine issues routinely, allowing the participants to come to discussions well prepared, based on a predictable schedule that also gives them the space to run their own large departments and agencies. Good process also preserves time and energy to handle the inevitable crises, when everyone must stop whatever is planned and move to the Situation Room.

Without a routine process in which the principals have confidence, every issue becomes a crisis: Officials never know what the priorities are, preparation suffers when they become consumed by the latest fire drill, and there's too little time to focus on the longer-term national interest. Another likely impact will be corrosive leaks from inside the still-forming team. Leaks tend to happen when the

team is not set, trust not established, and when the process leaves players feeling unheard, undercut or surprised. The result is even further erosion of trust. Despite a halting start, there is some reason for optimism. The team is set at the top. McMaster has three decades of experience in transitions during his military career, which featured changes in positions every few years. He knows well the importance of setting the team and the process, and is expert at it, but this is altogether a more complex, higher stakes challenge.

An effective NSC steadies the ship of state. The White House addresses complex issues of highest priority while delegating others to the departments and agencies to manage. There is discipline to distinguish the most important issues from those that appear most urgent based on news cycles. There is a balance between time spent on decision-making and overseeing implementation. Beyond current policy issues, time is set aside for longer-term strategy. We pay a heavy price for the ongoing extended transition. Without the team in place and procedures set, decision-making becomes ad hoc and unpredictable, leading to mistakes and poor execution. Coordination suffers, as the players are not on the same page, leading to misstatements and a perception of internal disputes. Because the NSC staff settles in first (in part, because these positions do not require Senate confirmation) while vacancies persist at Defense and State, power gravitates to the White House, distorting the process from the outset and unbalancing relationships between the White House and the rest of the national security players. Such an imbalance will be difficult to reverse, even as new players later join the team upon confirmation. Today's security challenges cannot be managed from the White House alone.

While we undergo this too-slow transition, the world continues to spin. Without our national security team and process in place, we are living on borrowed time before we confront a significant national security crisis that overnight becomes our first priority. Opponents deliberately will test us, friends will move on in their own interests, natural disasters will happen. No one will wait for us to get our act together. We cannot afford 2017 to be a year of endless transition. This issue is our top national security priority today.

# How Congress Failed to Plan for Doomsday

*What would happen if some crazed gunman or terrorist massacred Congress? We don't really know and that's bad news for our democracy.*

Sen. Rand Paul was blunt about what would have happened Wednesday morning during an attack on a congressional softball practice without the coincidental presence of Majority Whip Steve Scalise—there wouldn't have been any Capitol Police presence, meaning no security to return fire and stop the shooter. "It would've been a massacre." Even as it was, the gunman got off dozens of shots—perhaps as many as 50 or 60, witnesses told reporters.

Scalise, the third-ranking member of the House leadership team, remains in critical condition after being shot in the hip, and the gunman was killed. But the incident brought new attention to an uncomfortable fact that has dogged Capitol Hill since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001: Congress, thanks to its own stubbornness, still doesn't have a good mechanism to quickly replace members who have been injured or killed. And, if ever there were a mass slaughter of top members of Congress—a chemical or biological attack, or even a shooting incident that merely injured or incapacitated a large number of senators or representatives—business could come to a grinding halt and leave the House and Senate impotent for weeks or even months. The stranger thing, though, is that America's continuing inability to rebuild Congress after a catastrophic attack is, one might say, supposed to be a feature, not a bug. The men and women who have occupied the House leadership before Scalise have decided that they don't want members to be easily replaced, even if preserving congressional traditions means that senators and representatives would be sidelined from post-disaster decision-making.

The loss or incapacity of even a small group of members would have a profound and immediate impact on democracy, thanks to procedures developed when Confederate members of Congress abandoned Washington during the Civil War. Today, the loss of life of one or two dozen members of Congress could drastically alter the majority totals necessary to pass tax cuts or the repeal of Obamacare, restrict civil liberties following an emergency or pass any other piece of legislation.

Congress has never had



much interest in confronting its own mortality—during the Cold War, President Dwight Eisenhower effectively coaxed into existence the congressional doomsday bunker at the Greenbrier resort in West Virginia after legislative leaders dragged their feet—but the months after 9/11 raised new fears about just how unprepared Congress remained for any sort of widespread catastrophe involving its members.

Those fears were quickly underscored when Senate leaders like Patrick Leahy and Tom Daschle received deadly anthrax at their offices, forcing the closure of 19 Capitol Hill office buildings. The anthrax attacks raised a new, scary possibility never contemplated during the Cold War: What if an attack incapacitated large numbers of senators and representatives without immediately killing them? From the 1940s to 1962, as it wrestled with the issue of presidential succession, Congress saw more than 30 different proposed bills and constitutional amendments about what to do in the case of a mass death of its membership—three of them were even passed by large margins out of the Senate, but every bill died untouched in the House, which stubbornly refused to contemplate its own mortality. Eventually, the issue fell from the legislative branch's radar.

One of the stumbling blocks was that "continuity of Congress" was a misnomer. From the outside, the legislative branch might appear as a single entity housed in a single domed building. But the House and the Senate operate separately, each driven by and respectful of its own traditions and precedents. As

James Madison explained in setting up the legislative branch, the Founders' goal was to "divide the legislature into different branches; and to render them by different modes of election, and different principles of action, as little connected with each other, as the nature of their common functions, and their common dependence on the society, will admit." Neither body has any ability to force its governance principles on the other—all procedures were arrived at either independently or by negotiation and compromise.

That history explains why, when it comes to questions of continuity and succession, the two bodies have evolved rather different approaches. The Senate—which until the early 20th century had a long tradition of appointed members rather than directly elected ones—had relatively clear constitutional policies about how to appoint interim senators to fill a vacancy. The House, though, had no clear way to reconstitute itself quickly, nor have its leaders been inclined to compromise what they see as their body's unique character in the name of continuity efforts. That's precisely the way House leaders want it to be: The House prides itself on the fact that every person who has ever set foot in the body has been duly elected by the people; its biennial elections keep it close to the will of the voters and make it a valuable check on the whims of the president and the Senate, whose longer terms allow them greater detachment from the populace.

In the wake of 9/11, though, a terrifying image haunted the

discussion of congressional continuity: Had United Flight 93 taken off on time, instead of 41 minutes late, and the passengers hadn't had time to learn of the other attacks and storm the cockpit, the plane might very well have successfully continued to Washington and hit the Capitol building at about the same time as American Airlines Flight 77 hit the Pentagon. Had it hit while both chambers were in session, as they were that morning, legislative business might have been forced to a halt by procedural problems deeper, in fact, than the catastrophic physical destruction wrought by the attack. "With hundreds dead and perhaps hundreds of others in burn units in hospitals, Congress would likely have been without a quorum, without a building, without the ability to function," American Enterprise Institute scholar Norm Ornstein worried after 9/11.

In congressional testimony, Ornstein pointed out that since the Civil War, Congress had interpreted Article I of the Constitution as requiring a quorum of the majority of the members "duly chosen, sworn, and living" to conduct its business—that interpretation, as opposed to basing a quorum on the majority of the body's total membership, was a procedural sleight of hand formulated as a response to the large numbers of senators and representatives who had left the body as the Confederate states seceded. The seats left vacant by the secessionists need not, House Speaker Galusha Grow had ruled, be counted toward the body's quorum total.

Gathering a quorum of members chosen, sworn and living was a simple enough standard to meet if members were killed—thereby reducing the House's total number—but it would pose its own post-catastrophe problems. As Ornstein pointed out, if 300 members of the House were killed in a natural disaster or terrorist attack, the body could conduct business with a majority—68 representatives—of just those remaining alive until special elections ultimately filled the vacancies. Certainly, whatever legislation such a small group could pass might, as Ornstein said, "tax its legitimacy" with the public. What if an attack wiped out the vast majority of the body? Would anyone want a subset of just a handful of representatives, perhaps just a dozen, score, or even a hundred, making sweeping decisions about declarations of war, new appropriations or the massive civil liberties curbs likely to be imposed following a large-scale attack? What if a massacre changed the partisan balance on the Hill? It's too early to know the extent to which Wednesday's shooter was motivated by partisan motives, but any sort of mass attack on one particular party could easily tip the balance of power, particularly in a closely divided body.

Even more troubling for democracy, though, are scenarios that include the loss of a large portion of Congress.

"Take, for example, an attack that kills all but 9 members of Congress," Ornstein argued. "Five of those nine would constitute a quorum, and that tiny, unrepresentative group could pass legislation out of the House. More troubling is the intersection of the Presidential Succession Act with an attack on Congress. In the case of the death of the president and vice president, a nine-member House could then elect a new Speaker, who would become president of the United States for the remainder of the term." Yet in some ways, the problems of a small, skeleton Congress were simpler than the more frightful alternative raised by the anthrax attacks in the fall of 2001—at least it was clear a mass killing of congressional members would let the body continue legally functioning, albeit with questionable national legitimacy.

# Man on a wire : Mike Pence's Tightrope Act

Right around the time Donald Trump was boarding Air Force One en route to Saudi Arabia, soon to escape a capital city obsessed with investigations into his campaign's ties with Russia and the firing of FBI Director James Comey, his vice president was receiving a booming ovation inside a fifth-floor Ritz-Carlton ballroom in the nearby Virginia suburbs. It was the afternoon of May 19, and Mike Pence stood before several hundred members of the Council for National Policy—a secretive group of conservative movement activists, donors and intellectuals that meets under off-the-record rules—and downplayed the perception of a presidency in crisis. “The truth is, you elected a man who never quits. He never backs down. He’s a fighter. He’s a winner,” Pence said, according to an audio recording obtained by Politico Magazine. “And I’ll make you a promise: No matter what Washington, D.C., might be focused on at any given moment, President Donald Trump will never stop fighting for the American people and for advancing an agenda that will make America great again!” His audience roared. For those who feared the GOP’s once-in-a-generation opportunity for a policy renaissance was being squandered by infighting and incompetence and the creeping scent of scandal, the vice president’s words, as they so often have during the early days of the Trump administration, provided temporary relief. The performance was vintage Pence. He was grandiose but grounded, hailing a host of early victories but cautioning that the biggest were yet to come; he was authoritative but deferential, speaking for the party and the government while carrying greetings from his boss. Above all, Pence was upbeat, befitting the “happy warrior” persona he has long labored to promote. “It’s hard to get through all these

accomplishments—unless you’re watching cable news,” he said, chuckling. “They never come up, except on one network!” Had Pence not nodded twice to the Beltway media’s preoccupations, one would have had no inkling that Trump was enduring the most perilous stretch of his young presidency—or that Pence appeared at risk of becoming collateral damage. The night before, on the eve of Trump’s first foreign trip—and Pence’s private speech—two news outlets published a pair of eyebrow-raising stories that reflected mounting anxiety within the vice president’s inner circle. The sourcing and strategy seemed clearly choreographed. First, both articles aimed to distance Pence from the chaos engulfing Trump’s White House; CNN quoted “a senior administration adviser” who said Pence “looks tired” and never expected such mayhem on the job, while NBC cited “a source close to the administration” who complained of a “pattern” of Pence being kept in the dark on matters relating to the scandal-plagued former national security adviser, Mike Flynn. Second, both stories were authored by former Pence “embeds,” reporters who had spent months traveling with him and are expertly sourced among the vice president’s tight-knit team. And third, the news accounts cast Pence in a sympathetic light at the very moment when the D.C. media was, for the first time, beginning to hammer him. The New York Times had reported the day earlier that Flynn informed the Pence-run transition team before Inauguration Day that he was under federal investigation; the implications for Pence were staggering, and the White House categorically denied the story. But Pence had also courted trouble the week earlier by insisting that Trump’s decision to fire Comey was based on the deputy attorney general’s recommendation—a claim Trump promptly

contradicted in an interview with NBC’s Lester Holt, embarrassing the vice president and sending an awkward question echoing around Washington: Is Pence being kept out of the loop, or is he being deceitful? The answer, in conversations with more than a dozen people familiar with the vice president’s role in the administration and his relationship with Trump, is actually neither. They concede he has on several occasions been the victim of an uncommunicative White House—and an unpredictable president—that regularly leaves top officials hanging out to dry. They also reject the suggestion that he looks “tired,” though several friends acknowledge that his patience with the West Wing’s dysfunction has worn thin. But whether that pro-Pence leaker told CNN and NBC News the truth is less relevant than the fact there was a pro-Pence leaker at all. From the moment last July when Trump picked Pence as his running mate,

through the first five months of this administration, the vice president has been all but invisible in the parade of palace intrigue stories detailing the rivalries, alliances, backstabbing, self-promoting and stock-watching inside Trump’s reality-TV style presidency. That is no accident: Pence made clear to everyone around him when he was picked, and again at the outset of the administration, that the spotlight belongs to Trump. Leaking, speaking out of turn or doing anything that could be perceived as upstaging the president would not be tolerated. “He laid down the law,” one Pence associate recalls. “This was going to be about Trump, not him.” Unsurprisingly, the vice president declined to comment for this story. His inconspicuousness is engineered to keep all eyes on the president. But it’s also necessary to guard against whispers that he, not Trump, is running the show—a narrative fueled both by Pence’s standing

in the party and by the fact that he has been empowered like no vice president before him to establish, sell and execute the administration’s agenda. Five months into the Trump era—and less than a year since he was plucked from a thorny situation in Indiana—Pence, once an endangered small-state governor, has become the most popular Republican in the country and accumulated an astonishing amount of power. He is deeply involved with nearly every major decision coming from the White House, whether it be the withdrawal from the Paris climate accord or the appointment of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. He is the administration’s most effective and reassuring messenger, often because of his license to clarify or even correct things said by his boss. And he is widely viewed by Republicans on Capitol Hill as the de facto leader of the GOP—not just the safety parachute

for a free-falling presidency, but a polished, respected statesman from whom members can take their cues. This outsized stature, however, also threatens the harmony between Pence and his famously fickle superior. Trump has come to trust his second in command above everyone else in the White House, people close to both men say, prizing Pence’s unwavering loyalty and discretion. And yet the vice president’s camp operates in a continual state of apprehension, having been handed massive responsibilities by a president known for his insecurities and acute sensitivity to being overshadowed. Ken Blackwell, the former Ohio secretary of state and longtime conservative activist who ran the domestic policy wing of Pence’s transition team, put it this way: “Mike Pence has a very full and complex portfolio in his briefcase. And he has to carry it like there’s a bottle of nitroglycerin inside.”

## Jehadi Chickens Coming Home

but “was revived suddenly with American help”. The second big mistake was the muddled planning of Bin Laden’s expulsion from Saudi Arabia to Sudan (1991) and his further move to Afghanistan (1996), which provided him an ideal haven for global conspiracy. His activities could have been restricted had this not happened. The US had roles in both, although denied. Steve Coll (author of Ghost Wars) said that Bin Laden was expelled to Sudan on CIA’s report. The Saudi official who escorted him out conveyed that the royal family was preventing his killing by the Americans. The Guardian said that Sudanese negotiators told CIA that he would go to Afghanistan. ‘Let him’, said the CIA. As a result, bin Laden “eventually enjoyed a strong financial position in Afghanistan,

thanks to Saudi and other financiers”, according to the 9/11 Commission, which also felt that “ISI probably had advance knowledge of his move to Afghanistan and its officers may have facilitated his travel”. The third mistake was not getting him arrested in Afghanistan, despite plans by the CIA. By 1997, the CIA was ready with plans of his capture. His indictment for attempting attacks against the US was approved by the grand jury in June 1998. The CIA conducted four rehearsals. However the plans went awry because of bureaucratic bottlenecks in Washington DC. According to the 9/11 Commission: “At this time, 9/11 was more than three years away”. The fourth big mistake was President Bush’s 2003 war to bring in ‘regime change’ in Iraq. This was opp-osed even

by Gen. Brent Scowcroft, his father’s national security adviser, who had coordinated the First Gulf War (1990-91). In 2002, he war-ned Bush that “Saddam’s exit would swell terror’s ranks”. A declassified British Joint Intelligence Committee paper (Feb 10, 2003) supported this: “The broader threat from Islamist terrorists will also increase in the event of war, reflecting intensified anti--US/anti-Western sentiment in the Muslim world, including among Muslim communities in the West.” Former MI-5 chief, Manningham-Buller, told the Chilcot inquiry on July 20, 2010: “Our involvement in Iraq...radicalised a whole generation of young people, some of them British citizens who saw our involvement on top of our involvement in Afghanistan, as being

an attack on Islam”. She then underplayed the threat by aiming to correct “not a whole generation, a few among a generation”. Now, MI-5 says that it is struggling to watch 20,000 British jihadis. There was no Al-Qaeda in Iraq before the 2003 US invasion. Similarly, the arming and funding of terrorists by the West against Bashar-al-Assad’s regime in Syria from March 2011 created ungoverned territories which are occupied by terrorists. This was the origin of the dreaded Islamic State, which, like Jules Verne’s giant octopus, is attacking humanity all over the world. These lessons of history have relevance to our Kashmir situation also. Our hyper nationalists think that force will suppress dissent in the Valley. Global experience has disproved this wrong judgement.

# Muslims targeted by violence in wake of ISIS-claimed attacks

Worshippers at the Omar Faruque mosque in Cambridge found strips of ham attached to their vehicles. Several Muslim families have reported receiving letters warning, "You are no longer welcome in this country." Scores say they have been spat on.

Across Britain, Muslims say they are being targeted by a wave of animosity and violence simply because of the way they dress and worship, and because they share a religion hijacked by bloodthirsty extremists like the Islamic State group, which was quick to claim responsibility for recent attacks in Britain and elsewhere. In Monday's attack, a man plowed a van into a crowd of worshippers, injuring at least nine people — a tactic used in the recent attacks on Westminster and London bridges.

London's Police Commissioner, Cressida Dick, said Monday's assault outside two mosques during the holy month of Ramadan was clearly "an attack on Muslims."

"We are easy targets because of the way we dress and when we pray," said Hassan

Ali, a 34-year-old resident of Finsbury Park, a north London neighborhood that is home to a large Muslim population and where the attack occurred. "But every time there is an attack here or elsewhere, we are blamed. When we are attacked, people look away."

Since the wave of IS-inspired terror attacks in Britain, there has been a five-fold increase of hate crimes against Muslims. Tensions have also been running high since Britain's decision to leave the European Union, a vote that was largely driven by anti-immigrant rhetoric — a message that was further reinforced by some of Britain's right-leaning tabloids and spread by populist European politicians promising to stem immigration and tackle terrorism associated with IS.

"I feel unsafe," said Emma Salem, a 15-year-old Muslim who lives in the neighborhood targeted on Monday.

Such attacks against Muslims have been on a worldwide increase. In January, a white nationalist opened fire on an Islamic cultural center in Quebec City,

Canada, killing six people and wounding nearly 20. In the same month, the Islamic Center of Lake Travis in Austin, Texas, was destroyed by a fire in what authorities called a hate crime and another mosque was burned to the ground. Last year, nearly 100 mosques were attacked in Germany and dozens across Europe have been targeted by arsonists this year.

Stirring tension plays an important part in Islamic State and al-Qaida propaganda, as well as propaganda by right-leaning political groups.

Brendan Cox, the widower of the slain British parliamentarian Jo Cox+, said both the far-right and Islamic extremists are propelled by polarization.

"Far-right fascists and Islamic terrorists are driven by the same hatred of difference, same ideology of supremacy & use of same tactics," he wrote on Twitter.

The Islamic State group and al-Qaida have targeted Muslims living in the West, repeatedly saying they will never be fully accepted members in a society of

"unbelievers." The idea has been to sow mistrust and drive both sides to the extremes. In the case of IS, the propaganda has gone even further, warning Muslims that if they failed to either join the fight in defense of the extremists' self-declared caliphate in Iraq and Syria or carry out attacks in their home countries, they themselves were complicit in a system of oppression against Muslims. Islamic State supporters used Monday's attack to fuel more tensions by noting that the attacker, identified as 47-year-old Darren Osborne, was not shot to death, unlike the London Bridge attackers+. "Muslims, you need to wake up, the war is starting now in your own streets," the message went on, according to the SITE Intelligence Group. "Muslims are repeatedly being used as a political football and pieces in a propaganda campaign," said Mohammed Shafiq, head of the Ramadhan Foundation. "The rampant rise in Islamophobia has been perpetuated by right-wing newspapers and outlets. This has led to an atmosphere where it is acceptable to

harass and ostracize Muslims. The Muslim community is constantly demonized." Residents of Finsbury Park said they were angry that the police seemed slow to call Monday's incident a "terror attack." They also expressed frustration that attacks on the Muslim community have received little coverage or sympathy. "There has been an outpouring of sympathy for all the recent terror attacks but hardly a whisper on this attack," said 23-year-old Ali Habib, who described how the white van swerve into a crowd of worshippers gathered outside a mosque following evening prayers. "People are both scared and angry. Parents are scared to send their children to evening prayers." The Muslim Council of Britain has called for extra security around mosques, describing the Finsbury Park van attack as "the most violent manifestation" of Islamophobia. Mosques across Britain and elsewhere are expecting large crowds this week as Ramadan draws to a close.

## An unpredictable voyage THEY AREN'T BEGGARS

By the same token, Mr. Modi could look at the nuclear trade with the U.S., though he has embarked on an indigenous programme and also signed up for the next stage in Kudankulam with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Westinghouse has gone bankrupt and cannot build the six reactors we had contracted for with Mr. Obama. The solution to the liability law issue proposed by Mr. Modi, which earned him the reputation of a man of action, has not taken off at all. Of course, Mr. Trump's views on nuclear trade with India are not known, even though the nuclear deal was the handiwork of fellow Republican George W. Bush. Trump's climate-change denial On climate change, Mr. Modi had a very good chance to be on the same side as Mr. Trump if India had supported a renegotiation of the Paris Agreement. It is no secret that Mr. Modi was not fully satisfied with the Paris Accord and had contemplated not ratifying it unless India got membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. The argument was that India would not be able to reduce greenhouse gas emissions unless it enhances its nuclear power generation. But Mr. Modi later vowed his allegiance to the Paris Agreement. An ambiguous line on Paris may have been to our advantage. With the liabilities outweighing the assets that he is

carrying to Washington and the unconventional diplomacy of Mr. Trump, Mr. Modi will be walking on thin ice in the Oval Office.

The first time he entered the Oval Office, its then occupant had begun by congratulating Mr. Modi on the welcome he had earlier received from the Indian community in the Madison Square Garden. Perhaps, Shalabh Kumar and his Hindu constituency may organise a matching performance to impress the current occupant. But for the inward-looking Mr. Trump, who has shown indifference to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and hostility towards the Paris Agreement and other international commitments, a massive gathering of Indian immigrants may well be a provocation. India should wish its Prime Minister well in his most difficult voyage. At this moment of a thorough reshaping of international relations, conflicting trends in recent elections in France and the U.K. and a decline of the post-Second World War dispensation, India simply cannot afford to lose out. Together with German and Chinese, a mixture of Indian English and Hindi must also prevail on the international stage.

always wanted to escape from the farm. Sure, in feudal times, land was power; pride was measured in acres and prestige in the number of retainers and slaves. But that world has crumbled for the good and the slaves keep escaping to the cities to run away from oppression, caste violence, stagnation and most important of all, poverty. Farming is a zero-sum game. A bad crop means devastation, debts and often death by pesticide. But a bumper crop means a glut and hence loss of prices and again devastation. As a society we have been terribly cruel to our cousins whom we have left behind in the farms to feed us in the cities. This year they had a bumper crop. But the numbers are cruelly stark: the price of almost every commodity has crashed. Take the example of garlic. It was selling for Rs 100 a kg last year and now it is just Rs 10-25. Red chilli has come down from Rs 120 to Rs 50-60. Tur daal was Rs 9,000 a quintal last year. This year it fetches just Rs 3,700. Chana has come down by Rs 7,000 per quintal from Rs 12,000 to Rs 5,000.

This is a systemic failure, undoubtedly. But it is primarily the failure of the Union government because even the prime minister's greatest admirers are blaming this crash on demonetisation. Outlook works out of an office next to south Delhi's best-known dhabha. Right after demonetisation, it was completely empty. In a few days it switched over to plastic money. Still, the crowds stayed away. Tandoori chicken was definitely not an essential commodity. So, it took some time for the situation to return to normalcy. Now, it is again impossible to walk out of the office after 8 pm as the entire parking lot and the pathways are chock-a-block with people greedily gorging on a chicken or a goat.

Similarly, the mandis or our markets, the lifeline of rural economy, were also sucked dry of liquid cash. But reports from Madhya Pradesh suggest there is still a dearth of cash in rural pockets, probably resulting in the farmers' agitation that cost many lives in Mandsaur. More detailed investigation and analysis are required to understand the larger impact of

demonetisation on our rural economy. But it is sad if this present farm crisis is the result of a liquidity crunch. We could have eaten less of lamb lababdar in the cities, which anyway had switched over to plastic in a huge way. The mandis of Mandsaur needed those currency notes badly.

Worse, while we send satellites to monitor crops and run drones to detect deficiencies, we still cannot ensure remunerative prices to our farmers. This is no rocket science. Even when prices crash at farm gates and wholesale markets, they hardly move at the retail outlets, which is a clear proof of the middleman's cut. Middlemen at every level control our farm economy. And when, finally, the farmer commits suicide, the government waives off loans.

Let us not keep on waiving off loans. Instead, let us give farmers the price their produce deserves. Let there be better access to markets, better storage facilities in times of a bumper crop and let us not treat them like beggars at the mercy of mandis, middlemen and bank managers.

# Terrorist or Disturbed Loner? The Contentious Politics of a Label

Description With Deeper Meaning  
 These debates have raged since 2015, when the rise of attacks by the Islamic State coincided with an uptick in violence against Muslims in the United States and Europe.  
 The question of how to talk about and treat those two forms of violence overlaps with sensitive issues related to the integration of Muslim communities into Western societies. As attacks against Muslims have risen, many have been labeled something other than terrorism. For Muslim victims, this seemed to confirm suspicions that society sees them as potential threats more readily than as fellow citizens to be protected. Civil rights groups say the hesitation in labeling anti-Muslim violence as terrorism is part of the same anti-Muslim bias that manifests in, for example, policing and hiring discrimination. But other factors play a role as well. Formal definitions of terrorism typically rest on motive, which can be tricky to determine, particularly in the immediate moments after an attack. According to British law, an attack is deemed terrorism when it seeks "to influence the government" or "intimidate the public" with the aim of "advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause." Louise Richardson, an Irish political scientist, has posed a similar definition: "Terrorism simply means deliberately and violently targeting civilians for political purposes." Islamist attacks often seem to meet this standard more easily. Transnational groups like the Islamic State or Al Qaeda are eager to claim faraway attacks and have the public relations machinery to do so. Their reach online often means the attacker will have visited their sites or forums, allowing the groups to claim even loners as their own. Far-right extremists tend to be less organized. Groups are smaller and online communities more fractured. Though attacks are rising, often there is no group to claim them. The police may fall back on calling the incident a hate crime, which is easier to prove. An attack can be both. When Omar Mateen killed 49 people last year at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Fla., he appeared motivated by animus against gay people as well as the political agenda of Islamic State, to which he had sworn allegiance. The F.B.I. called the attack terrorism as well as a hate crime. Post 9/11, the Language of War  
 Over time, as this disparity has fed into Muslims' sense of being second class, the issue of labeling terrorism has grown more charged. Calling an attack terrorism has become a way of asserting that the targeted community feels terrorized and of asking society to take that threat as seriously as it does other forms of terrorism. The debate is less about legalistic definitions than a way to examine which groups society is willing to protect, and what kind of violence it is willing to tolerate. And it is a reaction against the politics around Islamist terrorism. Since Sept. 11, 2001, Western policy makers have described terrorism in the language of war, with President George W. Bush saying Al Qaeda sought to destroy "our way of life." Though leaders like Mr. Bush were careful to distinguish extremist groups from mainstream Islam, some rights groups warned that the political climate contributed to anti-Muslim violence. Ever since, some see the speed with which Muslim attackers are called terrorists as proof that Muslims are considered outsiders. When episodes of right-wing violence are not labeled terrorism, that is taken as proof of a deadly double standard. For others, any hesitation at labeling an Islamist attack as terrorism demonstrates that political correctness prevents policy makers from fully addressing the threat. Years of seeing terrorism as a foreign threat, and of arguments that Muslim communities must address the roots of extremism, has freighted the term with accusations that extend beyond the attacker to his or her community. As far-right violence has risen, accusations of responsibility once leveled at Muslims are now directed at white communities and right-wing politics broadly. Experts dispute that entire social groups can be blamed for terrorism. Still, some worry that far-right extremism is under-addressed as leaders strain to avoid the appearance of bias against mainstream conservatives — a consideration not so easily afforded to Muslims. Micah Zenko, who studies terrorism at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote in 2014, "We treat 'terrorism' differently because it is ascribed to foreigners who are unlike us, whereas similarly savage behavior conducted by fellow Americans is a reflection of us." When a Department of Homeland Security report on right-wing extremism leaked in 2009, it prompted accusations that Democrats were persecuting conservatives. The report was withdrawn and the office that had produced it quietly dismantled. A Sense of Hierarchy  
 When far-right violence is described as a hate crime or the act of a disturbed loner, even if that is true, it can exacerbate a sense of targeted communities that they matter less. In 2015, Dylann S. Roof, a South Carolina man who had once worn white supremacist patches, killed nine people at a mostly black church. The Black Lives Matter movement had spent two years campaigning against violence against African-Americans, particularly those killed in encounters with the police. Mr. Roof's attack, they argued, demonstrated the threat facing black people. If Islamist terrorism had inspired national mobilizations and sweeping policy changes, they argued, so should violence against blacks. And the crime appeared to neatly fit terrorism's legal definition. When Mr. Roof was charged with hate crimes, rather than terrorism, social media and rights groups angrily denounced the decision. It seemed to confirm that the government took violence against black people less seriously and would refuse to fully tackle far-right extremism. Legal scholars said prosecutors likely chose hate crime charges because they are significantly easier to prove than terrorism charges, reducing the risk of an acquittal. Federal terrorism charges are tailored to certain acts, like airplane hijackings, rather than shootings like Mr. Roof's. Shortly after, Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch called hate crimes "the original domestic terrorism." It was an acknowledgment that "terrorism" has different meanings in the courtroom and in society more broadly and that its use carries meaning beyond describing a particular act. But it hardly quieted the outrage and that, as long as deeper issues remain, seems bound to recur.

## Conversation on Yoga for Health ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji (Pujya Swamiji) said, " When I was in the jungle I saw that the saints there had no shopping mall, no Pizza Hut, no Starbucks, no Amazon.com to get whatever they want, whenever they want, but they were so happy. Nothing was set in their lives, no menu for tomorrow, but personally they were set. Their hearts were set. Their minds were set. From that, their entire health was set! In our lives everything is set but we are upset! What is the key to being set and healthy in body and mind? The answer and the secret is yoga." Pujya Swamiji further added "Additionally, today, its crucial for us to expand that sense of we must also include our entire planet. Hence yogis must come forward to be Green Ambassadors, ensuring that the world is truly a healthier place for all." Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji said, "We have eradicated most of the diseases that plagued our planet last century, we now have so many vaccinations,, antibiotics and other medicines. But we are not any healthier. Today the diseases we suffer from are mostly diseases from a system out of balance, a system gone awry. Yoga is what brings us back into balance and cures not only diseases of the body but also the pervasive "disease" lack of ease, lack of balance, that afflicts our minds and hearts. Yoga, a true realisation and practice of union, could save not only our health, but also our families, our communities, our nation and our planet. " In the opening remarks by Dr. Nata Menabde, Executive Director, WHO, New York shared, "Healthy lives and wellbeing have been recognized as an essential aspect of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Health is defined by the World Health Organization as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. While it is important to provide affordable health care services, including hospitals, quality vaccines and medicines, it is important to spread awareness about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle in promoting good health. Hence, yoga is not a religion but truly a lifestyle." Acclaimed and respected Bollywood Actor, Anupam Kherji shared, "We leave our happiness in someone else's hand. Yoga teaches you to be happy with who you are. We are constantly trying to be somebody else but Yoga teaches us how to be ourselves. That will be Yoga's contribution to your own life. Your own contribution to your own life. You can only contribute to your life if you are happy with your life." Dr Bruce Lipton shared, "When we look at the world today we see global crisis everywhere. While you think it is bad news, it is actually good news. Because crisis precipitates evolution. As we face crisis we recognise it is time for us to change. Hence, I honour, respect and appreciate you because evolution is in your hands." During the end HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji lead a beautiful pledge of oneness, inspiring everyone, including Anupam Kherji, Dr Nata Menabde and the Ambassador of India to the UN, Mr Syed Akbaruddin, to take Yoga from global to local, starting in their own lives and with their own self. All of the participants deeply moved stood up, joining hands, chanting in unison the sound of Om as it powerfully reverberated throughout the hall, ending the historic International Yoga Day conversation on Yoga in Health and leaving everyone with a lot of deep insight and inspiration.

# Russia's pipeline power

## *Washington is focused on Russia's political interference but Moscow's campaign against the U.S. extends beyond the ballot box.*

For months, Washington has been fixated on Russia's interference in our presidential election, as well as similar concerns in elections of our European allies like France and Germany. Moscow's actions are a direct threat to the credibility of our presidential elections and it's understandable that lawmakers and pundits have spent so much time discussing them.

But Russia's campaign to undermine the United States extends beyond the ballot box and across multiple domains, from its annexation of Crimea in Ukraine to its support for Syrian dictator Bashar Assad. One extension of this policy that has received curiously little attention, though, is Russia's energy policy.

As the world's second-largest producer of natural gas, Russia actually has leverage over its European customers by threatening to cut off gas supplies, and it's using this power to foster discord among European countries. A new pipeline that Moscow intends to build could dramatically increase that leverage, potentially raising its share of Germany's gas market to above 50 percent. This policy, and the pipeline in particular, poses a direct challenge to the post-World War II U.S. interest in European stability—and could potentially have effects that outlast the election scandals.

At the end of April, Russian natural gas giant Gazprom signed a financing deal for its Nord Stream 2 pipeline, which would carry gas from Russia's Ust-Luga area west of St. Petersburg across the Baltic Sea directly to Germany, where it would be distributed to other European countries. Natural gas infrastructure is costly and complex to build, and, once in place, pipelines can reshape the flows and relations between affected countries for decades. If Nord Stream 2 passes its environmental review, the project would deepen EU reliance on Russian gas and increase Moscow's leverage over key U.S. allies.

Nord Stream 2 would expand Russia's commanding position in European gas markets, a position it holds in part thanks to the Nord Stream 1 pipeline, which follows a similar sub-Baltic Sea route. In 2016, Russia supplied 34 percent of EU natural gas consumption, and Nord Stream 2 could double



Nord Stream 1's export capacity. In total, the new pipeline could deliver enough energy to Europe for 26 million households per year.

One analyst has argued Nord Stream 2 would increase Russia's share of the German gas market to over 50 percent, from 43 percent of its imports in 2015. Poland already receives more than two-thirds of its natural gas supply from Gazprom. And Nord Stream 2 backers also note that European domestic gas supply is set to decline by 50 percent over the next 20 years, and the fear is that the pipeline would mop up a significant amount of this developing import gap, deepening European reliance by discouraging imports from elsewhere.

Military spending and disinformation have so far been the principal lenses for looking at the Russia threat. Since the 2006 Riga Summit, the United States has pressured its NATO allies to reach the target of spending at least 2 percent of their GDP on defense, and it was a major topic during Trump's first official NATO meeting in May. Similarly, disinformation has attracted attention on Capitol Hill, including provisions in proposed Russia sanctions legislation.

The success of Nord Stream 2, however, is a reminder that security depends on more than military strength and a healthy media environment. The pipeline is a naked Russian attempt to divide and conquer Europe. What makes the Kremlin so clever, and this effort so insidious, is that Gazprom has engineered an attractive business case for the project for a number of European gas importers.

Russia's construction of Nord Stream 2 would weaken Europe in three key ways. First, it would give Russia greater leverage over

Germany and other European countries. With such a large share of its natural gas market, Germany will be hostage to Russia's supply manipulation, particularly if Russia chooses to jack up the price, or, in the extreme, reduce delivery. That's a lot of power for Russian President Vladimir Putin, and the United States and Germany should not assume that Russia would never choose to bring down the hammer.

Second, Nord Stream 2 would allow Russia to bypass Ukraine by delivering gas to the European Union. In other words, if Russia wanted to shut off Ukraine's gas supplies, it wouldn't affect Germany's gas supplies as well, as is the case today. By delinking EU and Ukrainian shipments, Russia could wield greater influence over Ukraine by disrupting its gas supplies without interrupting deliveries to powerful regional rivals like Germany.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the new pipeline could increase divisions among EU countries and weaken their resolve on sanctions on Moscow over its annexation of Crimea. By deepening links between EU and Russian energy markets, Nord Stream 2 would crowd out cargoes from other foreign suppliers and drive European countries into a complicated economic relationship with Russia. That poses a risk to sanctions on Russia: European countries with strong economic ties to Russia have wavered on those sanctions, including Hungary which is currently negotiating a gas supply deal with Russia extending beyond 2021. Ultimately, the pipeline would exacerbate the existing split between Europeans concerned

about Russia's coercive power and opposed to its market dominance and Europeans welcoming cheap energy and cooperation with Russia.

Moscow has already shown a willingness to use its power as a dominant natural gas supplier for coercive purposes in the past. It has cut off natural gas supplies to Ukraine in 2006, during the 2008-09 winter and during the conflict in 2015. Historically, Russia has also strategically charged different customers different rates and threatened to cut supplies for geopolitical gain.

Considering Nord Stream 2's potential consequences, it is not surprising that many European countries consider energy a major national security issue. Small Eastern European countries, usually less central to EU energy policymaking than their larger neighbors, are particularly vulnerable to Russian coercion. In a Senate hearing with representatives from Eastern European allies, energy security rivaled military capabilities and disinformation as the most discussed topic. The representatives invoked the importance of diverse energy supplies. For instance, the Polish ambassador, discussing the planned integration of the EU energy system, noted that without an energy union, "there is no [European] Union."

In fact, EU and U.S. policymakers understand these problems and have tried to prevent its construction. E.U. officials have tried—and failed—to use regulatory tools to prevent its approval while U.S. diplomats have urged Denmark individually to withhold project approval.

Opponents of the pipeline on both sides of the Atlantic are holding out hope that a draconian application of EU energy rules or a possible Danish national security provision currently under consideration could, at the last minute, thwart the construction of the pipeline. But today, with just an environmental review standing in the way, it's almost certain to be constructed.

In turn, the U.S. must find other ways to balance Russia's growing influence, starting with supporting Europe's ongoing diversification away from Gazprom. The U.S. should also support the construction of LNG export terminals, foster a liquid global natural gas market that will diminish the role of bilateral long-term contracts that allow countries like Russia to lock in favorable terms, encourage the integration of EU energy infrastructure, and promote Europe's transition to clean energy.

There are some hopeful signs coming from the Trump administration. In April, Secretary of Energy Rick Perry announced the approval of the Golden Pass liquefied natural gas export terminal, and National Economic Council Director Gary Cohn has called for more U.S. LNG exports. Private sector developments are also positive. In June, a Polish company received an LNG delivery from Cheniere Energy, the first former Soviet bloc country to receive a shipment directly from a U.S. company. Increased energy resilience would become particularly relevant during a crisis—like the 2011 Fukushima disaster—or, crucially, in any attempt at coercion by Moscow, a persistent fear in Europe. Countries worried about Russia's energy-enabled power understand the potential protection afforded by new natural gas supplies such as those from the United States. In fact, Lithuania has even christened its LNG import terminal "Independence."

Russia's interference in the U.S. presidential election is a big story and requires a comprehensive investigation. But Moscow's dangerous energy policy poses a threat to the U.S. interest in maintaining post-World War II stability in Europe and deserves real attention. Ignoring it only plays right into Russia's hands.

# Crown At The Colony's Mercy

## *Officialdom, advertisers and a deluge of confident fanfare this Champions Trophy is an Indian show*

A cricket fan may not have got fish and chips at the Edgbaston cricket ground in Birmingham, but make no mistake, there certainly was vada pav. If an Yankee were made to watch the Champions Trophy on television, he could be easily convinced that it was happening at the Wankhede or the Eden Gardens. The on-field signifiers are all eerily Indian—almost all the in-stadia advertisement is by Indian firms or MNCs' Indian arms like Pepsi, Oppo and MRF. And there were more tricolours flying in all the venues than any other flag.

The Indian presence starts right from the very top—the ICC chairman, Shashank Manohar—and it percolates down to where excited young kids look for autographs and selfies outside the Hyatt Regency hotel in Birmingham, where the Indian team is staying. In between these farthest latitudes, cricket-mad Indians seem to be omnipresent; they are the flavour of the Champions Trophy. Even for the fanatically idolised Team India, this kind of support, in England no less, must still fuel the players, who have reached the semi-finals with just one hiccup against Sri Lanka. "Fans are amazing over here. The support we get is like back home. Big thanks to them from our side," says the in-form Shikhar Dhanwan. Jasprit Bumrah, he of the demoralising, toe-crushing yorkers, is playing his first big international tournament and is as amazed. "There are a lot of Indians coming and supporting us, so it is like in India. We are really happy we have got so much support today," he said after the win over South Africa that took India into the semis.

Like the colourfully patriotic Brazilian fans descending on a tournament to cheer the Selecao, the



indication of an impending Indian fan attack was evident even before the tournament began. For India's warm-up match against New Zealand at The Oval, London, on May 28, about 18,000 people turned up in 22,000-capacity stadium. The millions of Indian cricket fans worldwide are obviously what the advertisers are aiming at. Companies that are either based in India or have a strong presence there fetch close to 80 per cent of revenues to the ICC in the form of sponsors/partners. Apart from the sponsors, the official broadcasters, another fertile source of income, has deep roots in India. STAR India grabbed the rights for the 2015-2023 cycle for reportedly \$1.98 billion. STAR India also has the India rights. Besides, two other prominent ICC sponsors—its global partner MRF Tyres and innovation partner Intel—are Indian firms. Even the ICC's three other global partners—Nissan, Oppo and Emirates—bank heavily on the huge Indian market. Oppo is also the Indian team's sponsor. Some Indian firms are expanding their horizon beyond the ICC and BCCI. Gujarat-based dairy giant Amul sponsored the New Zealand team at the

Champions Trophy, its logo displayed on players' jerseys.

The ICC itself is mostly run by Indians. Apart from its chairman Manohar, it has about 70 full-time employees at its Dubai headquarters and at least 40 per cent of them are Indians—more than from any another country. England comes second. There are some more people who work on a contract basis.

Indeed, fans from the Indian sub-continent have been making a big contribution to the ICC's revenues—and that too in multiple ways. Supporters of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh dominated all venues. For example, the India-Pakistan league match in Birmingham and the Bangladesh-New Zealand game in Cardiff was brimming over with supporters of the three Asian countries. On the other hand, stadiums hosting the England matches were, ironically, not full.

Moreover, India's good showing has meant a skyrocketing demand for match tickets. A top-ranking ICC official said his friends bought tickets for an India match at four times its

price. "Black marketing of tickets is happening in the open here in England. I know this as some of my friends bought the crucial India-South Africa league match gold tickets for £200 when they were officially priced at £50. The platinum ticket was priced at £75," says an ICC official. Quite naturally, the demand for India match increased manifold after Kohli's boys stormed into the semis. "It's true, match tickets of Indian games are not available. But Indians living in England are willing to pay [any price] to watch the Indian team's matches. It's also true that India is the financial home of cricket. Also, IPL gets a lot of following here in the UK, and the mindset of county cricket administration has also favourably changed (towards India)," says former India pacer Rudra Pratap Singh (Senior), who is now with the Lancashire County Board. He says social media and mobile phone in particular have played its role in bringing cricket to every household in India from anywhere in the world.

Manchester-based Ritesh Shetty, a doctor, had to miss the India-Pakistan match on June 4 despite having a ticket for the high-profile

encounter. "I had one £80 ticket that I got in the second round of the lucky draw on the ticket-selling website. But I didn't go as my son wouldn't let me go without him," says Shetty. He gave the ticket to a friend, but he says he could have got £500 for it. Former India wicket-keeper Saba Karim says it is not only in England. "This may be one of the biggest gathering of Indians for a sporting event abroad. However, the 2015 World Cup in Australia drew huge crowds in larger stadiums like the MCG," says he. Close to 78,000 Indian fans in the 100,000-capacity Melbourne Cricket Ground had turned up for the India-South Africa match in the World Cup.

However, India's entry into the penultimate round has posed a fresh round of problems to the ICC vis-a-vis the BCCI. So, far the BCCI has been at loggerheads with the ICC, seeking a lion's share out of the revenues that the world body earns from sponsors based in India. Now, the same group of BCCI officials are putting pressure on the ICC to provide them more tickets for the semis. "It seems the whole of BCCI has turned up in England. Its officials are forcefully demanding tickets for the semi-finals. We've told them that all tickets have been sold out. But they are insisting, at times rudely, that they want them at all costs," says a thoroughly hassled top ICC official. No wonder, because being at an English ground as the Oval in London, and watching a Kohli inside-out cover drive while munching vada pav, surrounded by a conch-blowing sea of blue, has an ecstatic, anachronistic thrill that is not to be missed. Many must be forgiven for thinking that in cricket's imperium, they are the new aristocrats.



# Sikh man arrested, handcuffed in US for carrying kirpan



(Agencies) WASHINGTON: A 33-year-old Sikh convert was handcuffed and arrested in the US for carrying a kirpan after a customer at a grocery store called police.

Harpreet Singh Khalsa, who was born as Justin Smith, has worn the ceremonial knife known as a kirpan every day since he converted to Sikhism nine years ago.

Khalsa, who owns a catering business, was quoted by The Baltimore Sun as saying that he has been stopped multiple times by police, and was arrested again last week

outside a grocery store in Catonsville, Maryland, after a customer called police.

Khalsa said he explained to the officers that the knife is part of his religion, but they frisked him, took the kirpan, placed him in handcuffs and drove him to the local precinct.

Khalsa was later released without charges, after police "confirmed that the knife was a kirpan and part of his religion, and not a threat to the community," Baltimore County Officer Jennifer Peach was quoted as saying.

"The officer did follow all

Maryland and county laws properly in this incident. There is no known exception to the deadly weapons laws at this time," Peach said.

She said the department is providing education and guidance to its officers about Sikhs and their culture.

"This incident clearly illustrates that this is an increasingly diverse county, and BCoPD (Baltimore County Police Department) works hard to understand and respect the many cultures that call Baltimore County home," Peach said.

# Airbnb buying background-check startup founded by 3 Indian-origin entrepreneurs



(Agencies) New York : Leading online lodging service Airbnb is buying a California-based background-check startup founded by three Indian-origin entrepreneurs in 2014 as it seeks to protect its users and hosts from

undesirable and fraudulent people. A report in Fortune magazine said Airbnb is buying Trooly, a startup that specialises in technology that helps conduct background checks.

Trooly was co-founded by Savi Baveja, Anish Das Sarma and Nilesh Dalvi. According to profiles of the founders on the Trooly website, Baveja, who is also the company's CEO, had previously served as senior partner at the strategy consulting firm Bain & Company, and a member of the Bain Board of Directors.

Sarma, the company's Chief Technology Officer, is a gold medalist from IIT and has worked at Google Research and

Yahoo Research. Dalvi, Trooly's Chief Science Officer, is an IIT alumnus and has worked at Facebook and Yahoo Research.

Trooly said on its website that it uses public and permissible digital footprints to understand and predict the trustworthiness of individuals and businesses. It uses minimal and non-intrusive identity information as input and returns "trust" ratings which incorporate screening for undesirable

past behaviours.

The Fortune report said an Airbnb spokesperson confirmed the acquisition but did not disclose the price or the number of workers involved.

We look forward to welcoming the Trooly team to Airbnb in the coming weeks," the Airbnb spokesperson said in the Fortune said. "We'll continue working together to better facilitate trust between strangers on, off and across the platform - supporting Airbnb's overall

strategy to create a world where anyone can belong anywhere".

Trooly, founded in 2014, raised USD 10 million in funding in 2016, according to venture capital tracking site Crunchbase.

Fortune said Trooly's technology is supposed to be an alternative to conventional background checks and credit score services that businesses typically use to screen employees before hiring. Airbnb has reportedly been a Trooly customer since 2015.

# Indian-American CEOs welcome Donald Trump's apprenticeship programme

(Agencies) WASHINGTON: Indian-American CEOs Indra Nooyi of Pepsico and Ajay Banga of Mastercard along with India's IT major Wipro on Friday joined scores of US companies in welcoming President Donald Trump's ambitious

apprenticeship programme aimed at developing job-related skills among the workforce.

"We applaud the president's commitment to industry-driven apprenticeships as a powerful tool to build the skilled workforce prepared

for the jobs of the 21st century," Business Roundtable -- a group of chief executive officers of leading US companies -- said in a full-page advertisement released in The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times today.

Abidali Neemuchwala

from Wipro Limited is the only Indian company to have signed on this advertisement.

Several Indian-American CEOs including Nooyi, Banga also signed on this advertisement supporting Trump's initiative.

Ajita Rajendra from AOSmith Corporation, Ashok Vemuri from Conduent Incorporated, Dinesh C Paliwal from Harman International Industries, Bhavesh V Patel from Lyondell Basell Industries have also signed. Besides, the advertisement was signed by scores of US

companies including American Airlines, Caterpillar, General Motors, General Electrics and Verizon. "America needs a strong, skilled workforce to drive job creation and ensure future economic growth. America's business leaders are encouraged by the administration's focus on building a 21st century workforce and welcome president Trump's commitment to expand and improve apprenticeship opportunities in the US," said Wes Bush, chairman,



CEO and president of Northrop Grumman corporation and chair of the Business Roundtable Education and Workforce Committee. "Work-and-learn models, including internships and apprenticeships, are powerful tools to close the skills gap and meet our nation's workforce needs. We support the president's challenge and look forward to partnering with government at every level as we work together to rebuild the pipeline that generates top talent," he added.

# Indian diner arrested after row over onions at US eatery



(Agencies) WASHINGTON: An Indian-origin man has been arrested in the US after he went on a violent, naked rampage, threatening to shoot staffers at an Indian eatery - all because the restaurant put onions in his food. Police arrested Yuba Raj Sharma,

43, after the confrontation at the All India restaurant, in Oakland, Pittsburgh, and charged him with terroristic threats, indecent exposure, resisting arrest and public drunkenness.

The argument began when servers put onions in Sharma's order, WPXI-TV reported.

He returned the next day drunk and angry, restaurant owner Ravinder Singh told police.

According to the criminal complaint, Sharma was so drunk and difficult that he became "dead weight" as police tried to put him in a patrol car.

The owner of the restaurant told

police that Sharma visited twice this week. The owner said Sharma was eating there and "acting belligerent," according to the complaint.

The owner said Sharma was "intoxicated" when he returned on June 6, and was told that he was not welcome at the restaurant, according to a police report. That is when Sharma "became angry" and "irate" refusing to leave, the report said.

According to the complaint, Sharma told the owner that "he was going to shoot him," then the owner saw Sharma make "a motion that he had a gun in his pants."

# Indian Consulate marks third International Yoga Day in US



(Agencies) New York : A large number of people including those from the Indian community have participated in special yoga sessions organised by the Indian Consulate here to commemorate the third International Yoga Day. Consul General Riva Ganguly Das led the Yoga Day celebrations at the Consulate premises on Monday and participated in the yoga and Art of Living (AOL) sessions. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message on Yoga Day was played before practitioners led the gathering through the two-hour yoga and meditation sessions. "Our message is to take yoga to

the world. New York is the crossroads of the world and in its fast-paced life, we feel that yoga has much to contribute," Das told media. The Consulate had planned a flagship event for the day at the city's historic and popular Battery Park where hundreds of people were expected to participate in the Yoga Day celebrations. However, due to inclement weather, the event had to be cancelled and rescheduled at the Consulate premises. A large number of people attended the yoga sessions at the Consulate and performed the 'Surya Namaskar', 'Pranayam', AOL sessions and other yoga

exercises. Das said resonance for the Yoga Day has grown in three years since the day was first marked in 2015. "With the focus on one particular day, it helps promote the message," she said, adding that lot of people who normally would not have done yoga are also getting interested and participating in the Yoga Day events. "People realise the benefits of yoga, and India's name is intrinsically associated with the day," she said. Das will also attend yoga celebrations at Times Square on Wednesday where thousands of people descend on one of the most iconic American destinations and practice yoga.

# NRI's need not to worry about Aadhaar card

**Latest government notification also exempts NRIs from quoting Aadhaar for income tax returns and PAN application**

(Agencies) Abu Dhabi: Indian expatriates living across the globe need not worry about any possible problems with their financial or income tax transactions in India for not having an Aadhaar (Indian biometric ID card), an official said on Sunday. Despite the exemption previously announced by the Indian authorities, many Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) expressed their concerns about disruption of transactions in NRE (Non-Resident External) bank accounts in India and filing of income tax returns. As PAN (Permanent Account Number — issued by income tax authorities for tax and financial

transactions) was already made mandatory for holding a bank account, NRIs are concerned about a June 30 deadline to link Aadhaar with PAN. Failure to link Aadhaar with PAN makes PAN redundant and hence some NRIs feared that this could affect their banking transactions. Mandatory for cash deposits PAN is already mandatory to make cash deposits above Rs50,000 (Dh2,850) with banks in India. A redundant PAN will also affect NRIs who invest in Indian stock market, for which PAN is mandatory. However, a latest Indian government notification has further alleviated these concerns. The requirement

of quoting of Aadhaar shall not apply to NRIs for filing of return of income and for making an application for PAN with effect from July 1, 2017, according to the notification issued by the Central Government on May 11. As Gulf News reported on April 7, India's Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had also made a similar announcement. The government started giving these exemptions to NRIs after a top official clarified that NRIs were not eligible for Aadhaar and onus was on the government departments to give exemptions to NRIs in this regard. As Gulf News exclusively reported on

March 30, Dr Ajay Bhushan Pandey, CEO, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), said in a telephone interview from New Delhi that instead of Aadhaar, the departments could get a declaration from the NRI that, being an NRI, he or she was not eligible for Aadhaar card.

Not mandatory As Gulf News reported on April 11, the Indian Embassy in Abu Dhabi had also announced that Aadhaar was not mandatory for obtaining a driver's licence or a SIM card in India. Aadhaar is one of the several documents recognised for address proof of the



applicant, it said. A senior embassy official said that there was no change in the previous announcement. "It is still valid because NRIs are not eligible for Aadhaar as per the law. Otherwise, this law has to be amended," Dinesh Kumar, counsellor, community affairs at the embassy, told Gulf News on Sunday. As per Indian laws, an

individual is considered a resident, if he or she has resided in India for a period or periods amounting in all to 182 days or more in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application [for relevant services or documents like Aadhaar]. An applicant for Aadhaar has to make a declaration that he or she is a resident of India.

# Two NRIs featured to mark Canada's 150th anniversary



(Agencies) MONTREAL: Two Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), one whose origin is Gujarat and one who hails from Punjab, have been featured in the 150

stories to mark Canada's 150th anniversary. The two are journalist Sultan Jassa and former Liberal Member of Parliament in Canada, Gurbux Singh Malhi. Others featured include Romeo LeBlanc, a teacher, journalist and Canada's former Governor General, the famed one-legged runner Terry Fox, who raised millions to fight cancer, and Lincoln Alexander, Canada's first Black MP, cabinet minister and also Ontario's former Lieutenant-Governor. This series was initiated by the Canadian race Relations

Foundation (CRRF), Canada's leading agency dedicated to the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. The special series pays tribute to Canada's diversity, democratic principles and multiculturalism by highlighting stories of remarkable Canadians and organisations. Born in Tanzania, Jassa, from a very young age, tried to foster oneness and community work. On moving to Canada in the fall of 1973 to start a new life, he continued doing community work, fighting

racism. He was awarded Canada's highest and most prestigious Order of Canada in 2005 for more than three decades of community work. In 2010, Sultan was chosen as Canada's top 25 immigrants in recognition of his achievements and contributions that have positively changed the face of Canada. He was recently presented with Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee Medal by Canada's Governor-General David Johnston at a ceremony in Ottawa. This is the third jubilee medal for him, health

field. He was awarded having previously received the Queen's silver and golden jubilee medals. Sultan has also been honoured by the Catholic, the Jewish and also the Sikh community. He became known as "The Sultan of Sacrifice" and "The Sultan of selflessness". Over the years, he has been honoured by municipal, provincial and federal governments and has been recipients of numerous awards. He won Ontario's medal for volunteerism, good citizenship and even a medal from the Ontario Medical Association for his work in the

# RBI directive on bankruptcies could start economic revival

**Bankruptcy helps provide creditors the basis for not only seizing assets of defaulters but for shareholders to initiate criminal proceedings against the promoters**

(Agencies) Indians should get used to the idea of bankruptcies as a purgative for the economy. On Tuesday, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said 12 accounts representing about 25% of the gross bad loans in the banking system would be eligible for immediate reference for bankruptcy proceedings. A combination of factors is at play for this to happen. First is that the country has a new bankruptcy infrastructure, including a set of tribunals, trained insolvency professionals and, most importantly, a market-based Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India. Second is a hard-nosed push to tackle the burden of non-performing assets that have been crippling the banking sector. The RBI has ordered banks to initiate bankruptcy proceedings against the country's 12 largest loan defaulters – steel, textile and real estate firms with a combined debt burden of an estimated Rs 2 trillion. A number of banks will now be forced to write-off enormous amounts of bad loans though there is some prospect of being able to capture assets that could set off some of these losses. Until now the fate of derelict companies has been left to court-appointed liquidators and politically appointed boards, which led to the Indian phenomenon of “sick” industries – zombie-like firms which could neither be revived nor closed down. The result has been large amounts of assets – land, machinery and even brands – that have been denied to the healthy parts of the economy. Worse, it contributed to a culture of setting up firms with the purpose of siphoning off money rather than actually trying to succeed in the market. Bankruptcy helps provide creditors the basis for not only seizing assets of defaulters but for



shareholders to initiate criminal proceedings against the promoters. There has been a long-standing strand of thinking in India that bankruptcy hurts workers. The Indian experience is cited globally as evidence to the contrary. Jobs are created when the market combines land, capital, labour and entrepreneurship in a wealth-creating manner. Sometimes this coming together fails in which case these elements need to be freed back into the economy to be reused for another attempt. This is a major component of the “creative destruction” that underlies capitalism's country the worst of all RBI ability to generate wealth. worlds: Minimal growth, India's years of socialism even less wealth creation sought to deny this simple and an economy of corruption and control.

# 'Make Mumbai Great Again': Trump's Partner Says No Conflict Of Interest

**Donald Trump's dealings with PM Modi illustrate a potential collision between his priorities as a businessman and his decisions as president.**



(Agencies) As President Donald Trump prepares to host Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington next week, his business partner in India is gearing up to sell high-priced condominiums at Trump Tower Mumbai.

While the timing may be coincidental, it points to possible conflicts of interest: Trump continues to profit from a business deal with India's largest real estate developer, who has close ties to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The developer, Mangal Lodha, the founder and major shareholder in the Lodha Group, is a senior party figure in the state of Maharashtra. His political manifesto echoes a familiar slogan: “making Mumbai great again.”

Mr Lodha's son, Abhishek, who took over running the

family business in 2010, says he sees no conflict because Mr Trump hasn't been involved with the company since he entered the White House. Mr Lodha paid Mr Trump as much as \$5 million for the licensing deal on the Mumbai development, according to the president's financial disclosures. “There cannot be any conflict of interest in relation to his association with us,” Mr Lodha said in an interview in London. “Mr Trump

arrangement is problematic because it can create doubt about whether the president is putting his interests ahead of the nation's. Mr Trump's dealings with PM Modi illustrate this potential collision between his priorities as a businessman and his decisions as president. As Mr Trump and the U.S. State Department negotiate with India, his company is accepting payments from business partners with ties to the Indian government. That House and the Trump Organization declined to comment for this story. PM Modi is due in Washington next Monday for his first face-to-face meeting with Mr Trump, a politically charged visit likely to be dominated by the president's decisions to pull out of the Paris climate accords and tighten rules for letting foreign workers into the U.S., which will affect Indian companies and outsourcing firms.

## Barclays charged with fraud in Qatar case

(Agencies) Barclays and four former executives have been charged with fraud over their



actions in the 2008 financial crisis. The Serious Fraud Office case relates to the way the bank raised billions of pounds from Qatari investors enabling it to avoid a

government bailout. Former chief executive John Varley is one of the four ex-staff who will appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court on 3 July. Barclays says it is considering its position and awaiting further details. “The charges arise in the context of Barclays' capital raisings in June and November 2008. Barclays awaits further details of the charges from the SFO,” the bank said in a statement. It is the first time criminal charges related to the financial crisis have been brought against a bank in the UK. Mr Varley, former senior

investment banker Roger Jenkins, Thomas Kalaris, a former chief executive of Barclays' wealth division, and Richard Boath, the ex-European head of financial institutions, have all been charged with conspiracy to commit fraud in the June 2008 capital raising. In addition, Mr Varley and Mr Jenkins have also been charged with the same offence in relation to the October 2008 capital raising and with providing unlawful financial assistance. Mr Jenkins will “vigorously defend” himself against the charges, his lawyer has told Reuters. “As one might expect in the challenging

circumstances of 2008, Mr Jenkins sought and received both internal and external legal advice on each and every topic covered by the SFO's accusations,” said Brad Kaufman from American firm Greenberg Traurig. Mr Boath, who last year took Barclays to an employment tribunal on the grounds of wrongful dismissal, also pledged to defend himself. He said in a statement: “The SFO's decision to charge me is based on a false understanding of my role and the facts. I was not a decision-maker and had no control over what the bank did in 2008.”

# Beware, anxiety about your partner's commitment can harm your relationship

*Are you unsure of your partner's commitment, Your anxiety might doom the success of your relationship, says a new study.*

If you are clingy and distrustful towards your partner, it might make them anxious about the relationship. Florida State University graduate student Ashley Cooper explores how fluctuation in one's feeling about the relationship can doom its success.

"For people anxious in their attachments, they have anxiety as to whether the person is going to be there for them and whether they are worthy of others," said Cooper. "I was interested in how attachment security impacted partners' experiences in their relationship on a daily basis. Some couples experience instability from one day to the next in their relationship, so we sought out to explore what could increase or decrease this

volatility," Cooper explained.

They found that individuals who experience high levels of anxiety about their partner's commitment were likely to experience more volatility in their feelings about the relationship from one day to the next. Furthermore, when women experienced this anxiety, their male partners experienced similar volatility in their feelings about the relationship.

They interviewed 157 couples and asked them a series of questions about how the couples communicated their attachment to each other, how comfortable they were in emotionally connecting with their partners, their relationship satisfaction and the type of conflict that existed in the relationship. Of the sample, 74%

of the participants were dating and nearly 50% of participants were in relationships of two years or less. The team specifically looked at the couples in which one or both partners experienced high attachment avoidance — behaviours associated with the distrust of relying on other people — and attachment anxiety — behaviours associated with fears regarding consistent care and affection. When an individual reported high attachment avoidance, both the individual and partner reported generally low levels of relationship satisfaction or quality.

When individuals reported high attachment anxiety, there tended to be increased volatility in relationship quality. Cooper said the findings will be helpful



to clinicians involved in premarital or couples counselling and for individuals who experience drastic differences in their feelings about their relationships from day to day.

For the average person, stay attuned to what your partner is saying and avoid making

assumptions that can escalate conflict, she advised. Trusting in your partner and your relationship is important to daily interactions and stability for your relationship, they concluded. The study was published in Journal of Social and Personal Relationships.

## What and how much to share online: Tips for college applicants, job seekers

*Your online personality may affect your real world goals. Here are some tips from experts on what to post and not post if you're trying to get into college or applying for a job.*



Google yourself. Curate your online photographs. The general rule of thumb, as one private high school advises its students: Don't post anything you wouldn't want your grandmother to see.

Guidance counsellors have warned college applicants for years to mind their social media posts but can now cite a high-profile example at Harvard University, which revoked offers of admission to 10 students for offensive Facebook posts.

Colleges rarely revoke admission for online offenses, but social media's role in the college admission process is a growing reality. The same holds true if you've applied for a job. A thorough background check includes social media activities. Here are some experts' tips on what to post — and not post — if you're applying to a college or for a job.

What research shows

Research from Kaplan Test Prep suggests online scrutiny of college applicants is increasing. Of 365 admissions officers surveyed, 35% said they check Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites to learn more about applicants, according to a poll released in February. Kaplan Test Prep has conducted annual surveys on the subject since 2008, when 10% of admissions officials said they checked the social media pages of applicants.

The Harvard case highlights that "admissions don't necessarily end at the acceptance letter," says Yariv Alpher, executive director of research for Kaplan, the test-preparation company.

The case included jokes about the Holocaust and sexual assault that were shared on a

private Facebook group for incoming Harvard freshmen, according to The Harvard Crimson, which broke the news earlier this month. Harvard has declined to comment but says it tells new students that admission offers can be withdrawn if their behaviour calls into question their maturity or moral character.

The grandmother rule  
San Francisco University High School seniors are given a warning each fall to clean up their online presence — and nix any posts they wouldn't show grandma, said Jon Reider, director of college counselling at the elite private school.

"The mythical grandmother is held up as an icon of moral standards," Reider said. Another word of wisdom: Don't make jokes online.

"Unless you are certified as being the funniest kid in the class, don't be funny," Reider said. "A sense of humor can be dangerous online."

Don't brag, especially about wrongdoing

Colgate University admissions officers don't routinely cruise prospective students' social media sites, says dean of admissions Gary L. Ross.

"However, there are occasions, very rarely, when

something might be brought to our attention, and it would be foolish for us, if the matter is serious enough, not to check that out," Ross said.

He cited a case from a few years ago where a student bragged on social media that she applied early to Colgate and another institution, which violates an agreement students sign to apply early to only one school.

"That was brought to our attention. I was in touch with the other dean of admission, and we both agreed it was in violation of each institution's rules, and the student was denied at both."

Edit online usernames

Make sure your email address is appropriate, says Nancy Beane, associate director of college counselling at The Westminster Schools in Atlanta, US. Silly, vulgar or otherwise unprofessional

usernames might look good to teenagers but send the wrong message to adults.

Beane also advises students to be mindful of how they treat others online, including comments and trolling of other accounts.

More dos and don'ts

The Princeton Review offers social media tips for college applicants, including one to "Google yourself" to see what turns up.

"Maybe you've made a comment on a blog that you'd rather not have show up, or a friend has tagged you in an unflattering photo," Princeton Review says in a tip sheet on its website.

It also advises students to check their privacy settings to know what can be seen publicly, and to edit their online photo galleries.



# Too hot to handle: As Earth's heat worsens, here's what you can expect

***Killer heatwaves around the world are becoming more common, and that this trend already seems unavoidable.***



Climate change will sharply boost the frequency of lethal heatwaves even if humanity caps global warming at two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), the core goal of the Paris Agreement, scientists said Monday.

Fulfilling that 196-nation pledge would, by 2100, still leave nearly half the world's population exposed at least once a year to bouts of heat and humidity that have proven deadly in the past, they reported in the journal Nature Climate Change.

Under a "business-as-usual" scenario, in which greenhouse gases continue pouring into the atmosphere at current rates, three-quarters of humanity will annually face what the researchers call "lethal heat events." "We found that killer heatwaves around the world are becoming more common, and

that this trend already seems unavoidable," said Camilo Mora, a professor at the University of Hawaii and lead author of the study.

"Even if we outperform the Paris targets, the population exposed to deadly heat will be about 50 percent by 2100," he told AFP. Already today, 30% of Earth's inhabitants encounter super hot spells at some point in the year.

Since the start of the 21st century, heatwaves have claimed tens of thousands of lives, even in countries best equipped to help their citizen cope. In western Europe, for example, there were more than 70,000 excess death during the blistering summer of 2003.

In future, the tropics will be hit hardest, according to the study, which forecasts — year-by-year, for each square

kilometre on Earth — the number of "deadly days" under three different carbon pollution scenarios laid out by the UN Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC).

Survivability threshold Indonesia and the Philippines, northern Brazil and Venezuela, Sri Lanka and southern India, Nigeria and most of west Africa, and northern Australia — all of these regions will face more than 300 potentially lethal heatwave days each year under the business-as-usual emissions trajectory, known as RCP 8.5.

Even under the most optimistic emissions scenario (RCP 2.6) — which roughly corresponds to the Paris goal of capping warming at 2 C (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) — megacities such as Jakarta, Lagos, Caracas, and Manila would

surpass the "lethal heat" threshold half the year, the study concluded.

"With high temperatures and humidities, it takes very little warming for conditions to turn deadly in the tropics," said Mora. Cities in sub-tropical zones such as Miami or Hong Kong would be thus exposed 150 and 200 days per year, respectively, in the worst case scenario, and — in the RCP 2.6 outlook — 80 and 140 days.

Washington D.C., on average, will get hit with potentially deadly heat 15 days a year if the Paris target is met, and 85 day per year if no further action is taken to fight climate change. The number of "lethal heat days" does not tell us how many people will die, the authors point out. If everyone is living in air-conditioned environments 50 or 75 years from now, they will be shielded.

But that is not the case today, and protracted heatwaves are also taxing for energy grids and critical infrastructure.

"The study provides additional, strong evidence that climate change, if unmitigated, will result in an increase in conditions deadly to humans," commented Jeremy Pal, a professor at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles whose own research in 2015 projected more heatwaves in the Persian Gulf exceeding the capacity of the human body to cope.

Pal's work established a human survivability threshold, a

measure used by scientists that combines temperature and humidity.

Sunburn inside the body Mora took a different approach. "Our threshold was based on actual cases of human mortality," he told AFP. His international team of 18 scientists identified 1,900 locations worldwide where heatwaves since 1980 had resulted in deaths.

"We collected climatic data for each location and time when there was a recorded heat-related death," explained co-author Iain Caldwell, also of the University of Hawaii. By statistically comparing these heatwaves to "normal" periods, the researchers teased out the key factors contributing to excess mortality.

Temperature and humidity topped the list. How long a heatwave lasted also mattered, but — surprisingly — did not significantly improve predictive accuracy. The researchers then plugged their findings into the averaged projections of 20 global climate models running until 2100.

High humidity reduces the human body's ability to cool via perspiration. "When it is both very hot and humid outside, heat in the body cannot be expelled," said Mora. "This creates a condition called 'heat cytotoxicity' that is damaging to many organs.

Think of it as a sunburn, but inside the body," she added.

# Grape skin and seeds may help fight against colon cancer, says study

***A research recently concluded that the compounds found in the skin and seeds of grapes, may help in killing colon cancer stem cells.***



Start eating grapes daily, as a research has revealed that the compounds, found in the skin and seeds of grapes, may help in killing colon cancer stem cells. The compounds, resveratrol,

which are found in grape skins and seeds, could also eventually lead to treatments to help prevent colon cancer, said Jairam K.P. Vanamala from Penn State Hershey Cancer Institute.

"The combination of resveratrol and grape seed extract is very effective at killing colon cancer cells," Vanamala added. The researchers suggest that the findings could pave the way for clinical testing of the compounds on human colon cancer, which is the second most common cancer in women and the third in men.

If successful, the compounds could then be used in a pill to help prevent colon cancer and lessen the recurrence of the disease in colon cancer survivors.

Vanamala noted that according to cancer stem-cell theory, cancerous tumors are driven by cancer

stem cells. Cancer stem cells are capable of self-renewal, cellular differentiation and maintain their stem cell-like characteristics even after invasion and metastasis.

When taken separately in low doses, resveratrol and grape seed extract are not as effective against cancer stem-cell suppression as when they are combined together, according to the researchers.

"This also connects well with a plant-based diet that is structured so that the person is getting a little bit of different types of plants, of different parts of the plant and different colors of the plant," said Vanamala.

For the animal study, they separated 52 mice with colon cancer tumors into three groups, including a control group and groups that were fed either the grape compounds or sulindac, an anti-inflammatory drug, which was chosen because a previous study showed it significantly reduced the number of tumors in humans.

The incidence of tumors was suppressed in the mice consuming the grape compounds alone by 50 percent, similar to the rate in the group consuming the diet with sulindac.

# Super Singh movie review: Diljit Dosanjh's superhero is no king

*Diljit Dosanjh comes across as somewhat anxious in his efforts to woo audiences in his new avatar.*

Super Singh

Director: Anurag Singh

Cast: Diljit Dosanjh, Sonam Bajwa and Pavan Malhotra

Rating: 2/5

The good news about Diljit Dosanjh's super hero act is that it was released on the same fateful Friday when Riteish Deshmukh — another entertainer like Dosanjh justifiably known for his comic timing — was caught 'wrecked'-handed robbing a bank.

Compared with Bank Chor, Super Singh is like a bowl of melting ice cream after a particularly indigestible frozen meal. But it's still not good enough to be considered a worthy desi super hero successor to Captain America or Deadpool. The special effects are cringe-worthy,

and when Diljit flies, he looks like Ashok Kumar marching across the army base in a comatose condition in Manoj Kumar's Clerk (check out the famous sequence on the internet).

But let's be fair. Diljit has considerable rustic charm of the regular desi bloke who drinks lots of lassi (no hard drinks unless hard feelings are to be handled), flirts harmlessly with women and makes a fashion statement out of not speaking English properly.

Doesn't he remind you of a certain Kapil Sharma? In fact, I'd like to see Kapil play a Punjabi super hero with Sunil Grover as the arch-villain.

Diljit is engaging when he woos women in Canada

with his rusticity. The supposedly sophisticated co-star Sonam Bajwa (why is she not being lapped up by the heroine-famished Bollywood film industry?) is allowed to pull up Diljit for his poor command over the English language — the sophisticated lady who probably dreams in English. All this banter and backslapping keeps the proceedings lively and perky. Once Diljit dons the super hero mantle, he must strike out a balance between being self-deprecatory and super-heroic.

The entertainer falls between the two stools. Neither super hero nor Aam Aadmi Diljit is like a caped Kejriwal trying to convince the world he must be taken seriously even

when he doesn't take himself seriously.

Diljit comes across as somewhat anxious in his efforts to woo audiences in his new avatar. The performance lacks the effortless of Udda Punjab. Nonetheless, he is fun to watch when hanging out with Sonam. She is required to only give ego-boosting cues to Diljit. She knows she is in a situation where she must play the self-styled super hero's 'insignificant other'. She does it with grace. Unforgivably, the film wastes the extraordinary talent of Pavan Malhotra, one of Indian cinema's most underused actors, used effectively in Anurag Singh's Punjab 1984, and here reduced to a preposterous prop. Why



did Malhotra do it? Why, the OMG scale of performances gets on your nerves. Akshay Kumar's turbaned goofiness in Singh Is King was far more endearing. But if you have been unfortunate enough to see Bank Chor this week, "Super Singh" may just be the antidote that only to a point. After a while your nerves need.

## Despicable Me 3 movie review: Hoped for a unicorn, got a one-horned goat

*Have we seen better animated films? Yes. Have we seen a better film in the same franchise? Definitely. But that doesn't take away from the fact that this too is 1.5 hours of silly fun with a filling of marshmallowy niceness.*

Despicable Me 3

Directors: Kyle Balda,

Pierre Coffin, Eric Guillon

Cast: Steve Carell, Kristen

Wiig, Trey Parker

Rating: 3.5/5

Seven years ago, when we saw the first installment of the Despicable Me franchise, perhaps no one could've imagined it'd go on to make \$1.5 billion. That is if you don't count the additional \$1 billion made by the spin-off Minions movie.

Seven years ago, the story of wannabe villain Gru (voiced by Steve Carell) and his decision to give up a life of crime and give a family to three orphaned girls did melt our hearts. However, the biggest takeaway was just how hilarious the yellow Spanish-hybrid speaking things were.

Kids began to worship the Minions, Facebook moms made unrelated 'good morning' messages. In a matter of days, they were everywhere: Lunch boxes, cellphone covers, even

toilet plungers.

Now, after seven years of stuffing our noses in Minions, Illumination decided it was time to put Gru back in the spotlight. Despicable Me 3 brings back what drew us to the franchise in the first place: A sweet story of bad man turning good for the love of his family.

While Gru takes in the girls in the first part and finds love in second, this one has him meet a twin brother Dru he never knew existed. Sure, it does sound like it just spilled out of one of Ekta Kapoor's TV serials, but you don't mind it. Gru goes through a wide range of opinions about Dru, from being excited to meet him to being jealous on seeing his full head of hair to revisiting his days of crime by stealing candies together.

Dru tries to lure him back to villainy while Gru struggles to include him in his family while being aware that his life as a villain is done and dusted. He has to love him like a brother

while not disappointing him with the choices he has made.

Lucy, voiced by Kristen Wiig, wants to win over the girls and be their 'mom'. Her part of the story gives the film its moments of sugary sweetness.

A thousand praises on Illumination for keeping the Minions down to the very minimum. In the few scenes they are employed, they do manage to bring in laughter. The best being their time as a ruthless prison gang, snapping fingers on unison as they abuse fellow convicts. The scene at the singing talent show could've have been avoided.

However, that doesn't mean that Despicable Me 3 sacrifices on the fun. There is still a flamboyant villain making things difficult for Gru. Trey Parker's Balthazar Bratt dances to Michael Jackson and vogues to Madonna as he pulls heists, has the most miserable haircut, even for a villain of



an animated movie and just casually steals diamonds in a Gérard Depardieu fat suit. The film fits in quite a few pop culture jokes and a dig at Hollywood itself through him.

Agnes, quite possibly the cutest thing to ever get animated, goes looking for a unicorn in a wholesome, adorable little adventure but ends up with something no one can ever complain about. Fluffy unicorn got nothing on this baby.

The soundtrack, with all the throwback hits from the '80s, gets you tapping your

feet more often. However, even with all the work done by Pharell Williams on this one, he couldn't deliver another Happy like last time.

Have we seen better animated films? Without a doubt, yes. Have we seen a better film in the same franchise? Definitely. But that doesn't take away from the fact that this too is 1.5 hours of silly fun with a filling of marshmallowy niceness. Yes, it could've been better, it could have been a unicorn but we too, like Agnes, are pretty happy with this one-horned goat we found in the woods.

# Biopics on political leaders face censor issues; filmmakers slam the NOC business!

**Films on major political leaders face the hurdle of getting permission. Filmmakers question this rule.**

Bollywood filmmakers might be cashing in on the biopics on the life of famous personalities, which seem to have become a sure shot formula to rule the box-office game, it isn't always a cakewalk for them to sail through smoothly and release their film without facing censorship issues.

Recently, actor Anupam Kher shared the poster of his upcoming film, *The Accidental Prime Minister*, a biopic on former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, based on a book by journalist Sanjaya Baru. The filmmakers have been asked by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to get a no-objection certificate from Manmohan Singh, Congress President Sonia Gandhi, and all other real-life characters depicted in

the film.

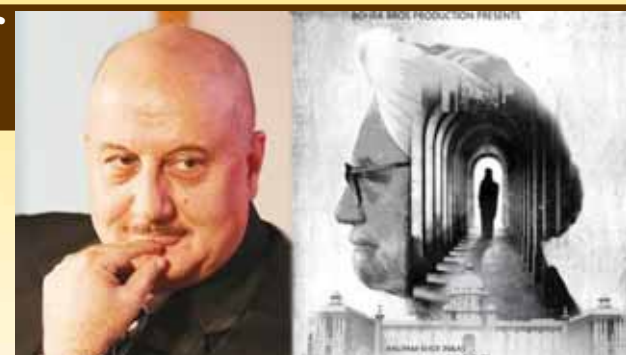
When we contacted actor Anupam Kher, who is reprising the role of Manmohan Singh, in the film, he said, "I'm under a contract with the producer to not to talk about the film. Giving any view would mean talking about the film. We've just announced the film, so there's no point in talking about it as of now. Once we finish the shooting, then it would make some sense."

Filmmakers seem to be unhappy with the hurdles they face in obtaining NOCs while trying to show a film based on top political leaders, on the celluloid.

Last month, a film titled *The Insignificant Man*, based on the life of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, faced a similar situation — filmmakers

Khushboo Ranka and Vinay Shukla were asked to get NOCs from Kejriwal, PM Narendra Modi and former CM Sheila Dixit. "It's a ridiculous demand. Our film is a journalistic documentary," Shukla was quoted as saying. The film has travelled across the globe at major film festivals including Toronto International Film Festival, BFI London Film Festival and Busan International Film Festival. Director Alankrita Shrivastava, whose film *Lipstick Under My Burkha* faced the CBFC axe before being cleared by a parallel forum, believes that one can't take censorship too seriously in India and this whole concept of censorship should be thrown out of the window and there should be just basic certification

system. She says, "These biopics made on political figures, would have used footage, which is public footage from public rallies and all of that, so I don't know from where this thing of an NOC comes in. I'm sure filmmakers know that they need permission while making a film on somebody's life. [Also] We live in a democratic country and we all have been granted freedom of speech as part of our constitution. So, let's act as a mature democracy and a country where there's a healthy culture of filmmaking. We can't have this fear of censorship all the time." In the past too, films such as *Modi Ka Gaon*, which featured a character referring to PM Narendra Modi was asked to obtain NOC from the PMO



(Prime Minister Office) and Election Commission, failing which the film is still stuck with CBFC and the makers are planning to go to the revising committee now. Director Tushar Amrish Goel, who directed *Modi Ka Gaon*, which is stuck waiting to get Censor Board's nod, says, "When films are made on sports personalities or an actor, it's easy to get their permission and moreover, these people buy the rights. But when there's a political leader involved in a biopic, censor board should understand

that it's not a child's play to obtain NOCs. [Also] I feel Pahlaj Nihalani is not giving freedom to Indian cinema, as he recently said that even the films going to film festivals should have a censor certification." Sonakshi Sinha's *Noor*, too, faced censorship issues when the makers had to do away with the name Dutt in a reference to journalist Barkha Dutt, because "referring to real-life characters without their consent is not allowed." Trade analyst Amod Mehra, however, feels that Censor Board is just doing their job and there's no harm in it.

**Star Trek: Discovery gets a September premiere date**  
**The Walking Dead alum Sonequa Martin-Green leads the series as Lt. Commander Michael Burnham**



Star Trek: Discovery has now an official premiere date now. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the series will launch on September 24 on CBS. The first season will be of 15 episodes and the sci-fi series will be split into two chapters. The first eight episodes will roll out through November 5, and then the series will return with seven new episodes in January 2018. The show will focus on the voyages of Starfleet on their missions to discover new worlds and new life-forms, and one Starfleet officer, who must learn that to truly understand all things alien, you must first understand yourself. The series will feature a new ship, new characters and new missions, while embracing the franchise's well-known ideology and hope for the future that inspired a generation of dreamers and doers. First ordered to series in late 2015, the CBS TV Studios drama was originally set to premiere before 'The Good Fight' earlier this year. The Walking Dead alum Sonequa Martin-Green leads the series as Lt. Commander Michael Burnham. She stars alongside Jason Isaacs, Doug Jones, Michelle Yeoh, and Anthony Rapp among others.

## Badman represents progressive cinema: Gulshan Grover

**Gulshan Grover's Badman will be the opening film at the prestigious 39th Moscow International Film Festival.**

Bollywood actor Gulshan Grover, whose mockumentary feature film *Badman* will be the opening film at the prestigious 39th Moscow International Film Festival and has also been invited to be screened at the London Indian Film Fest, recently said that it's a very proud moment for him as his film, which represents progressive cinema, is getting international acclaim.

Gulshan Grover said, "Badman is a film since anything that is for web, it has the impression it is a series, so *Badman* is not the series. It is India's first mockumentary feature film. It is also India's first original feature film for the web audience. I am very happy that this film represents progressive cinema, cinema of today and indeed has different kind of form."

"Everybody plays themselves in the film. Rishi Kapoor, Manisha Koirala, Mahesh Bhatt everybody is playing themselves in the film. So in this sense, it's a unique film that was created to be watch on mobile phones and I-pads, but it was the strength of the film that broke all the



barriers. And, today *Badman* is going to be the opening film at the 39th Moscow International Film Festival and will be screened at London film festival," he added.

The actor also said he just can't hold his excitement to watch the reactions of Russian audience for his movie. "I am extremely excited and thrilled about Moscow Film Festival, going there attending the prestigious film festival and also watching the reactions of Russian audience. The film is going to have Russian subtitles and hopefully Russian dubbing as well. So, it will be great fun and I am very excited about it," he said. He added, "In fact my friend Sunil Sethi, President of Fashion Design Council, has sent five Indian costumes just for

me to wear at the Moscow film festival. He brought five designers with five different jodhpuri suits, So, I am very excited about it." Directed by Soumik Sen, *Badman* which has actor Chunky Pandey playing a negative role, also features cameos by veteran actor Rishi Kapoor, filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt, ace choreographer-filmmaker Farah Khan, director Shoojit Sircar and actress Manisha Koirala. The 61-year-old actor, along with Anatoly Kargapolov, Charge d'affaires of the Russian Embassy, Indian Film Festival Worldwide (IFFW) Co-Curators Rc Dalal and Rahul Bali, yesterday attended the curtain raiser press conference of the 39th Moscow International Film Festival that is scheduled to be held from June 22-29 at Moscow.

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