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**Martins and Labriola
First Town Hall**



**First Asian American
Appointed as Deputy
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Newly Appointed Deputy
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How Is The BJP Swiftly Picking Up State After State ?

The BJP is thought to be invincible, but no party can be in democratic politics. In Karnataka, the BJP is actually on the defensive.



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Without Priebus, Trump Is a Man Without a Party

**By ousting Reince Priebus, the
president is severing one of his
few remaining ties to the GOP.**

(News Agencies) Reince Priebus looked battered. It was Monday, October 10—the morning after the final presidential debate—and our eyes met as I boarded a Southwest Airlines flight from St. Louis to Washington, D.C. It had been an extraordinary weekend: On Friday night, the biggest bombshell of the 2016 campaign dropped when the Washington Post published a decade-old audio recording on which Donald Trump made lewd comments about groping women. Speaker Paul Ryan disinvented Trump from a unity event in Wisconsin scheduled for the following day, and Priebus, then the chairman of the Republican National Committee, quietly made the case to Trump and his associates that he should quit the race. Trump refused. The Sunday debate, 48 hours after the tape's release, was dominated by discussion of Trump's history with women. He dismissed his recorded remarks—"grab them by the pussy," Trump had said, boasting that his celebrity status allowed him to get away with aggressive advances on

(Contd on page 25)



Indian convicted of using fake identity to get US citizenship

(Insider Bureau) WASHINGTON: An Indian man has been convicted of using fake identity to obtain American citizenship, an immigration official has said. Balbir Singh alias Ranjit Singh, 50, faces up to 10 years in federal prison, a maximum \$250,000 possible fine, revocation of his citizenship and enforcement of his outstanding deportation order. According to Acting US Attorney Abe Martinez, Balbir Singh had previously attempted to obtain asylum under false pretences. When that attempt failed, an immigration judge then ordered his deportation from the United States, thus making him ineligible to

ever become a naturalised citizen. A resident of Houston, Singh, instead of leaving the country, changed his name, date of birth, the manner in which he entered the United States and his familial history so that he could obtain lawful immigration status, and later naturalisation, based on a marriage to a United States citizen. In the process of obtaining the citizenship, he denied ever being ordered deported, seeking asylum or using a different identity. "In addition, Singh sent a letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2013. In it, he complained about the anxiety and frustration he experienced

in having to wait for an extended period at the airport every time he returned from an international trip due to discrepancies in his biometric information. He requested DHS clear these discrepancies," the Justice Department said. After obtaining the citizenship, a fingerprint comparison established the man previously ordered deported from the United States (Balbir Singh) and the man who later became a naturalised citizen (Ranjit Singh) were one and the same. Accepting the plea, US District Judge Ewing Werlein set the sentencing for October 13.

Sikh man asked to take off kirpan in Australian bus



(Insider Bureau) MELBOURNE: A Sikh man in Australia was asked to take off his kirpan and "get out" of a bus when a passenger called police in panic after seeing the ceremonial knife, a media report said on Wednesday. Police boarded a busy commuter bus in Auckland on Tuesday after a passenger was seen carrying a ceremonial knife, traditionally worn by Sikhs. "We looked out the window and we could see and the police car behind us with sirens blaring and armed men all around us. One policeman stormed into the bus with a gun in his hand and said to the guy, 'Get your hands up so we can see them and get out of the bus'," New Zealand Herald quoted a witness as saying. The passenger, thought to be in his 20s, was wearing a turban and had a long, curved "sword-like" kirpan strapped behind his back on the left side, which the police removed, said the witness. A

police spokeswoman said officers were called after a member of the public reported seeing a kirpan. She said the armed offenders squad was not sent and the officers were not armed. "Police spoke with the man, who is a Sikh." "He was in possession of a ceremonial kirpan, which is customary for Sikhs. The man, who is lawfully living in New Zealand, was polite and cooperative and no further action was taken," the report said. The spokeswoman said the ceremonial kirpan was not confiscated. A baptised Sikh has five articles of faith and the kirpan is one of them. The other four articles of faith are - kesh (uncut long hair), kanga (a comb), kara (an iron bracelet) and kachehra (under shorts). Sikhism is a small but growing minority religion in Australia that can trace its origins in the nation to the 1830s. Australia is home to more than 72,000 Sikh, a population that is expected to rise in this year's census.

Two Sikh Americans killed in the US

(Insider Bureau) WASHINGTON: Two Sikh Americans have been killed in two separate incidents in one week in California, according to community organisations and media reports. Subag Singh, 68, was found dead in a canal after he went missing in the morning of June 23. His body had injuries. California law enforcement officials from Fresno county have said that they were trying to find out who was responsible for the killing of the elderly Sikh American. "Deputies found his body with visible trauma in a canal on McCall and Jensen. Investigators are trying to piece together what led up to the body being found in a canal," Fox26 news said in a report. Deputies are not saying if this was a hate crime or not, but members of the Sikh community say this would not be the first, it said. "Honestly, we are very hurt, it just hurts us. And it just we then, think what else do we need to do," Gurdeep Shergill, a local community leader,

was quoted as saying. In a separate incident, Simranjit Singh, 20, of Elk Grove was shot dead on July 25 outside a gas station where he worked. According to Sacramento Bee news, he was shot dead by men who had earlier assaulted his co-worker. "At this point in both investigations, it is unclear if either of these crimes were racially motivated but we are working with both local and federal laws enforcement authorities to ensure these murders are thoroughly investigated and that the local jurisdictions are treating the cases with the utmost importance," said Sikh American Legal Defence and Education Fund (SALDEF). "These attacks are inexcusable and we offer our deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of Subag Singh and

Simranjit Singh. "We call upon local and federal law enforcement agencies to thoroughly investigate these heinous crimes and classify them as hate incidents if hate is show to be a motive," SALDEF executive director



Baldev Singh said. There have been a number of attacks targeting Indian-Americans and Sikhs in the recent months in the US. In March, a 39-year-old Sikh man was shot in the arm outside his home in Kent, Washington, by a partially-masked gunman who shouted "go back to your own country".

Indian in US jailed for illegally selling silencers for guns

(Insider Bureau) WASHINGTON: An Indian in the US has been jailed for 30 months for illegally selling silencers, used to reduce the sound of guns, and planning to smuggle more, an American attorney said on Thursday. Mohit Chauhan, 31, a resident of Pitampura in New Delhi, was also sentenced to three years of supervised release, the Department of Justice said. The sentencing came after he pleaded guilty before US District Judge Elizabeth Foote in Louisiana to one count of dealing firearms without a license. According to the guilty plea dated April 20, 2017, Chauhan was contacted by someone wishing to buy silencers. Chauhan discussed by email and phone calls manufacturing silencers for the potential client and importing more silencers and parts by labelling them as "auto parts" to evade US Customs. After they set up a meeting, he arrived in Shreveport on December 1 last year to meet the buyer and brought silencer parts with him. He travelled to a restaurant in Louisiana's Bossier City to discuss the sale details with the buyer. Agents recorded the meeting.

India's bureaucrats wedded to status quo: Indian-American author Aparna Pande

(Insider Bureau) WASHINGTON: The bureaucracy and institutions designed by the British rulers to maintain a colonial enterprise pose a challenge to restore India to its eminence in the new global order, according to a new book by an Indian-American author. "India's bureaucrats are wedded to the status quo even when India's people want to enter the twenty-first century as part of a new global order," Washington DC-based Aparna Pande concludes in her latest book: 'From Chanakya to Modi: The evolution of India's Foreign

policy'. Pande from the Hudson Institute, a top American think-tank, writes that since his election in 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has articulated a new vision, demonstrated the will to change things and is creating the networks that might bring about the change. "But the institutions of governance created by the British, including the civil service and the armed forces, were trained to think within predetermined parameters. Leaders, from Nehru to Modi, have promised to restore India to its eminence,"

she writes. India is, by all measures, an extremely significant country, she says. "However, the experience of the last seventy years leads one to wonder whether greatness as envisaged by India's leaders can be made to materialize by institutions designed to maintain a colonial enterprise," Pande concludes in the nearly 200-page book published by Harper Collins.



While politics in India has come a long way, the governments still believe they need to appeal to identity politics and that economic reforms do not win elections, she says.



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Nawaz Sharif's conviction leaves a political vacuum in Pakistan. This is not good for India

Nawaz Sharif's departure from the political scene in Pakistan is going to shift the balance of power back to Rawalpindi, and this will embolden terror groups targeting India



(Insider Bureau) On Friday, the Supreme Court of Pakistan disqualified Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from holding public office and barring him from electoral politics for five years. The investigation into the Panama Papers concluded that his assets exceeded his known sources of income.

His disqualification immedi-

ately opens up a succession issue within his own party but, more importantly, potentially signals a period of sustained political uncertainty among democratic forces in that country.

The same ruling has also affected his two sons, son-in-law and daughter — the latter who was seen as a potential heir to the leadership of his party, the

replacement in a relatively short period of time. So overwhelming is the political strength of the PMLN in Pakistan's largest province of Punjab and so weak is the opposition it faces, it's likely that the PMLN will still go into the elections as overwhelming favourites. It is not clear that Imran Khan, who led the charge

Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) — and left a gaping hole in Pakistan's polity. National elections are due by the middle of next year so the party must decide on a

against Sharif after the Panamagate revelations came out will necessarily benefit electorally.

The real shift, and the one that will matter the most, will be the power equation between the PMLN and the Pakistani military. There is strong evidence to indicate that the sheer depth of Sharif's electoral support had alarmed the Pakistani military and many of the protests and demonstrations against him have been fomented by Rawalpindi to remind him of who holds true power in Pakistan. The court ruling helps the military in that it has sharply reduced Sharif's influence — and, over the long term, serves to shift the balance of power back towards the generals.

The India-Pakistan relationship has been at an impasse

for a number of years. The trajectory has been largely downward, as clear from the renewed skirmishing along the Line of Control and the present problems in Kashmir. However, they have been within certain manageable limits.

Reports say that the complaints by Pakistani-based jihadi groups about a shortage of arms and funds have been because of interference by Sharif's government. The Pakistani leader has long been a votary of stronger economic relations between the two countries and has quietly believed that the resolution of bilateral problems through violence is a political dead-end.

His departure from the political scene is almost certain to herald a period of volatility within Pakistan and, therefore, greater risk in relations between India and Pakistan.

How to counter China's expansionist plans in Southeast Asia

China pumping money into South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka has raised India's hackles. But the question is why can't India give soft loans to Sri Lanka to pay off China loan and get the Hambantota port released?



(Insider Bureau) China and Sri Lanka recently signed the Hambantota Port deal which is being called a "win-win situation" for both. But what is really behind China's purchase of a port in Sri Lanka? Critics have been vocal about the fact that Sri Lanka has fallen prey to the economic-diplomatic moves that are seen as China's

"give loan and in return grab land" policy. Can Sri Lanka bear the debt burden and repay the \$ 5 billion loan which was given in order to get a 99-year lease on the port given its internal compulsions?

Giving China majority control of the port raises concerns about Sri Lanka's national security and rela-

tions with neighbours like India. It is well known that China is adept at manufacturing low cost products and tends to lend to commodity-exporting countries with highly competitive manufacturing sectors. This is what has happened in Sri Lanka.

China pumping money into South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan,

Nepal and Sri Lanka has raised India's hackles. But the question is why can't India give soft loans to Sri Lanka to pay off China loan and get the Hambantota port released? Will Pakistan be able to repay the CPEC loans? What makes China's grand plans click is that there is no other prominent economic power in the region which has such an expansionist focus. With the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in choppy waters, there are fears that the US is no longer a reliable ally in the region. This ironically applies to the Southeast Asian nations as well; looking at the case of the Philippines. With doubts over US credibility in the region, what China offers is a new sort of economic mentoring.

By making use of its huge economic clout, China is able to get what it wants in

many parts of the world. India has long been obsessed with China's military might. We are seeing that in Doklam. But of far greater danger is its economic hegemony which is now established in several areas, including in our neighbourhood. India needs to come up with a proactive response to this.

Financial might can be used as a tool to depict the confidence and purpose of a global superpower. Economic power is what fuels China's assertive foreign policy. The dragon is ready to take risks and go where the West has been reluctant to venture. However, China's replacement of western influence brings with it Beijing's territorial ambitions and aggression. The only way to counter this is if nations in a particular region act in concert. But in South Asia, that seems hardly likely at the moment.

What one Rajya Sabha election says about Indian politics

Trump's Loyalty Problem

Rarely has a single Rajya Sabha seat been so fiercely contested. And rarely does the contest over a single seat in the upper house of Parliament demonstrate so much about Indian politics. Ahmed Patel's struggle for political survival in the face of the BJP onslaught and ambition to deprive him of a victory reveals the fragility of power; the expansionist urges of the ruling dispensation; the decay of the opposition; and the state of our institutions.

First, the only way to understand this contest is to go back to the 2004-14 period. Ahmed Patel, as the political secretary of Congress president Sonia Gandhi, almost ran India. He had a key role in appointing ministers, picking MPs, influencing top government appointments from heads of intelligence organisations to those holding constitutional offices. He had control over the party treasury, coordinated with allies, framed plans to weaken the opposition, and much more. And that is why the fact that Patel today is fighting one of his most important battles – not to reclaim the power he once enjoyed, not to bring the glorious period of the Congress back but to win his own seat – says something about how democracy has a way of humbling the powerful, of how power is fragile: it is a lesson even those at the peak of their power today would do well to heed.

But that was then. Why is Ahmed Patel being given a run for his money now? There are four explanations. The first goes back to the way Narendra Modi and Amit Shah do politics. Every election matters, winning every election matters, and the party's sole focus has to be to acquire power, expand its strength and win as Shah memorably put it everything 'from the Parliament to the Panchayat'. In the old days, there was a nudge nudge wink wink understanding between top leaders of parties- they would make concessions to enable political space, or at least a parliamentary seat, for each other. All those elite compacts are dead under Modi-Shah. Everything is up for grabs.

The second explanation is Amit Shah's personal anger at what he perceives was the cynical role played by Patel in framing charges against him. Whether Shah was actually involved in giving a green signal for extra judicial executions in Gujarat as home minister is not relevant here. What is relevant is that in Shah's head, he was hounded by Patel and the rest of the UPA regime — which even led to imprisonment and exile from Gujarat. The third explanation is that given the difficulties that the BJP faces in the Rajya Sabha, every seat matters. The only real obstacle to the BJP's move from dominance to outright hegemony is the fact that it does not enjoy a majority in the Rajya Sabha. The UP win will improve its numbers gradually; the Bihar acquisition will strengthen its numbers; the elevation of a party loyalist, M Venkaiah Naidu, as Vice President and thus chair of the Rajya Sabha will help. But every seat matters, and the third seat from Gujarat will help too. And finally, remember Gujarat is headed for elections. The BJP's social coalition in the state had indeed fractured with the Patidar agitation. The party has had two CMs post Gujarat, and neither Anandiben Patel nor Vijay Rupani have been particularly impressive. But instead of Congress leveraging this, look at what's happening.

A tall leader of the party, Shankersinh Vaghela, has already quit. MLAs have resigned. Others have had to run off to Karnataka. The party's most powerful export to Delhi in recent times, Patel, is seen as struggling. Another defeat would have a debilitating impact on the party morale, among cadres, and send a signal to voters that the Congress was not a serious party at all. And it is to achieve these objectives that the BJP has unleashed all its power – and institutions under its control – to ensure the defeat of Patel. It is difficult to believe that the I-T raids on the Karnataka minister hosting the Gujarat MLAs are a mere coincidence. The BJP can cynically turn around and say that the Congress misused institutions too. This is true. It is also true one does not need to look hard to find those with unaccounted wealth in the Congress. But for now what is true is that the BJP has shown no desire to make institutions autonomous, away from political influences, and has sought to replicate the same practices. In its desire to acquire power, it has conveniently forgotten the distinction between using legitimate means and using instruments it has due to its position in power. Irrespective of the final outcome in the Gujarat Rajya Sabha election, the victor is clear. By putting a man who was once among the most powerful in India in a spot, by revealing his hunger and ambition yet again, by fracturing the Congress and exposing its vulnerabilities, and by sending a signal to the Gujarat electorate that there is only one party that is in the game, Amit Shah has already won this round.

This article is part of the Opinion Today newsletter. You can sign up here to receive more briefings and a guide to the section daily in your inbox.

President Trump likes to sing the virtues of loyalty. "A scout is trustworthy, loyal," he told a group of Boy Scouts last week, before adding, "We could use some more loyalty, I will tell you that." The perceived lack of loyalty to him from his fellow Republicans — and even from his own aides — has clearly enraged Trump. It's a constant theme of his Twitter outbursts about leaks, the failure of the health care bill and various other subjects.

John J. Pitney, a political scientist with sterling conservative credentials, has a blistering piece in Politico explaining Trump's problem: He thinks loyalty flows only one way. "Trump's life has been a long trail of betrayals," Pitney writes. He has dumped wives, friends, mentors, protégés, colleagues, business associates, Trump University students and, more recently, political advisers. "Loyalty is about strength," Pitney, a professor at Claremont McKenna, writes. "It is about sticking with a person, a cause, an idea or a country even when it is costly, difficult, or unpopular." Trump's lack of loyalty helps explain a level of White House dysfunction that seems to worsen by the week. "There's lots of back-channeling, backbiting, and lots of leaking," John Dickerson, the host of Face the Nation, said on the Slate Political Gabfest.

"Anyone who doesn't get that the loyalty should be for him personally, rather than the country, is, to Trump, a loser," my colleague Maureen Dowd wrote. "The president seems to have given the green light," Vox's Andrew Prokop noted, referring to Trump's reported enjoyment of Anthony Scaramucci's tirade. "His subordinates should attack their rivals as viciously as possible, and they'll face no consequences for it whatsoever." And if Trump's aides disappoint him while they're still working for him, just imagine how loyal they will feel after being let go. As The A.P.'s Steve Peoples observed, "Priebus was among only Trump campaign insiders NOT to sign non-disclosure agreement last year." Former Obama staffer Cody Keenan added another angle: "Hello, Reince? Hey, it's Bob Mueller" he tweeted on Friday. 2020 watch. John Delaney, a Democratic congressman from Maryland, has become the first notable candidate to announce his bid for the 2020 presidential race. He explained his reasons in a Washington Post op-ed. In the Times: If you haven't read Ross Douthat's Sunday column, I encourage you to do so. In it, he wonders how a party as broken as the G.O.P. can still be so much better at electoral politics than the Democrats. And if you're tempted to dismiss the notion by pointing out that Hillary Clinton won the popular vote, I'd point out that Republicans control the Senate, the House and roughly two out of three governorships and state legislatures.



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Rise of kanwariyas: Why politicians need to act against rowdiness in religion, writes Chandan Mitra

The tragic aspect of this increasingly rowdy behaviour is that it robs such functions of all vestiges of sobriety which should be associated with all religious observances.



Indians are overly exhibitionist in matters of faith. Many of us appear to believe that unless our respective religions and rituals associated with them are volubly demonstrated in public, we have somehow failed in performing our religious duty. Even festivals, which have no religious ceremony associated, such as Holi and Diwali are observed boisterously through the splashing of colours and bursting crackers at a deafening volume. Similarly Shia Muslims observe Muharram through self-flagellating processions and carrying Tazias down the street. But since loud music is not an integral part of these observances the public disturbance is limited.

In recent years, a section of young Hindus, especially in north India, has started reviving and celebrating the ritual of collecting water from the holy Ganga and ferrying it in canisters to the village temple for pouring the water on the shiv lingam during the auspicious month of Shravan. Although derived from an age-old tradition of walking from one's village to a pilgrimage site on (such as Haridwar) on the banks of the Ganga and returning to the village on or before shiv ratri, the recent rise of religiosity has transformed a deeply personal observance of faith into a noisy and often offensive display of public nuisance. In earlier times kanwars, as the pilgrims are called, evoked awe and devotion among the populace. They were respected for undertaking a long and arduous journey on foot,

braving heat, humidity and rain, to perform a ritual for their own and the village community's salvation. Consequently, affluent traders set up camps on the way where pilgrims could rest, have a meal at night before setting off at dawn next day. The physical endurance is what was believed to bestow piety upon them. Although they always walked in groups, they did so silently with a prayer on their lips. But in the last few decades, kanwars have broken all traditions converting their yatras to and from Haridwar or Garh Ganga (Braj Ghat)

into raucous events, travelling in trucks blaring loud music through massive loudspeakers, mainly Hindi film songs of dubious quality. Their behaviour on the roads is anything but devotional. They carry hockey sticks and baseball bats to intimidate and seriously injure other road users, state governments, not necessarily of BJP persuasion, make concerted efforts to facilitate their journey, even closing down the main highways on their route or erecting scaffolding barriers to protect the rowdy pilgrims who are known to turn violent if faced with any obstacle. The month of Shravan (July-August) is viewed with trepidation by most other travellers on north India's roads. Cities like Delhi and Gurugram too are significantly affected. Should observance of religiosity be such a demon-

strative public affair, especially if it inconveniences others? Most religious teachers tell us that religion is a private affair and should definitely not impinge on others' beliefs. But the kanwar revellers have no patience for such pious thoughts. Incidentally, even Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, a man deeply seeped in religion, had warned kanwars this year not to be unruly or play film songs which border on the vulgar. But the fear of violence seems to petrify the police who continue to treat these self-styled devotees with kid gloves. Possibly as a demonstration effect, young Muslims have started observing the sombre event of Shab-e-Baraat (night of ancestral spirits) in an equally ruffianish way. At least in Delhi, they come out in droves on noisy motorcycles at night, waving flags

and intimidating other road users by their unruly driving. The tragic aspect of this increasingly rowdy behaviour is that it robs such functions of all vestiges of sobriety which should be associated with religious observances. Arguably Hindu community pujas such as Ganesh Utsav and Durga Puja have always been noisy, loud music being their integral part. But it is often counter-argued that the muezzin's call to prayer at the crack of dawn each morning is no less of an invasion of others' privacy and right to sound sleep. The shabad relayed over loud speakers from Sikh gurdwaras early in the morning also causes disturbance in the neighbourhood. Sociologists may attribute such behaviour to India's warm climate wherein late nights and early mornings are most con-

ducive for observing religious ceremonies. When India was almost entirely a rural society, such activities were not just tolerated but had complete community sanction. Ironically, in those times, kanwars never played raucous music, nor did they travel on motorbikes carrying baseball bats. Is there no way to roll back the progressive degeneration of public behaviour associated with religious functions? Politicians are loath to act for fear of offending voters, and ignore the vast majority of the electorate that is profoundly inconvenienced by such rowdy outbursts of purported devotion. It is for religious leaders of all faiths, particularly those in the pravachan industry, to counsel their vast number of followers to return observances like kanwar yatra to their pristine, individualised purity.

Why VIP squatters have nowhere to hide

The government moved one step closer to rid its limited living spaces of squatters with the introduction of the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2017. The changes to the law will ensure that ministers, MPs and bureaucrats, don't overstay in government bungalows once their term is over

No State approves of squatters or encroachers. The Indian State is no different, but often finds its hands tied when it comes to pushing out the legion of VIP squatters. In other words, it finds it difficult to move VIPs out of official accommodation, usually located in the tony areas of a city. But now the government is a step away from arming itself with an amended law --- the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2017 --- which will ensure ministers, MPs and bureaucrats don't overstay in government bungalows once their term is over. Currently, among the politicians, Himachal Pradesh chief minister Virbhadra Singh is overstaying in an official bungalow for over two years. Besides, 70 officials continue to occupy government houses two years after their tenure in Delhi got over or they retired. All of them have moved court

and got a stay.

Under the rules, a former minister can hold on to his or her official accommodation for a month after demitting office. Once the stipulated time to vacate the house is over, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs ministry takes about two months to initiate eviction proceedings. The amendments will ensure that the ministry starts summary eviction proceedings within three days after the stipulated time given to a former MP or a retired official is over. This will ensure smooth and speedy eviction of unauthorised occupants. Also, the clause to approach district court has been removed. Since it assumed power in May 2014, the NDA has evicted about 1,500 officials and MPs. It is a departure from earlier governments that chose to ignore the transgressions of VIPs holding on to prime real estate in Lutyens' Delhi. Although moves such as



banning the red beacon on politicians' vehicles and evicting netas are mostly symbolic, they go a long way in sending out the signal that the government is gradually doing away with the culture of undue perks and privileges for VIPs.

The amended eviction law will hopefully end the problem once and for all. These VIPs occupy valuable real estate for years on end, many of them trying to con-

vert the premises into memorials and using every trick in the book to hang on. Around the world, in most democracies, the concept of official accommodation, except for the president or prime minister, is unheard of. In India, on the other hand, not only do politicians and bureaucrats take this perk for granted, they also shamelessly squat on official accommodation long after eviction notices are served.

What ails compensation plan for rape survivors in India

The State has failed the 14-year-old rape survivor who was forced to get married to her alleged rapist following intervention by village elders



The subcontinent is not the best place women to live and thrive, and we are reminded of this dubious reputation all too often. Last week, a tribal council in Pakistan's Punjab province asked a man to rape a 16-year-old girl in front of her family as punishment after her brother was accused of raping the man's sister. Even as we were struggling to come to terms with this devastating news, there was another, this

time from India: A 14-year-old rape survivor, who gave birth to a child last year after being denied permission to abort her foetus, has got married to her alleged rapist, following intervention by village elders in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly district. The accused has been forgiven by the girl's family because, as her father said: "How long can one fight against the society...it is better that she has gone to his house" He added that he mar-

ried off his child "only on the assurance of the village elders and the boy's family that they will take care of her." The victim's comment on her plight is much more terse and heartbreaking: "My parents cannot feed me and my child. Here, we at least get two meals a day". It is unfortunate that the traumatised child has to live with the same person who violated her. Unfortunately, the girl also does not qualify for the State's 'Victim

Compensation Scheme', which provides financial assistance to victims or their dependents, who have suffered loss or injury due to crime like rape, acid attack and human trafficking, because the case is sub-judice. Obviously the marriage has given the accused a shield and a chance to get off scot-free. Is there any surety that he will stay with the girl if the case is withdrawn since now she is his wife? On the larger issue of victim compensation, there are several problems: According to the law, the compensation part of the rehabilitation of victims of violence including rape is governed by provision of Section 357A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which states that every state government in coordination with the Centre shall prepare a scheme for providing funds for the purpose of compensation to the

victim of crime including rape. But that is not happening because the "foremost is the restrictive eligibility criteria. Next is the long and vague procedure for processing of applications and the disbursement of funds.

Another major infirmity is that the word 'dependent' has not been defined anywhere in the code or in the VCSs, thus creating ambiguity within the system". These roadblocks need to be removed without delay and there has to be a mechanism through which rape/acid survivors can get help to take care of themselves even when a case is going on. This is important not just to ensure that the victim gets support to tide over the crisis till further help comes in, but also can help to keep unconstitutional bodies such as the village elders (the group was not the panchayat) in Bareilly from calling the shots.

India is an overwhelming presence in south Asia, and must do more to build trust

In the old days, Indians would speak of the "hidden hand," accusing people of being on the payroll of CIA, or even the KGB. These days, Indian officials seem to have been attributed a similarly long and evil arm of influence by our neighbours.

After the mysterious disappearance and subsequent return of Farhad Mazhar, a Bangladeshi columnist and activist, on July 3, local media in Bangladesh reported conjecture that "Indian agencies" were responsible for the abduction. Nepali analysts have long spoken of "Indian agencies" being involved, usually playing a negative role, in political decisions; but the distrust runs so high that a Nepali national recently even suggested to me that India's prompt earthquake rescue and relief mission two years ago, was motivated by a hidden agenda.

This is partly because India, by sheer size of its population, military, economy and geography, is an overwhelming presence in the subcontinent. But its officials should have realised by now that repeatedly saying that India wants peaceful ties, based on cooperation, is not enough.

While it is generally accepted that it will, like all other countries, prioritise its strategic interests – primarily linked to China's growing clout – the open dismay to-

ward India is not without basis. While many of the allegations might be dismissed as local paranoia, India also needs to reconsider its image. India's clear and unwavering support for core democratic and human rights principles in neighbouring countries might go a long way toward dispelling some of the public anxiety.

For instance, many Bangladeshis, particularly opposition party supporters, believe that India is bolstering the ruling Awami League. The Sheikh Hasina government has addressed many of India's key security concerns, partnering in counter-terrorism operations and closing borders to insurgent groups. Bangladeshi security forces, however, are accused of serious human rights violations including extra-judicial killings, secret detentions and enforced disappearances, often targeting the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Jamaat-Islami. India has failed to raise concerns about these practices, which generates allegations of complicity. In Nepal, almost everything, even the potholes, are often blamed on "Indian agencies." When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Nepali parliament in 2014, it appeared that things might have changed — people came out on



the streets to applaud him. Soon after, however, that enthusiasm vanished, to be replaced by a familiar aggrieved suspicion. The unrest in Nepal's southern plains, the intractable political disagreements, the recent effective blockade on supplies to the hills from the Indian border due to the Terai protests, have played their part. Since the military, the Maoists, and most of the political parties had some role in the abuses that occurred during the civil war, India's protective hand is presumed in ensuring that its favourites hold office. Such claims would dissipate were India, which played an important part in ending the decade-long Maoist conflict in 2006, to publicly press for conflict-related justice and accountability.

Bhutan's fledgling steps toward democracy, many Bhutanese believe, were derailed

by India, which is accused of weighing in to ensure the election of its preferred candidate. India stumbled in the Maldives too, failing to stand up for the basic rights of the political opposition. Promoting human rights in both places would not only have helped the citizens of these countries, it could have ended the mistrust.

India's footprint was much more visible in Sri Lanka where Tamil Nadu politicians actively campaigned for the rights of Sri Lankan Tamils. Yet, India failed to condemn laws of war violations by both the Sri Lankan security forces and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the final months of the war in 2009, actively scuttling a rights-protecting intervention by the UN Human Rights Council. With the LTTE defeated, India did endorse Human Rights Council resolu-

Repeatedly saying that India wants peaceful ties, based on cooperation, is not enough. India's clear and unwavering support for core democratic and human rights principles in neighbouring countries might go a long way toward dispelling some of the public anxiety.

tions urging accountability, but both the Sinhalese and Tamils have reason to remain suspicious of India's role.

When Prime Minister Modi invited regional heads of state to his government's inauguration in 2014, there were hopes that he was signalling a shift in India's relations with its neighbours.

Modi now needs to turn that sentiment into action by promoting respect for human rights abroad. Concerns over "Indian agencies" are not going to disappear on their own.

'No one capable enough to compete with Modi': Nitish Kumar on 2019 polls

(Insider Bureau) New Delhi : In a verbal pat on the back to new ally BJP, Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar said on Monday that no person or political party has the ability to challenge Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the 2019 general election.

"Given the current political scenario, no one can compete with Narendra Modi," Nitish told mediapersons at a press conference. Elaborating on what went on behind the scenes after the CBI filed a graft case and conducted raids on the Yadav's properties, Nitish said he had tried to ignore the furor in the media. But soon fingers were pointed at him+ for not taking action against the accused.

He said he had tried to save the grand alliance but was forced to break away

after RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav and his family refused to come clean on the corruption allegations against them. "I didn't have a choice, I tolerated everything. But when the corruption allegations were made, it created a hubbub not only in the state but on a national level," Nitish said at the press conference. "The media was reporting a lot about the case but I tried to ignore that and continued working. I thought this happens in an alliance. Then, people started questioning, they have a zero tolerance policy for corruption, so what will they do now?" said Nitish. The JD(U) chief then revealed that the party had unanimously decided at a high-level meeting not to break away from their policy and offered RJD leaders Lalu Prasad and his son Tejashwi the chance

to put forth all facts about the corruption case in the public domain. He said he'd met with Tejashwi and talked to him about the same. "I had asked to explain the corruption allegations and had they done that, the situation could have been different. The proposal came from BJP after my resignation and we formed the government with the consensus of both parties' legislators," he said. Last Thursday, Nitish Kumar had taken oath as chief minister+ with support from the BJP, barely 24 hours after resigning from the post+ and quitting the grand alliance comprising JD(U), RJD and the Congress. The rapid sequence of events, capped off by Nitish's return to the NDA fold, had led to speculation that this bit of political maneuvering had been quite some time in the making. Responding to the RJD's charges



that he'd betrayed the mandate of the people of Bihar by joining up with "communal forces", Nitish said, "I don't need any certificate from anybody on secularism. They (RJD) were amassing personal wealth under the guise of secularism."

India submits Mallya's extradition paperwork to his legal team

(Insider Bureau) LONDON: The Indian government has submitted the requisite "opening note" and paperwork related to

ing note on the case.

The 61-year-old tycoon is sought by Indian authorities for allegedly defaulting on several bank loans amounting to nearly Rs 9,000 crores.

"All matters are on track," official sources confirmed to PTI today.

The next hearing to assess the progress in the case will be



Vijay Mallya's extradition case to the liquor baron's legal team within the UK court deadline today.

Chief Magistrate Emma Louise Arbuthnot, presiding at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London at the last hearing in the case on July 6, had set July 31 as the deadline for the Indian side - represented by the UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) - to provide Mallya's defence team with a detailed open-

ing note on the case. The 61-year-old tycoon is sought by Indian authorities for allegedly defaulting on several bank loans amounting to nearly Rs 9,000 crores.

Mallya, who has been in self-imposed exile in the UK since March 2016, was arrested by Scotland Yard on an extradition warrant on April 18 and is currently out on bail.

The CPS, arguing on behalf of the Indian government earlier this month, had told the court that they had "excellent cooperation" with the Indian authorities in the case and now had sufficient ma-

terial to establish a prima facie case for the extradition of the former chief of erstwhile Kingfisher Airlines.

"We have completed a review of materials and I am happy to state that we have had excellent cooperation with the Indian authorities in this case. We are ready and willing to proceed and would invite the court to fix a hearing date at the earliest," CPS barrister Mark Summers had said.

The judge agreed with the CPS to "progress with some rigour" and retained December 4 as the date for a final hearing in the case.

If the Chief Magistrate rules in favour of extradition at the end of the trial, the UK home secretary must order Mallya's extradition within two months of the appropriate day.

However, the case can go through a series of appeals before arriving at a conclusion.

India and the UK have an Extradition Treaty, signed in 1992, and Union Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi had recently indicated

it was working fine. "We are on the verge of extraditing an individual from India to the UK in the next week or 10 days. The extradition treaty is working just fine and there is no difficulty in the extradition treaty. We have extraditions already successfully completed," Mehrishi had said during his UK visit earlier this month. So far only one extradition has taken place from the UK to India under the India-UK extradition treaty - that of Samirbhai Vinubhai Patel. "He was extradited with the due process of law. We do understand that extradition does take time and there are multiple levels of appeal in either country and it is not the easiest of processes to complete. But being a liberal democracy that we are, we have to allow for the law taking its own course," Mehrishi added. Mallya's extradition is also believed to have featured during bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Theresa May on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Germany earlier this month.

Amit Shah's assets jumped due to inheritance: BJP



(Insider Bureau) AHMEDABAD: Reacting to media reports about the increase in the value of Amit Shah's assets, the BJP on Monday clarified that the rise was overwhelmingly because of the inheritance from his late mother. In a press release, the party said that in the affidavit he filed in 2012, Shah and his wife Sonal had declared assets worth Rs 10.99 crore. After the death of his mother Kusumben in 2013, the court probated her assets worth Rs 18.85 crore to Shah, taking the value of his assets to 29.84 crore. This has since gone up to Rs 34.31 crore largely because of appreciation of his assets.

2,023 villages in Karnataka have no graduates

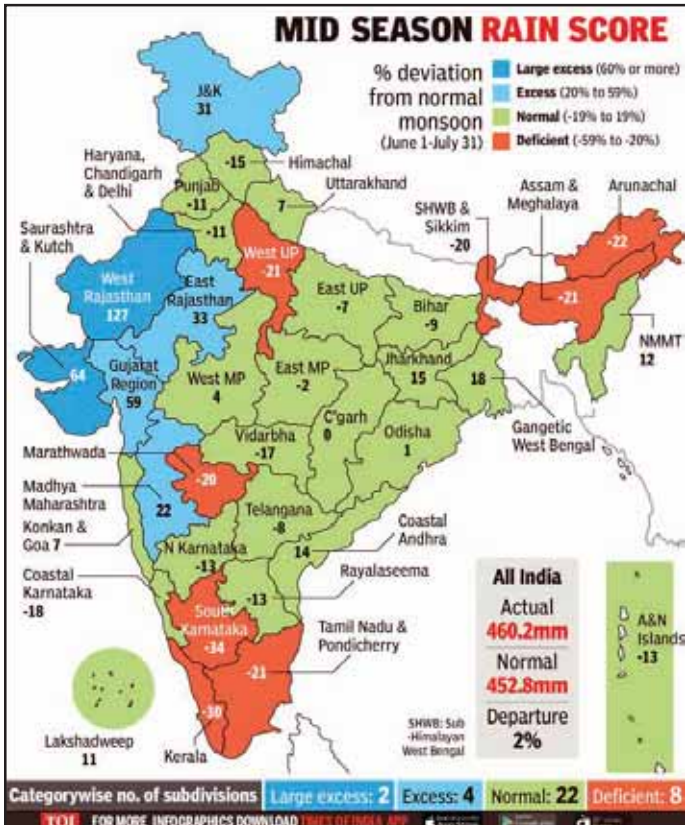
(News Agencies) BENGALURU: With a whopping 2,023 villages reportedly not having produced a single graduate so far, the state government has undertaken a three-day campaign to ascertain facts and bring dropouts back to colleges. A study commissioned by the directorate of collegiate education (DCE) had revealed that 2,023 villages, out of the total of 27,530 villages in the state, were yet to see a youngster completing his graduation. The revelation, which comes at a time when the govern-

ment has been spending over Rs 3,000 crore per annum on higher education, has raised questions on the judicious use of funds.

According to the study, the population of these zero-graduate villages range from one person to 2,900 people. The districts which have the highest number of villages with zero-graduates are: Kolar (211 villages), Tumakuru (190 villages), Uttara Kannada (166), Hassan (169), Raichur (144), Mysuru (113), Shivamogga (98), Chikkaballapura (90), Belgaum

(68) and Bengaluru Rural (66). The findings of the study have baffled policy makers. "Youngsters discontinuing studies in hilly tracts and most backward regions is understandable, but what is not fathomable is the fact there are so many villages from Kolar and Tumakuru that have not seen a single graduate despite their proximity to Bengaluru," a DCE official said and added: "This is a bad situation given the fact that the literacy rate in the state had touched 75.70 per cent. We need

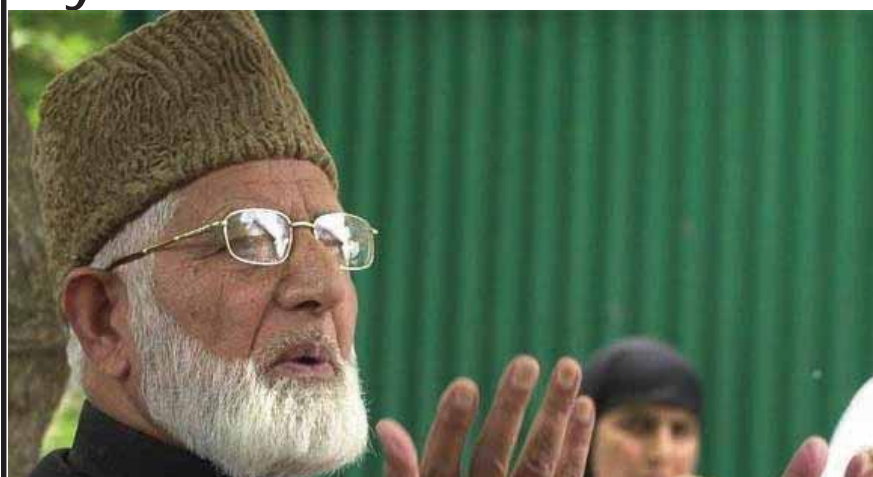
to ensure that educated youngsters from these villages complete their graduation." In the first phase, the government has identified 1,000 villages and has deputed lecturers from the nearest government colleges to visit these villages, ascertain facts and motivate those who have discontinued studies after II PUC to return to college. "The idea is to ensure that each village has at least one graduate," the official said and added: "The remaining 1,000 villages be taken up next year."



Why despite a good monsoon this year, all is not well

While the big picture for the monsoon this year may look good, the rainfall distribution was highly skewed. The arid Saurashtra and Kutch regions of Gujarat and western Rajasthan got a disproportionately high share of rain, leading to massive flooding in many areas, while the rains have been worryingly deficient in south India.

Geelani's lawyer expelled by Jammu bar association



(News Agencies) JAMMU: The Bar Association of Jammu (BAJ) today expelled lawyer Devinder Singh Behal, who is associated with separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, after he was arrested by the NIA in a terror funding case. "As soon as we came to know about his (Behal) activities, we verified our records and immediately decided to expel him without any notice from the primary membership of the association," BAJ president BS Salathia told reporters here. "Ours is a nationalist association and we will not tolerate the presence of any 'anti-national' element, whether associated with Hurriyat or any other group," he said. Widening its probe in the terror funding case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) had on July 30 searched the office and residence of Behal over his alleged role in routing funds to separatists from their Pakistan-based handlers. Behal, chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Social Peace Forum (JKSPF)- a constituent of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat headed by Geelani- was arrested following which several of his public speeches during last year's unrest in the Valley went viral on social media, wherein he was heard shouting 'pro-freedom' and 'anti-India' slogans. Salathia said Behal became a member of the Bar Association of Jammu in 2013 on the recommendation of two senior advocates. He said even members of the association belonging to his community took a strong exception of his activities and recommended his expulsion. "The decision to expel him was unanimous and aimed at sending a clear message that we will not tolerate any anti-national activity," he said. The BAJ chief also advised senior lawyers to verify the credentials of those seeking membership of the association before recommending their cases, and asserted that a "conspiracy has been going on to intrude anti-national elements into the body to dilute its stand".

Lalu Prasad's men groom Tejashwi Yadav for future



(News Agencies) PATNA: RJD is keen to ensure a larger stature for its leader and former deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav following JDU's exit from the grand alliance. Tejashwi, who has been praised for his speech in the state assembly, will soon hit the roads to undertake his padyatra from West Champaran, a place associated with Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha movement. While RJD

chief Lalu Prasad is preparing for the August 27 rally in which many Opposition leaders are likely to participate, Tejashwi's main task is to target the state government. RJD chief has also invited senior JDU leaders to join his party to strengthen Opposition against BJP in the state. RJD is also believed to be keeping a close eye on Union minister Upendra Kushwaha's RLSP and ex-CM Jitan Ram Manjhi's HAM. Both the parties, which are NDA allies in Bihar, have not got any representation in the new ministry.



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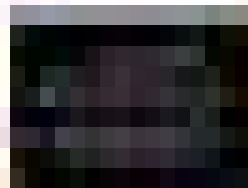
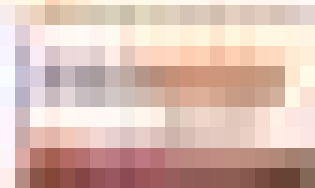
The South Asian Community has raised a total of \$100,000 for the cause of breast cancer research and treatment. The funds were presented to the man in the photo.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT US AT THE FOLLOWING PHONE NUMBER: (905) 477-1111

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Modi government trying to quash UPA's Land Acquisition Act: Rahul Gandhi



the way they are doing now."

Blaming Modi and Yogi governments for the peeved farmers, Rahul added, "The problem is that due procedures are not being followed. In fact, the Modi government is trying to quash our pro-farmer land acquisition act." He claimed that his party was working to counter Modi's game-plan.

Earlier, he met the top brass at National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to demand compensation for farmers and shopkeepers whose land had been acquired by the agency under national highway number 56 widening project (Lucknow-Sultanpur-Varanasi) in his parliamentary constituency Amethi.

Gandhi reached the state capital at 10.30 am and was welcomed by scores of party leaders includ-

ing Raj Babbar, UP Congress president. He reached NHAI's regional office at 11 am along with Jitin Prasada where over 100 farmers and shopkeepers were waiting to join him.

Congress leader Akhilesh Singh informed that the matter relates to over 600 shopkeepers and farmers belonging to Kathaura stretch in Jagdishpur. In their petition to officers concerned, Gandhi and other signatories claimed that 13 meters of land on both sides of the existing highway was acquired by NHAI in the first phase. Now, a second round of acquisition has been initiated which is taking toll of their homes and shops. They added that the residents were neither informed nor given a chance to adequately represent the matter.

Also, no compensation against the new acquisition has been given or promised.

Though the land acquired by the NHAI is government property, the Congress workers claimed that the farmers and shopkeepers had been living here for the past 20 years. Citing an apex court order that the shopkeepers and residents should be given compensation against the cost which went in construction of their houses or shops, Congress vice-president demanded compensation for them. The applicants also claimed that the second acquisition is taking place to build a truck lane. Stating that the truck lane was very close to residential area, they demanded scrapping of any such move.

(News Agencies) LUCKNOW: Congress party vice-president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday accused the Modi government of dumping pro-farmer policies of the UPA. Talking to reporters in Lucknow on Monday, he said, "We have been raising farmer is-

sues in UP for long... we were there at the time of Bhatta Parsaul... I came today for the cause of farmers in Amethi... the UPA government undertook many development projects for which huge chunk of land was acquired. But never did anyone complain

Govt approves study on why Gangajal doesn't turn bad

(Agencies) New Delhi : The Centre approved on Monday seven projects, worth nearly Rs 425 crore, under its ambitious ongoing river cleaning programme. Besides new sewage infrastructure projects, the fresh approvals include a research work to study nonputrefying properties of 'Gangajal' (Ganga water) — considered 'holy' by Hindus. The study will, in fact, be an extension of an ongoing research carried out by the National Environment Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to identify special properties of the river's waters. The research will cover study of both water and sediments, especially in the upper reaches of the Ganga.

"This research would focus on finding out the science behind these special properties in order to formulate a strategy to retain these characteristics", said an official note of the Union water resources ministry. All these projects were approved by an executive committee of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), a central body which approves all projects up to Rs 1,000 crore under the Namami Gange programme. The Mission has earmarked Rs 4.96 crore for the research study to understand the nonputrefying properties of the river Ganga. The six sewage infrastructure related projects, approved on Monday, include three projects each for Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In UP, these projects are aimed at creation of sewage treatment capacity of 29 million litres per day (MLD), at Unnao (13 MLD), Shuklaganj (6 MLD), and Ramnagar (10 MLD) at a total cost of over Rs 238 crore. In Bihar, these projects will create additional sewage treatment capacity of 27 MLD at Sultanganj (10 MLD), Naugachia (9 MLD) and Mokama (8 MLD). "All the six projects will be provided with 'operation and maintenance' cost for 15 years by the central government", said the ministry in a statement. The projects at Unnao and Sultanganj will be taken up under hybrid annuity-based PPP model in which 60% of the capital cost will be paid to the contractor over a period of 15 years on the basis of his work performance on the achievement of desired norms of treated waste water.

India sees signs of decline in cases of cervical cancer: Study

(Agencies) LUCKNOW: Known to be killing some 67,000 women every year in India, prevalence of cervical cancer seems to be declining. The prevalence has already stabilised and has shown a sign of decline.

"As per the trend captured by the National Cancer Registry Programme, there are signs of an impending decline in incidents of cervical cancer," said Dr Prashant Mathur, director, National Center for Disease Informatics and Research which conducts the programme. Dr Mathur, who was in city's Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences recently, added that the decline of cervical cancer has been clearly noted in some regional registries. "Registries in Gujarat and Barshi Maharashtra for example corroborate the trend," he

said. Talking about the probable reasons for the trend, Dr Mathur said, "improvement in personal hygiene, increase in marriage age, rise in use of contraceptive methods and use of vaccine seem to have contributed." He added that regional variations in prevalence of cancer prevented them from making a clear-cut conclusions and tabulation process to evaluate the nationwide decline is under way. "The regional variations in India are very high. For instance, cancer of the food-pipe or stomach are commoner in North Eastern states while oral cavity and lung cancer dominate Northern India. So, unless we have same indication from across all registries, a sweeping statement is not correct," he said. Talking about another trend, Dr Mathur said that cases of thyroid cancer in Kerala is going up.

"The pattern is being examined in detail," he said adding that more medical centers need to be included in NCRP. In 2016, radiotherapy department at SGPGI was included in the NCRP is also studying pattern of care and survival studies for cancer in breast, cervix and head and neck. While NCDIR is looking at a population-based cancer registry programme in UP, experts feel that making cancer a notifiable disease is must. "Karnataka has already taken a lead. States can do their bit till the Union health ministry makes it mandatory," said Dr Mathur. "Registry apart, cancer must be made a notifiable disease," asserts Prof Shalin Kumar, head of radiotherapy department, SGPGI. "India is likely to see 17.3 lakh new cancer cases and 8.8 lakh new deaths in the next three years. The urgency has to be understood and given its due," he added.

Amit Shah takes serious view of MPs absence from Rajya Sabha

(Agencies) NEW DELHI: BJP president Amit Shah has taken a serious view of the absence of party members from the Rajya Sabha despite a whip and the absentee MPs are likely to be asked for an explanation. Shah made his displeasure clear at the BJP parliamentary party meeting today, some MPs present there said, a day after the government suffered an embarrassment in the House when a united opposition ensured the passage of amendments to a Constitution amendment bill on backward classes.

The opposition-sponsored amendments were passed by 74 to

52 votes. The BJP's strength alone is 56 while the ruling block enjoys the support of 88 members, counting 10 JD(U) MPs. When the party issues a whip, members must be present in the House. The party president has taken a serious view of the absence of members. He said it should not have happened and must not be repeated," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar said. An BJP MP present in the meeting said Shah wondered if the absentee MPs should be named as the party, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has repeatedly stressed on the need for their pres-



ence in Parliament. He also referred to the votes during the presidential poll which turned out to be invalid and asked them to ensure that they cast votes properly during the vice presidential election.

Modi did not attend the meeting as in Assam to review the flood crisis there.

Woman is lynched by a mob blaming her for witchcraft after 50 women had their hair cut off in their sleep in creepy attacks across India

Indian police are investigating attacks on women claiming to have been knocked unconscious and having their hair cut off.

At least 55 women across five Indian states have reported waking to find their braids mysteriously cut off in the past month.

The outbreak of 'braid chopping' is spooking villagers and has reportedly led to a murder, where a mob in Uttar Pradesh turned on a woman falsely accused of carrying out attacks and using the hair for 'witchcraft'.

Four new cases were reported on New Delhi's outskirts on Wednesday, just days after half a dozen similar cases were reported in Gurgaon, south of the capital.

'We heard her cries, and when we rushed she was lying on the

floor unconscious,' said Rohit Yadav, whose 55-year-old mother Monesh Devi fell victim in July in Delhi.

'Her chopped off hair was lying next to her.'

The string of unexplained attacks has occurred in largely rural areas, where superstitious beliefs sparks hysteria and allegations of witchcraft.

Some villages have held special prayer sessions to ward off evil spirits and begun patrols to protect their women. None of the victims have been harmed in any physical way or robbed.

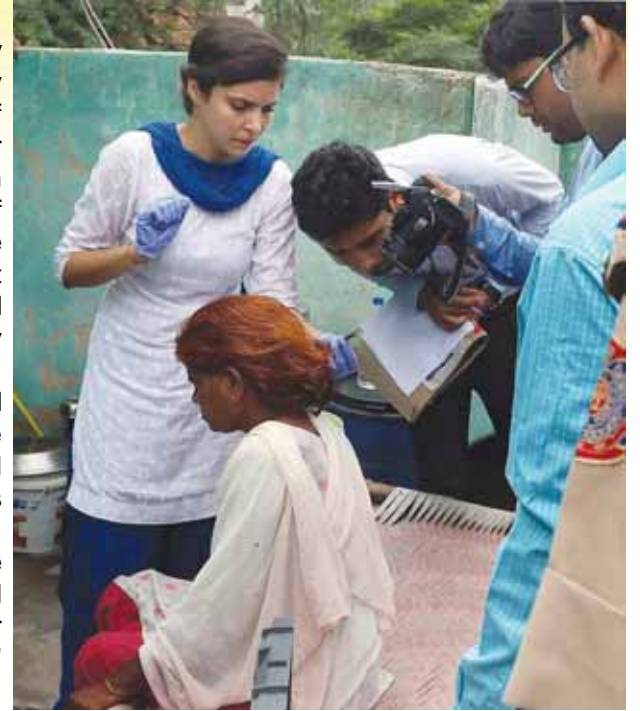
A 65-year-old woman murdered by a mob in Agra - home to the Taj Mahal - was later branded a witch and accused of using sorcery to slice braids, despite no cases

being reported in the city.

'She was beaten after they found her loitering in a nearby village. Someone accused her of being a witch and later linked her to the hair cutting incidents,' Dinesh Chandra Dubey, Agra police chief said. Authorities in Delhi are treating the assaults as crimes but have no leads thus far, said Surinder Kumar, deputy commissioner of Delhi police said.

However they have dismissed claims of witchcraft, leaning more towards the theory that mental illness or cases of copycat attacks could be behind the bizarre events.

'Counsellors said they could be suffering from disorders and could have done it themselves but our investigating are broad-based,' Kumar added.



Can MPs hike their own salaries, asks MP Varun Gandhi

(Agencies) NEW DELHI: BJP MP in the Lok Sabha, Varun Gandhi, on Tuesday demanded an external independent body, comprising members from outside Parliament, to determine salaries of MPs and suggested that the members must forgo their privileges (perks and salaries) in view of the economic conditions of poor and underprivileged citizens.

Raising the issue in the Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, he said, "Giving ourselves the authority to increase our own fiscal compensation is not in line with the morals of our democracy."

"For the greater good of this nation, we must create an external body, independent of us members, to determine salaries. Or, if we self-regulate, considering the economic conditions of the last man in society, we must empathetically forgo our privileges, at least for the duration of this parliament", said Gandhi.

Requesting members to forgo their privileges, he even cited example of such decision taken under the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, when the entire Cabinet in its very first meeting had decided not to avail salaries for six months in view of the "economic suffering of the citizens at the time".

Gandhi, while making his submission, highlighted the recent decision of doubling the salaries of its legislators by the Tamil Nadu Assembly and questioned such act where MLAs or MPs themselves raise their salaries.

Noting that a farmer from Tamil Nadu tried to take his own life in the national Capital a few weeks ago in order to register his protest against the suffering of farmers in the state and even members of the same group demonstrated skulls of fellow farmers who had committed suicide to make their point strongly, Gandhi expressed his concerns that the Tamil Nadu Assembly still in a "brazenly insensitive act" doubled the salaries of its legislators.

"When matters regarding salary are

raised recurrently, it makes me worry about the moral compass of the House. Nearly 18,000 farmers have committed suicide over the last one year. Where is our focus?" asked the BJP member.

Questioning such act of Tamil Nadu Assembly, the BJP member urged the House to take lessons from the past. He cited examples of members of the Constituent Assembly, like Biswanath Das from Odisha, who chose to draw only Rs 25 a day instead of Rs 45 a day, which they were entitled to, saying that he did not need/require any more. Similarly, V I Muniswami Pillai, in 1949, moved a motion in the Madras Assembly to impose a voluntary cut of Rs 5 per diem in recognition of the suffering of the farm-

ers. The Assembly had then unanimously passed the motion.

Demanding an independent body to determine salaries of MPs, Gandhi referred to such mechanism followed by the Parliament in United Kingdom where, he said, an independent authority - Review Body on Senior Salaries - consisting of distinguished non-members, advise the government on the pay and pensions of MPs. This authority takes into account the recommendations of both the beneficiaries and the public. It then checks the validity and affordability of these recommendations.

"Such a mechanism does not exist in our nation, sadly", said the BJP member while noting that the salaries of MPs in



India were increased by 400% in the last decade as compared to 13% rise in the UK. Referring to the view of Mahatma Gandhi on the issue who had expressed that the allowances drawn by the MPs and various Assemblies must be in proportion to the services rendered to the nation, the BJP member wondered whether this should not be the case now.

Nitish is a political turncoat hungry for power: Lalu Prasad

(Agencies) NEW DELHI: RJD supremo Lalu Prasad hit back at Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar on Tuesday and said the JD(U) leader was a master of the volte-face, flitting from one camp to another when it served his interest.

"Nitish is a 'paltu-ram'. He is a political turncoat+. I've lost count of the number of times he has changed his stance and his allegiance for the sake of power," Lalu said at a press conference.

This, Lalu cited, is evident from Nitish's altered attitude with regards to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with whom the Bihar chief minister had a major falling out in 2013. He further claimed that Nitish's defection from the grand alliance+ had been planned in cahoots with the BJP for quite some time.

"Nitish would thoroughly criticize Narendra Modi till only a few days back. Now, he is showering praises and has even proclaimed that no one can challenge Modi in 2019. It's obvious that his loyalty was suspect from the very be-

ginning," Lalu said. He also slammed Nitish for his arrogance in claiming that he'd been the one to win votes for Lalu during the 2015 Bihar assembly election. "Nitish said he got the votes for me. He didn't even feel ashamed at saying this. I'm his senior," the former Bihar chief minister railed. Nitish Kumar had lashed out at Lalu for insinuating that the JD(U) leader would have been nowhere if not for the RJD support in after the results of 2015 assembly polls came out.

"He (Lalu) arrogantly says that he made me the CM ... The people of Bihar showed him his worth in 2010," he had said at a press briefing on Monday. Reacting to this caustic barb, Lalu reminded Nitish of his own electoral track record. "Have you (Nitish) forgotten your own status in the past. You not only lost twice in two assembly election, but were soundly defeated in the Lok Sabha election too," the RJD chief jibed. Lalu further pointed out that he'd been the one



to bring Nitish to the fore when they'd been involved in student politics. He charged that Nitish had used him for political gains. He added that he'd lost faith in Nitish a long time back and had been leery of putting him in a position of leadership. But he changed his mind when Samjwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh rooted for Nitish.

Clean-up of corrupt civil and military elements necessary for Pakistan's survival

Pakistan is clamouring for across-the-board accountability and fortunately the judicial and military establishments think a major clean-up operation has become inevitable. This comes at a time when politicians are busy saving their money and skin



(News Agencies) As a hitherto lucky Nawaz Sharif was booted out from power, for the third time, last week, hardly a whiff of protest was heard. There was a deafening calm and a sense of relief all around, including the all-important security establishment.

I used the words "booted out" because his last two stints as prime minister were abruptly axed in 1993 and 1999 by Pindi boots—by Pakistan's military establishment. But this time they intelligently stayed away and quietly, and rightly, gave confidence to the apex court judges as the Panama Papers' judicial noose was enough to do the job.

The Sharif family had been caught red-handed with its

hands, feet and neck deep in the cookie jar. Numerous cases of corruption, money laundering and violation of oath were detected to be tried now. There was relief because Sharif began his term by taking on the army on key national policy issues — how to combat terrorism and relations with India. He wanted a soft approach on both these fronts and like Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Turkish model, wanted to bring the army under civilian supremacy. While he delayed action against the Taliban and pressed for a dialogue, the army thought precious time was being wasted and a stage came when a military operation was launched without the PM's approval. Sharif was forced to co-

operate with the highly successful anti-terror operation — at a later stage the prime minister even claimed credit for it.

On India, Sharif showed extraordinary courage and defiance, inviting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to his Lahore home after first attending his inauguration in New Delhi, never mentioning Kulbhushan Jadhav, a retired naval official arrested in Balochistan in March 2016, nor coming out strongly for the separatist movement in Srinagar.

Sharif even showed the audacity of inviting Indian tycoon Sajjan Jindal to his private residence at the hill resort of Murree, talking to him while strolling on the lawns to avoid monitoring. This could have been to either send or receive a message from New Delhi.

All these were highly annoying to the Pakistani army but it registered only soft protests inside closed doors and allowed him to continue, probably anticipating that the Panama Papers will ultimately, and quickly, bring him down through the constitutional process.

Some Indian voices were heard lamenting that a friendly

or less inimical regime had ended in Pakistan, but deep inside their hearts many Pakistanis, and especially Kashmiris on both sides of the disputed border, must be feeling happy.

"Five wise men have given a 5-0 verdict. It's good riddance on sound reasons," said Riaz Hussain Khokhar, an expert on India-Pakistan relations and a former Pakistani high commissioner to India. "Sharif's exit will have no affect whatsoever on Indo-Pak relations. There is no chance of any improvement because of Indian intransigence and New Delhi should take notice of official reactions in Beijing and Washington," he said.

Khokhar's comments should not be taken lightly by India as whoever succeeds Nawaz Sharif, most likely his brother Shehbaz Sharif, now chief minister of Punjab, will not be able to maintain a soft stand or keep quiet on issues like his brother defiantly did. Shehbaz will only be a stop-gap arrangement for a few months as general elections are due next year and he would have to keep his family and the party intact amid a plethora of criminal cases that will open against

all of them, including Shehbaz.

A family hounded by sleuths who are going all around the globe to find hidden treasures looted from Pakistan would have a very hard time projecting an image of innocence to the electorate or claim sympathy or political martyrdom. It will take a hit.

The rule of law unleashed with the unseating of the first family of politics, especially from elitist Punjab, will have to be extended to others, including the equally rich former president Asif Ali Zardari of the Pakistan Peoples Party and the corrupt elements in the civil and military establishment.

Pakistan is clamouring for across-the-board accountability and fortunately the judicial and the military establishments, at this particular time, also think a major clean-up operation has become inevitable — in fact it is a necessity for the nation to survive the grave strategic and economic challenges it is facing.

With politicians busy saving their money and skin, the momentous task of keeping Pakistan afloat, watching out and responding to the serious regional and international realignments fall to the rest of others.

India watching China's bid to court Bhutan

(Agencies) NEW DELHI: India is monitoring China's attempts to expand its influence in Bhutan ahead of the parliamentary elections in the Himalayan state next year, especially in the backdrop of a flurry of visits by senior Chinese officials to the neighbouring country in the past few months.

Amid the face-off between Indian and Chinese armies in western Bhutan, Delhi has noticed Beijing's effort to expand its presence in the Himalayan state, which became a constitutional monarchy from an absolute kingdom in 2008. With the third edition of the parliamentary elections scheduled for next year, Beijing has been trying to reach out to politicians and other power centres in Thimphu, according to persons familiar with the developments. Delhi-based senior Chinese diplomats have been visiting Bhutan regularly over the past few months and continued to do so even during the Doklam standoff, according to one of the persons quoted above. Thimphu, however, firmly supports New Delhi's posi-



tion on the faceoff on Doklam plateau and so far remained firm on its stand that the road the Chinese PLA wanted to build in Doklam plateau would have unilaterally changed the status quo on the trijunction. Delhi supported Thimphu at the trijunction following a security arrangement between the two sides. For India, King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and his father Jigme Singye Wangchuck continue to be key figures in Bhutan's decision-making process. The royal family has been traditional strong votaries of

Bhutan's "special and unique relationship" with Delhi. They would eventually play a key role to ensure the ratification of the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) by the Bhutanese Parliament. Delhi has decided to go with Thimphu's pace in implementing Bhutan leg of the BBIN MVA. But what worries Delhi is the possibility of Beijing seeking to influence the next year's elections to the National Assembly of Bhutan in favour of Druk Phuensum Tshogpa, or DPT, the current

opposition party in Bhutan. Sections of the Bhutanese society have been favouring wider outreach with the international community, including China. However, a large section of the society is still wary of external influences on local culture and recall Beijing's role in Tibet after 1949. The DPT, which lost the 2013 elections to People's Democratic Party, might try to make a comeback when the next elections to the National Assembly take place in 2018, said experts.

'Western media favours India', says Chinese media

(Agencies) NEW DELHI: Miffed at international opinion seemingly tilted in favour of New Delhi in the Doklam stand-off, China's aggressive state-backed media has accused Western media of being biased in favour of India simply because it is a democracy.

What's more, India "arouses sympathy" because it is "in a weaker position compared with China", said an opinion piece in China's Global Times on Tuesday. "India in the Western media is a victim which has been bullied by China, even though India illegally entered Chinese territory and violated international law to unilaterally intervene in the 'territorial dispute' between China and Bhutan," said the Global Times article. It was, of course, parroting Beijing's stance that India, rather than its own Peoples Liberation Army troops, violated the border in Doklam on June 16. Never mind

that Bhutan - where Doklam is located - and India both called China the aggressor. That the Western media too portrayed China as the aggressor has annoyed the Global Times columnist. Western media reports "mainly cited India's rhetoric and what happened from the Indian media's point of view, depicting a mild India which called for a troop withdrawal and bilateral negotiations", said the opinion piece in the Chinese publication. It added that India has "several advantages" in the sphere of international opinion, chief among them being the fact that it's a Western-style democracy.

"India has a Western-style political system and can gloss over its illegal acts under the banner of democracy," said the piece, adding that India has been a busybody in the region since World War II and the "Western media has ignored all this". "Since WWII, India has been one

of the few countries that annexed a sovereign country. It has inherited colonial legacies and directly interfered with or even diplomatically and militarily controlled its tiny neighbours.

The independence movement by India's ethnic groups and the rebellions of some religious sects were put down with cruel suppression. But Western media has ignored all this," said the article. Global Times believes that India has managed to pull the wool over everyone's eyes simply because it gained independence from



the British through non-violent resistance. "Westerners believe India is a country of peace. Over thousands of years, India was invaded about 300 times. It gained independence through nonviolent resistance to the British Empire. The West believes India created a peaceful model of an anti-colonial movement.

India is an overwhelming presence in south Asia, and must do more to build trust

Repeatedly saying that India wants peaceful ties, based on cooperation, is not enough. India's clear and unwavering support for core democratic and human rights principles in neighbouring countries might go a long way toward dispelling some of the public anxiety.

(Agencies) In the old days, Indians would speak of the "hidden hand," accusing people of being on the payroll of CIA, or even the KGB. These days, Indian officials seem to have been attributed a similarly long and evil

No information on 39 missing Indians: Syrian envoy

NEW DELHI: Syria has no information about the 39 Indians who went missing in Iraq in 2014. Syria's Ambassador to India Riad Kamel Abbas, however, said that his country is "keen" to send them home if they are found in its territory. Abbas yesterday said an Indian delegation has made several trips to Syria and Iraq in the past to seek information about them and the chief of the Intelligence Department of Syria has also visited New Delhi in this regard. "We are very keen to bring them (missing Indians) home if they are in our territory, but there is no official confirmation about it," he added. Early this month, Iraqi forces freed Mosul from the ISIS, a development that gave a ray of hope to the families of 39 Indians. However, there was no information of the missing Indian nationals from the liberated city.

arm of influence by our neighbours.

After the mysterious disappearance and subsequent return of Farhad Mazhar, a Bangladeshi columnist and activist, on July 3, local media in Bangladesh reported conjecture that "Indian agencies" were responsible for the abduction. Nepali analysts have long spoken of "Indian agencies" being involved, usually playing a negative role, in political decisions; but the distrust runs so high that a Nepali national recently even suggested to me that India's prompt earthquake rescue and relief mission two years ago, was motivated by a hidden agenda.

This is partly because India, by sheer size of its population, military, economy and geography, is an overwhelming presence in the subcontinent. But its officials should have realised by now that repeatedly saying that India wants peaceful ties, based on cooperation, is not enough.

While it is generally accepted that it will, like all other countries, prioritise its strategic interests - primarily linked to China's growing clout - the open dismay toward India is not without basis. While many of the allegations might be dismissed as local paranoia, India also needs to reconsider its image. India's

clear and unwavering support for core democratic and human rights principles in neighbouring countries might go a long way toward dispelling some of the public anxiety.

For instance, many Bangladeshis, particularly opposition party supporters, believe that India is bolstering the ruling Awami League. The Sheikh Hasina government has addressed many of India's key security concerns, partnering in counter-terrorism operations and closing borders to insurgent groups. Bangladeshi security forces, however, are accused of serious human rights violations including extra-judicial killings, secret detentions and enforced disappearances, often targeting the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami. India has failed to raise concerns about these practices, which generates allegations of complicity. In Nepal, almost everything, even the potholes, are often blamed on "Indian agencies." When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Nepali parliament in 2014, it appeared that things might have changed - people came out on the streets to applaud him. Soon after, however, that enthusiasm vanished, to be replaced by a familiar aggrieved suspicion. The



unrest in Nepal's southern plains, the intractable political disagreements, the recent effective blockade on supplies to the hills from the Indian border due to the Terai protests, have played their part. Since the military, the Maoists, and most of the political parties had some role in the abuses that occurred during the civil war, India's protective hand is presumed in ensuring that its favourites hold office. Such claims would dissipate were India, which played an important part in ending the decade-long Maoist conflict in 2006, to publicly press for conflict-related justice and accountability.

Bhutan's fledgling steps toward democracy, many Bhutanese believe, were derailed by India, which is accused of weighing in to ensure the election of its preferred candidate. India stumbled in the Maldives

too, failing to stand up for the basic rights of the political opposition. Promoting human rights in both places would not only have helped the citizens of these countries, it could have ended the mistrust.

India's footprint was much more visible in Sri Lanka where Tamil Nadu politicians actively campaigned for the rights of Sri Lankan Tamils. Yet, India failed to condemn laws of war violations by both the Sri Lankan security forces and the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the final months of the war in 2009, actively scuttling a rights-protecting intervention by the UN Human Rights Council. With the LTTE defeated, India did endorse Human Rights Council resolutions urging accountability, but both the Sinhalese and Tamils have reason to remain suspicious of India's role.



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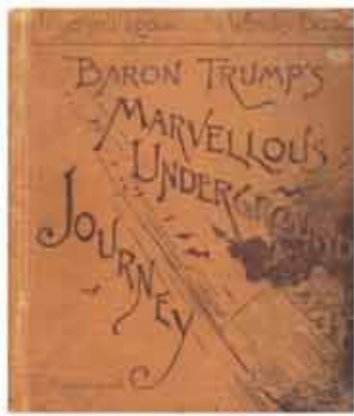
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Novels tell the tale of a wealthy and aristocratic boy living in 'Castle Trump'.

THE internet has been sent into a frenzy after several prescient books written more than 100 years ago re-emerged about the adventures of a boy named Baron Trump.

Ingersoll Lockwood, an American political writer and novelist, wrote two children's books titled 'Baron Trump's Marvelous Underground Journey', and 'Little Baron Trump and His Wonderful Dog Bulgar', as well as an ominously titled political tome, 'The Last President'.

The book titles and the connections to President Donald Trump and his son Barron are just the beginning of several spooky parallels. In the children's books, the novels tell the tale of a wealthy aristocratic boy who lives in 'Castle Trump' and is guided on his journey to Russia by a man named 'Don'.

One novel says Trump family's motto is glory

The multitude of similarities to the Trump family living in present day America and the tales in the tomes have internet conspiracy theorists concluding the Trump family is capable of time travel. Baron visits Russia on an extraordinary adventure. Baron's guided through his adventure by 'the master of all masters', a man named Don.

The Trump family motto, the one in the book that is, is: "The pathway to glory is strewn with pitfalls and dangers." In the storybook's illustrations of Baron Trump, he is lavishly dressed and decked in jewels, as he leaves Castle Trump and begins his journey to Russia to find an entrance to alternate dimensions.

The 19th century children's novel says little Baron is bored by his life of luxury and has an active imagination and a 'very active brain' according to Newsweek. Lockwood, as mentioned before, was also a political author. Unlike his children's books, he wrote the political novel: 'The Last President'.

The story opens in a New York City in turmoil. It's early

Too spooky to be true

19th century novels feature exploits of Baron Trump with mentor Don and a Russia trip



Internet conspiracy theorists concluded that the Trump family is capable of time travel.

November right after the election of an enormously opposed candidate. The East Side of the city, which is where the Women's March began the day after Donald Trump's inauguration, is in a 'state of uproar'.

The 19th century book says police officers shouted through the streets as 'Mobs of vast size are organising under the lead of anarchists and socialists, and threaten to plunder and despoil the houses of the rich who have wronged and oppressed them for so many years'.

'The Fifth Avenue Hotel will be the first to feel the fury of the mob,' the novel continues. 'Would the troops be in time to save it?' The Women's March concluded just two

blocks short of Trump Tower International on 5th ave.

The marchers didn't get in front of the tower because of police barricades. The month of the Women's March was January, a day after Trump was inaugurated, but the geography is eerily similar.

It's all strangely there. Of course the internet is spinning its wheels on conspiracy theories, but the most rampant one, which considering the evidence maybe shouldn't be shrugged off so soon, is that the Trump family has a time machine. Yes, a time machine.

How does one make a leap to Donald Trump and Barron Trump, possibly time traveling? We can thank the internet.

Daily Mail



Did S Korea blow up own guard during arms test?

THIS is the moment a mysterious figure was blown up in a video showcasing the pinpoint accuracy of South Korea's bunker-busting missiles.

Seoul tested a Hyunmoo Missile II during combined military exercises with the United States with the weapon seen thudding into a target.

But footage of the trial also shows flames and smoke coming out of a cave under the target — and engulfing a figure at the entrance of the tunnel.

South Koreans commenting on the footage asked whether the military had just blown up one of its guards — but others pointed out that the figure is likely to have been a mannequin designed to show the devastating impact of the rocket.



Seoul tested a missile during joint exercises with the US.

A spokesman for South Korean president Moon Jae-in said that the missiles 'will be a key component in our kill chain to counter possible North Korean missile attacks'.

In a recent test launch designed to resemble an operational strike, the missile penetrated the earth before erupting into flames in a bunker. Meanwhile, the US Air Force successfully launched an intercontinental ballistic missile just days after North Korea tested its latest rocket, which could potentially hit New York City.

An unarmed Minuteman III missile was fired from California's Vandenberg Air Force Base at 2.10 am local time on Wednesday. The Air Force Global Strike Command said a single re-entry vehicle traveled roughly 4,200 miles across the Pacific Ocean where it struck a target in the Kwajalein Atoll. Daily Mail

List uncovers 173 ISIS assassins planning to hit Europe



The names, discovered by Iraqi special forces in Mosul, include six Europeans.

A TERRIFYING list of 173 ISIS assassins prepared to carry out attacks in Europe has been found in Iraq. The list was found in a terrorist hideout in the shattered ruins of Mosul and includes names, photos and the country of origin of scores of fanatics.

More than 130 of the fighters are from Iraq, but it also includes Tunisians, Moroccans and Jordanians as well as jihadists from Tajikistan and Saudi Arabia, according to German newspaper Die Welt. Six of the terrorists are Europeans — from Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Germany.

Die Welt said Iraqi special forces apparently discovered the dossier in an ISIS hideout. American intelligence services have evaluated the papers and sent them to global police authority Interpol.

In May, the paper writes, the list was

distributed among all European security agencies including Britain's.

The fear is of a spectacular outrage being planned somewhere in the West as the group's self-proclaimed caliphate dies in the Middle East. The lone German on the list is Sami J., 27, from

Paper has names, photos & country of origin of jihadis

Soilingen, formerly a leading member of the Islamist group Fillatu Ibrahim.

His current battle name is 'Abu Assid al-Almani' — the German. He is said to have left his homeland in 2012, travelled to Egypt, then Libya and later via Turkey to Syria to join ISIS.

His wife and child followed him but it is not clear whether he is still alive. In mid-July ISIS broadcast a report about his death via its propaganda service in Raqqa but without mentioning how he died. This is considered unusual and intelligence agencies believe may be false in order for him to be secreted back into Europe for a suicide mission.

Die Welt says it has seen the list, adding: "Each photo on the list is marked with a name and a date of birth, with a often martial-sounding battlename and information about the country of origin. Some smile joyfully, others seem shy, many serious and expressive. A few of the shots look like passport photos."

And it notes the speciality of the holy warriors. Next to the name Sami M. It says: 'Suicide bomber'.

(Agencies) So the Scaramouch, a stock clown figure of old Italian comedy, is gone as White House communications director. Anthony Scaramucci's foul mouth was never going to pass muster in a White House run by a retired United States Marine Corps general. John Kelly, President Trump's new chief of staff, duly took care of him.

Scaramucci was perfect right down to his name. The Scaramouch, to quote my Webster's dictionary, was a "braggart and a poltroon" in the theater that emerged in 16th-century Italy. Boastfulness and cowardice are Trump trademarks, one the other face of the other. In his White House job, Scaramucci communicated stupidity above all.



Goodbye to the Scaramouch

Good riddance to him. After he'd unloaded his bile, Scaramucci asked us all in a tweet to pray for his family, which seemed a bit rich. Still, I do want to thank the Scaramouch. He came straight from Central Casting. In his total absence of dignity and decorum, his violence and his vulgarity, he was the emblem par excellence of the Trump White House. That reports of his wife filing for divorce surfaced during his brief apotheosis completed the picture. Fast-talking and fatuous, self-important and servile, he embodied the "commedia dell'arte" of Trump's dysfunctional crew. The commedia featured larger-than-life stock characters like the Scaramouch. They included deluded old men, devious servants, craven braggarts and starry-

eyed lovers. The president, at 71, is clearly a "vecchio," or elder. He is probably best imagined as the miserly Venetian known as Pantalone wandering around in red breeches with the oversized codpiece of the would-be womanizer. Steve Bannon, Trump's chief strategist, fits the bill as the "Dottore," who, as Jennifer Meagher writes in an essay, is "usually depicted as obese and red-cheeked from drinking." I'm tempted to offer the role of the belligerent, windy "Il Capitano," or Captain, to Sebastian Gorka, a deputy assistant to Trump, who recently told the BBC that, "The military is not a microcosm of civilian society. They are not there to reflect America. They are there to kill people and blow stuff up."

The lovers, of course, have to be Ivanka Trump and Jared

Kushner — they of the almost bloodless perfection — whose doting father complicates their sumptuous lives by bestowing upon them titles and tasks for which they are unqualified. The lovers grow quieter and quieter but are so pale they are unable to blush.

Will Kelly close down the "commedia?" The White House is supposed to run the free world. It's time for seriousness. The president, busy and colorful and burrowing as a chipmunk, appears to have awoken to some vague desire for discipline that Kelly's predecessor, Reince Priebus, was unable to provide.

It has to be said, in passing, that Priebus and "cojones" are utter strangers to each other. Ousted, Priebus confused taking the high road — territory unknown to this ad-

ministration — with gelatinous loyalty to the president who knifed him. It is hard to keep up with these guys. If one tries too hard the urge to take a shower and scrub off the oleaginous ooze becomes overwhelming. But back to Kelly: I doubt, however tough the new chief of staff may be, that the commedia is at an end. The Scaramouch was just a stand-in for the president he professed to love. The real "braggart and poltroon" sits in the Oval Office. The key to understanding him is probably that oversize codpiece.

What but some profound sense of inadequacy could explain the neediness and the nastiness, the pout and the pettiness, the vanity and the vulgarity, the anger and the aggression? This president gets

off on the humiliation of others. He is inhabited by some deep violence to which self-control is a stranger. It is almost painful to watch the degree to which he pursues self-aggrandizement. He confounds masculinity with machismo. As J.K. Rowling put it in a tweet: "You tiny, tiny, tiny little man."

In a single week, Trump reminded everyone — if a reminder were needed — just how mean he is. He tweeted an announcement that he had reinstated a ban on transgender individuals serving in "any capacity" in the United States armed forces, and suggested during a visit to Suffolk County Community College in New York that he wanted law enforcement to be "rough" on suspects.

The transgender decision (the one Gorka defended to the BBC by exalting the military's mission to kill people) was, in the words of Stephen Burbank, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, "an engine of malice." It illustrated how, "In the realm of moral leadership, President Trump is leading a race to the bottom." The military promptly said policy would remain unchanged until the White House sends the Defense Department new rules. The police department in Suffolk County also pushed back; it would not tolerate brutality.

Multiple forces in American society are pushing back against Trump. But this is the president we have: turbulent, chaotic, boastful, cowardly and violent. He thrives on the commedia that brought the bilious Scaramouch to the White House. Kelly's task is enormous. Because life is not comedy, much depends on his success: things like war and peace, for example

The Americans Who Saved Health Insurance

(Agencies) Many Americans look back on the heroic political fights of the past — for suffrage, Social Security, civil rights, Medicare — and wonder why today's politics never produce inspiring victories. Well, we just witnessed one. If one of the Senate or House health care bills had become law, millions of people would have lost their coverage. Ultimately, many would have been denied medical care. Birth defects, cancer, diabetes and other conditions would have gone untreated. And it came depressingly close to happening. But it didn't — because of a lot of hard work from a lot of people. Today, I want to give them their due. They are the people who have helped save decent medical care for their fellow citizens. They are an antidote to cynicism in this often cynical time. Jessi Bohon isn't

a political activist. She is a teacher in central Tennessee who grew up poor in rural Virginia. But President Trump's victory led her to join a grass-roots group called Indivisible, which encouraged people to attend town hall meetings on health care. On Feb. 9, Bohon went to one in Murfreesboro, Tenn. There, she asked her House representative, Diane Black, to fix Obamacare's problems instead of taking away insurance. "As a Christian, my whole philosophy in life is pull up the unfortunate," Bohon told Black. "We are effectively punishing our sickest people." The remarks went viral. Bohon was one of thousands of citizens who took time to attend meetings, visit congressional offices and call those offices, often repeatedly. This sustained action worked better than any poll to show

Congress how unpopular the bills were. It was a reminder of how democracy can work. Jessi Bohon was able to join Indivisible because of a group of millennials who reacted to Trump's election not with despair or blame games but by trying to make a difference. At an Austin, Tex., bar during Thanksgiving week, three friends got together to talk about stopping Trump's agenda. The friends — Sara Clough along with Leah Greenberg and Ezra Levin, a married couple who had both worked in Congress — envisioned a Google document with tips for citizen action. Others were involved, too, and the document began circulating online. It led to the formation of Indivisible, with chapters around the country trying to replicate the Tea Party's success, albeit to different ends. The vari-



ous groups and organizers fed off one another. Health care wonks like Andy Slavitt (who had run Medicare and Medicaid) and Topher Spiro used Twitter to explain what Congress was doing — and urge action. The hosts of a hit podcast, Pod Save America, implored their audience to stay engaged. AARP ran ads and mobilized members. It was a vast health care conspiracy.

Meet the 22-year-old creator of the 'Blue Whale' death game

(Agencies) NEW DELHI: A 14-year old student from Andheri in Mumbai may be the first reported Indian victim+ of the 'The Blue Whale Challenge' game, which appears to be still influencing people despite its creator Philipp Budeikin being thrown in jail last month. A Siberian court sentenced the 22-year-old Russian creator of the game to three years in jail for inciting Russian youths to kill themselves.

In an interview in Russia with Saint Petersburg News in May, Budeikin was asked if he really pushed teenagers to suicide intentionally. "Yes", he said. "I truly was doing that. Don't worry, you'll understand everything. Everyone will understand", he added, cryptically.

What is Budeikin's game all about? 'The Blue Whale Challenge' started in 2013, with Budeikin making online contact with people - usually impressionable teenagers - so he could decide who would

play the game successfully. He would ask people to talk about themselves, Skype them and ask them to watch gory and depressing content online. He would then select people he considered weak enough to be manipulated. After selecting who gets to play 'The Blue Whale Challenge'+, the administrators of the game assign daily tasks to the players, which they must complete over 50 days. The game begins with fairly basic tasks, but continually increases in magnitude to tasks such as cutting one's veins, killing an animal and finally suicide.

Each task also needs to be photographed or videotaped, so the administrators have proof of completion and authenticity, including the final suicide.

The game got its name from one of the first disturbing challenges of the game, where players were asked to draw a blue whale on a piece of paper, and

then told to carve the whale onto their body. Budeikin claimed that the psychological manipulation he was administering was intended to make the 'victims' happy. He said he was giving them the warmth and understanding that they didn't get in their lives.

His motives for driving them to suicide were far less empathetic though. "There are people - and there is biological waste. Those who do not represent any value for society. Who cause or will cause only harm to society. I was cleaning our society of such people", Budeikin said during the interview with Saint Petersburg News. He denied reports that he and his game were directly responsible for over 130 deaths, stating that he had only directly influenced 17 deaths. He said others had communicated with him and committed suicide later, but without any direct influence from him. Chill-



ingly, he said that there were 28 more people ready to take their lives. Disturbingly, Budeikin received love letters in jail after his arrest from teenage girls that were under his influence. At some point, it is necessary to push the teenager not to sleep at night. [In this way, their] psyche becomes more susceptible to influence", he said, explaining his tactics of manipulation.

How Brexit Britain Can Reset the Immigration Debate

(Agencies) LONDON — The Labour Party is surging in British polls. That's after a June general election in which it unexpectedly won a remarkable 40 percent of the vote under the leadership of the much-derided Jeremy Corbyn. Young and previously disengaged voters were galvanized by a left-wing policy platform that pledged to deal with the wealth inequalities and economic hardships that affect so many people today.

You could say Labour has tugged the national political map to the left. But now, this progressive spirit may be checked by Britain's referendum decision last year to leave the European Union — in particular, to the extent that the Brexit vote was motivated by hostility to immigration. According to a recent British Social Attitudes survey, 73 percent of those worried about immigration voted for Britain to leave the union.

The challenge for the Labour Party is to devise a policy that honors Brexit voters' decision but doesn't dishonor its own values. That's an especially tough circle to square when it comes to immigration. During the recent general election campaign, Labour conceded that the right to free movement within the European Union for member-state citizens would end post-Brexit. But the party leadership also championed migrants' vital contributions to Britain, while promising to scrap the "bogus immigration targets" that have been set by the Conservative government and to guarantee the rights of European Union citizens living in Britain.

This balancing act seemed to work for Labour's alliance of Leave and Remain voters, consolidating support. But it involves delicate positioning.

That much was made clear last month when Mr. Corbyn said in a TV interview that Brexit would end "the wholesale importation of underpaid workers

from Central Europe in order to destroy conditions, particularly in the construction industry." Although Mr. Corbyn clarified that he blamed employment agencies for this, and not migrants themselves, the formulation, reminiscent of right-wing populist rhetoric about "migrants coming here and taking our jobs," did not go down well with many people. It is also not true: Research has consistently shown that overall, migrants have little, if any, negative effect on wages or conditions (you can instead blame the recession for that). In sectors where migrants are used to drive down wages and destroy conditions, this is through a European Union initiative called the Posted Workers Directive, which has been used by unscrupulous employers to bring lower-paid migrants with fewer rights into the workplace. The solution here is not to end the free movement of workers, but to strengthen union rights and enforce existing employment laws; both measures were in the Labour Party's recent election manifesto.

It's easy to see why Labour is choosing to focus on this aspect of immigration: Attacking exploitative bosses is a fit with the party's framing of wider economic injustice. It's also understandable why supporters cut Mr. Corbyn some slack on the issue. The veteran left-winger and his allies now in leadership positions have a yearslong record of campaigning on immigrants' rights — even as previous Labour Party leaders seemingly competed with the Conservatives over who was "tougher" on immigration. That tradition of Labour's triangulating on the issue was encapsulated by a horrible promotional mug during the 2015 election campaign that bore the slogan "Controls on Immigration," issued under the former leader, Ed Miliband. Some sections of the party are still urging Mr. Corbyn to harden his stance on the issue to appease the party's traditional working-class base — which, according to this analysis, is never as ethnically diverse



as, in actual fact, it is. Nevertheless, Labour will need to show how removing from millions of people the right to move and work freely across the European Union is a progressive policy.

This is not impossible. Arguably, free movement of labor has made migration harder for those outside the European Union, whereas a Labour Brexit policy could equalize the criteria for all. But this approach might go awry if the European Union makes preferential trade access for Britain contingent on preferential treatment of migrants from within the union. Plus, of course, Labour would still have to sell the policy to a public that wants more immigration controls. So we're back to where we started.

And that's the squeeze Labour is in. It faces a hostile national mood on immigration that has taken hold over decades and has many causes. The country's inability to process its imperial past is compounded by constant migrant-bashing from the media and politicians. In 2008, an economic crash largely brought about by unfettered finance capitalism plunged people into nearly a decade of precarious work with low wages and minimal protections. That created a fertile breeding ground for the anti-immigrant rhetoric

of the far right. And Brexit, stoked by a nationalist campaign that demonized migrants, fostered a climate in which race hate surged after the referendum. The solution for Labour must be to be as bold in its desire to shift the migration narrative as it has been to move the national debate on economic issues. If the party is riding a progressive wave, there is an opportunity to bring more of the public on board — including people worried about immigration.

To an extent, this is already happening. Immigration was the dog that didn't bark in the recent general election. Recent polls of the British public's top concerns show immigration, which had consistently polled first, slipping down the list. One explanation could be that people now expect that Brexit will cause migration to drop; another could be that, with leaving the European Union now polling as people's leading concern, Brexit is partly acting as a proxy for immigration. Yet, other polling suggests that in the Brexit negotiations themselves, people place a higher priority on their health services and the economy than on reducing immigration. The public may finally be receptive to the idea that without migrants, Britain's economy will suffer.

The Good News on Brexit They're Not Telling You



(Agencies) LONDON — On July 24, trade talks began between Britain and America. All right, they weren't formally called trade talks: As long as Britain is still in the European Union, it is supposed to contract out all its commercial decisions to Brussels. Officially, the United States trade representative, Robert Lighthizer, and the British trade secretary, Liam Fox, met for broad discussions about what might happen when Brexit takes effect in 2019. Still, both sides can see the prize. For decades, there have been fitful negotiations

between Washington and Brussels on trade liberalization, but they have always run up against the protectionism of France and some southern European states. Between Britain and America, there are few such problems. Each country is the other's biggest investor: About a million Americans work for British-owned companies, and a similar number of Britons work for American-owned companies. A liberal trade deal, based on mutual recognition of standards and qualifications, will bolster both economies. Prime Minister

Theresa May keeps saying she wants Britain to be a "global leader in free trade." In parallel to the talks with Washington, Britain is starting discussions with China, Japan, India, Australia and others. Global trade deals should supplement rather than replace Britain's economic relationship with the remaining 27 European Union states. The non-member Switzerland, for example, exports nearly five times as much per head as Britain does, mostly to the European Union, while simultaneously having bilateral trade deals around

the world. The idea of a more global Britain emerging from the European Union may strike you as jarring. Much of the commentary over the past year, at least outside Britain, has portrayed Brexit as a nativist and protectionist phenomenon. I keep reading — often in the pages of this newspaper — that the vote was overwhelmingly about immigration. In fact, opinion polls before and after the vote concurred that the main issue for Leavers was democracy. An exit poll of 12,369 people, for example, found that 49 percent of Leavers had been motivated by the desire to bring decision making back to Britain, and only 33 percent by wanting more control of immigration. I've learned in politics that almost no one listens to the other side. Rather than going to the source, people read allies' reports of what the other side is supposed to have said. If a British person tells you that the vote was "all about immigration," I can almost guarantee that you are talking to a Remainer. Those among my friends who voted to stay in the European Union didn't weigh and then dismiss the economic and democratic cases against membership; they never heard them. The same confirmation bias can be seen in their determination to find bad eco-

omic news. Here is a selection of British reports from the past two weeks: Unemployment fell again, as every month since the vote, to 1.49 million (from 1.67 million in June of last year); manufacturing orders are at their highest level since August 1988; retail sales, official figures show, are up 2.9 percent on this time last year.

Exports were up 10 percent year-on-year in May, helped by the long-overdue correction of the exchange rate. Remainers like to point to the fall in sterling, but rarely mention that, before the vote, the International Monetary Fund and the Bank of England agreed that Britain's currency, seen as a haven from the travails of the euro, was artificially expensive. Continental Europeans evidently still regard the British economy as attractive; more of them are working in Britain than ever before. As for the supposed decline of London, a number of European banks, including Deutsche Bank and ING, have grown their operations here since the referendum. Last year, Wells Fargo spent £300 million (about \$392 million) on its new European headquarters — in London. The latest survey from the Robert Walters City Jobs Index, for July, reported that hiring in financial services was up 13 percent year-on-year.

A Chinese Threat to Australian Openness



(Agencies) SYDNEY, Australia — Australians are increasingly concerned about China's growing influence in the country. Chinese money is being funneled to politicians. Beijing-run media outlets buy ads in Australian newspapers to promote the Communist Party view on local and regional issues. Chinese companies are buying Australian farms and natural resources.

The push extends to Australia's universities. Chinese agents are said to monitor Chinese students and report on those who fail to toe the Communist Party line. And in another troubling trend, many of the 150,000 visiting Chinese students are importing a pro-Beijing approach to the classroom that is stifling debate and open-

ness. In 2008-9 I taught international relations to undergraduates at a Chinese university in Beijing, giving me a window into Chinese students' attitudes and behavior. I was struck by the tendency for students to align themselves with the government view.

I was not given any guidance or warnings about the topics I could cover in the classroom. But throughout the year, I was offered hints that my approach to teaching was inappropriate. Those warnings came not only from the administration but from the students themselves.

On several occasions, students suggested I use a different style of teaching. They found critical analysis and picking apart expert opinion uncomfortable. This was particularly true for readings and class discussions that could be construed as critical of China. Most students, for example, would reject anything that suggested China had not always been peaceful. The majority of students would react angrily to any reading material implying

that Japan was not an inherently aggressive and expansionist country. Some students told me in private that they were afraid to express their views in class. They feared that their peers would report on them and that they would receive a black mark on their record. The minority of students who showed interest in open discussion were shut down by classmates who parroted Beijing's talking points. In one session, students gave a presentation that, unsurprisingly, painted the Japanese in a negative light. One of their classmates wondered aloud whether Chinese people still needed to hate Japan. Another suggested that China also publishes textbooks with self-serving interpretations of history, as Japan does. Outrage erupted. One student furiously accused the two of "not loving China enough."

At my midyear review, I was told firmly by my department leadership that my approach of "trying to teach through rumor and hearsay" was unsuitable. When I refused to change my methods, I was told that I would not receive my bonus and that my contract would not be renewed.

A recent ABC-Fairfax report gave the

example of Lupin Lu, head of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association chapter at the University of Canberra. Ms. Lu said she would not hesitate to inform officials at the Chinese Embassy if she heard of Chinese students organizing, for example, protests against Beijing.

Even here in Australia, Chinese students have said they fear speaking up in class because they worry their compatriots will report them to embassy authorities. Some students ask to be placed in tutorial groups without other Chinese citizens so they can speak openly.

Sally Sargeson, an associate professor at the Australian National University, said to Forbes magazine that every Chinese student she asked about this problem "said they know they are being monitored and adjust their speech so they will not get into trouble." When Chinese students self-censor or monitor and report on their peers, it is not necessarily because the Chinese state is bearing down on them. Rather, many Chinese students believe that speaking out against the officially approved view, on any topic, is inappropriate.





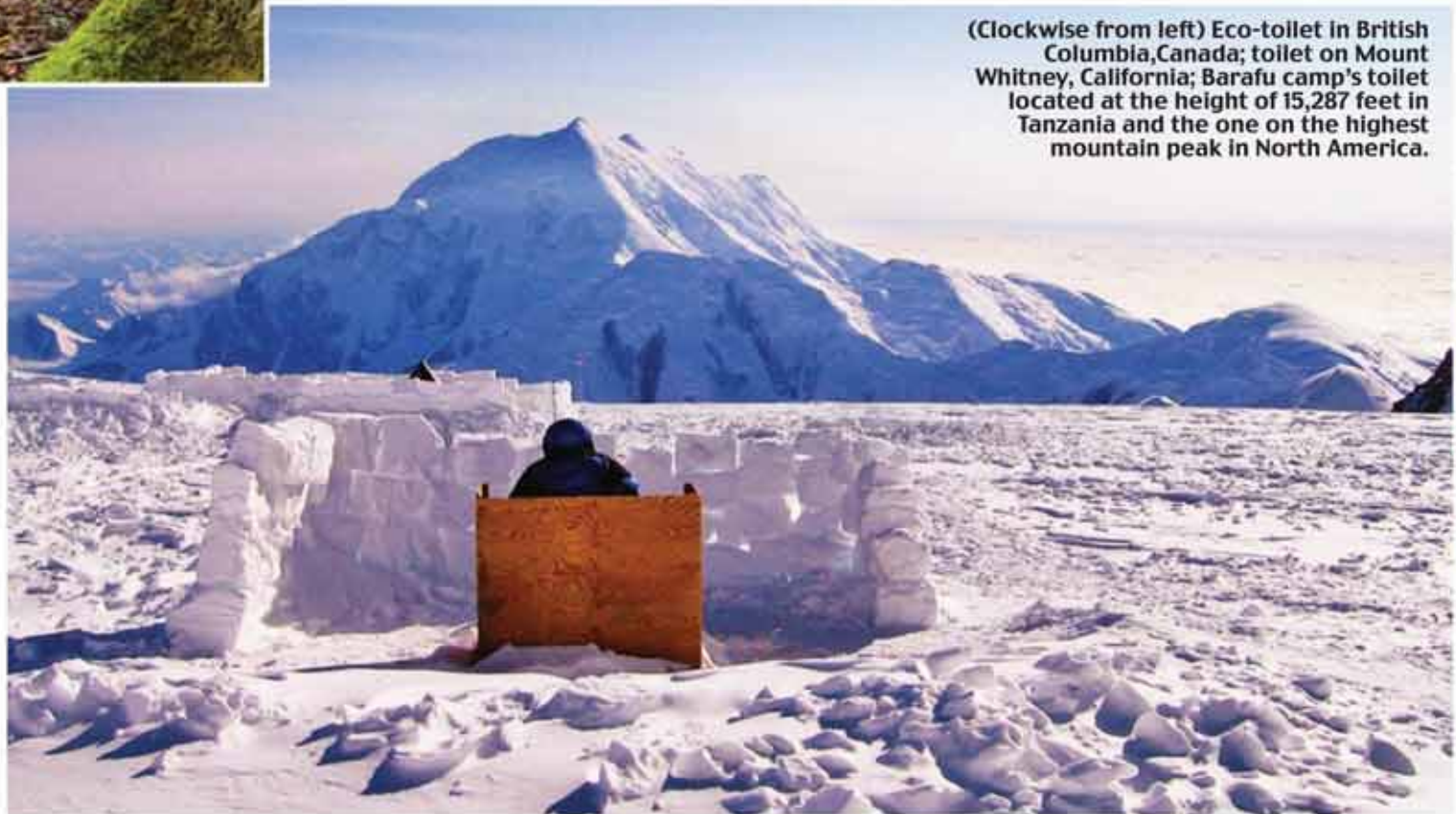
(Clockwise from left) Eco-toilet in British Columbia, Canada; toilet on Mount Whitney, California; Barafu camp's toilet located at the height of 15,287 feet in Tanzania and the one on the highest mountain peak in North America.

By **Mail Today Bureau**

ONE of the biggest pet peeves that any explorer could experience at any non-touristy spot is poop-centric. Sometimes, even decent destinations lack hygiene and sanitation facilities, while some unassuming places offer the most picturesque toilet stories. From futuristic commodes to box-urinals, ixigo presents how people have installed toilets at the most instagrammable places in the world.

BARAFU CAMP, TANZANIA

When you are trekking Africa's tallest mountain, toilet papers become an important investment. Be ready to immerse in the wilderness of various ecosystems, and stop by to relax and ease yourself at Barafu camp's toilet located at the height of 15,287 feet.



TOILET stories

ECO-TOILET, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

Eco-toilets are used in areas that lack water. Squat in the woods on this peaceful throne at Taylor Arm Provincial park on the north side of Sproat lake in British Columbia, Canada.

JONSKNUTEN, KONGSBERG, NORWAY

A Norwegian odyssey means soaking in the beauty of many dramatic landscapes and experiencing the twists of nature's artistry. The quaint town of Kongsberg opens a window to mount Jonsknuten with a toilet for a picturesque poo-fect holiday.

DENALI, ALASKA

Famed as the highest mountain peak in North America with a summit elevation of 20,310 ft. Denali claims a prominent place in the seven summits of the world and it's located in Alaska. Dropping a deuce here must feel like an over achievement.

MOUNT SHUKSHAN, WASHINGTON, USA

Mount Shukshan provide certain amenities at Sulphide Glacier base that'll make you fall in love with this scenic destination.

MOUNT WHITNEY, CALIFORNIA, USA

With an elevation of 14,505 feet, Mount Whitney is the highest sum-

From islands and deserts to summits and skyscrapers, here are some of the most picturesque loos with a view



(Right above) The Segantini Hut in Switzerland; (left) the toilet on top of Mount Shukshan in Washington; (right) the Thiksey Monastery in Ladakh has toilets which provide you with an incredible view.

mit in the contiguous United States. Installing a toilet at such great heights is very thoughtful.

SEGANTINI HUT, MUOTTAS MURAGL, SWITZERLAND

Swiss Alps, where the sunsets are a sight to behold, the Silent Segan-

tini hut is located on the summit of Muottas Muragl.

SAPPORO JR TOWER, JAPAN

This 38-storey tower is a skyscraper and office complex located in Sapporo, Hokkaido. The male

urinals are lined adjacent to the large windows.

THIKSEY MONASTERY, LADAKH, INDIA

Ladakh is every backpacker's dream come true if you are a sucker for mountainous adventures.

TOILET ISLAND, BELIZE

On usual days, one thinks what it would be like to own an island that is no less than any paradise. But an off-beat traveller might have to go an extra mile to discover an island that is famous for a fully functioning toilet.

How Is The BJP Swiftly Picking Up State After State ?

As the BJP swiftly picks up state after state, the Congress response has been fear and panic. Bihar slipped away despite the Congress having, according to Rahul Gandhi, prior knowledge of Nitish Kumar's defection. If they knew, why were they helpless? It is difficult to understand. Goa went similarly and though Congress was better placed there, having won more seats, it waited. And waiting while faced with a party of the talent and energy and hunger of the BJP was a fatal error.

In Gujarat, the exit of Shankarsinh Vaghela has triggered another round of chaos and six Congress MLAs have quit, jeopardising Ahmed Patel's Rajya Sabha election.

The party's response has been to suspect all its remaining MLAs and send them to Karnataka, one of the few states it controls. The strange thing is that Gujarat is a state where the BJP has

performed really poorly, according to Gujaratis themselves. It is the BJP that should be concerned about losing its popularity.

In the last couple of years Gujarat has seen the following major agitations under which lakhs of people have been mobilised. The Patidar agitation for reservations led by Hardik Patel, the counter agitation of OBC Kshatriyas led by Alpesh Thakor, the Dalit revolt after the Una episode led by Jignesh Mewani, the anguish of diamond merchants and textile workers after demonetisation and rallies by lakhs of traders in Surat after the imposition of GST.

Though these issues have been the direct result of BJP policies, all these agitations have happened without Congress leadership. They have thrown up new leaders like the three young men named above, or they have been leaderless. This shows that the Congress has forgotten how to

mobilise people on political issues. This is strange because some of Gandhi's most successful agitations, like the Bardoli satyagraha, were in Gujarat. The Congress party in Gujarat has consistently got over 30% of the vote. However it cannot get that extra three or four percentage points that are the difference between defeat and victory. And that can happen if it is able to capitalise on one of the issues by mobilising people around it. Its inability to mobilise despite all the agitations is the reason the Gujarat BJP remains comfortable.

The BJP is thought to be invincible but no party can be in democratic politics. In Karnataka, the BJP is actually on the defensive. The wily Congress chief minister Siddaramaiah has used Indian style political tactics to keep the Hindutva party busy. He is using an anti Hindi agitation in Bangalore, a subject on which BJP is

vulnerable because of RSS preference of Hindi. The local BJP must stay silent or suffer damage.

The other issue is that of the Lingayat community's internal demand that it be treated as a separate religion outside Hinduism. Siddaramaiah has offered to send a recommendation of separation of the faith to the Centre, if the Lingayats want him to. This seemingly innocent offer has set the cat among the pigeons. The problem of the BJP is that the community strongly backs the BJP (party leader BS Yeddyurappa is a Lingayat) but the BJP-RSS will not give Lingayat separatism legitimacy. Again, it must remain silent or suffer damage. Siddaramaiah has also disarmed the BJP's nationalism by turning the focus to subnationalism issues like a flag for Karnataka. All of this tells us that it is possible for Congress, and other parties, to offer a political challenge. How

can political parties in India mobilise their supporters in a time of trouble? The Congress might be about to get a lesson in that from one of India's sharpest politicians. Bahujan Samaj Party leader Mayawati has resigned from the Rajya Sabha after claiming she was not allowed to speak. Whether her anger is real or not, the action is deliberate. It will mean she will go to the ground and try to build back support she has lost. According to those who follow local politics, the BJP succeeded in breaking up of the unified Dalit identity into jatis and sub castes and going after the Dalit groups Mayawati had ignored. Her party has been getting about 20 to 25% of the vote in UP. In a multiple cornered fight so long as all parties were in that zone she had a reasonable chance of victory. But Amit Shah's superb ability to build caste alliances has given the BJP overwhelming numbers that neither the Samajwadi Party (which is stuck at 29% of the vote) nor the BSP can match. The only way to change that is to mobilise people. Mayawati knows that. The Congress, after this moment of panic has passed, should take a deep breath and think about how to do it.

Dilip Chauhan Becomes First Asian American to Be Appointed as Deputy Comptroller in Nassau County, NY.



(By Our Staff Reporter) Mineola, NY - Nassau County Comptroller George Maragos announced the promotion of Dilip Chauhan to the position of Deputy Comptroller for Minority Affairs. Our minority communities are an integral part of the fabric of our County. These vibrant minority communities have grown in population accounting for nearly 40 percent of our residents, but remain under represented in government and often experience difficulty navigating the bureaucracy to get the services that they need and deserve. The Comptroller's Office has been a driving force in advocating for increased business opportunities for

Minority and Women Owned Enterprises (MWBEs), and Veterans to meet the County's aspirational goals. The County, however, still lags behind its goals and in complying with state requirements. Mr. Chauhan has been a leader in this effort in the Comptroller's Office and his promotion recognizes the importance of helping the County increase its outreach to the minority communities.

"Mr. Dilip Chauhan has done an outstanding job for the County in advancing the Comptroller's mission by assisting members of the minority communities to

better navigate local government, helping resolve governmental issues faced by minority constituents and ensuring MWBEs gain full access to business opportunities," said Comptroller George Maragos. "I have the utmost confidence that Dilip will be a strong advocate for our minority communities in ensuring that Nassau County Government serves all resident equally." Mr. Chauhan took oath with "Vachanamrut" the Hindi scripture, and said, "it's an honor and a privilege to be appointed the position of Deputy Comptroller. I am

excited to continue my work, supporting the Comptroller's efforts to provide equal opportunity for MWBEs to do business with Nassau County. It's my great honor to work alongside Mr. Maragos who in one of the most honest and decent man in public service. I look forward to continue working with Mr. Maragos as I take up the responsibility as a Deputy Comptroller."

Mr. Chauhan has been active in numerous community and business organizations including: "Advisor" to the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), a "Board member" for Service Now for Adult Persons (SNAP) - a social service agency dedicated to improving and enhancing the quality of life for older adults, a "Volunteer" for the United Nations Millennium World Peace Summit, and as an "Advisor" for South Asian Affairs, New York State Assembly. Mr. Chauhan has been recognized with numerous awards for his community service in last one decade. Dilip Chauhan is married with two children and holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering.

Martins and Labriola Hold First Town Hall in Massapequa

(Insider Bureau) Massapequa, NY - Nassau County Executive candidate Jack Martins and Nassau County Comptroller candidate held their first town hall meeting on Thursday, July 20th at the American Legion in Massapequa. The two candidates spoke with Massapequa residents about their plans to fight corruption, establish transparency and overall improve the quality of life for the taxpayers of Nassau County. "I want to thank everyone who attended our first town hall, and Jack Martins for co-hosting with me, here in my hometown of Massapequa," said Steve Labriola. "It was a pleasure speaking with the residents about the various issues they're facing as taxpayers of this great county, and what Jack and I plan to do in office to alleviate their concerns. With my 3-point plan to create accountability, strengthen transparency and root out corruption, nobody will rip off the taxpayers on my watch! I look forward to continuing to speak with residents on our town hall tour across the county."



Without Priebus, Trump Is a Man Without a Party

the opposite sex as “locker room talk.” Priebus occupied a window seat, a pair of staffers to his left. The chair behind him sat empty; my instinct was to grab it and start firing questions through the slit at his left shoulder. But after studying Priebus—the slouched posture, the uncharacteristically rumpled suit, the groaning bags under his eyes—I decided it might backfire. Whether it was pity or strategy, or a bit of both, I settled in two rows back, deciding it would be better to talk upon landing in Washington. It was an eventful flight: Ryan, while we were at 30,000 feet, had told House Republicans on a conference call that he wouldn’t be defending

the president anymore and urged them to do whatever was necessary to survive in their districts. Meanwhile, there were reports Priebus would hold his own call with RNC members to discuss ousting Trump. Priebus was understandably not keen to discuss any of these developments. But he seemed to appreciate my earlier gesture. When I greeted him, just beyond the entrance to the jet bridge, his staffers tried to shut down any interview. Priebus told them to back off. “It’s OK,” he said, offering the sort of forced half-smile you see at hospital visitations. “Go ahead. Shoot.” We walked out of the terminal and past the baggage claim, covering all of it: the tape, the debate, Ryan, the RNC and what (if anything) it could do at this point. Priebus asked twice to speak off the record, which I allowed. But his most telling comment—in retrospect—came at the end of our conversation, after he explained that the RNC had no mechanism to remove Trump as its nominee.

“Look,” he said, stepping into the sunlight outside Reagan National Airport, his staffers loading up an idling black Chevrolet Suburban. “We don’t get to pick the nominee. And we don’t get to just walk away from him, either.”

By “we,” the chairman was referring to the RNC and the broader party leadership. But it seems obvious now—in studying his approach to Trump throughout the primary season, the general election and during his tumultuous 27-week run as chief of staff, the shortest in history—that Priebus was also talking about himself. As head of the party, Priebus never foresaw the real estate mogul running, much less becoming its standard-bearer. He cracked jokes about Trump early on and

flashed outrage at some of his incendiary rhetoric. But as Trump gained momentum and won the nomination and, later, the presidency—and as the RNC chairman emerged as the bridge between him and the Republican Party—Priebus could never bring himself to abandon Trump.

It’s not without irony that some will hold him responsible for Trumpism—Priebus should have kicked Trump out of the GOP debates, some critics suggest—seeing how the RNC chairman would have personally loved to see Scott Walker or Marco Rubio as the party’s nominee. Trump was the last choice of the party establishment, which Priebus embodied. It became clear, however, that Republican voters had other ideas—and Priebus made it his mission to ensure a level playing field. He ignored calls to remove Trump from debates

after he threatened to run as an independent, and bent over backward to make the reality TV star feel welcome in the GOP. Priebus knew he would be accused of sabotaging the party, but he was unwavering in the belief that it was his job to be a facilitator and an ambassador, not a kingmaker.

His friends had mixed feelings about the chief of staff position, and some cautioned Priebus against taking it. After all, he had inherited a penniless, disorganized, technologically bankrupt Republican Party in 2011 and transformed it by 2016 into a financial behemoth with adequate field and data operations. On his watch, the GOP had kept the House, taken back the Senate and now won the presidency; why not ride into the sunset, spend time with his family and cash in on those triumphs?

The fateful answer: Because Priebus couldn’t just walk away. He felt a sense of loyalty to Trump, and more acutely, an enduring responsibility to the party and the country. Plus, the second-most prestigious office in the West Wing was beckoning. Priebus jumped at the job.

It was a mismatch from the start. As RNC chairman, Priebus had two primary responsibilities: dialing for dollars (typically three to five hours each day) and sorting out disputes among his 168 members to keep everyone happy. Key administrative functions were mostly handled by other RNC staff, including Priebus’ own chief of staff; some associates feared that Priebus’ skill set simply would not translate to the new job. Making success all the less likely was the Wisconsinite’s disposition: laid back, naturally soft-spoken and nonconfrontational, a classic

people pleaser. Priebus kept a mini-fridge stocked with Miller Lite in his RNC office and would later hold occasional Friday happy hours in his West Wing suite, inviting officials from across the building to grab a can of beer or a Solo cup of wine and commiserate about the week that had been. This calm, consensus-minded approach made Priebus a beloved party chairman, and Republicans held out hope that it would make him a good chief of staff. But it didn’t. Trump trampled Priebus from Day One, sending out press secretary Sean Spicer, a longtime Priebus ally, to deliver a demonstrably false rant about the inaugural crowd size. Trump resented the idea that his chief of staff was there to tame him, and resented even more the notion that Priebus was the conduit to a Republican Party he had conquered.

Nasa hiring new ‘planetary protection officer’ to defend Earth from alien matter

The job post reads: “Planetary protection is concerned with the avoidance of organic-constituent and biological contamination in human and robotic space exploration. Nasa maintains policies for planetary protection, applicable to all space flight missions that may intentionally or unintentionally carry Earth organisms and organic constituents to the planets or other solar system bodies, and any mission employing spacecraft, which are intended to return to Earth and its biosphere with samples from extraterrestrial targets of exploration.” The three-year position — with a chance to extend it to five years — was created after the US signed the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, vowing to “pursue studies of outer space ... and conduct exploration of them so as to avoid their harmful contamination and also adverse changes in the environment of the Earth resulting from the introduction of extraterrestrial matter”.

There is only one other full-time role like

it in the world at the European Space Agency, says Catharine Conley, Nasa’s only planetary protection officer since 2014 (according to Business Insider). She is relocating to the agency’s Office of Safety and Mission Assurance.

Under the international 1967 treaty, she explained that any space mission must have less than a one in 10,000 chance of contaminating an alien world, including making sure a robot or probe that is travelling past or photographing a planet does not cause harm. “It’s a moderate level,” Ms Conley said. “It’s not extremely careful, but it’s not extremely lax.”

Similarly, the new employee would work to protect Earth from potential contamination by planets like Mars, which scientists say may have once been covered in water and supported life — and there may be chance of life there now.

The new hire will likely be part of the upcoming Nasa expedition to Europa, a

moon of Jupiter. The \$2.7bn (just over £2bn) Europa Clipper mission, approved by Congress, plans to map the moon’s surface and analyse whether it could be habitable. The probe could crash land, however, which is a circumstance the planetary protection officer should prepare for. Candidates will be required to travel frequently — but like any job, there will be a significant amount of emails, proposals and other reading. Candidates must have at least one year’s experience as a top-level civilian government employee, and an advanced degree in physical science, engineering or mathematics. They must also have “advanced knowledge” of planetary protection. The position also requires “demonstrated skills in diplomacy that resulted in win-win solutions during extremely difficult and complex multilateral discussions”. The new hire will also receive “secret” security clearance. Only US citizens and US nationals can apply.

CPEC may be hit by political changes in Pakistan, says Chinese expert

He also expressed concern that some part of the \$50 billion CPEC project might come under investigation and face uncertainties if the ruling party loses the next election in 2018. “The CPEC project would face some uncertainties if the next election in 2018 leads to a ruling party change,” he said.

This view flies in the face of a recent assertion by the Chinese foreign ministry, which said that the unseating of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif would not affect the project. “We believe the China Pakistan cooperative partnership will not be affected by the change in the situation inside Pakistan,” foreign ministry spokesperson Lu Kang said on July 29.

Doubts have now surfaced in Beijing even though the new interim prime minister

of Pakistan Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has been handpicked by Sharif to keep the seat warm for a few weeks until his brother, Shahid Abbasi, completes the formalities to be elected as prime minister.

Jiang also expressed concern that some aspects of CPEC may be investigated if the next general elections in 2018 throw up an opposition party in power in Pakistan. In addition, as opposition parties are incredulous about PML-N’s behind-the-scene manipulation in project negotiations, the possibility of reviewing some projects’ negotiation processes and conditions cannot be ruled out if an opposition party takes power.

The article noted that Shahbaz Sharif, who is expected to be the next prime minister of Pakistan, has “built more

friendly ties with the Pakistan military”. This is a significant statement coming from a Chinese expert because the military is known to be watching over CPEC’s implementation and suppressing any sign of opposition to it.

Nawaz Sharif supported the east route for the economic corridor covering the provinces of Punjab and Sind but opposition parties favor the west route that passes through less-developed provinces like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, he pointed out. “But political differences on the CPEC route will not hinder bilateral relations as no political parties in Pakistan use anti-China sentiment as political stunt and all of them are working to advance the sustainable development of China-Pakistan ties,” Jiang noted.

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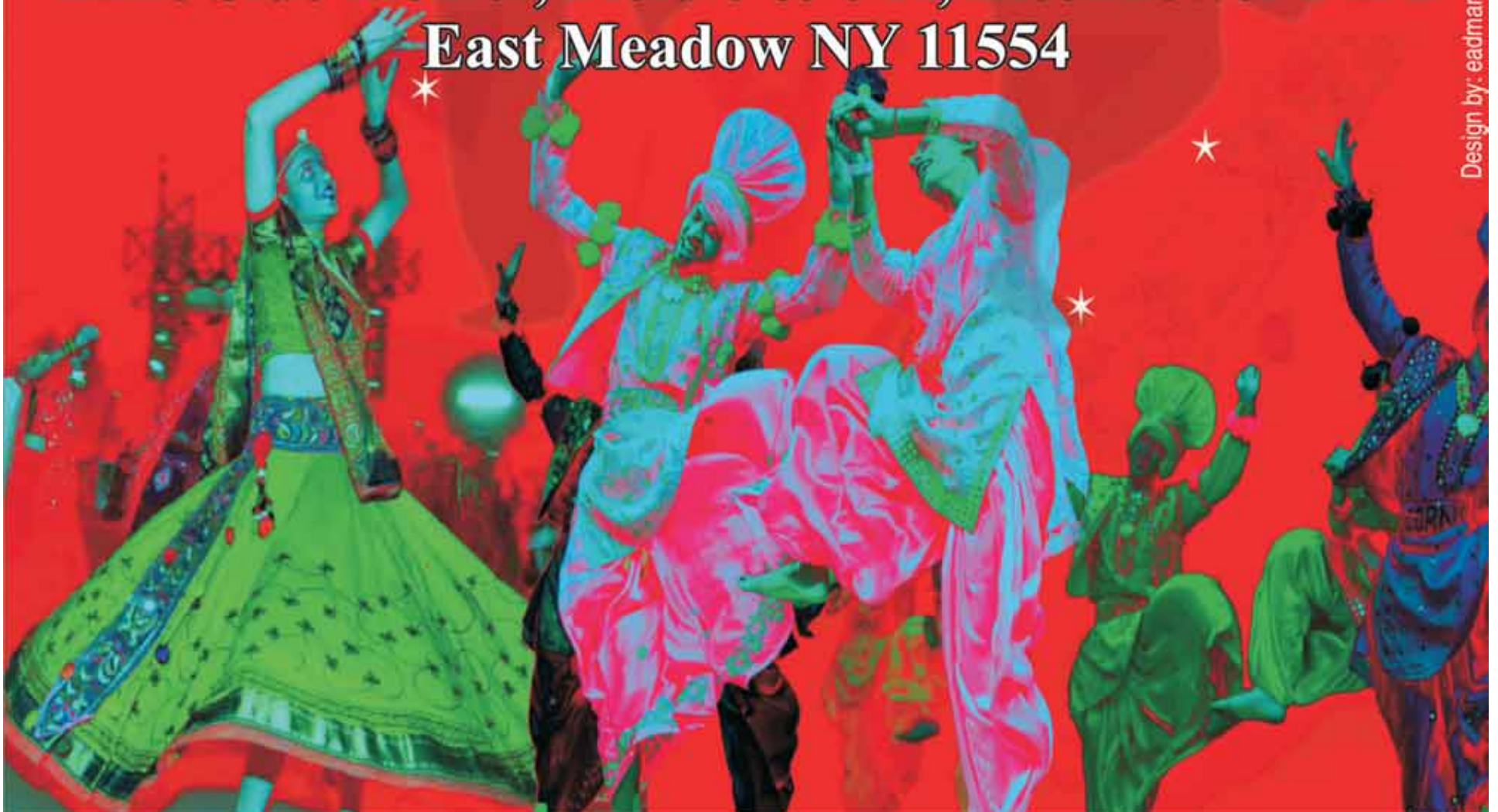
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Why heels are good for souls, not soles



IF YOU wear high heels at work, prepare for some good news — and some bad. British researchers say evidence suggests both women and men find those in heels more appealing.

Almost two-thirds of businesswomen think high heels make them more attractive — a boost to self-image, confidence and general well-being.

Men are almost twice as likely to smile at a woman in heels than one in flats, and are significantly more likely to offer her help.

But the same academics also point out that the shoes cause back pain, broken ankles and sprains, and more than double the risk of developing bunions.

They add that women who wear heels can suffer injuries from their toes up to their spine, and are more likely to fall. The scientists even go so far as to say that tougher laws are needed to stop women being forced to wear high heels at work against their will.

The findings follow high-profile complaints from women told to wear heels as part of their job.

An air hostess said she was made to feel like a 'prostitute' by British Airways because

she had to wear high heels in airports. BA however does not make staff wear them while working on the plane.

And last year receptionist Nicola Thorp was sent home from a London office after arriving in flat shoes and being told she had to have a 2in-4in heel. She set up a petition, which attracted more than 1,52,400 signatures, asking for a law banning firms from demanding that women wear heels.

A team at Aberdeen University reviewed 20 publications on high heels to find the high risk of injury and muscu-

loskeletal pain. The results are published in the journal *BMC Public Health*. Lead author Dr Max Barnish said: "There is pressure on women to wear heels, and celebrity influence with people such as Victoria Beckham and Kate Middleton making it fashionable to do so, whether they intend to or not. There is often not an absolute rule to wear heels, but in some workplaces there can be an unspoken expectation which means that everyone does it."

Almost two-thirds of businesswomen think high heels make them more attractive — a boost to self-image

Dr Barnish added, "Evidence shows women are suffering ankle fractures and sprains, back pain and bunions. But they are judged to be attractive, which creates a dilemma. We feel the government should follow the lead of other authorities which have introduced specific laws to tackle this practice rather than relying on existing legislation."

A government spokesman said: "No employer should discriminate against workers on grounds of gender — it is unacceptable and is against the law. Dress codes must include equivalent requirements for both men and women. To make the law clearer to employers and employees, the Government will produce new guidance on workplace dress codes."

CULTURE VULTURES ARE MORE GENEROUS

IF YOU enjoy going to the theatre or art galleries you're more likely to be kind and generous, scientists claim.

A study of 30,500 adults has uncovered a clear link between enjoying culture and subsequently donating to charity. Researchers believe that being into the arts improves our sense of wellbeing making us more inclined to want to help others. And they claim the arts is a stronger predictor of a



Being interested in the arts makes one more inclined to help others.

person's generosity than either their wealth, age or personality. The study was carried out by Kent University and published in the journal *Social Psychological and Personality Science*. Professor Dominic Abrams, from the University of Kent's School of Psychology, said that 'regardless of people's age, education, employment and savings, their engagement with the arts remained a stronger predictor of their prosociality than did any other variables.'

REVEALED: FUNNIEST WORDS THAT MAKE US GIGGLE

NO MATTER how serious you may think you are, there are certain words that instantly bring a smile to your face.

Scientists have analysed a selection of English words, and revealed the 12 that we just can't help laughing at — including booty, booby, nitwit and hooter.

The researchers hope their findings will allow future studies to better understand the foundations of humour.

Psychologists from the University of Warwick analysed 5,000 randomly selected words, and asked 800 participants to rate them on how humorous they found each word.

Dr Tomas Engelthaler, who led the study, said: "The research initially came about as a result of our curiosity. We were wondering if certain words are perceived as funnier, even when read on their own. It turns out that indeed is the case."

The results showed that the words that were rated as the funniest were booty, tit, booby, hooter and nitwit.

These were closely followed by twit, waddle, tinkle, bebop, egghead, ass and twerp. As part of the study, the participants also shared details on their age, gender and education.

And notably, the researchers found that men and women differed in the words they found the funniest.

Men found sexual words — such as orgy and bondage — the funniest, as well as birthmark, brand, chauffeur, doze, buz-



zard, czar, weld, prod, corn and raccoon. In contrast, women said the words they found the most humorous included giggle, beast, circus, grand, juju, humbug, slicker, sweat, ennui, holder, momma and sod. Age also appeared to affect which words participants found the funniest. Younger people (aged 32 and below) thought words like goatee, joint and gangster were funniest.

But older people (aged between 33 and 78) laughed more at squint, jingle, burlesque and pong. The study does not indicate why we find certain words funnier than others. Dr Engelthaler added: "Humour is an everyday aspect of our lives and we hope this publicly available dataset allows future researchers to better understand its foundations."

The words that were rated as the funniest were booty, tit, booby, hooter and nitwit.

Amazon Suspends Blu Smartphones' Sale After New Privacy Threat Reports



(Agencies) After KryptoWire's privacy revelations at the Black Hat conference in Las Vegas last week, Amazon has decided to stop selling Blu smartphones from its site. The e-commerce company cites "security and privacy of our customers is of the utmost importance", and has announced that it won't sell Blu phones till the problem is resolved. The problem first came to light last year in November, when Shanghai Adups Technology, a firm based in China, was caught

for having added a backdoor to the firmware of cheap smartphones like the Blu R1 HD sold in the US. At the time, the Shanghai-based firm said it had mistakenly used code for China-based software in these firmware, and remedial measures were soon made. However, researchers at KryptoWire last week once again revealed that Adups' software is still sending data from the Blu Grand M smartphone to the company's server in China. Because of this revelation, CNET now reports that Amazon has decided to suspend the Miami-based Android company

from selling Blu phones on its site. "Because security and privacy of our customers is of the utmost importance, all Blu phone models have been made unavailable for purchase on Amazon.com until the issue is resolved," Amazon said to the publication in a statement. Blu, on the other hand, denies any wrongdoing, and the company's spokeswoman said that it "has several policies in place which take customer privacy and security seriously." Furthermore, she asserted that there had been no breaches either. You can read Blu's full statement below.

Information that was collected and transmitted from the back door first found in November, included the full-body of text messages, contact lists, call history with full telephone numbers, unique device identifiers including the International Mobile Subscriber Identity (IMSI) and the International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) from a user's phone. Blu smartphones have been a part of the Prime exclusive program, making it an imperative step for Amazon to intervene and take the necessary steps to ensure its consumers don't buy potentially unsafe devices.

Despite Snapdeal Setback, SoftBank May Invest \$2 Billion In Flipkart: Report

That deal would have given SoftBank, as Snapdeal's largest shareholder, a significant stake in Flipkart - but it was scuppered on Monday, in the face of opposition from Snapdeal's founders, Kunal Bahl and Rohit Bansal.



(Agencies) SoftBank Group is still in talks to invest in Flipkart - despite the collapse of discussions to fold a smaller rival into India's largest e-commerce site - but it would do so through its Vision Fund, according to sources familiar with the matter. SoftBank, already invested in Indian online grocer Grofers and cab hailing firm Ola, tried for months to engineer a share swap transaction between

Snapdeal and Flipkart, India's two main homegrown e-commerce companies. That deal would have given SoftBank, as Snapdeal's largest shareholder, a significant stake in Flipkart - but it was scuppered on Monday, in the face of opposition from Snapdeal's founders, Kunal Bahl and Rohit Bansal. Three sources, who declined to be identified as the

discussions were private, said SoftBank founder Masayoshi Son was still eager to invest in Flipkart through his Vision Fund, in which Saudi Arabia is also a major stakeholder. The Vision Fund's planned investment is not dependent on a deal between Snapdeal and Flipkart, one of the sources said. Flipkart, the most significant Indian challenger to US retail giant Amazon's ambitions in the country, declined to comment on the matter. A spokeswoman for SoftBank said the Vision Fund "follows an independent process and judges every investment on its own merit". Snapdeal also declined to comment. Bloomberg reported earlier on Tuesday that the fund could invest up to \$2 billion in Flipkart. The Vision Fund, created by the tech-to-solar conglomerate, has raised more than \$93 billion from investors including Saudi Arabia's main sovereign wealth fund and Apple.

Toyota, Mazda to Build \$1.6 Billion Plant in U.S. in Joint Venture

(Agencies) Toyota Motor Corp. TM -1.28% and Mazda Motor Corp. 7261 4.93% are expected to announce Friday plans to build a \$1.6 billion assembly plant in the U.S. that would create 4,000 jobs and be up and running by 2021, according to a person briefed on the plans. The new factory's location hasn't been decided. Once built, it would produce 300,000 vehicles a year with half being the Toyota Corolla and the rest an unspecified Mazda model, the person said. The two Japanese car makers also will form a joint venture to co-develop electric vehicles, safety features and connected-car technologies, the person said. Mazda had previously operated with Ford Motor Co. in a joint venture in the U.S. Toyota has worked with Subaru and others.

The Nikkei first reported the factory. The announcement could hand a victory to President Donald Trump, who took aim at Toyota earlier this year for its plans to build a \$1 billion assembly plant in Mexico, rather than in the U.S. Toyota, in a statement, said the auto maker's board is considering the joint-venture proposal and pointed to an agreement in May 2015 between Toyota and Mazda to "explore various areas of collaboration." Mazda's board will also review the proposal at a meeting Friday in Japan, the company said in a statement. "We cannot comment further." The new plant is being planned as U.S. auto sales plateau and demand for sedans, such as the Corolla, are slipping amid low gasoline prices. Auto makers have been trying to balance production capacity through a combination of production slowdowns and higher incentives.

SoftBank's investments will elbow out other funds from the market

SoftBank has maneuvered itself into a position of strength - a process that has no doubt been aided by the money at its disposal.

(Agencies) The New York Times reported on July 25 that SoftBank Group Corp. is considering a "multi-billion dollar investment" in ride-hailing service Uber Technologies Inc. The report said talks between the two companies were still at a preliminary stage.

SoftBank already has a stake in several Uber rivals, including Ola (ANI Technologies Pvt. Ltd) Ola in India

and Grab (GrabTaxi Holdings Pte. Ltd) in Singapore. The Indian company already has an investment from China's Didi Chuxing, which also has a stake in Uber (made after Uber exited China after selling its Chinese operations to Didi). SoftBank itself has a huge investment (\$5 billion) in Didi. What this means is that SoftBank wins, no matter who does in the market.

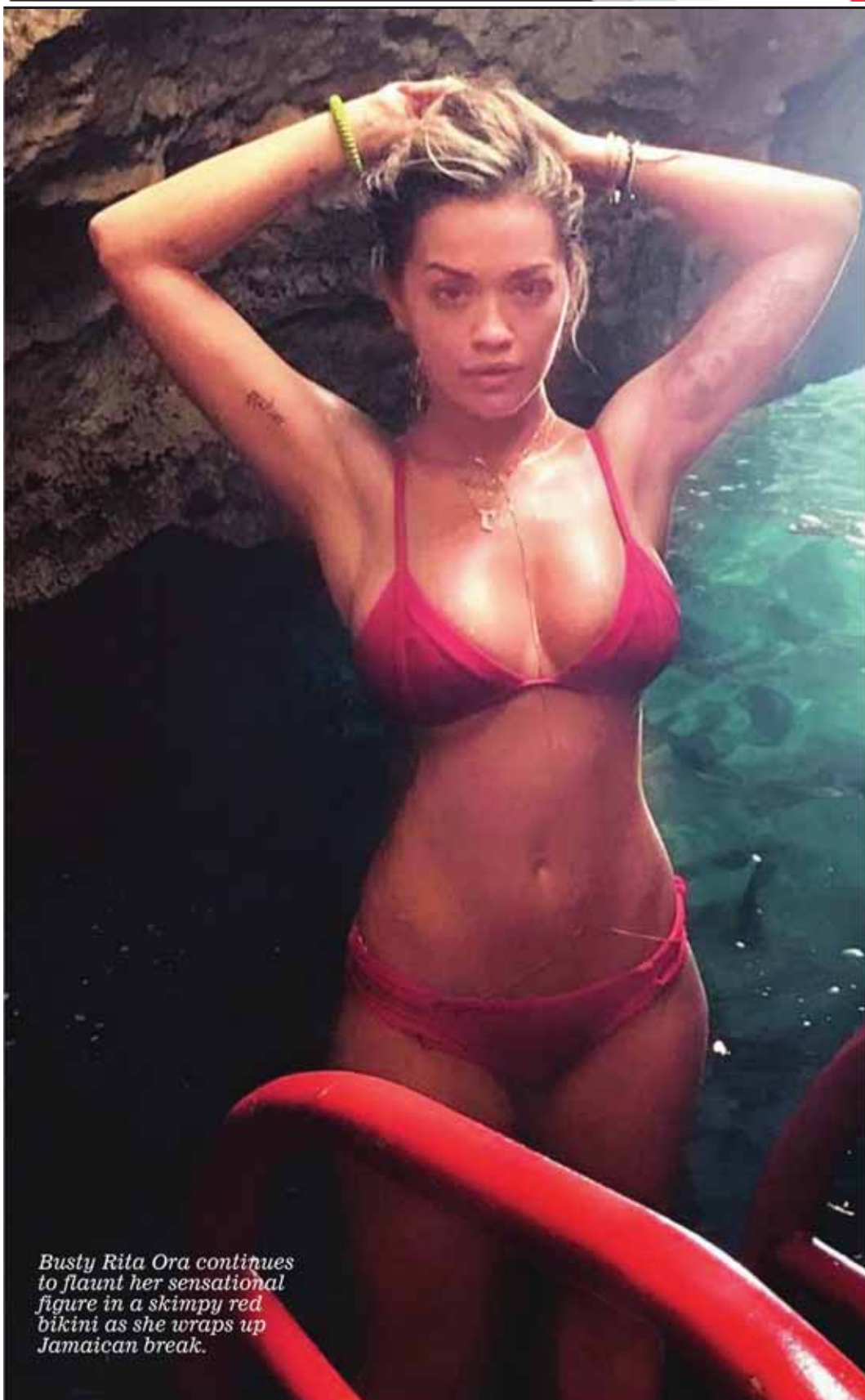
That's probably one of the advantages of having a \$100 billion (give or take a few billion) fund, which is what SoftBank has. Called the SoftBank Vision Fund, this is the largest technology fund ever raised. The size of that fund is probably why the storied investor can make a play for a stake in the world's most valuable start-up (Uber) -- just to hedge its bets. In India, Ola

and the local arm of Uber are fighting it out for market dominance. Independent analysts say the two companies are neck-and-neck; Ola says it is significantly ahead; Uber says it is significantly ahead. There's no debate about one of SoftBank's other investments in India, though. Snapdeal (Jasper Infotech Pvt Ltd), was once mentioned in the same

breath as Flipkart. Now, it is a distant third after Flipkart and Amazon.com Inc's Indian unit and in all sorts of trouble. Still, SoftBank is just a step away from parlaying its investment in Snapdeal into a stake in Flipkart (by getting the latter to buy the former). What's in it for Flipkart? A significant investment by SoftBank from its new fund. In this case, SoftBank is simply salvag-

ing an older investment that hasn't worked out (which, again, is fairly easy to do for a company that has just raised a \$100 billion fund). SoftBank is also a significant investor in Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, which, while it may be taking forever to finalise its India strategy, is seen by some as the only company capable of standing up to Amazon in India.

RED ALERT!



Busty Rita Ora continues to flaunt her sensational figure in a skimpy red bikini as she wraps up Jamaican break.

SHE HAS left fans a little hot under the collar with her latest Instagram uploads. And as she wrapped up her holiday in Jamaica recently, Rita Ora made sure to treat her social media followers to another glimpse of her sensational bikini-clad frame.

The singer, 26, flaunted her ample assets in the daringly low-cut design as she struck a sultry pose in front of the sea.

Rita looked just incredible in her scanty swimwear that paired together a pillar box red bikini top that struggled to contain her buxom bust, with matching bikini bottoms that sat high on her hips.

Rita Ora admitted to be suffering from sunburn

They boasted double straps that featured a racy cut-out in between and highlighted her slender pins, along with her peachy posterior.

The *Your Song* hit-maker ensured her incredibly toned stomach was left firmly on view in her two-piece and couldn't resist popping out her hip as she posed with her hand on her derriere.

Shooting a smouldering look towards the camera lens, Rita appeared in the image sporting subtle make-up to accentuate her natural beauty and left her blonde tresses in tousled beachy waves that were swept over to one side.

Rita also followed it up with yet another titillating bikini picture from a previous trip to caves out at sea.

Taking a dip inside the cool cove, Rita posed on the ladder leading down into the water while holding her tresses up

to her head. Again, she put on an eye-popping display — thanks to her revealing ensemble and simply added a bikini emoji alongside it.

Fans were quick to comment on the offering, with many showering Rita with compliments about her desirable frame. They penned comments like "Seriously body envy", "I love (your) figure", "The most beautiful woman in the world", "DAMN.. THIS PIC IS AWESOME", "I think I am in love", "@ritaora you little rocket." Since touching down in Jamaica, Rita has been making the most of her break from her busy schedule in the sun. She revealed that she might have overdone it slightly while indulging in a number of bronzing sessions in the blazing heat, as she shared a selfie of herself with sunburn.

Daily Mail



The 26-year-old singer garnered several compliments from awestruck fans.

Before fame hit! Blonde-haired Sofia Vergara looks unrecognisable in topless beach shoot from 1997 when she was still a struggling model

(Agencies) Sofia Vergara is an internationally known TV star thanks to her role on the smash-hit series *Modern Family*. But 20 years ago the Colombian siren was trying hard to make a name for herself. *DailyMail.com* has obtained photos of the beauty when she posed topless on a beach. The pinup, who is now married to Joe Manganiello, was very blonde and not at all shy about showing off her body.

It comes in the same week that the actress, now 45 with wavy raven locks, posed completely nude on the cover of the British version of *Women's Health*. The shoot took place in Boca Chita Key on the island of Islandia in Florida, which is where Jennifer Lopez recently shot her *Ni Tu Ni Yo* music video.

Vergara was very blonde with frosty

makeup and a deep tan.

She wore green bikini undies with a Hawaiian floral print and no top as she held a hat over her chest and also crawled on the sand. In 1997 Sofia was working as a model in the US.

She had already been divorced from her high school love Joe Gonzalez, and she had son Manolo who was only aged five at the time of the shoot.

The former beauty pageant contestant didn't make it as an actress until she was cast in *Big Trouble* in 2002.

She went on to star in *Chasing Papi*, *Soul Plane*, *Lords Of Dogtown* and *Grilled*.

A co-starring role with Natalie Zea on TV's *Dirty Sexy Money* gave her more exposure and led to her being cast in *Modern Family* in 2009. The show is still on the air. Also this week the looker

posed nude for *Women's Health* magazine. In the issue she said: 'I don't know if I'm strong. I have bad knees and very thin bones; I can barely do a pushup.'

'I wish I could be a little more athletic, but when you're born with these gigantic boobs... I've had them since I was 13, and then they got bigger when I was pregnant and had the baby.'

'It's not about having muscle or cut abs. I don't have abs because I'm not "I need to be like a fit model with a perfect body." That would take too much effort!'

Sofia also spoke about accepting her body as it is and learning to love the changes she experiences as she gets older. She said: 'I'm 45. Even if you want to, at this time in your life, you can't be perfect. It's not that you hate it, or that you're upset about it, but it is our reality.'



Thigh's the limit!

Priyanka Chopra stuns in nude silk gown on the NYC set of Isn't It Romantic

(Agencies) Priyanka Chopra flashed a curious-looking black garter belt beneath her gown on the Manhattan set of Isn't It Romantic on Tuesday. The Indian 35-year-old - who plays yoga ambassador Isabella - stunned in a plunging nude dress and stilettos selected by costume designer Leah Katznelson.

Director Todd Strauss-Schulson is at the helm of the 2019 romantic

comedy satire also starring Rebel Wilson, Liam Hemsworth, and Adam Devine. That same day, the Quantico actress modeled for the Hear the World Foundation's latest campaign shot by Grammy winner-turned-photographer Bryan Adams. The Canadian 57-year-old - whose hits include Heaven, Summer of '69, and (Everything I Do) I Do It for You - had reportedly also shot Priyanka for her

GUESS campaign back in 2013. Speaking of hearing loss, Chopra gave a warm Twitter welcome on Monday to Oscar winner Marlee Matlin, who joined the cast of her ABC series' third season premiering in January. According to TV Line, the hearing-impaired 51-year-old will take on the role of 'ex-FBI agent Jocelyn Turner, who became deaf after being too close to a bomb blast.'



Sheer madness!

Busty Kim Kardashian flashes her assets in flimsy black bodysuit tucked into camouflage shorts for NYC outing

(Agencies) She's never been shy to flaunt her ample curves. And Kim Kardashian was on trend as she turned heads in a mesh black bodysuit that left little to the imagination. The 36-year-old reality star showcased her bountiful bosom in a black mesh bodysuit as she stepped out in NYC on Tuesday. The classic beauty looked ravishing in the tight bodysuit that was tucked into chic camouflage shorts. Her nipples made an appearance as the see-through fabric did little to cover her body completely. Kim's lovely décolletage was on full display as the plunging body suit had thin straps over the shoulders. Daring to impress, the reality star let her gorgeous gams take center stage with the shorts cut just above the knee. The green,

brown, and black shorts were frayed at the bottom and cinched at her lithe waist. While she stomped through the streets of the Big Apple, her perfect skin tone shined from head to toe. Throwing caution to the wind, the wife of rapper Kanye West went virtually makeup free as she lent a touch of berry to her full lips. Kim kept her trademark raven tresses long and loose with a part down the middle as they cascaded over her back. She rocked bedazzled open-toed high heels and had nary an accessory as she sported retro shades. Her younger sister Kendall Jenner followed behind in a ruffled floral print dress. Her décolletage was on full display as well as the flower dress was virtually strapless and plunged low to her cleavage.

Bollywood's next big thing Tiger Shroff on fighting like Bruce Lee and dancing like Michael Jackson

(Agencies) Tiger Shroff looks like he is all set for a morning jog, rather than an interview. He sits in sports vest and track pants, playfully flexing his biceps. Outside the hotel room, the buzz is palpable. Bouncers stand in attention, lest the odd selfie-addict sneaks through. At 27, Tiger is among Bollywood's hottest properties, being pitched as a future superstar. Many have spotted Hrithik Roshan's mojo in his dancing, others feel he could develop the mass following of Salman Khan one day. Tiger coincidentally names these two actors as his idols. Stardom, he tells you, is the one thing that drives him. 'I want to be a star, I live to be a star,' he declares. 'I love the larger-than-life madness that comes with it. I want the hysteria all around me, like it is with Salman sir and Hrithik.' If the love of the masses matters to him, he boosts it with profound reason. 'Being popular is important. It gives you the power to influence minds. If I can gain that power, I will use it to do something I am truly passionate about. I will work for the environment,' declares the young actor. He

then chants his favourite line with teenybopper zest: 'As the saying goes in the world of my favourite superhero, 'with great power comes great responsibility.' (The reference is to Spider-Man.) Tiger's current occupation takes him closer to his human heroes. In his new film Munna Michael, he gets to fight like Bruce Lee and dance like Michael Jackson, phenomena he lists as his 'biggest idols'. Munna Michael casts him as Munna, a tapori with a gift of dancing like Michael Jackson. The film serves standard Tiger Shroff masala, mixing high-voltage action with spectacular dancing. 'This is the first time I have done a film that is truly about dance. That makes it special. It let me pay tribute to MJ. That makes it even more special,' says Tiger. He admits the MJ influence on the dancing style as well as the script made the challenge a difficult one. 'I was trying to bring alive the essence of one of my idols, so the pressure this time was far more than ever,' he points out.





DEMI TAKES THE PLUNGE

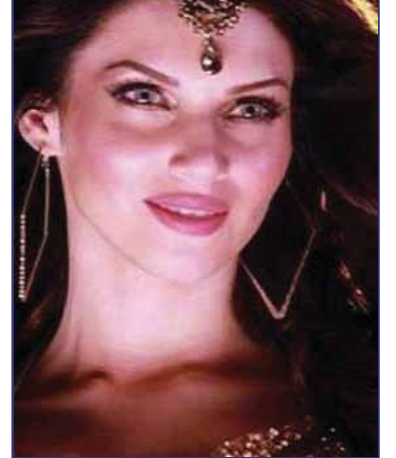


(Top) Demi Rose showcased her assets in a pale pink swimsuit at a bar. (Above) In another recent snap she sported a daring floral shirt with a perilously plunging neckline.

(Agencies) SHE was propelled into the spotlight after she caught the eye of Kylie Jenner's ex Tyga during a trip to Cannes last spring. And Demi Rose Mawby courted attention once again as she flaunted her hourglass figure on Instagram in a series of sizzling selfies from her summer holiday in Ibiza. The model, 22, set pulses racing as she showcased her ample assets in a plunging pale pink swimsuit while posing up a storm at a bar. The Instagram sensation struggled to contain her ample assets in the high-cut skimpy costume as she enjoyed a frozen cocktail at the Tropicana Ibiza Suites. Demi let her raven-haired tresses tumble down her shoulders in loose waves, which drew further attention

to her phenomenal physique. The pin-up accentuated her delicate features with heavy strokes of makeup for her sizzling Instagram shot. In another, equally raunchy shot, Demi showed off her prize assets once again in a daring floral shirt with a perilously plunging neckline as she enjoyed a dinner date on the White Isle. The model has been treating her 4.9million loyal followers to numerous pictures from her sizzling summer getaway. Confident in her sex appeal, Demi claimed her curvaceous figure rivals the Kardashians in a recent interview, saying: "I have an amazing life travelling the world and showing off curves to rival the Kardashians."

Scarlett Wilson Slaps Actor Umakant on Film Set



(Agencies) Scarlett Wilson, who appeared in a song from the movie 'Bahubali' was abused during a film shooting in Mumbai. It is said that due to this reason, Scarlett Wilson has slapped to the abusive co-actor. According to the news, this incident happened on the sets of 'Hansa Ek Sanjog'. Scarlett was shooting an item number song for this movie. Umakant Roy, an actor working in the film made abusive words to her badly and tried to touch her in the wrong way several times. After that, the Scarlett Wilson slapped him and left the set. Producers said "I will not tolerate such a bad deal on the set of this film. We decided to take Umakant out of our film". They also said If umakant apologize on this incident and Scarlett forgive him, then we will see what to do next, but now we have removed Umakant from shooting the film. We will also complain about this move by Umaknat to Film Federation of India. Let's inform you that the Scarlett has performed the item song in films such as 'Shanghai' and 'Rajkumar' and she appeared in the song 'Manohari' in the first part of 'Bahubali'.

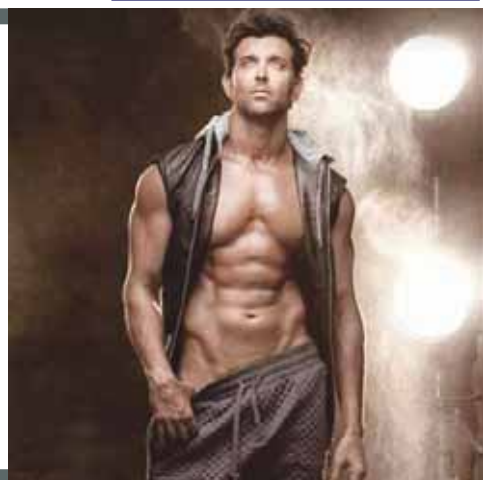
Hrithik Roshan in limelights with his new look

(Agencies) Star of Bollywood industry Hrithik Roshan has been enjoying his life away from the limelight post the release of his film 'Kaabil'. Recently on his



social media account he share a picture which is going viral on internet .Hritik Roshan is known for his chiselled body and ruggedly good looks is very much updated on the internet as he continued to share his most dashing pics for his fans .He has shared a smouldering picture of himself on his social networking accounts and a caption

everyone couldn't agree more with. In the picture, the actor is seen in all his glory flaunting his bare body with just a jacket and track pants hanging dangerously low.He captioned the post as, "Me: I'm already barely wearing anything. Please no more. Style Gods: You're overdressed! We need more! Or rather, less. Me: But. Style Gods: LESS! Me: Fine."



Nasa hiring new 'planetary protection officer' to defend Earth from alien matter



(Agencies) London : Nasa is hiring someone who can defend Earth from alien contamination. The full-time role of "planetary protection officer" will involve ensuring that humans in space do not contaminate planets and moons, as well as ensuring that alien matter does not infect Earth. The pay is a six-figure salary: as much as \$187,000 (£141,000) a year plus benefits. **(Contd on page 25)**

Rats Fed On Artificial Sweetener Aspartame Show Signs Of Impotence



(Agencies) A new study has red flagged aspartame, an artificial sweetener, after it was found to adversely hit sperm quality in rats. The study, published in International Journal of Impotence Research, has reported reduced sperm quality – in terms of motility and viability - in rats fed with aspartame for 90 days. They also showed higher numbers of abnormal sperms as well as defects in the structure of testis.

"Instead of circular shape, seminiferous tubules (that make sperms) showed poorly

differentiated sperm-producing cells which clearly show the defective architecture within the testis of aspartame-treated animals", said I Ashok of Dr. ALM PG Institute of Basic Medical Sciences, who led the study. Aspartame is known to break down into phenylalanine, aspartic acid, and methanol during digestion in the body. The researchers attribute harmful impacts of aspartame to methanol which they say, induces oxidative stress by releasing free radicals. "In rats, the metabolism of

methanol is fast, which is why they were made folate deficient to mimic the slow metabolism of methanol found in humans," Ashok explained. "As aspartame consumption is on the rise among common people, it is essential to create awareness regarding its

usage," researchers said while suggesting more studies to evaluate the effect of aspartame in humans.

Harikumaran Nair, professor at the School of Biosciences, Mahatma Gandhi University in Kerala, who is not connected with this study, told India Science Wire that, "the direct effect of aspartame on male hormone testosterone must be evaluated. Testosterone hormone plays a major role in male reproductive health including sperm viability, motility, and testis structure. In the longer run, retrospective studies with humans should also be carried out using surveys or questionnaires."

The study team included I Ashok, PS Poornima, D Wankhar, R Ravindran, and R Sheeladevi at the Dr. ALM PG Institute of Basic Medical Sciences and Pondicherry University.

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CPEC may be hit by political changes in Pakistan, says Chinese expert



(Agencies) BEIJING: A Chinese expert has admitted that the recent political developments in Pakistan would affect the \$50 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) because some "variable factors" would come into play. The expert also said that some political parties in Pakistan have cast doubt on some specific items in their economic cooperation with China.

Writing in the state-backed Global Times, Lan Jiang, a professor with the China West Normal University, said, the "disqualification of Nawaz Sharif would likely bring some uncertainties to the ongoing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. Pakistani political parties have some disagreements on the project, especially whether the east or west route of the project should be given priority." **(Contd on page 25)**

