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Tamannah Bhatia to star in Telugu remake of Queen



STORY ON page 29

Trump, the indecisive

The president speaks boldly about issues like trade, taxes, immigration, health care and climate change. But what exactly will he do?



STORY ON page 22

Sealing Souls With Glass

To be successful entrepreneurs, women must overcome their negative conditioning



(News Agencies)Over the last three decades, we have seen some wonderful instances of women entrepreneurs making their mark in Indian public life. Working with quiet assurance and confidence, they have exploded stereotypes about the docile, (Contd on page 22)

Golly! It's The Time For Davids

It's straight A for mid-budget, content-driven films at the box office this year while the star-power formula flails nervously



STORY ON page 23

Amitabh Bachchan, Family May Be Summoned In Panama Papers Case

Amitabh Bachchan's name had cropped in the Panama Papers case last year which is being probed by the Income Tax Department and the Enforcement Directorate.



(News Agencies) New Delhi: Actor Amitabh Bachchan and his family may be summoned by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the Panama

Papers scandal that last year revealed how offshore firms are used to stash the wealth of the world's rich and powerful, news agencies reported on Wednesday. The Enforcement Directorate or ED, which probes high-profile economic offences, has received replies from actor Mr Bachchan and his family members to notices issued to them in connection

with its probe in the case, officials said. Officials in the anti-money laundering agency said they had issued notices to the Bachchan family a while ago asking them to explain their foreign remittances since 2004 under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) of the RBI. (Contd on page 23)

India Will Be \$6 Trillion Economy In 10 Years, Says Morgan Stanley Report

The consumer sector is also likely to add about \$1.5 trillion over the next ten years, adds the report.



(News Agencies)Mumbai: India is expected to be a \$6 trillion economy — the third largest in the world — in the next 10 years, majorly helped by digitisation, says a report. According to global brokerage Morgan Stanley, (Contd on page 24)

Josh india tv

Ethnic Strategies

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Sadiq Khan compares Donald Trump to terror group ISIS



he is an 'unwilling participant' in his long-running feud with the US leader, who berated the London Mayor over Twitter for his response to the Westminster terror attack.

(News Agencies) Sadiq Khan last night accused Donald Trump of using ISIS-style language by calling for a 'total and complete shutdown' of Muslims entering the United States. The Mayor of London said the American President is playing the same 'game' as the terror group by first painting the world as a clash between civilisations. And he insisted

Speaking at a fringe event at the Labour Party conference, Mr Khan tore into the US President over his attempt to impose a Muslim travel ban. And he dismissed assurances that he would be exempt from the ban if it is imposed, saying it is insulting to be singled out as exceptional. He told the Guardian Live event: 'My view was firstly "I'm not exceptional" and secondly "think about what you are saying".

Another day, another baby!

Prince Harry keeps up the charm offensive as he plays with adorable infant backstage at Invictus Games after catching up with his old pal Barack Obama

(News Agencies) Prince Harry continued to charm the crowds and athletes at the Invictus Games in Toronto on Friday, paying particular



attention to an adorable baby who caught his eye backstage.

The royal couldn't resist giving the infant's toes a squeeze at the Swimming Finals at the Toronto Pan Am Sports Center, cooing as the little boy smiled for the camera.

He was not the first child to catch the prince's eye throughout the sporting event. On Wednesday, he

was besotted by two-year-old Emily Henson as they watched her father play in the Sitting Volleyball event.

Harry has made no secret of his love of children and his desire to have his own. His fatherly tendencies at this Games coincide with his first public appearance with his girlfriend Meghan Markle, raising hopes that a royal engagement is on the horizon.

After greeting the little boy, Harry met with some of the athletes before taking his seat in the stands. Earlier in the day on Friday, he caught up with former US President Barack Obama.

The 33-year-old royal has met the 56-year-old politician on several occasions previously and struck up a warm friendship with him and wife Michelle. Both men were casually dressed at the Pan Am Centre as they took their seats to watch a fast-

paced match between the USA and France, all the while chatting enthusiastically, laughing and joking. Although their arrival was unannounced, the high-profile duo was mobbed by a huge crowd as they walked in and word quickly spread.

Obama enjoyed a hugely successful state visit to the UK in 2011, when he and his family stayed with the Queen. And last year he and his wife had dinner with William, Kate and Harry at Kensington Palace, where they met Prince George. Obama has also thrown his support behind Harry's Invictus Games, a Paralympic-style event for injured servicemen and women, taking place in Toronto this week.

When it was held in Florida last year the two men struck up a hilarious viral rivalry to publicize the competition, Harry playing the trump card by invoking his grandmother, the Queen to appear in a short 'skit' with him.

(News Agencies) For the past three decades, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, currently Myanmar's state counsellor and 'de facto leader', had been widely recognised as one of the world's icons of peace and justice, a living embodiment of indomitable will under intense pressure. Much of her image as an unflinching crusader fighting for restoration of democracy—despite long spells of detention lasting nearly 15 years—was created as much by her own graceful persona and resoluteness as by the relentless propaganda of western media. That unabashed admiration seems to have attenuated to an alarmingly low level. What has brought Suu Kyi's role under the withering, critical lens of the West is the horrible condition and relentless suffering of Rohingyas, a Muslim minority in the Buddhist majority Myanmar's western Rakhine state. In recent weeks, after a few Rohingya militant strikes, Myanmar's army have killed, raped, looted and committed arson with impunity, forcing over 4,00,000 to flee to Bangladesh.

Developments related to the Rohingyas are essentially a humanitarian issue, but one that has multiple ramifications at various levels. "Without ignoring the suffering of the local people, evidence is emerging of a more

organised, Islamist-inspired militancy (often under the banner of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, or ARSA) in the area—and the army's ferocious response to it could have far-reaching consequences," argues veteran Myanmar watcher and author Bertil Litner. He points out that the issue has started having large traction in the Muslim world. Or, as the International Crisis Group report bluntly puts it: "Unless properly handled, this could well be the beginning of a new religiously motivated insurgency with outside support." Added to the problem is the involvement of various players trying to push their own agenda, often flooding social media with fake videos and photographs, sharpening not only the ongoing debate but often also undermining the credibility of genuine reports of traumatic atrocities against the Rohingyas. Suu Kyi, silent as the Sphinx as the horrors mounted in Rakhine, and for long being entreated by all to speak up, finally spoke on Tuesday at capital Nawpyidaw, proposing several steps to provide succour to the Rohingyas—among them immediate cessation of violence and return of refugees from camps in Bangladesh after a proper verification process in consultation with Dhaka. The fact that she spoke in English clearly indicated that her target audience was her critics in the West.

Yet, her speech hardly had a

**The Lady Doth Not Protest
As Rohingyas flee their
burning homes, Aung San
Suu Kyi's credibility takes
a hit. Yet, her situation is
a complex one.**



positive impact. Most western observers continue to see her stand as a tame acquiescence to the iron-fisted policy of Myanmar generals against the Rohingyas. It would seem that Suu Kyi's 'fall from grace' is imminent; already, there is a rising clamour from sections for her to return the Nobel. In 1991, when she was awarded it, the committee chairman had described her as "the outstanding example of the power of the powerless". Today, many in the outside world, swayed by the dominant western narrative, are willing to question whether that epithet still fits her. Among them are fellow Nobel laureates. Malala Yousafzai, the new poster girl of the West who had condemned the "tragic and shameful" treatment of the Rohingyas by the Myanmar

army, adopted a high moral ground. Desmond Tutu, the anti-apartheid activist, wrote an open letter, expressing his "profound sadness" and calling his "dear sister" to end scorched-earth military operations against the hapless people. "If the political price of your ascension to the highest office in Myanmar is your silence, the price is surely too steep," he wrote. Top western publications have pilloried her with the same gusto with which they once valorised her. "Ignoble Laureate", sneers the headline of a recent profile on her in the New Yorker, while The New York Times ran a report with the caption "A Nobel Prize Winner's Shame", accusing her of presiding over an "ethnic cleansing in which villages are burned, women raped and children are butchered". As if to

put an official seal on that growing view, the UN Human Rights chief described the developments in Rakhine as a "textbook case of ethnic cleansing". "The icon of yesterday is the villain of today," says former Indian ambassador to Myanmar Rajiv Bhatia. According to him, with President Donald Trump in the White House and the European Union caught up in its own problems, western governments have begun to forget the strategic importance of Myanmar in the geopolitical terms—especially the growing influence of China. This has allowed the human rights constituency a free run to mount attacks on Suu Kyi. He feels that the stark failings of Myanmar have made "all this very easy and doable".

Insecurity caused by migration can fuel human trafficking from conflict zones

“When I refused to sell my body they sold me to another brothel”. This is the heart rending testimony of a 13-year-old Nepalese girl named Skye trafficked by relatives to India. Skye’s story ends better than most. Together with her sister, Skye escaped the brothel, returned to school, and now works for the Nepalese organisation that rescued her: the globally renowned Shakti Samuha. But for every survivor like Skye, thousands are suffering in silence, gagged by the threat of violence and blackmail. People are labouring in farms and factories, coerced into the sex trade and tricked onto fishing boats. The range of coerced activities is equal to the huge number of places where victims are found. Today, we all need to be vigilant for signs of the modern day slave trade: sexually exploited and brutalised women and girls; frightened children begging on street corners; and clusters of labourers squalidly living at their workplace. This is the harsh evidence of a crime that haunts all our societies. In the early 21st century, how did it come to this? A large number of victims are

trapped in a hopeless circle of migrant smuggling and trafficking. The petrol fuelling these crimes is instability and insecurity. Conflicts in Iraq and Syria, and economic crisis elsewhere, have produced a tide of desperate humanity sweeping through West Asia, North Africa and across the lethal Mediterranean. These individuals are falling in and out of the hands of traffickers and smugglers as they seek sanctuary. Thousands are dying. Last year, the New York Declaration delivered a compelling statement from the United Nations that refugees and migrants need protection and assistance. Nations agreed to return to New York in 2018 to adopt a Global Compact on migration. The Compact will be the first negotiated agreement by governments to cover every aspect of international migration. Migration is an issue for our times, and there is a real need to go after root causes such as conflict, but we can all agree that refugees and migrants should not be treated like criminals. This is why the Compact can take the lead, and nations can assist by adopting and implementing the UN Conven-



tion Against Transnational Organized Crime, and its relevant protocols on trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling.

We have the tools to disrupt organised crime networks through intelligence sharing, joint operations, financial investigations and coordination across local and regional borders. But it takes resources and an unyielding commitment. Criminals are exploiting gaps in our international system that leave people defenceless and vulnerable to violence and enslavement. Our response must

be founded on the rule of law; and we need to work together, share responsibility and acknowledge that we can and must do more to stop human suffering. UNODC promotes a Trust Fund for trafficking victims that has helped thousands of victims become survivors around the world. Our unique Blue Heart Campaign supports the fund, and is a powerful advocacy tool to shout out the message that we all have to act if the criminals are to be defeated. Such efforts are vital. In Mexico, UNODC’s

#AQUIESTOY campaign (“Here I am”), supported by the government, gives voice to victims and shows that trafficking is not happening on some far, distant shore, but all around us. If adopted in 2018, the Global Compact has tremendous potential to enhance safe, orderly and regular migration and deal a concerted blow against the smugglers and traffickers. This is a generational opportunity to help every human being to live in dignity. Let’s dare to seize the moment.

Unrealistic economic expectations are hurting the government

Three years into its term, this government faces its biggest test. The crisis has not come from the issues that dominate the headlines: Pakistan, terrorism, or gau rakshaks. Instead it has emerged from the one issue on which there can be no compromise: the middle class’s standard of living and its expectations.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a middle class in possession of a reasonable standard of living is always in need of lots more money. So it has been with the Indian middle class. Nothing shapes the political discourse among educated Indians as effectively as money does.

Forget about agrarian distress or farmers’ suicides. Even social tensions or the dangers of growing religious fundamentalism count for less and less. The only thing that has the power to sway middle class minds is a threat to standards of living. The unprecedented economic growth of the last two decades has led most middle class people to believe that they are entitled to make more money or live more comfortably

with each passing year. This is not necessarily something to be proud of. But it is the Indian reality. And over the last month the government has finally come to terms with this reality. The prime minister’s popularity may be intact but the middle class is getting increasingly restive. And the government is concerned.

Some of the reasons for middle class disgruntlement are minor in the context of the larger economic picture. Inflation, well under control during the life of this government, has shown a small spike. The finance minister has said that a rise from two per cent inflation to three per cent inflation is hardly significant. And he has made the point that rises in vegetable prices are seasonal, so things should return to normal

soon. But the issue has refused to go away. And it has been twinned, in the eyes of many people, with the hike in petrol prices. Global fuel prices are much lower than they were during the UPA, but the benefit of the drop in prices has not been passed on the consumer. Such duties as central excise and state taxes have been used to generate massive revenues for the government from petrol. Predictably, many consumers feel short-changed. If this government was going to be led by the market, as it once promised, they ask, then why do Indian petrol prices bear no relation to the market price of petroleum?

The government’s answer – that it needs the additional revenue to keep the economy buoyant – is worry-



ing because it reminds us that private sector investment has failed to pick up after three years of the NDA. The economy now needs to be kept afloat through government spending. More worrying still, is the consistent refusal of the growth rate to hit its targets. For most middle class Indians, the GDP figures themselves are an irrelevance. They may worry when they hear that growth has dropped for several successive quarters, but their concerns are with the effects of the slowdown and not with the figures themselves. Why isn’t consumer demand picking up? Why are small businesses not finding the going as good as they had been promised? Why are more jobs not being created? There are good answers to these ques-

tions. One problem with private sector investment is the mess in our banking sector, for instance. But these are complex explanations and they are not always compelling. So the consensus among talking heads on TV channels and pop economists is simple: lower interest rates. In the past, this may have been difficult to do because Reserve Bank Governor Raghuram Rajan was mindful of the inflationary impact of a drop in rates. But now, with Dr. Rajan gone, critics ask, why can’t this be done at once? As the clamour mounts, the Reserve Bank will probably have to drop rates to some extent. But the danger of inflationary consequences is a real one. And with less than two years to go to the general election, (Contd on page 23)

A Trump Travel Ban We've Seen Before *BHU crackdown: Police hooliganism*

The central question to ask about President Trump's latest travel ban, which he issued on Sunday, is: Will it make Americans safer?



The answer, as best as anyone can tell based on publicly available information, is no. Starting Oct. 18, the United States will permanently bar entry to most citizens of seven countries — Iran, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Chad and North Korea. Certain citizens from Iraq and Venezuela will face restrictions and heightened scrutiny.

Mr. Trump justified these restrictions — which target countries that either failed or refused to meet new vetting standards — by saying he was acting “to protect the security and interests of the United States and its people.” Americans should be skeptical. While it may appear more modulated, Sunday's proclamation is a direct descendant of a central plank of Mr. Trump's campaign — his call for a “total and complete shutdown” of Muslims entering the United States, which he made in 2015, and which remained on his campaign website as late as May.

The list is almost identical to the ban issued in January — all are Muslim-majority countries with the exception of two additions, North Korea and Venezuela, both of which look a lot like window dressing. Annual visa grants to North Koreans number in the dozens, while the ban in Venezuela applies only to officials from the government of the Trump nemesis Nicolás Maduro, along with their family members. Meanwhile, no citizen from the barred countries has carried out a fatal terrorist attack in the United States in the past two decades. That's in part because the “extreme vetting” that Mr. Trump and his anti-immigration cabal have been hawking was already the law of the land. The United States subjects visa applicants to some of the most thorough and rigorous scrutiny in the world. The risk of a terrorist attack by a foreign-born visitor who could be stopped by these procedures is minuscule.

As one federal appeals court said in blocking the earlier ban, the administration has presented no evidence that “present vetting standards are inadequate, and no finding that absent the improved vetting procedures there likely will be harm to our national interests.” The new restrictions have, we're told, been informed by rational, evidence-based concerns about countries whose vetting procedures pose a true security threat to the United States. That might be enough for the ban to be upheld by the federal courts, which are as a rule very deferential to presidential actions on immigration and national security. (On Monday, the Supreme Court, which was slated to hear challenges to the second ban on Oct. 10, removed the case from its calendar and ordered the parties to submit briefs on whether the new ban makes the case moot.) But considered in the broader context of Mr. Trump's own remarks — most recently, his call for a “far larger, tougher and more specific” travel ban — it's hard to see how this latest version breaks much new ground. This shows why it is so damaging to have a fundamentally untrustworthy commander in chief. All presidents must make hard choices about security, and all administrations have faced the intransigence or incompetence of foreign governments when it comes to fighting terrorism. But when the president has freely spouted his own longstanding animus toward adherents of one of the world's major religions, his actions — which include, in addition to the travel ban, a pervasive hostility toward immigration — must be evaluated against that backdrop. In the end, debating whether Sunday's travel ban is fairer or better thought out than its predecessors is beside the point. Its political function is the same — the latest gambit in a cynical, unceasing effort by an embattled president to inflame public fears and woo the xenophobes in his base.

on campuses must stop

The police's conduct in BHU is disgraceful. But such actions have now become par for the course in the country. Thanks to weak and politicised university administrations be it at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jadavpur University, Hyderabad Central University, and now at BHU policemen now have a free hand to act against students who are perceived to have overstepped the limits set by the authorities

Earlier this year, Hindustan Times travelled to the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) campus to speak to girl students about their life there. The narrative that emerged was startling. “This is like life in Kashmir; isolated, alienated, and cut off from the mainstream,” said Anvesha Mishra, a student at the Mahila Maha Vidyalaya, the women's college inside the campus. In the course of the conversation, she listed the “absurd” and “discriminatory restrictions” in the five girls' hostels in BHU: No late nights, ‘decent’ clothing and no non-veg food, among others. “There's no space for us to demand our rights, or express our opinion. We are simply required to read textbooks, and maybe, even act like robots,” Ms Mishra added. This comment was prescient. Last week, protests broke out in the university after a student was allegedly molested. Instead of handling the issue with the empathy and restraint expected from a head of an academic institution, the vice-chancellor called in the police, which started forcibly removing students from outside the V-C's residence and a campus gate. This clash injured several students. The police's conduct at BHU is disgraceful. But such actions against students have now become par for the course. Thanks to weak and politicised university administrations — be it at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jadavpur University, Hyderabad Central University, and now at BHU — policemen now seem to have a free hand to act violently against protesting students. The police also lack training when it comes to handling women protesters or cases of violence against women. In BHU, in complete contravention of the law, male policemen were sent to tackle women protesters.



The Uttar Pradesh government on Monday transferred three additional city magistrates and two policemen after the BHU mishandling. But this is just not enough. Police hooliganism has to stop. But it will not happen unless political interference stops.

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The IS may be on its last legs, but the bigger enemy is radical Takfiri ideology

Our national security experts have dug up Indian Islamic heritage and Sufi ideology to seek an ideological counter to prevent Muslim youth from getting attracted to the rabid IS narrative

The so-called Islamic State may be on its last legs in the land of Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, but the larger battle to counter its fundamentalist Takfiri ideology that allows Muslims to kill their fellow brethren, looms ahead from Philippines to Bangladesh, the Af-Pak region and Africa.

Even if the best-case scenario of all IS fighters being neutralised in Iraq-Syria plays out, the Sunni group's radical ideology will be used both by religious and political leaders to attain power in terminally weak nation states. The worst-case scenario would be trained IS fighters taking their Islamic jihad to already radicalised state, joining hands with local extremists on ideological platform and seizing political control. The latter is a real-time scenario as Pakistan based terrorist group Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) — whose cadres have had deep links with first Al Qaida during Afghan war and now Islamic State — has already floated a political party and has plans to rule Islamabad through ballot forced by gun.

While many Islamic experts would argue that LeT and IS or Al Qaida are based on different Ahle-Hadith, Wahabbi and Salafi ideologies respectively, the terrorist groups have been known to mutate for tactical gains and also join hands with Shia extremists citing a larger enemy like US or Israel. A classic example would be how remnants of the Indian Mujahideen group, who followed Ahle-Hadith ideology, first mutated to Anwar-ul-Tauhid, linked to Salafist Al Qaida, in Afghanistan and then mutated to join Wahabi Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

There is now growing evidence to suggest that Shia terrorist groups based in Iran were in cahoots with Al Qaida leadership in the past decade as the larger enemy was US in Afghanistan. For India, the threat comes not only from Pakistan but also Bangladesh as opposition political parties, clerics and terrorists have joined hands to oust Bangladesh's Awami League party headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. With the spread of IS ideology in Bangladesh, Hasina is under serious threat and Indian intelligence believes there was an attempt on her life as she travelled to Hungary on Novem-

ber 27, 2016. The Boeing 777 plane made an unscheduled landing at Turkmenistan's Ashgabat airport with leakage in fuel and evidence of human intervention in critical parts of the aircraft. If one adds the belligerence of the Jamait-e-Islami, the rise of LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed and the presence of militant Rohingyas, Bangladesh emerges as the new fundamentalist hotspot.

As the IS black flag is up for India from the Af-Pak region and Bangladesh, national security experts have dug up Indian Islamic heritage to seek an ideological counter to prevent Muslim youth from getting attracted to the rabid IS narrative. For a country with second largest Muslim population, India can take comfort that a minuscule 55 radicals have joined the so-called IS Caliphate in Syria-Iraq and in the Kunar province of Afghanistan. Another 100 Indian Sunni Muslims are under watch as they take the next step towards religious radicalisation. There is now convergence building up within the Indian Sunni Muslim clerics that the answer to "Al Wala Wal Bara" ideology of Takfiri groups like IS, Al Qaida, and LeT lies in Sufi roots of the Indian subcontinent. "Al Wala Wal Bara" means loyalty and disavowal. It

essence is that you love all followers of Allah and hate all those who don't. The Indian counter is Sufi concept of "Wahdat-ul-Wajud" or unity of being. Its essence is that if you love the creator then you love all his manifestations.

Siddiq Hasan Khan, a 19th century Bhopal Muslim cleric credited for Ahle-Hadith movement, had challenged the ideological purity of Wahabis, just as Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madani of Deoband had questioned the foundation of Pakistan purely on religious grounds as he laid emphasis on culture/heritage of the subcontinent.

Muslim scholars argue that Indian youth cannot be attracted to so-called Caliphate since Babar declared himself a Mughal Emperor and cut off ties with Khalifa in Baghdad as he refused to call himself a mere Sultan.

Indian national security experts get solace from the fact that while Muhammed ibn Adal Wahab, the founder of ultra conservative Wahabi movement in Sunni Islam, could spread his ideology in West Asia from Saudi Arabia in 18th century, his contemporary Shah Waliullah of Delhi failed in his similar efforts during the Mughal regime.

While it is early days for proponents of "Wahdat-ul-Wajud", the concept is being hotly discussed as a counter to IS ideology from India to West Asia as it is the only viable alternative to "us versus them" option, practiced by followers of Abu Bakr Baghdadi in jihadi attacks in Europe, Africa, US, Russia, Bangladesh and Af-Pak region. Rather than get into the semantics of who is a terrorist or not, the time has

come for nations to join hands to counter the scourge as the decimation of IS will see a concomitant rise of Al Qaida and parallel strengthening of Iran-sponsored Shia terrorist groups as a natural reaction. While the US now recognises the threat faced from IS and Pak-based jihadists, Communist China will have to come to the same conclusion even if it comes the hard way in the restive Xinjiang province since there are many a freelance jihadists outside the control of Pakistan's deep state. Apart from the Af-Pak, Iraq-Syria crescent, the future radical battle zones lie in the poverty ridden, poorly governed yet mineral-rich African continent. The fundamental question is: Does religion radicalise people or people radicalise the religion? The answer is the latter and this needs to be stopped.



Cyberspace needs better laws, and more trustworthy companies

As most of our social and private lives are taken over by private companies that work through the almost border-less Internet, governing the millions of bytes of data that transfer huge amounts of information about users across the Internet becomes vitally important.

The CEO of Microsoft, Satya Nadella, acknowledging that users of technology deserve better privacy and data security is a step in the right direction in the realm of cyber security. The thorny matters of cyber security and privacy on the Internet are some of the most pressing and complicated legal questions of our time. Since technology companies cater to users across geographical and legal boundaries, protection of user rights within an online space becomes that much harder. How much information about users is available to the companies themselves, whether it's ethical to use user data for profit, and how much access law enforcement agencies must have to such data, are some of the questions that need to be considered seriously and immediately. As most of our social and private lives are taken over by private companies that work through the almost border-less Internet, governing the millions of bytes of data that transfer huge

amounts of information about users across the Internet becomes vitally important. From banking to sharing photos, and from calling our mothers to shopping, almost every aspect of our lives is now mediated by private technology companies. These companies have access to data that can reveal intimate details of the users' lives. Companies such as Google and Microsoft technically have access to user data ranging from personal emails to detailed location histories for every single user, across national boundaries. Law enforcement agencies, coercive governments, hackers, and others might all gain access to this information via various methods. Mr. Nadella is therefore absolutely right in saying that technology companies must work towards making themselves more trustworthy to users. Mr. Nadella's advice to develop a "principled, transparent, and efficient framework" for Internet governance is critical not just to the

future of the Internet but also to law enforcement and cooperation across the world. Promoting trust in technological companies is a vital first step, and ensuring that data collected from users remains secure is a fundamental concern. Given the recent Supreme Court judgement that reads privacy as a fundamental right of Indian citizens, how this is enacted within cyberspace and with respect to technology companies will be one of the most important issues in India going forward. Stronger privacy protections for individuals, clear laws for data access to law enforcement and other agencies, and transparent legal frameworks for the collection of digital evidence must be worked out. While social media and online footprints can be effectively used in crime detection and prevention, it must be ensured that we don't devolve into a surveillance society in which every individual is living in a veritable panopticon.

Human shield in Kashmir

How the Indian Army let itself down

I believe the Army comprises the best of our nation because, beyond being brave warriors, its men can distinguish between right and wrong. When a soldier makes a mistake he doesn't hesitate to admit it. Ultimately, this is what separates him from a civilian. Again, that didn't happen in this case.



It hurts to say it but it's the sad truth: If today the Army is embarrassed by the emerging outcome in the Farooq Ahmad Dar case, when an allegedly innocent Kashmiri voter was forcibly used as a human shield by Major Leetul Gogoi of the 53rd Rashtriya Rifles to deter stone-pelters and also teach them a lesson, the Army has only itself to blame. Unfortunately, a fair part of that responsibility lies with the Army chief himself. A police inquiry interim report says Dar was subjected to "wrongful confinement". It states "Dar cast his vote at a polling booth in his native village of Chill." He was, therefore, what he claimed to be, a voter and not a stone-pelter. The Army, on the other hand, claimed he was "instigating a stone-pelting mob" and "could have been their ring leader." He was said to be part of a group threatening the safety of election officials. However, the

Army had no answer to a critical question raised by Dar: "If I voted for democracy, why would I stop others from voting and pelt stones?"

Although the Army appointed a court of inquiry the Army Chief, without awaiting its verdict, described the Major's behaviour as "the right call". He also proceeded to award Major Gogoi a commendation. This was deliberate defiance of the Army's own due process and a clear snub to the Kashmiri people but Gen. Bipin Rawat defended his decision whilst the government endorsed it. In an interview to the Economic Times in May, Gen. Rawat said the award was "to ensure the confidence level of the officer and others operating in (a) similar environment." As he elaborated: "The message is not for the people. I am concerned with my rank and file." In other words, he was determined to defend 'illegal' acts for fear that if he did

not the army's morale could suffer. Worse, making a mockery of the court of inquiry, which he admitted "is for fact finding", the Army Chief said "even if he (Major Gogoi) is found guilty of some lapse, no major action will be taken against him. I find no reason for major action to be taken against him." Altogether this prioritized the army's interests over Kashmiri human rights.

Speaking to PTI, Gen. Rawat went further. "This is a proxy war and proxy war is a dirty war. It's played in a dirty way." This was his justification for what he called Major Gogoi's "innovation", when Dar was strapped to an Army jeep as a human shield and paraded for five hours through the villages of Kashmir.

Not surprisingly, several people criticised the army chief. Even within the Army, Gen. Rawat's behaviour was considered controversial though the criticism

was sotto voce and made behind closed doors. However, Lt. Gen. HS Panag, a former Northern Army Commander, was outspoken. In a series of tweets he said: "Whatever the provocation, the Indian army cannot take recourse to illegal acts." Commenting on the commendation, Lt. Gen. Panag tweeted: "IA (Indian Army) traditions, ethos, rules and regs (regulations) swept away by the 'mood of the nation'!" Gen. V. P. Malik, a former Chief, whilst defending Major Gogoi's action added the Major must be warned against repeating it.

Now that the police inquiry interim report seems to undermine the Army chief's stand, we should ask what has become of the Army's own court of inquiry? Did it complete its task? Has it submitted a report? And if it has, what's become of it? Or, as many suspect, have Gen. Rawat's comments and commendation made the in-

quiry infructuous? The undeniable truth is that in this sad instance the Army let itself down. As an Army son I believe the Army is fair, correct and unwaveringly committed to defending the rights of every Indian citizen. But that didn't happen in this case. More importantly, I believe the Army comprises the best of our nation because, beyond being brave warriors, its men can distinguish between right and wrong. When a soldier makes a mistake he doesn't hesitate to admit it. Ultimately, this is what separates him from a civilian. Again, that didn't happen in this case. Finally, to those who claim criticising the Army is anti-national, let me point out the Army doesn't see itself as above the nation. When it's erred, as it has in this case, it welcomes criticism. I have no doubt that's also true of Gen. Rawat, even if circumstances won't permit him to admit it.

Pakistan's isolation is responsible for its recent rants at UNGA

Pakistan continues to live in its own world as was reflected in its PM's statement that there is no role for India in Afghanistan. Many in Pakistan are now putting all their eggs in China's basket. The Xiamen BRICS declaration, which listed Pakistan-based terror organisations for the first time, should be a warning to Pakistan than an isolated Pakistan would be of little use to even China.



Like every year, Pakistan has once again railed against India at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Raking up Kashmir again, Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi urged the UN to appoint a special envoy to the state to investigate into the alleged atrocities. He also called for the need to send an inquiry commission to the state in order to secure the punishment of those "responsible of human rights violation." India's response was quick and potent, which underlined that "Pakistan is now 'Terroristan,' with a flourishing industry producing and exporting global terrorism.

The world has stopped listening to Pakistani rants on Kashmir but Islamabad has nothing else to talk about at the

global forum. These are tough times for Pakistan as it is feeling the heat from the rapidly evolving regional realities. The US' is tightening the screws on Islamabad. Its new Afghanistan policy has a laser-like focus on Pakistan to make sure it abides by its commitments. This theme also found mention in Trump's speech at the UNGA where he suggested that "it is time to expose and hold responsible those countries who support and finance terror groups like al-Qaida, Hezbollah, the Taliban, and others that slaughter innocent people." He added, "We must deny the terrorists safe haven, transit, funding, and any form of support for their vile and sinister ideology." Pakistan, as the epicentre of global terrorism, could not have

been oblivious to the underlying message.

The US has already banned in the US operations of Habib Bank, Pakistan's leading financial institution, for regulatory violations, signalling its resolve that it intends to move forward with the operationalising of its policy.

A number of other tough measures are being considered which may include revoking Pakistan's status of a non-NATO ally, cutting off aid, and even declaring Pakistan as a terrorist State. Not surprisingly, there is panic in Pakistan, which is suggesting that it is ready to respond in kind by gradually limiting diplomatic relations with the US, reducing mutual cooperation

on terrorism-related issues and refusing cooperation with the US on Afghanistan.

Even as US-Pakistan relations are passing through one of their most turbulent phases, India has emerged as a critical part of Donald Trump's South Asia policy as it doubles down on the Indo-US strategic partnership. Buoyed by Washington's desire to see a more engaged India in the economic development of Afghanistan, India has decided to take up 116 "high impact community developmental projects" in 31 provinces of Afghanistan. India and Afghanistan have also agreed to "strengthen security cooperation" with New Delhi agreeing "to extend further assistance for the Afghan national defence

and security forces in fighting the scourge of terrorism, organized crime, trafficking of narcotics and money laundering." Pakistan continues to live in its own world as was reflected in its PM's statement that there is no role for India in Afghanistan. Many in Pakistan are now putting all their eggs in China's basket. The Xiamen BRICS declaration, which listed Pakistan-based terror organisations for the first time, should be a warning to Pakistan than an isolated Pakistan would be of little use to even China.

As regional trends unfold, Pakistan's position is becoming difficult to sustain. Not surprisingly, ranting at the UN is the only thing left for Pakistani policy-makers.

German elections: A vote for stability but with question marks

Even as Angela Merkel prepares for an unprecedented fourth term as Chancellor of Germany, the vote is a signal of the looming challenges ahead. For the first time since the Second World War a far right nationalist party – the Alternative for Germany (AfD) – has won around 13% of the vote



Chancellor Angela Merkel is poised for an unprecedented fourth term as Chancellor in Germany with her party, the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) winning 33% of the vote and emerging as the largest party in parliament with 246 seats. The vote reflects a comfort level with Merkel's non-flashy and pragmatic leadership which has steered Germany and Europe through the difficult currents of the global financial crisis, the debt crisis in Southern Europe and now the challenge to European integration posed by the decision of the UK to leave the European Union. The German economy, the largest in Europe, is performing relatively well largely on the back of reforms undertaken by Merkel's predecessor, Gerhard Schroeder, while Germany's consensual style of politics has brought both political and social stability.

At the same time, the vote is a signal of the looming challenges ahead. For the first time since the Second World War a far right nationalist party – the Alternative for Germany (AfD) – has won around 13% of the vote and has entered the German parliament with 94 seats. The AfD had campaigned on an anti-refugee, anti-Islam platform, tapping into the fears of a section of Germans against Merkel's decision to allow over one million refugees into the country. This is part of a larger wave sweeping Europe and America and reflected in the rise of right wing parties across several European countries, in the UK's Brexit decision and in the election of an inward-looking Donald Trump in America.

Echoing Trump's slogan of 'take our country back', the AfD talks of 'taking our land back'. In a direct attack on the refugee policy of An-

gela Merkel, the AfD has threatened to launch an investigation into the 'crimes' she has committed against the country. The AfD support has come largely from East Germany, where it was expected to get 21% of the vote. The Eastern part of Germany continues to struggle with unemployment and a subdued economy, post-reunification, providing fertile ground for xenophobic ideas. Surprisingly AfD is also poised to do well in the traditionally conservative states of southern Germany – Baden-Wurttemberg and Bavaria – where it has gained at the cost of Merkel's partner, the CSU. Overall the AfD is gaining around 8% of vote share at the cost of the CDU/CSU combine whose vote share has come down by 8.6%. The Free Democrats (FDP) will be the other major gainer in this election with over 10% of vote share. Traditionally

the FDP has been a coalition partner in many governments in post-war Germany and has been described as the tail which wagged the dog. However, in the last election they had failed to cross the minimum 5% vote threshold and were unrepresented in parliament. They are opposed to some of the European reform proposals of President Macron of France.

The other major party, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which is currently a partner in the Grand Coalition Government led by Chancellor Merkel, is likely to lose 5% voting share and obtain around 20.5% of the vote. While this is less than the 8.6% decline in the CDU/CSU voting share, what should be of concern to the SPD is that over the last 20 years, its vote share has declined by nearly 20%. Martin Schulz, the SPD's candidate for Chancellor, has announced that the SPD will

not join a grand coalition to form the government. They will then be the largest opposition party, a space which would have otherwise been occupied by the far right AfD.

Chancellor Merkel is now likely to explore a coalition with the FDP and the Greens. This is not going to be easy but Merkel has, in the past, pragmatically appropriated parts of the platform of the Greens, such as closing down all nuclear power plants, and is known as a skilled coalition builder.

Steering a four party coalition with partners with widely divergent political outlooks will be more complex and challenging and will test Merkel's skills. Germany faces a more uncertain international environment as the traditional pillars of its post-war policies look increasingly shaky, including closer European integration, the alliance with the USA un-

der Donald Trump, relations with Putin's Russia and robust economic growth. The overhang of the debt crisis in Europe continues while the new wave of digitisation and artificial intelligence sweeping the world could disrupt the traditional manufacturing sector, which has been Germany's mainstay. The emergence of the AfD and its sharp rhetoric presages a more polarised polity and a shift in the post war style of German politics characterised by compromise and consensus. Angela Merkel's leadership is reaffirmed but there are signals of the uncertainties and challenges ahead. For India, Angela Merkel and Germany have been reliable partners in Europe and her re-election points to the relationship remaining on course. The challenge will be to impart more substance by building greater economic and strategic synergies.

Shobhaa de Crucifies Arnab Goswami



Never thought a day would come when the nation would pity Arnab Goswami, and actually feel sorry for the man! But thanks to Rajdeep Sardesai and his tweets calling out a former colleague for fabricating a dramatic narrative going back to the Gujarat riots in 2002, it has become official — Arnab, the self-styled emperor of prime-time, has no clothes. What a fall there was, my countrymen! Just look at where Arnab stands today! Once he was exposed as a complete liar by Sardesai and others, the dam broke. And it is worth analysing why there was such open

and enthusiastic jubilation over this single expose! It established incontrovertibly what a despised man Arnab had become over time. And how, perhaps for the first time in the history of our media, one of their own was gleefully trampled over, his carefully cultivated reputation mangled, and his well-crafted image successfully shredded. Dog definitely and enthusiastically ate dog in this round. If one examines the myriad jokes and memes that were created within hours of the truth tumbling out, it pointed to a rather sordid development — it does not pay to ride the moral high horse as Arnab had, and emerge a blatant liar. Media games are ruthless and played by cold-blooded professionals. Even going by that yardstick, Arnab's annihilation has been epic and swift! Suddenly, this pompous man has been reduced to a pretty puny nobody. All the people he once insulted and humiliated on his shows have risen as one to chorus: "Serves him right!" This may appear

a childish way to deal with an old foe. But the story is far bigger. And, as it now turns out, Arnab's biggest enemy was Arnab! I recall a conversation I had in Kathmandu last year, with a loud, crude mediaman. I suspect he had invested in Arnab's soon-to-be-launched channel, since his entire keynote address to a visibly baffled Nepali media was about the dynamism and greatness of a man called Arnab Goswami. I was pretty puzzled and wondered what that was all about. Later, the same evening, this guy continued to sing Arnab's praises, much to the irritation of an advertising agency biggie. I was getting bugged as well. So, I asked the loudmouth on what basis was he proclaiming the assured success of the new channel? Wasn't he making far too many assumptions? He looked at me and asked where Arnab could possibly go wrong. "He is the biggest media star in Asia. His brand value is unbeatable. There is no one else in his league."

Arnab Goswami - A Legend in his own Mind ?



ing. Goswami was also defended, or rather Sardesai was attacked, by actor Anupam Kher who occasionally functions as a spokesperson for the government and now also apparently for Goswami.

What makes someone lie like this? In an article for DailyO, journalist Swati Chaturvedi called Goswami a "fantasist". On an India Today TV show on the issue, lawyer Sanjay Hegde pointed out, tongue firmly in cheek, that everyone is entitled to be a "legend in their own minds". But what it comes down to plain and simple is plagiarism. Writers steal words. Those who do not write, steal experiences. Goswami's story had many personal touches which add verisimilitude - the fear of the driver who had no ID, Goswami's preference to sit in the front of a car, the sound of the mob. This was a story he must have internalised until it became his own. Perhaps he really believes it happened to him. Maybe he wished it happened to him. Goswami is a studio creation. He was forgettable in his earlier jobs, whatever he did there. He

came into his own thundering behind a desk at Times Now. Perhaps however he still carries a torch for his non-existent days as an intrepid reporter, covering perilous ground and breaking earth-shattering stories. Since he does not have enough fireside chat experiences of his own, he has no option but to steal the experiences of others. Or maybe he was just borrowing this one: he was going to return it but he forgot: "I covered the riots but not this part that I wanted to cover. So I thought I'd just try your part for a bit to see what it felt like." Of all the roles that journalism offers you, reporting is only one of them. It is not too late for Goswami to become a reporter. He may find it suits him. But he must be more courageous than he has been in the past. Even recently, during one of Mumbai's super-rainy days, he did not venture very far from his office and stood under a flyover on Tulsi Pipe Road with an umbrella. That is not proper reporting. Nor is going to Milan ?Subway in Santa Cruz.

He can instead prowl the countryside of Raigad to

find any more clues in Sheena Bora's murder. It may be more dramatic to go at night. And not wear a suit while he does it, although that can be his signature move. He might also lurk around the Leela Palace hotel in Delhi and solve the Sunanda Pushkar case all by himself. But let us get down to brasstacks. What Goswami did is not excusable. He stole an experience to make himself look bigger and braver. All it has done is make him look smaller and sillier. It has been a while since Goswami stopped practising any type or form of journalism. If he wants to make a comeback, I am not sure that stealing someone else's experience is the right way to go about it. But who knows. This is the "new India". Anything is possible. Meanwhile, it is terrible that one more journalist was brutally killed, this time in the line of duty. Santanu Bhowmick was covering a protest in Tripura when he was abducted and hacked to death by political elements at the rally. This has sadly become all too common - to kill journalists in an attempt to silence the media. Appalling, unacceptable.

(News Agencies) What an incredible kerfuffle! In a speech he made a couple of years ago, TV anchor Arnab Goswami told a moving story about how he was attacked by riotous mobs carrying trishuls, close to the chief minister's residence, while covering the Gujarat riots in 2002. Great story, but one slight issue with it. The incident did happen. But it did not happen to Goswami. It happened to Rajdeep Sardesai and other colleagues at NDTV.

surprise at Goswami's story. The video was taken down and then put up again. Inevitably, minor spats broke out all over Twitter. An employee of Republic TV standing up for her boss, Goswami, posted a photograph where Goswami was part of the group covering the riots. This claim was quickly demolished by Goswami's former colleagues - he was sent to Gujarat yes but to Kheda and a week after Sardesai's car was attacked by a mob. The photo was taken later. Several colleagues from NDTV corroborated Sardesai's assertion that Goswami was ly-

Sardesai put the video of Goswami's speech up on Twitter, expressing

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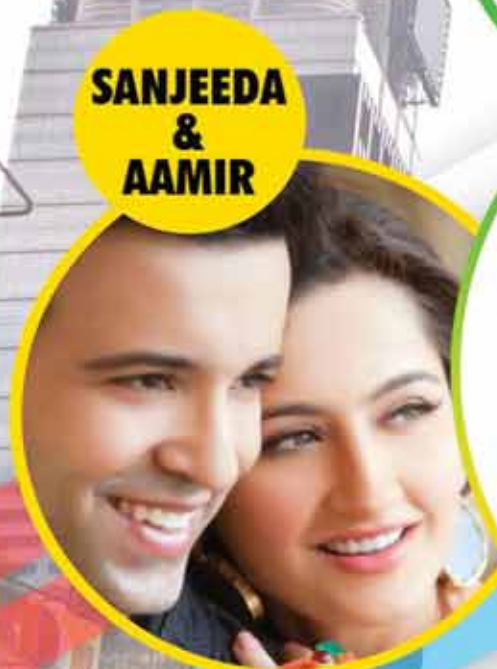
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(News Agencies) The Delhi high court dismissed on Tuesday the transit anticipatory bail plea of Honeypreet Insan, the absconding aide of Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh. Earlier, Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal, after hearing arguments on behalf of Honeypreet and the police of Delhi and Haryana, said, "the easiest way out for you would be to surrender".

On Tuesday, police from Panchkula raided a Dera property in south Delhi, but failed to find her at the location. Deputy commissioner of



special CBI court in Panchkula on August 25, following which violence and arson erupted in Panchkula and Sirsa districts of Haryana which claimed 41 lives and left many injured.

The Delhi high court asked Honeypreet's counsel to satisfy it as to how its territorial jurisdiction can be invoked and said it would take care of her rights only after that. "First you come on jurisdiction. Why has the plea been moved here... You surrender in Delhi and we will take care," the judge said. Transit anticipatory bail application is meant to seek protection against arrest during her transit from Delhi to Haryana for joining the probe.

Honeypreet's advocate sought the relief saying she was a woman who was not running away and was ready to join the probe if protected by the court. The plea was opposed by the counsel for Delhi and Haryana police who said it was "a ploy to do 'forum shopping'" and, by giving a wrong address of a Delhi property, she was "hoodwinking" the court.

Honeypreet's bail plea dismissed by Delhi HC, told to surrender

Honeypreet Insan is said to be the closest aide of Ram Rahim. Police are on her trail and searches have been conducted in many places including Rajasthan, Bihar and Haryana.

police (south east) Romil Baaniya said, "Raids were conducted today (Tuesday) morning at A-9 Greater Kailash with arrest warrant against Honeypreet. Later, it was confirmed that she was not sighted here in the recent past nor she

is staying here currently." The raid was conducted as Priyanka Taneja alias Honeypreet Insan's lawyer claimed that she had visited his office in Delhi on Monday to sign the anticipatory bail application. Honeypreet, in her mid-

30s, is on the run since August 25, hours after Ram Rahim was convicted of raping two women followers. She has been the closest aide of Ram Rahim since 2009. Police are on her trail for nearly a month and raids have been conducted in

Nepal, Rajasthan, Bihar and Haryana. Honeypreet is facing charges of sedition and tops the list of 43 people wanted by Haryana Police in connection with the violence that followed Ram Rahim's conviction. Ram Rahim was convicted by the

BHU violence: VC under pressure

On Sept 23, several students, mostly women, and policemen were wounded in clashes after police crackdown on protestors in front of the BHU vice-chancellor home.

(News Agencies) Pressure mounted on Banaras Hindu University's vice chancellor GC Tripathi on Tuesday after the Varanasi commissioner blamed the varsity administration and the National Human Rights Commission asked for an explanation over last weekend's violence on campus.

Students, mostly women, were cane-charged shortly after Saturday midnight when they were protesting the university's alleged inaction over a reported molestation in campus on Thursday. The crackdown left several students wounded and clashes that followed injured a number of policemen.

V-C Tripathi, who was in New Delhi for the varsity's executive council meeting on Tuesday, said that an inquiry will be headed by retired Allahabad high court judge VK Dikshit. The decision was also announced on Monday by the university.

The human rights panel issued a notice to the V-C over the crackdown and molestation case later in the afternoon. "Suo motu cognizance taken in subsequent use of unwarranted manhandling and thrashing of agitating students, mostly women, by UP police", the NHRC said. Earlier in the day, Varanasi Commissioner Nitin Gokarn submitted a report that blamed the university administration. Sent to chief secretary Rajiv Kumar, the report said BHU did not deal with the victim's complaint in a sensitive manner and did not handle the situation on time, said a senior administrative official.

The report also said that if the matter had been settled on time then there would not have been such a big controversy.

Photos and videos from people present inside the campus and at the entrance of the BHU's main gate showed large groups of police descending on students who had gathered at the two locations. Some videos,



which HT could not independently verify, showed male cops raining blows with a stick on female students. Tripathi late on Monday denied that women students were hit during the crackdown. "There was no baton charge on any girl on the varsity premises during the intervening night of September 23 and 24. Action has been taken against

criminal and anti-social elements who (vandalised) varsity property," a press statement issued late on Monday by Tripathi said. The vice chancellor also dubbed the alleged sexual harassment as part of a larger conspiracy to instigate women students against him. "We have asked the administration for initiating a dialogue with the students through the

vice-chancellor and a decision to set up close circuit TV cameras there had been taken," said Sharma. The campus unrest drew flak against chief minister Yogi Adityanath as Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party government for the police action.

CBI summons Lalu Prasad, son Tejjashwi on October 3, 4 respectively

The case pertains to allegations that Lalu Yadav, as railway minister, handed over the maintenance of two hotels run by the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation.

(News Agencies) The CBI on Tuesday issued fresh summons to RJD leader Lalu Prasad and his son Tejjashwi to appear for questioning on October 3 and 4 respectively in connection with an alleged corruption case. The CBI rejected the politicians' plea seeking 15 days' time for appearing before the investigation team in the case which relates to alleged graft in awarding a contract to a private firm for the maintenance of two railway hotels when Lalu Yadav was the Union railway minister in 2006.

Tejjashwi, who was summoned

to appear today, sent his counsel, who submitted a request seeking more time, sources in the agency said. Yadav has now been called on October 3 and Tejjashwi on October 4, CBI spokesperson Abhishek Dayal said.

The case pertains to allegations that Yadav, as railway minister, handed over the maintenance of two hotels run by the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation, a subsidiary of the Indian Railways, in Ranchi and Puri to Sujata Hotel, a company owned by Vinay and Vijay Kochhar, in return for a prime plot of

three acres in Patna through a benami company. The FIR alleged that the RJD leader abused his official position for extending undue favours to the Kochhars and acquired a piece of "high value premium land" through the benami firm Delight Marketing Company. As a quid pro quo, he "dishonestly and fraudulently" awarded the contract to them for the two hotels. After the tender was awarded to Sujata Hotel, the ownership of Delight Marketing also changed hands from Sarla Gupta to Rabri Devi and Tejjashwi Yadav between 2010 and 2014. By this

time, Lalu Prasad had resigned as railway minister.

The CBI registered the case against Lalu Yadav, his wife Rabri Devi, a former Bihar chief minister, son Tejjashwi, who was deputy CM until a few months ago, and Sarla Gupta, wife of Prem Chand Gupta, a former Union minister. Others named as accused in the FIR include Vijay Kochhar, Vinay Kochhar, both directors of Sujata Hotels and owner of Chanakya Hotel, Delight Marketing Company, now known as Lara Projects, and then IRCTC managing director P K Goel.



Govt To Give Cash Reward Worth Rs 1 Crore To Secret Informers Who Provide Information On Benami Properties

The initiative is likely to be announced by next month.

(News Agencies) The Centre is planning to give out cash rewards to the tune of Rs 1 crore to secret informers who provide tip offs to investigative agencies in connection with Benami Properties. The initiative is likely to be announced by next month.



A senior Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) official who is part of the policy making said on condition of anonymity, "An informer will get minimum Rs 15 lakh and maximum Rs 1 crore. According to the official, the information will have to be acute and identity of the informer will be kept secret. The department will never disclose the identity as this could endanger the informer. The Benami Property Law introduced last year lacked this provision. It is a common practice by the Enforcement Directorate, the Income Tax department and Directorate of Revenue Intelligence to reward informers. The reward, however, is not so lucrative." Finding Benamidars is a herculean task for Income tax officials as well as the administration.

A senior CBDT official told ANI, "It would be a lot easier, faster and effective method of operation if we take the help of informers. If we have an attractive award prize for informers then our task will become easy and we will start cracking Benami property holders nationwide, he further added. This policy is now with Finance Ministry. Once it gets approval from Finance Ministry and Final nod by Finance Minister, it will be announced by CBDT. An announcement is expected to be made by October end or first week of November." The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016 came into effect from 1st November, 2016. Several benami transactions have been identified since the coming into effect of the amended law. The benami properties attached include deposits in bank accounts and immovable properties.

'Couldn't Show Jayalalithaa In Nightie': Dhinakaran Claims Video Proof

(News Agencies) For months till her death in December, the only source of information on the state of J Jayalalithaa in hospital was a handful of her closest aides, including VK Sasikala, top AIADMK leaders and ministers. A minister's confession that he was "forced to lie" about the former chief minister's health has raised the question - did ministers, the ruling AIADMK and bureaucrats all lie?

Retired judge A Arumughaswamy has been asked by the Tamil Nadu government to investigate. This was one of the demands that Jayalalithaa loyalist turned rebel O Panneerselvam or OPS had raised to return to the party.

But many believe the investigation should be handled by at least a judge, if not the CBI.

"It is lie upon more lies, only an investigation can nail the lies," actor Kamal Haasan told NDTV today.

Questions that nagged the ruling party throughout Jayalalithaa's three-month hospital stay came roaring back after it emerged this weekend that state Forest Minister Dindigul C Srinivasan had said at a party meeting: "Sasikala and her family would tell us she (Jayalalithaa) ate idli, had coffee, was given sweets, did that and this... we told what she (Sasikala) said... The truth is that



nobody saw her... Even high-profile dignitaries including Amit Shah and Rahul Gandhi did not visit Jayalalithaa, but only met the hospital chairman."

In October, a doctor attested that Jayalalithaa had an inflamed right hand, so she had signed off on a candidate's election affidavit with a thumb print and not a signature.

"Begging" people's forgiveness, Mr Srinivasan appeared to imply that he was forced to lie by Ms Sasikala, who took control of the party after Jayalalithaa's death in December and was trying to take over as Chief Minister before she was sent to jail for corruption. Sasikala's nephew and proxy TTV Dhinakaran, sidelined recently by the party, said his aunt had

shot a video of Jayalalithaa in hospital but it had not been released so far as she was in a "nightie". The video, he claims, was taken when she was being shifted from the ICU to a room.

"Amma (Jayalalithaa) had lost a lot of weight... it was a video shot by my aunt (Sasikala) herself. You all know none would have seen Amma in a nightie, not any functionary. Even when late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Amma following her accident in 1989, she was fully attired, she always maintained that dignity," Mr Dhinakaran said. Sasikala was believed to be the only person to have access to Jayalalithaa. But significantly, OPS, as acting Chief Minister, was in charge at the time. Mr Dhinakaran said he should also be accountable.

Saving Aravallis: Could we have a beautiful deciduous forest in the middle of Delhi?

In the first of a six-part series on Aravallis, author and environmentalist Pradip Krishen writes that authorities lack expertise or vision to turn the Central Ridge into a truly beautiful dry, deciduous forest from the scrub forest full of Vilaiti Keekar that it is now

(News Agencies) Most evenings when I am in Delhi I take my dogs walking on the (central) Ridge, close to where I live. Timings vary. In mid-September, we start out at 5.15. The heat of the day has dissipated a little, darkness is safely distant. Post-monsoon verdure beckons. I park on the side of a narrow road and plunge in through ranks of tall Abutilon, making a snap decision about which route to take. Sometimes the dogs show me where they want to go. There are several options.

I've been doing this for 40 years now, an exquisite ritual that I look forward to almost as much as many generations of my dogs have done. It's both lovely and sad. Lovely because it is an immeasurable privilege to be able to ramble in this unruly, semi-wild forest of some nine square km in the very heart of Delhi's urban sprawl. Sad because it could be a lot nicer. Really it could. Lutyens' Delhi was planned early last century between the central Ridge and the Yamuna as a new capital city of 57,000 souls. Absurd as this number sounds now, the central Ridge was demarcated as a salubrious 'amenity forest', a place for sahibs to ride their horses in. Briefly, perhaps for only a few weeks or so, it seemed the central Ridge would become a really important part of the city because someone took Viceroy Hardinge riding there after the rains, and he was suddenly taken with the idea of placing the Viceroy's future residence – Government House – on the highest knoll of the Ridge, near Talkatora.

Hardinge wrote excitedly to the architect Lutyens, "Can you imagine how splendid a white Government House with red tiles and a gilt dome would look in such a commanding situation, dominating the whole of the country round, while the slope from the situation of Government House down to the plain would be covered with terraces and fountains like a miniature Versailles?"

Lutyens was still on the boat back to England and harrumphed his disapproval, and the idea soon faded away. The CPWD took charge of the Ridge and created a polo ground, riding trails and the Forest Department was called in to plant suitable species of trees. The Ridge was notified as a Reserved Forest and saplings of eight or nine kinds of trees were planted here. Nothing 'took', because the Forest Department chose all the wrong species, nothing that was likely to survive in thin, rocky soil without lots of help, except for one pernicious tree from Mexico (and further south) that came to be called 'vilaiti keekar' because it looked a lot like our desi keekar or babool.

And vilaiti keekar prospered

and begat more vilaiti keekar. And it outcompeted everything else until it came to completely dominate the Ridge. Which is why we find it so rampant today everywhere you look on the Ridge (and elsewhere).

Could it have been different? Could we have had a truly beautiful dry, deciduous forest in the middle of central Delhi instead of a degraded scrub forest chockful of an invasive tree?

We are only just beginning to glimpse what might have been possible. The 'discovery' of Mangar Bani – that wonderful little jewel in the Aravallis just across the Faridabad border – tells us eloquently of how lovely these forests can be when their natural vegetation is protected. 'If only' is a sad refrain, and the fact is



we are saddled with a ruined forest in the central Ridge for now. "Better than nothing", they say, and I agree. Vilaiti keekar is a lot better than bare, cleared ground. But is there a possibility that we could coax back a full-blown natural forest on the Ridge? Is it too late and too difficult? Or too expensive?

It is possible to bring back such a forest, and no, it's not too difficult or expensive but a more frightening possibility looms. Who will do it? Does the Forest Department know enough about dry, deciduous forests to do it well? What about the CPWD? Or one of Delhi's civic horticulture agencies?

The unvarnished truth is we're stuck for now because not one of these organisations has

even the glimmer of the expertise, imagination or vision to achieve anything as ambitious as this. We are better off without inviting them in with their blunt tools and outmoded ideas. Ironically, vilaiti keekar is keeping the idea incubating.

One day, however, I hope the time will come. A group of dedicated people who combine design skills with ecological knowledge, passion with purpose. We may have to wait a long time. So long that you and I may not see it. But it is worth knowing that the central Ridge waits, in prospect. We can dream of an immense and lovely natural forest in the heart of New Delhi, the best and most beautiful urban forest of any capital city in the whole world. One day.

Bihar dam collapse: Why public infrastructure crumbles so frequently in India

One of the key reasons is the corrupt nexus among politicians, bureaucrats and contractors, a theme portrayed poignantly in Hindi film Madari. The strategy of the parasitic politicians, bureaucrats and contractors is simple: Build like there is no tomorrow, and always low quality structures. .

(News Agencies) In the last one year, we have had flyovers collapsing in Maharashtra and Orissa. Last week, it was a dam in Bihar. Then there have been several monsoon-related cases such as pot-hole deaths and building collapse. The crisis of crumbling infrastructure is so deep and countrywide that even Bollywood came up with a movie, Madari, on the issue. In the film, a father takes revenge for his son's death in a bridge collapse. To go back to the recent one in Bihar, a part of the Bateshwarthan Ganga Pump Nahar Priyojna collapsed in Bhagalpur on September 19, embarrassingly a day before chief minister Nitish Kumar was to inaugurate it. The cost of the project is estimated at Rs 389.31 crore. Why is the quality of public infrastructure so bad in India? One of the key reasons is the corrupt nexus among politicians, bureaucrats and contractors, a theme portrayed poignantly in Madari. The strategy of the parasitic politicians, bureaucrats and contractors is simple: Build like there is no tomorrow, and al-

ways low quality structures.

The routine breaching of flood embankments in Bihar is a case in point. While there has been several reports of how embankments serve no purpose, no government is ready to scrap them because there is money to be made in maintaining these structures.

Second, lack of proper maintenance and regular safety audits. A report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India tabled in the Parliament on July 21 found the safety and compliance status of large dams to be poor. "Out of 4,862 large dams, emergency action plans or disaster management plans of only 349 dams, which is seven per cent, were prepared (March 2016)...mock drill in respect of only one dam was conducted as of March 2016," the report stated. The report also found that maintenance work was not conducted in many of the dams. Third, lack of information about certain structures such as dams. In a piece published in 2013, Himanshu Thakkar of SANDRP wrote that the Central Water Commission, which publishes

the National Register of Large Dams (NRLD), has several information gaps in its reports. "It is a disturbing situation that the agencies that are responsible for our large dams do not even know the names of the rivers (every river in India has a name, so if someone were to argue that the rivers do not have names, it won't be acceptable excuse) on which they are located. Without the names of the rivers and locations of the various dams on specific rivers, we cannot even start looking at the crucial issues like dam safety, cumulative social and environmental impacts, hydrological carrying capacity and optimum utilisation of the storages created behind the dams. We clearly have far to go to even start knowing our dams and rivers." This neglect of public infrastructure is criminal. But most accidents are forgotten after the initial hue and cry because in government responsibility is shared, the onus is not on one person. Politicians, bureaucrats and contractors take advantage of this loophole. and the deadly results are there for all to see.



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US Company GE on Verge of Losing Billion in Indian Contract Withdrawal

(News Agencies) India is one of the largest economies in the world and General Electric Co. had a massive success when they won a government contract back in 2015 worth upwards of \$2.5 Billion. The contract was primarily for 1,000 diesel locomotives to be delivered to Indian Railways over an 11-year span. In accordance with the contract, GE agreed to build plants to manufacture these

locomotives in rural parts of India to boost the local economy. However, the problems started to arise when the new railways minister, Piyush Goyal declared that India would phase out diesel entirely and instead switch its massive railway network to be used exclusively by electric locomotives. This recent development shocked the leaders of GE who are now in talks with the new

minister about trying to amend the contract. Instead of the contract being terminated entirely with a huge loss to GE, GE is in talks of possibly being the supplier of electric locomotives instead of the diesel engines. Other members of GE's staff say that the credibility of India's railway needs being met completely by electrification would be truly hard to believe. They hope that eventually the government

would gain their senses and realize that diesel is a promising investment that would not fail to give the returns India requires. India is one of the last standing BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) that is actually living up to its name. India is one of the largest economies in the world with the second largest population and an ever growing market. Which

makes it so enticing for large corporations to head over there and grab their fair share. GE has a plant that is still under construction nearly 600 miles from New Delhi that GE considers one of its prized possessions. Here's to hoping GE get their contracts worth and India is able to sustain a better mass transit railway system. The future sure does look bright.

Britain and America are on the brink of trade war over 125 Bombardier jets as UK threatens to end Boeing military contracts



(News Agencies) Britain and America are on the brink of a trade war after the UK threatened to end its military contracts with the US aerospace company Boeing.

British Prime Minister Theresa May condemned Boeing after the dispute with Canadian firm Bombardier threatened the loss of thousands of jobs in the UK.

Mrs May said Boeing's bid to impose a tariff of 220% on imports of Bombardier C-Series aircraft into America was 'no way to operate' and added their move put the company's 'long-term partnership' with the UK at risk.

However, the US giant could simply 'turn off' Britain's attack helicopters and military transport aircraft, according to an army expert. The Ministry of Defence in planning on purchasing 50 Apache AH-64E helicopters and nine P-8 maritime patrol aircraft

- which are built by Boeing - from the US government.

The MoD already uses around 60 Chinook helicopters.

A former four-star officer told The Times: 'Boeing owns the data. You buy the data. You rely on the original equipment manufacturer for the key to the data, servicing and upgrades. They can turn the fleet off.' It comes as the Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon backed Mrs May and warned Boeing the company could be cut out of UK defence contracts worth billions. The US ruling - an embarrassment for Mrs May, who personally lobbied President Donald Trump over the dispute - marked a setback to hopes of a swift UK-US trade deal after Brexit. And the threat to 14,000 jobs in Northern Ireland - where Bombardier, a Canadian firm, makes wings for its planes - puts a strain on Mrs May's Commons

power-sharing deal with the Democratic Unionist Party. Last night she said she was 'bitterly disappointed' by the US decision, which it is feared will kill off the C-Series programme. The Prime Minister said: 'I will be doing everything I can to ensure the future of Bombardier in Northern Ireland is guaranteed and protected. We have had a long-term partnership with Boeing, worked with Boeing over the years, and I think this is no way to operate in terms of such a long-term partnership. That long-term partnership is being undermined by this behaviour by Boeing.' Mrs May spoke to DUP leader Arlene Foster and Michelle O'Neill, Sinn Fein's leader in Northern Ireland, on the phone last night in an attempt to limit the damage.

The Defence Secretary led the backlash against Boeing, which has defence contracts with the UK worth around £8billion.

Sir Michael said: 'This is not the behaviour we expect from Boeing and it could indeed jeopardise our future relationship with them. Boeing wants and we want a long-term partnership, but that has to be two-way. Boeing stand to gain a lot of British defence spending. We have contracts in place with Boeing for new maritime patrol aircraft and for Apache attack helicopters and they will also be bidding for other defence work, and this kind of behaviour clearly could jeopardise our future relationship.'

"Should I buy the iPhone X?"

The question that's on everyone's minds.

First things first, The iPhone X looks like a great phone. The design is beautiful, the applications seem superb, with the phone sporting Face ID, wireless charging and portrait lighting on the new 12MP dual camera. But are these specs (and the wildly unneeded "Animoji") worth spending \$1000 for? Here's the answer.

The "Super Retina HD Display" for the iPhone X is 5.8 inches, while the upcoming iPhone 8 and 8+ have a 4.7 inch and a 5.5 inch display. So the iPhone X has the display going for it, but what about its camera? Well, both the iPhone X and 8 have a 12 MP camera and 4K video recording. They both have a wide angle lens, portrait lighting and they both even have an A11 bionic chip. But the X starts at \$999.99 and the 8 starts at \$699. So what does the iPhone X have that makes it \$300 more expensive than the iPhone 8? Honestly, not much. Sure, the iPhone X is 5.65 x 2.79 x 0.30 inches in size while the iPhone 8 is 5.45 x 2.65 x 0.29 inches, but this doesn't make the \$300 increase in price justified. The X's "No button" display, the 2 hour increase in usage from the iPhone 7 and "Animoji" still don't make up for this phones ridiculous expense. So what does? Well, if you are going to buy the iPhone X, what you're buying isn't increased performance or durability from the iPhone 8. What you're buying from Apple, is the name. Not everyone's going to be buying this phone if they can have the 8+ for the same performance, cheaper price and for a cheaper price. So if you will buy this phone, flaunt it. It's what it was made for. The iPhone X wasn't made for innovation, not to change the game or the phone industry. It was made to change you. Your status. Your reputation. With the right kind of marketing, this phone will make it's price justified. All you need is the right mind-set when you buy it. So if you were looking for a phone that's different to the one you have now, in design and power, don't go for the iPhone X. Instead, buy the iPhone 8, Samsung S8 or Note8, or one of the hundreds of other phones out there, looking to be held in your hand. But if you want status instead of performance, then you've come to the right place with this. It's not what you'll do. It's what it'll do.

By Roubin Singh Thind

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149 Indian prisoners in Sharjah to be released

(News Agencies) The announcement came in response to Pinyari Vijayan's request to Sharjah's ruler Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Quasimi, who is on a five-day visit to Kerala. A total of 149 Indians serving prison terms for minor and financial offences in Sharjah will be released following the amnesty declared here by the Emirate's visiting ruler Sultan Bin Mohammed Al-Quasimi. The announcement came in response to a request by Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan seeking the release of Keralites who had completed three years of their jail term in Sharjah.

According to a joint communique issued by the Sharjah and Kerala governments, those facing

punishment for minor offences and financial misappropriation would be given pardon as per the general amnesty. Al-Quasimi was honoured with an honorary D.lit Degree from Calicut University at a function held at Raj Bhavan here. Governor Justice (retd) P Sathasivam conferred the degree. Sharjah also agreed to open an institution of higher learning for Arabic studies and research and set up a chain of skill development centres for imparting training to those seeking jobs in the Gulf region. "This was announced by Al-Quasimi during his one-to-one meeting with Vijayan", the communique said. Sharjah has also accepted in-prin-

ciple the state's proposal for giving international driving licence to those who seeking jobs in the Emirate, the release said. A joint committee consisting top officials of Sharjah and Kerala would be set up to work out an action plan to implement projects agreed to by both sides. The Kerala government also offered land for construction of a permanent building for the UAE consulate in the state capital. The Sharjah Family City project, cultural centre and International Education Complex to be set up by Kerala in Sharjah were some of the other projects under the active consideration of the Sharjah government, the release said. Later, giving a lecture,



Al-Quasimi hailed the harmony among the people of Kerala and wanted them to preserve it. "I saw a dance yesterday. I was very happy to see three sects of people dancing together with love. I hope that will

remain always," he said. Al-Quasimi, who reached here on September 24 on a five-day visit to the state, promised he would be back within a year to celebrate the fulfilling of promises he had made.

The ruler met the chief minister at his official residence in the morning. He also met the council of ministers yesterday and discussed various issues pertaining to Kerala and Sharjah.

London Decides Uber is Unfit to Operate in the U.K. Capital

London's top transportation authority "Transport for London" said Uber Technologies Inc. had "a lack of corporate responsibility" and that would put at risk the safety and security of the public. They have said it is unlikely they will renew Uber's private car license when it expires on Sept. 30. What does this



mean for Uber? Troubled waters ahead if they do not pick up their act, London is one of Uber's largest markets with millions of people having used the app for their daily commutes. At least for the time being there is a stop-gap of sorts that will allow Uber to continue providing services to the people of London for a few months

before a final decision is made. Nobody is sure what made the London Transportation Authority act now on Uber's problems including background checks on drivers and serious criminal offenses however this new development will be a serious problem for Uber and its investors. Even London-

ers who use Uber daily were surprised and have made a petition with over 280,000 signatures to urge London to reverse the decision. The high cost of black cabs in London made Uber so popular in the beginning, now will Londoners have to return to the black cab or not?

E-Cigarettes are Taking Over the Streets

Everyone has seen them, they come in all different shapes, sizes and flavors. If you take a walk down New York City, every 20 minutes you'll pass someone vaping. It used to be cigarettes, now Big Tobacco companies are realizing that people are moving away from the cancer sticks to the newer vaporizers. They have taken an active foot into the market to make sure they obtain a piece of the cake, which can be seen with the acquisition of famous vape company BLU which is sold in every 7-11 for \$135 million. The current e-cigarette market has total sales of \$5 billion. Of course, compared to tobacco which has sales of \$92 billion, 5 really does not amount to much however that is poised to change within the next 5 years considering the vaping industry has an annual increase in sales of around 24%. Many people and institutions including health organizations do not know the effect of these brands and how deadly they are compared to traditional cigarettes. That is why many people assume

they are safe and have either switched to vaping from cigarettes, there are even people who have never smoked a cigarette in their life but would easily buy a vape because they believe it is safer and like the idea of smoking. The only problem is while we don't know if they're harmful, we still don't even know if vapes are safe to use. They aren't exactly new either, vaporizers have been around for about 30 years, they have only just been gaining the spotlight since around 2010. The deadliest part about vapes that still remain from cigarettes is the nicotine. Nicotine is still a highly addictive drug that can lead to problems and complications such as emphysema and high blood pressure. If people decide to switch to nicotine free vapes. As far as the law is concerned they should just simply be aware of some known risks and try to stay in touch with current news and developing scientific studies on the risks of vaping. Otherwise Happy Trails.

Will North Korea Strike the U.S?

It's a complicated question to say the least. We all know the recent news in the past 2 months of missiles being fired from the rogue nation, going over Japan, and landing into the sea. Missiles that can be armed with nuclear warheads. The only question remaining is if North Korea is willing to vaporize a U.S city? The international community with the exception of China have been trying to place sanctions on North Korea to dissuade them from further advancing their nuclear capabilities. The problem is that North Korea does feel the bite of this but simply does not care right now. They will care when they see Uncle Sam's missiles headed towards Pyongyang which is what definitely will happen if there ever was a North Korean missile headed for the U.S. So the short answer is, No the U.S is safe for now, the long answer is that we will just have to wait and see what they are planning up in that opaque state.

North Korean Foreign Minister Says U.S Has Declared War

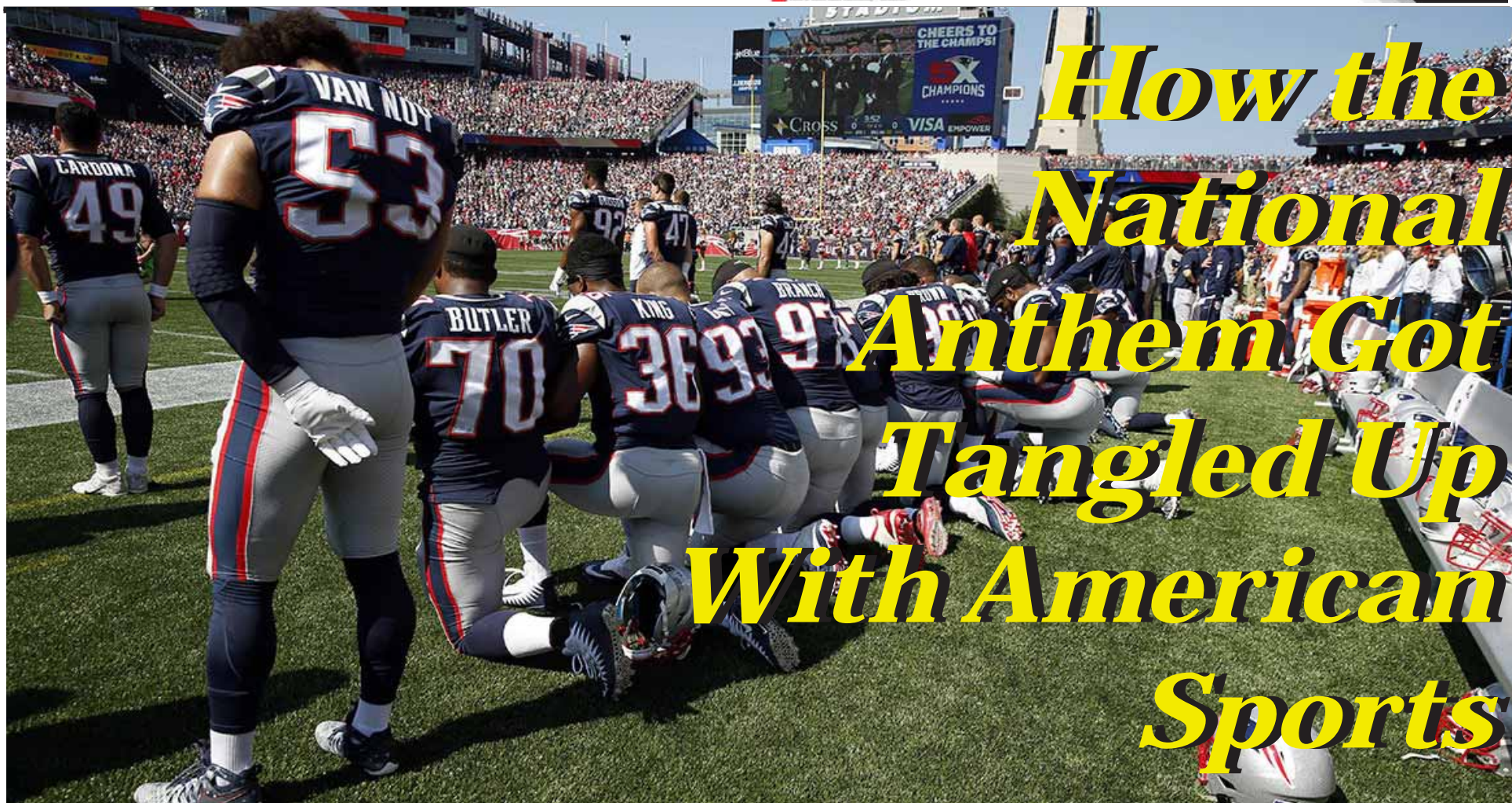
On Saturday September 23rd, U.S warplanes flew near the North Korean coastline north of the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. As far as the Foreign Minister of The People's Republic is concerned that is a declaration of war and North Korea has every right to shoot down any warplanes in or even near their borders. President Trump later rebutted with a tweet stating North Korea's leadership would "not be around much longer" if it attempted to take action against the U.S. or its allies. North Korea has provoked the international community

numerous times this year with the constant flow of missiles into the sea past Japan. Mr. Ri is the North Korean official who warned on Saturday that a missile attack on the U.S. mainland had become "inevitable" after Mr. Trump's United Nations General Assembly address on Tuesday. In that speech, the president threatened to "totally destroy" North Korea if the U.S. is forced to defend itself or its allies. Mr. Ri also suggested in comments on Thursday that North Korea could choose to detonate a hydrogen bomb over the Pacific Ocean.

Is there a Commercial Real Estate Bubble and if so When Will it Pop?

If you have a portfolio heavy on Commercial Mortgage Backed Securities, if you own a building or even if you're just a normal person, there should be red flags being raised in your mind right about now. Why? Simple, when every Mom, Pop, and John is able to buy a building simply off credit there should be an alarm sounding in your head saying "Woah! Slow down there buddy, get the f**k out of this!". There's an easy way to gauge this. Simply go on "Green Street Advisors" website and search for the "Commercial Property Price Index" which shows you at what price commercial property values are currently being negotiated, for example at the peak of the 08' financial crisis the gauge shows a value of 100, now that value has soared to 126.9. Dark times ahead or great success? Judge for yourself.

By Max Thind



How the National Anthem Got Tangled Up With American Sports

Like most relationships, it's complicated. Listen to President Donald Trump, or any one weighing in after more than 200 NFL players took a knee during the Star Spangled Banner on Sunday, and you might think that there's a very simple right and wrong way to listen to the national anthem, or register our objections to it. The truth is, though, that the history of playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" at American sporting events is complicated.

While there is evidence of "The Star-Spangled Banner" being played at occasional baseball games as far back as 1862, the song didn't become a staple at sporting events until 1918—two years after President Woodrow Wilson decreed it the national anthem by executive order. (Congress followed suit and made it even more official in 1931). On September 6, 1918, during a World Series between the Boston Red Sox and Chicago Cubs—how strange does that sound?—the band in Chicago played "The Star Spangled Banner" during the seventh-inning stretch. The U.S. was in the midst of World War I, and Cubs' third baseman Fred Thomas, on leave from the Navy at the time, saluted the flag in response to hearing the anthem. Other players followed Thomas' lead, and the crowd sang along. The moment was so stirring that the New York Times chose to highlight it, writing, "First the song was taken up by a few, then others joined,

and when the final notes came, a great volume of melody rolled across the field. It was at the very end that the onlookers exploded into thunderous applause and rent the air with a cheer that marked the highest point of the day's enthusiasm."

The Cubs realized they were on to something, and played the anthem during the seventh-inning stretch for the next two games in Chicago. When the series returned to Boston—where the Red Sox would win in six games, their last title for 86 years—the Red Sox tried to outdo the Cubs by playing the anthem at the beginning of the games. A tradition had been born, and over the next few decades, it became a more frequent, but not universal, practice to kick off both baseball and football games with the anthem, especially on special occasions like holidays or opening day.

One complicating factor was cost: As Marc Ferris, anthem expert and author of the book *The Star-Spangled Banner* said on NPR in 2016, "The thing is, you had to hire a band. That was expensive, so it was only for special occasions." Following World War II, the invention of sound systems allowed venues to play a recording of the song at virtually no marginal cost. "And thus," Ferris added, "they started to play it before every game." But even though the anthem has kicked off most professional leagues for about 70 years, there have been controversies about

it for nearly as long. During the Orioles' first season in Baltimore in 1954—they had previously been the St. Louis Browns—their patriotic general manager, Arthur Ehlers, made a public announcement that he would limit the playing of the anthem. Ehlers' objection was not at all about America or the anthem itself, but about the crowd. He felt that "crowds at stadiums and other sports arenas have a way of continuing to laugh and talk and move about while the anthem is being played. That applies to fights, wrestling matches, stock-car races and baseball games. To me it is very distasteful." (One wonders what Ehlers would have made of Orioles' fans' current practice of shouting a loud "O" for Orioles during the "Oh, say can you see" verse of the anthem.) Ehlers plan, like that of the Cubs, was to play it only on special occasions. But his new policy provoked a community backlash, and the Baltimore City Council passed a resolution calling for the playing of the anthem before every game, and not just on special occasions. From then on, the Orioles then made starting games with "The Star-Spangled Banner" their standard practice.

In the 1960s, objections to rowdy fans morphed into objections to American policy. In the 1968 Olympics, African-American sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos famously raised their fists in a black power salute on the medal podium while "The Star-Spangled Banner"

played, protesting American treatment of African-Americans. Washington's new National Museum of African American History and Culture has a statue depicting the two athletes, fists held high.

In the 1972 Munich Olympic games, two other African-American sprinters, Wayne Collett and Vince Matthews, did not do the black power salute; instead they stood around casually, and, some would say, disrespectfully during the song. Their different poses, however, did not bring about a different result; like Smith and Carlos, both were suspended from the U.S. team. In another amateur football player in Skokie, Illinois, would not remove his helmet during the anthem because of his objections to American foreign policy. He was suspended by the coach but reinstated by his principal. As the principal, Gilbert Weldy, put it, "People talk while the anthem is being played, eat hot dogs and drink Cokes, visit with friends and pay no attention to it. ... So why bother at all?" Weldy asked. He answered, somewhat cynically, "The only thing the national anthem accomplishes before a sports event is that it helps numb the crowd for a minute or two." At the professional level, though, protests against the anthem were almost unheard of. Professional athletes were a fairly patriotic bunch. In fact, players, regardless of race, helped enforce standards of patriotism among the fans. African-American

baseball great Reggie Jackson said in 1977, "When I'm in the outfield facing the flag, I see kids messing around, laughing and wrestling when the song is being played. Afterward, I go over and tell them, 'Either you stand at attention for our national anthem or you go over to China and see how you like it. You don't stand at attention over there, they shoot you.'" And in one legendary incident in the bicentennial year of 1976, Los Angeles Dodgers' outfielder Rick Monday stopped two protesters from burning an American flag in the outfield at Dodger Stadium, running across the field and snatching the flag out of their hands before they could set it alight. Despite a pretty good 19-year major league career, Monday is still best known for this incident.

The national anthem made news in 1977, when *Sports Illustrated* reported that buttoned-down NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle "issued orders against talking, nervous footwork, gum chewing and shoulder-pad slamming during The Banner." But there the issue was about decorum, not politics. (This was the same Rozelle who, in the 1980s, would fine Chicago Bears quarterback Jim McMahon for having an unauthorized corporate logo—"Adidas" on his headband. McMahon responded to the controversy by writing "ROZELLE" in black marker on the headband for his next game. Rozelle thought it was "funny as hell," but kept the fine in place.)

A Muslim American's Homecoming: Cowboys, Country Music, Chapatis

The conversion took place on Honky-Tonk Row, my baptism a glaze of midsummer Tennessee sweat anointing my forehead.

Nashville's Wildhorse Saloon is a tabernacle for line-dancing disciples, and I was in communion with the gyrating congregation.

"Shuffle, shuffle, turn to your left."

"Right, left, right — there ya go!"

I have a strong respect for choreographed mass dancing; I grew up with the understanding that seminal moments in Bollywood films must be commemorated with synchronized hip shaking. The Wildhorse was a divine revelation — white people, they're just like us!

There I was, a Yankee of Indian extraction who had always dismissed country music without a second listen, tearing through Nashville's Lower Broadway — swaying along to cover bands at Tootsie's and Robert's Western World and perusing star-spangled cowboy gear at Boot Country.

My visit to the South was long overdue. I've lived in five countries on three continents, but the United States has always been the unifying thread; my America is diverse and dynamic and molded by immigrants. But how well did I really know it? Last fall, when I returned from a four-year stint as an expat in South Africa, I deplaned into unfamiliar territory. There was an acrid, unseen fog looming: two weeks later came Election Day.

President Trump began his term with a travel ban on certain Muslim-majority countries; this week he's expanding that diktat, and in what's become

the hallmark of a turbulent presidency, no one has any clue what's next. As a Muslim American immigrant, am I just a few 140-character proclamations away from having my citizenship revoked? But fear also sparked curiosity. To me, "Wyoming" sounds foreign and peculiar, spilling lazily off the tongue like a yawn and evoking in my mind the wild terrain someone else might associate with a Zimbabwe or Mozambique. What's exotic to me isn't food gilded with turmeric and six-day weddings — it's grits and rodeos. How much time did I have left to experience them? I wondered if, given Mr. Trump's rhetoric, I would feel like a foreigner in my own home. So I hit the road over the Fourth of July to see how much of an outsider I really was.

The Not-So-Deep South

"The songs really don't help the stereotypes," Sobia remarked.

Every explorer needs a sidekick, so I'd drafted a friend whose curiosity rivaled my own. Sobia was the Clark to my Lewis, the Finn to my Sawyer, the Buzz Lightyear to my Woody; we were two Muslim-American women trying to demystify guns, cowboys, and church, and hopefully evading lard in the process. At that moment, however, our ambitions were limited to making sense of the song on the radio: "I was sittin' there sellin' turnips on my flatbed truck..."

You have to hand it to country music. You want to mock its clichés? It'll cram each verse with so many mommas and daddies and shotguns and Chevys that it insulates itself from satire. It's self-aware and sassy, somewhere between caricature and cultural anthro-

pology — just look up the lyrics to Hank Williams Jr.'s "A Country Boy Can Survive." Recurring themes of booze, small-town boys chasing blonde-haired girls, guns, and pickup trucks are not my domain. The heartbreak, however, is breath-takingly relatable.

Sobia and I began our trip to Nashville by educating ourselves, first at the Country Mu-



sic Hall of Fame and later at the iconic Grand Ole Opry. But it's in the kitschy, bachelorette-party ridden dives of Lower Broadway, dappled in neon and scorned by locals, where we truly embraced the music. We enjoyed our barhopping expeditions far more than anyone sober reasonably should, given the unseemly behavior and crimes against dancing that prevailed. We took a break to fuel up at Hattie B's, where we waited in line for an hour to sample Nashville's famed hot chicken, a fiery, delectable treat that singed even my normally spice-immune Indian taste buds.

Sunday morning in the Bible Belt can only mean one thing, and I sought the wisdom of Father Google to find us a house



sang B.B. King. "And everybody wanna know why I sing the blues. Well, I've been around a long time, I've really paid my dues." In Memphis, we listened to Blind Mississippi Morris belt out King's classic in a bar on Beale Street. But it was another King, he of sparkling spandex and bacon-banana PBJs and an affinity for Kahlil Gibran, who was beckoning me. I expected Elvis Presley's Graceland to be a temple of tacky brimming with shag rugs and frequented by zealous impersonators in blinged-out one-pieces. We scoffed when the woman selling tickets said the tour could take three hours. We ended up needing four.

Sobia and I found many nationalities and shockingly few sequins among Graceland's pilgrims. "So many people try to copy him, but he was the ultimate," said Rishi Khanna, a fan since his youth in India, before singing a few bars of "Can't Help Falling in Love." "Elvis's music is from the divine."

Memphis's other major landmark is the site of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, reborn as the National Civil Rights Museum, a powerful look at the nation's fractured racial history — a requisite at a time when so many people seem determined to downplay the struggles faced by African-Americans. "There have been some changes, but things are not what they should be," said Roy Logan, a museum volunteer. "We still have a ways to go."

His words lingered that evening, when a jovial elderly man chatted us up at a doughnut shop. The store had run out of doughnuts; I may have missed dessert, but I was treated to a serving of white privilege when I asked him about life in Memphis during the civil rights struggle.

"Blacks and whites never had problems," he claimed.

"But weren't blacks second-class citizens?"





If the EU fails to act, Myanmar's persecuted minority could turn to more extreme solutions.

They have been called “the world’s most friendless people” and current events are proving that to be true: Since August 25, more than 400,000 Rohingya have fled violent persecution in Myanmar, which they consider their homeland, and arrived in neighboring Bangladesh, which has kept its doors open on condition that they don’t stay forever.

The international community — and Europe in particular — has condemned the situation but done little to stop what the United Nations says could be a “textbook example of ethnic cleansing.”

Decades of tension between the Rohingya, a Muslim minority that is de facto stateless, and majority-Buddhist Myanmar have come to a peak. The Myanmar government doesn’t recognize the Rohingya as one of the country’s 125 ethnic groups, even though they have lived in northern Rakhine State since the 12th century.

“We have always felt oppressed, it is an ongoing process. But this time we fled to save our lives,” said Sabikun Nahar, holding her baby.

On August 25, rebels of the Arakan Rohingya Solidarity Army (ARSA) attacked around 30 police and army posts in Rakhine, killing 12 officers, according to the Myanmar government. In retaliation, the Myanmar army — which considers ARSA a terrorist group — launched an unprecedented campaign against civilians, who for decades have been categorized as “illegal Bengali immigrants.”

Nahar is one of 422,000 Rohingya forced to flee, ac-

ording to the latest U.N. estimates. The 21-year-old, who looks older than her years, said she and several relatives ran away in early September when “our Buddhist neighbors and the army came and unexpectedly torched our houses. They then started shooting us when we ran to save our lives.”

That was the start of a perilous 12-day journey to Cox’s Bazar, a Bangladeshi town on the border with Myanmar, with her mother-in-law, sister, brother-in-law and one-year-old child. “A lot of our relatives and friends have been killed,” said Nahar. Many of the refugees in Cox’s Bazar talk of houses burned down by the army and Buddhist mobs, indiscriminate shooting, and landmines planted along the border. It is difficult to verify their testimonies, partly because Myanmar refuses to allow independent investigators to enter Rakhine. But analysis of satellite images taken by organizations like Human Rights Watch (HRW) supports the refugees’ stories.

“The images corroborate accounts gathered by HRW from refugees who have described arson, killing, and looting by Myanmar’s military, police, and Rakhine mobs,” HRW said in a statement on September 19. Satellite footage shows that at least 214 villages in Rakhine have been destroyed, the group said.

Ahead of a U.N. General Assembly meeting in New York last week, the group called on world leaders to condemn what it called “ethnic cleansing” at the hands of Myanmar’s military. It also urged the Security Council to impose targeted sanctions

and an arms embargo.

President Emmanuel Macron announced he would work with the other members of the Security Council to end military operations, guarantee humanitarian access and restore law in the area. His use of the word “genocide” in relation to the humanitarian crisis marked the strongest verbal criticism by a European head of state.

Meanwhile, the U.K. — which ruled Myanmar from 1824 until 1948 — announced in New York that it would suspend its training of the country’s military, after facing criticism that it was dragging its feet in responding to the crisis.

Other European countries should follow the U.K.’s lead on the issue, said Alistair D.B. Cook, a researcher at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore.

“There is a lot of focus on Aung San Suu Kyi [Myanmar’s head of state and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate], while the people who have the power is the army,” said Cook. Myanmar’s military occupies 25 percent of seats in parliament, holds the right to veto constitutional changes and controls the country’s security apparatus. It is also allegedly the main force behind the atrocities committed against the Rohingya.

Concerted action from Europe would be more effective than a resolution from the U.N. Security Council, which is likely to be vetoed by China and Russia, Cook added. Both countries are permanent members of the Security Council and big

importers of weapons from Myanmar’s arms industry. China is also heavily involved in energy projects in Rakhine.

The European Union already holds a common position on Myanmar, which was first adopted in 1996 and includes an arms embargo. The bloc’s good relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) could also help resolve the crisis, according to Ludovica Marchi, a visiting fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science. “ASEAN has always protected Myanmar and sought to maintain peace,” Marchi said. “It has also, however, proved capable of exerting sufficient pressure on the government in charge to compel them to undertake reforms.”

Remy Mahzam, a research fellow at RSIS, said the EU will have to invest “in contributing to development aid, technical cooperation and training in Myanmar and facilitate the country’s opening up process.”

But while experts agree Europe has powerful tools at its disposal, they also warn the bloc is typically too slow to act.

The approximately 800,000

forcibly displaced Rohingya in Bangladesh — some 300,000 of whom arrived in Cox’s Bazar on the back of a previous crisis — live in despair, lacking basic needs like food, shelter or water.

The situation is feared to be worse in Rakhine itself, where hundreds of thousands of Rohingya are cut off from access to humanitarian help. An estimated 1 million Rohingyas lived in Rakhine before attacks began in August.

If Europe and others abandon the Rohingya to their “friendless” fate, members of the group could fall into bad company, experts also warn.

“ISIS is already exploiting the Rohingya crisis to recruit more fighters,” said Mahzam at RSIS. “Al-Qaeda has also issued a recent statement calling for attacks against the Myanmar government. The conflict could rekindle extremism and motivate more attacks across the world to address the crisis.” More than ever, the Rohingya need a friend. It’s up to Europe to make sure they find the right one.



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Trump, the indecisive

President Donald Trump has threatened to pull out of NAFTA, the Paris climate agreement and the Iranian nuclear deal — unless he opts to stay. He decided to revoke legal protections for the Dreamers, then urged Congress hours later to enact new ones. And he has repeatedly demanded that lawmakers enact major legislation on health care, tax reform and a \$1 trillion infrastructure plan — without making it clear what he wants the final product to look like.

Of all the factors that have made the president's first year so turbulent, one of the most important has been Trump himself: Combining quick mood shifts, a rancorous White House staff and his own fuzziness on the details, the self-proclaimed dealmaker has left his options way open on a range of contentious decisions — while inducing whiplash in many of the political insiders, business leaders and even foreign governments with a stake in the outcomes.

Some business groups are making long-range decisions based on their best guesses of where the administration will land, while others try to outflank the White House by talking to key lawmakers before Trump does.

"It's exhausting because there are so many places that you have to touch, so many different bases, because you never know who he's listening to," said Brian Wild, a Republican adviser to businesses on energy, tax, labor, transportation and health care at the law firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck. "You never know who's going to get the final 'yes.'"

One longtime GOP lobbyist added: "You would've never seen a situation with Bush or Obama when a position in the administration got flipped overnight. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, sometimes you get half a loaf, but rarely do you ever just change sides."

"I think he thinks of everything as a trial balloon," the lobbyist said of Trump.

The flux is especially vexing for conservatives who were invigorated after Trump won but now worry that their years of pushing to lower tax rates and repeal former President Barack Obama's health care law might have been in vain.

"Nobody is happy," said another

Republican lobbyist. "It's very likely that at the end of the year, we'll be left with Obamacare and the same tax code."

White House spokespeople rejected the idea that the president has waffled on policy issues, saying he's been "abundantly clear" that he'll leave the Paris agreement if he doesn't get a better deal and has been "very clear" he wants Congress to act on immigration.

"President Trump was put into office precisely because he isn't beholden to lobbyists and special interests," White House spokeswoman Kelly Love said. "If they're upset that they can't stroll into the White House and drive administration policy anymore, that's a badge of honor for a president who was elected to drain the swamp. This president makes his decisions based on what's best for Main Street, not K Street."

But the frustration has repercussions far beyond the Beltway. As tax talks between the White House and lawmakers stall, more than half of CEOs surveyed by Business Roundtable said they would have to shelve plans to hire

and invest more if an already long-delayed overhaul doesn't move through Congress.

The outcome of the tax debate will determine whether Guy Chemical Co. in Somerset, Pennsylvania, can buy extra equipment, hire 10 new employees and give raises to existing staff, company President Guy Berkebile said. But Berkebile, who was recently in Washington to urge lawmakers to lower business tax rates, said he's not getting his hopes up.

"I am already thinking what I will do with the extra money at Guy Chemical if business taxes are lowered," he said. "If tax reform does not get done, I will continue to grind away with the same typical investment I have put back into my company over the past 10 years."

The details of what Trump wants in a tax overhaul are still in flux, complicating his sales pitch to conservative Republicans. The uncertainty includes whether the White House will insist on his oft-stated desire to cut the corporate tax rate to 15 percent, down from 35 percent. ("I hope it's going to be 15 percent," Trump

told reporters Sunday, amid reports that negotiators had settled on a compromise of 20 percent.) On health care, Trump has spent the entire year pushing Congress to repeal Obamacare but has offered vague, often contradictory clues about what he wants to see take its place. At times he's promised "insurance for everybody," supported a House Republican bill that guaranteed nothing of the sort, or mused about letting Obama's system "explode" on its own or moving on to other issues like taxes. Trump's tough talk on trade has also left industries he's vowed to support hanging.

The United Steelworkers Union complains that foreign steel imports have "skyrocketed" since April, when the White House suggested the U.S. might limit them for national security reasons. Data from the American Iron and Steel Institute show that steel imports jumped more than 21 percent in the three months following the announcement versus the first three months of the year.

The Commerce Department was supposed to issue recommendations at the beginning of June but has delayed them indefinitely.

Vagueness and wishy-washiness might seem unlikely problems for Trump, who's

shown no reluctance to speak his mind and often expresses his thoughts in the most caustic terms — including using the epithet "Rocket Man" last week for North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. He's spent years espousing certain consistently held policy beliefs, such as his charge that "stupid" trade deals are letting other countries rip off the U.S.

But that doesn't make it any easier to predict the details of what Trump will decide as president, especially on the myriad issues where he's offered no well-formed opinion. And he's changed his mind on a host of issues — such as endorsing an influx of new U.S. troops to Afghanistan after previously calling for a pullout. Or holding a Rose Garden celebration in May after the House passed a bill to repeal Obamacare, only to describe the same bill as "mean" a month later in a meeting with Republican senators. Or deciding in early September to end the Obama-era program that prevented deportations for thousands of young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children — only to say hours later that he has "love for these people" and wants Congress to "help them."

Sealing Souls With Glass

To be successful entrepreneurs, women must overcome their negative conditioning

homebound India woman who has to set aside all aspirations in the seva of family and God.

But let's not assume that we have achieved a level playing field for women. Though there's better awareness of the neglected girl child, we remain a largely patriarchal society. Equality between genders still remains a distant ideal. However, the battles educated, urban women have to fight are substantially internal—they are constantly limited by the messages given to them at homes and in society. These messages are internalised at an early age and continue to hinder women from realising their potential.

Let me illustrate with my own experience. I grew up in an upper middle-class home; my father had his own business. My two brothers were expected to join the family business. Compared to my brothers I did better at studies, and yet was never encouraged to join the enterprise. A constant message was drilled into me—I was to prepare for

marriage and settle down to a family life.

By training, I am a social worker. But destiny took me to the corporate world. In the 1980s, my husband, Rohinton, suffered a massive heart attack. Friends and well-wishers suggested that, to help Rohinton, I take interest in our company—a private limited entity. I joined the HR division. After the death of my husband in 1996, the board appointed me executive chairperson. Male colleagues approved of this decision. I guess they felt comfortable; they had known me all along and thought they could get their way around me, little realising how tough I could be! As chairperson, I was troubled by all kinds of insecurities. I compared myself with my illustrious husband and felt inadequate. To add to my difficulties, the Indian economy was going through a downturn and this affected my company's performance. After several agonising quarters, I decided to seek help and called in a consulting company to help us turn

around. Though my male senior managers stood by me through this crisis, I remember their reluctance in asking for external help. Maybe their macho self-images didn't allow that. Within my own company and with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), where I was the western region chairperson, my male colleagues have gone out of their way to support me. I haven't really experienced a single man coming in the way of my personal growth. Of course, my experience cannot be generalised; possibly, I started from a different context.

However, my discomfort could be experienced by other women too. I had tremendous self-doubts about my capabilities. The Vipassana meditation session that I attended shortly after my husband's death helped me deal with my inner turmoil. I realised I have to accept me for what I am, make use of my strengths and, when in need, turn to people willing to help and guide. The messages internalised by our women make them cau-

tious and naturally they wouldn't dare take risks. Successful work life, especially entrepreneurship, is all about taking risks, which means believing in possibilities and not getting fixated by limitations. So, it is important for us to reflect on our growing up and once we do that it is possible to rewrite the old script.

Though there is change, I am aware that family businesses in India are still considered the preserve of men. I remember my husband and I never discriminated between our daughter and son, nor pressured them to join the business. Openness of choice is a legacy family enterprises can offer their women members. Whether from a business family or a first-generation entrepreneur, once the decision to venture out into the uncharted area of entrepreneurship is taken, I feel the most pertinent question to be asked is—can we remove the glass ceiling which we have set up within ourselves, before we expect the world to lift its glass ceilings at the workplace?

Golly! It's The Time For Davids

Small is beautiful, and also lucrative, in the B-town now. After its prolonged fixation with everything larger-than-life on 70mm, the film industry is finally beginning to realise that size doesn't really matter in the economics of new-age cinema.

This year, movie-makers appear to have cracked the box office code simply by picking up novel scripts, keeping the budgets low, sticking to production deadlines and avoiding unnecessary expenditure—all indicating a discernible change from the way Hindi cinema has been made over the years. The failure of many a big-budget project that chose to bank on star power rather than content, all at around the same time, has hastened this metamorphosis.

Doubtless, several movies with modest star casts, shorn of any hype prior to release, have left the producers laughing all the way to the bank in a year which reduced several bigwigs behind lavishly mounted extravaganzas to tears. Irrfan Khan's Hindi Medium—a telling commentary on the state of private school education, made on a budget of less than Rs 25 crore—turned out to be a massive hit, earning almost three times of its budget in the domestic market alone. Nawazuddin Siddiqui-starrer Babumoshai Bandoobaaaz, a gangster flick made on a shoestring budget of Rs 5 crore, left trade pundits astonished by raking in about Rs 13 crore. In keeping with this trend, Ayushmann Khurrana's latest, Shubh Mangal Saavdhan, which tackled as unusual a theme as erectile dysfunction, proved to be an aphrodisiac at the cash counters, garnering over Rs 35 crore, double its budget, in merely two weeks since its release earlier this month.

In sharp contrast, the big but bad ones, hoping to cash in on the charm and charisma of popular A-list stars, were left gasping in their commercial run. Highly-rated director Imtiaz Ali's Jab Harry Met Sejal, in fact, turned out to be Shahrukh "King" Khan's biggest disaster in the multiplex era.

Movies with modest star casts, shorn of any hype prior to release, have left the producers laughing all the way to the bank. Tubelight, starring another widely-acknowledged demigod of the box office, Salman Khan, did comparatively better with a collection of about Rs 120 crore, and yet its distributors ended up incurring huge losses because of its highly inflated budget.

Disney production Jagga Jasoos, Ranbir Kapoor's long-in-the-making film, also collapsed under the weight of its steep production costs while Amitabh Bachchan's Sarkar 3 could not replicate the magic of its hit prequels made by the maverick Ram Gopal Varma. A few big-budget movies of other top-notch stars, such as Ajay Devgn's Baadshaho and Anil Kapoor's Mubarakan, did good business initially but failed to ensure decent profits for all the stakeholders, from respective production houses to the exhibitors. In the first three quarters of the year, it was primarily the success of small-budget projects that brought cheers to an industry often pilloried for its disorganised style of functioning and utter disregard for fiscal prudence.

Significantly, their success has also cast a shadow on the much-vaunted star system Bollywood has so proudly worn on its sleeves like its proverbial badge of honour for long. As of now, the box office, otherwise considered to be an impregnable fortress of only a few big commercial stars, appears to be under siege with a bunch of 'regular', deglamorised but extremely talented actors churning out hits at a fair clip. Made on small-to-moderate budgets with minimal spending on publicity and promotions, their recent, more-realistic-than-fantastic ventures have earned enough profits to carve out their own space in the marquee of exalted box-office mascots.

Consequently, content appears to be tantalisingly close to replacing star power as the ultimate arbiter of a movie's fate now. Heralded by a bunch of new filmmakers and actors who have no qualms in playing true-to-life characters, with all their follies and foibles, the advent of content-heavy cinema marks a clear departure from the era dominated by the 'high-on-testosterone' macho-heroes, who wouldn't do anything not befitting their screen stature and considered any such shade to a role an infraction. But does all this really signify a change in the taste of audiences? Many believe that it's not a new phenomenon, as the audience has always appreciated a content-heavy movie regardless of its star cast. "The only difference today is that the industry is better at working out rational budgets for a film," says director Saket Choudhary whose Hindi Medium was one of the biggest hits of the year.

"Hasn't the same audience appreciated the big star Aamir Khan's Taarey Zameen Par and Dangal in the past or Akshay Kumar's recent films? I think it is this year in particular that a lot many content-driven films have done well together."

Hindi Medium, says Choudhary, connected with the audiences big time because they could relate to its theme. Besides, small and independent movies are also helped by the emergence of new avenues, he adds. "Since digital platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime have come up, the chances of recovering the cost of a movie have certainly gone up. The producer is no longer afraid to invest, knowing he would get back his money if he makes a good film within a fixed budget."

Choudhary says that the success of small movies has not only turned young actors such as Rajkummar Rao and Ayushmann Khurrana into new stars but also prompted a big star like Akshay Kumar to keep banking upon content-heavy cinema made on a reasonable budget. "Akshay has proved how star power combined with content can be a big motivator for the audiences to flock to theatres," he says. "This has helped him grow as an actor and star as well."

Choudhary has a point. In a year when his formidable colleagues like Salman and Shahrukh struggled, Akshay gave back-to-

back hits. This year, Jolly LLB 2 and Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, both earned more than Rs 125 crore underlining the fact that no star, howsoever big in the commercial world, can ignore content now. Concur director Ashwiny Iyer-Tiwari, whose Bareilly ki Barfi, a slice-of-life romantic drama set in a small UP town starring Khurrana and Rao in the lead roles, was among the hits this year: "I think the industry is going the Hollywood way these days. Back home, it's like returning to the days of Hrishikesh Mukherjee, when everybody knew which kind of movie a particular director offered," she states. "It is heartening that the character in a script has once again become far more important than the individual portraying it on screen, which implies that the meaning of an actor is coming out in the true sense now."

Director Amit V. Masurkar—whose black comedy, Newton, starring Rao in the lead, is slated for release this week—thinks the audience has now become more open-minded than ever before when it comes to accepting diverse themes. "The number of people going to multiplexes is rising by the day," he says. "Their aspirations and spending power are also increasing and they don't mind spending extra bucks even on a new Hollywood movie which is being released in India and the US on the same day these days."

Masurkar says that so-called art movies, howsoever good, did not do well commercially in the past

but in the era of multiplexes, they have better prospects because even regular audiences look forward to variety in content. He cites another reason for the success of young actors like Rao and Khurrana: "All the reigning superstars are in their 50s now so they are shifting to solid content to suit their age," he says. "That leaves the field open for the younger actors. It is, therefore, a natural progression for them to rise."

Nevertheless, it is too early to say if domination of content over star power at the ticket counters is for real or just a passing fad. Ghalib Asad Bhopali, scriptwriter of Babumoshai Bandoobaaaz, avers that this trend will last only if other film-makers avoid making similar movies. "Nobody knows how long it will continue for because Bollywood tends to blindly follow any trend that becomes popular. As a result, the audience ultimately gets tired of watching the same stuff over and over again," he says. "I'm afraid a day will come when the audience will also get fed up with the realistic cinema in vogue these days."

Ghalib, son of yesteryear lyricist Asad Bhopali, says that Babumoshai turned out to be a hit because people could easily connect with the character of a sharpshooter played by Nawazuddin. "It was not a larger-than-life character but a realistic one, someone they might have seen somewhere in their own neighbourhood," he states. "But such characters cannot be repeated in every other gangster flick."

Unrealistic economic expectations are hurting the government

the government is not sure how inflation will play with the electorate. It is one thing for economists to say that inflation rates of six to seven per cent are necessary; quite another for a politician to explain to his constituents why prices are rising. You can argue, as many in government do privately, that the middle class discontent does not matter because the prime minister has re-invented himself as a champion of the poor. But Mr. Modi is astute enough to know that he cannot ignore his original support base and he is experienced enough to realise that the mood of the middle class has a way of trickling down to the broader electorate. So, three years into its term, this gov-

ernment faces its biggest test. The crisis has not come from the issues that dominate the headlines: Pakistan, terrorism, or gau rakshaks. Instead it has emerged from the one issue on which there can be no compromise: the middle class's standard of living and its expectations. That's why the prime minister and the finance minister have been so busy preparing a stimulus package and may be prepared to risk increasing the budget deficit. They know that the next election will not be fought on Hindutva or development. It will be fought on the issue where the government is now most at risk of alienating its original supporters: the economy.

Amitabh Bachchan, Family May Be Summoned In Panama Papers Case

They said the Enforcement Directorate has now received their replies to the notices issued under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). "The replies have been received. They could be soon summoned as part of the probe," sources said, according to PTI. Amitabh Bachchan's name had cropped in the Panama Papers case which is also being probed by the Income Tax Depart-

ment. Tax officials are probing the Bollywood megastar's offshore remittances. Dubbed as Panama Papers, an investigation of a stockpile of records from Panamanian legal firm Mossack Fonseca by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalist had named several world leaders and celebrities who had allegedly stashed away money abroad in offshore companies.

India Will Be \$6 Trillion Economy In 10 Years, Says Morgan Stanley Report

(News Agencies) India's digitisation drive would provide a boost of 50-75 basis points to GDP growth in the coming decade. "We estimate that digitisation will provide a boost of 50-75 basis points to GDP growth and forecast that India will grow to \$6 trillion economy

and achieve upper-middle income status by 2026-27," Morgan Stanley head India research and equity strategist Ridham Desai told reporters here. "We expect India's real and nominal GDP growth to compound annually by 7.1 per cent and 11.2 per cent

respectively over the coming decade," he added. Citing the report 'India's digital leap - The multi-trillion dollar opportunity' released on Wednesday, Desai said apart from some short term teething problems including implementation of GST, there is scope for visible shifts in economic activity starting in 2018 which would eventually lead India to be the top five equity markets in the world with a market capitalisation of \$6.1 trillion and the third-largest listed financial services sector around the globe with a market cap of \$1.8 trillion by 2027. India's consumer sector is also likely to add about \$1.5 trillion over the next ten years. "We project gross FDI inflows amounting to \$120 billion by FY'27, almost double the current 12-month trailing run rate of \$64 billion," Desai said.

Accordingly, Desai also noted that stock markets are likely

to remain robust as a stronger economic growth should drive stronger corporate earnings growth. Desai also said the country is also likely to witness strong domestic participation in equities. "We project equity saving of \$420 billion-\$525 billion over the next ten years, versus the respective \$60 billion and \$120 billion that households and foreign portfolios invested over the previous ten years," he said. While the report exudes confidence that India's growth story is to continue, it also identified certain risks. These are with

respect to political stability, privacy debate over Aadhaar, and implementation of GST, among others. The report said that while the Supreme Court has made privacy a fundamental right in a recent judgement, private parties will likely continue to question whether Aadhaar violates privacy rights. "Any adverse judgement in the courts could derail one of the main anchors of our framework," it said. Further, it noted that GST is expected to disrupt smaller businesses causing job losses and a general slowdown in economic growth.

The Overwhelming Message of Unity being spread

By The Nature Gurus Slowly and gradually these weaver-birds and many more species of birds were becoming an inseparable part of my life. That fabulous tree with precious nests of weaver-birds, was growing From my uncle's backyard, many birds started adorning my roof-top also. Their chirping was a continuous source of inner peace and tranquility for me. With the passage of time, my husband started providing feed to these birds- grains, water and other food items edible for these crea-

tures. One day early morning, as we came downstairs after offering feed to these birds, I heard a great noise of birds as if they were calling each other to eat, inviting all to share. As I went there, I was bewildered and astonished at the scene over there. All birds seemed to worry about each other. Their selfless-chirping was a continuous source of inner peace and tranquility for me. With the passage of time, my husband started providing feed to these birds- grains, water and other food items edible for these crea-

Migration of weaver-birds- A Poignant Pause

(News Agencies) Every morning, these optimistic weaver-birds, my real chums used to wake me up with their melodious chirping. Slowly and slyly these birds became a precious asset of my life. But ... one morning Of mid-September.... Left me stunned....As I went upstairs to provide feed to the birds, all pigeons, sparrows and charming colorful birds were there but....to my surprise , all the nests of weaver-birds were empty. I was saddened as if I had lost some valuable asset. My husband told me that perhaps birds had migrated to some other place. Mostly these birds rebuild their home every year, without bothering about the hard work and labor involved in it. On one side I was looking at that tree which was perhaps missing those tiny birds. On the other side, I was feeling the pain and agony of those parents whose children had migrated to other countries due to lack of job opportunities in their native country and many more other reasons. Most of the residents of my locality are suffering isolation as their nests were also empty due to migration of their lovely birds.... Their kids. The tree was hopeful to be adorned with birds once again, though after one year. But the darkest side of picture in other case was that these desperate parents were dead sure that their children , once settled abroad , would never come back to live here and their nests will remain all barren forever....Alas the children of my country could make their dreams come true in their native country.

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ED plans new chargesheet against Vijay Mallya after tracking shell companies

(News Agencies) The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is said to have identified 30-odd shell companies which were used by Vijay Mallya to launder Kingfisher Airlines loans

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is preparing to file a second chargesheet against businessman Vijay Mallya, three months after filing the first.

The first chargesheet, filed by ED under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in June, was related to the suspected diversion of a Rs900 crore loan given to his de-

funct Kingfisher Airlines by IDBI Bank Ltd.

ED officials said on condition of anonymity that the next set of charges would pertain to other sums suspected to have been laundered by Mallya, who borrowed the money for Kingfisher Airlines, which was grounded in 2012.

Mallya diverted most of the Rs6,000 crore he borrowed from a State Bank of India-led consortium of lenders to shell companies in half-a-dozen countries, The Economic Times reported on Monday, citing investigations by the Central Bureau of Investigation

(CBI) and the ED. They will file a fresh chargesheet based on these findings, the newspaper said. "There is an existing chargesheet against Vijay Mallya and another one will also be filed soon. However, it is premature to spell out the details of the chargesheet," said a senior ED official on condition of anonymity.

Another senior ED official said, also on condition of anonymity, that "the agency had identified 30-odd shell companies which were used by Mallya to launder the Kingfisher loans". "The amount was about one-fourth but it is

early to say. The KFA account had a low credit rating and fresh loans were granted," he added. The second chargesheet will be based on a complaint filed by a State Bank of India-led consortium, this person said. CBI denied it was going to file any chargesheet on the matter. Mallya had been chargesheeted by CBI on 24 January, following which a CBI court in Mumbai issued a non-bailable warrant against him on 31 January. Mallya left for London in March 2016 as banks closed in on him to recover more than Rs9,000 crore owed to them by the



defunct Kingfisher Airlines. On 19 April 2017, Mallya was briefly arrested by Scotland Yard in London, following India's request for his extradition on fraud charges. He was released on bail a few hours later after he appeared at a central London police station. "This matter is sub-judice; hence, we cannot comment on the same," a spokesperson for Mallya's United Breweries Holdings Ltd said.

Amazon's Shoppers Stop deal is like most buys. Not essential



(News Agencies) It's possible, too, that Amazon may want to make a bigger play for Indian bricks and mortar, in which case

The three Western supermarket giants have plonked down hundreds of millions of dollars over the past decade to expand their retail chains across India. Now Amazon.com Inc. is about to establish a larger bricks-and-mortar presence than all three combined at a cost of just \$28 million. In the 95 minutes it takes Amazon to make that in revenue, the e-commerce

behemoth's 5% stake in Mumbai-based Shoppers Stop Ltd gives Jeff Bezos access to 80 shopfront locations across India, with 20 more to come.

The size of the outlay is ironic given that Wal-Mart had promised to bring thousands of jobs to India, only to be blocked by politicians intent on keeping foreign retailers out of the country. Carrefour left altogether in

2014, while Tesco has limited its operations to assisting a local retail chain with merchandise and technical support. Wal-Mart, meanwhile, doesn't sell directly to consumers. Rather, it has 20 wholesale-only outlets, although the company says it will add 50 cash-and-carry outposts over the next five years. In India, Amazon now gets to tinker with its newfound obsession of selling stuff in

shopfronts, without the pressure that accompanies bigger investments such as its \$13 billion purchase of Whole Foods Market Inc. in the US.

Outside of cash, Amazon is offering Shoppers Stop space on its website, from which the latter expects sales will boom, managing director Govind Shrikhande told Bloomberg News. Shoppers Stop needs the help: Two years ago, Shrikhande envisioned online sales would account for 20% of turnover by 2020; now that goal is 10%, up from a current figure of 1.2%. Investors applauded Monday, sending Shoppers Stop shares up as much as 20%.

While Amazon, Flipkart Online Services Pvt. Ltd and Jasper Infotech Pvt. Ltd's Snapdeal appear to be in an all-out dash for share of India's e-commerce sector, the US retailer is really only taking the first steps in a marathon. An interest in a company with \$732 million in annual revenue is small fry versus the 41 warehouses Amazon currently has in India and the \$5 billion Bezos has pledged to invest there.

But Shoppers Stop can become Amazon's test bed for what works and what doesn't in an emerging market where consumer behaviour is unique.

Trump proposes U.S. tax overhaul, stirs concerns on deficit



(News Agencies) deficit. The proposal drew a swift, skeptical response from WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump proposed on Wednesday the biggest U.S. tax overhaul in three decades, calling for tax cuts for most Americans, but prompting criticism that the plan favors business and the rich and could add trillions of dollars to the

deficit, period," Corker, who said on Tuesday he would not seek re-election in 2018, told reporters. Trump said his tax plan was aimed at helping working people, creating jobs and making the tax code simpler and fairer. But it faces an uphill battle in the U.S. Congress with Trump's own Republican Party divided over it and Democrats hostile. The plan would lower corporate and small-business income tax rates, reduce the top income tax rate for high-earning American individuals and scrap some popular tax breaks, including one that benefits people in high-tax states dominated by Democrats.

Forged during months of talks among Trump's aides and top congressional Republicans, the plan contained few details on how to pay for

the tax cuts without expanding the budget deficit and adding to the nation's \$20 trillion national debt. The plan still must be turned into legislation, which was not expected until after Congress makes progress on the fiscal 2018 budget, perhaps in October. It must then be debated by the Republican-led congressional tax-writing committees. Analysts were skeptical that Congress could approve a tax bill this year, but that is what Republicans hope to achieve so they can enter next year's congressional election campaigns with at least one legislative achievement to show for 2017. Financial markets rallied on the plan's unveiling, an event long anticipated by traders betting that stocks would benefit from both faster economic growth and

Thin Line of Curiosity, Habit

Eagerness to view porn is normal, but it's a serious problem if the activity starts to influence your sexual life and encourage behaviour that is unhealthy for others.

(News Agencies) The internet has certainly made the world smaller. In a decade or so, shops in malls will disappear and will be replaced by online stores. Making a purchase online is convenient and time saving, and one can return a disappointing product sitting at home. Libraries will also disappear; newspapers are already online. The world is literally at your fingertips. Many years ago, before the advent of smartphones and laptops, many people used computers mostly at the workplace. Though one would not be online constantly. I once got a call from the hospital superintendent that he wanted to see me over an urgent issue.

It turned out that he

had checked the browsing history of resident doctors and found they had been visiting pornographic sites. He wanted to withdraw their privileges of computer usage. I was a little amused and told him that would be like withdrawing vehicles from roads because they cause accidents. I asked him what he would do if he was in his twenties, was taking a break from studying in the dead of night and had access to a computer with internet. He laughed and I told him curiosity was making them visit certain sites and idle browsing was not something to be concerned about.

However, one must consider and draw a line between curiosity and an addiction to porn. A report

on obscenity and pornography in 1970 estimated that the retail value of pornography in the United States was \$10 million. In 1998, Forrester Research published a report online stating the adult content industry had an estimated annual revenue of \$750 million to \$1 billion. In 2014, the industry's revenue in the US was pegged at \$13 billion. There is some restriction on pornography around the world. In many cities in the West, sex shops are strictly regulated.

One must define what pornography is and what should be allowed. The issue is particularly vexing in our country, the birthplace of the Kama Sutra and home to many erotic sculptures and carvings.

The perceptions depend on how one views the issue. Much objection to pornography comes from feminism, law, and religion. Cyber pornography is banned in many countries, but legal in some. This is a grey area in India's IT Act of 2000: it's not prohibited, nor legalised. I think this is one of the most sensible laws enacted. Banning something is always counterproductive as the step only helps an activity thrive.

The more sensible thing to do is viewing individual curiosity as legal. An article by Arthur Caplan of the NY School of Medicine is enlightening. Flights attendants told him how many a large number of passengers on board watch porn on their



phones or computers. I suppose this breaks the boredom of along flight. It is not usually a problem until porn becomes a part of someone's sexual life, dominating it or encouraging behaviour that is not healthy for others. I think this very clearly explains the thin line between curiosity and disease. When it becomes a problem, it becomes a public health issue, like substance abuse. The word pornography has its origin in Greek — pornographos, meaning description or depiction of prostitution. A lot of erotic art was discovered during excavations at the site of Pompeii, an ancient Roman city, in the 1860s and it shocked Victorians. Depending on how one views things, one may see a huge difference between erotica and pornography or none at all. One is an art form, one is about a sexual act. In any case, when viewing certain material becomes problematic, it is wise to consult a doctor for further advice.

Want to know the secret to success at work?

It lies in having supportive friends and family



(News Agencies) Want to know what's the secret to success? Having a supportive family and friends can boost your confidence and keep you motivated to achieve greater personal goals, a study suggests.

Researchers at University of Michigan (U-M) in the US used data from the US and Japan to determine if personal growth is an outcome of an individual's traits or the positive relationships they have with others.

In one study, about 200 participants were randomly

assigned to one of three relationship conditions: supportive, non-supportive and neutral. In the two main conditions, some had to consider a person in their life with whom they felt comfortable (or not) and did not worry (did worry) about being abandoned by them.

The neutral group had to consider an acquaintance for whom they did not have strong feelings. Participants read a hypothetical scenario in which they had to choose between a higher-paying job with high familiarity (Com-

pany A) or a lower-paying job that required learning that would help their long-term career development (Company B).

Among those in the supportive relationship condition, 65% selected Company B, whereas 40% of those in the non-supportive condition chose the same company. 50% of the neutral group picked Company B.

Participants who thought about a supportive person were more willing to choose a job that promoted personal growth, even at lower pay, in

part because they had more self-confidence, the study found. In two other studies, researchers analysed people's perceptions of the support received from family and friends to determine personal growth tendencies in two cultures.

Using data from the Survey of Midlife Development in the US, more than 3,800 participants in the second study rated the support received from family and friends. People who reported their relationships to be supportive had a greater willingness to grow personally and felt more self-confident, the study showed.

Overall, the findings support the "I-through-We" perspective, which means the social tendency to connect with others, and the individual tendency to strive and grow as individuals, are not mutually exclusive and may augment and magnify each other. "In other words, relationships do not necessarily conflict with but help sustain one's personal growth," said Oscar Ybarra, professor at U-M.

Ink Talk: This is the reason why women are more attracted to men with tattoos

Women tend to look more favourably on men with tattoos, associating them with "good health, masculinity, aggressiveness and dominance," according to one study.

What is it about tattooed men that's so attractive? In a research carried out by dating app Type, it was found that 64% of women who stated a preference were looking to date men who have had some kind of permanent ink body art, reports The Independent.

This also holds true for those who are looking for a same-sex partner, with women and men stating that they view "some" tattoos as an added attraction in a love interest. Benno Spencer, Type's CEO said, "We've been surprised just how strong the trends are when it comes to tattoos. So many of our users are looking for someone with a bit of body art - it's clearly a turn on for both men and women." Previous research has also found that women tend to look more favourably on men with tattoos, associating them with "good health, masculinity, aggressiveness and dominance," according to one study. Type's recent survey also found that only 39% of men were attracted to women with tattoos. However, the dating app's company Steve Bryson bucks this trend. Today, the most tattooed city in the UK is Birmingham. One in five adults in the UK now have tattoos, with bastions of the British establishment having little qualms about visiting tattoo parlours.

Top 10 sex positions that are fat-burning exercises

Sex is hot! Sex makes you sweat and some sexual positions demand a lot from certain muscle groups!

(Agencies) If you skip your cardio for the day, get erotic and experience the health benefits of sex internally and externally. These sexual positions are not restricted to the bed, let go of yourself and pump up your exercise routine.

Standing

Lack of space and privacy means getting naughty in a closet or staircase. But doing it standing has several fitness benefits for different muscle groups. This sexual position builds your core muscles and improves your leg muscles too. The girl can flex her muscles and improve arm strength as she latches onto the man. This exercise needs a lot of stamina.

Lotus

Though it may seem like an easy sexual position, the lotus position improves your glutes and core. The lotus position also makes it intimate as you and your partner are facing each other.

Doggy style

This is one of the popular sexual positions for a man and a woman. It stimulates both the sexes immediately; doggy style stimulates a woman's G-spot and pumps up a guy's member. Doggy style strengthens a woman's core, quadriceps and glutes. As for guys the quads and the core too are exercised.

Cowgirl

Cowgirl is one the favourite positions for women as they



are in command of their body and their sexual experience. Cowgirl flexes lower abs, pelvic muscles and calves - cowgirl serves as a great exercise to build stamina and the leg muscles.

Scissors

Scissor position is recommended for pregnant women; it is a slow penetration and is not that tiring. But the scissor position uses your inner thigh muscles and the core due to lack of movement in this sexual position.

Bridge

You need to be fit to flex your muscles in this sexual position. The bridge position is demanding for women, she has to hold with her arms and legs, and her body has to be parallel to the bed. The bridge position exercises the biceps, triceps, abs, quads and glutes.

Arch

This sexual position is a good way to reach orgasm in a woman. For a woman, arch position exercises the core muscles and the legs - glutes

and quads. Arch position is a lot more of an exercise than the bridge position.

Wheelbarrow

You can burn up to 100 calories with this position. Wheelbarrow sexual position strengthens the arms of the woman and for the man too. A man also uses his leg muscles to support the girl and also uses his core muscles. Top 10 Sex Positions that are Fat-Burning Exercises

Missionary

This position is beneficial for:

the butt muscles.

- Core muscles: By lifting your pelvic and not your lower back, you are using the core muscles.

Lunge

It may seem complicated but lunge is a good way to exercise and improve flexibility. Here the woman is on top of the man with one leg ahead of him and the other leg is extended behind her. Lunges as a sexual position are a good way to exercise the butt, core muscles, quads and hamstrings.

5 Foods you can safely eat past their due dates

Do we really take expiry dates seriously? We have all been at the crossroads when picking or throwing away "expired food".

(Agencies) While it is right to cast away food after its expiry date for precautionary measures, there are a number of foods that can be consumed safely even past their due dates. We list a few below.

There are a number of chemicals and additives in aerated drinks, which can sustain its expiry long after the due date mentioned on the labels. The average shelf life of diet soda can be estimated to four months past the expiry date mentioned and regular soda can be nine months.

Butter

You may be wary of using this dairy product past its due date right? But butter unlike other dairy products can be frozen and kept

for longer than its expiry date. So if you realise that your unopened butter packet is approaching its expiry date, just freeze it for awhile and thaw it before baking. But make sure you use the entire packet in one go.

Chicken

One should never use raw chicken past its due date but frozen chicken is safe to consume even months after its expiry date. Frozen chicken can be thawed and cooked even up to a year past its due date.

Cereal

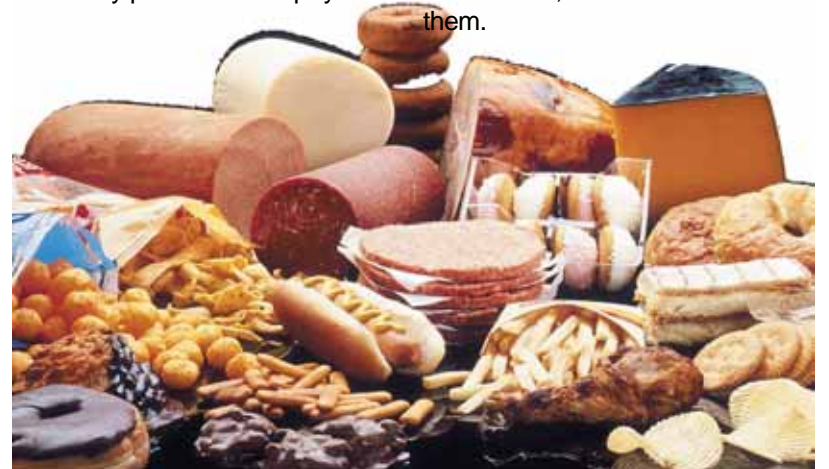
Your cereal may lose a bit of its crunch or even its flavour once it passes its expiry date but the truth is that processed cereals can last for upto six months past its

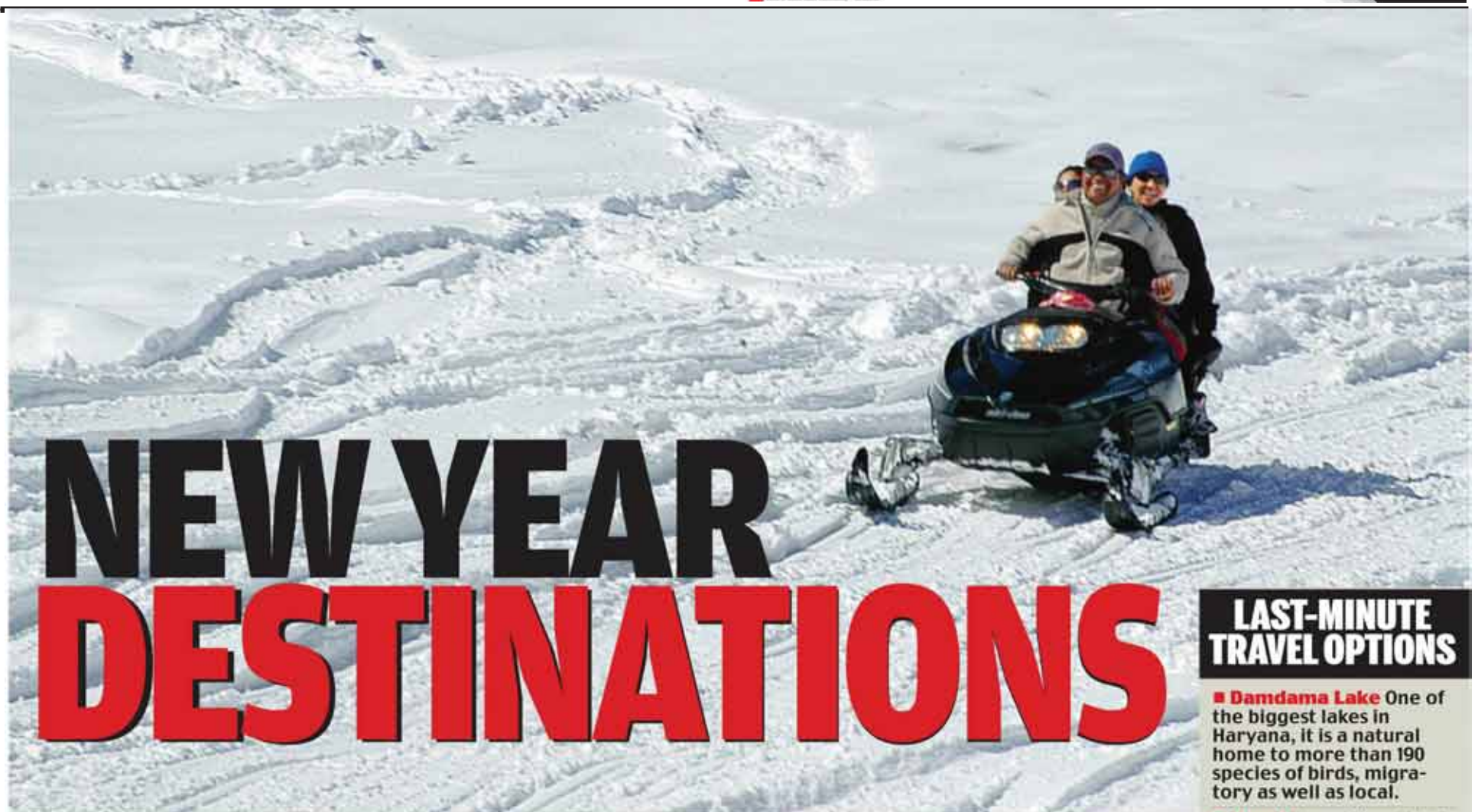
due date. Just remember to seal it or store it in an airtight container.

Potato Chips

Just like cereals, potato chips may lose their crunch or flavour after they pass their expiry date.

But, with the additives and chemicals present in them, you can consume them months after their due date. In fact, you could roast them in the oven to get back the crunch, and then snack on them.





NEW YEAR DESTINATIONS

LAST-MINUTE TRAVEL OPTIONS

■ **Damdama Lake** One of the biggest lakes in Haryana, it is a natural home to more than 190 species of birds, migratory as well as local.

■ **Hansi** One of the oldest forts in Haryana — built by Prithviraj Chauhan — lies in Hansi. It also has the ancient statues of Mahavira and Buddha.

■ **Surajkund** Built in the backdrop of the picturesque Aravalli Hills, Surajkund is known for its annual fair 'Surajkund International Craft Mela'.

■ **Alwar** Located 160 km from Delhi, Alwar has many historical monuments like Deewanji Ki Lal Haveli. It is also home to the haunted Bhangarh fort and the Sariska Tiger Reserve.

■ **Agra** Besides being the land of the Taj Mahal, it also houses Agra Fort, Fatehpur Sikri and Akbar's tomb.
— Suggested by Hari Nair, founder & CEO, HolidayIQ

By Srijani Ganguly

THE end is nigh, at least for the year 2015. People are working out ways to herald 2016 in their own way — watching celebrations around the world on the television, partying at the local bar or spending the new year at a place away from home.

Shiju Radhakrishnan, CEO and founder of iTraveller.com, breaks down the places one can visit during this period. "International destinations like Mauritius, Dubai, Singapore and Malaysia are best places for families to be during the New Year. Ideal places to visit with the family, within India, are Darjeeling, Coorg and Gangtok. As for the 'most happening' place for a group of friends, Goa remains the most preferred place" says Radhakrishnan.

Even those who have been unable to plan out a New

Year getaway, can chalk a last-minute plan thanks to Delhi's strategic location. "Luckily, the Capital has an advantageous location and is surrounded by some of the most popular places with an international repute. For a last-minute travel planning, Delhi has plenty of options like Jaipur, Udaipur, Agra, Mussoorie, Nainital, Shimla and Lansdowne, to name a few," says Shefali Walia, founder of WeTravelSolo.

Walia's own company is organising a few trips as well. She says, "WeTravelSolo is organising trips for Kasol, Goa, Auli, Udaipur and Jaisalmer. The idea behind choosing these destinations is to provide our travellers a blend of choices ranging from snow-capped mountains to all-white desert." The guys at Skyscanner have gone a step ahead and crunched out the numbers to predict the top-seven destinations that Indians are most likely to fly to next year. "With a significant growth in outbound travel to less explored cities, it appears that Indians are keen to make the transition from a wide-eyed tourist to a more receptive traveller. Based on our data, Indian travellers are eyeing for roads less travelled in countries that have been traditional destina-

tion magnets. While tropical Asia continues to be a favourite holiday region for Indians, destinations which are extremely rich in culture, traditions and history such as Russia is coming to the fore," says Ravish Doctor, manager, Growth Strategy at Skyscanner India.

Adding to the predictions of the 2016 travel trends, Hari Nair, founder and CEO of HolidayIQ, says that "activity-based travel that include trekking, rafting, kayaking, jet skiing, surfing, scuba diving and snorkelling will be an attraction for young travellers seeking adventure". He further adds, "Solo trips undertaken by women will gain momentum in 2016."

Indian travellers are now eyeing for roads less travelled

My best designs are created after Goa vacation

Manish Arora, known for his eccentric yet eclectic style, calls travel his source of inspiration

■ **What's your idea of a perfect holiday?**

Anything that allows me to unwind and escape from the craziness of reality for a while.

■ **What do you enjoy most on holidays?**

I love meeting new people and learning about different cultures, art, fashion and food.

■ **One holiday destination you keep going back to?**

Tokyo, it's one of my absolute favourite cities in the whole world.

■ **What's your happiest holiday memory?**

Every year at Burning Man.

■ **What do you like to do while on a holiday?**

Relax, explore and party!

■ **What is travel for you?**

Life & a rich source of inspiration.

■ **Any destination that's on your bucket list? And why?**

My bucket list is ever expanding & I love being surprised by my journeys.

■ **What's your favourite travel destination in India and why?**

I love India and every state has its own story which I love to uncover but I love Goa for its sun, sand, beaches and chilled vibes. It rejuvenates me each time I go and I always return to work all pumped up and energised. Some of my best designs have been created after a Goa vacation.

■ **Tell us about the city you recently explored.**

The year 2015 was a great year for travel. I visited places like Bali, China, eastern Europe, Thailand and Istanbul. All these locales, in fact, served as inspiration for my Couture 2015 collection which I recently showcased in Delhi.

■ **Where would you like to have your holiday home?**

I already have two homes in Delhi and Paris, and I shuttle between the two cities throughout the year. But if I had to have another, it would definitely be in Goa, London or Tokyo. I equally love these places and would do anything to be there.

■ **Please tell us about your travel plans for next year.**

Frankly speaking, I am an impulse traveller so your guess is as good as mine!

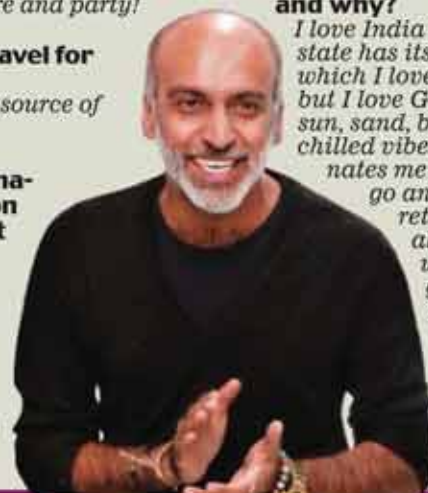
■ **What's your best travel advice?**

I believe getting lost in a new place is sometimes the best way to find hidden gems — shops, cafes, parks, etc.

■ **Tell us about things you never travel without?**

Sunscreen, an eye mask, a good pair of socks, a woollen sweater if it's some place cold, headphones and a good book that will give me company during my travels.

— As told to Lipla Negi





Kareena Kapoor looks hot in this black dress

(News Agencies) Kareena Kapoor looks hot in this black dress, See pics. Again, Kareena Kapoor is making headlines with her beauty. Bollywood diva Kareena Kapoor is among those actresses who are well known for their

fashion style. In Mumbai during her party time she amazed everyone with her hot look in black dress. The 37 year old actress arrived at party in a black dress, this dress had a shoulder slit. This mother returned to her perfect

shape after a baby. In this black dress she is looking fabulous. The long sleeve on her left balanced the glamour of the one-shoulder pattern with such subtlety that it set the ensemble a class-apart from your everyday little black dress.

“Baahubali” actor Tamannah Bhatia to star in Telugu remake of Queen

(News Agencies) “Baahubali” actor Tamannah Bhatia has been roped in to play the lead role in the Telugu remake of Kangana Ranaut-starrer “Queen”.

“Baahubali” actor Tamannah Bhatia to star in Telugu remake of Queen

The Telugu version is produced by Manu Kumaran under the banner of Mediente Films. National award winning director G Neelakanta Reddy will helm the remake, which goes on floors on October 25. “Baahubali” actor Tamannah Bhatia to star in Telugu remake of Queen

“Queen’ is an interesting film and I have always been motivated by roles that help alleviate women in some form. I am very excited to be in the Telugu version and can’t wait to start shooting next month.

“Baahubali” actor Tamannah Bhatia to star in Telugu remake of Queen

“This is the first time I’m working with Neelakanta Reddy and I’m sure we will create magic together on the screen,” Bhatia said in a release.

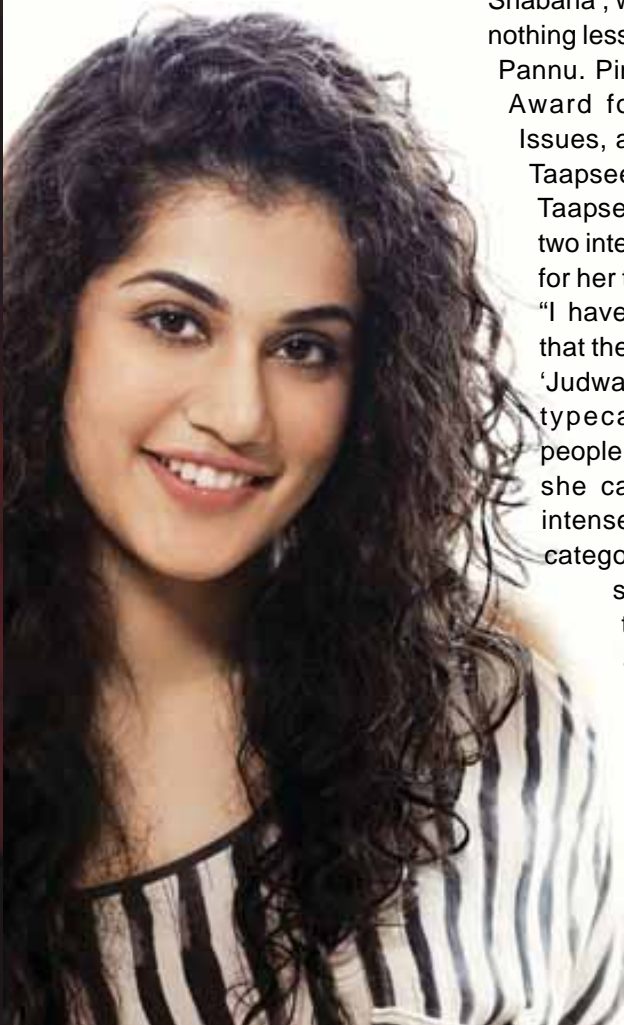


Taapsee Pannu: After ‘Pink’ and ‘Naam Shabana’, I chose ‘Judwaa 2’ to avoid being typecast

(News Agencies) After starring in

movies like ‘Pink’ and ‘Naam Shabana’, working on ‘Judwaa 2’ was nothing less than a picnic for Taapsee Pannu. Pink won the National Film Award for Best Film on Social Issues, and ‘Naam Shabana’ had Taapsee playing an Indian spy. Taapsee says, that after doing two intense films, it was important for her to take a break. She says, “I have no qualms in admitting that the reason I chose a film like ‘Judwaa 2’ was to avoid being typecast. I thought, before people typecast me, saying, ‘Oh, she can only do hard-hitting, intense roles’ and put me in the category of offbeat actresses, I should shock and surprise them. I hate being called an offbeat actress and I don’t consider myself one as my films have been a huge commercial success. ‘Judwaa 2’ is an attempt to surprise the audience and surprises have always worked in my favour. In ‘Baby’, people loved my 10-minute role which was a

surprise to many; in Pink, when people thought that apart from Mr Bachchan nobody else would get the limelight, I did make a mark, and so was the case with ‘Naam Shabana’. After all these films, when people might have thought that this is working for her and she might continue doing these kind of films, here I am, playing a typical Bollywood heroine because I know that I can carry that off as well.” The actress says that working on ‘Judwaa 2’ has been special for her as that has been one of her favourite films since childhood. She says that she must have been nine when she would have watched the film, and since then, she’s remembered dialogues, scenes and lyrics from the movie. “My memories of Judwaa are so strong that I remember the lyrics better than Varun Dhawan. When I shot for ‘Chashme Baddoor’ with David (Dhawan) sir in Mauritius, on the last day of the shoot, I forced David sir to shoot ‘Oonchi Hai Building’ with me as a promotional video, without having any idea that four years later, I would get to do this film,” she says.



Bhoomi movie review: Sanjay Dutt film wants to be a feminist's pride without giving up on cliches

While Sanjay Dutt is in form, Bhoomi is a stereotypical film that tries to advocate feminism but stays in the comfort zone of a Bollywood masala movie.



Bhoomi
 Director: Omung Kumar
 Cast: Sanjay Dutt, Aditi Rao Hydari, Sharad Kelkar, Shekhar Suman
 Rating: 2/5
 Bhoomi is a revenge drama that tries a lot to be bold, brave and advocate feminism but wants to stay in the comfort zone of a typical Bollywood masala film. The result is stereotypes, over-the-top melodrama and a predictable story. But here's the good news:

Baba is back and Sanjay Dutt fans will be more than happy to see him onscreen. Interestingly, Dutt, who returns to the screen after three years, plays an age-appropriate role in the film directed by Oomung Kumar. And he is in form. Bhoomi is the story of a father-daughter duo (Sanjay Dutt's Arun and Bhoomi played by Aditi Rao Hydari) who lead a simple life when a sudden turn of events shake their world. The initial banter between Sanjay and Aditi is syrupy sweet and you already know

that half of the scenes will be later used in montages to relay the pain. However, despite being high on melodrama, the emotional scenes manage to convey the love Sanjay and Aditi share onscreen. Sanjay is a single parent, a doting father and Aditi is the cute-but-motherly daughter who often chides him for his drinking habits. Even these moments are used to focus on the gender discrimination of our society, like during a Ganesha arti, for instance. These often seem forced but given that they are sparsely sprayed over the sequences, we manage to bear with them for the sake of the message intended. The twist comes when the daughter is gang-raped and the perpetrators are let off at the end of a trial in which the woman is humiliated repeatedly. But they are your average family that tries to pick up the pieces and get their life

back in order. A good half an hour is spent as Sanjay and Aditi try their best to maintain a happy face for each other's sake. It is only when they realise that a very trusted and close person was also involved in the crime that they seek revenge. Just before they turn to revenge, Aditi even says, "Rape ho gaya to kya karein? Mombatti le ke baith jaayein ya khud ko aag laga ke chillayein ki hume insaaf chahiye?" The courtroom sequence is reminiscent of Amitabh Bachchan-Taapsee Pannu-starrer Pink. But unlike the 2016 film, the dialogues that focus on the kind of treatment rape survivors get in our society feel forced. A monologue delivered by Dutt about how his daughter is repeatedly humiliated in the court feels especially misplaced. To begin with, he

is not even the lawyer. Even the supporting cast gets a clichéd treatment. Shekhar Suman – designed as the comic relief in an otherwise melodramatic narrative – peppers his dialogues with didactic one-liners. Sharad Kelkar, the film's main antagonist, is a throwback to the 80s. He spouts filmy dialogues while threatening people and will wait till the end of shradh before beginning his nefarious activities. The climax comes with tired tropes that we associate with such revenge dramas – Hydari is shown as Adi Shakti or a devi of Hindu mythology who is wreaking vengeance. While Dutt does the actual fighting, symbolically, Hydari is the one punishing the wrongdoers. Oh, the demands of Bollywood masala train.

Kingsman The Golden Circle movie review: A louder, longer and utterly ludicrous carbon copy of the original

Kingsman: The Golden Circle movie review: Four Oscar-winners - Colin Firth, Julianne Moore, Jeff Bridges, Halle Berry - and one committed Taron Egerton aren't enough to save this sub-par sequel.

Kingsman: The Golden Circle
 Director - Matthew Vaughn
 Cast - Taron Egerton, Colin Firth, Mark Strong, Pedro Pascal, Julianne Moore, Channing Tatum, Halle Berry, Jeff Bridges, Elton John
 Rating - 2/5
 From this moment on – at least until next month, when Kingsman: The Golden Circle ends its theatrical run, and with it, evaporates from public consciousness - when people complain about sequels not being 'as good as the first one', let this film be the one that pops into your head. Kingsman: The Golden Circle, the second in the surprise series of films based on a (highly recommended) comic book by Mark Millar and Dave

Gibbons, is a film plagued by many problems, the least of which is the baffling manner in which it treats its characters – they're strangely isolated and underused, the lot of them. Like some bizarre form of actor humiliation, the more celebrated you are, the more embarrassing your role in Kingsman 2 is likely to be. Of the four Oscar-winners in its cast, one remains confined to a padded cell for more than half the movie, hallucinating butterflies; another exclusively spends her time staring at large computer screens, the third drinks whiskey in a conference room, pausing only to deliver unsolicited lectures about the brewery business; while the fourth – Julianne Moore –

(literally) makes minced meat out of her enemies halfway across the world. Each of these fine actors – not to mention poor Channing Tatum, who after promisingly strutting into the movie finds himself in a coma after 10 minutes, and Academy Award nominee Emily Watson, who inexplicably makes a cameo as a paralysed zombie – is given nothing to work with. But most of these problems can be excused, or at least, explained away – as with most of life's troubles, the blame can squarely be laid on greed: Of actors, of filmmakers, of the studio, and of the audience. Yep, you're not off the hook. What cannot be excused, however – considering especially the money that went into making this movie, and the

sheer amount of talent involved – is that for most of its often unbearable length, Kingsman: The Golden Circle is excruciatingly boring. Now, I realise calling a film boring is the most boring thing I can say about it. But nothing about this film could inspire serious discussion – not even its ah-I-see-what-you-did-there ending, which involves the arrest and impeachment of a tragically stupid President, telecast, of all places, on Fox News. Everything about Kingsman 2 screams cash grab. It's the textbook definition of a rushed sequel meant to capitalise on the success of the first film – which was, in comparison to this, damn near a

masterpiece. Just this year, we've seen three excellent examples – John Wick: Chapter 2, Guardians of the Galaxy: Vol 2, and Annabelle: Creation were all good films in their own way. Observed from a distance, and from under the lull of popcorn, it would seem as if all three movies followed the sequel code closely – that is, understand what fans liked about the first one, and ramp it all up to 11. So why in the name of resurrected Colin Firth did Kingsman – a film that, for all its talk about paving your own way in life, plays it as safe as buttered toast at breakfast, checking every box on the list – choose the path of least resistance?



From alarms in sanitary pads to uselessness of Karwa Chauth: Twinkle Khanna's 10 life lessons

(News Agencies) Twinkle Khanna shared a few life lessons as she received an award at the Vogue Women of the Year Awards on Sunday.

Twinkle Khanna was awarded the Vogue Opinion Maker of the Year at the Vogue Women of the Year Awards on Sunday. To make it memorable not just for herself but also for those present in audience, Twinkle had just the right thing.

The author recited the 10 lessons she has learnt in the last 10 years of her life. They ranged from things like what she needs an alarm in her sanitary pad and to how useless it is to keep fast on Karwa Chauth for her husband. Check them out:

1. It's true that we get more comfortable in our skin as we get older but that is also because that poor thing is not as tight as it used to be.

2. We don't need GST on our sanitary pads. What we need instead is an alarm inside it, not a wide breaking one as it would set us on a different path altogether, but an alarm nonetheless that warns us of imminent overflow and saves us from the 100 trips we make to the bathroom just to check. Now that's a product I could not grudge the GST on.

3. Millions of Indian women fast for their husband's long life on every Karwa Chauth. My dear friend who just won an award does immortalise this in his movies but I don't think that our 3033 gods are really listening. Because when the mortality charts show up, there are 147 countries above us where their men outlive our good old Indian dudes. So ladies stop because it's clearly not working.

4. It's difficult to befriend your

present if you are still quarrelling with your past.

5. God could not be everywhere so he created mothers and the devil could not be everywhere so he created mothers-in-law. Having said that I feel like I am going to be a terrible one.

6. The only thing free in life is bad advice. Enough said.

7. Botox unfortunately does not make you look younger. It just makes you look like you are a part of a secret alien invasion desperately trying to fit in with the humans.

8. Our satellite only reached Mars because it was called mom. I am certain that if it was called dad it would still be circling the Earth, lost but not willing to ask for directions.

9. Life is but a chance in the game of choice.

10. For centuries women have been looking for a cape but have

been given an apron and it's only recently that we have learned how to swing our aprons around. So let it flutter down our backs and let it take to the skies.

Recently, she also wrote an acceptance speech for her actor husband Akshay Kumar when he won the Most Beautiful Man of the Decade award at the Vogue Beauty Awards. "To my overpaid trainer, and my underpaid cook, a big thank you for helping me maintain this 'Beautiful Man of the Decade' body which I have. Though part of the credit should also go to the fact that I did not have two carry my two children for nine whole months," Akshay read out at the event. Twinkle is the producer of Akshay's upcoming film Padman. The film is directed by R Balki and also stars Sonam Kapoor.

Haseena Parkar movie review: Shraddha Kapoor's film is dull, tedious and jumbled

Haseena Parkar movie review: Apoorva Lakhia designs his film for Shraddha Kapoor that is primarily a courtroom drama where two advocates are cross examining Haseena and some witnesses.

Haseena Parkar
Cast: Shraddha Kapoor, Siddhant Kapoor
Director: Apoorva Lakhia
Rating: 1/5

Jise Rs 2000 ka bijli bill nahi samajh aata, use Rs 2000 crore ka business kaise samajh aayega?

This is what Aapa, otherwise known as Haseena Parkar, says in front of the judge at a Mumbai court who seems to be in awe of the Nagpada gangster. This sympathetic tone on part of the director is also some kind of validation for the underworld don known for liasioning and property dealing.

Haseena's story begins much before her brother Dawood left Mumbai. The family of 12 kids lives in Dongri with their cop father known for his honesty. Unfortunately for Ibrahim Kaskar, his son rises high in the world of contract killings and extortion. Later, his involvement in the Mumbai



blasts of 1993 makes him most wanted in the eyes of the police. This means he needs somebody trustworthy to operate his businesses in the maximum city as he leaves the country. Though the film tries to argue against it, but Haseena is the chosen one to rule Mumbai.

Haseena Parkar chronicles the important events in Aapa's

life. As expected, most of it is about Dawood and how they form a good team. She loses her close relatives, including her husband and son, but never leaves Mumbai.

Lakhia suggests similarities in the modus operandi of Dawood and Haseena. They both create a network that promotes a certain kind of brand value. Both, Haseena

and Dawood flaunt their love for Mumbai and their people. Both dive into the world of crime to protect their family interests.

Lakhia designs his film primarily as a courtroom drama where two advocates are cross examining Haseena and some witnesses. We see the loss of innocence and birth of dreaded gangsters through flashbacks. But it's not a neutral perspective

because Haseena narrates the story and it has to bear her biases. Nothing wrong in this strategy, it's the director's choice but it hampers the objectivity. Basically, we watch just one side of the story, and it looks much mellowed and somewhat glorified.

That's also acceptable if you try, but how do you react to Shraddha Kapoor speaking with padding inside her mouth, a la Don Corleone?

Plus, there are songs like Tere Bina that put you at your wit's end. I get that Haseena was once a nice, homely woman who was scared of marriage, but this much fear on her face might require a doctor. She chews her dialogues as this is how Bollywood has shown its gangsters talking over the years. Can people change the way they talk after becoming gangsters?



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