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Ravi Bhalla becomes N.J.'s first Sikh mayor

Demonetisation led to multiple benefits



(By a Staff Reporter) New Delhi : Demonetisation a year ago has helped in flushing out black money, eliminating fake notes and reducing cash in circulation, the finance ministry said this week. The total currency in circulation has come down to Rs 14.75 lakh crore as of August 4, 2017, from Rs 17.77 lakh crore, said the finance ministry in a tweet. "Only 83 per cent is the effective currency in circulation today with remonetisation," the ministry said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a surprise move had announced withdrawal of legal tender status of old Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes with effect from November 9, 2016. Detailing other benefits of demonetisation for the economy, the ministry said it has dealt a big blow to finances (Contd on page 23)

Saudi Royal Purge: Crown Prince's High-Stakes Gambit

The purge underscores an unprecedented restructuring of Saudi Arabia as Prince Mohammed dismantles a governance model involving consensus within the royal family, while he amasses power



STORY ON page 22

ICE Busts 5 More Criminal Aliens Released by Sanctuary New York City



(By a Staff Reporter) In less than one week, immigration officers arrested five criminal aliens after they were released by sanctuary jurisdictions in New York City. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement Removal Operations (ERO) officials placed detainers on each of the criminal aliens prior to their release from custody.

"These individuals are criminal aliens who were released back into our neighborhoods, posing an increased risk to New York residents," (Contd on page 23)

Laura Gillen becomes first Democratic Hempstead Supervisor



(By a Staff Reporter) For the first time in more than a century, the Town of Hempstead will have a Democratic supervisor. Laura Gillen, a Rockville Centre attorney, defeated incumbent Republican Anthony Santino on Tuesday night by roughly 2,000 votes. Gillen said that her victory was one for all town residents. "We are going into a new era in the Town of Hempstead, and I thank you all for your support," Gillen said in her victory speech.

Santino conceded the race position of Hempstead Town Wednesday morning, vowing to work with Gillen toward a smooth transition. "I congratulate Ms. Gillen on her victory and wish her the best of success as she assumes the position of Supervisor," Santino said. "I look forward to working cooperatively with her to ensure a smooth transition for our township's residents."

As India Waits For Vijay Mallya, UK Judge's Order Makes Officials Nervous

Judges in London favoured the appeal of Sanjeev Kumar Chawla, a bookie, against extradition to India on grounds that conditions in Tihar Jail are such that his human rights would be violated



(By a Staff Reporter) New Delhi : As Kiren Rijiju, the Union Minister of State for Home, met with his British counterpart recently, a recent UK court order hung heavy between them. The order, linked to a bookie wanted in India, may impact the government's request for liquor baron Vijay Mallya's extradition. The Westminster Magistrate's court in London, which is handling the Mallya case and is set to take it up in two weeks, (Contd on page 23)



Ravi Bhalla wins Hoboken election, becomes N.J.'s first Sikh mayor

(By a Staff Reporter) HOBOKEN — City Councilman Ravi Bhalla has emerged victorious in the six-person mayoral race, becoming the first Sikh mayor of the Mile Square City — and the state of New Jersey. Bhalla, an Indian-American born in New Jersey, was endorsed by current Mayor Dawn Zimmer, who in a surprising decision announced she would not seek a third term in office.

Bhalla, who serves on the City Council, claimed the victory at Moran's Pub on Garden Street surrounded by dozens of his supporters, as well as his friends and family.

"Thank you for having faith in me, for having faith in our community, faith in our state, and faith in our country; this is what America is all about," he told the packed bar. "We've been through a bruising campaign... but now

is the time we come together and see who we can work with to bring this city forward."

He bested a six-person field of challengers that included council members Michael DeFusco and Jennifer Giattino, as well as Hudson County Freeholder Anthony Romano.

In the race for three at-large seats on the City Council, two members of Bhalla's slate — James Doyle and Emily Jabbour — were victorious, while DeFusco team member Vanessa Falco was also elected, according to the unofficial election results.

The race for City Hall took a turn this week when doctored campaign fliers began circulating attacking Bhalla with the message "Don't let TERRORISM take over our town!" above a picture of the Sikh mayoral candidate wearing a turban.

The wide-open campaign that

kicked off in June with Zimmer's announcement quickly turned into heated race, with Romano's campaign manager, Pablo Fonseca, calling the race "ugly" and "divisive."

The fliers appeared to have been a modified version of a mailer from DeFusco's campaign, alleging Bhalla had a conflict of interest. The councilman condemned the fliers in a statement, saying his campaign had nothing to do with them.

Hoboken police released video footage last week showing two unidentified "persons of interest" holding stacks of papers, presumably the fliers.

Phil Swibinski, a campaign spokesman for DeFusco, said DeFusco conceded defeat in a speech to supporters at his campaign headquarters at around 10 p.m. and offered his congratulations to Bhalla.



In a brief interview Tuesday evening, DeFusco said he fell just short of being elected Hoboken's first openly gay mayor, despite the only candidate to be attacked by everyone else in the race.

"And yet we still challenged a 9-year administration and lost by

a couple hundred votes," DeFusco said, insisting that Bhalla's narrow margin of victory means he would have to govern by consensus. "I look forward to working with Mayor-elect Bhalla, but he by no means has a mandate."

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard Delivers Welcome Address, Lights Ceremonial Diya at Diwali Celebration



(News Agencies) annual Diwali Celebration on Washington, DC—Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (HI-02) delivered opening remarks and lit the ceremonial lantern at the Capitol Hill. The congresswoman, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Asia-Pacific Subcommittee

and Co-Chair of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, spoke about the unifying message of Diwali to people of all religions and backgrounds, as well as the lessons it holds in overcoming challenges and divisions with love, respect, and understanding.

Diwali is observed by people all around the world. Also known as Deepavali, Diwali celebrates the triumph of good over evil, light over darkness. Spanning five days each autumn, it is considered

by some to be the start of the new year. On the Hindu calendar, Diwali falls on the eve of, or on, the new moon that occurs between mid-October and mid-November.

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard said, "Diwali is celebrated all across the country and around the world by billions of people. Diwali is observed not only as a time to spend with friends and loved ones, but also as a time to celebrate the victory of light over darkness, truth over untruth and righteousness over wrong. It is a time of

spiritual renewal, and honors self-awareness, righteousness, and service to others before self—values that transcend different religions, backgrounds, and differences. As we gather for the beautiful Festival of Lights this year, we reflect on the opportunity each of us has to overcome our differences with one another and find ways to be of service to others. This is the heart of our celebrations during Diwali, and also what we know in Hawai'i as the aloha spirit."

FIA hosts welcome reception in NJ for Ambassador Chakravorty

(News Agencies) NEW JERSEY: The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut in collaboration with the Indian American community, hosted a welcome reception Oct 25 for Sandeep Chakravorty, India's newly-appointed Consul General in New York, at the Royal Albert's Palace in Fords, NJ. Ambassador Chakravorty, 47, who assumed charge in New York in August 2017, was previously India's Ambassador to Peru. The 1996 Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer replaced Riva Ganguly Das as Consul General in one of the busiest Indian diplomatic mis-

sions overseas. The welcome reception, attended by more than 250 members of the Indian American community in New York and New Jersey, was hosted by FIA and supported by H R Shah, Dr Sudhir Parikh, Albert Jasani, Air India, HAKS Group, Dipak Patel of Dunkin Donuts, Kenny Desai of TAK Corporation, Incredible India, North American Telugu Association, Indian Business Association and TV9. Many speakers, including FIA chairman Ramesh Patel and president Andy Bhatia, H R Shah, chairman of TV Asia and Dr Sudhir Parikh, chairman of Parikh Media Worldwide, recounted



their recent interactions with Ambassador Chakravorty and came away impressed with the "remarkable and brilliant young man." Speakers also lauded the Consul General's pleasing demeanor and humility and the willingness to ex-

tend help on all matters of concern to the Indian American community. Ambassador Chakravorty was escorted into the banquet hall by colorfully-dressed members of the Bharat Dhol Group.

(Contd on page 23)



“Bruhud New York Seniors Celebrates Diwali at 5 Star Grand style with Musical Night”



Audience with full respect to the nation. Bruhud, Shashikant Patel and Gopi Udeshi received Diwali Proclamation, Citation from political leader like Congress woman Grace Meng, Senator Larry Comrey, Assemblyman David I. Weprin, Jeffrion L. Aubry, Cathrine Nolan, and Elizabeth S. Crowley, Andrew D. Hevesi, Barry S. Grodenchik and Harsh Parekh. Also Messages were received from Shree Vijay Rupani Chief minister of Gujarat, Congressman Joseph Crowley and NYC Mayor Bill De Blasio. New York Musical group entertain audience everyone enjoyed dance and dinner and leave with beautiful Gift.

(News Agencies) New York- November 3, 2017. Event Bruhud NY Seniors leader Shashikant Patel and Gopi Udeshi organized Diwali Dinner and Musical Night on Friday

was attended by more than 500 people and among them prominent leaders like Councilmember Barry S. Grodenchik, Consul Shree Krishna Murthy from Indian Consulate, Councilman David I Weprin Rep, Harsh Parekh Governor Cuomo Rep., Shree Harshad (Pakaji) Patel, Dr. Arvind Shah. The event Started with American and Indian National Anthem sung by beauty queen Ms Manjari Parikh received by

Diwali Festival & Women Achievement Award Ceremony

Attended by Bollywood Actress Tanu Shree Dutta, Actor Omi Vaidya, Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Winner Vishajeet Borwankar, Senator Tony Avella, Deputy Comptroller Dilip Chauhan, President Harpreet Singh Tony.



Deputy Comptroller Dilip Chauhan Presenting a New York State Senate Honor on behalf of Senator Toby Stavisky to Bollywood Actress Tanushree Dutta.

(News Agencies) Harpreet Singh Tony hosted a Diwali Festival & Women Achievement Awards-a fun packed evening to celebrate diwali and honor distinguished females of our society which was emceed by Manjari Parikh, Miss Teen Bollywood USA 2017. Guests of honor included Ms.Mani and Ms.Rashmee from Roshni media. The chief guest of the evening was Mr. Dilip Chauhan, Deputy Comptroller of Nassau County who was graciously

and humbly present with rejoice and fill the world with light and love, may New York State Senator Mr.Tony Avella who honored this Diwali light up peace and harmony in everyone's life. Also Mr. Promoter Bharat Goradia, on Sunday Oct 29th at Community Center of Flushing, where more than 600 people attended the Grand Diwali Celebration. Chief Guest of the Event Deputy Comptroller Dilip Chauhan stated that " Diwali is a special time when millions of South Asians all across the world

Assoaciation of Indians in America - Ny Chapters Children Diwali in Libraries

(News Agencies) New York, – AIA is the oldest association of the Indians in America. The Association was founded on August 20, 1967. The New York Chapter of AIA was established in 1968 and is well known for its social, cultural and educational activities. AIA-NY Chapter is a non-profit organization which is involved in many community, charitable and social events that embody the spirit of its members and its motto, "Indian Heritage and American commitment". The NY chapter has members from all



over the tri-state region. It prides itself on being completely secular and open, with members representing all regions and religions of India, as well as of varied professions, backgrounds and

occupations. For the last three decades, the mainstay event of the organization is the hugely popular Deepavali Festival, held at the Iconic South Street Seaport in New York City, organized on the first Sunday

of October. This year it was organized on Sunday October 1, 2017 with great pomp and show, which concluded with the spectacular and dazzling display of Fireworks in the East River. This was the 30 th

anniversary of Deepavali Festival and 50 th year of AIA and attracted record breaking crowd. This Deepavali festival is the most prominent and one of the most well-known festivals of the Indian community.

“Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation” Raises 2 Million in A Glittering Gala



(News Agencies) New York : Prakash Waghmare Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation's ('EVF') glittering 'Gala' on Saturday, Nov. 4 at the majestic 'Cipriani' on Wall Street in New York City was a grand success. The response for this highly anticipated event was simply overwhelming, not only in terms of capacity-attendance, but also donor's enthusiasm to support EVF's worthy cause. The evening raised more than \$2 Million.

'Ekal' as 'EVF' is popularly known, had been raising funds in USA through series of concerts mainly directed at grass-root level, until now. This gala, was an added innovative effort to reach out to the Corporate world and high net-worth individuals and bring mainstream America into its fold. This impeccably organized spectacular evening's main architect was Mohan Wanchoo (Chairman, Founder of EC Infosystems). He was ably supported in this affair by Chirag Patel (CO-CEO & Chairman of 'Amneal Pharmaceuticals'), Soner Kanlier (CEO

Jasmine Universe) and Rajesh Gooty (Founder, Pres.-CEO of M Corp). Since its inception 29 years ago, Ekal had been setting new records, year after year in fund-raising. Last year, even without any high-end gala event, this largest NGO, with chapters in ten different countries including in Middle-eastern countries, raised \$7.2 Million in USA alone.

The evening started with the salutation to American and Indian flags with national anthems on the big screen. Welcoming the guests, Mohan Wanchoo, briefed the gathering about Ekal's multi-dimensional approach to uplift rural and tribal areas of India through emphasis on literacy, healthcare, integrated village development and empowerment of village folks. He informed the gathering that Ekal currently has 58,000 schools, spread all over India supporting 1.56 Million children - more than half of which were girls. He further stressed that the project cost, including administration and monitoring was only \$1-a-day or \$365 per year per school. Chirag Patel thanked all the teachers working at grass-root level in India and imparting life-sustaining education to

the children facing various hurdles. Vinod Jhunjhunwala, the President of Ekal-USA paid tribute to Ekal leadership in USA as well Ekal-India team, which had flown in specially for this occasion. Under Ekal-USA leadership Ashok Danda, Subhash Gupta, Ranjani Saigal and Ramesh Shah were acknowledged while for Ekal-India Dr Subhash Chandra, Bajrang Bagra, Laxmi Goel, and Naresh Jain were recognized. Ranjani Saigal, the Executive Director touched on the whole range of Ekal mission in remote areas through couple of brief 'reality videos' that also depicted use of digital technology, organic farming, and skill-training centers which are empowering rural life. Ms. Mitzi Perdue, the heiress to 'Sheraton Hotel chain' and 'Perdue Poultry Farms', was one of the key- note speakers of the evening along with Dr. Subhash Chandra, Chairman of ZEE-TV and Chairman of Ekal-Global. Ms. Perdue, regaled the audience with three heartwarming stories about Ekal, that also reflected the importance of education for better achievements in life. Her speech enthused so many people that live mission-based auction for

raising funds had a jump start with pledging process reaching one million mark within first 15 minutes.

Three generous donors – Chirag Patel, Ajay/Ranjini Poddar, Sant Singh Chatwal – each donated \$250,000 each. There was amazing synergy and excitement during the pledging process - so much so that it was hard to keep the tab on all auction 'paddle-cards'. The frenzy to give donations was simply astonishing. Dr. Subhash Chandra, praised Mohan Wanchoo and Chirag Patel for putting up the magnificent fund-raising show and challenged economically blessed group of people to shoulder responsibility of those in need. Lauding the generosity of big donors, he further elaborated that numerous small donors were equally important as they had larger stake in building any Nation by their sheer number. The evening was interspersed with fabulous Indian dances. With this awesome success, Ekal plans to make such 'Galas' an annual affair going forward and host them at various Metropolitan places like LA, Chicago, Houston etc.

Indian American Voters Victory Forum

(An Inclusion, Education & advocacy organization for concerned voters)

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**if you don't
VOTE
then don't
COMPLAIN**

Most prudent and prompt use of our sixth sense- Investment in mutual funds

By- Sonia Gaba, mutual fund advisor

Money is just like our sixth sense without which we cannot make proper use of other five senses. Money is a medium of exchange, a unit of account and a store of value. The wheel of transactions of whole world revolves around the pivot of money. Many people put it away for a rainy day. This tendency is quite praiseworthy. We must

save and invest money in a judicious manner and avoid unnecessary spending. Investment is really a second source of earning.

Mutual funds are said to be readymade investment vehicle for investors. Any person who has surplus capital to be parked as investment is an investor, but professional management of money is a pre-requisite to be a successful investor. Mutual funds pro-

vide a qualified fund manager to the investors. When we are in search of low cost of asset management, there is no better option than mutual funds because of division of cost among a larger pool of money.

Diversification feature adds another cherry to the cake as we can diversify across asset classes at very low cost by investing in mutual funds. Diversification results in low risks. Moreover, it

is the easiest and the simplest way to invest with a unique feature of liquidity tied to it. Thus, we can start with a limited amount of cash and choose among thousands of funds to match our own investment objectives. In addition to this, mutual funds are regulated by the government under the Investment Company Act of 1940. Thus, a team of professionals guides us to make a smart use of our sixth sense.

College Student Run Over, Killed by Pickup Driver After Minor Car Accident: Police

(Insider Bureau) An 18-year-old Long Island student was run over and killed by another driver after she got out of her vehicle following a minor collision in her hometown, authorities say. Taranjit Parmar, a biology student at Adelphi University, was driving a 2018 Jeep east on Hempstead Turnpike shortly before 5 p.m. Thursday when a red pickup truck trying to turn east near Gardiners Lane in Levittown hit her vehicle, police say. Both drivers immediately pulled off the road after the accident. Parmar stepped out of her SUV. When she did, the pickup driver hit her with his truck and ran her over, leaving her to die in the street. Parmar was pronounced dead at a hospital a short time later with trauma to the head and chest area. Photos on the woman's Facebook page indicate she had a zest for life and loved outdoor activities. According to her LinkedIn page, Parmar was studying biology at Adelphi University; she had a 4.0 GPA and had been scheduled to graduate in 2020.

Laura Curran Becomes First Woman Elected As Nassau County Executive

(Insider Bureau) New York — Voters made history by electing the first woman to serve as Nassau County Executive. Laura Curran won with 51 percent of the vote to Jack Martins' 48. Curran delivered her victory speech in New Hyde Park Tuesday night. The 49-year-old married mother of three from Baldwin is a former newspaper reporter and Nassau County legislator. "I am truly humbled and honored for the great responsibility the people of Nassau County have trusted me with. We made history tonight thanks to the tireless effort of so many," she said. Throughout the campaign, both candidates promised to clean up Nassau County government. "We deserve a government that lives up to the people who live here that is open, that is transparent and is not corrupt," Curran said.



GST rates reworked, 178 items, restaurant bills to get cheaper from Nov 15

The GST Council meeting in Guwahati decided to cut tax rates on daily use items such as chewing gum, chocolates, shaving and after-shave items, leaving only the 'sin goods' in the top slab

(Insider Bureau) Scores of mass consumption items such as detergent, shampoo and chocolates will become cheaper, as the panel on Goods and Services Tax (GST) decided on Friday that only so-called sin goods should be taxed the most under the new multi-rate system. The GST Council recommended that the government prune by nearly three-quarters the number of items under the highest 28% slab, as well as move some items under other tax categories to lower brackets. Friday's meeting also agreed to reduce tax on restaurant bills, but given that these eateries will not get any input tax credit — a facility to set off tax paid on inputs with final tax — eating out might not become substantially cheaper. All changes come into effect from November 15.

The council also decided to bring more units within the scope of a special tax payment window for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) called the composition scheme, and

halved the tax rate allowed under it to 1%. The eligibility threshold for the scheme too has been raised to Rs 1.5 crore from Rs 1 crore now.

The latest feel-good tweaks to what is India's biggest tax overhaul should help ease the pressure the government faces over economic disruptions from the rollout of the new tax and last year's scrapping of high-value banknotes.

The decisions could also help reduce disquiet over compliance cost for SMEs, which are crucial to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plans to create a million jobs a month and many of whose promoters are traditional voters of his Bharatiya Janata Party. The party is facing a resurgent opposition in elections in its bastion of Gujarat. India has about 56 million small and medium-sized firms that account for some 110 million jobs in the country, official data show. Prime Minister Modi took to Twitter and said, "All our decisions are people-inspired, people-friendly and people-centric. We are working tirelessly

for India's economic integration through GST." Making things cheaper could, however, set government revenues back by Rs 20,000 crore, four people who attended the meeting said. Consumers will be benefited by lower prices as most of the taxable items are in the 5%, 12% or 18% slabs," finance minister Arun Jaitley told a press conference after the meeting. The GST subsumed a string of state levies and taxes but has faced a bumpy ride since its July 1 launch, especially on account of complex monthly tax-filing processes that is said to have raised the cost of doing business for shopkeepers and small businesses. Opposition Congress appeared unimpressed with Friday's decisions.

"The Prime Minister and his government first shoot, then they aim and then think, be it on the issues of demonetisation or GST," party spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi said, questioning the timing of the decision ahead of the Gujarat assembly elections.

But most industry experts welcomed the latest changes but hoped it would boost consumer demand but not impact public finances. "While the reduction of rates would substantially reduce the prices of a number of commodities, the government may need to balance the revenue

considerations too," Bipin Sapra, Tax Partner, EY India, said. Krishan Arora, partner, Grant Thornton India LLP, said the decision to prune the 28% slab would be a welcomed by industries in the mass consumption space.

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28% to 18%

Food & edibles: Cocoa products, chocolate, non-alcoholic beverages and wafers

Grooming products: Skin care products, shampoos, hair dyes, shaving cream, soaps, washing powder, creams and deodorants

Personal accessories: Goggles, wristwatches

Wood & rubber: Tyre tubes for bicycles & three-wheelers, plywood furniture, wallpaper

Stone & ceramics: Articles of granite, marble, slate, plaster, mica, ceramic goods and glassware

28% to 12%

Utility: Common kitchen appliances

18% to 12%

Health: Diabetic food, medicinal grade oxygen, spectacle frames

Food items: Refined sugar, condensed milk, pasta, curry paste

Handicraft: Bamboo/cane furniture, knitted hats, jute and cotton handbags

18% to 5%

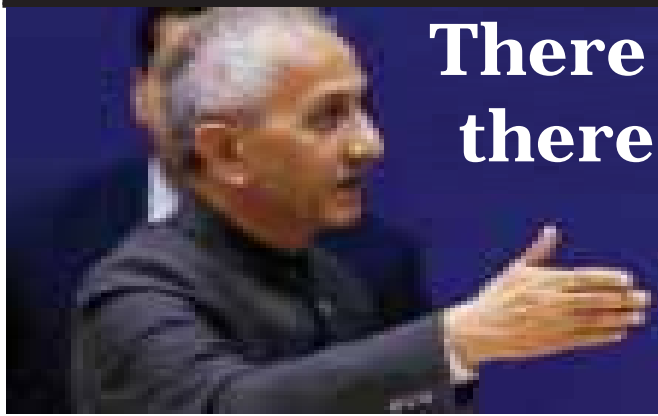
Air-conditioned restaurants, hotel rooms below ₹7,500 a day

12% to 5% Non-AC restaurants

5% to 0%

Food items: Dried vegetables, dried or frozen fish, coconut shells

New rates effective November 15



There is no one 'Kashmir problem'; and there cannot be a silver bullet solution

There has been a habitual muddling of issues, and an extraordinary neglect of context and trends. Crucially, there is not just one Kashmir problem, but many, and each requires redress by divergent means and at different stages.

A flurry of commentary has followed the appointment of former director of the Intelligence Bureau Dineshwar Sharma, as the Centre's representative (the title 'interlocutor' was studiously avoided) to "initiate and carry forward a dialogue" in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K). Detractors have seized upon this as an admission that the Centre's 'muscular' policy, or 'Doval doctrine' has failed. Others insist that the appointment of a former DIB will be counterproductive, as a 'political initiative' is what was needed. It is argued that given Sharma's background, his appointment suggests a continuation of an enforcement-dominated approach; or, further, that unless Sharma also talks to Pakistan, the process will be infructuous.

The broad contours of the conflict in J&K find little space in this commentary. Sharma's appointment, it would seem, stands alone and is to be judged on its potential to 'solve' the Kashmir problem – on which impossible criterion we can safely declare it a failure at once.

There is, in this commentary, a habitual muddling of issues,

and an extraordinary neglect of context and trends. Crucially, there is not just one Kashmir problem, but many, and each requires redress by divergent means and at different stages. The most urgent is the problem of terrorism and the bloodshed and disruption it generates. This has periodically been compounded by organised street violence. Then there are the more enduring and manifold problems of governance and of a communal, polarising and disruptive politics; and, of course, underlying all these is the canker of Pakistan.

No regime in India, including the present one, has ever suggested that the military approach alone is to be applied to J&K. Had that been the case, the state would simply have been brought under President's rule and handed over to the Army. To borrow the stock clichés of the bureaucracy, the solutions proposed are always intended to be 'holistic' and 'multi-pronged'. Indeed, for those who argue that Pakistan must be brought into the dialogue process for any concrete

progress to be made, it is useful to recall not only the numberless cycles of past talks with Islamabad. Now, the Prime Minister has declared that it was not 'goli ya gali' (the bullet or abuse), but 'embracing all Kashmiris' that would produce a solution.

Advocates of 'dialogue' glibly ignore the many failures of their favoured policy, but are eager to seize upon purported failures of 'muscular' responses. It is useful, consequently, to review the trajectory of violence in J&K to see how this has worked. First, the long term trend: J&K experienced 17 years of high intensity conflict (over 1,000 fatalities a year) between 1990 and 2006 (all data from the South Asia Terrorism Portal), peaking at 4,507 killed in 2001. From this peak, the trajectory was consistently downwards till 2012, when fatalities fell to 117. No dramatic shifts in India's policy or strategy are noticeable during this period of sustained improvement. It was principally growing international and domestic pressure on Pakistan, and a

shift in Islamabad's priorities towards its mischief in Afghanistan that resulted in a de-escalation in J&K. Pakistan's willingness to enter into a ceasefire agreement with India in 2003, and to maintain its terms almost without violation through the Pervez Musharraf regime till 2008, contributed significantly to this downtrend.

Significantly, the uptrend in violence commenced in 2013 (181 fatalities), before the Modi regime was established in Delhi, or the PDP-BJP combine in J&K. The present 'muscular' policy dates back to the Burhan Wani killing in July 2016, and the ensuing stone pelting campaign, taking terrorism-linked fatalities up to 267 in 2016 and 290 in 2017 (till October 22).

Around 61% of all fatalities in 2017 are terrorists, and among these are top field commanders of all active terrorist formations in the state. The distribution of this violence is crucial: 14 of J&K's 22 districts account for all the fatalities; on a further breakdown to the tehsil level, just 32 of 82 tehsils recorded fatalities. Crucially, the worst five tehsils accounted for 48% of all

fatalities.

Terrorist and separatist violence in J&K has been severely circumscribed, and is overwhelmingly localised to small and shrinking extremist-dominated constituencies, principally along the Line of Control (LoC). A bulk of terrorist fatalities is recorded along the LoC, and principally comprises fresh infiltrators. It is the success of kinetic measures that has opened up spaces for the revival of a dialogue process. Memories are short, and most commentators appear to have forgotten that an all-party delegation of members of Parliament to J&K in September 2016 saw separatist leaders slamming their doors in their faces.

Sharma's task is to create grounds for the resumption of dialogue at the political level, and it cannot be bound by irrational timelines and expectations. As kinetic pressures mount, he will engage with those who show themselves willing to abjure violence. He offers a window of escape, not a magical solution.

Why it will not be easy for Prince Salman to reform Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabia isn't the first country that comes to mind when there's talk of radical social and political change. Nor the second or even the tenth. A combination of a monarchy legitimised by an orthodox clergy and funded by the world's largest reserve of accessible oil and gas has usually mitigated any desire for change. Little wonder then, Crown Prince Mohammed bin

India has benefited to some degree from the crown prince's reform attempts. Riyadh has diluted its long-standing strategic relationship with Pakistan. It has also become much more helpful in providing intelligence about Islamicist terrorists to New Delhi.

Salman's aggressive push to upend the Wahhabi appellation surprised everyone. His plans to list Aramco, the trillion-dollar State-owned oil company, and encourage local entrepreneurship and employment

were unremarkable. Then came his announcement that women would be allowed to drive cars, a move that raised eyebrows. Now comes what is effectively a purge of the Saudi ruling establishment — the arrest of 10 princes of the blood including billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, four ministers, and dozens of former senior officials. To be

sure, this could be the heir to the throne consolidating his position, but it could also be a sign that the crown prince wishes to remodel Saudi Arabia into a nation that is more modern and more moderate.

India has benefited to some degree from the crown prince's reform attempts. Riyadh has diluted its long-standing strategic relationship with Pakistan. It has also become much more helpful in providing intelligence about Islamicist terrorists to New Delhi. And it has also expressed its interest in developing a larger economic

footprint in India's energy sector. If Crown Prince Salman takes his reforms to their logical conclusion, it might mean the end of the largest source of funding for the most extreme strands of the religion.

This is all good, but the Narendra Modi government will be rightly wary. A country with weak political institutions such as Saudi Arabia is notoriously difficult to reform. The prince's strategy seems to be centralise power with himself rather than seek a consensus among the various players. That he replaced the head of the

National Guard, a force loyal to the ruling family, was a reminder that some sort of political backlash, potentially violent, cannot be ruled out. His anti-corruption campaign, promise of a more open society and, most dangerously, an aggressive military posture in fighting perceived signs of Iranian influence in Yemen and elsewhere seem to be the base on which he hopes to rally popular support in favour of his agenda. It is almost impossible to tell in a country that remains quite opaque as to whether this will work.

How India has actually done a great job in dealing with the Dragon

Despite the power differential, India successfully raised the cost of China's land grab activities at Doklam, a feat that even the U.S. has struggled to accomplish in East Asia. While China was relentless in the pursuit of its goals, and had the resources to spend, India managed to call its bluff, and simultaneously allayed Bhutan's concerns.



If recent news reports are to be believed, China is back on the Doklam plateau in a veritable redux of the 73-day standoff that began in June this year. For its part, the foreign ministry has denied any change in the status quo following the "mutual disengagement" in late August. Those now skeptical of the government's apparent inability to tackle China fail to appreciate that Doklam was never just a "stand-off". It is part of a continuum of geo-political struggles - the current one is only naked in its manifestation as an outright territorial brawl — between the heavyweight and revisionist China and the defender India. It will not be the last, either.

Defusing the crisis at Doklam was never likely to reduce tensions across the 4,000 km border that India and China share. These border disputes are only symptoms of the Chinese determination to assert itself and claim pole position in an Asia that plays by Beijing's rules. It was but a matter of time until China, rebuffed in its earlier attempt to needle India, decided to press New Delhi harder. By utilising its time-tested technique of 'salami slicing', and through the coercion of India's smaller neighbours, China continues to seek to dent India's credibility as a regional power.

China's perception of, and strategy towards, India is shaped by the gaping asymmetry of power between the two countries. At \$11 trillion, China's economy is roughly five times the size of India. Were China to grow 2% and add over \$200 billion to its GDP, India will have to grow by 10% to remain at the same place. In real dollar terms it may well be a decade or more before India begins to close this gap. In terms of security capabilities, this gap is most visible in defence expenditure, with China's being approximately four times larger at \$215 billion, compared to India's \$55 billion.

Even though the prognosis might appear grim, smaller countries have successfully deployed denial and deterrence strategies against larger opponents, for instance China against the U.S., in the past. Despite the power differential, India successfully raised the cost of China's land grab activities at Doklam, a feat that even the U.S. has struggled to accomplish in East Asia. While China was relentless in the pursuit of its goals, and had the resources to spend, India managed to call its bluff, and simultaneously allayed Bhutan's concerns. The lessons from this incident for India's foreign policy establishment are seminal, and can help shape future responses to Chinese aggression. During a discussion in the US last month, a defence expert asked me if any other country has entered Chinese-claimed territory and stopped construction, as Beijing alleged, or intervened on behalf of a beleaguered third party as India claims. The subtext of the question was clear: India's defiance of China was a unique moment. This is the first lesson: the spectre of an invincible, fire-breathing dragon must not awe India. New Delhi must, and can, stand up to China when its national interests are at stake and cleverly deployed political muscle will succeed in some instances. The second takeaway is that the benefits of low-key diplomacy must not be underestimated. By engaging China away from the media glare, much to the vexation of New Delhi's foreign affairs press, the Indian government successfully arrived at a favourable compromise. That this diplomacy was backed by a resolute security posture on the ground only bolstered New Delhi's credibility, both at the negotiating table, and among regional partners. Deft and quiet diplomacy works and should be pursued as the first option. Third, by participating in the BRICS summit in Xiamen shortly after the crisis, and investing in the future development of this group, India showcased the future direction of its relationship with China. For New Delhi, the lesson was that it is both possible, and necessary, to be politically assertive with China in some cases, while co-operating on others. Until the asymmetry between India and China is bridged, every Indian government will have to walk this tightrope.

The Climate Risks We Face

Since the dawn of the industrial age, humans have been pumping increasing amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by burning coal, oil and gas. Researchers at the Mauna Loa Observatory, perched on the side of a volcano on Hawaii's Big Island, have measured atmospheric levels of this greenhouse gas since 1958. That first year, carbon dioxide averaged 316 parts per million. In May, it reached 410 p.p.m. — an amount never before experienced in the history of our species. This atmospheric carbon dioxide — as well as other heat-trapping gases and other air pollutants emitted by humans — is affecting our planet profoundly.

We helped write the "Climate Science Special Report: Fourth National Climate Assessment, Volume I," released on Friday by the United States Global Change Research Program. This comprehensive report — the most up-to-date climate science report in the world — is an outstanding example of federal science in action, and is especially noteworthy given the current political climate.

The majority of the report's 51 authors were drawn from federal agencies, like NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Department of Energy. Much of the foundational data and modeling that underpin the report rely on government investments in observational data and high-performance computing. The report was strengthened by an extensive review process involving the public, the National Academy of Sciences, and all relevant federal agencies, spanning two administrations.

The report concludes that "global climate continues to change rapidly compared to the pace of the natural variations in climate that have occurred throughout Earth's history." It finds that "human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century." The bottom line is that this report confirms and strengthens what the vast majority of climate scientists have known for decades: that climate is changing and humans are primarily responsible. Recent observations and investment in modeling and research have only strengthened the quality and amount of evidence collected. As the report documents, each of the last three years has successively been the warmest on record based on observational data going back to the late 19th century, and 16 of the last 17 years have been among the 17 warmest years on record globally. Global sea level has risen by about 7 to 8 inches since 1900, with nearly half this rise occurring since 1993. A substantial component of this rise, which is accelerating the increased frequency of disruptive "nuisance" flooding in dozens of coastal American cities, is because of human activity. At the same time, the area of ocean covered by Arctic sea ice in September (the typical annual minimum) has decreased by about 50 percent, while its volume has decreased even more dramatically as the remaining ice thins. The report also highlights growing reasons for concern. For example, ocean acidification, which occurs when atmospheric carbon dioxide is absorbed by seawater, is taking place at what is thought to be the fastest rate in at least 66 million years. Coupled with reductions in oxygen content in near-coastal American waters, this poses a significant threat to coastal fisheries and ecosystems. Much of the western United States is facing a growing threat of more severe drought and larger wildfires as higher temperatures, reduced snow pack and earlier spring snow melt reduce water availability during the warm season.

(Contd on page 22)



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According to World Health Organization Cancer is the second leading cause of death globally and accounted for 8.8 million deaths worldwide from cancer in 2015. Lung, prostate, colorectal, stomach and liver cancer are the most common types of cancer in men, while breast, colorectal, lung, cervix and stomach cancer are the most common among women. In the United States \$1.16 trillion was the estimated total annual economic cost of cancer in 2010. Cancer seems to affect at least one or more member of each family.

What is cancer?

Cancer is a generic term for a large group of diseases characterized by the growth of abnormal cells beyond their usual boundaries that can then invade adjoining parts of the body and/or spread to other organs. Other common terms used are malignant tumors and neoplasms. Cancer can affect almost any part of the body and has many anatomic and molecular subtypes that each requires specific management strategies.

Cancer Prevention

According to current evidence, between 30% and 50% of cancer deaths could be prevented by modifying or avoiding key risk factors.

**Excerpts Above from www.who.int/cancer/en/*

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Chinese veto to UN action against Masood Azhar: Here's how India can respond

Beijing has only itself to blame for its present predicament: is it for or against terrorism

By Yashwant Raj

Someone in Beijing is not thinking things through. Every time China has blocked the designation of Masood Azhar by the United Nations, it has seemed more and more like its terrorism-loving ally Pakistan.

Indian diplomats privately acknowledge that as much as they want to see Masood Azhar designated, and punished at some stage, they are "extremely comfortable" with a "no" from China as well. It gives them the opportunity to relitigate the issue, rally the world against terrorism, and as a bonus, expose China's doublespeak and have it stand with a world-renowned terrorist, as his greatest ally and benefactor. And at no extra cost.

Azhar is not going anywhere with or without the UN designation. His outfit, Jaish-e-Mohammad, stands sanctioned by the same UN committee that the Chinese are protecting him from. The man has also been designated by the United States, whose proposal it was that Beijing blocked on Thursday, to beat a procedural deadline.

Having forced China to hold a knife to its own throat, India has no intention of letting up the pressure, especially when it also has the moral high ground on the

issue, and the backing of the world.

"The process is going to continue," an official said, speaking on condition of anonymity, so as to be able to speak freely about India's options and strategy, in the face of China's cynical cussedness.

Option One, "go after the same guy": India could file another application before the ISIL (Da'esh) and al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council, start the process all over again for Azhar, secure the support of 14 members of the committee, which works on the principle of unanimity (all 15 members must vote for the proposal to be adopted, no one has a super-veto), and kick the ball back to the 15th member, China. China typically begins by running down the clock with the help of "technical holds", as it did with the first proposal, moved by India in 2016, and backed by the US, Britain and France. After stretching it out for the entire year almost, it killed it with a "block", a veto, in December.

It put a technical hold on the second proposal, moved this time by the US and backed by Britain and France,

in February, and killed past week citing lack of consensus that it had caused with as the leading, and only, dissenter.

Option Two, "go after the same guy, with another country": Terrorism has fewer friends around the world than enemies. Pakistan, which has been under the scanner for a while, recognises that. China, a relatively new player as both a victim and purveyor of it, doesn't.

India could wait for or look for another sponsor of a proposal to designate Azhar. Britain or France, backers of the earlier proposals, could be a candidate, in consultation with the United States and India. Or, may be a third country.

Option three, "another guy, proposed by India": Dump Azhar. There are plenty more to choose from. How about Chhota Shakeel, an aide of Dawood Ibrahim, the mafia don in Pakistan and who is already on the list? There are currently 256 individuals on the UN list. Only. There is scope for plenty more, and not to test China's cynical resolve to prove its loyalty to Iron-Brother ally Pakistan, but to genuinely



limit the ability of these killers to cause more damage.

Option four, "another guy, but proposed by US, France or Britain". A proposal moved by one of the three permanent members of the Security Council to proscribe another terror suspect. How about Chhota Shakeel again, to stay with the case cited earlier? Or, a completely different individual.

The effect would be the same: China in the box again as particularly partial to terrorists (and terrorism) to be blocking the designation of another terrorist. It would be

the only country to come to the rescue of terrorists, held as terrorists and murders by the rest of the world, twice. A rare dishonour for a country which has incipient problems with terrorism.

Option five, "proscribe a terrorist group": There are 80 terrorist organisations, and affiliates, on the UN list already. But it can easily take a few more, challenging Beijing to now prove it can go beyond Azhar if it really did have issues with him, and not terrorism. Beijing has only itself to blame for its present predicament: is it for or against terrorism.

13,149 have fallen to gun violence in US this year, calling it just 'act of evil' will not help

A man dressed in black tactical-style gear and armed with an assault rifle opened fire inside a church in a small South Texas community, killing 26 people and wounding about 20 others.

By Rezaul H Laskar

No matter how much President Donald Trump may rail on Twitter after each terror attack in the US, Americans are nearly 2,000 times more likely to be killed by a fellow citizen carrying a gun than a terrorist.

The sheer statistics are mind numbing – 52,385 incidents of gun violence with 13,149 fatalities so far this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive. A total of 307 mass shootings (defined by the Gun Violence Archive as incidents in which four or more people have been shot or killed, excluding the shooter).

And two of the five deadliest mass shootings since 1949 have happened in the past 35 days – in other words, on President Trump's watch. They were the attack on a music festival in Las Vegas by Stephen Paddock that left 58 dead on October 1 and the shooting in a Texas church

by Devin Kelley that left 26 dead (28 according to some reports) on November 5.

Since the 9/11 attacks, a total of 103 people have been killed by jihadi terrorists in the US. That's less than 1% of the total number of people killed by gun violence in each year since 2014.

And yet, the US does very little to control gun ownership and the sale of firearms.

Stephen Paddock, the shooter in Las Vegas whose motive is yet to be determined, bought 33 guns in the 12 months before he targeted concert-goers. Most of the purchases were rifles, and gun stores aren't even required to report multiple rifle purchases to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

A dozen of his weapons were fitted with "bump stocks", which allow semi-automatic weapons to fire like fully automatic ones. Again, it is completely legal to

sell devices such as bump stocks in the US, which effectively means regulations controlling the sale and ownership of fully automatic weapons have little impact.

Texas, the location of the latest deadly mass shooting, allows its residents to openly carry assault rifles such as the AR-15, a favourite with many of the shooters involved in gun violence.

The right of Americans to bear arms is protected under the second amendment to the US Constitution, which was adopted a mere 15 years after the country became independent in 1776. The amendment states: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

Clearly, US lawmakers of the era were thinking of the possibility of the need to organise



themselves in the event of renewed conflict with the British, from whom they had gained independence, or other oppressors.

It hasn't helped that the powerful National Rifle Association (NRA) has ensured that very little can be done to change this right to bear arms. Republicans, including Trump, have always been reluctant to go against groups such as the NRA, which can influence the

outcome of elections.

As with past mass shootings, there will be some reflection and debate on the need to change US gun laws after the Texas church shooting.

But as long as leaders such as Trump are content to just call it an "act of evil" without any mention of the need for a radical change, the spree of mass shootings in the US is unlikely to end anytime soon.

Tiger Zinda Hai *This time tiger ready to roar in a more impudent way*

-Sonia Gaba

Directed by Ali Abbas Zafar, having Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif in lead roles, the movie 'Tiger Zinda Hai' is all set to capture the theaters on December 22, 2017 and be a colossal and radiant blockbuster. The movie is an extension to the 2012 film 'Ek Tha Tiger'. Salman and Katrina have played as intelligence agents. Kumud

Mishra and Angad Bedi are in supporting roles. An Indian spy Tiger and Pakistani agent Zoya have joined hands to fight a common enemy for saving the lives of 25 Indian nurses who were kidnapped in Iraq. Though destruction and devastation are at peak but the ultimate motive is world peace. Both action and romance act spouse to each other in the movie. The action

scenes of both Salman and Katrina are really praiseworthy and magnificent. Multi-destination glimpses filmed Abu Dhabi, Austria, Greece and Morocco will really fascinate the viewers in a jubilant way. The natural beauty of snow-covered mountains of Austria and the lively fight on horseback riding in Morocco will be quite alluring. The

biting cold weather of Austria on one side and scorching heat of Abu Dhabi on the other side depicts the devoted efforts of entire cast and crew. The dialogue 'Shikaar toh sab karte hain, lekin tiger se behtar shikaar koi nhi karta' is really going to be a pioneer dialogue all over and the movie, undoubtedly a grand and marvelous success!



A few months ago, I was invited to be a judge at the Nature in Focus Wildlife Festival held in Bengaluru. Along with other judges, we chose a powerful, evocative photograph of a mother and baby elephant crossing a road with fires under their feet. A mob can be seen beyond them. It's a searing picture of the Human-Elephant encounter gone wrong and captured at its most heart-rending moment. The fear and pain on the faces of the elephants, especially the calf, is heartbreaking.

This picture has now won Best Wildlife Photograph Award at the Sanctuary Nature Foundation Photography Fest. International media, from Fox News, to The Independent and The Guardian have carried articles about it.

Of course, we react emotionally to this photograph. But there is a bigger picture beyond this photo and the interpretations in the international media; the picture it forms for people around the world is in my mind not the whole truth.

Every day in India, somewhere in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Karnataka, humans and wild elephants come face-to-face. India has the largest population of Asian elephants in the world, with about 25,000-30,000 in the country. Over 70% of them don't

have a viable habitat, using fields, tea and coffee estates and fragmented green patches as secondary habitats. Large animals with large appetites, each elephant needs about 150 kilos of food and about 150 liters of water per day. In many areas, herds are hungry and thirsty. In most areas, they have to run the gauntlet of mines, roads, dams, ditches, trenches, railway tracks, walls, buildings and, of course, humans. This photo is representational of this crisis. But that's not where the story ends.

The fact is that you and I and the world media can be emotional and shed tears over this photograph because we live in our safe spaces and don't have to worry about a hungry herd of elephants knocking down the walls of our houses to get food. We don't have to worry that when we get up in the middle of the night and step outside into the dark to go to the loo, we are in danger of bumping into an elephant. We don't have to worry that elephants might be in our path as we walk to work, as our children go to school, as our husbands and wives come home. In short, we don't have a bloody clue and we don't have any right to judge.

Yes, there are some awful instances where elephants are killed, often brutally, but let's not forget that 100 people on average are killed a year in India by elephants. The truth is that when faced down with several animals that

weigh several tons and can be pretty dangerous in a confrontation, people take drastic measures. When is the last time any of us had to be awake night after night to protect our fields, or our homes where we have stored harvested grain? That when hungry elephants come, we have nothing but fire crackers and sticks because we, unlike people in the African countries with elephants, don't own guns? Of course, some people might take it too far and throw burning branches and burning rubber and the ensuing chaos hurts elephants and people. However, we have not had to weep over the bodies of loved ones crushed beyond hope by an elephant.

For 15 years, I have travelled across India to various zones where people and elephants are in cramped shared spaces and both are trying to survive. For the most part, there is still a deep bond and understanding from the people, and the elephants are just trying to get by. A young mother with three children in Assam, homeless because elephants had knocked down their house for a second time, tells me she feels sad but does not and never will hate the elephants because it is also a being who gets hungry, also a being who needs space. She then says with great sympathy, what will they do when there are so many humans going into their space? An old couple in Tamil Nadu who has

had their fields raided and their homes destroyed tell me, we worship them as Gods, we have a language between us that they understand, but we have changed the way we grow crops and the way we live and they have nowhere to go. To me none of us, not one of us living our privileged lives, will have this grace, this understanding, this love so greater than the fuzzy version we feel cocooned in our privileged worlds.

The fact is that most of the damage to elephant habitat, apart from encroachment, is the lovely tea and coffee we like to drink, the mines that dig up the earth for our use, the dams and irrigation projects that bring us water and electricity and the roads that take us places all comes at a price someone else is paying. We might not be the literal hand that lit a fire bomb and threw it at a baby elephant, but we are most certainly the action behind those hands.

The international media is going to town with this picture, but how about realizing that in developed, manicured worlds, they are lucky if they have a butterfly coming through their window, let alone an elephant. It's a complicated issue and requires long-term involved solutions. Making the people who have most to lose the villains is ridiculous and knee-jerk.

The picture is titled "Hell is here". Yes it is. We created it.

PM Modi meets DMK's Karunanidhi in possible new gambit on Tamil Nadu politics

This was the first time a top BJP leader, and the Prime Minister at that, who has reached out to the DMK chief since the regional party walked out of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in 2004.

(Insider Bureau) Prime Minister Narendra Modi met ailing Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) chief M Karunanidhi in Chennai on Monday, in what experts called a possible move by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to reconfigure its political fortunes in the southern state.

The meeting assumes significance for two reasons. This is the first time a top BJP leader, and the Prime Minister at that, who has reached out to the DMK chief since the regional party walked out of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in 2004.

Second, the BJP had so far been cosy up to DMK's rival All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam which is riven by factional feuds. Monday's meeting is seen as part of the BJP's strategy to keep channels of communication open with both poles of Tamil Nadu politics.

"This is a clear signal that both sides are showing flexibility when the political situation is fluid

in the state," said Chennai-based political commentator Sadanand Menon.

"The BJP... has walked the extra mile to be a party to this optics. For the DMK, a party out of power for quite some time, it is an important political recognition."

The DMK and Congress party have been allies since 2004. So any deal between Karunanidhi's party and the BJP could hurt the Congress in Tamil Nadu.

Modi drove to Karunanidhi's Gopalapuram residence and inquired about the 93-year-old leader's health in a visit that lasted about 20 minutes, sources said. Modi sat next to wheelchair-bound Karunanidhi, and held his hands.

"Met former Tamil Nadu CM, Thiru M Karunanidhi and enquired about his health .@kalgaignar89," Modi tweeted.

The meeting wasn't on Modi's agenda till Sunday night, although BJP sources said the Prime Minister's Office was in



touch with the DMK over the last couple of days. DMK's working president MK Stalin, Karunanidhi's son, who was traveling abroad, cut short his trip by a day and returned to Chennai to receive Modi.

Hours after the meeting, the DMK called off protests in eight districts scheduled on November 8 against the government's recall of high-value banknotes last year. The party instead urged its workers to do relief work to help people devastated by the recent floods.

The meeting was described by both the BJP and the DMK as a "courtesy call" but triggered

political ripples in a state roiled by political instability all year, especially over factional fights in the ruling AIADMK.

The DMK's arch rival has struggled to close ranks since former chief minister J Jayalalithaa's death last December. Its former chief VK Sasikala is in jail on corruption charges but several MLAs are still loyal to her and her nephew, ousted party deputy general secretary TTV Dinakaran.

"The prime minister is sending a strong message. As far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, the BJP is still not a strong force," said one senior DMK leader on

condition of anonymity.

"By extending this courtesy, they hope to convince the people of Tamil Nadu that they indeed respect Tamil Nadu's leaders and thereby gain some goodwill." Monday's meeting is also a dramatic reversal from Karunanidhi's birthday celebrations this June when the DMK omitted the BJP from a string of national leaders invited. Modi was accompanied by state governor Banwarilal Purohit, defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman, minister of state for shipping Pon Radhakrishnan and state BJP chief Tamilsai Soundararajan.

One year of demonetisation *How much note ban has changed India*

(News Agencies) "To break the grip of corruption and black money, we have decided that the 500 rupee and 1,000 rupee currency notes presently in use will no longer be legal tender from midnight tonight, that is, 8th November 2016." With these words, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced demonetisation a year ago that took everyone by surprise.

One year down the line, the jury is still out on the success of the Narendra Modi government's decision to discontinue about 15.4 lakh crore of currencies in denominations of Rs 500 and Rs 1000.

The objectives of demonetisation, as defined by government in various phases, were to crack a whip against black money, fight counterfeit currency in circulation, formalisation of cash-dependent businesses, bringing back money lying idle in the banking



system and hitting hard at the financial backbone of terrorism and naxalism.

According to Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's statement in Parliament, Rs 4.9 lakh crore was deposited in about 1.48 lakh bank accounts post-demonetisation. These were high value deposits of over Rs 80 lakh each. The average deposit size was over Rs 3.3 crore for all 1.48 lakh bank accounts. Smaller deposits, ranging Rs 2 lakh to Rs 80 lakh, were made in about 1.09 crore bank accounts after demonetisation was announced.

The average deposit size in these accounts was Rs 5 lakh. According to one estimate the total deposits made after demonetisation accounted for more than Rs 10 lakh or simply about two-thirds of the total demonetised money. In August, the Reserve Bank of India declared in its annual report, that of demonetised currencies worth Rs 15.4 lakh crore, the high value notes worth Rs 15.3 lakh crore were deposited in the banks. This means, about 99 per cent of the demonetised currency came back to the banking system by June 30.

'Attacked' German held for travelling on forged visa in UP's Sonbhadra

(News Agencies) VARANASI: The German tourist, who had accused a railway engineer of attacking him for allegedly not replying to the latter's greetings at Robertsganj railway station in Sonbhadra district on Saturday, was arrested by the police on charges of travelling with forged visa.

Holger Eric Misch, the tourist, was booked under Sections 14A of Foreigners Act (travelling without valid documents), 419 (cheating) and 420 (fraud) of IPC by the Sonbhadra police following investigation by the foreigner regional registration office (FFRO) of Local Intelligence Unit (LIU).

A case was lodged against Holger with Manikaran police post of Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh on July 5 for attacking a person with sharp-edged weapon. His passport and visa had been deposited in CJM court of Kullu. SP Sonbhadra RP Singh said that Holger should have taken permission from Kullu police to leave the station. Singh said instead of taking permission, Holger travelled in other parts of the country and reached here without genuine documents and with forged visa. He said that investigation officer of the case would go to Kullu to collect more details for further investigation.

Holger emerged as major challenge for police since November 4 when an altercation took place between him and a railway engineer Aman Kumar at platform one of Robertsganj railway station in Sonbhadra. After GRP Robertsganj intervened, Holger and Aman, who allegedly assaulted the foreigner, gave complaints against each other.

(News Agencies) When India declared high-value bank notes unuseable a year ago in an effort to flush out tax cheats, one steel manufacturer was so spooked he resolved to do business by the book in future.

But 12 months on from the shock move, the industrialist says he has gone back to cash under the table at the insistence of his buyers - undermining government claims that the bold scheme has cleaned up India's graft-ridden



necessities as their meagre savings evaporated in an instant.

'Was it worth it? Certainly not,' said Sunil Sinha, principal economist at India Ratings & Research.

'It brought huge pain and disruption. People lost lives, lost their livelihoods.'

Authorities also expected that a portion of non-tax payers would fail to bank their unuseable cash for fear of exposure.

But in August the Reserve Bank of India announced that 99 percent of the devalued bills had been returned, undermining Modi's claim that stashes of black money would be uncovered.

Now traders say they are operating much as they did before the ban, with cash once again king, as fears of being stung by the taxman have faded.

'We're in a wait and watch phase before we decide if we should increase the cash portion (of the business) or not. It depends how closely the government monitors this,' said a dry fruit importer in a traditional market in Delhi's old quarter. 'Everyone does this. This is how business is done in India.'

BLACK money is BACK!

India's tradesmen rekindle love for cold hard cash, a year after Modi's note ban



cash at home, and if you want to be paid, we can pay you in cash immediately, but we cannot arrange a bank payment', he told AFP.

The government had hoped the surprise move, which meant high-value notes could not be spent and instead had to be banked, would encourage a switch to traceable digital payments in a country where just three percent had been paying taxes.

Modi personally championed credit and debit cards in the aftermath of demonetisation, beaming down from billboards encouraging Indians to embark on a digital revolution.

But sales from plastic have declined 13 percent from highs in December 2016, when new cash notes remained scarce.

Mobile banking figures for August, the latest data available, showed \$16 billion in transactions - a 20 percent drop compared with November.

Sanjay Moria, a tea vendor in central Delhi, said at least half his income in the weeks after demonetisation came through a popular payment app, but since then, digital sales had plunged. 'I'll take any form of payment, but people are mostly back to paying in cash,' he said, as office workers sipped hot spiced tea from small paper cups.

Many poorer Indians, reliant on cash, were left scrambling to buy basic

economy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision last November to withdraw India's high-value rupee bills was intended to root out a culture of tax evasion so widespread it had become the norm. His Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had won the 2014 election on a promise to root out corruption, which had led to popular disillusionment with the previous government.

But the move wrought havoc on businesses in Asia's third-largest economy, causing growth to

slump to levels not seen since Modi was elected.

Now, as businesses from street-side stalls to wholesalers rekindle their love affair with cash, Modi is coming under pressure to explain whether the most controversial policy of his tenure was worth the economic pain. The steel producer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said his efforts to keep business above board backfired when his buyers insisted on paying cash - and keeping their payments off the books.

'They said, 'we have



Juvenile 'confesses' to slitting the throat of seven-year-old school pupil as CBI probes market shop where knife was bought



(News Agencies) The Class 11 student of Ryan International School, who has been held for slitting the throat of Pradyuman Thakur, was taken by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to Sohna Market to identify the shop from where he allegedly purchased the knife used in the murder.

He will be taken to the school to reconstruct the scene of crime.

Investigators have told a juvenile court that the teen confessed to his crime in the presence of his father, independent witnesses and a social welfare board member.

The motive, apparently, was to delay an exam, but the CBI is yet to find clinching evidence.

The CBI said more interrogation was needed to reconstruct the scene of crime, to unearth conspiracy, if any, and to collect any other evidence related to the case.

In its note seeking the remand of the teenager from the juvenile court in Gurugram, the agency said his custodial interrogation was needed to ascertain if there were other people involved in the murder. He has admitted his involvement in committing the murder of...in ground floor boys washroom of Ryan International School...in presence of his father..., independent witness, welfare officer of the CBI, etc. (sic), the note said.

It was on Wednesday that CBI

said it had apprehended a senior student of Ryan International School in connection with the murder of Pradyuman's, rejecting Gurugram police's theory that the killing was the handiwork of school bus conductor Ashok Kumar.

According to the investigative agency, the student, believed to be weak in his studies, allegedly slit Pradyuman's throat to get the school to declare a holiday in order to defer a scheduled parent- teacher meeting (PTM) and an examination.

The agency did not find any evidence of sexual assault.

The CBI questioned the teenager for six hours before taking him to select shops to find out where the murder weapon - a knife - may have been bought.

Sources say in the next two days, he will be taken to his school so that he can retrace his steps on September 8, when Pradyuman was found murdered in a toilet near his classroom.

According to the CBI, the murder weapon which was used by the accused is the same as the one recovered by Gurugram police from the commode of the washroom where Pradyuman was killed.

After killing Pradyuman, the accused informed the PT teacher and

gardener of the school that a student is bleeding inside the washroom.

Sources told Mail Today that during a questioning session between 10 am and 5 pm, allowed by a juvenile court in Gurugram, the accused was taken to a 'certain place' to substantiate his statements on the activities before and after the crime.

The teenager was apprehended by the CBI on Tuesday night and is being kept at Sewa Kutir in Kingsway Camp, from where he was brought to the CBI headquarters at 10.45 am for questioning, the sources said.

The court has sent the juvenile to three-day CBI custody. Apart from the confessional statement, CBI claims to have scientific evidence, forensic evidence, CCTV footage and witnesses' statements, on the basis of which they have charged the juvenile

accused of murder.

Suspecting the involvement of more people, a CBI spokesperson said, 'Till now more than 125 people have been questioned in this case.'

The agency has not ruled out the possibility of other people involved in the murder of Pradyuman.

He has admitted his involvement in committing the murder in presence of his father, independent witness, welfare officer, etc.

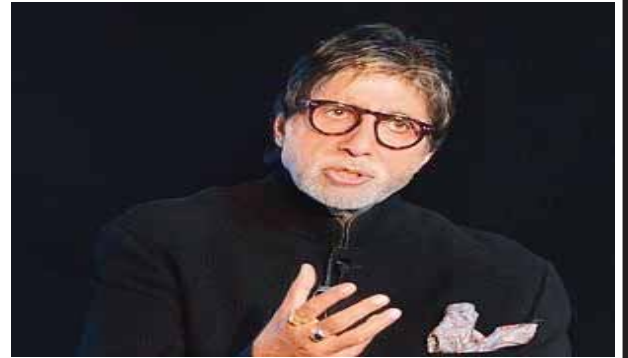
—A NOTE BY CBI

The Class 11 student, believed to be weak in studies, allegedly slit Pradyuman's throat to get the school to declare a holiday.

—A CBI SPOKESPERSON

Indian Paradise Papers leak

Amitabh Bachchan, Vijay Mallya, Niira Radia, Manyata, and two from BJP feature



(News Agencies) The Indian government has launched an investigation into offshore assets and bank accounts of over 700 Indian individuals and entities disclosed in the Paradise Papers released by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

The Indian names include Bollywood superstar

Bachchan, liquor baron businessman Vijay Mallya, corporate lobbyist Niira Radia, film star Sanjay Dutt's wife Dilnashin (now known as Manyata) Union minister Jayant Sinha and Rajya Sabha MP RK Sinha.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) announced that the multi-agency group probing the Panama Papers leak will also monitor the investigations on

the Paradise Papers on financial holdings abroad.

It said the investigation units of the income tax department across the country have been alerted to take note of the disclosures for immediate action.

In all, 714 Indian entities and individuals figure in the list.

The Paradise Papers include nearly seven million loan agreements, financial statements, emails, trust deeds and other paperwork over nearly 50 years from inside Appleby, a well-known offshore law firm with headquarters in Bermuda.

ICIJ worked with 95 media partners globally for the investigation. The leaked documents include files from smaller, family-owned trust company Asiatici (Singapore), and from company registries in 19 secrecy jurisdictions.

However, at the same time, the mention of names in the list does not mean wrongdoing, the body said.

CBDT, which is the apex policy-making body for the I-T department, said investigation in many cases of offshore entities is already on the fast track.

As soon as further information surfaces, swift action as per law will follow, it added.

CBDT said the government has directed that investigation in cases of Paradise Papers will be monitored by a reconstituted multi-agency group (MAG), which is headed by the CBDT chairman and has representatives from the tax body, Enforcement Directorate, RBI and

Financial Intelligence Unit.

The panel will first go through details of income tax returns filed by the 714 Indian individuals and entities named in the Paradise Papers and subsequently take action, on a case-to-case basis, official sources said.

However, the CBDT said it is still to receive full details of the latest disclosures. It said the names of only a few Indians have appeared so far in the media.

The Paradise Papers relate to an investigation into offshore and banking assets of individuals and entities carried out by the Indian Express in collaboration with ICIJ.

Even the ICIJ website has not yet released the names and other particulars of all entities, it said.

The ICIJ website suggests that information will be released in phases and structured data connected to the Paradise Papers investigation will be released only in the coming weeks on its offshore leaks database, a CBDT statement said.

A senior official said notices will be issued once complicity of an individual or entity is established in these cases.

The CBDT said revelations made on Monday in the media indicate that out of 180 countries represented in the data of offshore entities held by people of different nationalities, India ranks 19th in terms of number of names.

Sun Group, founded by Nand Lal Khemka, figured as Appleby's second largest client with as many as 118 offshore entities.

The papers include seven million loan agreements, financial statements, emails, trust deeds and other paperwork over nearly 50 years from inside Appleby



On matters such as the one in question (BMC notice on illegal construction), it shall be the agency, the system that shall resolve it... not the media.

25 years later, one of the chief prosecutors of the country who was involved in the matter, said our names were asked to be planted (in Bofors scam).

Two instant replies were given out by us, of denial and misuse of name (in Panama Papers), they were printed but the questions continued.



— AMITABH BACHCHAN WROTE IN A BLOG POST BEFORE PARADISE REPORTS



INSIDE CITY'S GAS CHAMBER



**Breathing
POISON**

A DOUBLE whammy of crop stalk burning in Punjab and Haryana and unfavourable meteorological conditions in the form of moisture-laden winds from Uttar Pradesh poisoned the Capital's atmosphere on Tuesday. Delhiites woke up to a toxic cocktail of air overlooking their balconies and entering their living rooms and Metro tunnels as the government was also jolted into waking up and announcing a slew of measures immediately.

Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia declared that primary schools in the city will remain closed on Wednesday. A fourfold hike in parking fees and slashing of Metro fares were also announced. Social media was flooded with grim pictures underscoring the extent of the crisis.

The Supreme Court-mandated Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority, empowered to enforce the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), also directed the states in the region to start preparing for implementing measures like the odd-even road space rationing scheme in light of the "crisis situation."

Social media flooded with grim pictures of the day

The air quality index was in the "severe" zone, with a score of 448 in a scale of 500, for the second time this year. Earlier, Diwali fireworks had triggered peak pollution levels on October 20. The National Green Tribunal took the governments of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana to task, seeking to know why preventive steps were not taken.

The Delhi government is considering shutting schools till the peak pollution levels prevail. "Delhi has become a gas chamber. Every year this happens during this part of year. We have to find a solution to crop burning in adjoining states," chief minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted. "Considering high level of pollution, I have requested Manish Sisodia, Education Minister, to consider closing schools for few days."

EPCA chairman Bhure Lal and member Sunita Narain directed the municipal bodies in the region to immediately enhance parking fees by four times and instructed the Delhi Metro to lower fares during off-peak hours for at least 10 days, introduce more coaches and ensure frequent services.

Among other measures, the EPCA

Around the world

Beijing & Shanghai

Have a robust warning system, shut down factories & restrict private cars on roads

London

Levies a congestion fee

Paris

Zones legally dedicated to only pedestrians & cyclists increased by including more kilometres

Singapore

Issues compulsory health advisories like wearing masks

Mexico

Has an odd & even system



Diwali fireworks had triggered peak pollution in the city on October 20.

instructed Delhi and neighbouring UP, Rajasthan and Haryana to introduce more buses and said a fine of ₹50,000 would be imposed on road construction agencies violating dust pollution norms.

The body asked the Delhi-NCR governments to start preparing for steps like odd-even and a complete ban on construction activities if pollution aggravates. The measures include complete closure of brick kilns, hot mix plants and stone crushers across the region till further notice and a ban on entry of goods vehicles - not destined for Delhi, for the next 20 days - in the city.

"Delhi has become a gas chamber. Every year this happens during this part of year. We have to find a soln to crop burning in adjoining states," Kejriwal tweeted.

The Indian Medical Association said Delhi is

witnessing a "public health emergency" and appealed to the government to stop outdoor sports and other such activities in schools to protect children.

"At present, Delhi's air quality is unfit for living. Delhi has turned into a poisonous gas chamber similar to the Bhopal gas tragedy," Dr Arvind Kumar, chairman of the Centre for Chest Surgery at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, told Mail Today. The EPCA announced that all measures under the GRAP's severe category will be implemented across the region till further notice. "Definitely, respiratory cases have just doubles in the past two-three days," Dr (Prof) GC Khilani, head of pulmonary medicine department at AIIMS, told Mail Today. "We are witnessing two types of patients: one with existing respiratory complications and the other are patients without fresh complaints of breathing."

Burning of stubble is main villain of the tale

By **Sneha Agrawal**
in New Delhi

AS DELHI begins to suffer from high level of smog due to stubble burning, amicus curiae senior advocate Kailash Vasdev appointed in the air pollution matter in the Delhi High Court has alleged that none of the court orders has been complied by the respondents and therefore it was time that the action should be taken against the officials.

The rise in the pollution levels in the Capital had made the HC take suo-moto cognisance in 2015. The bench of justices Ravindra Bhat and Sanjeev Sachdeva has asked the Delhi government and the neighbouring states to list the steps taken by them to address the issue.

Dust and construction debris 2 other factors

"October to January was a critical period when the air quality in Delhi is poor due to the weather conditions. Stubble burning during this period acted as the trigger or is the main villain which leads the situation to deteriorate," it said.

The court added that while the stubble burning had become the main villain, the dust and construction debris also contribute towards the poor air quality.

"While bringing stubble burning to a complete halt will take time, the governments should at least try to enforce the regulations like mitigating construction dust generation, which can be done easily," the court said.

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GHAZIABAD

441

Extremely dangerous

NOIDA

407

Extremely dangerous

GURUGRAM

331

Crossed dangerous limit

AGRA

337

Crossed dangerous limit

AMRITSAR

319

Crossed dangerous limit

LUDHIANA

319

Crossed dangerous limit

LUCKNOW

336

Crossed dangerous limit



As we complete 15 Years

“Words cannot express the monumental journey that each and every person reading this has crossed through. The South Asian Insider has completed fifteen year journey, that has brought a wave of information and has amassed everyone together in this community. Few people can claim to have been a part of a tireless effort to soar through the top of the skies of the newspaper industries and be able to remark on it, 15 years later. We believe an order of gratitude is granted to all of you. To everyone who has stayed with The South Asian Insider through our path, thank you.

If it was not for each and every one of you today who have supported our endeavours to become a reliable source of information, we would not have been able to voice our appreciation today. We as a family will continue to move forward with every article printed, with every word typed and with every voice incorporated into the publication that has stood to uphold the value of information and knowledge. Because with each idea shared, we as a community continue to move forward. And to all, thank you for sharing this achievement with all of us here today, working towards a new tomorrow.”

**-Sharanjit Singh Thind
Editor In Chief & Publisher**



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It's a national shame that bonded labour still exists in India

The only way to reduce bonded labour is taking a preventative approach, by reducing the conditions that perpetrate bondage-like conditions by promoting decent work, and by removing possible elements of bondage and coercion in the worker-employer relationship

(News Agencies) Last week, 25 bonded labourers, including children, were rescued from farmlands in Rajasthan's Baran district. The rescued workers said they were lured from Madhya Pradesh with loans between Rs 500 to Rs 20,000 and the promise of work. But they were made to work on the fields without pay. Bonded and forced labour - where a person is made to work through the use of violence or intimidation or more subtle means such as accumulated debt - are some of the oldest forms of slavery in the

world. According to the 2016 Global Slavery Index, India has the most slaves in the world. There are an estimated 46 million people enslaved worldwide with more than 18 million of them in India, the survey added. Unfortunately, the Indian government cannot verify these figures. But the labour ministry has drawn up plans to identify, rescue and help bonded labourers by 2030.

In reply to a Lok Sabha question, minister of state (independent charge) for labour and employment Bandaru Dattatreya, said that the Centre

has adopted a three-pronged strategy for the abolition of the bonded labour system: First, the Constitution prohibits forced labour. It enacted the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, which empowers executive magistrates to exercise powers of judicial magistrate of first or second class for trial of offences. Vigilance committees at the district and sub-divisional levels have been prescribed to identify and rehabilitate bonded labourers. A centrally-sponsored plan — Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour

— is under implementation since 1978 under which the Centre and states contribute Rs 10,000 each for cases of rehabilitation.

Unfortunately, despite these measures, India has such large numbers of bonded labourers, thanks to poor enforcement of the four-decade-old bonded labour law, its under-resourced police and judiciary, and deep societal and economic inequities that still exist. The only way to reduce bonded labour is taking a preventive approach, by reducing the

conditions that perpetuate bondage-like conditions by promoting decent work, and by removing possible elements of bondage and coercion in the worker-employer relationship. It also involves inter-state coordination mechanisms for migrant workers, including workplace improvements and linking them to social security schemes. Above all, efforts must be made to create a database of bonded labourers. It is not an easy task but would be first step towards their liberation and rehabilitation.

Padmavati in more trouble

Brahmin organisation up in arms against Bhansali film now

Padmavati starring Deepika Padukone in the titular role and directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali is battling fresh attacks every single day.

(News Agencies) The going just doesn't seem to get any easy for Sanjay Leela Bhansali's upcoming film Padmavati starring Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh and Shahid Kapoor. Now, a Brahmin organisation, Sarv Brahmin Mahasabha, has decided to oppose the release of his magnum opus.

In a statement, Suersh Mishra, state president of Sarv Brahmin Mahasabha said that they will not tolerate "distortion" of historical facts at any cost.

The Sri Rajput Karni Sena, an organisation of Rajput community, has already opposed the release of the film on December 1 on the same grounds, as have both the BJP and Congress parties.

Mishra said, "As per the feelings of the general public, screening of this movie should be stopped otherwise the Sarv

Brahmin Mahasabha will oppose this movie."

He said, "They (Bhansali's team) are trying to defame Padmavati by distorting historical facts. No one can tolerate this."

The film has been steeped in trouble since the shooting began. In January, activists of the Sri Rajput Karni Sena had protested, manhandled and misbehaved with the crew of Padmavati, claiming that Bhansali was distorting historical facts in the movie.

They had also damaged some cameras and other equipment. Bhansali had to stop shooting.

In March, some miscreants broke the mirrors in Padmini Mahal (palace) in Chittorgarh Fort where Alauddin Khilji is believed to have seen Rani Padmavati or Padmini.

The Karni Sena claims that mirror was invented years after the incident is claimed to have happened, so it is a completely

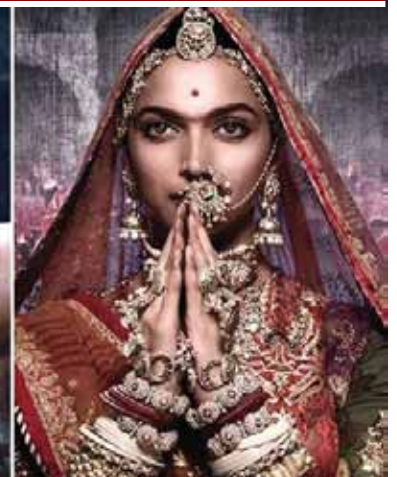
untrue and false story.

On November 3, the Karni Sena had called for a Chittorgarh bandh, which it claimed was a success.

Rani Padmini or Padmavati was the queen of Chittorgarh, and her existence itself has been debated for several centuries now. The first time Rani Padmini's name was mentioned in history was in a work of fiction, Padmavat, by a Sufi poet called Malik Muhammad Jayasi.

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's film Padmavati has been under attack from several fringe organisations who took offence to the supposed romance between Ranveer Singh, who plays Alauddin Khilji in the film, and Deepika Padukone, who plays the titular Padmavati.

The team of Padmavati has clarified time and again that there is no scene or dream sequence between Alauddin Khilji and Rani



Padmavati in the film. However, all their words seem to have fallen on deaf ears.

As recently as last week, the BJP sought a stay on the film. The party is to write to the Election Commission, Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) and the Central government requesting the same.

"We are writing to the ECI, CBFC and the Centre, seeking

to stop the film's release for a temporary period till the issue is resolved," BJP spokesperson IK Jadeja said. Senior Congress leader and national spokesperson Shaktisinh Gohil, on the other hand, said, "With elections round the corner, a Minister from BJP has written to the Election Commission seeking a ban on Padmavati till the elections are over."

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How uncle-nephew duo stole 50 mn litres oil from India's largest onshore fields

Over a period of five years, Bhoor Singh Rajpurohit and his nephew Gautam allegedly stole 50 million litres of crude oil from the country's largest onshore oilfield in Rajasthan. This is how they pulled off the staggering theft.

(News Agencies) The Mangala field in Rajasthan's Barmer district, 125 km from the Pakistan border, is the country's largest onshore oilfield. At 5.30 pm, 12 oil tankers with crude oil sourced from well pads, queue up outside the field colloquially known by its abbreviation – MPT (Mangala Processing Terminal); the hum of engines reverberates through the sand dunes overlooking the terminal; small groups of drivers play cards beneath neem trees leading to the MPT gate; and soon, the street lights in the small township adjacent to the plant are switched on. In the next few hours, oil tankers will unload crude oil that will contribute to MPT's daily production, 1.75 lakh barrels.

MPT contributes about 25 per cent to the country's domestic crude production.

Sometime in 2012, at least 30 tankers cumulatively began emptying crude oil at alternative locations before reaching MPT. Over the next five years and six months, the volume of stolen oil that was originally meant for the Mangala field would become roughly five crore litres.

Between 15,000-20,000 litres of crude oil was stolen every day until three months ago, when the Barmer police arrested Bhoor Singh Rajpurohit (42) and his nephew Gautam Singh Rajpurohit (28), the alleged masterminds of one of the biggest oil robberies in India's recent history.

Barmer, India's second largest Lok Sabha constituency in terms of area – five times as big as Delhi – was a nondescript outpost until 2004 when Cairn Oil and Gas, a Vedanta Group company, discovered oil reserves here.

Consequently, land prices in Barmer surged and multiple businesses started mushrooming in the region – taxi, real estate, construction materials, automobiles, among others. "There was only one guest house in the city and its room rent was Rs 500. Now, there are more than a dozen hotels and many of them have tariffs as high as Rs 3,500 per night. Earlier, a person owning a Maruti 800 was considered rich here. These days, you can easily find Audis and BMWs plying on the roads here," said Vikram Singh, who runs a handicraft shop

near Barmer railway station.

The fate of the Rajpurohits was connected to that of Barmer. The family was traditionally into farming. After the oil exploration in Barmer, five brothers, that is, Kan Singh (Gautam's father), Mohan, Madhu, Bhoor (Gautam's uncle) and Sampat Singh ventured into real estate, stone crushing and education.

Having studied till class 10, Bhoor Singh was the most literate of the five brothers. As a child, he enjoyed herding cattle with his father. When he was in his early 20s, he started looking after the spare parts shop that was jointly owned by the brothers. In his free time, he would oversee the running of a crusher machine, owned by one of his older brothers. From the money he got after the division of the family property, Bhoor Singh bought four bighas of land at Gadan road where he set up an oil storage facility. He obtained a license from the supply department to store 45 tons of oil at his unit. He would regularly visit Gujarat to buy Light Diesel Oil and Furnace Oil which he would then sell in Barmer. Over the years, he made many friends in the supply chain – drivers, surveyors, distributors, mechanics and owners of transport companies.

From his earnings, Bhoor Singh bought four bighas of land at Khet Singh Ki Pyaau and set up a tyre oil plant.

Gautam Singh did his BA in Computer Applications in the hope of getting a job in a private company – a major feat in a family where the men had always opted for business over employment. But Gautam did not get a job that matched his qualifications. So he began overseeing the operations of Hotel Madhav Paradise, a property jointly owned by the family. The hotel's clientele mostly comprised the staff of Cairn's vendors. Gautam bought two oil tankers which joined the fleet of another vendor. When Bhoor was away in Gujarat for oil trade, Gautam oversaw his factories.

The uncle and nephew bonded over trade, travel and politics. "Among our four uncles, Gautam was closest to Bhoor Singh, because both of them are reserved by nature. Also, they were more like friends than uncle

and nephew," said Gautam's cousin, Yogesh.

Five years ago, Gautam came across an oil tanker of Narendra Road Liners, one of the two companies that transported oil to MPT but was blacklisted at that time.

According to the Rajasthan police's Special Operations Group (SOG) which is investigating the case, Gautam found that though the GPS had been taken out of the tanker, the wiring was intact. He saw that it required a 12 watt battery and developed a prototype.

The modus operandi of the uncle-nephew duo who managed to rob Cairn of 50 million litres crude oil went something like this: First the crude oil was loaded on to the tankers from the oil wells. According to the police, out of multiple oil wells in Barmer, they stole oil only from three: Saraswati 1, Saraswati 2 and Rageshwari. After the oil was loaded, the tanker took a detour of approximately 35 km before it reached MPT. It stopped at Bhoor Singh's tyre oil factory in Khet Singh Ki Pyaau. The GPS (slightly bigger than a matchbox in size and stuck on the dashboard of the tanker) was taken out and connected to the battery of a Maruti Swift. Gautam's driver Ram Singh would then drive the car on the route meant for the tanker. Meanwhile, the tanker went inside the factory, fighter pumps transferred the content, the tanker returned to its original route, got the GPS back and proceeded towards MPT.

Bhoor and Gautam gave cuts to tanker drivers and the field-level staff at loading and unloading points. On one occasion, the control room at MPT phoned the driver of one of the tankers, perturbed by the slow speed or the momentary switching off of the GPS. Gautam told him, "Yaar do paise kama lene doh driver ko bhi aur mujhe bhi. (Let me and the driver make some money)." That was how Bankaram Jat, the man at the control room was managed, according to Sanjay Shrotriya, a member of Rajasthan's Special Operations Group. "He was asking for Rs 2,000 per tanker as his cut, but agreed to Rs 1,000. Jat would collect the payment from Gautam every five days," Shrotriya told Media.



After a Tax Crackdown, Apple Found a New Shelter for Its Profits

The tech giant has found a tax haven in the island of Jersey, leaving billions of dollars untouched by the United States, leaked documents reveal.

Tim Cook was angry. It was May 2013, and Mr. Cook, the chief executive of Apple, appeared before a United States Senate investigative subcommittee. After a lengthy inquiry, the committee found that the company had avoided tens of billions of dollars in taxes by shifting profits into Irish subsidiaries that the panel's chairman called "ghost companies."

"We pay all the taxes we owe, every single dollar," Mr. Cook declared at the hearing. "We don't depend on tax gimmicks," he went on. "We don't stash money on some Caribbean island."

True enough. The island Apple would soon rely on was in the English Channel.

Five months after Mr. Cook's testimony, Irish officials began to crack down on the tax structure Apple had exploited. So the iPhone maker went hunting for another place to park its profits, newly leaked records show. With help from law firms that specialize in offshore tax shelters, the company canvassed multiple jurisdictions before settling on the small island of Jersey, which typically does not tax corporate income.

Apple has accumulated more than \$128 billion in profits offshore, and probably much more, that is untaxed by the United States and hardly touched by any other country. Nearly all of that was made over the past decade.

The previously undisclosed story of Apple's search for a new

tax haven and its use of Jersey is among the findings emerging from a cache of secret corporate records from Appleby, a Bermuda-based law firm that caters to businesses and the wealthy elite.

The records, shared by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists with The New York Times and other media partners, were obtained by the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

The documents reveal how big law firms help clients weave their way through the gaps between different countries' tax rules. Appleby clients have transferred trademarks, patent rights and other valuable assets into offshore shell companies, avoiding billions of dollars in taxes. The rights to Nike's Swoosh trademark, Uber's taxi-hailing app, Allergan's Botox patents and Facebook's social media technology have all resided in shell companies that listed as their headquarters Appleby offices in Bermuda and Grand Cayman, the records show.

"U.S. multinational firms are the global grandmasters of tax avoidance schemes that deplete not just U.S. tax collection but the tax collection of most every large economy in the world," said Edward D. Kleinbard, a former corporate tax adviser to such companies who is now a law professor at the University of Southern California.

Indeed, tax strategies like the ones used by Apple — as

well as Amazon, Google, Starbucks and others — cost governments around the world as much as \$240 billion a year in lost revenue, according to a 2015 estimate by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The disclosures come on the heels of last week's proposals by Republican lawmakers to provide several new tax benefits for multinational companies, including cutting the federal corporate income tax rate to 20 percent from 35 percent. President Trump has said that American businesses are getting a bad deal under current rules.

But the documents show how major American companies find creative ways to avoid paying anything close to 35 percent.

Apple, for example, pays taxes at a small fraction of that rate on its offshore profits, according to calculations by The Times based on the company's securities filings. Apple reports that nearly 70 percent of its worldwide profits are earned offshore.

An Apple spokesman, Josh Rosenstock, declined to answer most questions about the company's tax strategy. He did say that Apple had told regulators — in the United States and Ireland and at the European Commission — about the reorganization of its Irish subsidiaries. "The changes we made did not reduce our tax payments in any country," he said.

He added: "At Apple we follow

the laws, and if the system changes we will comply. We strongly support efforts from the global community toward comprehensive international tax reform and a far simpler system."

In prepared statements, Allergan, Facebook, Nike and Uber said they complied with tax regulations around the world.

Congressional Republicans are also seeking to impose a 10 percent tax on some of the profits that American businesses say are earned offshore — half the rate they are proposing for profits in the United States. The lawmakers have also proposed another break, permitting multinationals to bring home more than \$2.6 trillion stowed offshore at sharply reduced tax rates. Both proposals, critics say, would only create additional incentives for businesses like Apple to shift more profits into island hideaways. Appleby is a member of the global network of lawyers, accountants and bankers who set up or manage offshore companies and

accounts for clients who want to avoid taxes or keep their finances a secret from authorities, business partners or even spouses. The firm did not respond to questions from The Times about its work for Apple or other companies.

Tax authorities have challenged several of the offshore structures maintained by Appleby and Estera, a spinoff of the law firm's corporate services business. Nike won a fight over back taxes with the Internal Revenue Service a year ago; a similar dispute between the I.R.S. and Facebook is continuing.

European regulators are trying to force countries including Ireland, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands to collect back taxes from big companies that relied on offshore arrangements. Apple is being pursued for \$14.5 billion in back taxes after European regulators ruled that its old tax structure amounted to illegal state aid from the Irish government.



Saudi Royal Purge: Crown Prince's High-Stakes Gambit

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA: With his sweeping royal purge, Saudi Arabia's future king has upended a decades-old system of governance adopted by previous rulers in what analysts describe as a bold but risky power play.

Dozens of political and business figures were arrested at the weekend in what Saudi authorities have dubbed an anti-corruption swoop, including billionaire Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal, while powerful royals such as the national guard chief were sacked.

The dramatic clampdown on business figures could deal a blow to investor confidence, potentially derailing sweeping Vision 2030 reforms, the brainchild of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

The purge underscores an unprecedented restructuring of the kingdom as Prince Mohammed dismantles a governance model involving consensus within the royal family, while he amasses extraordinary power.

"The structure of dynastic rule established over the past few decades is being reshaped into a more centralised monarchical system," said Jane Kinninmont, of London-based think tank Chatham House.

"MBS is disrupting the model of Saudi government," Kinninmont told AFP, using an acronym widely used for the crown prince.

Saudi authorities hailed the dramatic crackdown as a bold initiative to root out corruption.

But analysts question whether the issue serves as a guise for Prince Mohammed to consolidate power by eliminating rivals opposed to his reform drive and eventual succession as king.

"The dismissals and detentions suggest that Prince Mohammed rather than forging alliances is extending his iron grip to... counter opposition," said James Dorsey from Singapore's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

It raises questions about the reform process that increasingly is based on a unilateral rather than a consensual rewriting of the kingdom's social contract. "Potential of resistance"

Prince Mohammed's supporters lionise him as an enlightened disrupter of the status quo as he pursues dramatic social and economic reforms to modernise

the kingdom and prepare for a post-oil era.

His anti-graft campaign follows other bold moves, including a royal decree allowing women to drive from next June and clipping the powers of the religious police.

His ambitions were on display at an investor summit in Riyadh two weeks ago, where global business titans were shown blueprints for multibillion dollar projects, including a futuristic megacity with robots and driverless cars.

The venue of the summit, Riyadh's Ritz Carlton hotel, is now rumoured to be the site where many of the arrested elites are being held. Police cars surround the palatial complex, with its imposing gates clamped shut.

"The anti-corruption sweep has included individuals who had been seen as potential sources of resistance to elements of MBS's various projects," said Kinninmont.

The sweep has triggered uncertainty among businesses at a time when the kingdom is seeking to attract badly needed investments amid a protracted oil slump.

Among those being held, aside from Prince Al-Waleed, is Waleed al-Ibrahim, owner of the influential Arab satellite network MBC, as well as construction tycoon Bakr Bin Laden and billionaire Saleh Kamal.

Research firm Capital Economics said the arrests could deal a short-term "blow" to the economy as opposition towards Prince Mohammed builds, potentially threatening his reform drive.

Geneva's Mirabaud Securities warned that the purge, including

the arrest of Prince Al-Waleed who has invested billions in companies around the world, could spook the private sector in the short term and "intensify capital flight" from Saudi Arabia. 'Power grab'

But seemingly unfazed, government social media channels have replayed a months-old interview with Prince Mohammed in which he stressed that neither ministers nor business tycoons will be spared if found guilty of corruption.

It is a message that resonates with the masses who seethe over a culture of privilege among old-generation royals.

"Cynics calling it a power grab but actually power had been already consolidated," tweeted Ali Shihabi, director of the Washington-based Arabia Foundation who is said to be close to the establishment.

"This is about reshaping elite behavior by picking high profile



symbols. (Its) message is that house cleaning starts at the top." But experts warn that the purge could trigger a backlash especially as Prince Mohammed seeks to consolidate his control over the security services.

He ousted Prince Miteb bin Abdullah, the 64-year-old son of the late king Abdullah, as the head of the Saudi Arabian National Guard. The internal security force has long been seen as a local of tribal power and a stronghold of king

Abdullah's family.

In June, he also toppled the previous crown prince Mohammed bin Nayef, ousting him from the interior ministry.

"Such dramatic changes are bound to meet some resistance and opposition," Kinninmont said.

"Since there are few permitted avenues for expressing opposition and criticism in Saudi Arabia, (we) inevitably wonder whether opposition is brewing behind the scenes."

Scrapping of high-value notes led to multiple benefits: Finance ministry

of terrorism and Left-wing extremism. Besides, it has helped in expanding tax base, converting non-formal economy into a formal one and making money accountable. It has provided a big boost to digitisation of payments, making India a less-cash economy. During September, Rs 1.24 lakh crore transactions were done through the digital mode. The number of transactions was 87.7 crore. The ruling BJP has decided to celebrate first anniversary of demonetisation on November 8. This will see Union ministers and BJP office-bearers across the country build public opinion in favour of the government's decision. However, the Opposition has decided to celebrate the day as a "black day".



The Climate Risks We Face

To stabilize global temperature, net carbon dioxide emissions must be reduced to zero. The window of time is rapidly closing to reduce emissions and limit warming to no more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit or 2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, the goal set in the Paris climate accord. The further we push the climate system beyond historical conditions, the greater the risks of potentially unforeseen and even catastrophic changes to the climate — so every reduction in emissions helps.

While climate models incorporate many important processes, they cannot include all

aspects of the climate system and all of the possible interactions within that system. Vicious cycles between these climate components may push the Earth into states much different from the past: for example, one with a much smaller West Antarctic Ice Sheet and much higher sea level, or one without coral reefs and with greatly reduced marine biodiversity. Surprises can also come from compound extreme events like droughts, floods, heat waves, hurricanes and wildfires that may occur in multiple places at the same time, or sequentially in one place. What is clear is that, even though we cannot

quantify all of the possible changes to every element of the climate system, the risks to things we care about — from the health of our children, to the future economic viability of our low-lying coastal cities and infrastructure — are real and growing. And yet, there is also reason for optimism. The report documents how global carbon emissions may be leveling out, despite continued global economic growth. News reports in just this past year show how the cost of clean energy sources such as wind and solar have decreased dramatically both here and in emerging economies such

as China, India and even the Middle East, sending powerful signals to long-term investors and businesses about which way things are trending. And more and more businesses, whether by choice or in response to investor demand, are asking: What risks do we face, if we do not plan for a changing climate? All humans share this planet. We depend on it for the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, the natural resources it provides and the places where we live. For that reason, all Americans need to understand the risks we face, and the impact our choices will have on our future.

As India Waits For Vijay Mallya, UK Judge's Order Makes Officials Nervous

recently refused to send bookie Sanjeev Kumar Chawla to India after an expert cited "unsafe, inhuman and degrading" conditions in Delhi's Tihar jail. In her judgement, District Judge Rebecca Crane said, "I am not satisfied that there is an effective system of protection against torture in the receiving state. While the Supreme Court in India has raised concerns about prison conditions, the court has found little has changed in practice and overcrowding remains a problem. Evidence suggests... monitoring systems are not effective in practice." Mr Rijiju, in his meeting with

Brandon Lewis, pushed for 13 extraditions - including that of Mr Mallya, Indian Premier League founder Lalit Modi and Sanjeev Kumar Chawla. "We made our position clear. The response is positive from the government's side but there can't be a detailed discussion as the matter is in court," the minister told reporters.

Sanjeev Kumar Chawla is accused in the match-fixing scandal of 2000 involving Hanse Cronje, the former South African captain.

Ms Crane noted in her order that there were "strong grounds for believing that Chawla would be

subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the Tihar prison complex, due to the overcrowding, lack of medical provision, risk of being subjected to torture and violence either from other inmates or prison staff which is endemic in Tihar." The ruling was based on a report by Alan Mitchell, a member of the Scottish Human Rights Commission. He prepared two reports, in November last year and February this year, but he visited a prison in Alipore, not Tihar, because he didn't get permission.

Dr Mitchell noted that there was

227 per cent overcrowding in Tihar, "which alone is sufficient to consider a real risk to (human rights) being breached".

He also referenced a report that suggested that torture remained "endemic and institutionalised" in Indian prisons and there were an "alarming number of deaths in custody, particularly unnatural deaths."

Though the judge said there was nothing to indicate that Chawla would not receive a fair trial, she felt "in the light of findings that being held in Tihar prison poses a real risk of breach of (human rights), India's assurance was insufficient and didn't detail how

rights would be protected."

Vijay Mallya, 61, is wanted in India over for defaulting on loans worth thousands of crores in India. He slipped out of the country in March last year, amid attempts by a group of banks to recover more than Rs. 9,000 crore loaned to him for his defunct Kingfisher Airlines. India made an extradition request in February to Britain to send back the businessman to face trial. Last month, he was arrested in London and released on bail for the second time this year in a case of money laundering filed by Indian authorities through UK's state prosecutor.

ICE Busts 5 More Criminal Aliens Released by Sanctuary New York City

ERO New York Field Office Director Thomas Decker said in a written statement obtained by Breitbart Texas. "Because of the unnecessary threat being imposed by the city's decision to not honor ICE detainers, ICE remains committed, in the interest of public safety and national security, to welcoming changes to current New York City policies and strengthening its relationship with local law

FIA hosts welcome reception in NJ for Ambassador Chakravorty

In his thank you speech, Chakravorty candidly mentioned that the Indian Consulate's primary responsibilities included the furthering of US-India bilatera relationship and servicing the needs of the Indian Diaspora and "if we are not able to that successfully, then I think it's a problem with us." While applauding the contributions of Indian Americans, he said the Consulate was mindful of the burgeoning population of the Indian Diaspora and its diverse needs. He mentioned that the Consulate will host a "Open House" every alternate Wednesday to encourage participation of the community and addressing their concerns in the most efficient manner. The FIA of NY-NJ-CT was formed in 1970 and is among the largest umbrella organization representing over 500,000 Indian Americans in the tristate region. The centerpiece of its efforts culminates in the India Day Parade in New York each year.

enforcement."

Moussa Diaby, 28, a Mali national, was arrested by the New York Police Department (NYPD) on Sept. 6 on local charges. ERO deportation officers lodged an immigration detainer with the Bronx (NY) Central Booking. Diaby, however, was later released from NYPD custody without the detainer being honored and without notification to ICE. On Oct. 26, ERO deportation officers arrested Diaby in the Bronx, New York, on immigration charges. He is currently detained in ICE custody pending a removal hearing before an immigration judge.

Teofilo Santana-Perez, 25, a Dominican national, was arrested by the NYPD on Jan. 31, 2017, on local charges. On Feb. 5, 2017, ERO deportation officers

lodge an immigration detainer with the New York City Department of Corrections (NYCDOC). On Feb. 6, 2017, Santana-Perez was released from NYCDOC custody without the detainer being honored and without notification to ICE. On Oct. 31, ERO deportation officers arrested Santana-Perez in Manhattan on immigration charges. He is currently detained in ICE custody pending a removal hearing before an immigration judge. Mikolaj Michalski, 36, a Polish citizen, was arrested by the NYPD on Sept. 19, 2017. On the same date, ERO deportation officers lodged an immigration detainer with the NYPD Manhattan Central Booking. Michalski later released from NYPD custody without the detainer being honored and without notification to ICE. On

Oct. 31, ERO deportation officers arrested Michalski in Manhattan on immigration charges. He is currently detained in ICE custody pending a removal hearing before an immigration judge.

Darwin Benegas-Ortiz, 32, a Honduran citizen, was arrested by the Fallsburg Town (NY) Police Department on July 29, 2017, on local charges. On Aug. 4, 2017, ERO deportation officers lodged an immigration detainer with the Sullivan County (NY) Jail. Benegas-Ortiz was later released from the Sullivan County Jail without the detainer being honored and without notification to ICE. On Nov. 1, ERO deportation officers arrested Benegas-Ortiz, in Monticello, New York on immigration charges. He is currently detained in ICE custody pending a removal

hearing before an immigration judge.

Bertin Moran-Herrera, 29, a Mexican citizen, was arrested by the NYPD on Aug., 2017, on local charges. On the same date, ERO deportation officers lodged an immigration detainer with the NYPD Queens (NY) Central Booking. Moran-Herrera was later released from NYPD custody without the detainer being honored and without notification to ICE. On Nov. 1, ERO deportation officers arrested Moran-Herrera, in Flushing, New York on immigration charges. He is currently detained in ICE custody pending a removal hearing before an immigration judge. Despite protests to the contrary by open border activists, 91 percent of illegal aliens arrested by ICE since January were convicted criminals.

Poland urges citizens to reproduce like rabbits

The Polish government is encouraging citizens to go forth and multiply like rabbits. The health ministry of Poland, which has one of the lowest birth rates in Europe, has put out a short video praising rabbits for producing many offspring. The YouTube video shows rabbits munching on lettuce and carrots while a rabbit "narrator" reveals the secret of their big families — exercise, a healthy diet and little stress. The brief appearance of a human couple enjoying a romantic picnic hints that a little romance might help, and a wine glass turned upside down suggested an anti-alcohol message. Viewers are told: "If you ever want to be a parent, follow the example of rabbits."

It is the latest step by the conservative government in this mostly Catholic country of 38 million to reverse a shrinking population. European Union figures show that Poland's birth rate was 1.32 children per woman in 2015. Only Portugal had a lower fertility rate, though the figures in Spain and Greece were almost as low as Poland.

The Health Ministry said in a statement to The Associated Press that it was trying to encourage Poles in their reproductive years — between the ages of 18 and 45 — to adopt a healthy lifestyle that would improve their reproductive health. It also said it was seeking to raise public awareness of the issue in a way that "did not offend anyone and was not vulgar."

US, S Korea start drills in show of force against N Korea

US S Korea start drills in show of force against N Korea: The United States and South Korea have started joint naval drills that will involve three US aircraft carriers in what military officials describe as a clear warning to North Korea. The four-day drills that began today in waters off South Korea's eastern coast come as President Donald Trump continues a visit to Asia that has been dominated by discussions over the North Korean nuclear threat.

South Korea's military says the battle groups of the USS Ronald Reagan, the Theodore Roosevelt and the Nimitz will successively enter the exercise area during the drills that run until Tuesday. The three carriers will be likely together in the drills around Monday. It's the first time since 2007 that three US carrier strike groups are operating together in the Western Pacific.

Nassau County Commission on Human Rights

EDWARD P. MANGANO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Dr. BOBBY KALOTEE
COMMISSION CHAIRMAN

RODNEY H. MCRAE
INTERIM EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Friday,
December 1, 2017

WORLD AIDS DAY



Co-Sponsored by

Nassau Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta
Sorority, Inc.

Hempstead Branch - NAACP

NuHealth
Nassau University
Medical Center

6:00 - 9:00 PM

Theodore Roosevelt Executive
and Legislative Building
1550 Franklin Ave
Mineola, NY 11501



The red ribbon is the universal symbol of awareness and support for those living with HIV, it aims to spread the message that HIV victims enjoy equal status in society as well as enhance the social protection mechanisms for people living with HIV.

NASSAU COUNTY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
240 OLD COUNTRY ROAD, SUITE 606, MINEOLA, NY 11501
TEL: (516) 571-3662 • FAX: (516) 571-1422
nassaucountyny.gov/414/Human-Rights-Commission

Do you pop pills for heartburn?

Beware, it can put your kidneys at risk

Those heartburn pills are bad for you they can increase relative risk of developing chronic kidney disease or kidney failure.

(News Agencies) Millions of people popping common heartburn and indigestion pills could be at an increased risk of kidney failure, suggests a recent analysis. The study found that individuals who used proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), which reduce gastric acid production, had a 33% increased relative risk of developing chronic kidney disease or kidney failure when compared with non-

users. Previous studies showed a link between use of heartburn pills and kidney damage and even fractures.

To investigate, Charat Thongprayoon and his colleagues conducted an analysis of published studies that reported the risk of chronic kidney disease or kidney failure among PPI users compared with non-users. Five studies with

536,902 participants met the eligibility criteria and were included in the meta-analysis. Individuals who used PPIs had a 33% increased relative risk of CKD or kidney failure when compared with non-users.

Thongprayoon noted that this study demonstrated a significant association between the use of PPIs and increased risks of chronic kidney

disease and kidney failure. "Although no causal relationship has been proven, providers should consider whether PPI therapy is indicated for patients. Chronic use of PPIs should be avoided if not really indicated," he added. The findings are presented at ASN Kidney Week 2017 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, LA.



Your city's toxic air may harm even your mental health, finds study

The effects of air pollution on cardiovascular health and lung diseases like asthma are well established, but this area of brain health is a newer area of research.

(News Agencies) The higher the level of particulates in the air, the greater the impact on mental health, a new study warns. Air pollution may be detrimental to your mental health, according to the study which found a link between toxic air and psychological distress.

"This is really setting out a new trajectory around the health effects of air pollution," said Anjum Hajat, from the University of Washington in the US.

"The effects of air pollution on cardiovascular health and lung diseases



like asthma are well established, but this area of brain health is a newer area of research," said Hajat. Scientists have

identified "social determinants" of physical and mental well-being, such as availability of healthy foods at local grocers, access to nature or neighbourhood safety.

Air pollution, too, has been associated with behaviour changes - spending less time outside, for instance, or leading a more sedentary lifestyle - that can be related to psychological distress or social isolation.

The study, published in the journal Health and Place, looked for a direct connection between toxic

air and mental health, relying on some 6,000 respondents.

Researchers then merged an air pollution database with records corresponding to the neighbourhoods of each of the 6,000 survey participants.

The team zeroed in on measurements of fine particulate matter, a substance produced by car engines, fireplaces and wood stoves, and power plants fuelled by coal or natural gas.

The study found that the risk of psychological

distress increased alongside the amount of fine particulate matter in the air. Fine particulate matter (particles less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter) is easily inhaled, can be absorbed into the bloodstream and is considered of greater risk than larger particles. The current safety standard for fine particulates, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency, is 12 microgrammes per cubic metre.

Mushrooms are the newest 'superfood'. They protect you from signs of ageing and keep you healthy

Mushrooms are loaded with antioxidants and can fight ageing as well as protect from free radicals that can cause cancer, coronary heart disease and Alzheimer's.

(News Agencies) A team of Penn State researchers found that mushrooms are rich in antioxidants that could be used to fight ageing and boost general health. The study suggests that mushrooms have high amounts of ergothioneine and glutathione, both important antioxidants, said Professor Robert Beelman. Previous research said mushrooms can fight dementia and

Alzheimer's disease. He added that researchers also found that the amounts of the two compounds varied greatly between mushroom species. "What we found is that, without a doubt, mushrooms are highest dietary source of these two antioxidants taken together, and that some types are really packed with both of them," said Beelman. Beelman said that when the body uses food to produce energy, it causes oxidative stress because

some free radicals are produced. Free radicals are oxygen atoms with unpaired electrons that cause damage to cells, proteins and even DNA as these highly reactive atoms travel through the body seeking to pair up with other electrons. Replenishing antioxidants in the body, then, may help protect against this oxidative stress. "There's a theory — the free radical theory of ageing — that's been around for a long time that

says when we oxidize our food to produce energy, there's a number of free radicals that are produced that are side products of that action and many of these are quite toxic," said Beelman. "The body has mechanisms to control most of them, including ergothioneine and glutathione, but eventually enough accrue to cause damage, which has been associated with many of the diseases of ageing, like cancer, coronary heart disease and Alzheimer's."



According to researchers, the 13 species tested. "We found that the porcini has the highest, by far, amount of ergothioneine and glutathione in mushrooms vary by species, a wild variety, where searching for it has become a national pastime."

Dear fashion lovers, here are 5 wacky trends that you need try for your next party

These trends are as unique as they get. From animal print hair colours to glow in the dark hair, take a look at what's hot in the fashion circles right now.

(Insider Bureau) Bored with the same old look? Go beyond your comfort zone and give offbeat hair styles or quirky make-up a shot. There are many unconventional trends like animal print hair colour or glitter lips to choose from. Ishika Taneja, Executive director of Alps group, and make-up expert Gunjan Gaur, list down some trends:

*** Glow in the dark hair:** This is fun and ideal to sport at a late-night concert or party. No surprise then that it's fast catching up,

and everyone is trying it at least once.

*** Glitter lips:** If you're someone who just can't get enough of the sparkle, then this trend is just for you. All you need to do is to put a shade of lipstick of your choice and add some matching magical glitter dust on top. The trend is not just making waves at the runway internationally, but also is a big hit at Indian weddings.

*** Glitter hair partition:** Move over messy and beaded hair. Glitter hair partition is something to

surely try this season. Just apply a thick coat of glitter on your roots after parting your hair. It has the power to add an oomph factor to your simple hairstyle. *** Asymmetrical haircuts:** In this, one side is cut right at the chin level or spikes, while the other side is kept longer adding a feminine edgy touch to your style. It highlights your eyes and draws attention to your jawline. *** Animal print hair colour:** It is the latest hair colour trend, and is strictly for the bold and adventurous. To get this



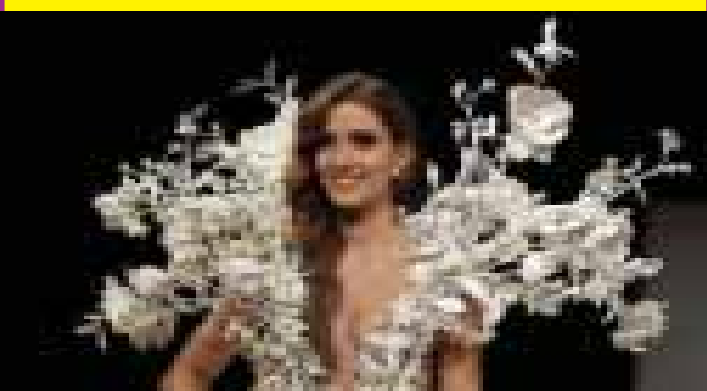
exotic look, apply an animal and create different zebra to tiger, there are print stencil onto the hair patterns. From leopard to many options.

If Hershey's went haute You have to see these incredible chocolate couture dresses

Designers sent mouth-watering ensembles inspired by and made out of chocolate down the runway at Salon du Chocolate festival in Paris. Check out some of the best creations below.



(Insider Bureau) Salon Du Chocolat festival is a fashion event with a difference. The annual gala in Paris made wearable chocolate (we're not totally clear on the science/germ factor behind wearing chocolate and how it would not melt upon bodily contact, or even if it's edible) a thing. The festival- with over 500 participants from more than 60 countries - featured a fashion show that paired chocolatiers with fashion designers to create couture dresses. The pieces were on display at an exhibition in the city of lights, between October 28 and November 1. The garments were nothing short of incredible. Although, the fashions weren't entirely made out of chocolate - they just featured it heavily, and the overall aesthetic for each was inspired by chocolate. Social media was suitably impressed with the works, which ranged from strapless princess gown numbers to more avant garde creations.



Deepika Padukone is giving us fashion lessons with her latest desi looks

Actor Deepika Padukone, who can make anything look effortlessly chic, was spotted in two back-to-back Sabyasachi ensembles. What do the two looks have in common? They were both fabulously desi.

(Insider Bureau) Deepika Padukone, without doubt one of Bollywood's biggest A-listers, swings between decadent and radiant designer ensembles on the red carpet and at high profile parties, premieres and award functions. She was recently spotted in two seriously-on-point desi Sabyasachi ensembles, fitting with her leading lady status: A whimsical sari with dramatic train at the back at an awards function and a youthful monochrome kurta-churidar at a trailer launch. On Tuesday, Deepika made a sexy and stylish appearance at the 3D

trailer launch of filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali's upcoming period drama Padmavati. The actor stole the show in a low-cut black kurta with beadwork detail that hugged her well-toned figure. She paired it with crisp white churidaar. She was a total winner with her strappy footwear, statement Amrapali earrings, neat low bun with center-parting, nude make-up, light pink lips and a tiny black bindi. The look was reminiscent of Deepika's signature style - sleek, subtle, sexy ensembles with heavier eye make-up and nude lips -

which she's been crafting for years. Deepika owned the Marathi Filmfare Awards, held in Mumbai on Friday, with another killer ensemble. The Finding Fanny actor looked absolutely gorgeous in a floral sheer Sabyasachi sari with intricate embellishments. The sari was gorgeous, but the extended train added drama and made it impossible to look away.

Bonus points for the soft and romantic styling: Deepika topped off the outfit with kundan jhumkas, also by Sabyasachi, wavy hair, smoky eyes and nude lips. Classic Deepika.



Flashback mode: The best of Victoria's Secret Fashion Show over the years

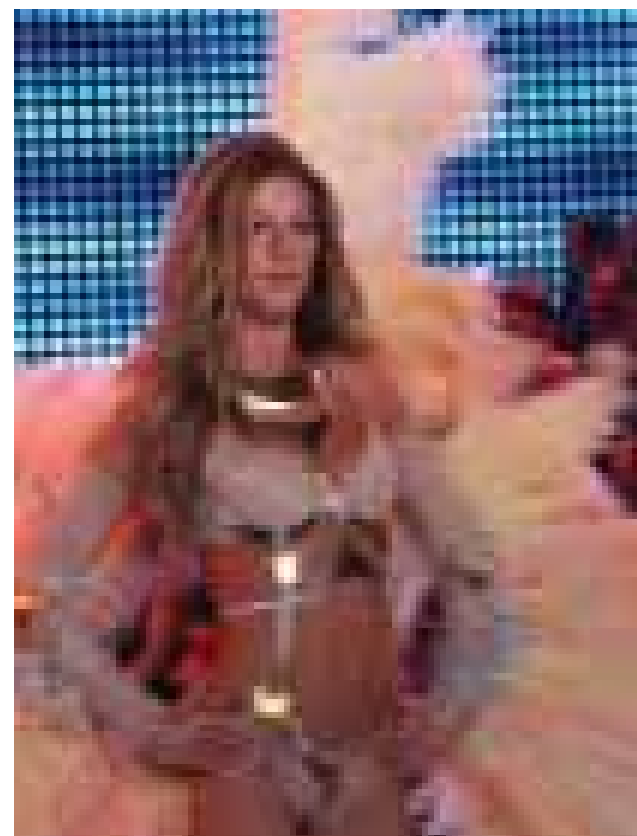
Here's a look at some standout moments from previous editions of the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show, since it began in 1995.

(Insider Bureau) At the show, which this year ends of November, some of the most stunning women on Earth will be jetting off to Shanghai, China, to star in the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show (VSFS) — one of the world's most hotly followed events. The VSFS, since it began in

1995. From Stephanie Seymour to Adriana Lima, Helena Christensen, Karen Mulder, Naomi Campbell, Laetitia Casta, Heidi Klum, Miranda Kerr, Gisele Bündchen, Alessandra Ambrosio and the Hadid sisters, for over two

decades, the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show has been bringing together some of the world's most famous models. Their presence alone is enough to make the show an unmissable annual event. Lingerie label Victoria's Secret also picks world-famous "Angels" to wear its iconic jewel-encrusted Fantasy Bra, the value of which has often exceeded \$10 million. Claudia Schiffer, Tyra Banks, Heidi Klum, Gisele Bündchen, Miranda Kerr and, more recently, Lily Aldridge and Jasmine Tookes, have all been lucky enough to showcase this exceptional creation at the end of the show. As well as star models, the Fantasy Bra and a host of sexy ensembles, musical performances turn this fashion show into a truly spectacular event. For more than 20 years, artists and bands like Mary J.

Blige, Destiny's Child, Sting, Seal, Justin Timberlake, Usher, Katy Perry, Kanye West, Jay-Z, Rihanna, Taylor Swift, Lady Gaga and The Weeknd have taken to the stage at this exceptional show. As a result, the VSFS draws an impressive audience worldwide. In 2015, the show was watched by some 6.59 million viewers on CBS, and is shown in more than 190 countries.



Unfortunately actresses in Bollywood are treated like time bombs



(Insider Bureau) Actor Akshay Kumar says that he is proud of all those female actors who have not let the 10 year shelf life have any significance for their careers.

Akshay Kumar has spent five decades on this planet and more than a quarter of a century in Bollywood. Sounds like a long time, right? But the actor remains an evergreen Khiladi of the showbiz game, with a body to die for and a fitness routine to swear by.

"To feel young, one must act young," says Akshay, asked to reveal his secret. "We are only ever as old as we feel, so I make sure that I still live like the world is my oyster, and [have] a smile that's as hungry for success and happiness as the day I started 26 years ago!" With his confidence, persona, and on-screen performances — he chooses his roles carefully — Akshay's position is, as yet, leagues ahead of the younger crop of

male Bollywood actors. But, says Akshay, compliments about his fitness and success never go to his head. "I'm proud of how I've carried myself, how disciplined I am about my workouts and, most importantly, my health," says the actor.

Referring to the younger crop of stars, such as Ranveer Singh, Sidharth Malhotra, Varun Dhawan and others, Akshay is quick to add, "But these young [actors] are the ones giving us old men a run for our money, not the other way round. When I entered the industry, no one knew what a six-pack was — now everyone has it."

Akshay made his Bollywood debut with the 1992 film *Khiladi*. Looking at the time when he started off and now, the actor asserts, "I couldn't be more excited about what the new generation has: bodies to die for, skills to be jealous of, action to wow us, and looks that could kill. All in all, us lot had better watch out."

Kriti Sanon, Diljit Dosanjh all set to start shooting for Arjun Patiala



(News Agencies) Diljit Dosanjh had an impressive debut in Bollywood with director Abhishek Chaubey's *Udta Punjab*. He was paired with Kareena Kapoor Khan in the film which revolved around the drug menace in Punjab. Despite her films not making huge money, Kriti Sanon always found producers lined up to sign her for their films. And then released *Bareilly Ki Barfi* which changed Bollywood's perception towards Sanon. She is now seen as a combination of glamour and talent. Her *Raabta* director, Dinesh Vijan, is returning to direction with a new film titled *Arjun Patiala* and he didn't have to look beyond Kriti Sanon for his leading lady. The film will feature Diljit Dosanjh opposite her. Diljit Dosanjh had an impressive debut in Bollywood with director Abhishek Chaubey's *Udta Punjab*. He was paired with Kareena Kapoor Khan in the film which revolved around the drug menace in Punjab. He went on to do *Phillaari* with Anushka Sharma.

The release date of *Arjun Patiala* hasn't been declared yet, but it's likely to release by April, next year.

Story of a struggling actor: What it takes to live the life of your dreams



(News Agencies) For an outsider, the dream of working in Bollywood is next to attaining nirvana. In a country of more than 1.2 billion people, making a space for yourself in the film industry is extremely tough, if not impossible. Thousands land up in Mumbai every day to pursue their dreams and thousands return without realising them.

Rahuul Aamath, a dreamy-eyed boy from a remote village in Rajasthan, is not someone you will bet on in this milieu. Generally, actors don't come from this strata of society in mainstream Hindi films. It's not unbelievable that he doesn't even know his exact birth date.

He says, "I belong to a family where

my parents didn't note my birth date. My father says that I was born when he was in Class XI. Going by that calculation, I assume I was born in 1983-84. I completed M.Sc in 2004, so I think this calculation is correct."

Like many of us, a government job would have been his ticket to a better job. He wasn't from a poor family, but his aspirations were limitless. "My village's name is Nikatpuri, it's on the Jaipur-Agra highway. We were mentally trained to become government servants, but films have their own charm. We watched films on VCR, sometimes we went to the nearby town on a tractor to watch a film. Sometimes, I even used father's name to rent VCR."

Talking about a film and hoping to be a part of it are two completely different things. "Sometimes I did modelling at the local level. I knew about theatre only when I came to the Delhi University for my master's degree. I also talked to my father about my dreams, but we knew nobody from the film industry."

A sustainable income could loosen the clutch of fate. Rahuul says, "I wanted a job that could give me the freedom to do theatre, and in 2005 I got selected for a job in DRDO. I wanted to stay in Delhi, but I was sent to Pithoragrah, Uttarakhand on my first posting. I was

so desperate to act that I was willing to feature in low-cost Kumauni music albums. There was just one gym with an annual fee of Rs 200, but I had to use it. In fact, the key to the gym was left with me."

Delhi was where the dream was. At least, for a beginner. "I had to come back to Delhi, so I lied to my father that I want to prepare for IAS. I took a study leave, but nothing happened. Of course, IAS was secondary. After the probation period, I finally came to Delhi and started doing serious theatre."

Persistence gets you auditions. Rahuul also auditioned for a couple of roles. Unfortunately, the idealism of a theatre actor came in his way. "I auditioned for the role of Arjun in *Mahabharata* on Star Plus and was offered Krishna's role, but I didn't want to get typecast as a mythological character. Recently, I met them and they still remembered me from the audition. My first camera experience was a short film."

They say actors have a shelf life, especially if you want lead roles in Bollywood. "Age factor also disturbed me, but I saw the interviews of many actors. I realised it's about presenting yourself in a particular way which happens only after sustaining a particular thought process over a longer period. Also, I

believed that I deserve good roles."

Rahuul elaborates his point, "Wherever you go, you leave an impression. People liked me and I tried to understand why. I also had a job to fall back upon. Many of my peers are working in TV and even if they worked in films, I wasn't satisfied with their work. I saw people like Deepak Dobriyal succeeding, so I thought my time might be coming."

"It's difficult to believe it, but I am not in it for money. I got offers for TV roles and with good money as well, but I was more into theatre. The more I read about cinema, the more I watched films, the more I got inclined to become an 'actor' than a hero. Irrfan Khan and Naseeruddin Shah became my idols instead of Shah Rukh and Salman," adds Rahuul.

He says, "I am not a busy actor, and my office supports me. In fact, it's this job that has given me the strength to say 'no'."

About 33 to 37-year-old today, Rahuul has a reason to be happy because his first feature film *Narayan* is going to hit the screens on November 3. His eyes twinkle when he explains his character. "It's about a 42-year-old father who is a security guard. He is a single parent who wants his son to study at a good school, but the child gets into bad company and starts doing drugs."

Khamoshi to Bajrangi Bhaijaan

10 Salman Khan movies to watch before Tiger Zinda Hai

Salman Khan will soon return with Ek Tha Tiger sequel, Tiger Zinda Hai but before that, here's counting down his 10 best films ever. Salman Khan, in his career spanning over almost three decades, has given Bollywood some of its most successful movies. Minting millions at the box office, films like Bajrangi Bhaijaan and Dabangg also proved to be hits with critics.

Soon, he will be back on the big screen with what many are calling a superhit in the making, Tiger Zinda Hai. A sequel to his 2013 hit Ek Tha Tiger, it is already creating waves among his sea of fans.

While there is still some time to go for it, as it releases on December 22, we count down his 10 best films to catch up on while you wait. Let us know if we missed any of your favourites.

Maine Pvar Kiva

has watched it a hundred times either willingly or after landing on it while switching channels and not being able to say no to it. Salman and Madhuri Dixit were a match made in movie heaven as the beautiful Nisha and Prem. They meet at a wedding and fall in love. However, in between the all-singing-all-dancing soiree, their love is tested harshly but they emerge victorious in the end.

Karan Arjun

With not one but two superstars, Karan Arjun was bound to be a roaring success and it was. The action, the music, the weirdly perfect melodrama all came together to create this 'most Bollywood' movie ever made. Brothers Salman and Shah Rukh, murdered by the evil Amrish Puri, take rebirth to avenge their mother, bring peace to their old town and ride some horses in style and the audience loved ev-

There's a pattern here. Perhaps Salman's best is revealed mostly when he pairs himself with another superstar. In Mujhse Shaadi Karogi, the anxious Salman is challenged by the charming Akshay Kumar in the race for Priyanka Chopra's Rani. Of course, 'wicked Sunny' does his best to ruin his plans but Salman's sweetness and clear conscience wins him her hand at the end.

Judwaa

The pattern is now complete. Bhai decided the best pairing he could have was with himself. He plays Prem and Raja in this double bonanza of a film. One is the street thug with a heart of gold and the other is a gullible, unsuspecting NRI. Their paths cross when the latter lands in India and weird things start happening. Together, Prem and Raja defeat the villain and land the girls in the end.

Khamoshi

One of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's best films is also his first with Salman Khan. Khamoshi, also starring Manisha Koirala and Nana Patekar as her father, is essentially be the story of a girl who aspires to be a singer. Nana plays a visual-and-speech impaired man who cannot understand his daughter's dreams. However, Salman manages to shine as the lovelorn Raj who inspires her to follow her dreams.

Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam

Hawa ka jhoka, Sameer enters Nandini's life like a whirlwind and when he leaves, she is not the same anymore. Salman, Aishwarya Rai and Ajay Devgn



give their career best performances in this yet another Sanjay Leela Bhansali film. Mischievous Sameer and temperamental Nandini fall hard in love against the wishes of her father. He gets her married to Vanraj, a complete opposite of Sameer in every way except he too loves her.

Bajrangi Bhaijaan

One of Salman's most successful films also comes with one of his best performances. Bajrangi Bhaijaan was the sweet tale of a brave, righteous man winning everyone's hearts by taking a lost little girl back to her home. The wholesome relationship between

the two made the film incredibly heartwarming.

Sultan

Salman gave all he had for this film. Sultan, also starring Anushka Sharma, was the story of a washed-up wrestler, trying to find meaning and purpose in his life. He wants to win over his estranged wife and make her realise the goodness that still exists in his heart. He plays a man consumed by his ego and also one who wants to purge himself of his sins, both quite spectacularly. The fight sequences and the climax make this one an entertaining watch.



2017 has been a mighty dull year as far as Bollywood films are concerned. Two of our superstars - Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan - both gave us duds like Jab Harry Met Sejal and Tubelight respectively, and all eyes are set on the last two months of this year. November and December have an interesting line-up of films. While small-budget films like Qarib Qarib Singlle and Tumhari Sulu promise quirkiness and fun, there are mega-budget releases like Padmavati and Tiger Zinda Hai too before we



2013's sleeper hit Fukrey will see its sequel on the big screen in Fukrey Returns, scheduled to release on December 8 this year. The film sees the Fukreys reprising their roles. Pulkit Samrat, Ali Fazal, Manjot Singh, Varun Sharma and Richa Chadha are all part of the sequel.

Finally, the year will close with Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif packing a punch at the box office, given the success that the prequel to Tiger Zinda Hai saw. In 2012, Ek Tha Tiger made millions at the box office in India. With Salman and Katrina taking the franchise forward, and Sultan director Ali Abbas Zafar behind the camera, Tiger Zinda Hai is expected to be a bigger blockbuster. Salman fans have been waiting eagerly for Tiger Zinda Hai. Especially because Tubelight, Khan's Eid release this year, turned out to be a damp squib.

No 2.0 but Tiger Zinda Hai and Padmavati

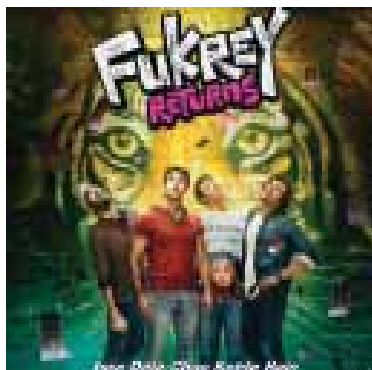
What the box office has in store for you in 2017

The months of November and December this year promise an interesting line-up at the box office with films like Padmavati and Tiger Zinda Hai.

enter 2018.

Take a look at the films that will hopefully be a breath of fresh air for the cash-starved ticket windows this year.

If you remember Irrfan's romantic-hero avatar in 2015's Piku, opposite Deepika Padukone, then Qarib Qarib Singlle might strike a chord with you. Touted to be a 'modern love story', the film deals with the



lead couple Yogi and Jaya who meet on an online-dating platform. Their journey and this adventure through love and life is what forms the crux of Qarib Qarib Singlle. The film is set to hit the screens on November 10 this year.

Vidya Balan plays the solo heroine in Tumhari Sulu. She is a housewife who lands an exciting job. She is a radio jockey who takes over the city once the sun goes down. Tumhari Sulu is being called a 'slice-of-life' film that is directed at a family audience. The film will see Vidya returning to the big screen after April's Begum Jaan, that could not do much at the box office despite a National Award-winning story, Rajkahani.

Come December 1, and the screens will dance to the tunes

of Sanjay Leela Bhansali. His Padmavati, the story of the goddess-queen, Rani Padmini and the conquest of Chittorgarh, has had people all excited for quite some time now. Add to that actors like Deepika Padukone, who plays Rani Padmini, Shahid Kapoor as Maharawal Ratan Singh and Ranveer Singh as the ruthless Turkic emperor Alaaddin Khilji, and you have the recipe for a potential blockbuster. Given the success of 2015's Bajirao Mastani, all eyes are set on Padmavati this year. Of course, there's the raw tension between lovers Deepika and Ranveer on screen too, even though the makers have clarified that there is no scene in the film that will see Padukone and Singh together.



Kate Winslet and Allison Janney's passionate kiss at Hollywood Film Awards

Kate Winslet and Allison Janney shared a passionate kiss on the stage at the Hollywood Film Awards this year.

It was overflowing love at the Hollywood Film Awards this year. Kate Winslet couldn't hide her delight as she went on the stage to collect the Best Actress award for Wonder Wheel, directed by Woody Allen. After collecting the award, she said that she felt "honoured" to be in the same room as Allison Janney, who plays the role of CJ in the political drama West Wing.

"Allison Janney... I know, I don't really know you, but I just want to be you. Or just stroke you or something. I mean we could always kiss, maybe," Kate said. This amorous outburst was greeted by

loud cheers.

Janney decided to fulfill the Titanic star's wish, and went on the stage, and the two shared a kiss. Clearly ecstatic by the encounter, Kate said, "Thank you very much. Now I'm a little bit breathless."

Angelia Jolie was among the night's winners after being awarded for her Foreign Language film First They Killed My Father. Gary Oldman won the Career Achievement Award, Mary J Blige received the Breakout Performance Actress Award for Mudbound, and Jake Gyllenhaal took home the Actor Award for Stronger.



Villain movie review: This Mohanlal film is slow, lacks impact

Villain

Director - B Unnikrishnan

Cast - Mohanlal, Vishal, Hansika Motwani

Rating - 2/5

"Here's the smell of the blood still. All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand," Mohanlal's character quotes Lady Macbeth as saying in a film that begins with multiple murders. But, even as the audience settles in for an interesting cinematic experience, the slow pace, heavy dialogues and disconnected character arc take the thrill out of this investigative thriller.

Villain is all about how Mathew Manjoran (a police officer played by Mohanlal) and Dr Shaktivel Palaniswamy (played by Vishal) cross paths. Mathew has returned to work after a long leave of absence, and ends up getting a series of murders that need solving. But he has his own demons to slay first. The police officer has lost his family, and we see flashes of how that happened. There is a particularly brilliant scene in the narrative, where we see Mohanlal suddenly waking up from a

nightmare. However, when one looks at the big picture, the flashbacks seem disjointed.

While we get to know Mathew and his family, we have niggling doubts about Shaktivel – who is he and where is he from? His character as an anti-hero is intriguing, but it is not explored to its full potential. In terms of performance too, Vishal fails to live up to his character's demands and that weighs down on important scenes. He faces loss, but the intensity is missing. He is frustrated with the system that he is a part of, but there is no depth in his expressions. He is betrayed in the end, but the shock is absent. He utters impactful dialogues, but there is no power to them. An individual who thinks that the country needs a dictator and feels he is the right man for the job needs to express his 'God complex' a little more convincingly.

Shaktivel has a strange and strong connection with Shreya (played by Hansika), his accomplice. Their intriguing relationship, which mirrors a maniac's mad love, could have added the much-needed depth to

his character. The director, however, fails to explore it fully.

Coming back to Mathew, we see a man who is intelligent and has the skill to deconstruct a crime scene unlike anyone else. His introduction, however, shows a man who is lost. That's appropriate, considering that he did lose his family. Mathew resumes duty for a day before he chooses to take voluntary retirement. However, circumstances require him to solve one last case that – incidentally – brings him face-to-face with his family's murderer.

The way Mathew struggles between vengeance and justice, the way he quotes Lady Macbeth and addresses life as a dark comedy, and the way he deals with his loss bring out every contrasting shade of his complex character. His colleague, Harshita Chopra (played by Rashi Khanna), observes that there are times when he seems unhinged. These instances are probably the best scenes in the film. The one where he tells Harshita to not push him, because he is



standing on a fine line between suicide and murder, does hit you hard. These characters connect with each other and the plot in a convincing manner. Srikanth as Felix D'Vincent, however, does not seem very convincing. His link with Mohanlal is abstract, and his connection to the present incidents is forced. This affects the flow of a film that already suffers from a slow pace.

"Killing another human being is the most unnatural act in this world." This statement delivered by Mathew, followed by his observation of the difference between killing out of love and killing out of hate, should have made the climax stunning. Many

elements – such as the heavy silence, the words that weigh heavy on the mind, and the relentless questioning of one's belief – should have worked in favour of a film that tries to say: "Nothing is white, nothing is black, everything is grey." However, the attempt is botched up by half-baked performances, a weak screenplay and an unnecessary song. The intensity required to build the audience's interest is absent, making it easy to guess what is going to happen next. The faulty dubbing of Hansika and Srikanth is also irksome, though this is only a small woe when compared to everything else in the movie.

Ittefaq movie review: Sidharth Malhotra, Sonakshi Sinha's decent crime thriller

Ittefaq keeps you on tenterhooks as its pace ensures that you do not get to think twice about what just happened. While Sonakshi Sinha and Sidharth Malhotra play the suspects, Akshaye Khanna is the wary investigator. Here's our movie review.

Ittefaq

Cast: Sidharth Malhotra, Sonakshi Sinha, Akshaye Khanna

Director: Abhay Chopra

Rating: 3/5

Vikram Sethi (Sidharth Malhotra) is a London-based mystery writer. His last book hasn't done well, and he is under pressure to deliver a bestseller. He is in India to launch his next, but circumstances take a strange turn when his wife's body is

discovered in a Mumbai hotel. It's natural for the police, led by Dev Verma (Akshaye Khanna), to arrest Vikram after he flees the scene of the crime. But the man turns out to be a slippery customer — he gives them the slip and scoots, again! Vikram is nabbed a second time at the house of a total stranger, Maya Sinha (Sonakshi Sinha). What's more, her husband's body is there too.

The police now face a problem of plenty. They have two bodies, two prime suspects and a number of secondary suspects in what once seemed like an open-and-shut case.

A remake of 1969 hit of the same name, Ittefaq uses Mumbai's rain-prone environment as a suitable backdrop for the murder mystery. The hazy weather and closed spaces spread a canvas and bracket the

audience's view. It's all very linear, so one needn't have a prior understanding of the relationships between the major characters.

A large part of the action takes place on staircases and inside dimly lit apartments. You know how claustrophobic city landscapes can get at times. Weird things happen in the middle of congested zones, and there are no witnesses despite the sea of people forever flooding the place. Notice how bodies keep turning up in locked apartments many a week too late?

Debutante director Abhay Chopra plays with our mind by not introducing many secondary story arcs in the plot. This technique makes us focus solely on the murders, with blinkers on. From love to seduction and betrayal, Chopra uses every trick in the book. Akshaye Khanna's Mumbai's cop is under pressure to solve the case within the stipulated period. It seems like an open-and-shut case at times, but what if the murders are not connected, or connected? What if all this is actually by chance (Ittefaq)?

It's not 'the butler did it' kind of crime as the director gives ample



hints of a logical conclusion through the 100-minute film. Anything less than a sensible conclusion would have amounted to shortchanging the audience. Luckily, that doesn't happen.

However, one major problem with Ittefaq is the lack of intensity. Sonakshi Sinha and Sidharth Malhotra take time in adjusting to their surroundings. That reminds me of Ram Gopal Varma's terrific psychological drama Kaun (1999), which worked mostly because of its lead cast. Ittefaq must have looked much better on paper. Though Sinha continues to struggle with her part till the bitter end, Malhotra begins to hit the right notes after a while. That helps the film a great deal.

You know how investigative

officers are used as storytellers in such films. Here, Khanna plays that role with ease, finesse and poise. He binds the story together.

There are no songs to distract you, and the camera keeps hovering over the same locations. The idea is to give us a 'rear window' through which you can see the action, but can't exactly understand its true nature.

The plot is not absolutely water-tight (the movie would have blown you away with its twists, if that was the case), but Chopra does put his resources to good use. Ittefaq tries its best to create intrigue, and doesn't give the audience a lot of time to think twice about a single event. That is its biggest achievement.





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