



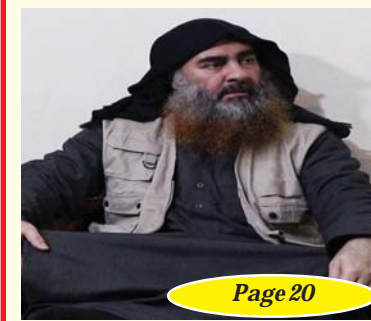
The South Asian

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Voice of South Asian Community

Since March 2002

Baghdadi's top replacement
also killed by US troops



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The Congress Game Of Thrones

Enter Sonia. Exit Sonia. Enter Rahul, Exit Rahul. Enter Sonia...



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Making History, DA Madeline Singas Casts her Ballot During Nassau's First Ever Early Vote

Singas voted on the first day of Early Voting in Hicksville after rallying for increased civic engagement with family, voters from around Nassau County and County Executive Laura Curran and other elected officials



Kaplan and Kevin years was a humbling Thomas, DA Singas and exciting experience. celebrated expanded I was thrilled to vote access to the polls and early for the first time called on Nassau ever with my family, residents to exercise friends and neighbors! their right to vote. Get out there and vote, "Serving as Nassau!"

District Attorney has After the rally, been a privilege and I am the crowd marched to proud of our office's Levittown Hall, one of 15 tireless work to keep designated early voting Nassau safe." said DA sites in Nassau County, Singas. "Today, casting where everyone proudly my ballot for four more cast their vote.

Hicksville, NY — District Hicksville this past new early voting period. as Nassau County Attorney Madeline Saturday, the first day of Joined by family, friends, Executive Laura Curran Singas cast her vote in New York State's brand and supporters, as well and NYS Senators Anna

Exclusive Pictures from Diwali celebration by New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer



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Former Yahoo Software Engineer Pleads Guilty To Using Work Access To Hack Into Yahoo Users' Personal Accounts

Defendant admits illegally copying images and videos from about 6,000 Yahoo accounts

(By Our Staff Reporter) SAN JOSE – Reyes Daniel Ruiz pleaded guilty in federal court in San Jose today to hacking into the accounts of thousands of Yahoo users in search of private and personal records, primarily sexual images and videos of the account holders, announced United States Attorney David L. Anderson and Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent in Charge John F. Bennett.

In pleading guilty, Ruiz, a former Yahoo software engineer, admitted to using his access through his work at the company to hack into about 6,000 Yahoo accounts. Ruiz cracked user passwords, and accessed internal Yahoo systems to com-

promise the Yahoo accounts. Ruiz admitted to targeting accounts belonging to younger women, including his personal friends and work colleagues. He made copies of images and videos that he found in the personal accounts without permission, and stored the data at his home. Once he had access to the Yahoo accounts, Ruiz admitted to compromising the iCloud, Facebook, Gmail, DropBox, and other online accounts of the Yahoo users in search of more private images and videos. After his employer observed the suspicious account activity, Ruiz admitted to destroying the computer and hard drive on which he stored the images.

Ruiz, 34, of Tracy, California, was indicted by a federal Grand Jury on April 4, 2019. He was charged with one count of Computer Intrusion, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(2)(C), and one count of Interception of a Wire Communication, in violation



of 18 U.S.C. § 2511(1)(a) and (4)(a). Under the plea agreement, pled guilty to the count of Computer Intrusion. Ruiz is currently on release pursuant to the conditions of an unsecured \$200,000 bond. Ruiz's sentencing hearing is scheduled for February 3, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. before The Honorable Edward J. Davila, U.S. District Court Judge, in San Jose. The maximum statutory penalty for each count in violation of Computer Intrusion, 18 U.S.C. § 1030(a)(2)(C), is five years imprisonment and a fine of \$250,000, plus restitution. However, any sentence will be imposed by the court only after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553. Daniel Kaleba is the Assistant U.S. Attorney who is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Tong Zhang. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Leader of the Castro Enterprise Involved in Armed Home Invasions that Targeted Victims of Indian

(By Our Staff Reporter) A Texas woman was sentenced to 37 years in prison for her role as the leader of several robbery crews that traveled across the United States in order to conduct armed home invasions of families of Indian and Asian descent. Assistant Attorney General Brian A. Benczkowski of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and Special Agent in Charge Steven M. D'Antuono of the FBI's Detroit Field office made the announcement. Chaka Castro, 44, of Houston, Texas, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Laurie J. Michelson of the Eastern District of Michigan, who presided over the trial. After a five-week trial, Castro was convicted of one count of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Orga-

nizations (RICO) conspiracy, four counts of assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering and four counts of use of a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. According to evidence presented at trial, from 2011 to 2014, Castro and her robbery crews committed a string of home invasions in Georgia, New York, Ohio, Michigan and Texas. The leader of the robbery crews was Castro, who would generate lists of robbery targets in various states around the county, specifically families of Asian and Indian ancestry, and then assign crews to carry out the armed robberies of these families within their homes. Once Castro assigned a crew to a particular area, members of the group would travel to

that location, conduct surveillance and execute the robberies. The crews utilized a particular modus operandi in each of the robberies. They disguised their appearance with clothing and bandanas so that victims of their robberies would have difficulty identifying them. They would openly carry and brandish firearms to gain control of the victims and then immediately corral the victims, including children, into one location in the home. At least one robber would then restrain the victims with duct tape and threats of violence, as another partner would ransack the home in search of cash, jewelry and electronics to steal. The group organized their trips to involve multiple home invasion robberies over a series of days.

Infosys says US agency initiates probe into whistleblower allegations

(By Our Staff Reporter) The US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has initiated an investigation into whistleblower complaints, Infosys said in a statement to stock exchanges today. "The company has been in touch with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) regarding the anonymous whistleblower complaints (Anonymous Complaints) and has learnt that the SEC has initiated an investigation into this matter," the IT company said.

Infosys shares are also listed on US stock exchanges and they have taken a knock after whistleblower claims accusing its top executives of "unethical practices".

"The company will coop-

erate with the SEC's investigation. Also, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has requested additional information from the company concerning the anonymous complaints. The company will provide the information as per Sebi's request," Infosys said. Infosys said "the company is also aware of a securities class action lawsuit that has been filed against the company in federal court in the United States based on the generalized allegations in the anonymous complaints. The company intends to defend itself vigorously in such a lawsuit."

Infosys shares are down 1.3% in early trade today.

Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani on Tues-

day assured investigations to the "fullest extent" into the allegations of unethical practices. "One Board member received two anonymous complaints on September 30, 2019, one dated September 20, 2019 titled 'Disturbing unethical practices' and the second undated with the title, 'Whistleblower Complaint'," Nilekani said in a statement to the exchanges.

Leading exchange BSE on Wednesday asked Infosys to explain why it did not make a disclosure about a whistleblower complaint which alleged that the company's top executives were following "unethical practices" to shore up profits through irregular accounting ways.

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Nassau County Celebrates Diwali



(By our staff reporter) Mineola, Long Island- Recently, a celebration for the Diwali – the Indian Festival of Lights was hosted by Nassau County Office of Asian American Affairs, along with the Indian American Forum, at Theodore Roosevelt Executive and Legislative Building. With over 100 constituents, the office and event's

sponsoring organizations enjoyed a bright evening celebrating with the beautiful cultural dances and instrumentals. The event was put together through the hard work of a host committee consisting of Jyoti Gupta, Pinky Jaggi, Beena Kothari, Mukesh Modi, Jasbir Jay Singh, Lalit Aery, Beena Sabapathy, Indu Jaiswal, Jaya Bahadkar, Sunita Manjrekar,

Dr. Bhavani Srinivasan, Roopam Maini, Anju Sharma. With sponsoring organizations including IAF, LILC, GOPIO, IDP USA, IALI, Vegetarian Vision, and the AAAC, the event was a resounding success for the community. County officials such as County Executive Laura Curran, Asian American Affairs Director Farrah Mozawalla, and

Human Rights Commissioner Bobby Kalotee came to show their support of the diversity in Nassau by participating in a traditional lamp lighting ceremony and giving inspiring words. The event also took the opportunity to honor some esteemed individuals for their contributions to the Indian American community. The honorees were Peter Bheddah,

Vikas Dhall, Anu Gulati, Harshal Kadakia, Nilima Madan, and Rajeevi Madankumar. The performances that followed all shone uniquely and showcased the breathtaking culture of Indian Americans. Through this celebration, all the attendees had the chance to reflect on beauty of how bright Nassau shines when standing together.

New York City Council Hosts Diwali Celebration at City Hall



(By our staff reporter) New York - Council Member Rory I. Lancman, Council Speaker Corey Johnson, and fifteen other Council Members recently hosted a Diwali Celebration in Council Chambers that featured a lamp lighting ceremony, dance performances, and the presentation of proclamations to distinguished South Asian leaders.

“Diwali is a special time when millions of South Asians all across the world rejoice and fill the world with light and love,” said Council Member Rory I. Lancman. “I am honored to join the many Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists in our city who celebrate this important holiday.”

Two prominent South Asian leaders and one South Asian group were recognized at last night's celebration: the NYPD Desi Society, who was honored

with a proclamation from Council Member Lancman; Dr. Samin Sharma, who was honored with a proclamation from Council Member Grodenchik; and Rajeev Pandya, who was honored with a proclamation from Council Member Eugene.

Other program participants included: Shruti Goyal, who performed the U.S. National Anthem; Dr. Krishna Pratap, who recited the World Peace

Prayer; and dance performances by Nandini Chakravorty, Manhattan Andaaaz, and Bhangra Group Dance by Ankita Jain, Namita Jain, and Karishma Malhotra. Democratic District Leader Dr. Neeta Jain delivered welcome remarks at the top of the program.

“Let's celebrate this Diwali with lights of Love and Peace, removing darkness of hatred,” said Dr. Neeta Jain. “Happy

Diwali to all of you!” The City Hall event was organized in conjunction with Council Members Adrienne Adams, Daniel Dromm, Mathieu Eugene, Barry Grodenchik, Robert Holden, Peter Koo, Karen Koslowitz, Alan Maisel, Steven Matteo, I. Daneek Miller, Donovan Richards, Ydanis Rodriguez, Eric Ulrich, Paul Vallone, and Kalman Yeger.

“Human Rights in a Terror-Free World - Even as Terror Morphs

After Christchurch on Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka”

First, I thank Chairman Brad Sherman for convening the Hearing, and for permitting a supplemental submission within five working days of October 22, 2019. This, therefore, is timely submitted.

I submit this “Supplemental Testimony,” as important issues were raised, and opinions expressed by the honorable members of the House, and Foreign Affairs Committee. To be concise, I’ve limited myself to addressing only certain issues to help better prioritize and focus.

Human Rights Is Both the Goal, and the Core Benefit, of Providing Public Safety.

It is a singular honor to help our deliberative Congress, a co-equal political branch vested with foreign policy oversight, as it seeks to recalibrate America’s foreign policies, and therefore, indeed, the world. It is a critical part of succeeding in making the 21st Century, an American Century, as the end half of the 20th was.

Since 9/11, a seismic change occurred. Eradicating “Terror” across the globe, in my judgment, is America’s Job #1. This, however, has created a need to deal with unsavory characters and nations, to achieve our over-riding objective; it includes turning a blind eye to behavior we find unacceptable on American soil. So, short of making the rest of the world behave as if it was our 51st state, we need to push for human rights, subject only to achieving our necessary predicate: a Terror-free world. Just this past weekend, our nation, aided by the Syrian-Kurds, Russia, Turkey, Iraq and Syria, brought a unique Terrorist, who harnessed the power of Fear, to self-create and govern a Terror-state, to his end. He was no Thomas Jefferson. Separatism married to Terror and Fear can never be confused with the American Revolution; as the former accumulates power and commits crimes against humanity,

while the latter separated power, and then for good measure, gave a Bill of Rights to the citizenry to further “check” governmental power beyond the check & balance of our “separated powers” regime.

These two critical “rights” are enshrined in our Bill of Rights. We ought to look at other nations to see if they too have, what Thomas Becket started, separation of church & state, and for good measure, our Founding Fathers bequeath a means of “effectuating” all rights justly: equal protection of the law. In the sub-continent, India has both, and more importantly, her citizens demand it as their own “inalienable” rights. It seems, every Indian, even in India, looks to American Exceptionalism as his or her own, given the nexus in history between India and America’s birth.

While every legitimate Government’s Job #1 was, and must always remain, ensuring Public Safety, in our presidential-republic, it is essentially a duty of the Executive honored through its “Police Power,” and it falls upon the Legislative Branch’s “Purse Power” to “round the edges” of Executive action. Parliamentary-republics have a harder time, given the partial merger born out of the fact that the “head of government” is a legislator also.

Public Safety is put at risk from war, crime or disease, but nothing is more disruptive than “Fear” emanating from “Terror.” And, Terror, in all its evil and morphing forms, has made that primary governmental function and relevant duties much harder, and more complex. Indeed, multilaterally in the comity of nations, it’s convulsed geopolitics since 9/11, and forced us to rely more heavily upon a discredited pillar of statecraft - that brings instant relief up-front and additional new problems upon a necessary divorce

on the back-end - counterbalance. Yet, worthy of focus is Human Rights, for if we don’t have Human Rights, how can any government satisfy Lincoln’s Gettysburg recipe and mandate: “of, by and for” the people. Indeed, it is to have Human Rights that “[w]e the people” permit our governments to govern.

So, the reason governments must first make us all safe, is so citizens can enjoy their rights - constitutional, statutory, contractual and human rights - without fear of punishment or death. Providing Public Safety then, is a tool, not a goal, as that lofty goal-object is the “pursuit of happiness” - by freely enjoying human rights. So, our Lincoln-esque Government, which we want emulated everywhere, including, easily in India, as she borrowed heavily from the nectar of our American Exceptionalism, and not so easily in many other parts of the world (where the local ecosystem rejects adopting our Founding Fathers as their intellectual ancestors) is all about being able to give, as a civilized society, maximum “human rights” to the maximum number of people in the maximum number of nations across the globe.

I wholeheartedly agree with that lofty goal, as it both promotes “our best,” as well as offset our collective judgment-errors as fiduciaries of our Republic, and permit us to “form a more perfect union” and be a just and fair sole super power on earth.

Thomas Becket and Sir Edmund Burke Were Both About Protecting “Dissent” - Civil or Religious - And Keeping the Dissenter Safe.

The cries of Rohingas, non-PKK Kurds, or innocent worshipping Moslems slaughtered in mosques in Christchurch district in New Zealand ring loudly in my soul and evoke much pain, and reinforce my lifelong desire to honor both Thomas Becket’s

“separation of church & state,” and Edmund Burke’s moral imperative, “[a]ll that’s necessary for evil to triumph, is for some good [persons] to do nothing.” For that matter, the recent horrific “murder-for-reward” of Kamlesh Tewari in India in his own place, reminds that none of us are really safe anywhere, not on the street, home or office, and we’d better get this problem solved - exactly as Thomas Becket insisted in societal separation of church and state, for we must be free - to “worship” any God or “disagree” with anyone - without fear of death or punishment.

Weaponizing “ideas” is a Freedom nobody has, even as Terror is rooted and nurtured by twisting same. No religion teaches “hate,” but always “compassion” and “forgiveness.” See, for example - the Golden Rule [Fn1]. True “Hate Speech” is a vehicle to weaponize ideas, and is more dangerous than the “Speech” which Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes denied constitutional protection to (in the 1919 case of Schenck v. United States, in which the Court unanimously upheld a conviction under the Espionage Act for distributing flyers opposed to the draft): “The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic.”

My father’s best friend was Meih Mehereli in India, this despite the needlessly painful Partition of 1947 and my

mother being shot in her foot by a Moslem soldier when my family came to India as Refugees. I recall my late Dad, the Hon. Sada Nand Batra, the greatest man I have ever known, and my loving Mother, Raj Kaur, with reverence, for they taught me “the love of others.”

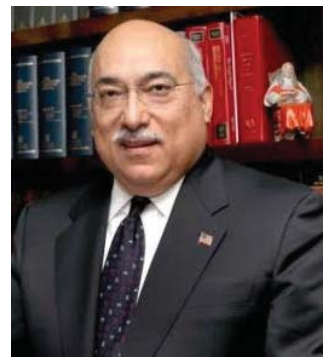
The Jewish Sage Hillel said the same thing: “That which is hateful to you, do not unto another: This is the whole Torah. The rest is commentary...”

In the holy Bible, please see Luke 6:31 and Matthew 7:12; and in the holy Quran, the Golden Rule is at Q:4:36, 13:22, 41:34, 28:54, 42:40.

Islamic Text on the Golden Rule:

“Serve God, and join not any partners with Him; and do good - to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess [the slave]: For God loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious” (Q:4:36) (In fact the Quran goes beyond saying the Golden Rule by stating in more than four places that “Return evil with Kindness.” (13:22, 23:96, 41:34, 28:54, 42:40).]

Edmund Burke’s mandate is a healthy one for this Congress, as it does the People’s business. Indeed, the vigorous dissent invited by our cherished 2-party system, is the daily dividend of American Exceptionalism. Yet, the Gentledady from Minnesota, from whom much is expected in leadership and to cause healing in American and



By Ravi Batra
Chair, National
Advisory Council for
South Asian Affairs

the world, but who has a history of “some people did something [Fn2],” commented upon a witness without giving her the universal “right of reply.” Rights are a funny thing: everybody has them. When only one person has them and denies all others, that is tyranny. I’m delighted to note Chairman Sherman, aware of the self-destructive nature of that event, partially remedied that before the close of the Hearing by giving a Right of Reply.

[Fn2: Rep. Omar: “Here’s the truth. Far too long we have lived with the discomfort of being a second-class citizen and, frankly, I’m tired of it, and every single Muslim in this country should be tired of it. CAIR was founded after 9/11 because they recognized that some people did something and that all of us were starting to lose access to our civil liberties. So you can’t just say that today someone is looking at me strange, that I am trying to make myself look pleasant. You have to say this person is looking at me strange, I am not comfortable with it, and I am going to talk to them and ask them why.”

(Contd on page 15)

First eradicate Terror, so Rights can be enjoyed.

(By Ravi Batra) “Those who wish to support Terror or compromise India’s sovereignty are purposefully misconstruing my recommendation to Congress - to go on a Congressional Delegation (CoDel) - as if it was a FBI or a NYPD police squad going overseas to intrusively solve a crime and gather facts and evidence. That misconception is as wrong as it is motivated, and not the function of any CoDel. Anyone familiar with our Congress knows that. I had agreed to testify in the House Foreign Affairs’ Sub-Committee Hearing last week - because as a New Yorker, I know that eradicating Terror is a non-negotiable duty for all responsible nations, and India’s PM Modi is

entitled to act legally and eradicate Terror without anyone else’s permission - just as we do in the United States. And once the reign of Terror is ended, public safety established, a Congressional Delegation to India is in order to get first-hand understanding of India’s challenges in eradicating cross-border Terror and domestic Terror, and what’s needed to lift as many restrictions on communication, movement and rights as on-the-ground near-the-border reality permits. Once the Sub-Continent is Terror-free, full Rights can be enjoyed with-total safety by all equally. All persons of good will want India to succeed ASAP, so little or no restrictions are needed.”

The significance of Baghdadi's end

Militarily down, the IS remains ideologically alive.
Counter-terrorism must adapt to its techniques



This past weekend, the United States (US) announced that the elusive leader of Islamic State (IS), Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, was killed after a nighttime raid by US Army Delta Force commandos in northwestern Syria's Idlib region. This brought a 10-year-long hunt for the man who, at one point, controlled territory bigger than the United Kingdom in Iraq and Syria, and led the most brutal and violent Islamist terror group on the planet.

Baghdadi, whose real name was Ibrahim Awwad Ibrahim Al Badri, was an Iraqi-born jihadist who, after years of fighting in the Iraqi and Syrian theatres, announced the setting up of the so-called Islamic State caliphate after taking over Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, in the summer of 2014. "I was appointed to rule you but I am not the best amongst you. If you see me acting truly, follow me, if not then advise and guide me. If I disobey God, then do not obey me", he declared from Mosul's Al Nuri mosque then, the only video of him until one was released earlier this year. Since then, the IS endorsed grotesque violence, making theatrical productions of beheadings, pushing people off buildings to their deaths, public executions, rape and slavery. It used the Internet to make them viewable in every home in the world, irrespective of geography or language. Baghdadi's death is bound to shake up the hierarchy of the IS. The group plunged into a deeper crisis a few hours after the Idlib raid when his aide and right hand man, Abu Hassan al-Muhajir, was also killed around the area of Jarablus on Syria's border with Turkey. Both Baghdadi and Muhajir died in territory which is not conducive to the IS, and is littered with other smaller groups who have fought the IS over the past few years. This in itself raises questions on what was transpiring within IS ranks. Was Baghdadi looking at some sort of compromise with other jihadist groups? Was he planning to slip into Turkey? There are more questions than answers available at the moment.

Interestingly, the IS' very effective, vast, organised and synchronised world of online propaganda has yet to react strongly to Baghdadi's death. The usual channels of online communications for the

IS, such as Amaq News, have not released statements or reacted to the reports, including nothing on President Donald Trump's long address to the nation on the success of the Idlib raid. Most pro-IS accounts and channels online have maintained their daily routine. They have been reporting on relatively small ground offensives and attacks, as the group morphs into an insurgency in order to better its chances of long-term survival, and by association, a revival.

There are, however, latent rumours of possible replacements for Baghdadi at the top of the IS. A few reports, two months ago, highlighted that Baghdadi's aide, Amir Mohammed Saeed Abdulrahman Mohammed al-Mawla, also known as "Abdullah Qardash" was nominated to lead the group's activities in Iraq as Baghdadi suffered from diabetes. Qardash is known to be from Tal Afar in northern Iraq, a devout radical, and one who has spent considerable time with Baghdadi. Analysts in touch with former IS members and breakaway groups say that some seem to believe Qardash could be the one to take over from Baghdadi. During this period of his accession to handling IS duties in Iraq, the US State Department announced a \$5 million reward against him. Like Baghdadi, who was a PhD, Qardash is also known to be highly educated, reportedly being a graduate in Islamic studies from Mosul University.

Whatever the outcomes for the IS may be, both organisationally and operationally, the group has managed to embed its brand of terror in the global conscience. From the propaganda videos of executions to the pro-IS attacks in the streets of Paris, the group's ideological success in both enlisting locals for its cause and inspiring many from abroad to come and fight for the caliphate has been institutional. It has also changed the classical rules of terrorism and counter-terrorism. Weaponising the Internet, and using the same platforms we do for communications on a daily basis to radicalise and recruit, poses a new threat which is proving to be a challenge for security agencies.

The NDA's shifting dynamics



The National Democratic Alliance, of which the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the core, has seen a shift in power dynamics over the last two decades. Under AB Vajpayee, dictated by the BJP's absence of majority in Parliament, allies exercised an important say in decision-making and had a substantial share in the power structure. After 2014, when the BJP returned to power with a majority of its own, its dependence on allies dipped — but Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave them a share in Cabinet portfolios. After the Lok Sabha elections earlier this year, the BJP's relative power — compared to its allies — grew even further. The space for allies shrunk, and all parties recognised it was Mr Modi's appeal that drove the mandate.

But the Maharashtra and Haryana elections have led to a slight shift in this power dynamic. The BJP emerged as the single largest party in Haryana. But it needed support to form the government. Dushyant Chautala's Jannayak Janata Party provided these numbers. But this came at a cost. The BJP has had to make him deputy chief minister. This could, however, help the

BJP in the medium-term. It is a way to reach out to the Jat community, which has been alienated from the party. The BJP may also use Mr Chautala to reach out to Jats in Uttar Pradesh. In Maharashtra though, the shift in the power dynamic is more visible. The Shiv Sena, which had once been the senior partner in the alliance prior to 2014, has been reeling with anger over the past five years because of the BJP's rise in the state and the fact that it had to work under Devendra Fadnavis in government. It also had to settle for fewer seats in the alliance in this election. But the verdict has created grounds for a renegotiation of terms. The BJP saw a dip in seats and needs the Sena's support. The Sena sees this as an opportunity to push its claim for rotational chief ministership for Aaditya Thackeray, a claim that the BJP sees as unjustified for it remains the larger party by a stretch. The Maharashtra negotiations will take time, but it indicates that while the BJP is politically dominant, it needs other sources of support and may have to make some adjustments.

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Don't impose controls to manage population

Instead of punishing people with the two-child policy, give them information and tools to make a choice



Like the proverbial bad penny, the two-child norm pops up every now and again, usually in the form of disincentives to stop people from having more than this number of children. It is, in fact, a favourite fallback position of governments when they want to show that they are doing something about tackling population, poverty and lack of resources.

The latest is the Assam government, which has decided to implement a policy passed two years ago to prevent anyone with more than two children from getting a government job starting 2021. Since we are in the midst of celebrating the Mahatma, it is significant that he did not support such "control";

rather, he supported the idea of abstinence, letting people make the choice for themselves.

The fact that we are still talking of control suggests that the family planning programme, which India began in 1951, has not been implemented as well as it should have been. For a long time, after the uniquely cruel manner in which Sanjay Gandhi imposed population-control measures on hapless people during the Emergency with disastrous political consequences, the issue became a political hot potato. You would have thought that politicians would shy away from any attempt to control populations, to enter an arena so private and

sensitive. But the fears triggered by the coercive policies during the Emergency did not last. And we were back to the control concept, something which persists till today.

There is also a clear communal subtext to the issue, with many suggesting that the norm is necessary since Muslims procreate at a much faster rate than Hindus and will, hence, overrun the country in the near future. This is of course off the mark. But for this or other reasons, various states have instituted restrictive measures ostensibly to keep the numbers down, despite the fact that we have a holistic and human rights-based National Population Policy.

Assam is not alone in imposing such quotas. Both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh do not allow a person with more than two children from contesting local elections. Maharashtra has this provision for the panchayat and municipal elections. The state also has a rule denying public distribution system benefits to women with more than two children.

Rajasthan disqualifies those with more than two children from contesting panchayat polls as does Gujarat, which extends this to municipalities and corporations. Bihar and Uttarakhand too bar those with more than two children from contesting the municipal polls.

But there is another model, which has delivered. Kerala has none of the restrictions, and yet fertility levels have fallen below replacement levels. Education, healthcare and choice of contraception have done the trick. As a well-known social scientist once told me, take care of people and the population will take care of itself.

Instead of all "controls", India should be proud that despite all odds, fertility rates are going down. Only 12 states and Union

territories have fertility rates higher than replacement levels.

We are very fond of comparing the dramatic results achieved by China with its stringent and often frightening implementation of the one-child norm. India's national policy has been based on choice, access to medical care and reduction in maternal and infant mortality.

The problem is that we have not been able to implement the recommendations in the policy. These include the cafeteria approach to contraception—choice of reversible and irreversible contraception made available to couples or individuals. It is a different matter that public health centres, which should be dispensing these, along with providing the right kind of medical attention, are not doing so for lack of funds. Along the way, as various governments have blundered from prescribing controls in the form of sterilisation, almost

always for women, after two children, many myths have been busted. One such myth is that the poor want to have more children so they have more earning power. This is wrong, it is simply that

they do not know enough about reversible contraceptive methods or have no access to these.

The focus of the whole population debate has been on women from sterilisation to reproductive health workers. It is rare that men, who are almost always the decision-makers when it comes to family size, are involved in the debate on the merits of smaller, healthier families. Many problems still remain, one being the preference for the male child, which means many women are forced to have several girls before the desired son arrives. Yet, despite all of this, fertility rates are declining. It is not for the state to provide either incentives or disincentives to regulate numbers.

No one should be punished for having the number of children they chose to have, instead they should be given the information needed to make an informed choice.

This debate is old hat in developed countries. It is a pity that worries about the population are still met with unacceptable solutions, in contravention of the government's humane national population policy.

India and Pakistan must talk - on nuclear issues

The first nuclear age dawned with the bombing on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Over 200,000 civilians were killed. It brought World War II to a conclusion. Was such destruction of civilian populations essential to bring the most destructive conflict of the 20th century to an end? The jury is still out to this day. Soon after, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Great Britain, France and China joined this elite club, the Nuclear Five, N-5. Together they constituted the first nuclear age. What are the primary lessons of the first nuclear age then?

First, don't get into a thermonuclear war and kill hundreds of millions of people. Second, the

nuclear era is about deterrence rather than war. Third, nuclear weapons kept the protracted peace of the Cold War, premised upon the doctrine of mutually assured destruction (MAD).

Fourth, nations will use their nuclear arsenal to play nuclear mind games with each other to warn them about the probable consequences of crossing certain red lines.

Fifth, nuclear powers must talk to each other even during the Cold War to offset any possibility of even an inadvertent

miscalculation. Despite this nuanced, yet linear, nuclear theology, tension between the US and USSR did come to a head during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. There were many other false dawns — the most quoted being the 1972 exchange between the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Leonid Brezhnev and Marshal Andrei Grechko — during a nuclear drill with the former asking the latter, "Andrei Antonovich, are you sure this is just an exercise?" Nonetheless, to their credit, the first nuclear age powers kept things stable. The second nuclear age dawned with the Indian nuclear tests in 1974. Over the next two decades, Pakistan followed suit.

Soon, North Korea joined the ranks. Israel has always been a de facto nuclear weapons State. Iran has very thinly disguised its nuclear intentions. Syria also had similar ambitions before it imploded. The second nuclear age has a number of different features. At the most elementary level, it is the recognition that the end of the Cold War did not mean the end of nuclear weapons. It also implies that the current epoch is also not bound by the rubric of its preceding period, and that security in the 21st century will be defined by the state of play in Asia. The question is, have the second nuclear age powers learnt anything from the first? The first nuclear age was

primarily underscored by the yawning conceptual divergences between two contrarian schools of political thought that deemed the triumph of the other as an empirical issue. However, in South Asia, where two second-age and one first-age nuclear powers are located, the nuclear competition among China, India, and Pakistan is different. All three states accept the legitimacy of the global order, State sovereignty, and the rules of the market economy. Two nuclear powers — China and India — have enormous strategic depth, exceptional topographical fortifications, and robust conventional capability. Neither apprehends a conventional threat.

Governments in both these states are of the opinion that nuclear arms are political weapons whose singular objective is to prevent the use of nuclear munitions by others.

They also subscribe to an established tradition of a civilian-dominated nuclear management where the military is only one variable — and that too, a relatively minor one. All these elements diminish the propensity of the two nations from adopting muscular nuclear postures predicated on first-strike options. However, this comfort does not encompass Pakistan that, for the lack of terrestrial depth and its dismemberment in 1971, has adopted a first-use nuclear dogma.

India needs pluralism, not majoritarianism

Religious and linguistic diversity are integral to the growth and development of our society. We must preserve them



“A lie does not become the truth, wrong does not become right, and evil does not become good, just because it is accepted by the majority”; a profound statement made by American pastor and author, Richard Warner. This should make us rethink the principle of majoritarianism in our political and social lives.

Majoritarianism is one of several mechanisms of decision-making in a democracy. It does not legitimise or sanctify every action and reaction. If we are not cognisant of this basic premise, our notion of majoritarianism will lead to denial of the genuine rights of many — those smaller in number, leading to further injustice in society.

Let us examine the hypothesis that the indiscriminate use of the majoritarian principle leads to domination and prejudice. Before that, let us also disabuse

ourselves of the concept and construction of a majority, which is purely contextual, issue and space-specific. In India, everyone is a minority depending upon the context. Hindus are the minority in Kashmir, Brahmins in Tamil Nadu, non-Christians in Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya and of course, Muslims, Christians and Parsis in the whole of India. If we look beyond India, in South Asia, Muslims are a minority in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, but they are majority in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Maldives. Likewise, Buddhists are minority in all South Asian countries but are a majority in Sri Lanka. If we take other signifiers such as language and ethnicity, there will be a different majority-minority

dichotomy.

From time to time, depending on the issue, the political majority is constructed as well as deconstructed. For instance, a new majority was constructed against the Emergency in 1975-77. Again, during the Bofors scandal, VP Singh built up a majority. Since 2014, a new majority has sprung up on “daring and decisive governance” and nationalism. This majority may disappear and new ones may emerge. To test the hypothesis, we take up two issues: Language and religion. Recently, a controversy erupted when it was thought that the home minister suggested that Hindi be made the single national language to unite the country. Though he categorically clarified he

was not suggesting the majority principle here is untenable.

imposition of one language and had encouraged all languages, the debate continued for a while.

The majority principle, were it to be applied, in the Hindi case, militates against federalism and the denial of rights to several states and their people. The Constitution says, that India is a Union of states, and many states have been constituted on the basis of language. To deny states their own language is tantamount to erasing their cultural identity. Second, it is impractical and needless to translate English into Hindi until we generate our knowledge structures and enough material in indigenous languages or even Hindi. So, the

Religion is another area where the majority principle has often been misunderstood. Articles 25 to 28 of the Constitution state that every citizen has the right to practice and promote their religions peacefully. And yet, we have witnessed religious riots in the country on several occasions.

Hence, majoritarianism should be replaced by pluralism which promotes peaceful coexistence of diversities through the spirit of accommodation as well as solidarity. India has served as an exemplar of multicultural democracy. Let us not deny ourselves that uniqueness with a narrow and limited mechanism of majoritarianism.

Is Asia's oldest insurgency close to a resolution?



The Naga insurgency has been one of India's oldest conflicts. Right from Independence, Naga groups have asserted their distinct identity and sought to break away from the Indian State. Led by Angami Zipo Phizo, the movement for secession took a violent turn in the 1950s. When some elements signed a peace accord with the government, a more radical outfit — the Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) — was set up under the leadership of T Muivah, Isak Swu and SS Khaplang. The group eventually split.

The movement itself had two major strands: Recognition of Naga sovereignty; and the integration of all Naga-speaking areas (particularly of Manipur)

into a Greater Nagaland. These were demands that no government in Delhi could meet. The first — sovereignty — would undercut India's claim over the region; the second — integration — would create a backlash in Manipur. But since the 1990s, Delhi began engaging closely with NSCN, led by Isak and Muivah (I-M). A ceasefire was declared. Multiple rounds of negotiations were held. Violence dipped — even though the insurgents maintained a parallel government in the state. And, in 2014, a “secret” framework agreement was signed.

Delhi is close to signing a final peace agreement with a section of the Naga groups such as the Naga National Political Groups, but this does not include

A peace pact is welcome. But bringing NSCN (I-M) on board is important

the NSCN (I-M). There has been an evolution in the Naga position. Demands for Independence have faded. But symbolically, they want a recognition of a distinctive Naga identity.

This, for NSCN (I-M), means a recognition of the Naga flag and a separate Naga constitution — demands that Delhi finds hard to accept. It is also clear that Delhi will not

redraw state boundaries. agreement will be most welcome. But unless NSCN (I-M) is brought on board, sustainable peace and closure of the Naga insurgency will be hard to achieve.

Twitter's ban on political ads is a good first step

On Thursday, Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey announced a ban on political advertisements (ads) on the micro-blogging site. He advocated the importance of credible information, especially political information, as it has the ability, and the intention, to influence voters. The timing is significant. Campaigning for the United States presidential elections has begun. In a speech earlier this month, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg had ruled out a ban on political ads on his platform, citing free speech. Facebook, home to more political ads, has often drawn flak for spreading disinformation and fake news, and its privacy policy. In this backdrop, Twitter's move is welcome.

Political ads, which micro-target users, much like commercial ads, have been called out for their blatant lies. But political ads have severe

consequences. Politicians go the extra mile to win an election, but how far is too far if social media platforms allow you to spread (dis)information with no consequences? Going by fake ads by politicians on Facebook

— very far. Misleading voters on a mass scale undermines democracy. To be sure, Twitter makes less money than Facebook on political ads, but of Facebook's total revenue, Mr Zuckerberg confirmed that ads run by politicians will only make up 0.5% of its 2020 revenue. Little monetary gain from political ads

makes Facebook's approach seem far more sinister, and it should worry users.

While Twitter has stolen a march on Facebook with its announcement, it is only the first step. Twitter has, in India, blocked the accounts of non-abusive individuals, even while allowing anonymous ones, which endorse rape threats, communal hatred, and death threats. Additionally, the promotion (read: buying) of Twitter trends distorts information flow. All of it

has made the platform a site for abuse and uncivil discourse. Twitter must build on its ban, and undertake more comprehensive reforms. All of this also underlines the need for a new regulatory regime which takes into account the power of social media, and the need to hold it accountable.



At Riyadh event, PM Modi points to five trends that are key to prosperity

PM Modi listed 5 major trends as keys to future prosperity - impact of technology, importance of infrastructure, human resources, care for environment and business-friendly governance.



(News Agencies) India and Saudi Arabia on Tuesday launched a Strategic Partnership Council to guide their ties in areas ranging from trade to energy security, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a new conflict resolution mechanism in an increasingly multipolar world. PM Modi and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman signed the agreement for the Strategic Partnership Council following their delegation-level talks that capped the

Prime Minister's day-long visit to the kingdom. The council was first mooted during the crown prince's visit to India in February. The council, to be chaired by the Indian premier and the Saudi crown prince, will monitor and guide the strategic partnership and projects taken up by the two sides. The body will have two mechanisms – one under the foreign ministers of the two sides to oversee political and diplomatic relations, and another under the commerce

ministers to guide trade and energy ties. Both mechanisms will report to the Indian PM and the Saudi crown prince.

The Indian Prime Minister and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and appreciated the close cooperation on security matters between the two countries. The discussion was held during a bilateral between King Salman and PM Modi. "Called on His

Majesty King Salman. He is one of the most widely respected leaders. We discussed multiple aspects relating to further boosting cooperation with Saudi Arabia," Modi tweeted.

Delivering a keynote address at the Future Investment Initiative business forum, the brainchild of Mohammed bin Salman, or MBS as the crown prince is popularly known, Modi said the Strategic Partnership Council marks the beginning of a new era in bilateral relations. He used the speech in Hindi to criticise the UN for its lack of success in creating a neutral global rules-based order. The UN, he said, had been used by the powerful as an instrument and the time had come for overarching reforms of the world body at a time of conflicts over land, water and space.

"When 70 years passed,

we were looking for its reform but that didn't happen. Now when the UN will be 75, all the nations should decide what should be its form; what should be the norms and what are the responsibilities," he said. The last and current centuries have witnessed the most efforts for peace as well as conflicts, he said, adding that there was a need for a new mechanism for conflict resolution. He further said India had never used force against anyone.

From a bipolar setup, the world has moved towards a multipolar framework that is interdependent and interconnected and countries have to change their thinking and strengthen multipolar arrangements, Modi said. While expansionism was seen as a strength in the past, the world must now pay attention to achieving a balance between human values and technology-

driven changes, he added. Modi described MBS as his "friend and brother" and said the historic links between India and Saudi Arabia dating back thousands of years had laid the strong foundation for the bilateral strategic partnership. The Prime Minister listed technology and innovation, the importance of infrastructure in global growth, human resources, compassion for the environment and business-friendly governance as the five key trends for growth of trade and economies. He said India provides tremendous investment opportunities in view of its plans to become a \$5 trillion economy in the near future and infrastructure development plans. Modi invited Saudi companies to invest in India's energy space, saying that the government has set a target of \$100 billion investment in the sector.

Manmohan Singh in list of first jatha through Kartarpur corridor

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh will lead the jatha to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan.



(News Agencies) India on Tuesday shared the list of 575 pilgrims to go in the inaugural jatha to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib through the Kartarpur corridor in Pakistan on the occasion of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, government sources said. It includes former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, Union Ministers Hardeep Puri, Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Punjab chief minister

Captain Amarinder Singh, MPs and MLAs from Punjab among others. Pakistan is building the corridor from the Indian border to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, while India is constructing the other part from Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district up to the border.

Captain Amarinder Singh will lead the jatha to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur. They will pay obeisance at the shrine

built at the site where Guru Nanak spent the final years of his life and return the same day. On October 24, India and Pakistan operationalised the Kartarpur corridor to allow Indian pilgrims to visit the gurdwara. The agreement was signed by officials of the two sides at the "zero line" on the border. The Kartarpur corridor will facilitate visa-free movement of Indian pilgrims.

India's Supreme Court has been slow, says UN rights panel on J&K situation

The statement by the UN's human rights panel coincides with a visit by a group of European Union parliamentarians to the Kashmir valley.

(News Agencies) A United Nations panel has reiterated its concern about the situation in Kashmir after India scrapped the state's special status in August and asked the government to "unlock the situation" and fully restore the rights that the committee said, are currently being denied. The nudge by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on Tuesday came just two days before the state is split into two centrally-administered union territories.

The statement by the UN's human rights panel coincides with a visit by a group of European Union parliamentarians to the Kashmir valley. The panel said some "very restrictive measures" were introduced in Jammu and Kashmir after the state's special status was cancelled. The authorities, it said, had lifted the "undeclared curfew"



imposed in the state from much of Jammu and Ladakh region within a few days of being imposed. But it is reportedly still in place in large parts of the Kashmir Valley, preventing the free movement of people, the panel said.

The rights panel also referred to allegations of security forces using excessive force during sporadic protests that it said, had led to six civilian deaths since August. "We have also received a number of allegations of torture and ill-treatment of people held in detention," the UN panel's statement said before expressing its

dissatisfaction with the Supreme Court's intervention. "The Supreme Court of India has been slow to deal with petitions concerning habeas corpus, freedom of movement and media restrictions," the rights panel said. It also pointed to continued detention of political and civil society leaders including three former chief ministers. It added that other watchdogs in the state which oversee human rights, transparency and protection for women and children were being wound up due to the change in the state's constitutional status into two union territories.

'Didn't agree to 50-50 formula': Fadnavis trashes Sena demand on CM post

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has contested the Shiv Sena narrative that the two parties had decided to share the chief minister's post as part of a 50-50 formula referred to by Uddhav Thackeray's party

(News Agencies) Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday challenged the Shiv Sena's claim that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) agreed to share the CM's post with its partner for half the government's five-year term as neither side budged on the terms of cabinet formation a week after the assembly election. Soon after Fadnavis' statement rebutting his party's claim, Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray cancelled a planned 4 pm meeting with the BJP on government formation, likely worsening the already strained relationship between the BJP and its oldest political ally.

"Union minister Prakash Javdekar and party leader Bhupendra Yadav were supposed to attend the meeting to start discussions on formation of the next government from the BJP side, while the Sena would have been represented by

Subhash Desai and Sanjay Raut," Press Trust of India quoted a Sena leader, whom it didn't name, as saying.

"Fadnavis should mind his words while making such statements," the senior leader added. The Sena also released an old video clip in which Fadnavis spoke about "sharing posts and responsibilities" equally.

Senior Sena leader Sanjay Raut confirmed the cancellation of the meeting. "Discussions between BJP-Shiv Sena were scheduled for today. But now if the CM himself is saying that the 50-50 formula was not discussed then what will we even talk about? So Uddhavji has cancelled today's meeting," Raut said.

Fadnavis said earlier in the day that the BJP never agreed to the so-called "50-50 formula" the Shiv Sena claims was agreed to by the two parties when they decided to fight the April-May Lok Sabha polls in an alliance, referring to the claim by Thackeray that he,

BJP president Amit Shah and Fadnavis had finalised the terms. "There was no assurance given to the Sena for the rotation of the post of the CM. There was a proposal by the Shiv Sena for sharing the chair for two-and-a-half years equally, but it was never admitted by our leadership. I have spoken to our party president and he has confirmed it to me," he told reporters.

He said he had no problem in offering the post of deputy CM to the Shiv Sena, "but a formal proposal should come from them".

Fadnavis added that the BJP legislature party will elect its new leader at a meeting on Wednesday. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already announced the name and the meeting will be a formality," he said, apparently referring to Modi's statement during the assembly election campaign that Fadnavis will lead the coalition government.

The firm rebuttal from Fadnavis, who was the BJP's chief ministerial face, was the party's first clear response to the Shiv Sena, whose Sanjay Raut had held out a warning to its partner that it had "other options".

Raut was critical of Fadnavis' statement. "I did not hear what the CM said. If he is saying that the 50-50 formula was never discussed, then I think we need to change the definition of truth. What was discussed is known by all. The media was present," Raut said.

The BJP is the single largest party in the 288-member Maharashtra assembly with 105 seats but is 40 MLAs short of the majority mark. The Sena, a pre-poll ally of the BJP, is the second largest party with 56 seats. The Nationalist Congress Party has 54 seats and the Congress, 44.

The Sena agreed to contest fewer seats than the BJP in a seat-sharing deal



ahead of the state elections, implicitly accepting that it was the junior partner in the alliance. "Uddhav Thackerayji has said that we have other options too but we don't want to do the sin of accepting that alternative. Shiv Sena has always done politics of truth, we are not hungry for power," Raut was quoted as saying by news agency ANI.

Raut also took a swipe at the BJP's alliance with Dushyant Chautala's Jananayak Janata Party (JJP), which teamed up with the BJP to form a coalition government in Haryana. "There is no Dushyant (Chautala) here whose father come out without

politics of dharma and satya," he said. Dushyant Chautala's father Ajay Chautala is serving a jail term after conviction in a teachers' recruitment scam. On Sunday, he attended the swearing-in of Manohar Lal Khattar as Haryana chief minister and his son Dushyant as deputy chief minister after he was granted a furlough for two weeks. Dushyant Chautala reacted strongly to Raut's comment. "It means he knows who Dushyant Chautala is. My father is in jail since six years; he never asked about his well being. Ajay Chautalaji has not come out without completing his term.

Russian president Vladimir Putin not visiting Tamil Nadu to watch Jallikattu

(News Agencies) Russian President Vladimir Putin will not visit Tamil Nadu to watch the famous bull-taming sport Jallikattu along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Pongal celebrations, according to news agency ANI on reports from state about President Putin's visit.

Earlier in the day a government functionary in Madurai district said that they had heard that Putin would visit Alanganallur (a village near Madurai) to see the event along with PM Modi in January 2020.

However, Tamil Nadu Revenue Minister RB Udhayakumar, who represents Thirumangalam assembly constituency in Madurai district, had said that there was no official confirmation of Putin's visit.

Jallikattu is a sport, played as a part of Pongal (harvest festival dedicated to Sun God) celebrations, where a bull is let loose into a crowd of people. The participants are supposed to

take control of the bull by holding its hump as long as they can. In 2016, the Supreme Court to ban Jallikattu after a plea by animal rights groups after many people had been gored to death. But Tamil Nadu insisted Jallikattu was a crucial part of its culture and identity. The government later issued an executive order to overturn the court verdict. Jallikattu is part of the three-day Pongal festival and derives its name from Tamil words 'salli' meaning coins and 'kattu' meaning package. This refers to the bag of coins which is tied to the bull's horns which participants try to get hold of. The bull species called Bos indicus, or humped cattle, is specifically bred for Jallikattu. The bulls that do well at the event are used latter for breeding.

Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde appointed next Chief Justice, to take oath on November 18

A native of Maharashtra, Justice Bobde is a third-generation lawyer and studied law at Nagpur University. The top court judge, whose grandfather and father were both lawyers, started out with law practice at the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court.

(News Agencies) Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde is all set to be the 47th Chief Justice of India after President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday signed a warrant appointing the 63-year-old senior-most Supreme Court judge to the post. Bobde is scheduled to take charge of the top court on November 18, a day after the present CJI Ranjan Gogoi demits office.

The Presidential warrant follows the recommendation of the serving Chief Justice on October 18, who, as per convention, proposed Justice Bobde's name as his successor. As in previous instances, the recommendation was sent a month before the current CJI demits office.

Justice Bobde was part of the five-judge constitution bench hearing the longest running Ayodhya land dispute case and in which the order is



expected by November 18, before CJI Gogoi retires. A native of Maharashtra, Justice Bobde is a third-generation lawyer and studied law at Nagpur University. The top court judge, whose grandfather and father were both lawyers, started out with law practice at the Nagpur bench of the Bombay high court.

Justice Bobde was elevated

to the Supreme Court in April 2012 after serving as chief justice of the Madhya Pradesh high court. Justice Bobde was elevated to the high court as an additional judge in March 2000. In his verdicts at the Supreme Court, Justice Bobde has backed privacy as a fundamental right and held that the "right to privacy is inextricably bound up with all exercises of human liberty". He was also a member of the bench that ruled that no Indian citizen could be deprived of basic services and government subsidies because he didn't have an Aadhaar card. In 2017, he upheld the Karnataka government's ban on a book on the grounds that it outraged the religious feelings of Lord Basavanna's followers. He had also led the three-judge bench that first suspended the sale of firecrackers in the National Capital Region in 2016.

Rescued from smugglers, over 250 cows stolen from Tripura's cow shelter in 6 months

Officials of the Delhi-based Dhyan Foundation that looks after the cow shelter in Debipur village, 22km from state capital Agartala, lodged a complaint of the theft at the Madhupur police station. The cow shelter has 596 cows at present.

(News Agencies) More than 250 cows, which were among those rescued by the Border Security Force (BSF) from being smuggled to Bangladesh earlier, have been stolen from a cow shelter in Tripura's Sepahijala district in the last six months.

Officials of the Delhi-based Dhyan Foundation that looks after the cow shelter in Debipur village, 22km from state capital Agartala, lodged a complaint of the theft at the Madhupur police station. The cow shelter has 596 cows at present.

"According to our reports, more than 250 cows were stolen from our shelter. We have lodged complaints regarding this five-six times in the police station," a volunteer of the non-government organisation, R Lata Devi, said.

"On October 24, few people came with arms in the shelter and tried to steal at least 12 cows, but they left the place without the cows after we reached there," Devi said.

The NGO had said earlier that 159 cows had died in the shelter between May and July this year. Of

them, 45 died due to 'hypothermia' in the second week of July as they were out in the open due to the lack of sufficient sheds. It had rained heavily and they suffered a cold shock, it had said.

The cow shelter has 18 workers along with one supervisor who work during the day. But at night, only two workers and the supervisor stay in the shelter, said Devi.

"The workers refused to stay at night following frequent interrogation by the police since we have lodged a complaint of cow theft. We



have installed four CCTV cameras in the entire cow shelter," she said.

Madhupur Police confirmed the complaints of cow theft. Officer-in-charge of Madhupur police station Bishnupada Bhowmik said

they have rescued a few cows and handed them over to the NGO.

"Attempts are on to rescue the stolen cows. We have asked the NGO about the detailed report regarding the cows in the shelter,"

Bhowmik said.

The foundation started the shelter in February on four acres of land allotted by the state government and provides medicine and other support to the rescued cattle.

Why did Centre stop Indian MPs from visiting J-K, asks Opposition

On August 24, a delegation of prominent Opposition leaders were not allowed to enter the region after landing in Srinagar airport.



(News Agencies) The Opposition on Monday hit out at the government for facilitating the travel of a delegation of lawmakers of the European Union to Jammu and Kashmir, while the region remained out of bounds for most Indian leaders.

On August 24, a delegation of prominent Opposition leaders were not allowed to enter the region after landing in Srinagar airport. Senior Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma and KC Venugopal were part of the panel. It also included Communist Party of India's Sitaram Yechury, Loktantrik Janata Dal leader Sharad Yadav, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's Tiruchi Siva, Janata Dal (Secular) leader D Kupendra Reddy,

Trinamool Congress's Dinesh Trivedi, Nationalist Congress Party's Mehmoed Memon, and the Communist Party of

India-Marxist's D Raja. The BJP's Nalin S Kohli said, "The abrogation of Article 370 was the elimination of a

temporary provision of the Indian constitution and the government of India under PM Modi has successfully, both diplomatically and strategically, countered Pakistan's narrative of falsehoods. The visit may also be seen from this perspective. If the government of India, at any point, decides to put out information in public domain, then it will continue to do so."

But Sharma said the government rolling out the red carpet for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to brief and invite them to visit J&K? was "a

disrespect to the sovereignty of the Indian Parliament and the violation of the privileges of Indian MPs". Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "MPs from Europe are welcome to go on a guided tour of Jammu & #Kashmir while Indian MPs are banned & denied entry. There is something very wrong with that."

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh tweeted that the move to take MEPs was an insult to the Indian Parliament. "When Indian political leaders have been prevented from meeting

the people of J&K, what possessed the great chest-beating champion of nationalism to allow European politicians to visit J&K?..."

Yechury questioned the move and tweeted: "I was allowed to enter Srinagar only when the Supreme Court permitted my... petition. Even today Indian MPs are not allowed while Modi welcomes MEPs." RJD's Manoj Jha said: "Doesn't it sound bizarre that the government does not allow its own Opposition leaders but has no issue with foreign leaders landing in J&K..."

Caught in Shiv Sena-BJP crossfire, Dushyant Chautala hits back

Dushyant Chautala's JJP won 10 seats in the Haryana state polls and decided to support the BJP after it failed to secure a majority on its own.

(News Agencies) Dushyant Chautala, Jananayak Janata Party founder and BJP's new ally in Haryana, was the target when Shiv Sena sounded a warning to its alliance partner in Maharashtra on Tuesday. Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut blamed BJP for the delay in government formation in Maharashtra. "There is no Dushyant (Chautala) here whose father is in jail. Here it's us who do politics of dharma and

satya (ethics and truth), Sharad ji (Sharad Pawar) who created an environment against BJP, and Congress who will never go with BJP," Raut told news agency ANI.

Dushyant Chautala's JJP won 10 seats in the Haryana state polls and decided to support the BJP after it failed to secure a majority on its own. BJP won 40 seats in the 90-member Haryana assembly while Congress got 31 seats. Dushyant's father

Ajay Chautala is serving jail term after conviction in a teachers' recruitment scam. On Sunday, he attended the swearing-in of Manohar Lal Khattar as Haryana chief minister and his son Dushyant as deputy chief minister after he was granted furlough for two weeks.

Dushyant reacted strongly to Raut's comment and said such remarks don't behave him. "It means he knows who Dushyant Chautala is. My father is in jail since

6 years, he never asked about his well being. Ajay Chautala ji has not come out without completing his term. Such statements don't add to Sanjay ji's stature," he was quoted as saying by ANI.

Allies BJP and Sena have exchanged terse words since the results of the Maharashtra assembly polls were announced. BJP won 105 seats in the 288-member assembly while Sena won 56. Both the parties

have a pre-poll alliance in Maharashtra. Sena wants a "50-50" power-sharing formula with BJP wherein chief ministers from both sides have a two-and-half-year tenure. The BJP hardened its stand on Tuesday after Sena's demands and chief minister Devendra Fadnavis said a "50-50" power-sharing formula was never agreed upon. Fadnavis said Sena had proposed the 50-50 formula but said the BJP hadn't accepted it.

Why Shiv Sena may drag feet on govt formation in Maharashtra

The result for the assembly elections were out on October 24 but the two parties have failed to close the negotiations and continue to flex muscles for the chief minister's post.



(News Agencies) The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fears that Shiv Sena may delay government formation in Maharashtra for some more time before

elections were out on October 24 but the two parties have failed to close the negotiations and continue to flex muscles for the chief minister's post.

BJP and Shiv Sena are pre-poll partners, but both have staked claimed to the top chair. The Sena contested elections on 124 seats of the 288-member Maharashtra assembly and won 56 while the BJP contested 164 seats and won

105. "Shiv Sena will eventually give in and agree to be a part of a BJP-led government," said a senior BJP leader who didn't want to be named. "Sena will ask for some portfolios that are currently with BJP. We may have to let go of some of them." Departments such as home, finance, urban development, revenue, rural development and others are currently with CM Devendra Fadnavis or other BJP leaders. Shiv

Sena has portfolios such as transport, industries, environment.

Only 6 of the 25 cabinet berths and 7 out of 18 minister of state portfolios are with the Sena.

Fadnavis and Shiv Sena leader Diwakar Raote held separate meetings with Maharashtra governor

Bhagat Singh Koshiyari on Monday, setting off speculation that the relations between the two allies might worsen over a "50-50" power-sharing

formula.

Sena wants CMs from both sides with each having a two-and-half-year tenure. Sena boss Uddhav Thackeray also said a 50-50 formula was agreed upon with BJP president Amit Shah and Fadnavis ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

Senior BJP leaders have said the party will not withdraw its claim on the CM's chair or agree to a rotation of the top job as demanded by Sena.

Thirty terrifying minutes on IndiGo flight to Kuwait

(News Agencies) 160 passengers to Kuwait had a harrowing time after a fire alarm on the IndiGo flight went off, moments after take-off, forcing it to return to the Chennai international airport during the small hours on Friday. The smoke warning alarm, indicating fire in the rear-cargo area, turned out to be false, said the airlines. Pilots flying IndiGo 6E-1751 to Kuwait declared full emergency after detecting smoke warning, minutes after the flight's take-off from Chennai at 1:30 am on Friday. The flight landed back safely in Chennai at 2 am.

"IndiGo aircraft VT-IJJ departed for Kuwait at 1.30 am and was forced to turn back due to cargo smoke warning. After noticing the alarm, pilots declared a full emergency and landed the flight safely at Chennai airport by 2 AM," said officials familiar with the developments. An inspection was carried out after the passengers were deplaned from the Airbus A320 model aircraft and the alarm was found to have gone off erroneously.

"There was no evidence of smoke in the aft cargo, which only had passenger baggage. During the technical inspection, two smoke detectors were found to be faulty," said the official quoted above. An IndiGo spokesperson, who didn't elaborate, also said the fire alarm was false. "After take-off from Chennai, the pilot observed a momentary message about the smoke detector in the aft cargo compartment. Therefore, he returned to Chennai. After reaching Chennai airport, the alarm was confirmed to be a false message," the spokesperson said. All passengers were safe and a departmental probe had been ordered into the incident, said sources.

Congress meet to firm up Maharashtra stand as BJP, Sena stand-off lingers

The discussions in the Congress gathered momentum after the state leaders met Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Sharad Pawar on Thursday.



(News Agencies) A high-level meeting of the Congress on Maharashtra political developments is scheduled in Delhi on Friday even as Shiv Sena issued yet another warning to the BJP, its ally of 30 years, saying that if Sena wanted, it could get the required numbers to form the government in the state.

The discussions in the Congress gathered momentum after the state leaders met Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Sharad Pawar on Thursday. "Sonijaji and Pawarsaheb have already spoken on the issue early this week. When the

state leaders met Pawarsaheb, he directed them to get the nod from the party high command on the issue. Congress may informally give its nod to Shiv Sena to form the government and support from outside," a senior Congress leader said on condition of anonymity.

The Shiv Sena and the BJP are at loggerheads since the October 24 assembly election results with the former insisting on a 50-50 power sharing formula. The BJP, which contested the state elections in alliance with the Shiv Sena, had emerged as the single largest party with

105 seats in the 288-member assembly. Sena, was the second largest with 56 seats. The Congress has 44 MLAs and the NCP 54. A strength of 145 is needed for a simple majority. Among those expected to meet Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday are former chief minister Ashok Chavan, state president Balasaheb Thorat and five working presidents. This follows a meeting on Thursday where former chief minister and Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan, Ahmed Patel and Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot were present. The meeting was held on the

sidelines of a programme to pay tribute to former prime minister Indira Gandhi on her death anniversary.

"I have already made it clear that there should be a government in place in the state in the wake of crop loss due to the heavy rainfall and other problems the citizens are facing. As far as the support to the Shiv Sena is concerned, there should be a firm proposal from them for it. We will put it before our central leadership for approval. Our meetings with Sonijaji are to apprise her about our performance in the Assembly polls and nothing more should be read out of it," Prithviraj Chavan told HT on Friday.

Former Mumbai Congress chief Sanjay Nirupam, however, feels that the Congress should keep itself away from the BJP-Shiv Sena fight over power tussle. "It is a fight to grab more ministerial berths by the Shiv Sena. Congress should not get into the drama. How can some Congress leaders think about supporting Sena," Nirupam tweeted. Former chief minister Sushilkumar Shinde too has said that Congress cannot back Shiv Sena to form the government. "Congress should not get into this unholy alliance with the party like Shiv Sena."

(News Agencies) Pakistan has denied permission for an Indian delegation comprising representatives of the Punjab government and various Sikh bodies to hold 'nagar kirtan' at Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak, people familiar with developments said on Tuesday.

The delegation, led by the Punjab government and including representatives of the SGPC and DSGMC, had planned to organise 'Akhand Path' and hold



Pakistan denies Indian delegation permission to hold 'nagar kirtan' at Nankana Sahib

The delegation, led by the Punjab government and including representatives of the SGPC and DSGMC, had planned to organise 'Akhand Path' and hold 'nagar kirtan' at Nankana Sahib in Pakistan's Punjab province as part of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak.

'nagar kirtan' at Nankana Sahib in Pakistan's Punjab province as part of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. Pakistan did not grant visas for a 31-member delegation of the Punjab government and another 450 Indian

pilgrims even though their applications were recommended by the Indian government to the Pakistan high commission in New Delhi, the people cited above said. Authorities in Pakistan instead decided to give

leadership of the group of pilgrims to Paramjit Singh Sarna and this has not been viewed well by the people of India's Punjab state, the people added. "It is seen as disrespect to the sentiments of the members of the Sikh

community who wanted to visit Nankana Sahib on the auspicious occasion to start commemorations of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak from the first week of November," said a person who declined to be identified.

The people said this is perhaps the first time that Pakistan, whose leadership has often spoken of facilitating Sikh pilgrims to visit Nankana Sahib, has denied such a visit. Pakistan is also yet to respond to a proposal

made by the Indian government to enhance the number of pilgrims visiting the country on the occasion of Gurburab in November, under the 1974 protocol, to 10,000 instead of the regular 3,000, the people said.

The people said the position taken by Pakistani authorities reflected lack of seriousness in translating statements made by the country's leadership into actions to ensure smooth and easy access for Indian Sikh pilgrims to sacred gurdwaras in Pakistan, especially on the occasion of 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. In a separate development, India on Tuesday shared a list of 575 pilgrims who will be part of the inaugural 'jatha' to use the Kartarpur Corridor to travel to Darbar Sahib gurdwara, built at the site where Guru Nanak spent the final years of his life. The list includes former prime minister Manmohan Singh, union ministers Hardeep Puri and Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Punjab chief minister Amrinder Singh, and MPs and MLAs from Punjab.

Pak court suspends Nawaz Sharif's sentence for 8 weeks on medical grounds in graft case

Sharif, 69, was admitted to the Services Hospital on Monday night from Pakistan's anti-graft body's custody after his platelets dropped to a critical low level of 2,000.



(News Agencies) A Pakistani court on Tuesday suspended the sentence of ailing former premier Nawaz Sharif for eight weeks in a corruption case, paving way for his release on bail as his condition deteriorated after a drastic drop in his blood platelet count. Sharif, 69, was admitted to the Services Hospital on

Monday night from Pakistan's anti-graft body's custody after his platelets dropped to a critical low level of 2,000. Sharif was sentenced to seven years in jail in the Al Azizia case. He was granted interim bail on Saturday by the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) on medical grounds. As the

interim bill expired on Tuesday, a two-member bench of the IHC comprising Justice Aamir Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani heard the case. Fresh reports on Sharif's health were submitted in the court. Sharif's lawyer and personal doctor told the court that his condition was not good due to

erratic platelets count. According to the doctors treating Sharif, he is suffering from an autoimmune blood disorder requiring immediate medical attention. After hearing the arguments, the court reserved the judgment for a short time which it announced later on.

The court ordered to give eight-week bail to Sharif by suspending his sentence. It also said that he should approach the government of Punjab for any extension in the bail. The court said that two surety bonds of Rs2 million each should be submitted to the court to secure Sharif's release.

Sharif was in Kot Lakhpat jail but early this month was sent to the custody of National Accountability Bureau

(NAB) which is probing the Sharif family in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills case. Sharif last week procured bail on medical grounds in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills case from the Lahore High Court. During the hearing on Tuesday, the IHC asked doctors, who are part of the medical board overseeing Sharif's treatment, if it was possible for him to recover without staying in the hospital. The doctors responded in the negative and said that the PML-N medico-legal board required medical supervision at all times, the Dawn reported.

The board informed the court that Sharif had been given 80 injections in order to bring his platelet count - which was reported to

dangerous levels - to normal. When asked if Sharif had suffered a heart attack during his medical treatment, the doctors responded in the affirmative.

Sharif's personal physician Dr Adnan Khan, who had arrived in court before the hearing started, said that so far, the board was not able to figure out the reason behind the destruction of the platelets in the former premier's body. Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, who appeared before court today, assured the bench that the provincial government was providing the best medical care to the former premier. He told the bench that the provincial government was working to bring forth prison reforms.

This man is running for governor of California so he can run false Facebook ads

(News Agencies) A San Francisco man is going to extreme lengths to call out Facebook's controversial policy of allowing politicians to run false ads on its platform. On Monday morning, he registered as a candidate in California's 2022 gubernatorial election — not with the primary goal of becoming governor, but so he can run false Facebook ads of his own. Facebook allows politicians, including candidates for public office, to run ads on its platform that are not fact-checked. That policy has drawn criticism from Democrats who say it will help President Trump's re-election campaign. Former Vice President Joe Biden's campaign wrote to Facebook asking the company to remove a false ad the Trump campaign ran about Biden and Ukraine earlier this month. Facebook denied Biden's request. Adriel Hampton, a political activist who runs his own marketing firm in San Francisco, registered at his local post office on Monday morning as a candidate for governor of California. Hampton told CNN Business that he will use his new status as a candidate to run false ads on Facebook (FB) about President Trump, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, and other Facebook executives. He said he also plans to run false ads on Facebook about executives of Twitter (TWTR), which also has a policy of not fact-checking ads run by candidates.

Apple's iOS 13.2 introduces more inclusive emoji, privacy features and camera tools

(News Agencies) After yawning smiley face. In recent years, Apple has been on a push to offer more diverse emoji, such as different skin tones, occupations and flags. In March 2018, the tech giant requested more emoji that were inclusive of disability in a proposal sent to the Unicode Consortium — the nonprofit organization that sets the global standard for emojis. "Currently, emoji provide a wide range of options, but may not represent the experiences of those with disabilities," Apple wrote at the time. "Diversifying the options available helps fill a significant gap and provides a more inclusive experience for all." The iPhone maker said it had consulted with top organizations for people with disabilities when submitting the proposal. Beyond emoji, iOS 13.2 adds a "deep fusion" camera mode to the iPhone 11 and 11 Pro — a tool that uses artificial intelligence to improve image quality. iOS 13.2 also features optional Siri recording, allowing users to better control whether to share audio recordings with Apple developers. In addition, the latest software features HomePod voice support for up to six different voices and compatibility for AirPods Pro, the high-end version of Apple's popular wireless earbuds unveiled on Monday.

When you're a joke on the internet

Meme effect Images, videos or even pieces of text lifted off the internet, edited to add satire can be funny, but to its innocent subjects, this could be quite distressing.

(News Agencies) When a businessman's wife clicked photos of him in 2015, sitting on a stool, shirtless and scrubbing a cauldron, little did he know that he would soon attain internet fame, of the kind that he would have liked to do without. In the years since, the months of October and November are a time he dreads. The photograph is invariably resurrected as memes to drive home a point in the war of the genders, especially when the festival season of Diwali draws near. The most popular of these memes show him scrubbing the cauldron, with his wife standing next to him, both looking into the camera, blank-faced. The meme usually surfaces after Karva

Chauth — an annual Hindu ritual observed by married women in northern India, who fast on the day for the long life of their husbands. The festival heralds in the Diwali season. "When October comes, I usually wait for a week or two, keeping a tab on social media. I also call up a cyber security consultant to keep him ready to help me," said the 40-year-old Delhi-based businessman, who did not wish to be identified. In the past few years, many in the city have been victims of internet memes. Such memes can be images, videos or pieces of text that are lifted off the internet, edited to add satire and then circulated widely. While these memes end up distressing their innocent subjects, they can mean

opportunity of work for several cyber security professionals whom many of the "victims" approach for help. Some of these consultants work for a fee, but several others do it for free — the incentive being to get more stable work as consultants associated with government agencies, private institutes, schools and companies, by adding such isolated cases in their portfolio. In the Delhi businessman's case, there could be a reason why the internet meme resurfaces around the same time each year. It is the superimposed text at the bottom of the photograph that roughly translates to: "Karwa Chauth is over and husbands should get back to doing household chores", the cyber security consultant who handled the case said.



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मोदी का एलान-ए-जंग

बूंद-बूंद को तरसेगा पाक



नई दिल्ली ■ हम हिंदुस्तानी

पुत्राचार्य अरुणो की पुस्तक 'मोदी का एलान-ए-जंग' का प्रकाशन किया है। पुस्तक में मोदी के शासन के अंतर्गत देश की विकास प्रक्रिया का विश्लेषण किया है। इसके अलावा मोदी सरकार के अर्थ-राज्य नीति का भी विश्लेषण किया है। पुस्तक में मोदी सरकार के अर्थ-राज्य नीति का विश्लेषण किया है। पुस्तक में मोदी सरकार के अर्थ-राज्य नीति का विश्लेषण किया है।

नई दिल्ली ■ हम हिंदुस्तानी

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भारतीय-अमेरिकन कम्प्यूनिटी द्वारा घोर निंदा

अमेरिका ने एंटी-देने से किया इंकार



वॉशिंगटन ■ हम हिंदुस्तानी

भारतीय-अमेरिकन कम्प्यूनिटी द्वारा घोर निंदा की गई है। अमेरिकन सरकार ने एंटी-देने से किया इंकार। अमेरिकन सरकार ने एंटी-देने से किया इंकार। अमेरिकन सरकार ने एंटी-देने से किया इंकार।

वॉशिंगटन ■ हम हिंदुस्तानी

भारतीय-अमेरिकन कम्प्यूनिटी द्वारा घोर निंदा की गई है। अमेरिकन सरकार ने एंटी-देने से किया इंकार। अमेरिकन सरकार ने एंटी-देने से किया इंकार। अमेरिकन सरकार ने एंटी-देने से किया इंकार।

Kartarpur pilgrims won't need passports, two-day waiver of \$20 fee, says Pakistan PM Imran Khan

India and Pakistan have already signed an agreement for Kartarpur corridor that will connect Darbar Sahib with Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district of Punjab and will facilitate visa-free movement of Indian pilgrims.



(News Agencies) Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday announced several concessions for Indian pilgrims going to Darbar Sahib gurdwara at Kartarpur in Pakistan's Punjab where Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, spent the last years of his life. "For Sikhs coming for

complete waiver of pilgrims' fee but Khan announced just two-day relief -- on the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor on November 9 and on Guru Nanak's 550th birth anniversary on November 12.-- in the \$20 charge that has been a sticking point in the talks on operationalising the Kartarpur corridor. The border corridor connects Darbar Sahib with Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district of Punjab.

This year marks the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak and on this occasion India and Pakistan have signed an agreement to construct the Kartarpur corridor. It is meant to facilitate visa-free movement of Indian pilgrims, who will only have

to obtain a permit to visit Kartarpur Sahib, which was established in 1522 by the founder of the Sikh faith.

Both countries have agreed that Pakistan would allow 5,000 Sikh visitors per day into the country through the corridor, which will also be the first visa-free corridor between the two neighbours since their independence in 1947. Pakistan is building the corridor from the Indian border to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, the final resting place of Guru Nanak, while the other part from Dera Baba Nanak up to the border will be constructed by India.

India is constructing a bridge at the zero point and has urged

Pakistan to build a similar bridge on its side that will provide safe and secure movement of pilgrims and address concerns regarding flooding. The bridge is over a creek of which the majority part falls in Pakistan.

The corridor is set to be inaugurated on November 9 when a 575-member Jatha will cross the corridor to to Gurudwara Kartarpur Sahib. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Punjab CM Amarinder Singh, Union Ministers Hardeep Puri and Harsimrat Kaur Badal are among the first batch of pilgrims. Cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu has also accepted the invitation of the Pakistan prime minister and will be present on the occasion.

6 Mexican Nationals Plead Guilty To International Sex Trafficking Offenses

(By Our Staff Reporter)

Geoffrey S. Berman, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that EFRAIN GRANADOS-CORONA, a/k/a "Chavito," a/k/a "Cepillo," pled guilty today before U.S. District Judge Andrew L. Carter to sex trafficking by use of force, fraud, or coercion. Five additional defendants in this case -- JULIO SAINZ-FLORES, a/k/a "Rogelio," JUAN ROMERO-GRANADOS, a/k/a "Chegoya," a/k/a "El Guero," ALAN ROMERO-GRANADOS, a/k/a "El Flaco," PEDRO ROJAS-ROMERO, and EMILIO ROJAS-ROMERO -- pled guilty to sex trafficking offenses last month before U.S. District Judge Andrew L. Carter.

U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman said: "These defendants systematically preyed on innocent women and girls in Mexico, smuggled them into the United States, and forced them into prostitution -- depriving them of their freedom and dignity. The devastation to these victims caused by the defendants is beyond comprehension. With the defendants' guilty pleas, we seek to deliver justice for the victims, and to deter others from engaging in this reprehensible conduct."

According to the allegations in the indictment to which each defendant pled guilty, public court filings, and statements made in court: EFRAIN GRANADOS-CORONA, a/k/a "Chavito," a/k/a "Cepillo," JULIO SAINZ-FLORES, a/k/a "Rogelio," JUAN ROMERO-GRANADOS, a/k/a "Chegoya," a/k/a "El Guero," ALAN ROMERO-GRANADOS, a/k/a "El Flaco," PEDRO ROJAS-ROMERO, and EMILIO ROJAS-ROMERO, the defendants, are members of an international sex trafficking organization (the "STO"). Many of the members of the STO are related by blood, marriage and community.

Between at least in or about 2000 and 2016, members of the STO (the "Traffickers") have used false promises, physical and sexual violence, threats of the same, lies, and coercion to force and coerce adult and minor women (the "Victims") to work in prostitution in both Mexico and the United States. In most cases, a Trafficker enticed a Victim -- frequently a minor -- in Mexico. The Trafficker then used multiple means to isolate the Victim from her family. In some cases, the Trafficker used romantic promises to induce the Victim to leave her family

and live with him. In other cases, the Trafficker raped the Victim, making it difficult for her to return to her family due to the associated stigma of the rape. Once a Victim was separated from her family, the Trafficker frequently monitored her communications, kept her locked in an apartment, left her without food, and engaged in physical or sexual violence against the Victim. Traffickers often told Victims that the Traffickers owed a significant debt and that the Victim must work in prostitution to assist in repaying the debt. Traffickers typically began forcing the Victims to work in prostitution in Mexico. Victims were often required to see at least 20 to 40 customers per day. Traffickers monitored the number of clients a Victim saw by surveilling the Victim, communicating with brothel workers, and by counting the number of condoms provided to a Victim. Traffickers typically required the Victims to turn over all of the prostitution proceeds to the Traffickers. After a Victim worked in prostitution in Mexico for some time, Traffickers typically arranged for the Victim to be smuggled into the United States. Members of the STO assisted one another in making smuggling arrangements. In many

cases, multiple Traffickers and multiple Victims were smuggled into the United States together.

"Human Rights in a Terror-Free World - Even as Terror Morphs

Because that is the right you have." [Emphasis added.]

Honestly, I wish I had the reply-right, for I had a comment on leadership that minimizes what we in New York - especially our brave First Responders - have lived, and are living through, since 9/11. My comment would also request of Congress to join the Executive in "eradicating terror" globally - on a bipartisan basis - as America's #1 Foreign Policy. Indeed, every person who flies on a commercial plane goes through an intrusive security check to ensure public safety. Its not "some people did something." Those "some people" are Terrorists. The "something" is the evil of 9/11, and we will never forget, and have the steely resolve as a nation of "never again."

Since I'm a New Yorker, 9/11 is why I seek the prompt eradication of Terror as every government's Job 1. I also since 9/11 proudly wear the American Flag on my lapel, right over my heart - here and across the world. To me, 9/11 is not just "something," "somewhere." It's a sea change of life, as the world stood still and in shock, before it changed everything, forever. The "Doomsday Clock" became more haphazard, as non-state actors now could cause even more miscalculations. If we don't manage to eradicate Terror, and do it soon, we won't have to worry about Mother Nature, using the forces of nature, aka the Climate Crisis, to wreak havoc. Terror which can occur any day or any minute, then, is as much an existential threat, but much closer, than even Climate Crisis - which speaks in terms of a decade(s). When humanity suffers and

States together. In other cases, one Trafficker remained in Mexico while another Trafficker and other Victims.

ranging for a Victim to be smuggled together with another Trafficker and other Victims. dies by being blown up by Terror, suffer a nuclear winter, or drowning from rising sea levels, the precious human rights we are all fight for will have been devalued to meaninglessness. That's not the world we want our kids or grand kids to inherit. We can do better. This Congress can do better. Give us a world that is safe, so our rights and freedoms we live with, and for, mean something everywhere.

America Must Lead to Eradicate Terror, So Human Rights Can Be Enjoyed.

Yes, as Americans, we are not perfect, and suffer from even treason - unregistered foreign agents - the "Benedict Arnolds" among us. In fact, we even make mistakes more than we should. That's why, our Founding Fathers, knowing we would have human vices and frailties, bequeath us a recipe for achieving extra-greatness, where the "sum of the parts" exceeded the "parts" - our singular contribution to mankind's quest for greater rights and greater freedom. We are the next step after the Magna Carta. We need to be worthy of our ancestry, so our descendants can live free and better.

I again - invite you - to schedule a bipartisan Congressional Fact Finding Mission to Kashmir, including, Americans whose ancestry can add an honest and objective nuance - as that will serve to reassure every Member's constituents, and aid in hastening the lifting of all restrictions, other than those based upon credible intel of clear & present danger to India or visitors. For liberals who fancy lunacy, and want rights and freedoms even when Terror and Fear reigns, I urge them to give it up gracefully, late as it is.



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Grandfather charged in death of toddler on cruise ship

The grandfather of a toddler who fell to her death on a cruise ship in July has been charged with negligent homicide in her death, Puerto Rican authorities said.

(News Agencies) Salvatore Anello was playing with the girl, Chloe Wiegand, on the 11th floor near a window while the ship was docked in Puerto Rico.

An attorney for the Indiana family has said Anello sat the girl on rails near the open window, thinking it was closed. Prosecutors allege that Anello "negligently exposed [his granddaughter] through one of the windows," according to a statement from the Puerto Rican Department of Justice. The San Juan judge "found cause for arrest against the accused, and imposed a bail of \$80,000," the

governor's office said. Chloe's parents blamed the cruise line company, Royal Caribbean, after the accident, saying the window shouldn't have been open. The criminal charges are "pouring salt on the open wounds of this grieving family," said Michael Winkleman, an attorney representing the family in a civil suit he's preparing against Royal Caribbean. "Clearly this was a tragic accident and the family's singular goal remains for something like this to never happen again," Winkleman said in a statement. Anello turned himself into Puerto Rico officials

Monday, Winkleman said. He was arraigned, posted bond and is now back in Indiana with his family. The details of the toddler's death have been disputed since the accident. Port Authority officials said Anello sat the girl in the window and lost his balance, and the girl fell to her death. Winkleman, however, told media that the toddler loved glass and windows, and her grandfather had placed her on a ledge by a glass wall, but had no idea one window within the wall was open. Royal Caribbean "has still not given us the opportunity to view surveillance



video they have of the incident," the attorney said. Royal Caribbean said after the incident that it was "deeply saddened" by it, and that it had "assisted the authorities in San Juan with their inquiries." A preliminary hearing is scheduled for November 20. Anello has retained counsel in Puerto Rico for the criminal charges.

Federal judge blocks Alabama's near-total abortion ban

A federal judge has blocked a controversial Alabama abortion bill that would block almost all abortions, calling it a "ban" that "contravenes clear Supreme Court precedent."



(News Agencies) US District Judge Myron Thompson issued a preliminary injunction on Tuesday barring the Human Life Protection Act from taking effect until the court resolves the case in full. The law was slated to go into effect next month. Thompson's decision to block the Alabama ban means that all of the state laws passed this year restricting early-stage abortions have been blocked from going into effect by the courts. In the 17-page opinion, Thompson wrote that the state's abortion ban "violates the right of an individual to privacy, to make choices central to personal dignity and autonomy." Thompson also stated that the ban "diminishes the capacity of women to act in society,

and to make reproductive decisions." Thompson added, "It defies the United States Constitution." That will be the question at the heart of the case if Thompson affirms his ruling and sets up a Supreme Court appeal -- a result Alabama officials said they were hoping for when they passed the law in the first place. Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall called Thompson's ruling "not unexpected," pointing to the bill's aims of overturning the Supreme Court's landmark cases Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion in the US in 1973, and Casey v. Planned Parenthood, one of the key opinions that upheld Roe in 1992. "As we have stated before, the State's objective is to advance our case to the US

Supreme Court where we intend to submit evidence that supports our argument that Roe and Casey were wrongly decided and that the Constitution does not prohibit states from protecting unborn children from abortion," Marshall said in a statement. The bill, which Republican Gov. Kay Ivey signed into law in May, would punish doctors who perform abortions with life in prison. The law only allows exceptions "to avoid a serious health risk to the unborn child's mother," for ectopic pregnancy and if the "unborn child has a lethal anomaly" -- not for instances of rape or incest. "We must continue doing all we can to protect life. However, we also anticipated this challenge, and I support the rule of law," Ivey said in a

statement Tuesday, highlighting the bill's "overwhelming support" when it passed the legislature. The American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU of Alabama and Planned Parenthood Federation filed their lawsuit shortly

after the bill was signed on behalf of Alabama abortion providers challenging the law. The groups cheered Tuesday's ruling. "Today's victory means people can still access the health care they need across Alabama -- for now," Alexis McGill

Johnson, acting president of Planned Parenthood, said in a statement. She said state legislators in Alabama and elsewhere were "putting people's health and lives at risk in their attempts to ban abortion outright in this country."

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Photos highlight stark differences in Trump and Obama approaches

(News Agencies) The execution and aftermath of the raids that took down Osama bin Laden and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi were as different as the presidents overseeing them. But in one area they converged: Barack Obama and Donald Trump both wanted to watch. How each leader handled the defining moment says as much about their mindset as it does their foreign policy. Before, during and after the raids that took down two highly sought terrorists, Obama and Trump adopted divergent approaches and were met with different reactions from the American public. Both recognized, however, the weight the moments carried for their legacy. And both wanted to see it happen. "As though you were watching a movie," Trump recalled Sunday after announcing the death of the ISIS leader in graphically detailed terms.

"We were essentially watching what was happening in real time," Obama recounted to CNN in 2016, five years after the 9/11 mastermind. It's easy to understand the impulse. Coming in the third year of their presidencies, the raids carried the possibility of vindication and the risk of devastating failure. Looming was the legacy of Jimmy Carter, whose mishandling of a high-stakes foreign policy crisis -- the Iran hostage matter -- may have cost him a second term. Photographs of the two moments capture leaders on edge. Trump, stone-faced and formal in a suit and necktie, sits at the head of a long Situation Room table surrounded by similarly grave advisers, some in military uniform, as the raid played out on large screens. The literal and symbolic central figure, Trump is shown watching

sense of authority he has often craved as commander-in-chief. The rigid posture and imposing presidential seal stand in contrast to the photo of Obama, in a polo shirt and windbreaker, leaning forward as his team huddled around laptops as word came from Abbottabad that "Geronimo" -- the code name given bin Laden -- had been killed. Obama, slightly off-center with his chair pushed into a corner, is not the eye's natural point of focus. The photos are from different rooms: Trump's was taken in the John F. Kennedy Conference Room, the iconic command post famously reproduced in movies and on television shows where presidents are briefed on highly classified missions. Obama was briefed in the lead-up to the bin Laden raid from the same head-of-table position where Trump is shown watching



DOUG MITCHELL

the Baghdadi mission. He sat there as Admiral William McRaven, the Joint Special Operations commander, narrated the mission from an outpost in Afghanistan. But later, as word came there was a better view to be had down the hallway, he and his team decamped to the smaller conference room where a video feed was playing on the general's laptop. It is there the tableau -- crowded with others, including a hand-

to-mouth Hillary Clinton -- was snapped. If both presidents wanted to view the operations they personally ordered that took down their era's most wanted terrorists, there was little else in common in how they handled the high-wire decision and subsequent exaltation of the missions' successes. When he took office, Obama made clear to his first CIA Director Leon Panetta that finding bin Laden was a priority. Nine

months before the raid, Obama was first briefed on the possibility the US had located the terrorist at a compound in Pakistan. But without certainty, Obama was left with a choice. "I had been inclined to take the shot fairly early on in the discussions. But you hold back the decision until you have to make it. And in the end, what I very much appreciated, was the degree to which we had an honest debate," Obama told CNN in 2016.

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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

ਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਸ਼ਾਹੂ: ਆਰ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਸ ਸਾਲ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਣ ਲਈ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਵੱਡੇ ਖਰਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਭਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਾਲ 1.25 ਲੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਣ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਖਰਚੇ ਦੀ ਸਹੂਲਤ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਇਸ ਸਾਲ 1.25 ਲੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਣ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਖਰਚੇ ਦੀ ਸਹੂਲਤ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਇਸ ਸਾਲ 1.25 ਲੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਣ ਲਈ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਖਰਚੇ ਦੀ ਸਹੂਲਤ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ।

ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖੇਗਾ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ

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Donald Trump says Baghdadi's top replacement also killed by US troops

“Just confirmed that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's number one replacement has been terminated by American troops. Most likely would have taken the top spot - Now he is also Dead!” Trump tweeted.



(News Agencies) US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday the person likely to be first in line to replace Islamic State's slain leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has also been “terminated.” “Just confirmed that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's number one replacement has been terminated by American troops. Most likely would have taken the top spot - Now he is

also Dead!” Trump tweeted. Trump did not identify the person or give more detail on how he was killed. A top Kurdish official said Baghdadi's spokesman and right hand man, Abu Hassan al-Muhajir, was killed Sunday in a separate raid in the village of Ain Al-Baydah. It was unclear if that was the person Trump was referring to in his tweet. Mazloum Abdi, commander of the Kurdish-led SDF, had said on Twitter that al-Muhajir was targeted in what he described as a “coordinated operation between SDF intelligence and the US army.” That raid was carried out a day after US commandos stormed Baghdadi's house, Baghdadi's hideout in northwestern Syria. The Islamic State founder detonated a suicide vest, killing himself and three children, as he was being chased into a dead end tunnel, according to the US account. A Kurdish official on Monday said the SDF provided crucial intelligence from a source who infiltrated Baghdadi's house, bringing out underwear that provided positive DNA identification.

Stuck in an airport for almost two weeks, Iranian beauty queen says she will be killed if she is deported

(News Agencies) An Iranian beauty queen who has spent almost two weeks inside Manila's international airport says she will be killed if she is sent back home and is seeking asylum in the Philippines. Bahareh Zare Bahari, a contestant in the recent Miss Intercontinental pageant in Manila, claims Tehran is attempting to silence her because of her public stand against the government.

In a press release last week, the Philippines Immigration Department said the international police agency Interpol issued a worldwide request to arrest Bahari, known as a red notice. The statement did not specify which country

requested the red notice, but Bahari told CNN that an immigration official told her Iran requested one in 2018. “I have been living here since 2014 and I've not gone back to Iran. I explained to them many times, how can I have a criminal case in Iran when I've been living here?” she told CNN by phone. Bahari said she has been confined to a passenger room in Terminal 3 of Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport since she arrived from Dubai 12 days ago. “I'm really mentally sick,” she said, adding that the uncertainty over her case is wearing her down.

Bahari believes she is being targeted for supporting the exiled Reza Pahlavi, the

son of the Shah of Iran overthrown in the country's 1979 revolution.

The beauty queen blamed the situation on Iranian authorities, saying it came up because she used an image of Pahlavi and the flag of the former Iranian monarchy as props during a recent competition. Bahari said she made the statement “to try and be the voice of my people.”

She also believes she may be targeted because of her social activism in Iran. Bahari said that she became a teacher there because she wanted girls to learn “they are not things, they are not toys, they are human and they have same right as boys.”

The Philippines Department

of Immigration and Department of Justice have not responded to CNN's request for comment. Requests for comment made to the Iranian embassy in Manila and the Iranian government in Tehran have not been answered.

Bahari said she moved to the Philippines about five years ago to study dentistry and has since been on a student visa that renews annually. She said her existing visa is valid until January 2020.

She told CNN by phone from the airport terminal that she was denied entry when she returned to the Philippines on October 17 from a trip to the Middle East, upon which she



claimed asylum.

Bahari said that if a legitimate red notice had been issued for her arrest, then she would not have been able to acquire other visas for her trip to the Middle East. In its statement, Philippines immigration authorities said Bahari was also accused of assault and battery in the Philippines city of Dagupan. The statement did not say whether this was the reason a red notice had been issued, or if the complaint originated in Iran. Not all red notices are made publicly available due to the confidential nature of international criminal investigations. Interpol's press office said the agency does not comment on specific cases or individuals “except in special circumstances and with the approval of the member country concerned.”

Asked about the assault

allegations, Bahari said they were “a big lie” and designed to force her back to Iran. She said there were no pending cases against her in the Philippines. Human Rights Watch deputy director Phil Robertson said in a statement that “there have been repeated incidents where rights repressing states in the Middle East have abused the (Interpol) process to try to force the return of dissidents overseas.” He said the organization was concerned about the “mysterious” red notice, “especially since under Interpol rules a red notice is null and void if the person named in the notice is found to be a refugee fleeing from the state that issued it.” Bahari said she was returning from Dubai earlier this month when immigration authorities in Manila stopped her from entering the country.

South Bay Doctor Pleads Guilty To Unlawfully Distributing Hydrocodone And Committing Health Care Fraud

SAN JOSE – South Bay doctor Venkat Aachi pleaded guilty to distributing hydrocodone outside the scope of his professional practice and without a legitimate medical need, and to health care fraud, announced United States Attorney David L. Anderson, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent in Charge Chris Nielsen, Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent in Charge John F. Bennett, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General (HHS-OIG) Special Agent in Charge Steven J. Ryan, and the California Department of Justice Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse (BMFEA). The guilty plea was accepted by the Honorable Edward J. Davila, U.S. District Judge. According to the plea agreement, Aachi, 52, of Saratoga, was a

licensed physician in the state of California who operated a pain clinic in San Jose. He maintained a DEA registration number authorizing him to prescribe controlled substances. Aachi admitted that from September 18, 2017, through July 2, 2018, he wrote hydrocodone-acetaminophen prescriptions that were outside the scope of his professional practice and not for a legitimate medical purpose. The plea agreement describes transactions in which Aachi improperly distributed hydrocodone. For example, in November of 2017, he wrote a prescription enabling a patient to receive 90 hydrocodone-acetaminophen pills. Aachi did not conduct a physical examination of the patient nor discuss the patient's pain or response to prior medication. Aachi acknowledged that he knew the prescriptions were not for a legitimate

medical purpose and that he did not write the prescriptions in the usual course of his professional practice. Further, Aachi admitted that on July 2, 2018, he falsely submitted to an insurance company a false and fraudulent claim for payment for healthcare benefits, items, and services. Aachi admitted he acted with the intent to defraud the insurance company. On October 9, 2018, a federal grand jury indicted Aachi and charged him with six counts of distributing drugs outside the scope of professional practice, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1) and (b)(1)(C), and one count of health care fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1347. Aachi pleaded guilty to one count under each statute. Aachi remains free on bail pending sentencing. Judge Davila scheduled Aachi's sentencing hearing for July 1, 2019.

Secrets of London Underground revealed

Tube driver shares his paranormal experiences, how he uses hidden toilets on platforms and why he HATES hearing 'Mind The Gap'



(News Agencies) A Tube driver has shared what it's really like to work on the London Underground, revealing how he's had paranormal experiences, dealt with rowdy customers, and that he uses secret toilets on the platforms. In a telling Reddit AMA, the driver, going by the name TrainOperator, said that he hates the phrase 'Mind the Gap' because it's 'burned into his brain'. When asked if he'd seen anything paranormal he replied 'yes' without elaborating further.

The tube driver also said the most difficult person he had to deal with was a 'vagrant' who used the train floor as a toilet when asked to leave. He also said the underground has secret toilets on the platform for staff, and that there were a myriad of benefits to his job - including how drivers can earn up to £39,000 a year after tax. 'The money is good, the benefits are good' he said. 'Honestly the best part of my job is that I don't need to take anything home and actually have a real work-life balance. I stable my train in the depot, or hand it over to another driver, and I just go home.

Like people used to do. 'My job before TfL involved long hours and having to answer emails and whatnot when I wasn't at work. Being able to switch off is the best part of this job. He added he free travel on his Oyster card as another perk of the job. Lots of curious people asked about the application service, to which the driver said: 'You need to join the Underground and apply internally, as with all good jobs in the Underground. 'You used to be able to apply externally for night tube train operator then transfer to full time, but night tube train op is so popular internally now that their latest campaign is internal only.' Another user asked how drivers get to work if the tube is closed. 'There is a network of

shuttle taxis that stop at every station that ferry all operational staff around when the trains aren't running.' When one person asked the question on every Londoner's lips, why haven't TfL fixed the scorching Central Line TrainOperator answered in one word: 'Money'. He also shared his shift pattern, with a tube driver from Vienna and another from the US sharing their working patterns. 'You can drive for 4 hours 15 minutes before you need a break, or 5 hours 15 minutes on duty' he said, later revealing he needs a break of at least 12 hours between shifts. 'Depending on your tax situation and whether you have a student loan, etc you will clear £2,750-£3,000 every 4 weeks after tax, pension, etc'

£60 parking fine destroyed my dream of owning a home!

Driver who fought penalty notice rather than pay claims he now can't get a mortgage because legal battle ruined his credit rating



(News Agencies) A driver has claimed his life was ruined after his plans to buy a home were dashed by a £60 parking fine. Mark White, 34, of Plymouth, Devon, says he went through hell and back fighting a legal battle which at one stage destroyed his credit rating. Because of the effect on his credit score, Mr White says he is unable to get a mortgage after a debt recovery order was attached to his name. Now he wants to warn other people who get parking fines to just pay up, claiming that the risk of the legal battle is not worth it. Mr White said: 'If I had known at the time what would happen, I would

have paid the fine from the outset. If I had that chance again, I would have paid it off. 'It's not worth the stress or hassle. It's how the law works - you park in a private car park and you have to pay. The courts aren't bothered - it's a simple contract.' Mr White's misery unfolded on August 24, 2016 when he went to a business meeting and parked in a hotel's privately operated car park and went inside. What Mr White did not realise was he needed to record his car registration details at reception in return for a free parking session. He later received a £60 fine

in the post courtesy of Civil Enforcement Ltd on the basis he had not followed the rules. He appealed, arguing signs at the car park did not make clear what drivers had to do and filed pictures as evidence. But Mr White lost his case, and an independent body also ruled in Civil Enforcement's favour, arguing the onus was on him to have checked what the rules. The fine went up to £100 - but he still refused to pay. Mr White added: 'At the time, the opinion online about these firms were all different. 'These are just private companies, just ignore it, was what I was hearing from people. You can just

call their bluff and allow them to take you to court. 'So I said to Civil Enforcement, I'm not prepared to pay this fine, take it to court and I will deal with the courts as opposed to you. I didn't hear anything back from them. 'It was another two years before anything else occurred. In November, last year, I was trying to get in a position to buy my own house. 'I was going through the finances when it was confirmed that my credit score was going to be updated. 'When I checked, it had dropped substantially and there was a County Court Judgement and a £300

plus charge against my name.' Mr White discovered Civil Enforcement had continued sending requests for payment to his old address, but after receiving zero response, got the courts involved. 'I took a significant drop in my credit score, I was now unable to open up a new line of credit with anyone and at that time my hopes of buying a house were gone,' he said. Mr White said it then became a mad scramble trying to lift the order against him and settle the case once and for all. 'I had nothing, no paperwork, nothing,' he said. 'I was going in blind, trying to find anything

about the case. 'I eventually tracked it down - I knew that if you can provide evidence that you didn't get the paperwork then you have grounds of another appeal. 'So I had to go through all the motions of that, stuff going back and forth with the courts.' Another court hearing was due for later this year, but the entire episode was finally dropped this summer after Mr White reached a deal with Civil Enforcement Ltd. 'I had a really good chance of getting rid of the CCJ (at appeal) so I told them I would give them £100 - and they accepted that; case closed.' But Mr White says the emotional impact of fighting and defending himself was huge. 'It went on, for a long time - it was really stressful,' he said. 'I spent entire days off work sorting the paperwork - the stress of it was huge. 'It really, really affected me. I had a family member helping me with it all. It was just horrible. It took a very long time before we got to the point where they closed the case.'

Explaining to my children why the world is burning

We were just sitting down for dinner on Sunday night when videos of the flames leaping around Interstate I-80 in California suddenly appeared across my wife's phone. She held up her screen so I could see it from across the table, and we paused before eating, talking quietly about the horror of the moment and the harbingers of worse to come. Then my 10-year-old daughter piped up: "California's on fire?"

I hadn't realized she'd been listening, distracted as she was with a bowl of fettuccine under a mountain of parmigiano. My wife and I glanced at each other, in one of those unspoken communications parents have when trying to figure out how to address an "adult" topic in response to a child's question. Then my wife explained about the drought and the high winds, and I told our daughter that this was part of climate change making the natural world more dangerous. I added, "And that's why we have to work so hard to fix this. Because there's still hope." How do we talk to our children as we teeter on the edge of climate apocalypse? Fires and

floods and terrible storms seem to make the news on a weekly basis. While these aren't the only bad things happening in the world, the long-term scope of the climate crisis, coupled with ongoing disasters — natural, but intensified by human activity — raise particularly difficult questions for parents.

We can try to shield our children from the truth, but kids these days rapidly learn how to access information for themselves. This is good! Information literacy and critical thinking are the keys to success in the 21st century. But by the time children are ensconced in elementary school, parents simply cannot control the flow of news and ideas to their kids. We need to be ready. I try to walk a fine line between not sugarcoating the news while also not scaring my kids. It's true that the climate crisis is not like other problems. There may never have been such great disasters looming on the horizon; at the same time, there's never been a crisis for which we've had so many tools to both predict and mitigate the worst consequences.

As a historian, I think about great plagues, earthquakes, famines

and other disasters that often arrived without warning, and even when understood, could rarely be prevented. Today's disasters are greater in scale than almost anything in human history, but scientists have been working for decades to understand the relationship between the carbonization of our atmosphere, rising temperatures and more extreme weather — and they've discovered myriad ways to fight back.

Just last week, for example, a group of United Nations scientists argued that we could halt the rise of greenhouse gases by restoring around 900 million hectares of disused wastelands with crops, trees or pasture, and that we would thereby sequester enough carbon in the soil to slow the rise in global temperatures for 15 to 20 years. The total cost? \$300 billion — paltry on a global scale. Of course, we also need high-tech solutions involving new sources of power (or more efficient delivery of power generated by renewables), locomotion, building design, agriculture and so much more. But using land more wisely can buy us the time to get there. Meanwhile, the politics of the

climate crisis are changing. I've been telling my daughter in particular about the young women leading the way, from Quannah Chasinghorse to Greta Thunberg to Isra Hirsi, co-founder of the US Youth Climate Strike and, like my daughter, a proud Minnesotan. These are the role models I want to elevate for her, even as they lay out the seriousness of the battle that will likely dominate their lives. Recently I talked over direct message with Erin Biba, a science journalist and climate communicator whose work I admire because she focuses on the dual message that our climate problems may be both more serious and more solvable than most people think. Biba tells me that a central focus for her is "to make sure to stay away from the 'individual responsibility' rhetoric and to focus on systemic change and remaking industry."

While Biba says she's no expert when it comes to talking to children, she thinks kids especially "shouldn't feel like the burden is on their tiny individual shoulders." Meanwhile, the news

isn't getting better. Late Sunday night, a new fire broke out near the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), the for-profit power company that, per the Wall Street Journal, enjoyed years of boosted revenues as the company deferred maintenance while arguably enhancing fire risk (a finding that the company disputes), is now shutting off power to lower the threat of new fires. The resulting blackouts, in turn, are creating new threats, especially for disabled people who rely on power for basic needs like oxygen or mobility. It's easy to succumb to despair. But despair is not a luxury available to parents. By having children, we're committed to the long-term view. Throughout my life, I've always rolled my eyes at the cliché "think of the children," so often deployed by politicians who are advocating for their various pet policies. But right now I am thinking of my children. And when I see the worry and empathy in my daughter's eyes, I know I have to do more than just allay her fears. I have to believe my own message and remember there's genuine hope — and then get back to work pursuing that systemic change.

Why E-Verify is failing

E-Verify is a database system that checks identities of newly hired workers against government records. Employers are supposed to fire new employees if the system flags them as being in the United States illegally. In this way, the program is supposed to turn off the jobs magnet that attracts undocumented immigrants in the first place. Proponents of the system believe that without the jobs magnet, illegal immigration would stop. E-Verify's theoretical simplicity is one reason why it was initially so popular in some southern states and Arizona. If a quick computer check could accurately tell whether a worker is an undocumented immigrant then workplace raids, mass roundups of undocumented immigrants and a massive deportation force becomes unnecessary. Most would just self-deport, in the famous words of Sen. Mitt Romney, while he was a presidential candidate in 2012. That's the theory anyway. In reality, three groups of people—workers, companies and even the politicians who trumpet it—have come together to ensure that E-Verify remains completely powerless.

Congress has not mandated E-

Verify nationwide, but states have been experimenting with it as an immigration enforcement tool for more than a decade. In these cases, state-level employers were required to run the identity information provided by new hires through the online E-Verify website, then wait for government permission to keep the worker on the payroll.

The first state to mandate E-Verify for all new hires was Arizona in 2008. Former Arizona Republican state Sen. Rich Crandall said E-Verify "was promised as the silver bullet to immigration problems. E-Verify was going to solve our challenges with immigration." Terrified by the prospect of an effective E-Verify program, about 17 percent of Arizona's undocumented immigrant population left the state in response to its implementation.

But the exodus slowed after E-Verify went into effect because workers and businesses figured out how to get around it. Those lessons quickly spread to the other states where E-Verify was mandated, like Mississippi, whose undocumented immigrant population has remained roughly constant for a decade. In August, Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents raided several

meat processing plants in Mississippi and detained 680 undocumented immigrant workers, eventually letting 300 go. If E-Verify was the silver bullet program sold to state legislators like Rich Crandall, then ICE raids should not have been necessary, as undocumented immigrants would never have been employed in the first place.

Undocumented immigrant workers get around E-Verify mandates in several ways. The first is by taking advantage of E-Verify's biggest weakness: It checks the identification papers, not the worker. Thus, an undocumented immigrant worker can pass an E-Verify check if he hands somebody else's identification to his employer. According to an audit for the federal government conducted by Westat, about 54 percent of undocumented immigrant workers are approved to work by E-Verify for this very reason. The workers sometimes steal IDs, but many also borrow them from friends or family members. The story of a young undocumented immigrant named "Manuel" explains how so-called identity loans work. Manuel needed identification to work in the unionized construction industry in San Francisco. He contacted an uncle in Mexico who had obtained a Social Security

number in the early 1970s but then returned to Mexico permanently. The uncle let Manuel use his SSN and forge a new green card with his uncle's name. Since there is no victim of this kind of fraud, identity loans are extremely difficult to stop. But workers aren't the only ones who have figured out how to fool E-Verify—many businesses are also adept at doing so. The easiest way is to just not use E-Verify. In Mississippi, for instance, only about half of all new hires were even run through the system even though 100 percent were supposed to be cleared. E-Verify use rates in the other states where it's mandated aren't much better.

Many employers use E-Verify but look the other way. Their job is not to inspect documents, which can open them up to potential discrimination claims, but they are often not interested in doing so anyway. Many of the hires in Mississippi actually were wearing ICE ankle bracelets — a sign that they had entered the country illegally and were awaiting a deportation hearing and theoretically should not have been permitted to work. One undocumented immigrant worker with an ankle tracking device after the Mississippi raids said that she's waiting for everything to "go back to normal" because then a company

may take her on again. Businesses have every reason to avoid E-Verify. So far, no executives have been charged by the federal government for illegally employing workers. States rarely enforce E-Verify mandates against businesses — which brings us to the third group that doesn't want E-Verify to work: politicians. E-Verify allows politicians to have it both ways: Supporting it makes them look tough on illegal immigration while the fact that it's so easy to evade means their local businesses and economies are largely unaffected. Thus, politicians who support E-Verify get the political benefits without their constituents paying the economic costs. (Undoubtedly, there are some politicians who support E-Verify because they think it will work, but conviction is greater when principle is cheaper.) Mississippi isn't the only state where E-Verify has failed. In an infamous series of raids in 2006, ICE arrested nearly 1,300 workers at Swift & Co. meatpacking plants across the Midwest — all of whom had passed E-Verify checks. How many more raids need to happen before lawmakers realize that E-Verify is not the silver bullet they were promised?

Kerala nun writes to Vatican to make case before Pope

to her to appear in person before a tribunal which would consider her appeal against the Congregation's decision.

She has also sought an opportunity to present her case to the Pope Francis.

The Congregation for the Oriental Churches in Vatican had dismissed Sister Lucy's first appeal challenging the Franciscan Clarist Congregation's decision to expel her for "failing to give a satisfactory explanation for her lifestyle in violation of FCC laws".

However, it allowed her to present a new recourse to the Supreme Tribunal of the Segnatura Apostolica in Vatican.

"I am deeply obliged for providing me the opportunity for a further appeal to the Supreme Tribunal of the Signatura Apostolica. It is desired, in this connection, that an opportunity be granted to me to appear in person before the Tribunal to

enable me to present to its honourable members my side of the situation.

"It is requested, further, that I be granted an opportunity to present my case to the Pope Francis, whom I venerate and in whose sense of justice I have absolute faith", the nun said in her letter to Leonardo Cardinal Sandri.

Sister Lucy Kalappura, who took part in a protest by nuns belonging to Missionaries of Jesus Congregation, seeking the arrest of Bishop Franco Mulakkal, accused of raping a nun, was expelled by the FCC in August this year. In her letter, the nun said the FCC congregation initiated 'disciplinary action' against her. "In my case too, what purports to be 'disciplinary action', and what in reality are reprisals, against me commenced only after I stood by the sisters of the Missionaries of Jesus in their efforts to secure

justice for the outraged nun. This is amply evident from the show cause notice issued to me, a copy of which is attached for ready reference," she said. "I wish to urge strenuously that the actions initiated against me, and the vindictiveness it reeks of, cannot be understood aright, if they are seen in isolation from the Franco Mulakkal matter as the trigger. "I fervently hope that the honourable members of the Tribunal would appreciate the truth that I am a collateral victim of this Franco Mulakkal scandal, in regard to which the mettle of the Church's commitment to truth and justice is being tested in full public view," she wrote.

"It does not have to be argued that the Holy See being made to be seen as partisan in this case, or as hostile to justice being available to a rape victim, is sure to discredit the witness and integrity of the Catholic Church for the years to come. "It is

shortsighted to coerce nuns to perjure in legal proceedings in the hope that the ends of justice can be stalled thereby. It is bound to result in extreme and undying infamy to the Church," Sister Kalappura said in the letter. She submitted that the Franco Mulakkal case has already attained unprecedented public attention and people of diverse persuasions are seized of how it is going to pan out.

"What aggravates its repugnance is that it has burst into public attention amidst a series of corruption charges and criminal acts ascribed to church leaders of diverse denominations in Kerala. "The only thing that will salvage the credibility of the Catholic Church in this context is to be seen as committed to truth and justice, without fear or favour. Attempts to the contrary are sure to be self-condemnatory; a concern that I cannot disown", the nun said.

In its notice to the nun early in January, the congregation termed as "grave violations", Sister Lucy possessing a driving licence, buying a car, taking a loan for it and publishing a book and spending money without the permission and knowledge of her superiors. The nun dismissed charges levelled against her by the congregation, saying many of them were a "deliberate attempt to paint her in bad light." In its notices, the FCC alleged the nun violated its dress code in public without any permission and caused grave external scandal and harm to the Church by participating in the protest by 'Save Our Sisters Action Council' on September 20, 2018 at Kochi, seeking the arrest of Bishop Franco Mulakkal, accused of raping a nun in Kerala. The FCC, under the Roman Catholic Church, said the nun was issued "proper canonical warnings", but did not show the needed remorse.

The man accused of running Asia's biggest drug trafficking syndicate has been revealed

Asia Pacific synthetic drug surge that has ruined countless lives. But he has been named, and the region and the world have taken note.

Authorities believe the Sam Gor syndicate has generated billions of dollars each year from the trade in methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs. If the allegations pan out, a credible case can be made that Tse has been a bigger player in the global drug trade than Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, and possibly even Colombian cartel leader Pablo Escobar.

The difference is that he has allegedly done it in a few short years, and he has been able to maintain his anonymity until now. Tse has not responded to the allegations leveled against him in the Reuters piece, and so far regional law enforcement agencies have not publicly named him on the record. But the UN Office on Drugs and Crime can confirm that Tse is being investigated for running one of the biggest drug trafficking syndicates in history.

The accusations leveled against Tse raises fundamental questions: how did he pull it off; and what can Asia learn from what has happened?

Organized crime gangs are in the business of making money. They seek the conditions they

need to build, expand and profit -- and Asia has provided a perfect breeding ground.

All the necessary pieces have been in play: industries from which to obtain a steady supply of precursor chemicals and pharmaceutical products; off-the-grid territory controlled by ethnic armed groups where production can be hidden and protection provided; proximity to lucrative pre-existing and ready to develop markets; great infrastructure to move product quickly; loosely regulated high cashflow businesses like casinos and junkets to launder piles of cash; compromised governments and

police forces that are not candid with each other and do not cooperate effectively; and virtually no health and social response to counter the use and harmful impacts of an ever-expanding supply.

In other words, Asia has provided the opportunity for an enterprising drug trafficker and syndicate. If the drug trade wasn't so destructive, the innovative approach allegedly used by Tse and Sam Gor might actually be something to admire.

So what does the region need to do so another kingpin does not come along and take over -- or even improve on -- what Tse and

Sam Gor are accused of building so quickly and effectively?

Each step will require a heavy lift, time and most importantly, political will.

Asia needs its leaders to acknowledge the situation and agree to take action. They need to stop dancing around the fact that parts of the region and a generation have basically been handed over to one of the biggest organized crime figures in history. This means failures of regional governance will have to be confronted, and practical steps will need to be taken to address them. If not, another super-syndicate will quickly

emerge.

Given the scope of the challenge, Asia will not be able to do this alone. It is clear a broad Asia-Pacific agreement to tackle organized crime is necessary, and that it will take time to address significant policy deficits and the lack of tools governments have to stop the drug trade from growing in the region.

The things that countries and the region need to do to build resilience to organized crime are not done easily -- they will involve hard discussions and decisions.

Or the region can do nothing, and another kingpin will come along.

2 Pakistani men among 6 convicted for 2008 attack on CRPF camp in Uttar Pradesh's Rampur

The court of additional district judge on Friday convicted six of the eight accused in the attack on a CRPF camp at Rampur over 11 years ago in which seven CRPF personnel and one rickshaw-puller were killed. Two of the accused, Qausar Farouqi and Gulab Khan, have been acquitted. Of the six accused who were convicted on Friday, two are Pakistani nationals.

The quantum of punishment will be announced on Saturday. The attack took place in the early hours of January 1, 2008, when the CRPF personnel were sitting around a bonfire. The CRPF group centre was attacked with grenades and AK-47s.

Seven jawans were killed before they could react. A rickshaw-puller who was sleeping near the gate was also killed. The accused are Imran and Mohd Farouqi of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, Fahim Ansari of Mumbai, Sabauddin Saba of Bihar, Baba Khan of Moradabad and Mohd Sharif of Rampur. Fahim Ansari and Sabauddin Saba, who are also accused in the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, were let off for want of evidence.

The government counsel Dalvinder Singh said the accused were involved in the attack on the CRPF camp and are currently lodged in Lucknow and Bareilly jails. District government advocate Sardar Dalvinder Singh

(Dumpy) said that Mohammad Sharif, Jung Bahadur, Imran Shahzad, Mohammad Farooq and Sabauddin were convicted in the terror attack. Passports and firearms were recovered from Fahim Ansari of Mumbai Goregaon, who was arrested but his role in the attack could not be established. He has been convicted under IPC sections 420, 467, 468, 471, 200 and 25/1/A. Kausar Farukhi of Kunda in Pratapgarh and Gulab Khan of Baheri in Bareilly have been acquitted. The administration had made tight security arrangements and an alert has been sounded in the wake of pronouncement of quantum of punishment on Saturday.

Enter Sonia. Exit Sonia. Enter Rahul, Exit Rahul.

Enter Sonia... The Congress Game Of Thrones

Sonia Gandhi once again has the onerous task of resurrecting Congress as a serious political heavyweight but the biggest hurdle is the baggage of inexperienced young leaders

Second comings don't necessarily guarantee a revival of past glory. On August 10, frustrated by Rahul Gandhi's obduracy on stepping down as party president, the old guard of the Congress manoeuvred an ailing and semi-retired Sonia Gandhi back as interim chief. The 72-year-old matriarch of India's 'grand old party' was projected as the helping hand that would pull the Congress out of its quicksand of political ignominy. Nearly three months on, assembly poll results for Maharashtra and Haryana show that despite its failure in containing a progressively worsening economic crisis, the BJP's fortunes haven't dipped significantly, while the Congress's revival seems wobbly, at best.

"For Sonia, this is déjà vu. She once again finds herself in the unenviable position of rebuilding a completely gutted organisation; this time handed to her by her son," a senior party MP tells Outlook. Back in 1998, Congress warhorses like N.D. Tiwari, Arjun Singh, K. Natwar Singh, Sharad Pawar and Ghulam Nabi Azad had scripted the unceremonious exit of Sitaram Kesri from the Congress presidency. The party had lost two successive Lok Sabha polls and a string of assembly elections back then, like it has since 2014. Sonia was anointed Congress president on March 6, 1998—just a fortnight after the party lost the general elections.

In her address to party workers at Delhi's Siri Fort Auditorium that day, Sonia had said: "I have come to this office at a critical point in the history of the party. Our numbers in Parliament have dwindled. Our support base among the electorate has seriously eroded. We are in danger of losing our central place in the polity of our country." Over 21 years later, when Sonia returned as interim chief, she could have simply read the same speech. Through her 19-year-long presidency, the



Congress had been in power at the Centre for a decade (2004 to 2014), before 'misadventures' of her son and her own tacit approval of them sent the party into an electoral tailspin.

In 1998, within six months of taking charge, Sonia had presided over the party's Pachmarhi conclave where she gave colleagues a call for ekla chalo—go alone—to revive the Congress. Her team of advisors then included Arjun Singh, Natwar Singh, K. Karunakaran, Ambika Soni and Ahmed Patel, all seasoned politicians with vast experience of grassroots politics or organisational matters. Over the next few months this group grew to include Manmohan Singh, Pranab Mukherjee, P. Shiv Shankar and even Sharad Pawar, though he resigned to form the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) a year later after questioning Sonia's foreign origin. Evidently, she steered clear of husband Rajiv Gandhi's script of taking political advice from a coterie of non-political people.

In 1999, when the fall of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 13-month NDA government forced another election, Sonia's ekla chalo policy failed miserably. The Congress's strength in the Lok Sabha fell to 114 seats in 1999—its lowest tally until the 2014 elections when it plunged to just 44 seats. Sonia got down to the drawing board once again. By 2003, she appointed a slew of emissaries to work out alliances with regional parties, including Pawar's NCP and M. Karunanidhi's DMK—a party the Congress had attacked virulently in the past for sympathising with the assassins of Rajiv

Gandhi. A year later, the Congress-led UPA coalition returned to power—and held on to it till 2014.

The Sonia-era between 1998 and 2017 failed to revive the party in states like UP, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Odisha. However, her success in stemming the rot in other states and keeping the party together, particularly in the period between 1998 and 2004, made Sonia a better choice to lead the party through the current mess than Rahul or his whippersnappers.

Many party seniors believe that the Maharashtra and Haryana assembly poll results show that Sonia's biggest hurdle is the baggage of younger leaders, with little electoral or organisational capabilities, that Rahul left behind. "In Haryana, Ashok Tanwar should have never been given prominence because he didn't have any following beyond some pockets in Sirsa, while in Maharashtra, the Congress should have projected a more experienced leader than Balasaheb Thorat," says a Congress leader. Party spokesperson Sanjay Jha concedes that "a lot of time was lost in Haryana because of the uncertainty following Rahul's resignation...we could have unseated the BJP government had we been prompt in addressing internal issues".

The Congress had lost over 70 days in its search for Rahul's successor. A member of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) notes that by the time Sonia returned, the first session of the new Lok Sabha had ended, with the Narendra Modi government scrapping Article 370. The decision, the CWC member says, had

"already given the BJP an upper hand for the assembly elections while the Congress continued to implode". During the session too, her choice of Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury as party leader was questioned by many.

Sonia's first decision as interim chief should have been to rev-amp the AICC and launch nationwide padayatras and rallies to expose the (Narendra) Modi government's lies on the economy and the continuing attacks on Dalits and minorities. Instead, we got busy preparing programmes to mark Rajiv Gandhi's 75th birth anniversary and Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary," a Congress MP says.

The Congress has nearly half-a-dozen frontal organisations dedicated to mobilising different sections of the society—students, youth, professionals, women, farmers et al. Sonia should have read the riot act to office-bearers of these organisations and told them to draft a packed schedule of agitations and public movements. Barring the Mahila Congress headed by Sushmita Dev, none of the other frontal bodies—NSUI, Youth Congress, Kisan Congress, Professional Congress and Seva Dal—have a clear agenda.

Sonia's unstable health also prevented her from campaigning for the Maharashtra and Haryana polls, but she was left to her own devices even by Rahul and Priyanka. Rahul made more news for his foreign trips in the midst of the campaign than for the half-a-dozen rallies he addressed. Priyanka

Gandhi Vadra stayed away from the campaign entirely, ostensibly focusing on her grand Uttar Pradesh revival plan.

A Sonia confidante tells Outlook that soon after her return as party chief, she told leaders of poll-bound states to refrain from any personal attacks against Modi. "Her instruction was clear—focus on failures of the state government and don't draw Modi into a slanging match." While the party leadership, particularly in Haryana, followed Sonia's directions, it was Rahul who revived his attacks on Modi and the Rafale deal—jibes that had cost the Congress the Lok Sabha polls.

With Modi back in power and Amit Shah's BJP unsparing in its quest to demolish the Congress, the unsteady nucleus of the 134-year-old party has stayed on its fission trajectory. "The crisis we see in the party today is a creation of both Sonia and Rahul," a party leader says. The veterans continued to draw power from Sonia while Rahul's confidantes believed they now had a free run with him as the chief, the leader says, adding that the mother-son duo never tried to develop a synergy between the two blocs. Congress sources say when Ajoy Kumar, Pradyot Debbarma and Ashok Tanwar quit the party, Rahul did not even reach out to them though they had been handpicked by him as state chiefs in Jharkhand, Tripura and Haryana. A section within the party believes that the Congress's troubles stem more from its ideological vacuum, rather than its leadership crisis. "Sonia is currently interim

chief and a full-term president is likely to be elected post-January. The old guard wants her to stay on while some are still hopeful of Rahul's return. Others are batting for Priyanka. Rahul still wants a non-Gandhi chief. None of this will matter if we have no vision or narrative to offer to the masses and that is our biggest challenge today," says a former party MP.

Rahul's 18-month presidential stint had seen the party embrace a softer version of BJP's Hindutva. Rahul, or his comrades, rarely took to the streets on the issue of targeted lynching of Muslims and Dalits by right-wing mobs, but were seen temple-hopping during elections. After Sonia returned, this blatant display of soft Hindutva was junked, but the Congress is still cautious in reverting to its 'secular' identity. As a party leader says: "We don't use the word secular anymore... we just say the party stands for a pluralistic society." Journalist and Congress MP Kumar Ketkar believes this ideological ambivalence is the party's main problem. "The Congress was never an ideological monolith, but it represented liberalism, religious tolerance, socialism and public welfare. These values are more important today because a huge proportion of young voters are attracted to these ideals. The party has to embrace its original idealism and values if it hopes to bounce back." The marginal gains Congress has made in the Haryana assembly polls following an issue-based campaign should give the party some encouragement. But those shouldn't be a cause for complacency. Sonia has set up a 20-member advisory panel, comprising senior leaders, who will formulate a strategy, find ways of overhauling the party's functioning and, perhaps, give it a new narrative. A good move, but will it be enough to rejuvenate a listless organisation that is erasing itself from public memory?

The 'High Command' Culture Destroying Congress, Can Sonia Gandhi Really Become A Success Story?

The masquerade of sycophancy hides the conviction in Sonia's stand that her family's association with the Congress is a 'duty', argues Rasheed Kidwai

It was not a great idea to face the Congress president at the breakfast table every day, every morning. That was Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru when Indira Gandhi became AICC chief in 1959. And sixty years later, Sonia Gandhi faces her predecessor and successor (possibly) every day. For her part, she has been successful in averting a major split in the party after the disastrous 2019 general elections. But her biggest challenge comes from within. The Gandhi trio—Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka—bonds flawlessly in the family mould. But as party colleagues of consequence, the interim chief, the former AICC president and the AICC general secretary may have different views on appointments, strategy, alliances and a range of issues. Plus, the perception that Rahul—whose resignation as the AICC's 87th president on May 25

brought her back to the helm, albeit temporarily—is an edgy and angry politician doesn't augur well.

What if Sonia offers to bow out or sets a February 2020 deadline to get a new boss? In the absence of a contender or free organisational polls, Rahul may emerge as the comeback man. Why not? So many leaders and sympathisers view Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka as harbingers of hope—guardians of the flame. For them, no one from the Nehru-Gandhi family has ever failed—no precedence of it, not even after back-to-back drubbings in Lok Sabha elections. Decades of “high command” culture has made the Congress so subservient that when an informal headcount was organised at 24, Akbar Road in August, 148 of 150 leaders vouched in favour of a Gandhi to lead the party. At 73, Sonia had to step in as interim chief.

Her silence, masterly inactivity and acceptability among 400-plus influential Congress leaders have worked in her favour, at least for now. The masquerade of sycophancy hides the conviction in Sonia's stand that her family's-association with the Congress is a “duty”. Like she said before—“I saw them (Nehru-Indira-Rajiv) struggle, work day and night to uphold certain values, certain principles...When it came to my call, I felt that I was being cowardly not to respond to them.”

A huge pool of talent is available in five party chief ministers—Kamal Nath, Amarinder Singh, Ashok Gehlot, Bhupesh Baghel and V. Narayanswamy. There are experienced hands such as Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, P. Chidambaram, Ahmed Patel, Mukul Wasnik, Prithviraj Chavan, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Kapil Sibal, Digvijaya Singh, Milind



Deora, Jitin Prasada, Shashi Tharoor, Manish Tewari and Ajay Maken. For advice, the party can turn to veterans Manmohan Singh, A.K. Antony, Veerappa Moily, Mallikarjun Kharge, Sushil Kumar Shinde, Meira Kumar, Ambika Soni, Mohsina Kidwai et al. But Sonia and the Congress seem allergic to the idea of experimenting or looking for

an out-of-the-box solution. At the root of this is that Rahul and Sonia see themselves as trustees of the party, not wielders of power (which is what they are). This delusion is destroying the Congress, and the party leaders seem to be ignoring this crucial -aspect. A reason why the slightest of demands for revamping

the organisation are cut short with alibis such as the leadership has little time for such matters because of elections—oddly, an exercise the Congress isn't good at these days. Yet, Sonia has an eye on history. She wishes to be remembered as an exceptional success story.

Imran Khan announces concessions for Indian Sikh pilgrims to Kartarpur

He said that Sikhs from India visiting the gurdwara will not require a passport to cross over to Pakistan as long as they possessed a valid identity card and waived \$20 service fee on pilgrims for two days.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday announced several concessions for Sikh pilgrims visiting Darbar Sahib Gurdwara at Kartarpur in Pakistan's Punjab for the celebrations of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism.

The Pakistan premier said that Sikhs from India visiting the gurdwara, which is the final resting place of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, will not require a passport to cross over to Pakistan as long as they possessed a valid identity card and waived the \$20 service fee on pilgrims for two days.

“For Sikhs coming for pilgrimage to Kartarpur from India, I've waived off two requirements: they won't need a passport-just a valid ID; second, they no longer have to register 10 days in advance. Also, no fee will be

charged on the day of inauguration (November 9) and on Guruji's 550th birthday (November 12),” Khan tweeted.

India has been seeking a complete waiver of the \$20 service fee which Pakistan decided to impose on each pilgrim and called it a “matter of disappointment” that Islamabad did not heed the request.

Reacting to the Pakistan

PM's announcement, Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Friday expressed his gratitude but urged that Islamabad “apply this not just to Sikhs but all citizens of secular India”.

“Happy & grateful for waiver of passport & advance registration conditions for Sikh pilgrims by @ImranKhanPTI govt, but would urge Pakistan to

apply this not just to Sikhs but all citizens of secular India,” Singh said in a tweet. He also reiterated India's demand to waive off the \$20 fee on all days. “Also urge Pak PM to waive off \$20 fee on all days instead of just two,” he said.

The Kartarpur corridor, which will be inaugurated on November 9, will provide pilgrims a visa-free link between Dera Baba Nanak

shrine in India's Punjab and the Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, just four km from the International Border, located in Narowal district of Pakistan's Punjab province. Both the countries have agreed that Pakistan will allow up to 5,000 pilgrims from India daily, with plans to gradually double the capacity.

A 575-member ‘Jatha’ (delegation) will cross the

corridor to Gurudwara Kartarpur Sahib on November 9. Former prime minister Manmohan Singh, Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh, and Union ministers Hardeep Singh Puri and Harsimrat Kaur Badal are among the first batch of pilgrims.

Khan extended an invitation to cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu, who has agreed to attend the event.

Pakistanis feel inflation, not Kashmir, is biggest problem facing them: Survey

Spiralling inflation and not the Kashmir issue is the biggest problem haunting the people of Pakistan, a survey conducted by Gallup International in all four provinces of the cash-strapped country has said. The study, which was published by Gallup and Gilani Pakistan on Tuesday, said 53% of respondents believe the country's

economy, specifically increasing inflation, is the biggest problem facing the country.

Worries of inflation is followed by unemployment (23%), the Kashmir issue (8%), corruption (4%) and water crisis (4%), the survey has said.

The survey also mentions fears over political instability, power crisis,

dengue outbreak among other issues.

Gallup Pakistan said the survey's sample comprised men and women from across the four provinces -- Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh.

Pakistan's economy has struggled in the last few years. In July, the International Monetary Fund

(IMF) had said Pakistan was facing “significant economic challenges” due to weak and unbalanced growth and that its economy is at a critical juncture where it needs an ambitious and bold set of reforms. At the time, Pakistan had a currency reserve of less than USD 8 billion, enough only to cover 1.7 months of imports.

Pakistan and the IMF signed a USD 6 billion bailout package this year, aimed at returning sustainable growth to the country's fragile economy and improve the standards of living. Other than the IMF, Pakistan has secured substantial bailout packages from Qatar, China, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.



Brexit could provide the US huge economic opportunity

Yesterday the UK Speaker of the House, John Bercow, blocked a vote on the Brexit deal agreed upon by negotiators for the UK and EU last week. The deal would enable Great Britain to break with Brussels at the end of this month. If the deal fails to garner sufficient backing in Parliament, Brexit will likely be delayed yet again, this time probably until early 2020. Amid the seemingly endless turmoil, it's easy to lose sight of the light at the end of the tunnel. Britain's departure from the EU will create a host of extraordinary opportunities. Among them — a chance to deepen and expand economic ties between the United States and the UK. For decades, the EU's heavy regulatory hand has stifled Britain's economy and hampered trade with the United States. Differing regulatory and legal standards significantly constrain trade in financial services, telecommunications, motor vehicles and professional services. And US farm products face tariffs averaging 11%. But that could soon change. If the UK regains control over its national trade policy when it severs ties with the

EU, we will have an opportunity to forge a comprehensive US-UK free trade agreement.

While we already enjoy one of the strongest economic partnerships in the world — with total annual trade exceeding \$260 billion last year — there is plenty of room for improvement.

As two of the most innovative countries in the world, we can write new rules on digital trade that will ensure the free flow of data across borders, remove restrictions on e-commerce and exempt digital products from custom duties. Opening up the digital ecosystem will incentivize billions of

dollars in new investment, giving us a leg up in the race to develop the transformative technologies of the future, such as artificial intelligence, internet of things and quantum computing.

We can eliminate virtually all tariffs and expand market access for thousands of products. This will provide businesses with more export opportunities and lower prices for consumers.

We can reduce the costs and compliance burdens imposed upon businesses of all sizes across nearly every industry. And we can incentivize billions more in

cross-border investment by facilitating deeper integration of our financial services markets.

For American businesses operating in Great Britain, these changes will go a long way toward offsetting any potential economic repercussions from reduced access to EU markets.

These are just a few of the many opportunities that lie ahead. When added up, the economic case is indisputable. A trans-Atlantic trade pact would create jobs, foster innovation, spur economic growth and unleash billions of dollars in investment on both sides of the Atlantic. It could also have a

profound impact on the

trajectory of the global economy. Years of exploitation by China, along with a host of other factors, have undermined the global economic order and degraded public support for international trade liberalization. A robust US-UK deal could reverse this trend and revive confidence in free trade.

As two highly advanced, free-market economies — with strong traditions of entrepreneurship and respect for the rule of law — we can craft a deal that would raise the paradigm of international commerce and set a new standard for free, fair and reciprocal

trade.

Moving forward, this deal can serve as a template for future bilateral agreements with other nations throughout the world.

While the potential here is enormous, a deal is far from a sure thing. Formal negotiations cannot begin until the UK leaves the EU — a task that has proven to be particularly challenging.

Still, there is plenty to be excited about. Rarely do we have an opportunity to enter into a bilateral trade deal with a nation so fundamentally similar and intertwined with our own. Together, we can unleash our economic potential and usher in a new era of global trade — one grounded in the principles of fairness, competition and reciprocity.

As we wait for Brexit to unfold, Republicans and Democrats in Congress should come together and send a clear message that the United States is open for business and ready to get to work. Doing so will ease uncertainty on both sides of the Atlantic and lay a foundation for a robust and expeditious US-UK free trade deal in the very near future.



What I've Learned Staking Out Trump's Washington Hotel

Why are the Trumps worried about increasing scrutiny of the hotel I have a few ideas.



The Trump family is reportedly exploring a sale of the Trump Hotel in Washington D.C., partly out of concerns raised by ethics watchdogs and emoluments lawsuits that Donald Trump is profiting off of his presidency. The Trumps are right to be (belatedly) worried. I know the Trump Hotel D.C. pretty well, and I feel confident saying there is plenty more where those red flags came from.

My daily look at who is patronizing the president's D.C. hotel started as research in July 2017 for what became one sentence in a 5,500-word feature for Condé Nast Traveler. A few minutes on Instagram revealed that if you had concerns about the U.S. president doubling as a hotelier, they were well-founded. I found photos of Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) crashing a Vapor Technology Association's conference; a guest posing with former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, captioning her photo, "He's still calling the shots"; and the president's attorney Rudy Giuliani enjoying a cigar in a wine-stained tux the night of Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin's wedding. Lawmakers, lobbying groups and would-be powerbrokers were taking full advantage of the chance to better their lot by throwing a few bucks the president's way. More than two years later, I haven't stopped scrolling through photos from the Trump Hotel D.C. For two years, I've read through every Instagram, Facebook and Twitter post geo-located to the hotel. I've also made several visits and done some more sleuthing around the internet, then published my findings, first on a Twitter thread and now in a newsletter that comes out five days a week.

Zach Everson is a freelance writer and creator of the 1100 Pennsylvania newsletter.

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findings, first on a Twitter thread and now in a newsletter that comes out five days a week.

After two years of observation, I've learned three big things about how people use the Trump hotel to curry favor with the president, all while he profits.

Social media from the Trump Hotel can tip us off to major stories months in advance.

Despite being known as the "guy who's always at the Trump Hotel," I visit about once a month, usually in response to a tip or because friends from out of town want a justification for grabbing a drink there. Instead, most sightings come from the 80-plus websites and social-media pages I've bookmarked—Twitter feeds and lists and a dozen Google alerts. If you want it to be known that you're sending money the president's way, social media is an easy way to do that, after all—and that online advertising makes it fairly easy to find the Trump Hotel's big spenders. Instagram, LinkedIn and a website of a person's employer are more helpful for identifying lobbyists than watching them work in situ.

Social media can be especially useful in combination with real-time observation. For instance, take the evening this past March when I spotted Romania's prime minister, Viorica Dancila, at the hotel.

That spotting got a lot more interesting later. I'd seen Giuliani at the Trump Hotel D.C. earlier that same weekend, but not with the Romanian prime minister. We already knew that Giuliani had reached out to Romania's president "about continuing damage to the rule of law" in the country, so there was reason to think at the time that the two

would know each other. But a Giuliani spokesperson didn't respond to my inquiry asking if he had met with Dancila.

But later that same week, Giuliani tweeted a photo of himself dining in the hotel's steakhouse with other members of Trump's "All Star legal team." There, seated at an adjacent table, within arm's reach of the president's attorney, was Romania's prime minister. It was just her rear profile, though; if I hadn't seen her hairstyle and outfit in person that same evening, I would not have recognized her. (Giuliani has since implied in an interview that Romania is connected to his efforts regarding former Vice President Joe Biden and "corruption.") Later, an Instagram post the Wall Street Journal uncovered showed that Lev Parnas, Giuliani's associate who was recently arrested on campaign finance violations, was there that night, too.

Scoping out social media also allows me to report immediately on what's happening at the hotel that's not often available through other channels. Even if he wins a second term, Trump probably will be out of office before all my Freedom of Information Act requests regarding government officials' visits are answered. Campaigns and committees sometimes don't report a disbursement at the hotel to the Federal Election Commission until months after the event—and they don't provide any insight into who attended. For instance, while a tip helped the Washington Post expose the extent of T-Mobile's Trump Hotel D.C. patronage in the eight months following its unveiling of controversial plans to merge with Sprint, a Facebook post the

day after the announcement gave an immediate glimpse of CEO John Legere's strategy for winning administration approval: frequent and highly visible trips to the Trump hotel in Washington.

The profits from foreign governments are especially opaque.

All told, officials from at least 29 different foreign countries have stopped by or stayed at the U.S. president's D.C. hotel since opening, a number I arrived at through my reporting combined with that of other outlets. And the money coming from those guests is a lot harder to track than the money coming from U.S. lawmakers.

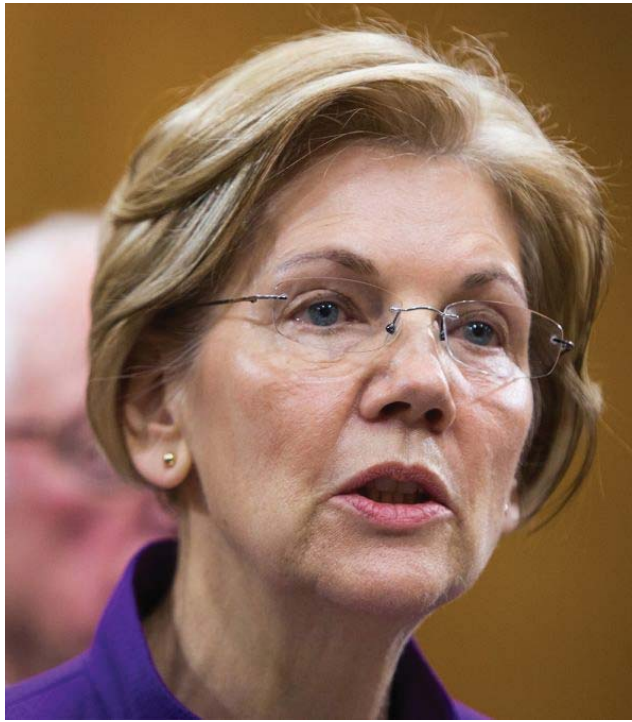
Between my and others' reporting on the peculiar-to-this-administration reporting, we know Trump's D.C. hotel has already hosted government officials from at least three G7 countries. Ontario Premier Doug Ford lunched there last September at the invitation of Kelly Craft, then U.S. ambassador to Canada and currently the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Not only was Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage's patronage of the Trump Hotel cited in a 2018 emoluments suit—for diverting business from a Maryland hotel and toward one owned by the president—but he also served as a featured attraction for 800 hotel customers at a Turning Point USA gala this year. In January, Italy's deputy minister for foreign affairs, Guglielmo Picchi, met at the Trump Hotel with two senior officials in the president's shadow cabinet: Lewandowski and Giuliani.

Why Democrats face an uphill battle against Trump

While the latest head-to-head polls show President Donald Trump trailing Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren, translating those polls into votes for the Democratic nominee next fall won't be easy. Earlier this month, Elizabeth Warren announced that she would not hold big-dollar fundraisers, even if she becomes the Democratic nominee. Within hours, though, her aides added a caveat: This pledge did not apply to fundraisers she would do on behalf of the Democratic National Committee.

This important addendum should come as no surprise to those who have been following the problems at the DNC for the last several years. With just one year left before election day, the DNC doesn't have the money, the data or the team to adequately support the eventual nominee. Filings from late September reveal an anemic DNC mired in debt while the RNC has senior staff set up already in a whopping 19 states.

Elizabeth Warren, and every other candidate who appeared on the debate stage last week, knows that it will be nearly impossible to win the White House without a competent national party apparatus — especially if there is a protracted fight for the nomination that stretches into the spring. Voter turnout is what will ultimately decide who wins the 2020 election. This election will not be about winning over undecided voters with television ads. There are few undecided voters, now that nearly every American has an opinion about President Trump (only 5% have “no opinion” about his job performance). But it



doesn't matter whether more than half of voters want him out of the White House if they don't show up to vote when it counts. That's why money — and enough time to spend it — matters.

Turning out voters takes enormous resources on the ground in every state. It takes money far enough in advance that a campaign can build out a ground game with enough time to identify middle- to low-propensity voters, target them with digital ads that are laser-focused on their interests and bombard them with information to get them to the polls at the right place and on the right day.

It takes field staff knocking on the right doors at the right time so that a candidate banks as many votes as possible when early voting starts. That makes it easier come Election Day, when field staff can focus on targeting the remaining stragglers. It's a game of millimeters.

(This is why Hillary Clinton and her team sound silly when they crow about winning the popular vote in 2016. All that means is they wasted time and money targeting the wrong voters. I assure you that the Trump team didn't waste

a moment's thought on getting extra votes in Texas. They spent their resources in, you guessed it, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan.)

Let's step back a moment. Last week, The New York Times published an in-depth story about voters in a swing county in Pennsylvania. The piece is with Mark Graham, an Obama voter who switched to supporting Trump in 2016. He hasn't been impressed by the President's performance (he called Trump's behavior “a joke”), but after watching the Democratic primary debates in September, he told the Times he couldn't back any of the Democrats either.

Then came the political chaos of the past few weeks. Now Graham says, “I'd vote for the Democratic nominee no matter who it is at this point.” Upon reading that, the DNC may be gaining confidence — that's one more vote in Pennsylvania, right?

But do you see the problem? Graham doesn't actually like any of the Democratic candidates on that stage; he just happens to like

Trump less. He's what you'd have in your database as a high-propensity voter (he votes every four years) with a low attachment score for the eventual nominee (he's not particularly motivated to vote for the Democrat). Graham is not undecided — but once the general election is here and he's bombarded with negative ads about the Democratic nominee on social media, specifically targeted to his interests, Graham may well throw up his hands and decide not to vote at all.

This means the DNC needs someone to visit Mr. Graham and remind him of all the things he's feeling right now about President Trump and make sure he doesn't decide to stay home in November of 2020. He doesn't need to hear more about Medicare for All canceling his private insurance; he needs to hear about President Trump's latest mess.

But who's going to knock on that door? And, unless The New York Times writes a profile on every voter in Erie, how will the DNC know who else to talk to and what to say? While the Democratic primary candidates are raising

gobs of money, they are also spending it largely in ways designed to help them defeat their fellow Democrats in the primaries, not to defeat Donald Trump in the general election.

On the one hand, Democratic contenders are building miniature ground games in early primary states, which would be good, except that Pennsylvania and Ohio are not early primary states. You don't need a ground game in South Carolina to beat Donald Trump come next fall.

Building those early ground games, of course, is exactly why the party committees exist. But the DNC isn't exactly inspiring confidence that the organization will be ready for the fight come 2020.

New FEC reports were filed last night and the gulf continues to widen. The DNC raised under \$7 million, with \$8.6 million on hand and more than \$7 million in debt. The Republican National Committee, on the other hand, raised more than \$27 million and has over \$59 million on hand with no debt. This means the Trump campaign and the RNC combined in the third quarter to raise over \$125 million.

Add that to the multiple staff shakeups at various Democratic party committees and, well, yikes.

Voters have strong feelings about the President and about the direction of the Democratic Party. But feelings don't equal turnout. A recent experiment, for example, showed that Democratic voters who were exposed to news coverage about some of the left-leaning policy positions taken by Democratic candidates at the debate became slightly more enthusiastic about voting for the eventual nominee of their party.

But the survey also showed two big red flags. First, independents who read about the party's leftward turn were 6% less likely to vote Democratic. Second, the experiment also found that the results “did not indicate [Democratic voters] were more motivated to vote and campaign for the eventual nominee than those who hadn't read about them.” This is why campaigns and parties spend hundreds of millions of dollars on targeted digital ads, and on building a robust ground game. And while the President may be turning off non-white voters in Florida, Democrats aren't going to win that state or any other swing state unless their voters actually show up to—you guessed it—vote.

But the eventual Democratic nominee won't have a field army to greet them at the Panhandle gates.

We may spend a lot of time talking about the polls in the media, but the candidates who appeared on last week's debate stage would be wise to remember: Polls don't vote.

Amazon makes grocery delivery free for Prime members



Amazon is eliminating its subscription fee for its Amazon Fresh online grocery delivery service. Two-hour Whole Foods deliveries were free for many Prime customers through Amazon's Prime Now delivery app. Starting Tuesday, grocery

delivery from Amazon Fresh is free for Prime members who have previously used the grocery-delivery service. Amazon is rolling out the new, free service in phases: Prime members who haven't yet ordered groceries can request an invitation. Amazon didn't say when it will start taking on new grocery-delivery customers. The delivery minimum for the Amazon Fresh service is \$50 in New York City and \$35 in a majority of the other 2,000 regions the service is available in. Slight changes are also

coming to Whole Foods deliveries. Amazon announced Tuesday that customers will be able to buy Whole Foods groceries through Amazon.com and the Amazon app, in addition to the Prime Now app. But new customers will have to wait for an invitation if they want groceries delivered from the chain through Amazon's website and app. New customers can order some items on Prime Now for a fee. Amazon bought Whole Foods two years ago for \$13.7 billion. The company said in a

press release that grocery delivery is one of its "fastest growing businesses." Amazon maintains several grocery shopping options, including Prime Now delivery, Whole Foods, and 20 Amazon Go stores. It is also developing a new chain of grocery stores. But the \$14.99 monthly charge — in addition to the \$119 annual Prime membership — for its Amazon Fresh subscription service was a tough ask for some Prime members. The changes will help secure Amazon's position in the area, which has many

competitors including Instacart, Walmart, Kroger (KR) and FreshDirect. Amazon's price reduction could put pressure on its largest rival: Walmart (WMT). The company charges \$98 annual fee for grocery delivery. It's also investing in the sector, including a new feature that lets Walmart employees put groceries into customers' refrigerators while they're away from home. They also have more traditional drop-off services. Kroger is also investing in the sector with a delivery service it launched last year.

India to gain from more land reforms: World Bank chief

Malpass' suggestions on further reforms come in the context of India improving its position in World Bank's 'ease of doing business 2020' study released earlier in the week showing that India had moved up 14 places in this year's ranking to 63rd position, up from last year's 77.

India will benefit a lot if it modernises its land management, streamlines courts and steps up regulation of its troubled shadow banking system, World Bank Group President David Malpass said here on Saturday after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Malpass' suggestions on further reforms come in the context

of India improving its position in World Bank's 'ease of doing business 2020' study released earlier in the week showing that India had moved up 14 places in this year's ranking to 63rd position, up from last year's 77. Malpass said he had the chance to discuss issues related to India's financial sector and skill development during his meeting with the Prime Minister, in which he highlighted the advantages

a deeper bond market and stronger regulation of non-bank lenders could fetch India. "India made progress in moving up to 63 in the ease of doing business ranking. We think there can be more progress in land permits and in enforcement of contracts. I congratulate India. Even more can be done in future," Malpass said. He explained later in response to a question from Mint that one way to improve

India's performance in enforcement of contracts, is to ensure that commercial courts are "adequately resourced at district level". He also said that the possibility of setting up fast track courts for dispute resolution could be considered. To modernise land management, India could digitise land records, which will facilitate quick transactions in land, he said. Malpass said that he



discussed issues relating to India's financial sector with the Prime Minister. The suggestions included facilitating the growth of private sector banks, deepening the capital markets especially the bond market, and scaling up the regulation of non-banking financial companies. NBFCs have grown in importance in the country but these entail some risks, he said. They also discussed Modi's goal of scaling up the size of India's economy to \$5 trillion over the next few years. Malpass said the global trade uncertainty, Britain's plan of leaving the European Union and the low investment rate in the world are among the factors affecting growth. "I think what is to be done is to have better growth programmes country by country. India has taken a good step on the corporate tax rate. That should add more growth," said Malpass. The Narendra Modi government, which is confronting a sharp economic slowdown, has

taken a series of reforms in its second term in office, which include making it easier for companies to access capital, rationalising various corporate compliance requirements as well as penalty provisions and sharply raising the monetary threshold for tax department to appeal on disputes. Malpass is on a visit to India after assuming leadership of the World Bank group in April and is exploring ways to expand partnership with India. As of June, the total net financial commitments to India from World Bank group's two arms — International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA) — stood at \$25.5 billion across 101 projects. The World Bank group's private investment arm, International Finance Corporation, has an exposure of \$6.9 billion in India across 219 clients, World Bank had said last week in a statement.

Mukesh Ambani readies India's Alibaba with \$24 billion holding firm

The board of Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd. approved a proposal to plow 1.08 trillion rupees (\$15 billion) into the fully owned subsidiary, which will in turn invest that amount in Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd., the conglomerate's telecommunications venture.



Billionaire Mukesh Ambani moved a step closer to creating an e-commerce giant for India, unveiling plans to set up a \$24 billion digital-services holding company that would become the main vehicle in his ambition to dominate the country's internet shopping space. The board of Ambani's Reliance

Industries Ltd. approved a proposal to plow 1.08 trillion rupees (\$15 billion) into the fully owned subsidiary, which will in turn invest that amount in Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd., the conglomerate's telecommunications venture. A series of capital transfers would make Jio, which already has

capital of 650 billion rupees, almost debt free by March 2020, the parent said Oct. 25. The move by Asia's richest man is the latest sign of the oil-to-petrochemicals group's pivot toward data and digital services for future growth, as it builds an online platform to take on the likes of Amazon.com Inc. and Walmart Inc.'s Flipkart Online Services Pvt. in India. Ambani, 62, told shareholders in August that the new businesses, including retail, are likely to contribute half of Reliance's earnings in a few years, versus about 32% now. With the new holding firm, Ambani is also readying the businesses for an initial public offering, which he has vowed to complete within five years. Since Jio's 4G network rolled out in 2016, the carrier has vaulted to the top in India with more than 350 million users.

Housefull 4 movie review

This Akshay Kumar, Kriti Sanon film is uneven but funny

Watch it if you are a fan of the franchise and, of course, Akshay Kumar, who seems to be getting better with age.



Housefull 4

Director - Farhad Samji

Cast - Akshay Kumar, Kriti Sanon, Bobby Deol, Riteish Deshmukh,

Kriti Kharbanda, Pooja Hegde

At a time when content is king, an out-and-out comedy like Housefull 4 has its work cut out. Housefull 4, on its part, does a credible job with an all-star cast of Akshay Kumar, Kriti Sanon, Riteish Deshmukh, Bobby Deol, Pooja Hegde and Chunky Pandey, among others. The film, directed by Farhad Samji, manages to tickle your funny bone whilst making sense.

Another plus is that Housefull 4 goes beyond funny as Samji stirs the pot with drama and action. The clear standout is Akshay's bald king Bala with his idiosyncrasies and a viral signature step. The film is divided between two eras — 1419 and 2019. Harry (Akshay Kumar), Max (Bobby Deol) and Roy (Riteish Deshmukh) own a barber shop in London and are in debt. To pay off the massive loan, they devise a plan to marry three millionaire sisters. Harry suffers from short-term memory loss on hearing any loud sounds and often

has flashbacks of a life he led 600 years ago. Early in Housefull 4, we see Harry visiting Sitamgarh, where it all started and then convincing others that they all have all been reborn. We are then introduced to the cast's period avatars -- King Bala (Akshay), Bangdu Maharaj (Riteish) and Dharamputra (Bobby) from 1419. The twist in the tale comes when they realise they are about to marry the wrong girls, and how the past has an impact on their future.

Bollywood is no stranger to reincarnation tales. It has tried the genre often in the past with various degrees of success — while Karz, Karan Arjun and Om Shanti Om achieved cult status, others such as Ek Paheli Leela and Raabta sunk. For Housefull 4, it is the comedy that sets it apart. The first half of the film keeps you engaged with its period look and sets mounted on a lavish scale,

but the second half is a downer with a weaker narrative. Even if you fast forward the second half all the way to the climax, you would not miss anything. The dialogues, with a clear emphasis on rhyming, keep the laughs coming. Samji, who has also penned the dialogues, gives us these gems: 'Aaj mera fast hai, isliye thoda slow maara', 'Isne gender ka tender nahi bhara', Kabootar ka yuck brings good luck', 'Maa ka saaya nahi hai aur mundan ke baad sir par chaaya nahi hai'. Housefull 4 also references older films and songs in creative ways to keep you smiling. While Housefull 1, 2, 3 were laughter riots with several lame jokes, Housefull 4 thankfully overcomes that shortcoming with elan. The film rests on Akshay's shoulders and he does a commendable job of keeping it going. He perks up the screen with his very

presence, giving a fillip to others' performances too. As Bala, he raises the bar but the underdeveloped character of Harry lets him down.

Riteish Deshmukh and Chunky Pandey, who have such spot-on comic timing, have been under-utilised in the film, with their dialogues often sounding off-track. Bobby Deol looks macho and stands out. Among the female actors, Kriti Sanon does well — both as a princess and a woman of today. Her namesake, Kriti Kharbanda brings freshness to the screen though her poor dialogue delivery is distracting. Pooja Hegde, who is doing a period role again after her debut Mohenjo Daro, is strictly average. The only scene where she pulls off a joke is when she says 'In shabdon ko toh sangeet mein pirona chahiye' in a rather cheeky way.

Rana Daggubati is wasted

in a cameo, especially as we have come to expect so much from him after Baahubali. Yesteryear villain Ranjit, senior actor Manoj Pahwa and Johnny Lever are in their element. Amid such an interesting line-up, Sharad Kelkar turns out to be the surprise element, and quite impressive too.

While Housefull 4 music is ordinary, the Ek Chumma song has been beautifully choreographed. Bala — Shaitaan Ka Saala is clearly the highlight with its lame yet catchy lyrics. A qawwali called Badla featuring Rana doesn't fare any better.

Housefull 4 is quite the comic extravaganza that offers you a heavy dose of laughter this festive season if you can keep your expectations in check. Watch it if you are a fan of Housefull franchise and, of course, Akshay Kumar, who seems to be getting better with age.

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Dolemite Is My Name movie review

Eddie Murphy makes stunning comeback in hilariously entertaining Netflix film

Eddie Murphy makes a hilarious (and severely overdue) return to form, as Netflix makes a strong stride into awards season.



Dolemite Is My Name

Director - Craig Brewer

Cast - Eddie Murphy, Keegan-Michael Key, Mike Epps, Titus Burgess, Wesley Snipes, Da'Vine Joy Randolph

Professional success came to Rudy Ray Moore later in life, and watching Dolemite Is My Name, his biopic on Netflix, one can't help but imagine the adventures Rudy must've had before the events shown in the film.

There is a scene around halfway through, in which the ever-enterprising Rudy

(Eddie Murphy), looking to make a movie based on a successful character he has created, walks up to a man in a strip club. The man is actor D'Urville Martin (Wesley Snipes), who, after appearing in a small part in Rosemary's Baby, likes to boast that he has 'been directed by Roman Polanski'. A lot is said in the scene, but what is communicated wordlessly is way more interesting. Because as Rudy and D'Urville engage in a subtle game of courtship, they understand exactly where

the other is coming from. Neither is Rudy a hotshot producer, nor does D'Urville's lift man role in Rosemary's Baby make him a star. They need each other to get ahead in life. This also happens to be one of the few times in Dolemite Is My Name that Rudy Ray Moore pitches an idea that isn't rejected immediately. But he's used to it. "If a man shuts the door in my face, I find another door," he says in one scene, with only a hint of impatience. He is a man who has made peace with the fact that to survive, he must be his own biggest advocate.

When we first meet Rudy, he does have the appearance of a man who's had several doors shut on him. He works in a record store, but dreams of doing stand-up comedy. In the evenings, he tries (and fails)

to squeeze some original material into the few moments on stage that he has, MC-ing comedy gigs at a local club. For financial support, he must turn to an elderly aunt, and for emotional support, he relies on his fellow performers at the club; he doesn't seem to have a significant other in his life. Had he been depressed, mentally ill (and white), he might have turned into the Joker.

But Rudy Ray Moore, as played by the great Eddie Murphy, was perhaps the most optimistic man to ever walk the Earth, it would seem. Or at least as optimistic as fellow filmmaker Ed Wood, who'd developed his own cult of fans through earnestly made bad movies a few decades prior. It should come as no surprise that both Tim Burton's Ed Wood and Craig Brewer's

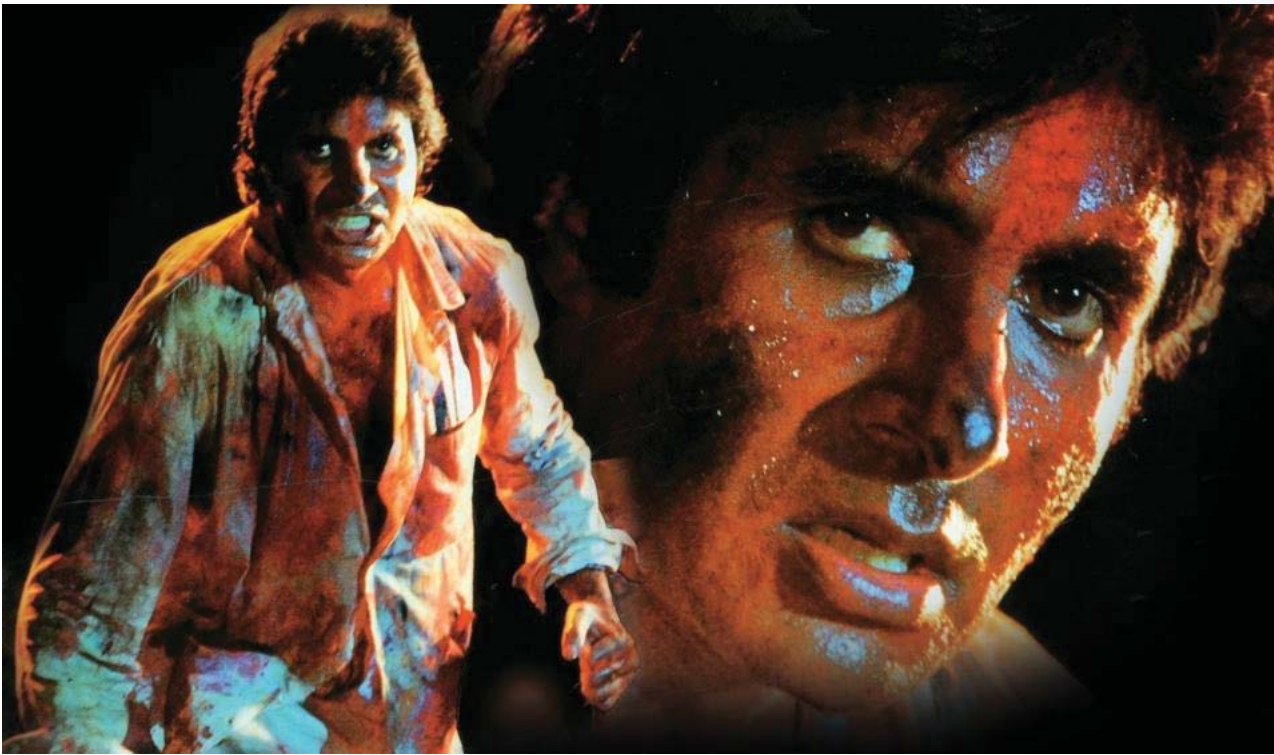
Dolemite Is My Name have been written by the terrific screenwriting duo of Scott Alexander and Larry Karazewski. But I was also reminded of the fantastic 1999 documentary, American Movie, a tale of sheer passion, about one outsider and his near-mythic quest to make a low-budget horror film. What Dolemite Is My Name highlights, above even Rudy's indefatigable spirit, is the kindness he was shown. Just like the colourful youth I imagined for him, I also found myself wondering why the film never focuses on the failures that Rudy must surely have suffered; the ridicule that he must have faced, being the sort of person that he was. We're conditioned to anticipate, in stories like this, scenes in which our hero is humiliated, so that when he

finally achieves success, we can experience a sort of vicarious thrill.

But Rudy is an easy man to get behind. The struggle could have made him bitter, but instead, it inspired him to create. And Dolemite Is My Name would much rather honour the people who supported him than acknowledge the ones who shut the door in his face. Like Ed Wood and American Movie, there is an unfiltered joy in watching the scenes in which a ragtag group of friends make a movie together; suffering production setbacks, negotiating with studios, and most importantly, learning as they go along. And while no supporting character is as well fleshed out as Rudy, the actors instil in them an impressive presence.

Big Data on The Big B

Bachchan's 50-year career in numbers



The film *Saat Hindustani*, set against the backdrop of the liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule and directed by the great Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, released on November 7, 1969. Among the actors who played the seven Hindustanis was a lanky young man from Allahabad, Amitabh Bachchan, who was cast as a Muslim poet.

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Fifty years on, that man is still acting. He's also acknowledged as the greatest star of Hindi cinema — for his staggering longevity and popularity, massive hits and memorable performances. Bachchan's success began with his portrayal of the unsmiling, hot-tempered Inspector Vijay in *Zanjeer* (1973). And then he proved there was more to him than incandescent rage. He took to romance and comedy; he became the actor who could do it all. As he grew older, Bachchan gracefully moved into senior citizen roles; his star power ensures that films are written around him.

Generations of co-stars have bowed out, but Bachchan goes on. Through tough patches, he's risen to shine again. So here's Bachchan's remarkable film career so far — in some fun and surprising numbers...

15 The number of double roles Bachchan has played

His first was back in 1973 in *Bandhe Hath*. And unusually for a Bollywood hero, five of those double roles has him playing father and son. Quite a deal, getting two Amitabhs for the price of one ticket. The 1983 film, *Mahaan*, featured him in a triple role, as a father and his two sons. When a frustrated

Amjad Khan, the baddie in *Mahaan*, asks exactly how many of them have the same face, the youngest Bachchan quips: "Paun darjan hujoor!" (A quarter dozen, my lord!)

12 The films he's done with Shashi Kapoor

Bachchan's collaborations are legendary. But it's Shashi Kapoor, with whom he's partnered the most. Starting from *Roti, Kapada Aur Makaan* (1974) and *Deewaar* (1975). Kapoor also directed him in *Ajooba* (1991). They last worked in *Akayla* (1991) when Bachchan played a renegade cop and Kapoor, his wizened mentor. Fans call them Shashitabh for a reason.

4 Bachchan's heroines who've also played his mother

In one of the very rare instances in Bollywood, four actors have played his heroines and his mothers (though in different movies). Waheeda Rehman featured opposite him in *Adalat* and *Kabhi Kabhie* in 1975 and 1976, and played his mom two years later in *Trishul* (1978). Rakhee Gulzar has done the same in *Kabhi Kabhie*, *Kaala Patthar* and *Shakti*; Sharmila Tagore did it in *Faraar* and *Desh Premee*. And then there's Nutan, who played his neglected wife in *Saudagar* (1973), and his mother in *Insaniyat*, about two decades later in 1994. Head spinning yet? Three Bachchan films also feature co-stars who play both his mothers and wives (since he was playing both father and son). Waheeda Rehman in *Adalat* and *Mahaan*, Sharmila Tagore in *Desh Premee*.

21 Films where he was called Vijay

No points for guessing that Bachchan's most common screen name has been Vijay. *Zanjeer*, *Roti Kapada Aur Makaan*, *Deewaar*, *Trishul*, *Kaala Patthar*, *Shaan*, *Dostana*, even the relatively recent ones like *Aankhen*, *Nishabd* and *Rann*.

9 The times Bachchan's been

given the name Amit or Amitabh

In the '70s and early '80s, He was frequently called Amit. In films like *Silsila*, *Do Anjaane* and *Benaam*, he was Amit, the sensitive everyman.

19 Movies where Bachchan played a cop

His first time playing a police officer was his most iconic role. In *Zanjeer* he played Inspector Vijay Khanna, the brooding cop that established his Angry Young Man persona. His most recent outing as a cop was where he was seen grooving and shaking with his son and daughter-in-law. The film was *Bunty Aur Babli*, and he was DCP Dashrath Singh.

8 The maximum number of films he's done with a director

Amitabh Bachchan's maximum collaborations (not counting cameos) have been with the directors Manmohan Desai and Hrishikesh Mukherjee. He starred in 8 films with each of them. But there's another director whose Bachchan tally is just as high. Ram Gopal Verma directed 8 films with Bachchan, their last outing being *Sarkar 3*. But with RGV, the flops have come thick and fast so you don't remember them as much.

16 The films he's done with Hema Malini — still his most frequent female costar

This may have something to do with the fact that they look majestic as a senior couple in recent films: *Baghban*, *Baabul*, *Veer Zaara*. Bachchan has had the most superhits with Rakhee, with whom he'd appeared in 13 films, of which almost all are hits, except *Reshma aur Shera* and *Shaan*. Parveen Babi was another frequent partner in crime, featuring in some 12 films together with him. Bachchan worked in 11 films with Rekha, 8 with Zeenat Aman, and Mr. Bachchan has featured with Mrs. Bachchan in some 9 films.



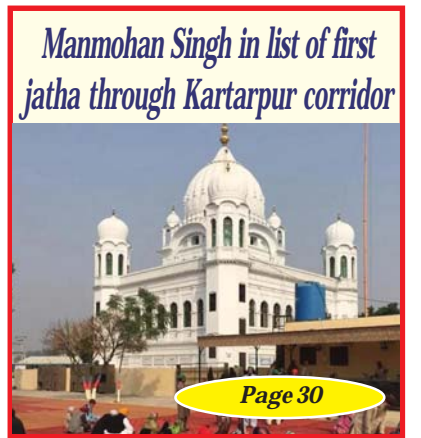


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Why E-Verify is failing



(News Agencies) Politicians of all stripes have rallied around the federal government's E-Verify system as a low cost and effective way to keep undocumented immigrants out of the United States. Congress needs to reauthorize E-Verify this fall when funding for the government runs out. Between now and then, members of Congress need to take a serious look at this failed program.

(Contd on page 22)



Explaining to my children why the world is burning

(Contd on page 22)

Kerala nun writes to Vatican to make case before Pope

Sister Lucy Kalappura, who took part in a protest by nuns belonging to Missionaries of Jesus Congregation, seeking the arrest of Bishop Franco Mulakkal, accused of raping a nun, was expelled by the Franciscan Clarist Congregation in August this year.



(News Agencies) A Kerala nun, who has challenged the Franciscan Clarist Congregation's decision to expel her, has written to the Vatican, alleging the 'disciplinary action' was taken for participating in protests by a group of nuns seeking arrest of a bishop accused of raping a fellow nun. In her letter to Leonardo Cardinal Sandri, Prefect, Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Sister Lucy Kalappura also sought an opportunity

(Contd on page 23)

The man accused of running Asia's biggest drug trafficking syndicate has been revealed



(News Agencies) The southeast Asia until his identity was revealed last week in an investigative piece published by Reuters. It has been hard to watch and wait while the case against Tse has developed, knowing that he is believed to be the driving force behind the recent

(Contd on page 23)

