



"We Feel Your Pain" Indian American community strongly condemns attack in Kashmir on CRPF

To unmask Pakistan role in terror; India to give Kashmir attack proof to friendly nations



Page 19



(Insider Bureau) India will not submit any evidence to Pakistan on the role of Jaish-e-Mohammad in the Pulwama terror strike, and instead give all such facts to friendly nations to unmask the role of elements based in the neighbouring country in the attack, a senior government official said. The official was sharing the views within the government, which is not at all in favour of giving any evidence to Pakistan considering the past experience when despite giving multiple dossiers on the involvement of Pakistan-based elements in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks and terror strike in Pathankot airbase, Islamabad did nothing to punish the perpetrators.

Continued on Page 19

Supreme Court constitution bench to hear Ayodhya matter on Feb 26



(Insider Bureau) The Supreme Court will begin hearing the Ayodhya case on February 26. The five-judge bench of the apex court led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi will hear the Ram-Janmabhoomi Babri Masjid land dispute matter at 10.30am. Besides the CJI, the other judges on the bench are Justice D Y Chandrachud, Justice Ashok Bhushan and Justice S Abdul Nazeer. The hearing of the Ayodhya title suit case was deferred on January 27 following the non-availability of one of the five judges on the constitution bench, Justice S A Bobde. **Continued on Page 19**

Malvinder Singh accuses brother Shivinder, Radha Swami Dera Head

Page 19



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Long Island's Indian community condemns Kashmir attack, raises funds for CRPF martyrs



(Press Release by Jasbir Jay Singh) New York: A large number of Indian American community organizations held a meeting on Feb 17 to condemn the Pakistan abetted terror attack in Kashmir and to raise funds for

the families of the 49 CRPF jawans martyred in that attack. "Over 250 people including some eminent Indian Americans attended the solemn event at Antun's by Minar, which was initiated by Kamlesh Mehta,

Chairman and Publisher of The South Asian Times. Event was put together by Jasbir Jay Singh, President of IDP (India Day Parade) USA and Mukesh Modi, also of IDPUSA. The Indian Consulate was represented

by Deputy Consul General Shatrughna Sinha. In his stately speech, he read out names of the martyred CRPF jawans and also the statement of support from the White House. He assured the audience that the Indian

government is aware of the grief, sorrow and anger among Indians and NRIs following the Pulwama attack. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promised adequate response, for which all options are on the table, he added.

Over 600 members of the community attend Candle vigil and Tribute to martyrs of Pulwama, India



(By Paresh Gandhi) American community which included organizations of the New Jersey- North of Indian Origin majority of Indian diaspora came

together to hold a the mayor of candlelit vigil in the Woodbridge, John Royal Alberts Palace McCormac who sponsored by the attended along with Federation of Indian Councilwoman Nancy Associations (NY NJ Drumm & Alok Kumar, & CT). President-FIA NY NJ The somber tribute CT. The event was included a flower open for all to pay filled memorial and their respect to the included brief memorial banner and remarks from the was concluded with a candle vigil with over 600 led candlelit vigil.

White House receives proposed regulation to end work authorisation for spouses of H1B visa holders

(Agencies)- The White House has formally received the proposed changes in the existing regulations to end the work authorisation for certain categories of H-1B foreign work visas.

The move that would impact over 90,000 spouses of H-1B visa holders, an overwhelming number of whom are Indians, was



sent by the Department of Homeland Security to the White House Office of management for Budget on Wednesday, officials said. It's now for the White House to take a final call on it, before a formal regulation in this regard could be issued and the Department of Homeland Security can inform a federal court, where a lawsuit on this issue is pending.

Now White House would carry out its review of the proposed regulation, take inputs from various agencies, before taking a final call. The entire process could take from a few weeks to several months.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) which manages the programme said the proposed regulation was not final until the review and comment process was complete. As per the existing process, once

White House gives its nod, the regulation would be published in federal register with a 30-day comment period.

It is only after that the new changes can come into effect. The Trump administration is moving ahead with its proposed regulation, despite strong resistance from a group of US lawmakers including Senator Kamala Harris, and Silicon Valley companies who argue that this is not only anti-women, but also prevents talented spouses of H-1B visa holders from working in the United States.

Meanwhile, the US Court of Appeals, District of Columbia has extended the time for various

stakeholders, including the Department of Homeland Security to submit its responses on the lawsuit against it filed by the



A forum with four of the New York City Public Advocate candidates was held at the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. Errol Louis served as the moderator and the candidates in attendance included Melissa Mark-Viverito, Rafael Espinal, Michael Blake and Ydanis Rodriguez, who answered a wide range of questions from journalists in presence.

The Secret Role Of Prashant Kishor As BJP, Sena Sink Differences

Aditya Thackeray's promotion in the Shiv Sena, announced last year, became official during the press conference held jointly by BJP President Amit Shah, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Shiv Sena Chief Uddhav Thackeray on Monday. While he is not gunning for the Chief Minister's post yet, he is now officially the second-in-command in the party. Thackeray junior is involved in all major decisions of the party, which his father leads. In 2014, the BJP had carped at the Shiv Sena for sending a 24-year-old to negotiate with the party during the pre-election tussle over seat-sharing. Eknath Khadse, then a senior BJP leader with clout, had famously said, "I found it inappropriate that while our senior leader Om Mathur was holding consultations, the Shiv

Sena sent their youth leader Aditya Thackeray to hold talks. Mathur has the same stature as Amit Shah in the BJP. In such circumstances, sending a junior leader to hold alliance talks is saddening." Eknath Khadse's 'junior leader' comment, though perhaps not completely unwarranted, has not been forgotten by the Shiv Sena.

Cut to 2019 where Eknath Khadse, many believe, is on his way out of the BJP is no longer around to hold talks, and the Sena has tasked Aditya Thackeray, Subhash Desai and Eknath Shinde with negotiating with the BJP. The results haven't been too disappointing so far. At the press conference in Mumbai on Friday, Aditya Thackeray was invited to the stage by the Chief Minister and the familiarity was hard to miss. It was clear that the duo were in touch. In fact, before the press

conference took place, Aditya Thackeray ensured that everything was in place at the press conference venue before returning home to take part in the meeting with Amit Shah, Devendra Fadnavis, Subhash Desai and his father. During the press conference, his father Uddhav, consulted him multiple times and Aditya Thackeray was seen passing notes to his father. Also what caught attention was while BJP ministers in the state were not on stage, the 28-year-old was seated right next to former Chief Minister Manohar Joshi, who was next to Uddhav Thackeray. Top Sena leaders acknowledge that the 'young tiger' plays a very active role in formulating strategy and his father consults him on all issues, especially on important matters such as the induction of leaders into the party. Several leaders approach him with requests but

Aditya Thackeray ensures that the party's top leaders are consulted while the Yuva Sena (Shiv Sena's youth wing) has an equal role in taking the message to the party cadres.

While Uddhav Thackeray mentioned several secret meetings ahead of the alliance announcement, what he left out was how Aditya Thackeray was a part of those meetings and provided inputs as a gen-next leader of the party. When the Chief Minister arrived at Matoshree last week to meet Uddhav Thackeray, Aditya received him and also sat in the meeting. Aditya Thackeray was also present in the meeting with Amit Shah on Monday at his father's home. Sources say while he mostly listens at these meetings, he does offer his views, which complement and support Uddhav Thackeray's points. And while he is far more

media savvy, the younger Thackeray is reticent and rarely gives interviews unless he is cornered by journalists. However, he is active on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, which keeps the lines of communication open.

One of the reasons why the alliance talks went off smoothly is the choice of negotiators on both sides. New teams were selected to hold the talks and leaders considered aggressive or had old baggage were kept out. The new teams had a clear brief. Initially, the Sena was apprehensive but strategist-turned-Janata Dal United leader Prashant Kishor, who visited Uddhav Thackeray earlier this month, apparently convinced the Sena leadership that the BJP was serious about an alliance this time and would be willing to accommodate a few demands of the Shiv Sena.

PM Modi Needs Trump to Ensure Pakistan Never Repeats Pulwama

Here's the thing. I don't like war. I am terrified of it. I blame my fears on a book of photographs that I had chanced upon when I was just seven. They were glossy, high-quality photos of the Iran-Iraq war. Pictures of babies with half their head blown out, young men with severed torsos, mothers hiding inside bombed-out homes, and dead dogs with their entrails spilling out on rubble-strewn streets. I am equally scared of terrorism. When I am in an airplane, I surreptitiously scour the faces of my co-passengers to gauge whether they are plotting to blow me up. I give moral lectures to

the security guard at the mall if he hasn't checked me properly. And, I dutifully switch on the dome light inside our car when I am crossing a police checkpoint.

In short, I want terrorists to be locked up, but I don't want any Dubya-style War on Terror. So, when in the aftermath of the Pulwama attack, social media and TV studios exploded in wanton bloodlust, I was greatly dismayed. It is clear that most people who want to obliterate Pakistan from the face of the earth have very little idea about what modern nuclear weapons can do. The

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) says Pakistan has 140-150 nuclear warheads. If loaded onto Shaheen-III, the warheads can travel upto 2,750 kilometres.

In other words, it can hit any target in India. You could argue that only someone utterly mad could start a nuclear war against India. We can retaliate with even greater force. We won't even need our longest range missile Agni-III, which can hit targets that are 5,000 kilometres away.

The idea of a nuclear war is mad. Quite literally. MAD, here, stands for Mutually Assured Destruction. But, Pakistan is an

unstable, failed state. It is controlled by a military that has been systematically radicalised over the past 40 years. They hid Osama Bin Laden and believed they would get away with it. Nothing could be madder than that. All you need is a mega-suicide bomber with access to nuclear codes.

In 2011, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States spoke to a large group of army officers. Much to his chagrin, he discovered that a large chunk of them believed that the United States is Pakistan's biggest enemy. It was a complete reversal of the army's attitude

towards the US during the Cold War days. As, Fareed Zakaria wrote, it was a sign of the deep reach of radical Islamist ideas in the second rung of Pakistani military officers. The only thing that keeps the Pakistani military sane is their vast business interests. Ayesha Siddiqi's classic work *Military Inc* reveals, that Pakistan's army controls 12% of all land, 30% of heavy industries, over a hundred big companies, a vast private security firm, a commercial bank, an airline, shipping majors, large construction companies and logistics players.

Priyanka Factor Should Worry Modi More Than The Gathbandhan

Whenever a journalist reports on the political mood of a place, chances are they have spoken to their cabdriver. So, when I had to take an Uber the other day, I, too, decided to gauge the Mood of the Nation. Does Rahul stand a chance against Modi, I asked my cabbie. No way, said the Übermensch. But, he added, if Priyanka were to campaign, Modi would be in trouble.

Clearly, the Congress party was listening in. Within 48 hours, it had announced Priyanka's political debut. She is like Indira Gandhi, opined the guard next

door, as he caught me on the way to the local Mother Dairy. She is destined for greatness, said my mother's domestic help, who had named her daughter Priyanka some 20 years ago. And, mind you, both of them voted for Modi in 2014.

But does Uttar Pradesh care? Will Priyanka generate enough of a groundswell to upset electoral equations in the state? And who will the Priyanka Factor dent, if at all? Will she eat into the upper-caste, better educated, more affluent urban vote share and cause problems for the BJP?

Or will she take away a sizeable chunk of the Muslim vote and hit the SP-BSP combine?

Priyanka has been given charge of 41 out of UP's 80 Lok Sabha seats. In 2014, the Congress didn't put up a candidate in only one of these seats, Fatehpur Sikri. Excluding that, during the Modi Wave, the party averaged nearly 10% vote share in these Eastern UP seats. Five years before that, the Congress contested 35 of the 41 seats and averaged more than 20% votes. Even in 2014, at the nadir of its popularity, the Congress got

more than one lakh votes in 15 of these seats and more than 15% vote share in eight of them.

The first thing to note is that most of the 'Priyanka seats' have a relatively low Muslim population. Only 10 or less than a fourth have a Muslim population of more than 20%. In other words, Muslims are not a decisive factor here. They aren't big enough to provide a winning bloc of votes to any one party. Neither can they be set up as the 'other' to polarise Hindu votes. This is important, because a division of

the Muslim vote between the Congress and the SP-BSP alliance is not going to have as big an impact as it would in seats where Muslims make up a large chunk of the electorate. Let's now take a closer look at the eight seats where the Congress got more than 15% votes in 2014. Out of these, Amethi and Raebareli elected the Gandhis to parliament even in their 2014 debacle. In the remaining six, the Congress averaged about 21% vote share, just 7% behind the combined votes of the SP and BSP.

Haryana forest department recommends putting all of Gurugram Aravallis in conservation zone

But another decision by the Haryana Town and Country Planning department could leave large stretches of Aravallis in Faridabad (over 15,000 acres) out of the Natural Conservation Zone.

(Insider Bureau)- The Haryana forest department has recommended that all parts of the Aravalli range in Gurugram, including the Aravalli Biodiversity Park, be categorised as natural conservation zone (NCZ) where construction is not allowed, in a move that will be cheered by activists, nature lovers and birders.

But another decision by the Haryana Town and Country Planning department could leave large stretches of Aravallis in Faridabad (over 15,000 acres) out of the NCZ. The regional master plan 2021 restricts construction in NCZs, but Town and Country Planning department officials say they will go by a notification issued by the union environment ministry in 1992 to define the Aravallis.

That notification limited Aravallis only to Gurugram in Haryana, and Alwar in Rajasthan

If the forest department's submission of including all Aravalli areas in Gurugram - such as gair mumkin pahar (uncultivable land of Aravalis) areas -- under NCZ is accepted by Haryana's Town and Country Planning department, then the move will ensure protection to areas such as Gurugram's Aravalli Biodiversity Park from infrastructure and real estate projects.

The NHAI proposed two link roads-from Ambience Mall to Aya Nagar on Gurgaon Mehrauli road (NH 236), and another from Vasant Kunj to Aya Nagar on Gurgaon-Mehrauli road (NH 236) -- on its website as part of a plan to decongest Delhi. Both proposed roads would have cut across the park as per the current design. The projects were deferred following a public outcry but the forest department's recommendation, if accepted, will provide the park a more permanent protection.

"We have internally communicated to the Town

and Country Planning Department that all Gurugram plantation areas, including gair mumkin pahar areas, are in confirmed NCZ, but it will review our submission and then take a call," a senior forest department official said on condition of anonymity. Makarand Pandurang, director, Town and Country Planning Department said his department recently decided which parts of the state were Aravallis based on the Aravalli notification of 1992. "There is no legal document to say there are Aravallis in Faridabad or other districts. As per the 1992 notification, they are limited to Gurugram in Haryana."

This could open up large parts of Aravallis in Faridabad for real estate development, activists fear.

"Recommending which area is to be categorised in NCZ is not the job of the forest department. It is a planning issue that the Town and Country Planning department is dealing with. Divisional

forest officers have been included in a committee, which is conducting the ground-truthing exercise but that committee also includes planners, officials from mining department and others," added Pandurang.

Ground truthing is an exercise where map or remote sensing data is matched with features on the ground.

The NCR Regional Plan 2021 has categorised the extension of Aravalli ridge in Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi, forest areas, rivers and tributaries of Yamuna, Ganga, Kali, Hindon and Sahibi, sanctuaries, major lakes and water bodies such as Badkal lake, Surajkund and Damdama in the Haryana sub-region and Siliserh lake in Rajasthan as NCZ. But Haryana government in 2014 reopened the status of these areas and directed district level authorities to conduct a ground-truthing exercise.

There are two categories of NCZ areas which are being reviewed by the Haryana government: "confirmed NCZ"



and those areas that Haryana government kept in "status yet to be decided". On January 4, Haryana Town and Country Planning Department in a meeting with district town planners and forest officials recommended that NCZ areas with built-up structures should be excluded from NCZ category. It also directed district level committees to submit their ground-truthing reports by January 31. Another meeting on finalisation of NCZ was slotted for February 12 but it has been deferred.

The Haryana government last week proposed to amend the Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA), a move which will open up more land for real estate development. The amendment involves excluding tracts of land included in the final development plans or town improvement plans from the ambit of PLPA. This

development could affect the Aravalis, catchments of the Badhkal, Surajkund and Damadama lakes, and other forest areas in the state. Activists are concerned about the delay in finalising NCZ areas and the PLPA amendment as both could spell doom for the biodiversity rich Aravallis.

"Amending the PLPA Act is an underhand attempt to remove the tag of forest and therefore the protection of the forest conservation act to Aravallis. If Haryana also succeeds in its claim that there are no Aravallis outside Gurgaon -- then Aravallis in Faridabad and rest of Haryana will not be classified as natural conservation zone either. This will legalise illegal farmhouses banquet halls built in the past as well as open the floodgates to future construction," said Chetan Agarwal, a Gurugram-based environmental activist.

This is how Twitter Ads transparency centre will work in India

(Insider Bureau)-As India gears up for the coming general election, Twitter has announced to bring its Ads Transparency Centre to India on March 11 that allows everyone to view political ads with details like ad spend and targeting demographics. In the Ads Transparency Centre dashboard, people can view ads that have run on Twitter within the last seven days from any Twitter handle. "If an ad is reported and taken down from Twitter, it will be archived in the Ads Transparency Centre within approximately 24 hours," Twitter India said in a statement.

If the account was suspended, Tweets will not be shown in the Ads Transparency Centre. The

same applies to deleted Twitter accounts and Tweets. "For India political advertisers that fall under the Political Campaigning Policy, you will be able to see further details, including billing information, ad spend, and impressions data per Tweet," a said the micro-blogging platform. Additionally, it would show demographic targeting data for the ads being served, both intended by the advertiser and actually delivered by Twitter.

"We are making it clearer who is advertising Indian political campaign content on Twitter by including a visual label and disclaimer information on promoted content from certified accounts. "This will allow users to easily



identify political campaign ads and to know who paid for them," said Twitter that is facing the heat in the country on presence of political bias on its platform.

No login or Twitter account would be required to access the Ads Transparency Centre. Only certified advertisers will be allowed to run political campaigning ads on our

service. Political advertisers must apply now for certification and go through every step of the process," said Twitter, adding that the Indian election is a priority for the company. Twitter has been accused by the government of being "slow" in removing "objectionable content" from its platform.

Soldiering on, after Pulwama

We are acutely aware of what is at stake in Kashmir. And that there is no easy way out

Another bloody strike in Kashmir has left the nation in shock and disbelief. The 40 CRPF bravehearts who were killed in a suicide car bomb attack near Lethpura, Pulwama, on February 14, came from all corners of the country. As the nation mourned, in a predictable display of defiance, a section of Kashmiri society celebrated this strike on social media. A nasty backlash followed, that does no credit to the national cause in the Valley. Especially because patriotic Kashmiris serving in all our security forces are at the frontline in this conflict.

Across the country, the reactions from the usual suspects have been all too predictable. The jingoists go on beating their war drums, the peaceniks carry on smoking their peace pipes, and analysts educate us about the lack of a proper strategy in Kashmir. Everyone has their favourite scapegoat to blame for the mess. Many point a finger at the current dispensation at the Centre for its hardline approach, that has supposedly worsened the situation in Kashmir. Others bemoan the lack of a coherent policy in Kashmir, as if it was some kind of a magic formula which once adopted, would solve everything. Lack of dialogue is often blamed for escalating violence.

This is hogwash in a scenario when violence is the primary negotiating tactic of our enemy. Policies are not formed in a vacuum. They are, of course, based on strategic objectives, but they are also shaped by capacities and constraints. The current course in Kashmir is to no one's satisfaction but it is imposed on us by a combination of all of the above. To paraphrase Drucker, in Kashmir, reality eats policy for breakfast. For the security forces operating in the Valley, most of this talk is plain noise. Fact is, we are too quick to claim improvement by clutching at straws. So a decline in violence and increase in voter participation will be trumpeted as a huge achievement. And conversely, a spectacular terror strike such as the incident in Pulwama, or an increase in casualties over the previous years, is enough to bring out the prophets of doom and gloom. The truth, as always, lies somewhere in between.

There are challenges in Kashmir that are surmountable. And there are challenges in Kashmir that we have no answer to. Knowing which is which would be a useful exercise to weigh our options post Pulwama. Let's look at the negatives first. It is not possible to dissuade the separatists/jihadis from the path of violence. It is not possible to coercively or diplomatically change the mindset of the generals and mullahs in Pakistan who provide them with basic support.

It is not possible to seal the border completely to prevent crossing of militants and weapons. It is not possible to ensure that "fidayeen" attacks and the resultant loss of life can be prevented in totality. Anyone who promises any of these as an achievable policy objective, has a tenuous grip on reality. Conversely, we must be clear about what is achievable in Kashmir. Preserving the demographic profile and cultural distinctiveness of the Valley is no longer in our national interest. Article 370 was a goodwill gesture by Jawaharlal Nehru that no longer serves its original purpose of making Kashmiris embrace the accession to India. If we want to show national resolve, repealing it would be exhibit A. It has long outlived its utility, if it had any to begin with. All it has done is create a limitless sense of entitlement in the Valley. The second thing that is entirely achievable is to continuously dehyphenate Ladakh and Jammu from Kashmir Valley. For too long, the Valley has been given the privilege of speaking for the entire state. It doesn't, and it is high time to show the mirror to the separatists about the culturally parochial and geographically limited nature of the Azadi movement. The right to self-determination cannot begin at the Zojila and end at the Banihal. The third thing is to ensure that at the tactical level the security forces are given the best logistical support possible. In practical terms, it means bulletproofing and IED proofing all the vehicles used by the security forces in the Valley. It also means reimposing restrictions on civilian vehicles during convoy movement that had been in place earlier but were done away with in a goodwill gesture. And it will also require a more robust airlift capacity between Jammu and Srinagar for all the CAPFs. The fourth is to step up our efforts at deradicalisation and engage more meaningfully with Kashmiri youth. In the aftermath of Pulwama, our task is cut out. Our first challenge is to go after the perpetrators. As I write this, those efforts are well under way. Our second challenge is to ensure that the threat of such attacks in the future is minimised. One would want to paint a realistic picture on this count. With the best technology, equipment and intelligence at their disposal, US-led forces in Afghanistan and Iraq have not been able to eliminate the threat of car bombs. So let's not promise something to ourselves as a nation that is impossible to deliver. We can be better prepared, that is all. Our third challenge is to ensure that the culture of restraint and proportionate response by our men on the ground does not break down.

Pakistan has shown no interest in addressing terror concerns

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan chose to talk about the brazen suicide attack at Pulwama only five days after the assault claimed by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed, attributing the timing to his country's preoccupation with a crucial visit by the Saudi crown prince. Mr Khan then trotted out his country's stock offer of assisting in the investigation into the attack, taking action on the condition that India provides actionable intelligence, even holding talks on terrorism. He also called for introspection in India on the Kashmir issue and concluded his brief pre-recorded address by warning Pakistan



would have no option but to retaliate if India carries out any attacks over the Pulwama attack. Equally important was what he didn't say - there was no condemnation of the attack or a mention of Jaish-e-Mohammed, whose top leadership, including its founder Masood Azhar, is based in Pakistan. That his speech was greeted with scepticism in official quarters in New Delhi was hardly surprising. The Indian government hasn't forgotten what emerged from Pakistan's previous offers to help investigate the 2008 Mumbai attacks and the 2016 assault on Pathankot airbase, which too was blamed on Jaish-e-Mohammed. Mr Khan's supporters could say he was not in power when those attacks occurred, but they will do well to remember Mr Khan has shown no

alacrity in getting things moving in the investigations into these attacks or the prosecution of the seven men arrested for the Mumbai carnage.

It is understandable that the external affairs ministry dismissed Mr Khan's offer of assistance by saying there is already sufficient evidence for Pakistan to act and his pledges of action ring hollow in light of Islamabad's track record. Clearly, Mr Khan's advisors didn't give much thought to preparations for his address as it didn't touch on most of India's stated concerns. Mr Khan's course of action appears half-hearted, given that his predecessor Nawaz Sharif at least

resorted to the usual Pakistani ploy of placing Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar under "protective custody" for some months after the Pathankot attack. Pakistan should note moves by Western powers to keep up the pressure on terror groups and terrorist financing as well as mounting domestic pressure on the Indian government to respond in some way to the Pulwama attack. Given all the talk from Islamabad of Pakistan Army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa desiring normal relations with India, and the civilian government and military establishment being on the same page - something Mr Khan never fails to reiterate when talking about ties with India - Pakistan should start walking the talk before it is too late.



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Truth about terror

Pak PM must know he has no plausible deniability on terror. Saudi Crown Prince cannot turn a blind eye to the problem

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan is either very naive or plain disingenuous. In his first response to India holding Pakistan responsible for the February 14 Kashmir attack, he demanded "actionable evidence" and asked what his country had to gain from a terrorist attack in India from its territory. He should know that Pakistan does not have credible deniability on this attack. The Jaish-e-Mohammad, which took responsibility minutes after the devastating suicide bombing, is based in Pakistan's Punjab province. To say that the JeM was banned in 2002 is not good enough. After the 2016 Pathankot attack, also the JeM's handiwork, the Pakistan government took the Jaish leader,

Masood Azhar, into protective custody. PM Khan appeared reasonable when he said he was prepared to discuss terrorism with India. But if he really understands that his country stands to lose from terrorism, the first thing to do is to crack down on the JeM, Lashkar-e-Toiba, and other such groups flourishing in his country. Shortage of evidence has never been the problem for Pakistan in tracing the perpetrators of terrorist attacks in India. In the 26/11 case, it had its own investigation, but still did nothing. The problem is that Pakistan believes using terrorists as proxies is the most effective way to achieve its regional strategic objectives.

Advertising
The arrival of Crown Prince

Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia at this moment is an opportunity that India must use well. India's relations with Saudi Arabia are wide-ranging, from trade and investment to defence and security. In 2010, the two countries enhanced their ties to the level of a "strategic partnership". The Islamic kingdom is India's fourth largest trading partner. Bilateral trade is in the region of \$28 billion. India imports 19 per cent of its oil requirement from Saudi Arabia. As the country with the third largest Muslim population, there is a religious-cultural aspect to India's ties with the custodian of Islam's holiest sites. The Indian workforce in Saudi Arabia tops 3 million. Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to India



will no doubt seek to build on this already strong relationship.

What India needs to press home to the Saudi Prince is that his praise for Pakistan's efforts against terrorism on his visit to Islamabad earlier was tone deaf. It is no secret that Islamist extremism was exported and funded from Saudi Arabia. The JeM, a

Sunni Deobandi group, has drawn both money and ideology from al Qaeda and Taliban. If MBS, as he is known, is truly the reformer he claims to be, India must hold him to his agenda. The entire region is a powder keg because of the terrorist groups that operate from Pakistan, one day and India the next.

And with the ISI created Taliban hoping to regain power in Afghanistan in a negotiated deal with the US, the situation in South Asia is extremely fragile. If MBS wants India-Pakistan tensions to de-escalate, as he declared in Islamabad, he must start by advising his Pakistani hosts to take the steps the world has been asking them to.

Post Pulwama: Call for action

The Pulwama terror strike against India has proven what many have long feared: India's Pakistan policy, especially with regard to Kashmir, is an utter failure. While Pakistan has consistently deployed 'non-state actors' to carry out its monstrous and murderous machinations, India has been helplessly handcuffed and out-manoeuvred. Our security forces, hamstrung for want of political or diplomatic support, are unable to carry out effective counter attacks despite our much vaunted and singular 'surgical strike.' On the other hand, we have never, whether officially or unofficially, resorted to our own retaliatory response of "bleeding Pakistan with a thousand cuts."

A history of conflict
A long view of the Kashmir conflict reveals that Pakistan has consistently resorted to non-state agents, deflecting blame from itself, while

simultaneously accomplishing its objective of inflicting heavy casualties and damage on India. In fact, Pakistan started using this method way back in 1947 itself. On October 22, 1947 under 'Operation Gulmarg', mercenaries and tribal lashkars, supported by Army and paramilitary forces, crossed the border. Their attempt to seize Kashmir almost succeeded. In just three days, the invaders were just 50 km from Srinagar, having captured Baramulla on October 25. The troops of Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir proved quite powerless and incapable of defending their princely state. The warlike but greedy Maseed Pathans, however, lingered on for days in Baramulla to rape, loot and pillage the town. In the meantime, scared with the prospect of imminent capitulation,

Hari Singh signed the instrument of accession to India on October 26. Rao Bahadur Vappala Pangunni (or VP) Menon, ICS, CSI, CIE, Sardar Patel's trusted lieutenant in the integration of the 565 princely states into the Indian Union, carried the vital document to New Delhi. On October 27, the following day, the accession was accepted by Louis Mountbatten, 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma and India's last British governor-general. That very day, Indian troops were airlifted to Srinagar. They fought back fiercely, but before they succeeded in fully repulsing and repelling the invaders, a harsh winter set in, with the prospect of prolonged and inconclusive hostilities. A ceasefire was declared on December 31, 1947, coming into effect on January 1, 1948. The Line of Control (LoC) thus came into being, which is still the virtual border between our



countries. Using non-state actors, Pakistan gained roughly one-third of Kashmir, which they termed 'Azad' or free Kashmir. Within 10 years, in 1957, this territory was integrated into Pakistan. India lost Aksai Chin, another 37,244 sq km of territory, to China in the 1962 debacle. But on the Indian side of the LoC, Kashmir continued to be a burning cauldron, with thousands of security personnel and civilians lost to

a deadly proxy war with Pakistan. Terror in the Valley
In the late 1980s, this bloody feud entered a new phase, with home-grown terrorists euphemistically called 'militants,' waging war against their own state and country. Political solutions to the problem have only succeeded partially, that too at a heavy cost, with increased infiltration, division, and alienation

between Kashmiri Muslims and Jammu Hindus, not to speak of the heavy price paid by the lakhs of Kashmiri Pandits in losing their homeland. To all appearances, then, Pakistan has the upper hand in both the narrative and the actual wars, that too at relatively low cost. In contrast, India has lost state troops, resources, and prestige, without being able either to secure peace or stability in the Valley.

On Saudi prince's India visit

Congress slams Modi for welcoming 'those who praised Pak's anti-terror efforts'

(Insider Bureau)- Slamming Prime Minister Narendra Modi for receiving Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the airport, the Congress on Wednesday asked whether according a grand welcome to "those who praised" Pakistan's "anti-terror efforts" was his way of remembering the martyrs of the Pulwama attack.

In a special gesture, the prime minister received the Saudi crown prince at Palam airport on Tuesday night. The visit comes five days after a suicide bomber belonging to the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) group killed 40 CRPF personnel in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir.

"National interests V/S Modiji's 'hugplomacy'.

"Breaking protocol, grand welcome to those who pledged USD 20 billion to Pakistan and praised Pakistan's 'anti-terror' efforts. Is it ur way of remembering martyrs of Pulwama?" Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said on Twitter.

The Congress spokesperson was referring to the crown prince's visit to Pakistan, during which the two countries signed investments agreements worth USD 20 billion. Surjewala also tagged photographs of Modi hugging the crown prince and sharing a laugh at the Palam airport.

He urged Modi to "show courage" and ask Saudi Arabia to undo its joint statement with Pakistan, in which they called for avoiding "politicisation" of the UN listing regime at a time when India was

stepping up efforts to brand JeM chief Masood Azhar a global terrorist.

"Modiji, Is asking for a terrorist to be designated as such politicisation of UN listings? Would you show courage to ask Saudi Arabia to undo their 'Joint Statement' with Pak virtually rejecting India's demand for designating Masood Azhar as a 'global terrorist'?" he said.

After being received at the Islamabad airport by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, the Saudi leader said in a Saudi-Pak joint statement that dialogue was the only way to resolve "outstanding issues" between India and Pakistan.

Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma tweeted, "PM Modi seems to be eager to compete with and emulate the Pakistan PM Imran Khan in breaking



protocol and receiving Saudi Crown Prince... without any need or justification".

"Worse, the joint statement does not refer to the ban on either Jaish or Masood Azhar," he said. Sharma added, "The fact that the Crown Prince has visited Pakistan after the dastardly

attack and refused to endorse the ban on Masood Azhar and the declaration of Jaish E Mohammed as a terrorist organisation seems to have been lost on the Prime Minister."

He called it a "glaring diplomatic failure" for which Modi must answer to the nation.

Former Visva Bharati VC, registrar found guilty in forged certificate case

(Agencies)- A West Bengal court on Wednesday found former Visva Bharati vice-chancellor Dilip Sinha and registrar Dilip Mukherjee guilty of criminal charges related to conspiracy and forgery.

The other person to be found guilty was Mukti Deb, a former lecturer of mathematics in the university, who produced the documents to land a job as a lecturer of mathematics. Significantly, Deb got the job without producing original testimonials but on the basis of photocopies attested by Sinha.

The prime minister is the chancellor of Visva Bharati, a central university founded by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. The marksheet scandal blew up on the institution just a few weeks after the theft of Tagore's Nobel medallion in March 2004.

"Judge Arvind Mishra will pronounce the quantum of punishment on Thursday," said Naba Kumar Ghosh, special public prosecutor for Criminal Investigation Department (CID). Sinha, who served as the VC of the university between 1995 and 2001, was arrested by the

CID in June 2004 from his residence but subsequently was granted bail. In March 2005, CID submitted the chargesheet against the trio at Bolpur court. The accused were charged under IPC Sections 466 (forgery of record of court or of public register), 467 (forgery of valuable security, will), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating), 469 (forgery for purpose of harming reputation), 471 (using as genuine a forged document) and 474 (possession of document knowing it to be forged and intending to use as genuine).

The punishment for these sections varies between seven years in jail to life imprisonment. The Case

On January 16, 1997, Mukti Deb was interviewed for the post of lecturer for mathematics. She furnished certificates of BSc from Calcutta University and MSc and MPhil from Jadavpur University. These documents were proved to be forged.

"The authorities of both institutions said that the certificates and marksheets were forged. She had appeared for part-1 exam of BSc but failed in it," said Ghosh. During the interview, she produced



photocopies of the testimonials that were attested by Dilip Sinha, said the CID counsel.

Five years after she joined Vishwa Bharati, Deb wrote to the university authorities seeking permission for enrolling for a PhD programme. "When the authorities asked her to submit original documents, instead of furnishing them, she said she was not interested in pursuing

PhD," said the CID counsel.

In end May 2004, Sunil Kumar Sarkar, former registrar of the university, lodged a complaint with Bolpur police station. Former chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee handed over the investigation to the CID. Deb taught the students of Visva Bharati for seven years before she was sacked in 2004.

"Sinha attested all the photocopies. No one raised a question as he was chairman of the university's selection committee. Deb was selected as a scheduled caste candidate," R K Mohanty, additional director general, CID told the media in June 2004 after Sinha was arrested.

CID officers said Sinha was known to Deb and her family.

UP leader wanted for 75 train robberies and thefts, nabbed

Harvinder was sent to police custody till February 20. The Mumbai railway police will seek his custody next.

(By a Staff Reporter) - It would be a story straight out of a movie script where a man leads to two lives- one where he is a local political leader leading masses and working for betterment of civic facilities whereas in the other one, he is a criminal mastermind executing thefts and robberies in trains.

34-year-old Harvinder Singh alias Sunny led a normal life in Uttar Pradesh's Haldaur where he was elected as an independent councillor for the town's municipal board. Harvinder Singh was arrested by Hyderabad railway police who were on a lookout for him and his brother for stealing valuable and ornaments worth Rs 10 lakh from an Army brigadier's

wife who was travelling from Duroto Express on February 11. Harvinder was sent to police custody till February 20. The Mumbai railway police will seek his custody next. The duo was nabbed from Hyderabad railway station on February 16 by SCR RPF when they were preparing for another heist, with a reserved first class ticket to Mumbai. According to Railway police officials, Harvinder had been carrying out train heists since 2008 and was wanted in more than 75 cases. The total amount of valuables stolen by him could be in crores. Back in his hometown Haldaur, he was a respected politician fighting for civic facilities for the residents.

He had won with a whopping number of votes, defeating his opponent in the ward. Many saw him as the next mayor of the town. Meanwhile, he indulged in train loots in other parts of the country. Last year, Harvinder had managed to steal valuables and a .32 bore pistol from a passenger travelling on the Avantika Express from Mumbai. He was arrested in 2014, but after being released on bail he went back to his old habits and sought the help of his younger brother Gaurav to accompany him for the robberies. Harvinder Singh was earlier arrested for the passenger theft offences in Vijawada Division of south central railway. During the preliminary enquiry,



he revealed having committed offences such as theft of gold jewellery, valued at Rs 10 lakh from a train on February 11 at Nagpur station.

He also revealed of having committed cash theft of Rs 1,90,000 from Duroto (Nagpur-CSTM) and gold jewellery from Mumbai-Solapur Siddheshwar Express on February 13 and 14 respectively.

The duo was apprehended with

Rs 1,60,000 in cash, a gold necklace, diamond jewellery, which are suspected to be from the recent robbery.

He also revealed stealing from ladies' handbags several times from AC coaches in trains like Kitoor-Chennamma and Madras Mail from Bangalore. Detailed interrogation may reveal further details. Maharashtra GRP was informed and they are sending the team for further action.

Hyderabad: Man arrested for running fake job racket, had duped 24 people of Rs 60 lakh

(By a Staff Reporter) - Aman from Srinagar has been arrested in Uttar Pradesh and brought to Telangana for allegedly cheating people to the tune of Rs 60 lakh after promising them government jobs, police said on Monday. The Central Crime Station (CCS) police arrested Gulam Mohammed, a native of Srinagar, from village Dulahipur in Uttar Pradesh and brought to Telangana on transit remand. Deputy Commissioner of Police Avinash Mohanty said the accused was involved in cheating

people on the pretext of offering them jobs.

Speaking to ANI, Mohanty said, "The accused Gulam Mohammed Illahi, who cheated around 24 unsuspecting people to the tune of 60 lakhs, was arrested by police after following leads based on credible information."

The accused would promise secure government jobs in Railways, SBI, FCI among others. Since the month of January 2018, the accused along with another accused induced

the victims to pay Rs 2,50,000 each by creating fake online website of Railway Recruitment Board along with fake offer letters. The accused also facilitated medical tests at Bardhaman in Kolkata. After receiving the cash, the accused and others have been absconding from Hyderabad since June 2018. "On receiving complaint from the victims, a case under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code was registered and an investigation was carried out," Mohanty said.



After PM Modi meeting, Saudi Crown Prince talks about \$100 bn investment opportunity in India

Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman said that his country had invested as much as \$44 billion in India since 2016.



(By a Staff Reporter) - Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has said that his country sees an opportunity to invest as much as \$100 billion in various sectors in India in the coming few years. Addressing a joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the crown prince said his country had invested \$44 billion since 2016 in India, when PM Modi had visited the country, and had benefitted from it. "We believe that the (investment) opportunities in India are worth more than \$100 billion. Together we want to make these investments beneficial for both India and Saudi Arabia," he said.

"We want to diversify in other areas such as petrochemicals and storage," he said.

"We want to make the relations between India and Saudi Arabia beneficial for both countries," he said.

"These investments will help benefit the Indians in Saudi Arabia and the Saudi people who are working in India," he said.

He said that Saudi Arabia had taken a leaf out of India's book and had invested in the IT sector after PM Modi's 2016 visit.

"We know India is strong in the IT sector and we have invested a lot in Saudi Arabia in the IT sector and have benefitted from it," he said.

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Pressurise nations backing terror: PM Modi at joint press meet with Saudi Prince

PM Modi held bilateral talks on Wednesday with visiting Saudi Prince Salman in New Delhi as the two countries seek to deepen their ties and frame a common strategy to deal with the challenges posed by terror.

(Agencies)- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in a joint press meet emphasised the need to fight terror in all forms. The two leaders "agreed" to put pressure on countries providing support terrorism in any form, PM Modi said after holding a delegation-level talks with Prince Salman in New Delhi.

Asserting that "barbaric attack in Pulwama last week is another cruel imprint of terror", PM Modi said, "We agreed that to fight this challenge, there is need to put pressure on countries extending any kind of support to terrorism." "Destruction of the infrastructure of terrorism, ending support to terror and bringing the supporters of terrorism to justice is essential," said PM Modi. The two leaders explored the ways to deepen strategic ties in the wake of Pulwama terror attack,

in which at least 40 soldiers were killed last week.

Saudi Prince Salman said, "Extremism and terrorism are our common concerns. We will cooperate with you (India) in all possible ways including intelligence sharing to counter terrorism. We will work with all the countries to ensure a brighter future for the coming generations."

Later, briefing the media, TS Tirumurti, a secretary in MEA, said, "The two leaders condemned in the strongest terms the recent terrorist attack on Indian forces in Pulwama in Jammu & Kashmir."

"Both leaders underlined the importance of comprehensive sanctioning of terrorists and their organisations by the United Nations," said Tirumurti.

According to news agency ANI, Tirumurti further said, "The complicity of Pakistan in

Pulwama attacks was very much underlined (during talks between PM Modi and Prince Salman). They agreed on the need for creating necessary conditions for any resumption of talks."

Tirumurti denied that Saudi Arabia offered to mediate between India and Pakistan to de-escalate tension in the backdrop of Pulwama terror attack. "Both sides agreed on the need for creation of conditions necessary for resumption of the comprehensive dialogue...At this point in time, no mediation has been offered," ANI quoted Tirumurti as saying.

The Saudi Prince arrived in New Delhi on Tuesday evening on a two-day visit, which followed his Pakistan tour. The prince returned to Riyadh from Islamabad and after spending a few hours back home, took a 3,000-km flight back to the Indian



subcontinent.

In Pakistan, a joint statement by Saudi Arabia and Pakistan made reference to "the need for avoiding politicisation" of the UN regime for listing terrorists. The statement also referred to the prince's praise for Pakistani premier Imran Khan's efforts for dialogue with India and opening the Kartarpur corridor.

However, people familiar with developments said India's relations with Saudi Arabia shouldn't be compared with those of Pakistan. During the prince's visit, the two sides emphasised to deepen their strategic

partnership on the back of growing security cooperation and intelligence-sharing on terrorism.

During his press meet with Prince Salman, PM Modi said India-Saudi Arabia ties have strengthened since his 2016 visit to Riyadh for the signing of an agreement on cooperation in intelligence-sharing on terror financing. PM Modi said Saudi Arabia is the most valuable strategic partner of India in the Middle-East. India describes Saudi Arabia as a "key pillar" of its energy security and the kingdom is home to 2.7 million Indians with annual remittances of more than \$11 billion.

India keeps fighter jet makers waiting. And waiting. And waiting

India's rapidly aging fighter jets make it a lucrative potential prize for the likes of Lockheed Martin Corp and Boeing Co.

(Agencies)- India's rapidly aging fighter jets make it a lucrative potential prize for the likes of Lockheed Martin Corp and Boeing Co.

In the world of multibillion dollar defence contracts, India stands out.

Home to one of the biggest armed forces on the planet, the country has an uneasy co-existence with neighbours Pakistan and China. Its rapidly aging fighter jets make it a lucrative potential prize for the likes of Lockheed Martin Corp and Boeing Co. While India wants to upgrade its fleet, there's one big road block: New Delhi's famed red tape.

The country-the world's biggest arms importer, with an annual defence budget of \$43 billion-has been dangling a potential \$15 billion fighter jet deal for more than a decade, with Lockheed and Boeing, the world's two largest contractors, vying for the chance to refit India's air force. Although drawn-out negotiations aren't

uncommon in the arms world, India took 32 years to seal a deal with the US to buy 145 howitzers from BAE Systems Plc, with arcane procurement rules and shifting specifications contributing to the lengthy delays.

"It's frustrating for both sides," said Laxman Kumar Behera, a research fellow who specializes in arms procurement at New Delhi's Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. "No company or industry wants to wait so long. It also creates problems for the armed forces, because they are not getting the equipment on time."

Extra Cautious

In a country with a long history of corruption allegations-a scandal involving Bofors AB guns in the 1980s brought down a government and delayed the subsequent howitzer deal that was eventually hammered out last year-bureaucrats have turned extra cautious to avoid misdeeds, adding layers of

vetting for negotiated contracts. A wary India, which is hosting its flagship air show this week, has also derailed plans by Lockheed and Boeing to breathe new life into their aging F-16 and F/A-18 programs. India is still seeking to replace its Soviet-era MiG aircraft, while countries such as Japan and South Korea have acquired modern stealth fighters such as Lockheed's F-35.

"The Indian Air Force is facing a critical shortage of combat assets and other equipment," said Caron Natasha Tauro, an analyst at Jane's by IHS Markit. "With a two-front threat in its north from Pakistan and China, this shortage is perceived to be an immediate threat to national security."

Immediate Need

About a third of India's 650-strong fleet is more than 40 years old and set to be phased out over the next decade. The IAF has estimated it needs at least 45 squadrons to repel a joint attack from Pakistan and China,



compared with a current active strength of about 25. The need is immediate. Just last week, New Delhi blamed Pakistan for a terrorist attack in Pulwama that killed 40 security forces in Kashmir, prompting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to promise a "befitting reply."

At the biennial air show in the southern city of Bangalore starting Wednesday, Saab AB, Dassault Aviation SA, Lockheed and Boeing will showcase their products as they seek to push for an early deal. Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed has sweetened its bid by offering to fit its F-16 Fighting Falcons with an advance radar available on its F-35s, while also promising to

manufacture wings for the jet locally. Sweden's Saab makes the Gripen fighter jet and Boeing makes the F/A-18 Super Hornet. India is in the process of gathering information from fighter jet makers for the next round of orders, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said Tuesday, without elaborating. Representatives of Boeing, Dassault, Lockheed and Saab didn't respond to requests for comment.

Rafale Scrutiny

Apart from bureaucratic delays, changes in governments and opposition parties out to embarrass the ruling party over perceived wrongdoings have also added to the mess.

Pakistani prisoner killed in Jaipur jail brawl after argument over TV

(By Our Staff Reporter)- A Pakistani prisoner serving a life term in the Jaipur Central Jail was allegedly killed by four other inmates on Wednesday afternoon after a brawl over watching television, said a jail official. "A Pakistani prisoner, who has been in Jaipur jail since March 2011, was killed by four men in a barrack after they had arguments over television channel and volume," said director general (prisons) NRK Reddy. "Seven prisoners were watching television at about 1.45 p.m. when the

argument broke out. Shakir Ullah was the only Pakistani among them," said another prison official who didn't want to be named. Jaipur police commissioner Anand Srivastava said Ullah, 44, asked the inmates to lower the volume when four prisoners – Ajeet Jaat, Manoj Pratap Singh, Kulwinder Gurjar and Bhajan Meena – hit him with a marble slab on which the TV was kept. He died on the spot, he said. After initial questioning, the police booked the four, of which two are

murder convicts. All four have been booked for killing Ullah and a magisterial inquiry has been ordered. Ullah, also known as Mohammad Hanif, was native of Sialkot in Pakistan, and was arrested in 2010 in Ferozepur, Punjab, for his allegedly recruiting locals for Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and sending them to Pakistan for training. Ahead of his arrest, the Rajasthan anti-terror squad (ATS) had intercepted his phone calls to some locals in Jhalwar in south-east



Rajasthan while "He was found guilty of coordinating for LeT recruiting for LeT, terror activities in the region, an officer of the ATS said requesting anonymity. In 2011, he was brought to Jaipur.

"He was found guilty of recruiting for LeT, sending the recruits for training to Pakistan and arranging funds for terror activities on December 6, 2017," the officer said.

Seven other persons were also convicted with him, said the ATS officer said. Two of the convicted, Asgar Ali and Mohammad Iqbal, also lodged in Jaipur Central Jail, are Pakistanis. The other convicted Hafiz Abdul Ali, Qabil Khan, Arun Jain, Babu alias Nisha Chand Ali and Pawan Puri are Indian nationals.

'India hammers facts, Pak the table': Harish Salve's swipe at ICJ's Jadhav hearing

(By Our Staff Reporter)- India on Wednesday strongly objected to the abusive language used by Pakistan's counsel in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), urging the UN court to draw a "redline" to prevent its repetition. Harish Salve, the former solicitor general of India while presenting India's case before the ICJ, drew the court's attention to the abusive language used by Pakistan through its counsel Khawar Qureshi on the second day of the hearing.

"The language echoed in this court... perhaps this court may lay down some redlines. The transcript is peppered with words such as shameless, nonsense, disgraceful, arrogant... India takes exception to being addressed in this fashion in an international court. Indian culture prevents me from using similar language." India strongly objects to abusive language of Pakistan's counsel," Salve said as the International Court of Justice began the second round of public hearing in the

Kulbhushan Jadhav case. He said that the criticism of a sovereign state of the case made out of the other state must be in a language consistent with the dignity of other states, he said. "Humpty-Dumpty has no place in this court," Salve said. He said that "when you are strong on law you hammer the law, when you are strong on facts you hammer the facts and when you are strong on neither you hammer the table... Pakistan has hammered the proverbial table."

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'Get Trump alone'

Kim Jong Un's game plan ahead of Vietnam summit

(Agencies)- Ever since he met Kim Jong Un in Singapore last year, President Donald Trump has shown a tendency the North Korean leader is sure to try and exploit: making unexpected concessions in one-on-one meetings.

There was the December phone call with Turkey's president, when Trump surprised his own aides - and prompted Defense Secretary Jim Mattis's resignation -- by suddenly agreeing to pull troops out of Syria. And last year's joint press conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin, when Trump all but dismissed his own intelligence community's findings on Russian hacking of the 2016 election.

Heading into next week's summit with Kim in Hanoi, the president's top advisers will seek to ensure no last-minute giveaways happen this time around. But for North Korea, the president's habit of making concessions on the fly presents an opportunity that's likely to lead negotiators from Pyongyang to disregard the president's staff to focus on what he might offer.

"They do look to get President Trump in a room and see what they might get out of him," said

Christopher Hill, the North Korea negotiator under President George W. Bush. "If Singapore is any indication, the president seeks to want to negotiate everything himself."

When the two leaders met last June in Singapore, Trump accepted a vaguely worded statement about "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula." In exchange, he had already given Kim a priceless public relations victory just by agreeing to talks. Trump also extended a suspension of major joint military exercises with South Korea, even adopting North Korea's terminology on those drills -- calling them "war games" and "provocative."

Kim and his team seem to be betting on a repeat. A senior Trump administration official, who asked not to be identified discussing internal deliberations, said North Korean officials have so far given little away in their meetings with the top U.S. envoy for the talks, Stephen Biegun. The official said the fear is that Kim will make an offer to Trump that sounds good at the moment, inspiring the president to sacrifice something in return that goes too far.



Those fears have largely focused on the fate of about 30,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea. Kim could seek to exploit Trump's own professed distaste for overseas deployments to extract a commitment to withdraw some or all of them as part of a deal to secure a peace agreement.

Read More: Spies and Satellites -- Analyzing North Korea's Economy Isn't Easy

The U.S. and South Korea recently concluded weeks of bruising negotiations that got President Moon Jae-in's government to increase its

payments for hosting American troops, but Trump and his team have indicated they want Seoul to do more.

"I could see Kim saying, 'South Korea is reluctant to pay for the troops so why don't you withdraw them?'" said David Maxwell, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and a former special forces colonel in South Korea. "It's most important we disabuse him of that notion that he can make a deal without the working-level foundation."

Observers such as Maxwell point to a range of evidence to suggest

this is North Korea's strategy. They cite a refusal to meet with Biegun for months after he was named the lead U.S. negotiator in August 2018.

Biegun got his first formal meetings in January, and complex talks on an agreement from the summit got underway only recently, just a few weeks before Trump and Kim meet. And while the window to achieve anything of substance is short, that didn't stop the president from agreeing to a second summit where pressure will be high to move beyond the vague agreements from Singapore.

To be sure, ever since his early real estate days, the president has believed he's the best negotiator in any room, and the intimacy of a one-on-one chat is often where he thinks he can get the best deal. Trump has said he and Kim "fell in love" last year and that North Korea has enormous economic potential under Kim.

Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said Thursday in an interview with NBC's "Today" show that the president and his team remain focused on the end goal of "complete denuclearization" of North Korea and that the main U.S. leverage, UN-backed sanctions, will remain in place until then. "I don't want to get into the negotiations, what we might give up, what they might give up," Pompeo said. But when it comes to sanctions, "we won't release that pressure until such time as we're confident that we've substantially reduced that risk," he added.

Shameful Smollett lynched the truth, betrayed every black and gay person in America

'I AM telling the truth!' Jussie Smollett once tweeted, with the hashtag #TheMostCommonLies. Oh the irony. Today, Smollett is revealed to be the most hideous, reprehensible, disgusting, snivelling little liar in America. How else to adequately describe a prominent black, gay celebrity actor who police say staged a racist, homophobic attack on HIMSELF? A man who would pay two friends to pretend to jump him in the street at 2am in Chicago, scream ugly insults about his skin colour and sexuality, put a noose around his neck, and pour bleach on him? A man who would claim his 'attackers' were red-capped supporters of President Trump, and shouted 'This MAGA country', referring to Trump's campaign slogan 'Making America Great Again?' A man who would then go on national television to give an interview to ABC's Robin Roberts in which he

tearfully doubled down on every detail? A man who soaked up valuable police time as 20 detectives were assigned to investigate what was billed as a despicable hate

crime? A man who, even as his story unravelled faster than Pinocchio's nose grew the more lies he told, continued to protest his total innocence, continued to play the victim? A man who did all this because according to Chicago Police, he wanted to jack up his salary on Empire? No, I can't think of any better way to describe a pathetic excuse for a man like Jussie Smollett, though I might add the words 'sickening, shameful disgrace' to the mix. Or worse.



Everything about this story seemed implausible from the moment it first broke.

It's why I very unusually held my Twitter tongue as so many others raced to assume Smollett's story

was true. We were supposed to believe that these two vicious Trump-hating racist homophobes just happened to be wandering the freezing cold streets of Chicago at 2am, armed with bleach and a noose, and lucked out by finding Smollett walking home from Subway. They then savagely attacked him, but apparently not so badly that Smollett wasn't able to remember to take his sandwich home. It's usually the little details like that bit that trip up humongous liars.

In Smollett's case, it was every detail.

His appalling crassness and duplicity was only matched by his spectacular stupidity.

For a start, who hires two black men to commit a fake racist attack on a black man? At least use white guys, Jussie! Come on! I suspected Smollett was lying the moment it emerged he had withheld his phone from the police. No genuinely innocent victim would do that unless there was evidence on that phone that would contradict his story. When Smollett finally gave up his phone records, they were heavily redacted - thus presumably removing all the stuff that would incriminate him. But it was his appearance on Good Morning America that cemented my doubts. Watch it back now he's been arrested, and you'll laugh out loud at the obvious acting.



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Politics over Pulwama: Benazir Bhutto's husband Asif Ali Zardari calls Imran Khan immature

Asif Ali Zardari was the president of Pakistan when, in 2008, Mumbai was attacked by the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Zardari, at that time, had promised the then US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, that his government would take a "strong action" against Pakistani elements implicated in the Mumbai attacks.

(Agencies)- Former Pakistan president Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday slammed Prime Minister Imran Khan's way of handling India's allegations that Islamabad was providing safe havens to the terrorists.

Zardari said Khan was immature and did not know how to handle international politics.

"During my tenure, the Taj Hotel in Mumbai was attacked. But back then, we handled the issue amicably. This time around, the prime minister [Imran Khan] is pretty immature. He does not know what to do. He is, in fact, a back seat driver and is acting at the behest of others. That's why

the situation is getting worse," Zardari told ARY News.

For the unversed, Asif Ali Zardari was the president of Pakistan when, in 2008, Mumbai was attacked by the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). The LeT, a Pakistan-based group, opposes Indian rule in Kashmir.

Zardari, at that time, had promised the then US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, that his government would take a "strong action" against Pakistani elements implicated in the Mumbai attacks, as opposed to Imran Khan's clear dismissal of Islamabad's involvement in the Pulwama terror attack.

Over 40 CRPF personnel were killed in the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama on February 14, drawing condemnation for Pakistan from across the world.

Pakistan, however, maintains that it was not involved anyhow in the attack and will take an action against India, if it continues with its blaming spree. Imran Khan, notably, in his televised speech on February 19, did not utter a word of condolence for the martyred CRPF jawans.

Asif Ali Zardari further said, "We, however, still support the Army and if India plans to carry out any misadventure against us, we will



be together and fight against it." Zardari had further said.

This is not the first time Zardari has spoken against Imran Khan. Earlier, when Khan assumed power in August, 2018, Zardari said he would not complete his constitutional five-year term.

"Sit down and think about the government. Now that you have become an accidental, selected prime minister, learn something,"

Even, PPP chairman and Zardari's son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, also said Imran Khan lacked the courage to talk face-to-face during Parliament sessions.

In response to these barbs, Imran Khan had once said Zardari was the biggest disease of Pakistan.

In "War" Against Pornography, Bangladesh Shuts About 20,000 Sites

The crackdown was launched after Bangladesh's High Court in November asked the government to block pornography websites and publication of obscene materials in electronic forms for six months.

(Agencies)- Bangladesh authorities have blocked almost 20,000 websites as part of an anti-pornography "war", a minister said Tuesday.

Internet providers in the conservative Muslim-majority nation took down pornography and gambling websites in the past week under orders from the telecommunications regulator. "I want to create a safe and secure internet for all Bangladeshis, including children. And this is my war against pornography. And this will be a continuous war," Mustafa Jabbar, the posts and

telecommunications minister, told AFP. Popular social media apps such as TikTok and Bigo -- which authorities believe are misused -- have also been blocked in the South Asian nation, Jabbar said. Most of the blocked sites are foreign, but a few local websites and social media platforms have also faced action under the crackdown, he added. The crackdown was launched after Bangladesh's High Court in November asked the government to block pornography websites and publication of obscene materials in electronic forms for six months. The court acted after a civil society

organisation filed a petition stating that a large number of adult websites contain uncensored and obscene content. On Sunday, police reprimanded a rising actress and told her to remove provocative images from her Facebook, Instagram and TikTok pages.

"We are monitoring the local Facebook profiles, YouTube channels and websites also," Jabbar said. "A few of them were taken down for having obscene content. We advised a few others not to post anything that goes against our social norms." Bangladesh -- a country



of 165 million people -- has more than 90 million internet users. Porn stars regularly top the list of the most searched names.

Emdadul Hoque, general secretary of the internet service providers association, said they have complied with the order, but many users can still access online porn

by using virtual private networks or mirror websites. "This is a continuous process and it needs regular monitoring. These websites are very well aware of the regulations and they come up with thousands of mirror sites every week," Hoque told AFP.

In backdrop of Pulwama terror attack, resolution on Kashmir situation likely in upcoming RSS meet

(Agencies)- The highest decision-making body of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological parent of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), will discuss the increase in number of terror attacks, locals joining terror outfits, and the situation in the Kashmir valley at its upcoming meeting in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior, according to functionaries familiar with the matter. The meeting of the Akhil

Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS), scheduled from March 8 to 10, will come weeks before the 2019 general elections. It also comes in the backdrop of the recent attack in Kashmir's Pulwama, where a suicide bomber attacked a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy, killing 40 troopers. The Sangh has condemned the attack and asked the government to bring its perpetrators to justice; the Sangh cadre, too, has been

instructed to raise funds for the families of the soldiers killed in the attack.

"Kashmir has always been a sensitive issue for the Sangh. Developments in the recent months are worrisome. The issue is likely to be discussed and there could be a resolution on the Kashmir situation if the decision making body arrives at a consensus on the issue," said a senior Sangh functionary who asked not to be

named. Traditionally, the ABPS, which is attended by senior functionaries of the Sangh and its affiliates, discusses issues of national importance. On the last day of the meeting, resolutions are passed on issues that the Sangh thinks are of importance to the nation. This won't be the first time the Sangh is weighing in on Kashmir. In the past, issues pertaining to the situation in Kashmir; cross-border terrorism;

and attacks on the security personnel have been part of resolutions passed. After the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly passed a resolution in 2000 for the restoration of autonomy to the state and demanded that the Union and the state governments "take positive and effective steps for its implementation", the Sangh responded by calling it a resolution "fraught with disastrous consequences".

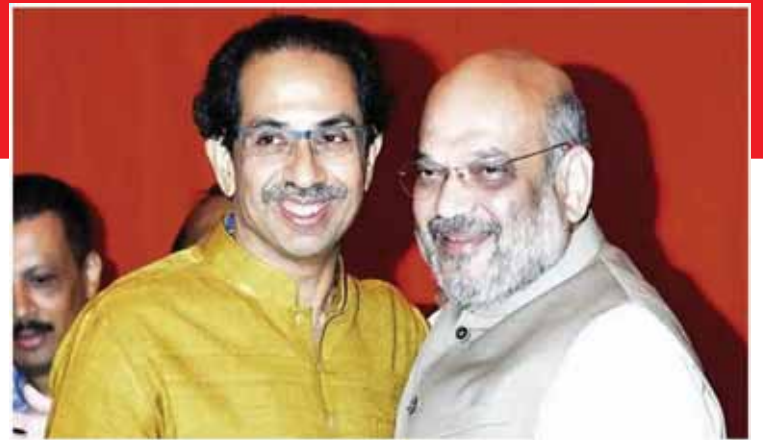
'Not helpless, gave it another shot', Shiv Sena on alliance with BJP

The Shiv Sena in an editorial in the party mouthpiece Saamana said that it looked at the "numbers" and the "new arrangement" like any other political party.

(By Our Staff Reporter)- After questions were raised over its decision to revive the alliance with the BJP, Shiv Sena on Wednesday clarified why it did a U-turn on its decision to go solo in elections. The Sena said that it is not "helpless" and no "adjustment" was reached for power and that it gave "another chance" to the alliance after differences were sorted between the two parties. The BJP and the Sena announced an alliance for Lok Sabha and Assembly election on Monday. The Sena in an editorial in the party mouthpiece Saamana said that it looked at the "numbers" and the "new arrangement" like any other political party. "In a parliamentary democracy, numbers have got more importance than it should. Therefore, like others, look at

their numbers, we too have to do it, the editorial said. However, it added that it has not "turned the way the wind was blowing" and said that the "wind" is now in favour of the Sena. The Shiv Sena justified that it never left the National Democratic Alliance. "Even a trusted ally like Nitish Kumar has quit the NDA twice. Nitish, who had attacked on Ram temple and Godhra, was not acceptable to Modi... if Nitish Kumar can come back into the NDA, then Shiv Sena has been an equal member of the NDA," the editorial said. The Sena has been at the receiving end after its U-turn to ally with the BJP which came after almost five years of constant criticism. The editorial in the Marathi daily added, "The opposition has a question on why the alliance happened... Amit

Shah came to Matoshree. We told him what we wanted to convey in 'Thackeray' style. It was unanimously decided that what mistakes were committed earlier will not be repeated." The Sena added that it maintained its "dignity and will continue to do so." It added that the 2014 "wave" is gone and the 2019 elections will have to be fought on "ideology, work and the



future". "There are new majority mark on its own, and challenges before the NDA. It has realised it two years seems difficult that the BJP back," the Sena said through the mouthpiece.

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Pervez Musharraf accepts Jaish's involvement in Pulwama attack, but defends Imran Khan

(Insider Bureau)- In an exclusive conversation with India Today TV's Rahul Kanwal, Musharraf said Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not have any "real emotion" for the CRPF personnel killed in the Pulwama attack. Over 40 CRPF personnel were killed in the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM)-led terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama on February 14, drawing condemnation for Islamabad from across the world. Pakistan, however, maintains that it was not involved anyhow in the Pulwama attack and will take an action against India, if it continues with its blaming spree. Imran Khan, notably, in his televised speech on February 19, did not utter a word of condolence for the martyred CRPF jawans. To this end, Musharraf said the Pulwama terror attack was a terrible event to have occurred, but there was no reason to believe

that the Pakistan government was party to it. "It [the Pulwama terror attack] was sad. Extremely terrible. There's no doubt about it. And I have no sympathy for Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar. He had tried to kill me too. But that doesn't prove that Pakistan government was involved in it," Musharraf told India Today TV's Rahul Kanwal. Musharraf added, "I don't think Imran Khan should or will have any sympathy for Jaish. And I don't believe Pakistan government was involved in it." 'India is wrongly accusing Pakistan' When confronted with a snatch from Masood Azhar's recently released audio tape where he confirmed Jaish did carry out the attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama, Musharraf said he did admit that the terror group was responsible for the attack, but

the government wasn't involved. "India has been wrongly accusing Pakistan over everything. It's time you stopped it," he added. 'Modi ke dil mein koi aag nahin hai' The former Pakistan president said Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not have any "real emotion" for the CRPF personnel killed in the Pulwama attack or for the Kashmiris. "Modi ke dil mein inn logon ke liye koi aag nahin hai. Agar hoti toh woh pehle woh Kashmir ka maslaa suljhaatey," he said. 'Stop meddling with Pakistan' Musharraf alleged that India was meddling with Pakistan by ganging up on it -- with help from France and the United States. "Don't say we meddle with India. Don't you meddle with Pakistan? Why did you help break Pakistan into two? Didn't you meddle with East Pakistan?" Musharraf told India Today TV's Rahul Kanwal.



He added, "You are colluding with France and the US and are trying to blacklist Pakistan. Stop doing that."

'Koi surgical strike nahin ki thhi aapne, sab galat hai'

The former president also refuted the whole idea of surgical strikes by India. He claimed they were not carried out at all.

"You keep telling us that. But let me tell you it is all but a farce. There was no surgical strike carried out. We don't buy this idea at all," he said.

Musharraf's predecessor slams Imran Khan

Earlier today, another former Pakistan president, Asif Ali Zardari, slammed Imran Khan's way of handling India's allegations. Zardari said Khan

was immature and did not know how to handle international politics.

"During my tenure, the Taj Hotel in Mumbai was attacked. But back then, we handled the issue amicably. This time around, the prime minister [Imran Khan] is pretty immature. He does not know what to do. He is, in fact, a back seat driver and is acting at the behest of others. That's why the situation is getting worse," Zardari told ARY News.

For the unversed, Asif Ali Zardari was the president of Pakistan when, in 2008, Mumbai was attacked by the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). The LeT, a Pakistan-based group, opposes Indian rule in Kashmir.

Saudi Arabia Is Investing \$20 Billion in Pakistan. Here's What It's Getting in Return

(Insider Bureau)- Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has been shunned by much of the world after the murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October, which the CIA concluded he had ordered. A-list executives pulled out of his Riyadh investment forum (dubbed 'Davos in the Desert'), street protests greeted his arrival in Tunisia in November, and there were reports Morocco's King Mohammed VI snubbed him on a visit to the North African country. That wasn't the case earlier this week in Pakistan, however, which bestowed its highest civilian award on the young Saudi prince, gave him a gold-plated gun, and declared Monday a public holiday in honor of his two-day visit to Islamabad. "Saudi Arabia has always been a friend in need, which is why we value it so much," Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said Sunday, while seated next to MBS, as the crown prince is known. Earlier Saudi's de-facto leader had announced investments in Pakistani petrochemicals, power generation, and mining projects

worth more than \$20 billion. In addition to the staggering financial package, MBS - on Khan's request - ordered the "immediate release" of more than 2,000 Pakistani prisoners incarcerated in the Kingdom. He "won the hearts of the people of Pakistan," the prime minister - who broke protocol to personally drive MBS to his official residence - later gushed on Twitter. MBS's visit to Islamabad is widely regarded as an attempt to repair his tarnished credentials as an international statesman. It precedes stops in India and China, which-like Pakistan-have not spoken out about Khashoggi's murder. But Saudi Arabia's investment in the nuclear-armed South Asian state is more than just a PR exercise. Why does Pakistan need Saudi funds? Saudi Arabia has a long history of providing financial support to Pakistan. That includes funneling money through Pakistan's madrasa education system, cushioning the impact of international

sanctions following its nuclear test in the late 1990s, and loaning Islamabad \$1.5 billion when the Pakistani rupee crashed in 2014. But the latest round of investment comes at a critical time for Islamabad, which is in the middle of an economic crisis. The foreign exchange reserves that Pakistan uses to purchase crucial fuel imports have dwindled to less than \$8 billion. Since he was sworn in as prime minister last August, the populist Khan has been engaged in a highly public "austerity drive" while appealing to friendly nations for financial support. In fact, in October his government received Saudi funds to the tune of \$6 billion, including \$3 billion import payment deferrals. The Kingdom proffered that support package after Khan's visit to Riyadh, when Pakistan's central bank reserves had plummeted 40% on the previous year's figures. Islamabad is currently negotiating a bailout from the IMF-the country's 13th



since the 1980s.

What are the economic incentives for Saudi Arabia?

Historically known for spending lavishly to win hearts and minds, the Saudi Kingdom now faces financial constraints of its own. It urgently needs to diversify its oil-dependent economy. "The largesse that the Saudis were able to afford in the 80s and 90s, we haven't seen recently, and we definitely haven't seen it under MBS," says Andreas Krieg, a Middle East security expert at King's College, London. The pledged \$20 billion in not just "a bailout they do because they like the Pakistanis," he says. Instead

there is oversight to ensure investments are "sustainable and will actually have returns in the future." Some \$8 billion of the funds pledged to Pakistan have been earmarked for the construction of an oil refinery at Gwadar Port, the jewel in the crown of the China-Pakistan economic corridor and an area in which Saudi Arabia's Gulf neighbor UAE has also invested. With Beijing set to pump some \$62 billion into the economic corridor under its transnational Belt and Road Initiative, Saudi stands to massively increase its own oil export market in Pakistan.

Malvinder Singh accuses brother Shivinder, spiritual guru of fraud

Former Indian billionaire Malvinder Singh has filed a criminal complaint accusing his younger brother of siphoning funds from their family holding company and fraudulently diverting them to a renowned spiritual guru, the latest twist in the unraveling of a \$2 billion empire. Shivinder Singh allegedly directed the holding company to acquire debt-ridden firms which collectively lent 10 billion rupees (\$140 million) to the family and associates of their guru, Gurinder Singh Dhillon, according to a

complaint filed to the Economic Offenses Wing of the New Delhi police seen by Bloomberg. In return, the younger Singh was promised he would succeed the guru as head of one of India's most powerful spiritual sects, according to the document. The public fight between the former billionaire brothers follows the collapse of one of India's most storied business families that once controlled the nation's top drugmaker and second-largest hospital chain. The siblings have lost much of their corporate

empire to debt, and are still being chased by creditors. Meanwhile, India's stock market regulator and fraud office have open investigations into wrongdoing at companies the brothers used to run. New Delhi police have opened an investigation into the complaint, said a police official. A criminal prosecution would be pursued if the probe establishes criminality, he said. Malvinder and Shivinder have declined to comment on the allegations in the criminal complaint. The brothers have previously denied

any wrongdoing at their companies. Dhillon's lawyer and the secretary of his spiritual sect did not immediately respond to text messages seeking comment on behalf of the guru and his family members referenced in the allegations. The criminal complaint alleges that the 43-year-old Shivinder "initiated" as well as "permitted this siphoning and malfeasance of funds entrusted to him with the ulterior motive of gaining ultimate control of the seat of the spiritual head of the Radha Soami Satsang Beas," promised to him by Dhillon. The spiritual sect, founded almost 130 years ago and based on a commune in north India, boasts four million followers worldwide. Malvinder, 46, claims the acquisitions of six debt-ridden companies by his brother were misrepresented as beneficial to the family's holding company when in fact they had no value. Efforts to write off the guru's debts to these companies are further eroding the value of the holding company, RHC Holding Pvt., according to the complaint. God in Human Form A Bloomberg investigation last year showed a key reason for the build up in debt that cost the Singhs their empire were loans to the Dhillon family and property firms controlled by the them. Dhillon has previously declined

to comment on the matter, and a representative for the spiritual group has said that since 2011, the guru has stepped back from helping the Singhs with guidance over their businesses due to ill health.

Dhillon, who succeeded the Singh's maternal grandfather as guru of the powerful sect, became something of a father figure to the brothers after their own died in the late 1990s. Some followers of the sect, maintained on a sprawling commune along the river Beas in Punjab state, call Dhillon a god in human form. As many as half a million followers at a time sometimes congregate at the commune to hear his teachings on how meditation, vegetarianism and high moral values can help one escape the cycle of death and rebirth.

Death Threat

In his criminal complaint, Malvinder claims Dhillon had threatened him to sign a settlement absolving the guru of any wrongdoing and abstaining from any legal or criminal action against the spiritual leader. Malvinder alleges Dhillon, through his lawyer, told the tycoon he 'would be eliminated by persons from the Radha Soami Satsang Beas,' if he did not proceed as demanded, according to the complaint.

India won't give proof to Islamabad, but to friendly nations to unmask Pakistan role in terror: Official

There is no question of giving any evidence to Pakistan. Rather we will share them with friendly countries to expose the role of Pakistan-based elements in Pulwama and other terror attacks on Indian soil," the official said.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan Tuesday said he would act against the perpetrators of the Pulwama attack if India shares with Islamabad "actionable intelligence".

Fourty CRPF personnel were killed when a suicide bomber of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) rammed a vehicle carrying explosives into their bus in

Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir on February 14.

In the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, enough evidence was provided to Pakistan but there has been no action against Lashkar-e-Taiba founder Hafeez Saeed, top leader of the group Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, some ISI officers and others even after 11 years.

In case of the terror attack on Pathankot airbase, a five-member team of Pakistani investigators was allowed to visit the site for gathering first hand information. However, when the team returned to Pakistan after visiting the sensitive airbase, they claimed that Indian authorities "failed" to

provide evidence to prove that Pakistan-based terrorists had stormed the Indian Air Force station.

"When we get these kind of responses from Pakistan, there is no point in engaging with them. Now, our primary task will be to expose Pakistan globally, about its role in aiding and abetting terrorism," the official said.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had on Tuesday slammed Imran Khan for demanding actionable intelligence from India, saying JeM has publicly acknowledged its hand behind the attack.

Robert Vadra questioned by ED for three hours in connection with money laundering case

The businessman told the investigating officer (IO) of the case that he was not well and hence, the recording of his statement was discontinued, the officials said.

They added that Vadra was expected to join the probe again on Friday.

On Wednesday, it was a scheduled appearance of Vadra before the ED in a criminal complaint related to allegations of money laundering to purchase assets abroad, the officials said. A group of Vadra's supporters raised slogans in his favour outside the ED office, before being dispersed by the police.

Vadra had skipped the summons on Tuesday, citing bad health. He was questioned by the ED sleuths in connection with the case for 23

hours over three days of deposition earlier this month.

He has been asked by a Delhi court to cooperate in the probe being conducted by the central probe agency.

The ED case against Vadra relates to allegations of money laundering in the purchase of a London-based property, located at 12, Bryanston Square and worth 1.9 million pounds, which is allegedly owned by the businessman in a "benami" way.

The agency had told the court that it had received information about various new properties in London that belonged to Vadra. These include two houses - one worth 5 million pounds and the other valued at 4 million pounds - six flats and other assets.

Vadra has denied the allegation of possessing illegal foreign

assets and termed it a political witch-hunt against him. He has said he is being "hounded and harassed" to subserve political ends.

The statement of the businessman is being recorded under section 50 (powers of authorities regarding summons, production of documents and to give evidence) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

His first appearance before the ED earlier this month acquired political overtones after his wife Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, recently appointed Congress general secretary in-charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh, accompanied him to the investigating agency's office and picked him up after questioning another time.

Supreme Court constitution bench to hear Ayodhya matter on Feb 26

The hearing of the Ayodhya title suit case was deferred on January 27 following the non-availability of one of the five judges on the constitution bench, Justice S A Bobde. The constitution bench will hear the appeals against the 2010 Allahabad High Court judgment, delivered in four civil suits, that the 2.77-acre land in Ayodhya be partitioned equally among three parties-the Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla. The Ayodhya matter has been pending before the top court since 2010. Last year, a bench led by the then chief justice Dipak Misra had indicated that the dispute would be heard on a day-to-day basis. But it then had to adjudicate upon a preliminary issue raised by Muslim parties who demanded that the Supreme Court first constitute and decide the question as to whether a

mosque was an integral part of Islam. They wanted the court to revisit a 1994 judgment. On September 27, the Supreme Court settled the question by rejecting the contention by a 2-1 majority and refused to refer the matter to a Constitution Bench. With CJI Dipak Misra's retirement, a new bench had to hear the land dispute case. On October 29, a bench led by current CJI Ranjan Gogoi fixed the case for the first week of January before the "appropriate bench". A delay in settling the Ayodhya dispute has led to demands for an ordinance, or executive order for the early construction of a majestic Ram temple on the disputed site. In an interview, Prime Minister Narendra Modi indicated that any decision on such an ordinance could be taken only after the completion of the judicial process.

'Young blood' company Ambrosia halts patient treatments after FDA warning

(Insider Bureau)- A company that charged patients thousands of dollars for infusions of blood plasma from younger donors said Tuesday that it had stopped treating patients after the Food and Drug Administration warned consumers against such treatments, purported to prevent aging and memory loss. The company, Ambrosia, said on its website that it had "ceased patient treatments." The announcement came hours after the FDA issued a statement saying there is no proof that plasma from young donors can be used as a treatment for dementia, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's disease or post-traumatic stress disorder, as some companies have claimed. The plasma infusions can also be dangerous, the agency added, because they are associated with infectious, allergic, respiratory and cardiovascular risks. "We're alerting consumers and health care providers that treatments using plasma from young donors have not gone through the rigorous testing that the FDA normally requires in order to confirm the therapeutic benefit of a product and to ensure its safety," Dr. Scott Gottlieb, food and drug commissioner, and Dr. Peter Marks, director of the agency's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, said in a statement. The federal agency noted

that several businesses offer infusions of plasma costing thousands of dollars per infusion for a variety of conditions. Such companies can often avoid FDA drug approval processes because plasma transfusions are a well-established procedure. Ambrosia, for example, had been charging \$8,000 for one liter of blood and \$12,000 for two as part of a clinical trial. The blood was donated by 16- to 25-year-olds to consumers ages 35 and older. Ambrosia's founder, Jesse Karmazin, 34, a Stanford Medical School graduate, launched the startup three years ago. In 2017, he began a clinical trial and touted impressive results, claiming that young plasma could prevent Alzheimer's

and lower blood cholesterol. But he never made the results of his study public.

Ambrosia isn't the only company that aggressively marketed scientifically dubious potions to those desperate to preserve their youth.

Other medical establishments, such as the Maharaj Institute in Florida, have started expensive clinical trials and openly discussed plans to charge patients for transfusions of plasma from young donors. In fact, people considering enrolling said they had been told they would have to pay \$285,000, STAT reported last March.

"Though the use of young plasma is promising and hopeful, there needs to be rigorous trials to ensure



therapeutic benefits and safety standards for each indication of use," said Dr. Sharon Sha, a neurologist at the Stanford Neuroscience Health Center in Palo Alto, California. "I also have concerns about 'for pay' sites that encourage participation by patients who are not aware of the risks and can be desperate for a cure." Plasma is the liquid part of blood that contains clotting factors, antibodies and other important proteins. Plasma infusions from young donors have been shown to have mildly positive results in Alzheimer's patients, according to a small Stanford University study. Plasma transfusions are normally given to correct for blood-clotting deficiencies in patients who are bleeding. Plasma is not FDA-approved to treat other conditions, such as normal aging or memory loss. "The administration of plasma for indications other than those recognized or approved by the FDA should be performed by a qualified investigator or sponsor who has an active investigational new drug application with the FDA," the FDA said.

Venezuelan oil finds home in India as US shuns shipments



(Insider Bureau)- India is feasting on Venezuelan oil, after the U.S. imposed a de facto ban on crude imports from the Latin American nation. While flows to the U.S. came to a halt, India became the No. 1 buyer of Venezuelan crude in the first half of February, with imports jumping 66 percent to 620,000 barrels a day. Indian refiners Reliance Industries Ltd and Nayara Energy Ltd, which is backed by Rosneft Oil Co PJSC, are driving the boost. Still, Venezuelan crude exports have plunged since U.S. President Donald Trump ratcheted up sanctions against the country's oil company. Shipments of oil, the commodity that bankrolls the regime of embattled president Nicolas Maduro, fell to 1.12 million barrels daily in the first half of February, down 9.2 percent compared with the same period in January. No U.S.-bound vessels have left Venezuelan ports in that time. Seven Venezuelan oil-laden vessels loaded for U.S. refiners Valero Energy Corp and Chevron Corp have been stranded since sanctions were announced on Jan. 28, as state-owned Petroleos de Venezuela SA demands upfront payment for the cargoes.

Bernie crushes 2020 Democratic field in first-day money chase

(Agencies)- Bernie Sanders' 2020 campaign is off to an impressive start: The Vermont senator crushed other Democratic candidates in his first day of online fundraising, and boasted social media stats that easily outstripped his competition, too.

Sanders brought in more than \$5.9 million from more than 220,000 donors in the 24 hours since he announced his presidential candidacy, according to his campaign. He easily eclipsed other announced 2020 candidates' first-day fundraising figures - as well as his own in 2015, when he raked in more than \$1.5 million online in the first 24 hours.

Sanders broke small-dollar fundraising records in that campaign, and his staff has worked to amass an online media empire, posting more than 1,000 videos on his Facebook and Twitter pages over the past two

years. Another show of his digital strength: The Vermont senator's announcement video racked up nearly 5.4 million views on Twitter in the first day, more than any other 2020 contender's formal announcement or exploratory committee video, most of which have been online for weeks.

The rest of the field is playing catch up with Sanders, currently the only candidate in the Democratic primary who begins on the foundation of a full-blown presidential campaign. But the numbers suggest that many of his most passionate followers are on board with his repeat bid for the White House, at least at this early stage of the campaign.

The first email the Sanders 2020 presidential campaign sent to his supporters asking for financial contributions

came around 5 p.m., ten hours after he announced his candidacy. Two emails before that sought signatures on a petition backing his bid. According to the campaign, Sanders' supporters gave \$600,000 in contributions that will recur monthly.

Two key alumni who helped build Sanders' small-dollar fundraising operation during his first run have joined the 2020 team, as expected: Tim Tagaris, owner of Aisle 518 Strategies and Sanders' 2016 digital fundraising director, and Robin Curran, his 2016 digital production director. Two other staffers who worked as Sanders' media producer and digital director in his Senate office have come onto the campaign: Armand Aviram and Georgia Parke. Sen.



Kamala Harris' campaign said it raised \$1.5 million in the first 24 hours of her Jan. 21 launch, and her announcement video has received almost 4.3 million views on Twitter. Sen. Cory Booker, who kicked off his bid on Feb. 1, has seen his announcement video garner nearly 4 million views on the site. On the day she revealed her exploratory committee on Dec. 31, Sen. Elizabeth Warren raised more than \$299,000 online. Her exploratory announcement video has gotten more than 3.8 million views. Sen.



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Trump can't run the Mueller playbook on New York feds



(Agencies)- Even as speculation mounts that special counsel Robert Mueller might be winding down his investigation, a parallel threat to President Donald Trump only seems to be growing within his own Justice Department: the Southern District of New York. Manhattan-based federal prosecutors can challenge Trump in ways Mueller can't. They have jurisdiction over the president's political operation and businesses - subjects that aren't protected by executive privilege, a tool Trump is considering invoking to block portions of Mueller's report. From a PR perspective, Trump has been unable to run the same playbook on SDNY that he's used to erode conservatives' faith in Mueller, the former George W. Bush-appointed FBI director. Legal circles are also buzzing over whether SDNY might buck

DOJ guidance and seek to indict a sitting president. The threat was highlighted when SDNY prosecutors ordered officials from Trump's inaugural committee to hand over donor and financial records. It was the latest aggressive move from an office that has launched investigations into the president's company, former lawyer and campaign finance practices. New York prosecutors have even implicated Trump in a crime.

Add it all up and the result is a spate of hard-to-stymie, legally perilous probes that appears on track to drag on well into Trump's 2020 reelection campaign. SDNY stands poised to carry on Mueller's efforts whenever the special counsel's office closes shop, and it's likely to draw even more attention if freshly confirmed Attorney General William Barr - who now oversees

the Russia probe as DOJ head - clamps down on the public release of Mueller's findings.

"When you combine their experience with the traditional independence of the southern district and the reputation it has, this is like another Mueller investigation going on," said Nick Akerman, a former SDNY assistant attorney who also worked on the Watergate prosecution team. Mueller can take credit for spawning significant parts of SDNY's work. The two DOJ units have shared staff, witnesses and leads, and SDNY has been well-positioned to pick up anything that is outside Mueller's primary lane of investigating collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. A Mueller referral to SDNY, for example, triggered an FBI raid on Michael Cohen's office and hotel room, according

to Cohen's former lawyer. And the fruits of that raid culminated late last year in Cohen's guilty plea, in which the former Trump fixer and attorney admitted in federal court that Trump directed him to make hush money payments to sway the 2016 presidential election.

The New York federal prosecutors are far from finished. They're still seeking interviews with Trump Organization executives, according to a source with knowledge of the probe. And Trump's inaugural committee confirmed earlier this month that it had received a wide-ranging subpoena from SDNY for documents as part of a probe into how the group raised and doled out a record \$107 million. Investigators are looking at everything from potential mail and wire fraud to illegal foreign contributions and money

laundering. "This is why I've been saying for months that the Southern District of New York investigation presents a much more serious threat to the administration, potentially, than what Bob Mueller is doing," Chris Christie, a former New Jersey governor and former federal prosecutor, told ABC News earlier this month. Elaborating on MSNBC, Christie said that SDNY, unlike Mueller, has "no restrictions on their purview." "Bob Mueller has a task: It's Russian interference and potential collusion in the 2016 election," he said. "Southern District of New York is whatever the heck you want." SDNY poses a potent threat because the office has accumulated a perfect storm of witnesses who have guided Trump throughout his career, from his businesses to his meteoric rise in presidential politics up through his inauguration to the White House.

The weapon is now in the minds and bodies

The eruption of anger after Burhan Wani's killing in 2016 was a consequence of 2010. If 2010 was a long period of unrest, 2016 saw an uprising that gave birth to new-age militants, including Adil Ahmad Dar.

(Agencies)- Kashmir's first suicide bomber, a young 17-year-old, Afaq Ahmed Shah, hit the headlines in the year 2000. The state had been in the grips of an insurgency since 1989 but never before had any from the Valley turned their bodies into guided missiles. That was left to foreign mercenaries who sneaked in from across the line of control.

After 22-year-old Adil Ahmad Dar rammed an explosive-laden car into a CRPF bus on Thursday, security officials, on the condition of anonymity, point out that "South Kashmir is full of Adils," conceding that the trend is "extremely worrying."

Neither Shah, nor Dar's family had any inkling that either would blow himself up. I visited the Shah home, in 2000, and his father, Yusuf Shah, a school teacher

said that his son was a shy and introverted child, who preferred the solace of his room to the chatter of his friends. The father recalled that his son usually spent his time studying so that he could become a doctor. Afaq had even got himself photographed wearing a doctor's coat and a stethoscope and kept the framed picture in his room.

The youngest of three brothers, none in the Shah family thought his behaviour had changed when Afaq started spending nights in the local mosque next door. It was good, his parents thought, that he was taking an interest in religion. They were not overly worried either when on some evenings at home Afaq would read the Quran by candlelight even when there was power. The flickering flame and the Quran soon became a routine. Afaq

would read out aloud and cry.

There's always a back story. And, like with many young men and women who get radicalised all over the world, the family either didn't see or didn't want to see what was happening.

Then one day, Afaq just left home.

Three weeks later, he called his father to say he was leaving. A few hours after the phone call, the Shahs heard security vehicles screech to a halt outside their door. Their son, they were told, had blown himself up at the Badami Bagh gate in Srinagar, the army's 15 Corps headquarters.

He had driven a stolen red Maruti -- laden with explosives -- to the high-security barrier. What remained of him were several pieces, his body having been blown over a distance of 100 metres.



Dar's family too got a phone call soon after the attack on the CRPF convoy, the worst attack in the state's three-decade long insurgency. They knew when he left home in March last year, to resurface holding a weapon on social media sites, that he would die. Why did he choose the path of violence?

His father recounts an incident that left a mark on his son's psyche. In several interviews since the attack, the father narrates how his son was deeply affected by how he was made to rub his nose on the ground by

security officials while on his way back from school. After that, he dropped out of Class 12 and started engaging in what his family called "pro-freedom politics".

Adil was one among the hundreds - if not thousands - who took to the streets after the killing of poster-boy militant commander Burhan Wani. Kashmir was angry, not only because Wani was eliminated in an encounter, but because the trust deficit between the Valley and Delhi had eroded over the years and reached break point.

Facebook and Google Face another costly battle

(Agencies)-EU's view is that free social media is not a public good if its business model hoovers up user data without consent.

For many people, it probably sounds a little rich to hear the European Union (EU) accuse Silicon Valley of being a graveyard of innovation. But that's where we are in 2019. Regulators are hitting the likes of Alphabet Inc.'s Google and Facebook Inc. with a flurry of antitrust fines and data-privacy probes, implying that they regard tech billionaires as more John D. Rockefeller than Nikola Tesla.

The endgame, according to Brussels' top data watchdog, is to make sure new startups aren't blown out of the water by Big Tech (or gobbled up), which should ultimately benefit consumers by allowing them more choice.

Tackling this so-called "kill zone," where fledgling tech companies are acquired or copied out of existence by deep-pocketed incumbents, is a prime ambition for European Data Protection Supervisor Giovanni Buttarelli, nicknamed "Mr GDPR" after the data-

privacy law. When I met him in Brussels recently, Buttarelli checked off the barriers to entry for a startup: It needs to first outbid the likes of Amazon.com Inc., Facebook and others for engineering talent; then sell its product through an app store probably run by Google or Apple Inc.; and finally compete against big players with established networks and huge cash piles. And even it clears all these hurdles, it's still vulnerable to being taken out.

There's a connection between this dominance of Big Tech - which is proven by the decline in venture-capital financing for upstarts, as my colleague Noah Smith has written - and harm to consumers. The EU view is that the "free" price tag of social media and apps is not a public good if it's underpinned by a business model that hoovers up data from users without consent. And if the profits from that are spent on blocking competition, there's less chance of a market-based alternative.

Google and Facebook rebut this view, insisting that a disruptive rival could unseat them anytime. But regulators have given up waiting for one.

The recipe for fixing things, according to Buttarelli, is threefold. He wants more competition through antitrust enforcement, more data protection through GDPR, and more fairness and transparency for customers from the tech giants themselves.

None of this would destroy Facebook or Google. GDPR is estimated to have inflicted a negative impact of 2 to 3 percent on the two companies' total ad revenues, according to Bank of America analyst Justin Post. The running total of EU antitrust fines against Google is about 6.7 billion euros (\$7.5 billion), while the company's yearly sales are more than \$100 billion. Still, Eric Leandri, co-founder of French search engine Qwant, says he's confident that recent fines against Google on competition and



data-privacy grounds - which the US firm is appealing - will have had a chilling impact.

Defenders of the Silicon Valley faith will grumble about mission creep in Brussels. It's certainly true that regulators need to be careful not to muddy the waters with inconsistent or unclear regulation. The recent German competition ruling against Facebook uses data privacy as its main argument, but without a prior ruling on GDPR infringement. That's a potential problem because it's hard to separate the need to enforce user privacy with the need to safeguard competition. Indeed, both things might be in conflict one

day, says Ariel Ezrachi, a competition specialist at Oxford University. Imagine the right to keep your data private under one law alongside the need to share your data in a competitive market under another.

Another thing not covered in Buttarelli's plan is where investment comes from. It was no surprise when Sweden's music-streaming giant Spotify Technology SA decided to list its shares on the New York Stock Exchange last year. If Europe fails to unify its fragmented capital markets, especially after Brexit, the fruits of Buttarelli's labour will end up in America regardless.

New problem for legal weed: Exploding pot factories

(By our staff Reporter)-States are facing a new danger as legal marijuana spreads across the country: Explosions and fires at cannabis factories are sending workers to the hospital with severe burns, revealing the nascent industry's lack of proper safety standards.

In the 33 states where the drug is legal for medical or recreational use, at least 10 fires or explosions have occurred in the past five years at facilities that extract hash oil used in edible products. Nearly all resulted in serious injuries for production-line staff.

"The extraction process is continuing to evolve,"

Raymond Bizal, director of California and Oregon regional operations for the National Fire Protection Association, told POLITICO. "The fire-safety industry has to play catch-up." Most of the states where marijuana is legal offer no safety and health guidance for the new industry. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, which researches

work-related injury and illness, has conducted only two hazard evaluations of legal marijuana facilities, neither of which focused on the extraction of hash oil. Even in those states that do offer



safety and health guidance - Colorado, California, Michigan, Oregon, and Washington - fire safety officials complain that worker safety protections are often inadequate.

Worker safety is a matter of growing urgency because legal marijuana is a booming business. In 2018 there were an estimated \$10.4 billion in U.S. sales

of legal medical and recreational marijuana. That translated into 259,000 jobs, according to cannabis research firm New Frontier Data. Some estimates project sales to reach \$40 billion by 2021. Marijuana legalization is fast becoming a mainstream position for Democratic presidential candidates. Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) called for federal legalization on Feb. 11, and even confessed that "a long time ago" she'd smoked the stuff herself. "I did inhale," she said (an allusion to candidate Bill Clinton's much-mocked claim in 1992 that he did not). Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.), another presidential hopeful, introduced a bill in 2017 to legalize marijuana at the federal level. But labor unions complain that state governments are moving too swiftly to license producers, outpacing the states' ability to inspect production facilities for potential safety violations. Unions also want more certification training to teach workers how to handle machinery and

equipment properly. Extracting hash oil from cannabis is dangerous because typically it requires pouring highly-flammable butane or some other volatile solvent into a cannabis-filled pipe. The butane strips THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, from the cannabis plant, which then drips down in liquid form and is collected for consumption in cannabis-laced chocolate, butter, or tea, or, more directly, in hash-oil vape pens. In Arizona last year, a fire at a legal medical marijuana facility erupted after a worker improperly stored a can of butane, causing an explosion. "This is something fire departments and law enforcement and city code officials will have to deal with," Fire Capt. Mark Dillon of Coolidge, Ariz., told ABC's Nick Ciletti at the time. When performed in illegal marijuana operations - often located in residential locations - the processing of marijuana for hash oil has long been known to cause frequent deadly explosions. In 2017 the Drug Enforcement Agency recorded fires or explosions in roughly 10 percent of all illegal extraction labs nationwide.

Will pay up, RCom says after SC threatens to jail Anil Ambani in Ericsson debt case

The Supreme Court has directed Anil Ambani to pay Rs 453 crore that Reliance Communications owed to equipment supplier Ericsson within four weeks or face a three-month jail term.

(Agencies)- Troubles for Anil Ambani, the chairman of the Anil Dhirubhai Ambani group, seem to be mounting, with the Supreme Court on Wednesday directing him to pay Rs 453 crore to equipment supplier Ericsson within four weeks or face a three-month jail term.

The order has cast a shadow on the once-flamboyant industrialist who is the younger brother of India's richest man Mukesh Ambani.

The Supreme Court order in the Reliance Communications (RCom)-Ericsson case will also have political ramifications. The Opposition Congress is likely to ask tough questions to the Modi government on the choice of the jaded industrialist as a partner to France's Dassault Aviation, makers of the Rafale fighter jets. The Rafale deal is already under a political cloud after the Congress alleged irregularities in the deal process. The Congress

has also questioned the choice of the Indian partner for the deal, saying the Modi government favoured Anil's fledgling defence firm at the expense of the more experienced state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL).

Anil's once flagship firm Reliance Communications (RCom) had been fighting an ugly legal battle with its one-time supplier Ericsson whom it owed Rs 550 crore. RCom missed its second deadline to pay it in January this year.

The Rs 550 crore amount was a settlement reached between the Swedish firm and RCom instead of the actual Rs 1,100 crore the latter owed Ericsson as fees for 'managed services' of its telecom network. RCom exited the telecom business last year.

Last week, Anil Ambani had to personally appear before the Supreme Court on the contempt petition filed by Ericsson. "No one likes to lose his company.

Unfortunately, RCom has fallen on bad days. I tried to save it but couldn't," senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi, speaking on behalf of his client Anil Ambani told the Supreme Court.

However, the Supreme Court seemed to show no leniency to the alleged defaulter, and has now directed him and two directors of his firm to pay up or face imprisonment.

RCom's shares fell 6 per cent on the Bombay Stock Exchange following the announcement. From a peak valuation of Rs 1,65,917 crore in January 2008, RCom market cap has shrunk to just Rs 1,560 crore as on February 19, 2019.

In a media release, RCom said, "We respect the Hon'ble Supreme Court judgement. The RCom Group shall comply with the same."

However, paying up the money will not be easy for Anil, as his group companies are already



neck-deep in debt. The combined debt of his listed group companies stood at Rs 1.72 lakh crore as on September 2018.

The group had been selling off assets, and sometimes entire businesses, to pare its debt. However, a deal with brother Mukesh for selling Anil's telecom assets to the latter's Reliance Jio for Rs 18,000 crore fell through, after the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) insisted that Jio should accept RCom's arrears too.

However, Jio has been unwilling to do so. Following this, RCom said it is proposing a debt resolution plan with the National

Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and "expects substantial unsustainable debt and liabilities to stand extinguished under the NCLT process."

Will Mukesh come to his brother's aid and help him avoid a jail term? That's what will be keen to watch now.

RCom sources say that the company will be able to pay out of internal accruals. There have been income tax refunds of around Rs 400 crore, a source said, which could be used to make the payment. Moreover, Rs 118 crore of the total Rs 550 crore plus interest has already been paid, leaving the debt at Rs 453 crore, the sources added.

China accuses US of trying to block its tech development

The Trump administration has pressured allies to shun networks supplied by Huawei Technologies Ltd., threatening the company's access to 5G markets.

(Agencies)- China's government on Monday accused the United States of trying to block its industrial development after Vice President Mike Pence said Chinese equipment poses a threat to countries that are rolling out next-generation mobile communications.

And in a potential blow to US efforts to rally its allies on the issue, British media reported UK intelligence agencies found it is possible to limit potential security risks of Chinese equipment in fifth-generation networks.

The US argues Beijing might use Chinese tech companies to gather intelligence about foreign countries. The Trump administration has pressured allies to shun networks supplied by Huawei Technologies Ltd., threatening the company's

access to 5G markets.

Huawei, the biggest global maker of switching gear for phone and internet companies, denies accusations it facilitates Chinese spying. Its founder said last month it would reject government demands to disclose confidential information about foreign customers. The US government is trying to "fabricate an excuse for suppressing the legitimate development" of Chinese enterprises, said a foreign ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang. He accused the United States of using "political means" to interfere in economic activity, "which is hypocritical, immoral and unfair bullying."

Mike Pence, speaking Saturday in Germany, urged European allies to take seriously "the threat" he said was posed by Huawei as they look for partners to build 5G networks.

The 5G technology is meant to vastly expand the reach of networks to support internet-linked medical equipment, factory machines, self-driving cars and other devices. That makes it more politically sensitive and raises the potential cost of security failures. Pence said Huawei and other Chinese telecom equipment makers provide Beijing with "access to any data that touches their network or equipment." He appealed to European governments to "reject any enterprise that would compromise the integrity of our communications technology or our national security systems." In what could amount to a turning point for the U.S. effort to isolate Huawei, Britain's National Cyber Security Centre has found that the risk of using its networks is manageable, according to the



Financial Times and other British media outlets. The reports, citing anonymous sources, said there are ways to limit cybersecurity risks. They said the U.K.'s decision would carry weight with European allies who are also evaluating the safety of their networks. The British government is due to finish a review of its policies on the safety of 5G in March or April. The office of British Prime Minister Theresa May said Monday that "no decisions have been taken." If eventually confirmed, "such a decision by the U.K. would be a strong message and could be

influential in the medium term," said Lukasz Olejnik, a research associate at Oxford University's Center for Technology and Global Affairs. The British review "could inevitably serve as an input or a reference point in other countries' risk assessments," he said.

Officials including a vice president of the European Union have expressed concern about Chinese regulations issued last year that require companies to cooperate with intelligence agencies. No country in Europe, however, has issued a blanket veto on using Huawei technology in the way the U.S. has urged.



Gucci unmasking a harder, more masculine collection

Gucci creative director Alessandro Michele says the blackface controversy has had a deep impact on the company and provided a learning experience for everyone.

Gucci creative director Alessandro Michele says the blackface controversy has had a deep impact on the company and provided a learning experience for everyone.

Michele, speaking to reporters backstage after Gucci opened Milan Fashion Week on Wednesday, said the lessons were not linked to creativity but to how the company operates. Gucci announced it would hire directors for diversity and take other measures after facing a backlash for a balaclava sweater that evoked blackface.

Michele said he took full

responsibility for the misstep. He said after experiencing the "displeasure" of the controversy, "I hold on to the beauty of having learned. I learned a lot. This remains. It is not just a moment of emotion. I think it deeply affected the work of the company."

Alessandro Michele's latest collection for Gucci was shown under unrelenting, even blinding, strobe lights that the designer said in some way evoked the intensity of everyday life. A religious hymn played as the models walked deliberately, almost robotically.

Michele chose a mask as the

metaphor for the collection, noting that "clothing is our mask, which both shows and hides."

The show invitation was glued inside a paper-mache mask of Hermaphrodite, a homage to his exploration of genderless dressing. "The ancient world sang about the marvels of being between two sexes. Today it is one of the more difficult masks to wear, but being a hybrid is a blessing," Michele said.

Still, the combined menswear and womenswear collection had a tougher, more masculine edge, shrinking ever so slightly from the designer's gender-bending musings of past seasons. It was at its heart the exploration of the suit, with broad shoulders and unfinished edges and a stronger silhouette.

The looks also combined a sense of protection and also aggression with spiky accents on the looks and on belts worn cross body. An elaborate ruffle and lace collar peaked out of an overcoat, worn with baggy trousers. Boyish striped sweaters tucked into patterned jeans.

For women there were pretty silken shirts with pleated peplums over straight skirts. A gray jacket featured three concentric rounded collars, like shawls, worn with trouser pants.

Michele worked at Fendi as a young designer under Karl Lagerfeld. A day after the design legend's death, Michele recalled a man with the spirit of Peter Pan.

Michele said Lagerfeld called him "DJ" for his musical choices and insisted that for the music be played at full blast.

"I loved him a lot. I am deeply sorry and not fully aware of the fact that he is no longer here. I have the impression that it is only news in the newspapers," Michele said.

Milan-based Austrian designer Arthur



Arbesser has little chance of cultural missteps in his collections. His inspiration is from the world around him — from the architecture outside his Milan studio, to the checkerboard tiles of his bathroom to the durable Loden fabrics of his native Austria.

"I don't even pretend to try to go too far. I just go where I am, and what I am surrounded with, and straightforward, honest collection, basically," Arbesser said backstage.

The color palette of the collection included muted checks in mango, lime and lavender, against larger contrasts of orange against dark blue. The contrasts playing well against the color-dotted rock-climbing wall backdrops.

The collection effused an urban modernity. Handkerchief skirts were worn with print blouses inspired by an abacus. Ribbed knitwear featured ruffle-y edges down the sleeves and long the hems. T-shirt dresses were overlaid with bodices and worn over stretchy jersey wear. A long Loden dress flowed monastically. Jackets belted over harlequin patterned tops and pleated business skirts.

"Literally, some of the things are my stuff. I mean this is my old tuxedo jacket when I was 18, and this is my boy scout pants from when I was a teenager. We just redid them in very feminine fabrics, and all the sudden they were working," Arbesser said.

Are boots the new sneakers? Here's how to wear boots with a dress



Winter is almost over and it's time to welcome spring. If you are busy packing off your winter footwear, you might want to keep at least one pair of your favourite boots aside. Boots with dresses and gowns are going to be big this spring. The trend is a hit on global ramps, right from Kate Spade's shows to those of Prabal Gurung. Fashion forwards are making the best of the trend. Michelle Obama's

thigh-high glittery boots by Balenciaga were quite the trendsetter. She looked spectacular in the yellow gown teamed with the boots. Models Bella Hadid and Sara Sampaio have also been rocking fun, flirty dresses with high ankle boots. Style experts say that styling your boots with dresses is a fun way to style your feminine clothing as it adds an element of sturdiness to the look.

Boots, the new sneakers

"The way sneakers became versatile and were seen being styled with everything from dresses to saris to joggers, boots, too, have become the most sought-after piece," says designer Anvita Sharma.

Style it right

Don't match your boots with your dress. "Picking colours from the same family is fine but you can't be matching it head to toe," says designer Nachiket Barve. "Also, if you are short, wearing ankle length boots with dresses would be unflattering. Wear a pair of tights in the same colour as that of the boots," he says.

Pay close attention to matters of the heart

Technology executives are notorious for believing they have special powers and are indestructible. They become obsessed with making money and achieving success — to the detriment of their health. I know because I am one of them.

Heart disease is the leading killer of adults in the US, and, according to The New York Times, Americans of south Asian extraction are four times as likely as members of the general population to develop it, and tend to do so a decade sooner.

The Times article cited a seven-year study by University of California San Francisco and Northwestern University named Mediators of Atherosclerosis in South Asians Living in America, or Masala, which followed more than 900 south Asians in Chicago and the Bay Area. They suffered from high blood pressure, high triglycerides, abnormal cholesterol, and type-2 diabetes at relatively low body weights.

I have a feeling that it isn't just my Indian friends in Silicon Valley who need to worry; heart disease is a common problem in the business world — also in India. Technology executives are

notorious for believing they have special powers and are indestructible. They become obsessed with making money and achieving success — to the detriment of their health.

I know because I am one of them.

I started a company back in 1997, which became one of the hottest startups of its time. All was great until the dot-com bubble burst and 9/11 compounded the economic shock in 2001. After a year of extremely long hours and incredible teamwork, we turned the company around and were on track for 200% annual growth rates and 25% profit margins. I was determined to make it as big a success as my previous startup, which we had taken public, and believed that nothing could stop me.

I was wrong. My body could stop me.



On a flight home from Mexico, where I went to take a short celebratory vacation, I started to feel a shooting pain in my left arm. It was as if electricity were passing through my veins. I ignored it — as I had ignored the back pain that I'd felt on the cruise to Cancún and my extreme nausea after climbing the Chichen Itza pyramid — because I thought I was indestructible.

Fortunately, my wife, Tavinder insisted that I see a doctor as soon as the flight landed. But I had not been sick in a decade and didn't have a personal physician. I didn't know whom to

call. So we just went to the nearest hospital: The University of North Carolina Medical Center. There, the nurse strapped an EKG monitor to my chest, reviewed the results, and started making phone calls. Then she pulled Tavinder aside to talk to her. Before I could understand what was going on, doctors had put me on a stretcher and taken me into an operating room, where I was sedated. I woke up to learn that I had been having a major heart attack and needed placement of two stents in my arteries. The doctor said that if I had checked in two hours later, I would not have checked out: I

would have ended up in the morgue. I share this story because I want others who are as careless about their health as I was to realise that they too are vulnerable. You may not subscribe to anything called a work-life balance, but your body certainly does. You need to monitor and nurture your body. I used to have an obsession with building businesses and forgot about building health. I was focused on the destination rather than on the journey. I caution you to not do the same. Get regular checkups; exercise; meditate; learn to relax. Do the things that are fun and good for the soul.

How exercise can help you fight jet lag symptoms

Exercise has been known to cause changes to our body clock. But can exercise help jet lag?



Finding it hard to cope with jet lag, shift-based work? Doing some exercise can shift the human body clock and help you adjust to the shifted schedules, suggests new research. The study, from the Arizona State University, showed that exercise can shift the human body clock with the direction and amount of this effect depending on the time of day or night in which people exercise. Exercising at 7 a.m. or between 1 and 4 p.m. advanced the body clock to an earlier time, and exercising between 7 and 10 p.m. delayed the body clock to a later time. Exercising between 1 and 4 a.m. and at 10 a.m., however, had little effect on the body clock, and the phase-shifting effects of exercise did not differ based on age or gender, the researchers explained. "Exercise has been known to cause changes to our body clock. We were able to clearly show in this study when exercise delays the body clock and when it advances it," said lead author Shawn Youngstedt, from the varsity, adding, "This is the first study to compare exercise's effects on the body clock, and could open up the possibility of using exercise to help counter the negative effects of jet lag and shift work."

Antarctic fungus can bring cheaper cancer drugs

At present, the anti-cancer drug costs around Rs 2,000 for a vial of 10,000 units, and the monthly cost of treatment ranges between Rs 10,000 and Rs 20,000.

Researchers from Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, and National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research, Goa, have isolated a fungus from Antarctic soil and moss that can produce an anti-cancer drug used to treat Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL), which is a common form of childhood cancer.

The drug produced from the Antarctic fungi will be cheaper and lead to fewer side effects than the ones currently available in the market, according to researchers whose findings were published in the journal Scientific Reports this month.

ALL is a type of blood cancer where immature white blood cells are produced in excess. The chemotherapeutic enzyme currently in use to test ALL, L-Asparaginase, is isolated from bacteria such as E.Coli and E. Chrysanthemum grown in a liquid medium.

"The Antarctic fungus, on other hand, can be grown on solid mediums, mostly agricultural waste like rice husk and wheat bran and



does not need specialised medium, which brings down the cost of production," said Dr Devarai Santhosh Kumar, principal investigator and associate professor in the department of chemical engineering at IIT Hyderabad.

"The method can be easily scaled up. We already have the fungus stored in a frozen state so that we would not have to go back to collect samples for expansion of production," he added.

The National Cancer Registry programme puts the incidence of

ALL in various parts of India between 16.9 and 61.3 per million for boys and between 10.3 and 45.8 per million for girls under the age of 15. At present, the drug costs around ₹2,000 for a vial of 10,000 units, and the monthly cost of treatment ranges between ₹10,000 and ₹20,000. "The dosage depends on the height and weight of the patient. ALL patients have to take it from at least six months to several years, depending on when cancer goes into remission. Most people - six or seven of 10 in India - are not able to afford it.

Kim Kumari wins Miss India USA 2019

Vidhi Dave is Mrs. India USA, Esha Kode is Miss Teen India USA

(By a staff reporter) New Jersey-

Kim Kumari, 18, is from New Jersey and is planning to be Optometrist and help Third World Nation Children learn about the importance of eye care. Kim also got the Best Talent Award for her performance of Lavni (Maharashtra folk dance) with a fusion of Bhangra. Mrs. India USA, Vidhi Dave, 31, from Connecticut has a Data Scientist degree from Harvard University is a Project Manager with an IT company. Her hobbies include all kind of dancing including Bharatnatyam, Folk and Bollywood. She wants to be a social activist and become a voice for women's empowerment.



(from left Vidhi Dave - Mrs. India USA, Kim Kumari - Miss India USA, Esha Kode - Miss Teen India USA)

Esha Kode, 16, from New Jersey was crowned Miss Teen India USA who also got the Miss Talented Award. Esha aspire to be a top fashion model and movie star and academically pursue to be a pediatric surgeon. Kim and Vidhi will represent USA in the Miss & Mrs. India Worldwide 2019 to be held in Mumbai in September of this year. The three won the crowns out of 75 finalists from all over USA. The annual pageant which also celebrated thirty seventh anniversary of Miss India USA was held in Fords, New Jersey.

Photo courtesy:
Hemant Pandya of
Friday Films.

Prime Original Series "Made in Heaven" trailer launched

(By Our Staff Reporter) Mumbai : Amazon Prime Video, Excel Media & Entertainment and Tiger Baby today announced the trailer launch of their upcoming Prime Original Series Made in Heaven. The trailer invites viewers to take a peek into the lives of Tara and Karan, two Delhi-based wedding planners. Their stories unfold over the course of an opulent wedding season. As tradition jostles with modern aspirations against the backdrop of big fat Indian weddings, many secrets and myriad lies are revealed.

Created by Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti, Made in Heaven is set to release on March 8th, exclusively on Amazon Prime Video across 200 countries and territories. Vijay Subramaniam, Director and Head, Content, Amazon Prime Video India, said, "Made In Heaven brings to Indian customers a show with a fresh storyline, incredible talent and a layered narrative that will draw the viewer in. We



endeavour to bring viewers' local, immersive stories that are relatable – Made In Heaven is a gripping drama series from the house of Tiger Baby Productions and our long-time collaborators, Excel Media & Entertainment. Indian weddings are a heady mix of celebrations, drama and intrigue for customers everywhere and this show will offer just that by lifting the veil and looking closely at what transpires behind-the-scenes. We are ecstatic to work with Zoya, Reema and the team and are certain audiences will enjoy this voyeuristic view beneath the veneer of grand Indian weddings." Ritesh

Sidhwani, Excel Media & Entertainment, said, "We have had two mega-hits in collaboration with Amazon Prime Video. Inside Edge nominated at last year's International Emmy Awards was a phenomenal success and Mirzapur connected with customers not only in India but also globally. We believe our next show Made in Heaven will take our successful collaboration a step further. Made in Heaven holds a mirror to society, bringing to light the tussle between tradition and modernity in India. The series will certainly make viewers reflect on the state of Indian society – a culture in transition."

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Gully Boy movie review:

Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt introduce hip-hop to mainstream Hindustan

Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt's Gully Boy, an underdog story shining a light on India's incipient hip-hop subculture, is the first great Hindi film of 2019 and a rousing celebration of spunk. Rating: 4/5.

Gully Boy

Director - Zoya Akhtar

Cast - Ranveer Singh, Alia Bhatt, Siddhant Chaturvedi, Vijay Raaz, Kalki Koechlin

Rating - 4/5

The first time we see Ranveer Singh in Gully Boy, he's stealing a car. Three men head toward an SUV, Singh walking third, far behind the cocksure leader. He appears tentative and preoccupied, having sought out the least active role. His name is Murad, and that is his way. A college kid obsessed with hip-hop, he even writes songs hoping someone else will belt out his rhymes. He approaches a performer with a notebook-full of verses, but this man disagrees, advising him instead to do what feels hard. "If we get comfortable," he asks Murad, "who the hell will rap?"

Zoya Akhtar's Gully Boy, an underdog story shining a light on India's incipient hip-hop subculture, is the first great Hindi film of 2019 and a rousing

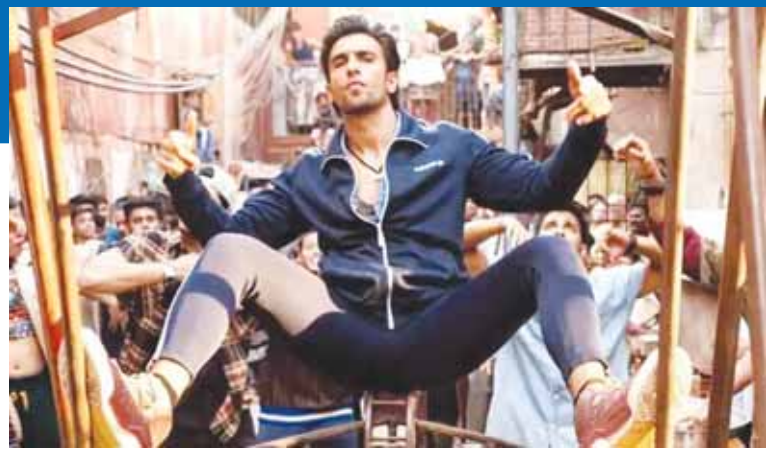
celebration of spunk. The writing is enthralling, the texture fantastic, and this world is a revelation. Here are characters without room to breathe who express themselves breathlessly, through a style of music that has always belonged to the marginalised. Dissent finds a way - and a beat.

How does a rapper-to-be find another, though? The answer lies in Murad's graffiti scrawl, where he accurately lists 'Internet' alongside 'Roti, Kapda, Makaan' as an essential. Rap battles in India used to take place on forums online before hip hop enthusiasts realised there were finally enough of them to assemble and make real noise. Murad sends a Facebook friend request to a performer, and finds a musician via comments under a YouTube video. He's nervous asking to meet up, incredulous about suggesting it "directly." This is the coyness with which young people approach crushes, the hesitant and gradual outreach

of the romantic.

There is nothing hesitant about Murad's girlfriend, however. Played by an electric Alia Bhatt, Safeena is an incurable hothead - he nicknames her 'Danger Aapa' - who tells her man to go ahead and dream. She's going to be a doctor and so they're going to be just fine. She's a dynamite character, and this is reassurance Murad sorely needs, living in a tiny Dharavi flat occasionally beset by tourists who want poverty porn on their Instagram feeds. Murad and Safeena are practicing Muslims, childhood sweethearts sundered by wealth and class.

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The film opens with a dedication to pioneering Indian hip-hop stars Naezy and Divine, with Akhtar and co-writer Reema Kagti borrowing background and specifics from their lives. Many local rappers show up, delightfully cameoing as themselves. Yet Gully Boys doesn't try to explain the music itself, or what draws these hungry young men to the

righteous aggression of Nas and Tupac and Jay-Z, or even what distinguishes this subculture from other rebellions. They may say "old school" a lot, but they aren't even wearing oversized shirts and multiple chains.

Instead, the writers studiously follow the graph of a sports drama, taking as much from the Rocky template as from Eminem's screen memoir, 8 Mile. It's a smart move, keeping the beats basic and buoyant - if repetitive - and making sure the energy is full-tilt and familiar, instead of trying to convert audiences to rap. Besides, the prizefighter template is apropos. Who was the first rap battler in the world? Mohammad Ali.

The Wife movie review:

Glenn Close deserves an Oscar; it's the greatest film of the post-MeToo era. 5 stars

Glenn Close cements her position as the Oscar front-runner with the greatest film of the post-MeToo era. An unmissable stunner. Rating: 5/5.

The Wife

Director - Bjorn Runge

Cast - Glenn Close, Jonathan Pryce, Max Irons, Christian Slater

Rating - 5/5

The Wife opens with a sex scene - not alarming, necessarily, but not romantic either. A middle-aged couple lays in bed. The man is restless; the woman asleep. He wakes her up, and his hand snakes out of view, under the sheets. No, she says, as she groggily turns to him. Not now.

It seems like they've been through this before, though, and they both know how this scene plays out. They're simply acting out a ritual. "You just have to lie there," he says, coaxing her like

he must have before. "Do nothing." She gives in eventually, and even enjoys herself. Soon, the man turns over and falls asleep, the transaction complete, the status quo maintained.

The next day, he is awoken by a phone call informing him that he has won the Nobel Prize for literature.

He tells the kind man on the line to wait while his wife gets on the extension; he wants to share the moment with her. Together, they dance on the bed in celebration. But for the second time in the same day, she asks him to not do something. "Don't thank me in your acceptance speech," she says, "I don't want to come across as the long suffering wife." He does it anyway.

The Wife is a searing drama about relationships, not only between writer Joe Castleman (Jonathan Pryce) and his wife, Joan (Glenn Close), but also about men and women, and the crippling generational fallout of patriarchy. It might even be the greatest film of the post #MeToo era, although it was made before the allegations against Harvey Weinstein were first reported in 2017.

The film has had an unusually long and vacillating release - sort of like an old marriage coming undone. It is technically a 2017 movie, having first been screened at the Toronto International Film Festival that year, before being released in American theatres a few months later, and in the UK



a few months after that. It arrives in India just ahead of the Academy Awards, where Close has been nominated for Best Actress.

She is - and I say this as the greatest fan of Yalitza Aparicio's work in Roma - my absolute favourite for the Oscar. It's difficult to take your eyes off her, even in

Joan's many moments of silence. Years of being put in her place, patronisingly introduced by her husband as his 'better half', and then being sent away to discuss fluff with the other women while Joe bares his soul to the world with his art has almost convinced her that she is just that -- a long suffering wife.

Sara Ali Khan to Ananya Panday: Why is Kartik Aaryan the new Bollywood sensation?



Year 2011: Amid big releases like *Ready*, *Shaitan*, *Zindagi Na Milegi Doabara* and *Singham*, a film quietly hit the screens. A film about three friends and their "supposed" love stories. Undertones of misogyny and women-bashing disguised in the garb of a romantic comedy, director Luv Ranjan's *Pyaar Ka PUNCHNAMA* opened to mixed reviews. Despite divided opinions on film, one thing that earned the film a separate fan base was Kartik Aaryan's five-minute monologue. However, this new face was soon forgotten in the barrage of other newcomers in Bollywood. There were two forgettable films in between too: *Kaanchi* and *Akaash Vani*.

Year 2015: But he was still not done with films. Kartik made a grand return with *Pyaar Ka PUNCHNAMA 2*. The sequel to the hit first film was nothing more than serving the same old wine in a not-so-new bottle. Kartik's homecoming was lauded by a handful of fans of the franchise. But this too fizzled out.

Year 2018: Three years later, Kartik and Luv Ranjan decided

to return with a vengeance. This time they had a new story and new title for their film. Bidding adieu to the *Pyaar Ka PUNCHNAMA* franchise, Kartik and Luv Ranjan decided to give a new spin to bromance with *Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweetie*. But little did this Gwalior boy know that the film was going to change his life forever.

The film set the cash registers ringing and the audience instantly fell in love with Sonu. So much so, that in no time, his fan pages mushroomed on social media, the paparazzi started following the current heartthrob and he was brushing shoulders with A-listers like Kareena Kapoor Khan.

At a time when his film was busy crossing the Rs 100-crore mark, Kartik had taken off to Singapore with Kareena for Manish Malhotra's fashion show. The pictures of him walking the ramp with Kareena were proof that he had truly arrived in Bollywood.

The massive success of *Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweetie* earned him the tag of a mass hero who could carry a film entirely on his

shoulder. Out of his other *Pyaar Ka PUNCHNAMA* co-stars, from both the films, only Kartik Aaryan has come this far in Bollywood. Divyendu Sharma is now back to the spotlight with the hit web series *Mirzapur* but in films, Sharma's career never really took off.

Not so for Kartik. The new boy who made his debut in Bollywood as Kartik Tiwari, soon got himself a new second name - Kartik Aaryan, the extra 'a' for luck included.

In his own words, "Now people know who I am. Before the film [*Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweetie*], they knew me by face but not my name. I am no longer just catering to the youth. Now, taijis, chachis and mummies know me. For the first time in eight years, I have the option of choosing from a variety of scripts. I no longer need to pick up just about anything that comes my way. The options are better than before. I strived to become a priority for filmmakers, rather than an option. Sonu... made it possible."

Vicky Kaushal's *Uri* is second Hindi film on IMDb's list of top Indian films after Amitabh Bachchan's *Anand*



Vicky Kaushal's *Uri The Surgical Strike* has emerged as the second Hindi film after Amitabh Bachchan and Rajesh Khanna's *Anand* on IMDb's list of top Indian films.

Aditya Dhar's *Uri The Surgical Strike*, the first Bollywood release of 2019 that has also become the highest grosser of the year, has now found a space on IMDb's list of top Indian films. Ranked after Amitabh Bachchan and Rajesh Khanna's classic *Anand*, Mohanlal's *Drishyam* (Malayalam) and Kamal Haasan's *Nayakan* (Tamil), *Uri* is fourth Indian film and second Hindi film on the list. According to a report in *Livemint*, "IMDb has curated a list of India's top 250 movies based on a weighted average of user ratings. All the films on this list have had at least 5,000 users casting votes with more weight given to regular user votes." *Uri* has garnered a rating of 8.6 while Rajesh Khanna-Amitabh Bachchan-starrer *Anand* is rated 8.7. *Nayakan* and *Drishyam*, too are rated at 8.6. Amol Palekar's *Golmaal* (8.5), Anurag Kashyap's *Black Friday* (8.5) and

Andhadhun (8.4) are other Hindi films in top 10 on the list. Meanwhile, the film has collected Rs 228.78 crore at domestic ticket windows. Trade analyst Taran Adarsh tweeted the figures Wednesday afternoon. "#UriTheSurgicalStrike is having a miraculous run... [Sixth] Tue is higher than Fri and Mon... Will challenge *lifetime biz* of #Simmba... Now eyes? 250 cr... [Week 6] Fri 1.20 cr, Sat 2.52 cr, Sun 3.23 cr, Mon 1.32 cr, Tue 1.38 cr. Total: ? 228.78 cr. India biz," he said. *URI* is based on surgical strike carried out by the Indian Army in 2016 on terrorist camps in Pakistan in retaliation for the terror attack on an army camp in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir. Starring Vicky Kaushal in the lead role and produced by Ronnie Screwvala, *Uri* also stars Mohit Raina, Paresh Rawal, Yami Gautam, and Kirti Kulhari amongst others. The film was directed by Aditya Dhar.



BRITs 2019

Little Mix rule the red carpet in VERY daring gowns as they prepare to battle it out with pop's finest on music's biggest night of the year

The hottest stars in music headed to London's O2 arena in North Greenwich on Wednesday night in celebration of the 2019 BRIT Awards.

The evening, hosted by Jack Whitehall for the second year in a row, sees P!nk being honoured for her career with the Outstanding Contribution To Music prize. Little Mix ruled the red carpet as the stars flocked to the venue, looking absolutely incredible in four very different evening gowns. The girls were nominated for Best British Group and Best British Video for Woman Like Me (feat. Nicki Minaj), but only walked away with the latter award. Leigh-Anne Pinnoch commanded attention in a daring green skirt with a thigh-high split, teamed with a coordinating silk top.

The revealing ensemble highlighted her tiny waist and toned stomach, perfectly complemented by her long, loose curls. Perrie Edwards opted for a more classic red carpet look, slipping into a midnight blue strapless number by Suzanne Neville.

Jade Thirlwall looked angelic in a white number with a sparkling silver overlay, while Jesy Nelson wowed in a sexy black lace number. Little Mix will be performing at the ceremony once again, proving their title as the world's best girl band.

Dua Lipa, 23, was also turning heads in a bright fuchsia frock as she joined the likes of Lily Allen and Maya Jama on the red carpet. The singer looked sensational in her eye-catching Christopher Kane dress, which featured an entirely sheer, black lace bodice with an extreme plunging neckline. Dua added some quirky accessories including emerald rings and a dazzling silver manicure to match her diamond necklace.

The New Rules hitmaker had the most nods out of all the BRIT nominees for the second consecutive year, after receiving five in 2018. Last year saw the pop princess take home two prizes; British Female and British Breakthrough Artist. This year, despite being nominated four times; in the British Single category for her hits IDGAF and One Kiss and in

the British Video section for the same songs, but she walked away with the British Single award for One Kiss. Lily Allen was also making a strong impression on the red carpet, showing off a new Gothic inspired hairstyle as she descended upon the O2. She embraced a bohemian vibe in a floaty, floral print Coach dress and completed her look with a smoky eye and some serious attitude. Pink put in an appearance at the awards to collect her top prize, ensuring all eyes were on her thanks to her neon yellow dress. Maya Jama was a vision in a beige dress with voluminous tulle detailing, exuding elegance as she made her way into the venue.

Maya pulled her hair up in a high ponytail and accessorised with a pair of sparkling silver chandelier earrings.

Meanwhile, Abbey Clancy was indisputably one of the most glamorous stars on the night, turning heads in a glittering green gown. The pregnant model - who is expecting her fourth child with husband Peter Crouch - looked impossibly gorgeous in the



daring, thigh-split dress. The likes of Caroline Flack and Louise Redknapp also walked the red carpet, donning little black dresses, while Kelly Brook was her typical seductive self in a low-cut burgundy frock.

Also lighting up the red carpet was Jess Glynne, who ditched her usual street style in favour of old school glamour in a figure-

hugging silk gown.

The singer was nominated in the British Female category and was also up for the British Single gong, but she was unsuccessful on the night.

Hugh Jackman was also one of the first stars to walk the red carpet, flashing a big grin and wave as he prepared for his big opening number.



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