



Happy Birthday
Kareena Kapoor Khan



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US-China trade war

Trump says it's 'time to take a stand'

'We have no choice. It's been a long time. They're hurting us,' US president tells Fox News



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How Pakistan ISI used Facebook likes and comments to honey-trap a BSF jawan

IG Police, ATS, Asim Arun admitted that multiple cases of 'social media trap' by ISI have been reported in the recent past in which people got trapped through simple likes and comments on their posts by unknown people, mainly girls.



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How Amazon plans to battle Walmart in India

(News Agencies) Walmart recently spent billions to get into online retail in India. Now Amazon is going offline in the hope of gaining millions of new customers in the vast market. The e-commerce giant is buying 49% of More, a popular Indian supermarket chain, according to multiple reports in local media. The remaining 51% will be owned by Indian private equity firm Samara Capital.

More has over 540 supermarkets and hypermarkets across India. It is part of a bigger retail business that was recently sold by Indian conglomerate Aditya Birla Group to a company called Witzig. An Amazon spokesperson told CNN that Amazon and Samara have "agreed to co-invest" in Witzig but declined to comment on the size of Amazon's investment or its stake. Witzig director Paurush Roy confirmed Samara Capital's 51% stake and its acquisition of More, but did not comment on Amazon's involvement. (Contd on page 18)

The Man Behind Trump's 'Invisible Wall'

USCIS Director Lee Francis Cissna is the son of an immigrant, the son-in-law of a refugee and a man who says he's just obsessed with the fair implementation of laws. So why is he making them so much harder for immigrants?

(News Agencies) This summer, as anger over the separation of migrant families at the border boiled over, and the abolition of Immigration and Customs Enforcement became a rallying cry for left-leaning Democrats, a number of less scrutinized, more arcane reforms were quietly working their way into the most foundational laws governing U.S. immigration.

One was the establishment of a "denaturalization task force" that pledges to investigate immigration fraud and strip away citizenship in such cases—something that's historically been reserved for serious criminals or terrorists. Another was a new memo that allows visa officers to deny applications

without first requesting more evidence or notifying an applicant.



Then there's the refugee program, which has been decimated as the administration slashes the level of admissions and redirects its resources

to domestic asylum cases—people who have already arrived safely in the United States. And coming soon: a controversial proposed regulation that could prevent immigrants from obtaining green cards if they or their family members have used a public benefit, which is expected to include everything from food stamps to health insurance programs. The man overseeing these reforms isn't Stephen Miller, the White House aide publicly known as the architect of President Donald Trump's most restrictionist immigration policies.

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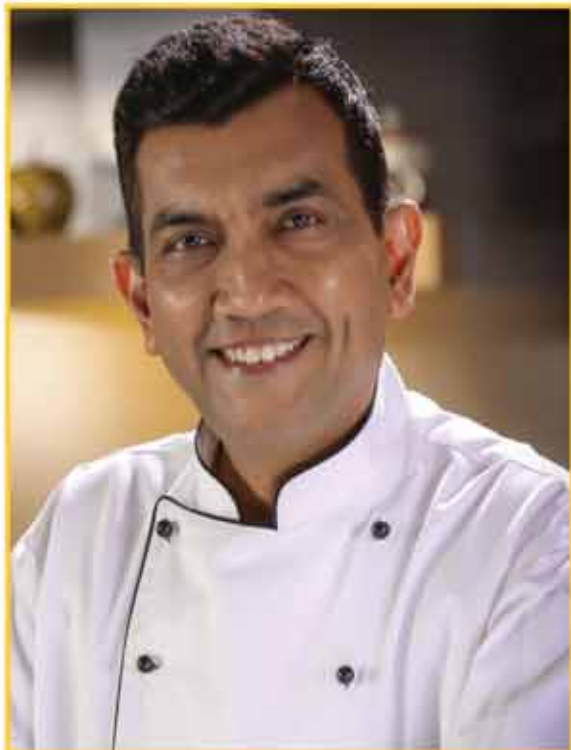
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De Blasio Administration Allocates \$ 4.1 Million to Provide Legal Assistance for Migrant Children and Separated Families

Announcement comes as volunteer City delegation returns from week of providing pro bono help to hundreds of detained families at the southern border

(News Agencies) New York—As a group of volunteer attorneys recruited from several City agencies returns after spending a week assisting detained immigrant families near the southern border, the City announced that it has earmarked \$4.1 million to provide legal assistance for migrant children, both unaccompanied minors and separated children in New York City. This funding will also provide access to legal risk assessments and screening for those seeking to be sponsors for migrant children. "The Trump Administration's cruel and inhumane attacks on immigrant families seeking refuge in our country is un-American. Those are not New York City's values, which is why we are stepping up and speaking out to help these families and call on the President to reunite the over 400 remaining separated children," said Mayor de Blasio. "Mothers and fathers need to be able to hug and console their

children and we are doing everything we can to help by providing free high-quality legal services."

"We are proud that New York City is a city of immigrants. And we are a city where people take care of one another," said First Lady Chirlane McCray. "The services available in New York City are an example of our commitment to reunite and support families torn apart by the inhumane policies of the federal government. In New York City, we will never stop fighting for immigrant children and families."

"Under the leadership of Mayor de Blasio, the City made a tremendous investment to create a system for providing legal services that can mobilize quickly to address the emergent legal needs of immigrant New Yorkers," said Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks. "Today we are using this system to shield immigrants against the draconian policies the federal government

is implementing."

The Human Resources Administration's Office of Civil Justice and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs have been working with the City's legal services providers through the Administration's Immigrant Opportunity Initiative (IOI) program to increase their capacity to meet urgent legal needs. These include the needs presented by separated children placed in federal facilities under the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in New York City, their families and loved ones seeking to become sponsors, and hundreds of unaccompanied minors settled here who are in need of legal representation.

This announcement comes on the heels of the completion of a City employee delegation to provide pro bono assistance to families facing detention near the southern border. Last week, Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Bitta Mostofi traveled to Dilley,

Texas as a volunteer alongside fifteen colleagues—City attorneys and licensed clinical social workers—volunteering from the following agencies: Administration of Children Services, Department of Consumer Affairs, Law Department, Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Mayor's Office of Special Enforcement, NYC Commission on Human Rights, and NYC Health + Hospitals. The delegation was made possible due to support from private funders working with the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.

Organized by the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), the City volunteer group worked with the Dilley Pro Bono Project, a partner of the Immigration Justice Campaign. At the South Texas Family Residential Center, the largest U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) family detention center in the country, the volunteers assisted in approximately

300 cases. Among their duties, volunteers prepared families seeking asylum for credible fear interviews and provided mental health screenings for children and families, including once-separated families.

The legal service providers include Catholic Charities, Catholic Migration Services, Central American Legal Assistance, Immigrant Justice Corps, Kids in Need of Defense, Legal Services NYC, New York Legal Assistance Group, Northern Manhattan Center for Immigrant Rights, Safe Passage Project, Sanctuary for Families, The Door, The Legal Aid Society, Urban Justice Center, Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, and Make the Road New York.

In FY 2014, Administration funding for immigration legal services was approximately \$2.1 million. Since then Mayoral funding for immigration legal services has increased dramatically. In FY 2018, the Administra-

tion raised its commitment to funding free immigration legal services to over \$30 million.

"Several separated children who were brought to our city have been reunited with their families at the border, but they continue to languish in detention," said Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. "It was a harrowing experience to speak directly to families separated by the Trump administration and to witness the systematic mistreatment of immigrant children and families up close. The de Blasio Administration will continue pushing to end both family separation and the erosion of asylum for those fleeing persecution and violence. With today's legal services announcement, even more migrant children who arrive in our city will receive critical representation and services to help fight for their safety."

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On Citizenship Day De Blasio Administration Launches New Campaign to Promote Naturalization and Civic Engagement Among Immigrant Communities

**New multilingual LinkNYC ads encourage 660,000 eligible New Yorkers to apply for citizenship
New flyers promote voting for eligible immigrant New Yorkers, and more ways to engage with civic society**

(News Agencies) New York—On the 231st anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, the de Blasio Administration recognizes Constitution Day and Citizenship Day by announcing a series of initiatives encouraging increased immigrant civic engagement. The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) partnered with LinkNYC and local artists Shimeah Davis and Dayo Olopade to launch a new ad campaign encouraging eligible New Yorkers to utilize NYCitizenship in their journey to becoming citizens. In addition, MOIA—in collaboration with the NYC Campaign Finance Board and DemocracyNYC—has created new informational materials to educate immigrant New Yorkers on voting and additional ways to be civically engaged in New York City. In partnership with private foundations, libraries, and legal service providers, the de Blasio Administration is providing free help to apply for citizen-

ship, as well as demystifying the levers of democracy for our immigrant communities, in order to lower barriers to civic participation across New York City.

"Americans have fought for the sacred right to vote for generations. Through DemocracyNYC, we will continue to encourage all New Yorkers to participate in our civic life," said Phil Thompson, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives. "I'm proud to work with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, my fellow colleagues in public service, private funders, and across the public sector to rebuild our democracy and make it truly equitable across NYC."

"Immigrant New Yorkers play a vibrant role in our economy and our civic communities. No matter your immigration status, all New Yorkers will play a critical role in building our city for tomorrow," said Bitta Mostofi, Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immi-

grant Affairs. "This Citizenship Day, we aim to empower eligible immigrant New Yorkers who are eager to become citizens, and provide more New Yorkers with information on how they can get involved in our democracy. A diverse set of New Yorkers from all paths of life will help make New York City's future even greater."

"As the quintessential city of immigrants, New York City takes pride in being a beacon of hope for all those who have come here seeking a better life for themselves and their families," said Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks. "To further our commitment with immigrant New Yorkers we want to provide them with the support they need on their path to become citizens, which will allow them to have greater access to opportunities and to fully participate in the civic and economic future of our nation."

"We know that citizen-

ship is a powerful tool for fighting poverty and helping individuals and families access economic stability, yet many immigrants remain one step away from citizenship because they can't find trusted and reliable legal counsel," said Toya Williford, Executive Director of the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City. "Today, we are proud to stand with our philanthropic partners to support NYCitizenship because we believe immigrant New Yorkers should be able to access legal advice without fear of deportation or falling prey to fraudulent providers." "New York City welcomes immigrants and encourages all new-comers to pursue the full rights and privileges that come from becoming a citizen," said Matthew Klein, Executive Director of the Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity. "Our office is proud to support NYCitizenship, an innovative program that reaches the most vulnerable of those New Yorkers

who are potentially eligible for citizenship. Obtaining citizenship status can lead to more economic security, a greater sense of belonging, and even more opportunities to contribute to the City's civic life."

"Immigrants are an integral part of our society and instrumental in making New York the greatest city in the world," said Samir Saini, Commissioner of the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications. "We're proud to display this campaign on thousands of Link kiosks across the five boroughs, showcasing our pride in who we are: a City of Immigrants."

This Citizenship Day, the de Blasio Administration is continuing our efforts to help New Yorkers apply to naturalize. Approximately 660,000 immigrant New Yorkers with lawful permanent resident status ("green card" holders) are one step away from citizenship. Through this new ad

campaign—at no cost to the City—LinkNYC kiosks will display multilingual ads in targeted, immigrant-dense communities encouraging New Yorkers to apply for citizenship through NYCitizenship. MOIA worked with local New York City artists, with a strong desire to engage and support immigrant communities through art, to design the ads. They will be on display starting today in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Haitian Creole, and Bengali, with additional languages to come.

NYCitizenship provides free citizenship application assistance and financial counseling across all five boroughs at 12 public library branches alongside services available at in partnership with the New York City Human Resources Administration. To make an appointment, New York City residents simply have to call 311 and say "citizenship appointment."

World Hindu Congress honors ISKCON, BAPS, Geeta Press, Gorakhpur and Chinmaya Mission



(By Our Staff Reporter) It was a time for connecting and reflection for the 2500 Hindu delegates who had gathered at Hotel Westin in Chicago for the 2nd World Hindu Congress from 7-9 September. The mega initiative, a brainchild of IITian Swami Vigyananand, assessed ways to raise the visibility of Hindus on the world stage and work on challenges facing the community globally. Hindus from 60 countries were present with sizable delegations from Bharat and the US.

The event had a historical significance as it commemorated the 125th anniversary of Swami

Vivekananda's iconic address at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Against the backdrop of a life like statue of Swami Vivekananda, RSS Chief Dr. Mohan Bhagwat and keynote at the inaugural event addressed the congress on the core theme drawn from the Mahabharat, "Think collectively, Act Valiantly." He highlighted the need for Hindus to work together and said "We have stopped our descent and are contemplating how to ascend. Our universal values, now called Hindu values, lead to the welfare of the individual, the society, nature and the environment. It is the duty

of Hindus to remind the world, the universal values from time to time."

Stressing the need for unity, Bhagwat said if a lion is alone, wild dogs can invade and destroy the lion. We must not forget that."

"We want to make the world better. We have no aspiration of dominance. Our influence is not a result of conquest or colonization," he noted.

Chair SP Kothari, said he and many speakers attending the conference received calls and petitions from organizations and individuals to withdraw from the Congress on the ground WHC or some of its organizers are "socially and re-

ligiously divisive." "I urge them to listen to my talk and reflect on whether it is tainted with hate. I have chosen to disregard those petitions as originating from a lack of complete understanding of the World Hindu Congress." Coordinator Dr. Abhaya Asthana stated that WHC is not an event, it is a community movement. It seeks to encourage Hindus around the world to ascend to the highest levels of excellence. This Congress was important so we "may graduate from individual success to collective success."

Award winning actor Anupam Kher said "Hinduism is a way of life and one

becomes a Hindu by living like one. Tolerance was the centerpiece of Vivekananda's message. My roots are steeped in Hinduism... As a Hindu, it pains me deeply to see how ignorance and half knowledge are trying to destroy one of the oldest, world's most peaceful religion."

Vice Chair, Raju Reddy, urged Hindus worldwide to become more visible as positive change makers in their respective countries they call home, wherever they may be today. He added, Hindus as a community should become economically more prosperous and be viewed as an economic powerhouse. Our

immense soft power of Hindu teachings, Vedic knowledge and thought will be limited in its acceptance and reach without the accompanying economic power.

India's Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, keynote for the concluding session, renewed Swami Vivekananda's message and elaborated on some of the essential elements of Hinduism namely the breadth of its vision in treating the world as one family, tolerance and acceptance of plurality, and unity in diversity. True nationalism is in the preservation of India's invaluable heritage, he said.

Should there be a ban on hoardings?

Bengaluru's zero-hoarding policy will hopefully trigger advertising reform in other cities as well



Policy reforms are hard to come by, but when they do, they are singular moments of victory marking sweeping change: reversing an existing regressive norm, or introducing a progressive new one. In the past few months alone, we have seen the critical role played by the courts in catalysing such reforms — from privacy issues to the recent LGBT ruling. While these are large constitutional issues of civil rights and freedoms, the courts play a critical role in more mundane battles too.

In Bengaluru, for example, over the past few weeks, a high court division bench has set in motion a flurry of activity on reforming outdoor advertising in the city. A series of court orders in August 2018 directed the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (Bengaluru Municipal Corporation, BBMP) to “remove all illegal hoardings, flexes and banners, as well as prevent their

re-occurrence so as to ensure Bengaluru becomes a flex-free, poster-free, plastic-free city”.

The order was triggered by offences reported under the Karnataka Open Spaces Prevention of Disfigurement Act of 1981, and the ban on plastics by the Karnataka department of forest ecology and environment. The divisional bench has been unsparing in its criticism of the municipal corporation's perceived inaction on the matter, and the BBMP has responded with two commitments: first, speedy action on removal of illegal hoardings; second, drafting of a new advertising policy for Bengaluru. The second is because the BBMP is cognisant of the 1997 case - MC Mehta v Union of India, and the ruling of the Supreme Court whereby “the civic authorities, including the DDA, railways, police and transport authorities are directed to identify and remove all

hoardings against the roadside...carried out not withstanding any other order or directions by any other authority, court, or tribunal...”.

On the first commitment, the Bengaluru Traffic Police and BBMP have booked 228 cases against violators, closed many facilities that print flex banners and hoardings, and gone on a war footing to remove all hoardings, banners, wall posters, in the city, so much so that the aam aadmi has begun to notice.

On August 31, the BBMP also submitted a new draft advertising policy to the court. The draft policy prohibits all commercial hoardings and banners within the BBMP jurisdiction. The only allowance on public roads is for signage that communicates on-premise use and activity. Sponsored advertising in the public realm is permitted at bus shelters, public transit stations, bike-sharing stations, car-share facilities, public park signboards, recreation grounds, street furniture, public toilets, street kiosks, public art, pedestrian bridges and tunnels, and other such facilities. New draft by-laws to replace the existing 2006 by-laws were tabled and discussed in the municipal council. Impressively, the members of the municipal council appear to have taken an enlightened view of the

high court's orders. By unanimous consensus, the council has approved the new policy and by-laws. For a change, the municipal council will play hero in the tale.

The council's decision could be a calculated response based on two factors: first it retains the moral high ground rather than ceding it to the court, which would presumably use the 1997 Supreme Court precedent to ban all hoardings anyway. Second, the municipal revenue from advertising tax is a paltry Rs 26 crore annually, from about 2,500 licensed hoardings, with an equal number estimated to be illegal. Realistically therefore, the current revenue could at best double, even with the best enforcement measures. The visual degradation and public criticism is too large a price for so meagre a return.

At first glance, this new policy of virtually zero hoardings seems draconian. But because the virus of outdoor advertising has crept in gradually, we don't even see the epidemic it has become — rather like the frog that is boiled slowly in water and doesn't jump out. If the new by-laws do indeed see the light of day, Bengalureans may expect to see a lot more of their city sky.

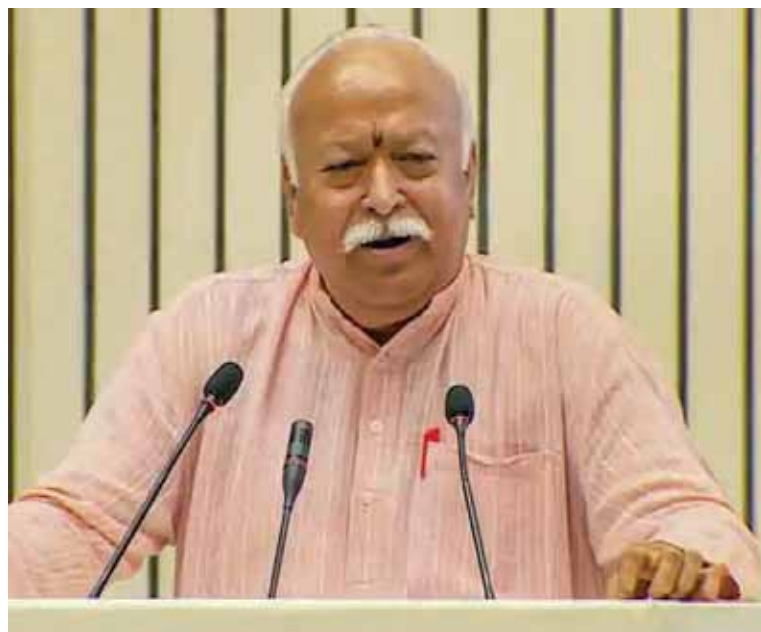
The revised policy places “public purpose” above revenue generation — for private

business, property owners, or the municipal corporation. There are three “public purpose” considerations that anchor the proposed policy: environment, traffic safety, and aesthetics.

In undertaking this reform, Bengaluru will be following in the civic footsteps of many cities around the world, big and small. Beyond the usual examples of global cities like New York or London, in 2007, the municipality of Sao Paulo in Brazil passed a Clean City Law, with a blanket ban on all commercial advertising, removing thousands of hoardings, oversized shop signs, and advertisements on taxis and buses. In 2014, the local government of Grenoble in Europe replaced all commercial advertising with community boards. In India, Mumbai and Chennai too have taken baby steps — undertaking removal drives and area specific prohibitions. Hopefully, Bengaluru's experience can trigger substantive advertising reform in other cities as well. While the state has given an in-principle blessing to the ban on hoardings, it remains to be seen if the divisional bench continues to keep the foot on the accelerator. One hopes that in the coming weeks, unaided by fanfare in a quiet courtroom, a small but crucial reform can be catalysed for our cities.

Has the Sangh really evolved?

The RSS must now crack down on any violence carried out in the name of the organisation



The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat's lecture series in Delhi stemmed from the organisation's desire to reach out to the capital's

residents, particularly its opinion-making elite; allay ‘misconceptions’ that exist about the Sangh worldview and functioning; and present its own

vision. The Sangh wields tremendous influence in contemporary India — through both its political affiliate, the Bharatiya Janata Party, as well as other affiliates working with students, teachers, tribals, workers, farmers, the Hindu religious leadership and other groups. Bhagwat's elaborate policy statements were critical in showing the ways in which the Sangh had evolved. For one, on the minorities, while the Sangh remains a Hindu organisation, committed to Hindutva and a Hindu rashtra, it has acknowledged that Muslims are as Indian as Hindus; they have a place in Indian society; and their exclusion cannot lead to a stronger nation. The most important departure in this regard was Bhagwat distancing himself from Guru Golwalkar's more

extreme texts on Muslims — and emphasising that the organisation had evolved since then. Two, the Sangh goal of Hindu unity has often been seen as a code for upper caste domination. But with its unequivocal support for reservations and inter-caste marriages, and acknowledgment that it needed to get more diverse, it has sought to become more inclusive at least in terms of bringing backward communities, Dalits and tribals into its fold. Three, Bhagwat — by acknowledging the role of other political actors, including the Congress and communists, who have been bitter ideological adversaries — tried to position the Sangh as being above the partisan fray. And four, while it may be cautious and uncomfortable, there is a degree

of social liberalism that seemed to have found its way within the Sangh, for instance its openness to accepting difference in the case of sexual minorities. All these are welcome changes. But what is important now is that this gets internalised on the ground. There has been violence in the name of causes dear to the Sangh, by activists who draw inspiration from the Sangh, and often through affiliates of the Sangh. Distancing itself from it — through sporadic condemnations — is not enough for the RSS. What is needed is a mass campaign by the Sangh to crack down on any such activity. And while the Sangh's views have clearly evolved, the trace of Hindu supremacy or belief that Hindus are the true inheritors of Indian civilisation persists.

Regionalism, not secularism, is the new pivot of Indian politics

The party that will be hurt the most by the ascent of regional forces and their localised identities will be the Congress. Most likely the political fault line in 2019 will be Hindutva vs Caste disruptions

At a recent panel discussion to launch a book of essays by senior lawyer and Congress spokesperson, Abhishek Singhvi, I pushed the speakers to define what "secularism" is. Singhvi's introductory chapter identifies secularism as the first principle of Indian democracy. As a philosophical notion of diversity and a constitutional guarantee of equality, of course I entirely agree. It is what makes India unique and wonderful.

But I was more interested in exploring whether it still holds as a marker of political differentiation. Hasn't secularism become corroded and compromised as an electoral slogan?

Dinesh Trivedi of the Trinamool Congress retorted — rather candidly — "This secularism debate is all politics." He wasn't dissing the idea of religious pluralism which he said was innate to India; his remark was on the electoral squabble over the word.

But perhaps nothing illustrates the fact that the old political silos no longer apply than the meeting between his party's boss Mamata Banerjee and the Shiva Sena's Uddhav Thackeray. Unlike his father, Uddhav is someone I have often described as "the reluctant fundamentalist". But notwithstanding his seeming discomfort with the traditional militant parochialism of his party,



it would be hard for anyone to call the Sena a secular force. Yet, an unfazed West Bengal chief minister said she "respects Shiv Sena; no one is more communal than the BJP". Since then, Uddhav has become an unlikely rallying force for the anti-Modi federal front, even though he hasn't yet left the alliance with the BJP in Maharashtra. The message is clear: the rhetoric notwithstanding, in the run-up to 2019, the pivot around which the non-BJP parties will organise themselves will be regionalism and federalism — and not secularism. The anti-Narendra Modi sentiment among these state satraps is higher than an anti-BJP ideology per se. In any case, most of the regional political

protagonists have had alliances and understandings with the BJP in the past. Naveen Patnaik, Mamata Banerjee, Nitish Kumar, Mayawati, N Chandrababu Naidu, K Chandrasekhar Rao have all either been in alliance with the BJP or showered praise on its leadership at different points of time.

Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal United — stung by three consecutive losses to the Tejashwi Yadav-led RJD — has begun to murmur its disenchantment with the BJP, amid rumours that a faction could split under Sharad Yadav. In fact, nothing better represents the demise of secularism as a meaningful political slogan more than the Bihar chief minister's

fickleness. Nitish was hailed by liberals as a secular alternative to Modi. Last year, before Nitish walked into the arms of the BJP, historian Ramachandra Guha suggested that the Congress back Nitish as its prime ministerial candidate. "He is a leader without a party," Guha told me," and the Congress is a party without a leader." But neither Nitish's alliance with the BJP, nor his second exit, should it come later this year, will have anything to do with secularism or an antithetical ideology. His decisions will be a by-product of realpolitik.

The Opposition's win in Kairana has offered a ready blueprint for what lies ahead — alliances, arithmetic and an

attempt to make the elections as local as Modi will try and make them presidential. On this chessboard of moves — and despite Jayant Chaudhary's memorable winning line — Ganna, not Jinnah — the organising principle of the arrangement of power will be regional blocs, caste calculations and the cementing of anti-Modi calculations. Don't be surprised if the Shiv Sena joins such a federal front officially revealing that the old rules of secularism have changed. No one is a political pariah any more. And the traditional notions of Left vs Right have collapsed.

The party that will be hurt the most by the ascent of regional forces and their localised identities will be the Congress. For years the Congress has argued that the fundamental difference between it and the BJP is that it is secular. But now — unless wins in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh can tilt the scales — the Congress not just has to play second fiddle in a rainbow coalition of regional parties; it also has to accept that these state forces will set the narrative. Most likely the political fault line in 2019 will be Hindutva vs Caste disruptions.

The setting up of the sex offenders registry is timely

The sex offenders' list will help in enabling justice and monitoring an offender's future behaviour but the State must ensure that there is no overreach and misuse

India on Thursday joined eight other countries that maintain a registry of sex offenders. The registry, which will be maintained by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), will include names, address, photographs and fingerprints details of convicted sexual offenders.

In the United States, the sex offender registry is available to the public, whereas in India, and countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, and Trinidad & Tobago, the registry is available only to law enforcement agencies. The Indian registry is expected to list 4.4 lakh cases but the state police have been asked to update data from 2005 onwards. The government has promised that the database will not compromise any individual's privacy. The database will have details of offenders convicted under charges of rape, gang rape, POCSO and harassing women.

The opening of the registry is timely because crimes such as rape, voyeurism, stalking and aggravated sexual assault are on the rise. The latest National Crime Records Bureau data shows there has been a 12% rise in rapes between 2015 and 2016, and that the majority of offenders are known to the victim. In a situation like this, the sex offenders' list can definitely help the investigation and monitoring process as well as work as a deterrent.

However, there are some issues that need to be tackled before the registry starts its work.

First, what will be the process of categorising offenders? For example, can the recent rape of a minor in Kathua, Jammu and Kashmir, be termed more heinous than the rape that has been reported at a school in Dehradun, or vice versa?

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How the blasphemy law could transform Punjab into a theocratic state



The Punjab government's proposed Section 295AA is not only about violating individuals' rights to freedom of speech and expression, but about the broader question about "the kind of democracy that we have proclaimed ourselves to be."

In 1926, a new religious faith was born in Punjab. Known as the "ad-dharm movement", this faith drew inspiration from the Bhakti movement, venerated the poet, Ravidas, had its own sacred book, and aimed to provide Dalits with a separate religious identity, which would aid them in their quest for emancipation. It preached caste equality and liberation.

Had the government of Captain Amarinder Singh been in power in Punjab then, as it is now, the "ad-dharmis" would have been arrested, prosecuted, and potentially

imprisoned for life. This is the effect of the "blasphemy law", which inserts a new Section 295AA into the Indian Penal Code. The vague and suggestive wording of the section is a delight for unscrupulous governments: it criminalises "injury, damage or sacrilege to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Srimad Bhagwad Geeta, Holy Quran and Holy Bible with the intention to hurt the religious feelings of the people".

But there are three constitutional problems with Punjab's plan to criminalise blasphemy.

First, by giving four religions an effective veto power over what can or cannot be said, the sacrilege law transforms Punjab into a theocratic state along the lines of Pakistan or Saudi Arabia. This is at odds with our cosmopolitan and inclusive Constitution. It is also at odds

with the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression.

The famous Article 19(1) of our Constitution does not permit "sacrilege" or "hurt ... religious feelings" to be invoked as grounds for restricting the freedom of speech. It recognises that the purpose of freedom of speech in a democracy is not just to allow people to say things that are palatable or comforting, but to "offend, shock, or disturb". In particular, it does not give individuals the right to demand that speech be restricted if it "hurts" their feelings, simply by invoking religion as the basis for those feelings. To accept such a view would be to let religion dictate the scope of the right to free speech, and destroy the delicate balance wrought in the Constitution between protecting religious freedom, and furthering crucial democratic values, such as the freedom of expression.

Second, the dictionary defines the word "sacrilege" as "gross irreverence toward a hallowed person, place, or thing". By criminalising "irreverence", the Punjab government has essentially created a regime of thought crime, where showing insufficient "reverence" can have you arrested and jailed. At its heart, the command that due "reverence" must be shown to the revealed truth, whether it is

in the Guru Ganth Sahib or the Quran, is based on the idea that religion is the ultimate arbiter of truth, and cannot be questioned.

In a free and open democracy, however, very few questions are treated as settled and immutable for all time. Truth is not revealed from above, but something that we discover through debate, discussion, and learning from one another. Therefore, one crucial purpose of the freedom of speech is to ensure that, through constant communication and articulation of competing and even conflicting ideas, we move closer towards identifying truth. But in making the four religious books immune from criticism, the Punjab government appears to be cutting short the debate altogether, simply on the basis of "hurt feelings". Third, in criminalising "sacrilege", Section 295AA penalises dissent and debate within religions. The definition of what counts as sacrilege will, inevitably, be determined on the basis of the views of those who claim to represent the religious communities. This, however, gives continued control over the evolution and interpretation of religion to a narrow set of gatekeepers. This is particularly poignant in

India, whose entire history is characterised by deep dissent within faiths, and the formation of new religions and ways of life that arise out of these dissents. It is to religious dissent that we owe Buddhism, Jainism, the Bhakti Movement, and — ironically enough — Sikhism. Section 395AA seeks to throttle the lifeblood of any community: the ability to disagree — even to disagree radically — with the prevailing orthodoxy. The Punjab government's proposed Section 295AA, therefore, is not only about violating individuals' rights to freedom of speech and expression, but about the broader question about "the kind of democracy that we have proclaimed ourselves to be".

Are we a paranoid democracy that allows religious groups to eliminate all forms of dissent by codifying a blasphemy law with a punishment of life imprisonment? Or are we a courageous democracy, that encourages challenges to, and debates about, all the prevailing ideas that we hold most dear, and are more passionate about. The eventual fate of Section 295AA — whether in the state legislative assembly or in the courts — will help us to answer these two questions.

How rapes are impacting the mobility of women

A heinous gang rape of one girl impacts the mobility of many others, affecting their ability to participate in public life

The first-year BSc student was on her way to coaching classes to prepare for the railways entrance exam. She was abducted, drugged, gang-raped and then dumped back at the bus stop from where they had taken her.

The crime touches so many aspects of what it means to be female in Haryana.

Clearly, there is aspiration and ambition as a new generation of girls surges ahead in sport and education, the Phogat sisters as flag-bearers. In classrooms, 45.8% have completed 10 years of schooling, well above the national average of 35.7%.

"The girls are motivated to study and do well in life," says UNDP's state project head Kanta Singh who looks after skilling programmes in Haryana and NCR.

But, says activist Jagmati Sangwan, crimes against women are also increasing at a "very large scale". Haryana ranks #1 in gang rape, #2 in dowry-related deaths and #3 in stalking. "A patriarchal mindset makes these girls soft targets. State machinery, which is expected to protect the dreams and aspirations of these girls, is completely absent," she says.

Away from the spotlight, what future does a rape survivor have in a culture that sees rape as an irretrievable loss of honour?

In Dabra, a young woman who had been abducted and gang-raped while on her way to her grandmother's house to study for her Board exams told me of her struggles. She had enrolled in college but continued to be ostracised and eventually gave up on her

BA. In Karnal, a 16-year-old gang-rape survivor dropped out of school when her mother was murdered soon after, leaving the girl the sole caregiver for her younger siblings. The girl had been raped while on her way to school.

But the fallout is rarely contained. "When one girl is raped in a village, parents of the other girls will impose even more restrictions on their movement outside the house," says Singh.

A fact-finding report in 2012 by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights found that "many people stopped sending their daughters to school" following a spate of gang-rapes of Dalit girls by upper caste men.

Haryana's women are struggling to be seen and



heard. They are being whitewashed out of public life.

The state officially regards the ghoonghat (veil) as its pride. Its khap panchayats prohibit jeans and mobile phones for girls and advocate early marriage as a bid to curb rape. Its sex ratio is India's worst. Its streets and public transport are demonstrably out of bounds

for women. No wonder then that despite their educational attainment, only 19% women in Haryana are in paid employment, well below the already low national average of 24%. If there is hope, it lies in the state's exceptional, talented girls who are straining to get ahead. One day they will stand up and say, enough. One day they will demand to be equal citizens.

I-T officials conducting survey since Sep 19: Jet Airways

Shares of the crisis-hit airline fell over 8 per cent to touch a low of Rs 224.70 on BSE. It later recovered some lost ground and was trading at Rs 231.40, down 5.26 per cent at 1138 hours on the BSE.



(News Agencies) Jet Airways Friday said Income Tax officials have been conducting survey of its premises since September 19. Shares of the crisis-hit airline fell over 8 per cent to touch a low of Rs 224.70 on BSE. It later recovered some lost ground and was trading at Rs 231.40, down 5.26 per cent at 1138 hours on the BSE. On Wednesday, sources said the I-T Department is inspecting the books to ascertain whether there have been falsification of accounts, suspicious dealings and other possible violations. In a regulatory filing Friday, the carrier said I-T officials are conducting a survey of the premises of the company since September 19. "The company is fully cooperating with the authorities and is responding to the queries by the Income Tax authorities," it said. The full service carrier, grappling with financial woes, is already under the scanner of markets regulator Sebi and the Corporate Affairs Ministry for various alleged lapses. The airline reported a net loss of Rs 1,323 crore for the June quarter on August 27. The carrier is also under the regulatory lens for deferring the results, which were initially scheduled to be announced on August 9.

11 lions found dead in Gir forest, Gujarat govt orders inquiry

All the bodies were found in Gir (east) division, mainly from Dalkhaniya range. As per the 2015 census, Gir is home to 520 lions.



Veterinary Hospital and are waiting for the post-mortem report," he added. Additional chief secretary of the forest and environment department Dr Rajiv Kumar Gupta said the state government has ordered an inquiry which would be conducted by the principal chief conservator of forest (wildlife). "Primary information shows that eight deaths have occurred due to infighting. For the rest three, post-mortem reports are awaited," Gupta added. PCCF wildlife AK Saxena, who rushed to the Gir forest, said most of the deaths were due to infighting and resultant injuries. "Most of the deaths are due to infighting and injuries caused thereby, mainly affecting cubs and females. This trend is being noticed over a period of three to four years. No foul play or suspicion is suspected," Saxena said. As per the 2015 census, Gir is home to 520 lions. Rajya Sabha MP Parimal Nathwani said on Thursday that a probe must be conducted to see if the deaths occurred due to electrocution, poisoning or poaching.

(News Agencies) Rajkot: The carcasses of 11 lions were found in Gujarat's Gir forest, prompting the state government to order an inquiry, officials said on Thursday. All the bodies were found in Gir (east) division, mainly from Dalkhaniya range in the last 10 days, an official said. "We have found carcasses of 11 lions from Gir east forest range," said P Purushothama, the deputy conservator of forest, Gir (east). For administrative purposes, the Gir forest has been divided in east and west parts. A carcass of a lioness was found in a forest near Rajula of Amreli district on Wednesday, while three more lions were found dead the same day in Dalkhaniya range area in the Gir forest, a senior official said. Carcasses of seven other lions were found in the last few days, he said. "We have collected viscera samples of the dead animals and sent them to the Junagadh

Woman, infant daughter killed as roof collapses due to heavy rains in Haryana

(News Agencies) A 28-year-old woman and her infant daughter were killed on Sunday morning after roof of a house, where they had taken shelter, collapsed due to heavy rainfall in a village in Haryana's Sirsa district, police said. The incident occurred in Nilanwali village located in Dabwali town of the district, deputy superintendent of police Kishori Lal said. The house was an old structure located in fields in the village. The woman, Kiran, and her one-year-old daughter, died at the spot. They belonged to a village in Punjab's Moga district, he said. Earlier on Saturday, two persons were killed and four others of a family seriously injured when roof of a house located in Dilipgarh area near Ambala cantonment had collapsed due to heavy rains. In the wake of heavy rains lashing several parts of Haryana since Saturday, authorities have sounded an alert and officials have been directed to keep a close watch on the water level of rivers and ponds in their respective areas. Widespread rains continued to lash Punjab for the second day on Sunday. The maximum temperatures in the region have also dropped.

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Rewari gangrape case: Accused soldier's wife leaves village, wants marriage annulled

While village sarpanch refused to talk on the matter, her husband confirmed that the accused's wife has left the village.

(News Agencies) After being questioned daily about the whereabouts of her husband, the wife of the main accused in the Rewari gangrape case, has left their village to never return and wants their marriage annulled.

Pankaj, who is posted in Rajasthan, and his co-accused Manish are on the run while the third key

accused Nishu has been arrested. The trio had drugged and gangraped a 19-year-old Rewari girl when she was on her way to a coaching centre at Kanina in Mahendragarh district on September 12.

While village sarpanch Sarita Devi refused to talk on the matter, her husband Amit Kumar confirmed that Pankaj's wife has left the village.

He said that a few days after the incident, Pankaj's father-in-law had come to the village and took his daughter with him. He said, "Before leaving the house, she told my wife that she will never return and wants their marriage annulled." Meanwhile, Pankaj's sister appeared before mediapersons and appealed his brother to

surrender.

Meanwhile, talking to Hindustan Times in Hisar, All India Congress Communication in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala, said, "Even nine days after the incident, police have failed to nab two of the main accused. While chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar is busy in issuing



statements on safai Deendayal is the owner of the tubewell room where the crime was committed, while Sanjeev is a registered medical practitioner (RMP) who attended the victim when her health condition deteriorated.

Besides Nishu, police arrested two more accused — Deendayal and Sanjeev on Sunday.

PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate Sikkim's first airport in Pakyong today



(News Agencies) The airport, which is located at Pakyong, is a Greenfield airport which will circumvent the need for a five-hour journey through mountainous roads and bring citizens of Sikkim closer to the state capital.

Located around 60 km from the Indo-China border, the airport is strategically relevant from a security point of view. The Indian Air Force (IAF) will also find this airport convenient for landing and taking off, Union Minister for Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER), Dr Jitendra Singh, said on Sunday.

The establishment of

the airport is expected to provide major impetus to tourism, with Sikkim being perceived as one of the most popular destinations for tourists all throughout the year. It is also expected to cause a significant reduction in travel time for tourists, who earlier had to board from Badgodra in West Bengal. Built at an estimated cost of over Rs 605 crore, the Pakyong airport is a new distinction for Sikkim, which has, in the last three to four years, achieved the distinction of becoming the first "Organic State" and also the first "Open Defecation Free" (ODF) state of India.

Chidambaram slams govt for its 'heavy-handed' approach to NPA problem

Chidambaram said due to the NDA government's heavy-handed approach to the NPA problem, banks did not have money to lend.



(News Agencies) Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram Friday slammed the Modi government for its banking policy, saying due to its "heavy-handed" approach towards non-performing assets, banks have no money to lend.

In a series of tweets, the former finance minister also claimed that though export credit had declined from Rs 39,000 crore in June, 2017, to Rs 22,300 crore in June, 2018, the government thinks that it is taking steps to boost exports.

"In a climate of suspicion and vendetta, the only thing a banker

looks forward to is the date of retirement. Thanks to the NDA government's heavy-handed approach to the NPA problem, banks have no money to lend and bankers have no mind to lend," he said.

Chidambaram said the report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative has said 27.1 crore people in India were lifted out of poverty between 2005-06 and 2015-16 and of those 10 years, the UPA was in the government for eight years.

"For the BJP government, its bloggers and bhakths, every problem is a 'legacy' issue. Wish to remind them that lifting 27.1 crore people out of poverty is also a 'legacy' issue," he said.

Painting a gloomy picture of the banking sector, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said Gross NPA

ratio of banks is likely to rise from 11.6 per cent in March 2018 to 12.2 per cent by the end of the current fiscal.

In its Financial Stability Report (FSR), the RBI has said stress in the banking sector continues as gross non-performing advances (GNPA) ratio rises further.

"Macro-stress tests indicate that under the baseline scenario of current macroeconomic outlook, SCBs' (scheduled commercial banks) GNPA ratio may rise from 11.6 per cent in March 2018 to 12.2 per cent by March 2019," it said.

Referring to the 11 state-owned banks under prompt corrective action framework (PCA), the RBI said they may experience worsening of their GNPA ratio from 21 per cent in March 2018 to 22.3 per cent by this fiscal-end.

Armyman, main accused in CBSE topper gangrape case, arrested in Haryana

The three main accused allegedly took turns to rape the Haryana Class 10 topper on September 12.

(Insider Bureau) Two men, who had been on the run since allegedly gang-raping a 20-year-old woman in Rewari on September 12, were arrested from Satnali in Haryana's Mahendragarh district on Sunday.

Pankaj, an army man and the main accused, and his accomplice, Manish, were arrested while they were having breakfast at a dhaba. Another accused, Nishu Phogat, had been

arrested last week

The two will be produced before a local court on Monday. The police would seek their custody to interrogate them regarding the people who had sheltered them while they remained on the run.

Police superintendent Naazneen Bhasin, who is heading the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the gang-rape, said they worked round-the-clock to get leads

about the accused. "So far, I can say that this was an organised gang-rape," she said

Bhasin said Pankaj and Manish had dug a pit in a field to keep their mobile phones. "They went to Bikaner in Rajasthan and were sheltered at a dharamshala, dhanis (a cluster of houses). They even spent a day in the fields," Bhasin said.

She said three people were initially named in

the First Information Report (FIR). "Later, we arrested two more people, one Deendayal... and Sanjeev, a registered medical practitioner. We have sent medical reports of the victim to a forensic lab to know how many people committed the crime. The forensic, medical reports will also confirm if the victim was raped by other people as well, though the possibility cannot be ruled out," she said.



Pankaj, Manish and gang-raped her. Nishu allegedly In the FIR, the abducted the 20-year-old woman said the three accused gave her water laced with a sedative to drink before she was going to her coaching centre and stop and fled.



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Rains lash Himachal Rivers in spate, Chandigarh-Manali, Jammu-Srinagar highways blocked

An official of the local MeT office said there are chances of heavy rainfall at some places in the state till Monday and thereafter the intensity of rains will start receding.

(News Agencies) The southwest monsoon remained aggressive on Sunday in Himachal Pradesh with most of the areas experiencing heavy to extremely heavy rains, causing landslides in some areas and blocking the highways. All the major rivers and their tributaries were in spate, officials said.

While picturesque tourist town Manali recorded the highest rainfall in the state at 127 mm, it was 125 mm in Dharamshala, 124 mm in Una and 90 mm in Dalhousie. State capital Shimla saw 47 mm rain. However, higher reaches of Kullu, Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti districts saw snowfall.

Highways closed

The water level of the Beas river also rose abnormally touching the Chandigarh-Manali National Highway 21 near the Hanogi Temple in Mandi district. As the road submerged in water, the highway remained closed on Sunday. Hundreds of vehicles were stranded on both sides of the road. Small landslides also took place at Hanogi Mata Temple area of NH 21. Meanwhile, a truck and Volvo bus were washed away in Beas river water at Manali. The bus was parked in the official parking lot at Manali and sudden increase in the river water washed away a portion of the ground along with the bus. However, no casualty was reported from both the districts till the evening.

Further, the highway that connects Manali with Leh in Jammu and Kashmir has been closed for traffic owing to heavy snow, officials said. "The traffic between Manali and Leh has been closed since Saturday," an official of the 38 task force of the General Reserve Engineering Force (GREF) told IANS.

The Manali-Leh highway is crucial to the movement of the

armed forces and their supplies and wares to forward areas in Ladakh. An official of the Himachal Road Transport Corporation said it would take a week to restart the bus services between Manali via Keylong and Leh. Meanwhile, the 13,050 feet high Rohtang Pass, the main tourist attraction and located 52 km from here, was also closed. Mandi-Pathankot national Highway 153 also remain partially blocked on Sunday.

What's in store

An official of the local MeT office said there are chances of heavy rainfall at some places in the state till Monday and thereafter the intensity of rains will start receding. Incessant rains have also caused massive landslides on national highways in Shimla, Kinnaur, Mandi and Kullu districts, hampering vehicular traffic. The water level in the major rivers of the state — the Satluj, Beas and Yamuna — which enter the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana has also increased, a government official said.

Normal life disrupted

With continuous rain, normal life in all parts of the Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh came to a near standstill for the third day on Sunday. Labour of the public works department (PWD) were seen clearing the debris from the roads despite rain on Sunday. Sujanpur, Nadaun, Bhoranj areas of the district were the worst hit. In view of the spate in Beas river and its tributaries, the administration has directed people not to go near the river.

Farmers worried

The weather condition has also added to farmers' woes as they were harvesting maize crop but the fields got waterlogged, and stopped the process. Meanwhile, there was no drinking water supply in various parts of



Hamirpur district on Sunday. A spokesman of the irrigation and public health department said that water supply would be restored once situation came under control. The spokesman added that there was a heavy loss to the crops and official and private properties during the current monsoon season. He said that field staff of the revenue and other public related departments were busy accessing the damage to be communicated to the state government through district administration once the rains stops.

20 rescued from Rohtang pass after heavy snowfall

At least 20 stranded people have been rescued from the Rohtang Pass in Himachal Pradesh on Sunday, a Border Roads Organisation (BRO) official said. They were stranded due to the closure of the Rohtang Pass after heavy snowfall, Lieutenant Colonel DS Bisht said. After getting information, a General Reserve Engineering Force (GREF) truck was sent and they were brought to Manali safely with the help of Col AK Awasthi and Kullu deputy commissioner (DC) Yunus, Bisht said. Rohtang Pass witnessed about four feet of fresh snowfall on Sunday.

18 trapped due to swelled Beas river water in Kullu district As many as 26 people

were trapped in the swelled Beas river water at Dobhi area of Kullu district out of which, eight were rescued from Rohtang top of Kullu district on Saturday night. The rescue operation was delayed due to bad weather on Sunday. Dobhi is an open land and site area where paragliders land. Beas water suddenly encircled the landing site and people saved their lives by gathering at the highest point of the land.

Various projects affected

District administration of Mandi and Kullu issued red-alert as the excess water was released from Beas Sutlej Link (BSL) project Pandoh and Lurgi power project's reservoir. Power production at Lurgi power project

hampered due to excess silt on Sunday. Lurgi project executive engineer Sunil Kumar said that production will be restored after release of silt. Sunil added that every precaution has been taken before releasing excess water and silt from the reservoir. Bhakhra Beas Management Board- BSL project executive engineer Rajesh Handa said that flood gates of the Pandoh Dam have been opened to release excess water of Beas river and warning has been issued to Kangra district authorities to take precaution.

Holiday in Kullu, Kinnaur districts

Heavy rains have driven the Himachal Pradesh government to order closure of all schools in Kullu and Kinnaur districts on Monday, officials said. All government and private schools will remain closed in tribal district of Kinnaur on Monday as per the directions issued by deputy commissioner Gopal Chand, an official said. Kullu DC Yunus also declared holiday for the students in government and private schools and institutions on Monday but added that teachers and staff will attend the schools and institutions.





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Second woman accuses US Supreme Court-nominee Brett Kavanaugh of sexual assault: Report

The New Yorker magazine reported Sunday night that Senate Democrats were investigating a second woman's accusation of sexual misconduct by Brett Kavanaugh while he was in Yale University.



(News Agencies) The Senate Judiciary Committee scheduled a hearing Thursday for Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh and Christine Blasey Ford, a woman who says he sexually assaulted her as a teenager, as a claim of sexual misconduct emerged from another woman.

The New Yorker magazine reported Sunday night that Senate Democrats were investigating a second woman's accusation of

sexual misconduct by Kavanaugh dating to the 1983-84 academic year, Kavanaugh's first at Yale University.

The New Yorker said 53-year-old Deborah Ramirez described the incident in an interview after being contacted by the magazine. Ramirez recalled that Kavanaugh exposed himself at a drunken dormitory party, thrust his penis in her face, and caused her to touch it without her consent as she pushed him away, the magazine reported.

In a statement provided by the White House, Kavanaugh said the event "did not happen" and that the allegation was "a smear, plain and simple". A White House spokeswoman added in a second statement that the allegation was "designed to tear down a good man."

The New Yorker said it contacted Ramirez after learning of a possible involvement in an incident with Kavanaugh and that the allegation came to Democratic senators through a civil rights

lawyer. She had been considering speaking to the magazine for at least a week. Meanwhile, Republicans were pressing for a swift hearing and a vote.

The magazine reported that Ramirez was reluctant at first to speak publicly "partly because her memories contained gaps because she had been drinking at the time of the alleged incident." She also acknowledged reluctance "to characterize Kavanaugh's role in the alleged incident with certainty."

The magazine reported that after "six days of carefully assessing her memories and consulting with her attorney, Ramirez said that she felt confident enough of her recollections" to recall the incident.

The new information came hours after the Senate committee agreed to a date and time for a hearing after nearly a week

of uncertainty over whether Ford would appear to tell her story.

The agreement and the latest accusation set the stage for a dramatic showdown as Kavanaugh and Ford each tell their side of the story. The developments could also determine the fate of Kavanaugh's confirmation, which hangs on the votes of a handful of senators.

It had seemed assured before Ford, a 51-year-old California college professor, went public a week ago with her allegation that Kavanaugh assaulted her at a party when they were in high school.

Kavanaugh, 53, an appellate court judge, has denied Ford's allegation and said he wanted to testify as soon as possible to clear his name.

Senate Judiciary

Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, wrangled with Ford's lawyers for the last week over the exact terms of her appearance. She made several requests, some of which were accommodated — a Thursday hearing, three days later than originally scheduled, and a smaller hearing room with less press access to avoid a media circus, for example. Grassley's staff also agreed to let Ford testify without Kavanaugh in the room, for there to be only one camera in the room, "adequate" breaks and a high security presence.

The committee said it would not negotiate on other points, though, including Ford's desire for additional witnesses and a request to testify after, not before, Kavanaugh.

US proposes blocking visas for those using public benefits

Immigrants could also be denied a change in legal status once in the US if they received or are likely in the future to use public benefits, such as public housing and food stamps equivalent to a certain monetary threshold.

(News Agencies) US President Donald Trump's administration has revealed a plan to block visas and green cards for immigrants to come to or stay in the country if they or their family use certain public benefits.

The proposed rule announced by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on Saturday could make immigrants seeking to enter the US



the US or force them to choose to forgo benefits that they or family members would otherwise be eligible to receive.

"Under long-standing federal law, those seeking to immigrate to the US

ineligible for visas or green cards if they are deemed likely to receive certain public benefits once they come to the country, reports CNN.

Immigrants could also be denied a change in legal status once in the US if they received or are likely in the future to use public benefits, such as public housing and food stamps equivalent to a certain monetary threshold.

The rule is a vast expansion of existing interpretations of what is considered a "public charge", or someone dependent or likely to become dependent on government.

If the rule survives widely expected legal changes, it could mark a sea change that allows far more immigrants to be rejected from

must show they can support themselves financially," DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said.

"This proposed rule will implement a law passed by Congress intended to promote immigrant self-sufficiency and protect finite resources by ensuring that they are not likely to become burdens on American taxpayers," Nielsen said.

Once the rule is formally published in the Federal Register, it will kick off a public comment period for Americans and interest groups to submit feedback, CNN said. The DHS will, by law, have to review those comments before finalising the regulation. Advocacy groups are also widely expected to try to challenge the rule in court.

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China summons US envoy, lodges protest over military sanctions for buying Russian arms: Report

The US said the purchases of Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets and S-400 surface-to-air missiles by China's equipment development department (EDD) of ministry of defence has violated US sanctions on Russia.

(News Agencies) China on Saturday summoned the US ambassador to lodge an official protest over sanctions imposed by Washington on a Chinese military unit for purchasing advanced fighter jets and missile systems from Russia, according to a media report. Also, China has cancelled a reported move to

send vice-premier Liu He to Washington for talks to end the escalating trade war between the world's two largest economies, following imposition of tariffs on Chinese goods by the Trump administration. The Chinese foreign ministry summoned the US ambassador to protest against US sanctions

on the equipment development department of the Chinese military and its director, the official media reported on Saturday. The US state department said on Thursday that it would immediately impose sanctions on the equipment development department of the Chinese military and its director, Li Shangfu, for engaging in "significant transactions" with Russia's main arms exporter. The US said the purchases of Russian

Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets and S-400 surface-to-air missiles by China's equipment development department (EDD) of ministry of defence has violated US sanctions on Russia. It was the first time the Trump administration targeted a third country with its Countering America's Adversaries Through

Sanctions Act of 2017 (CAATSA), designed to punish Russia for its seizure of Crimea and other activities. While the Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, Geng Shuang on Friday expressed outrage and asked Washington to revoke the decision or face consequences, China's

military today expressed indignation over the move. "The Chinese military expressed strong indignation and opposition to US sanctions on the equipment development department of the Chinese military and its director," the state-run China Daily quoted a military spokesman as saying.

US condemns attack on military parade in Iran but says Rouhani 'needs to look at own base'

At least 29 people were killed when suspected Arab separatists in southwestern Iran opened fire Saturday on a parade commemorating the start of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.



(News Agencies) The United States on Sunday condemned the deadly attack on a military parade in Iran but said the country's clerical rulers needed to look at reasons for unrest.

"The United States condemns any terrorist attack anywhere, period. We've always stood by that," Nikki Haley, the US ambassador to the United Nations, told CNN.

But she said of Iranian

President Hassan Rouhani: "He has oppressed his people for a long time."

"He needs to look at his own base to figure out where that's coming from. I think the Iranian people have had enough and that's where all of this is coming from."

At least 29 people were killed when suspected Arab separatists in southwestern Iran opened fire Saturday on a parade

commemorating the start of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Iran pinned the blame on an unnamed US-backed Gulf state for allegedly supporting the militants.

The attack, which is rare for Iran, was claimed by the Islamic State group, which is made up of Sunni Muslim extremists staunchly opposed to the Shiite clerical state in Iran.

US President Donald Trump's administration has piled pressure on Iran, with national security adviser John Bolton and other officials in the past calling for supporting anti-government forces within the country. Haley, however, repeated the administration position: "We're not looking to do a regime change in Iran or anywhere."

Pakistan's friendship offer to India should not be seen as weakness, says PM Imran Khan



(News Agencies) Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday said that Pakistan's offer of "friendship" to India should not be considered as its weakness and the Indian leadership should shun "arrogance" and hold peace talks.

"I hope the Indian leadership will shun arrogance and hold (peace) talks with Pakistan," Khan told bureaucrats from Punjab. "Our offer of friendship should not be considered as our weakness. Friendship between Pakistan and India will help overcome poverty."

Pakistan "should not be threatened as it will not tolerate any act of hostility," Khan said,

Imran Khan on Saturday said that India's decision to cancel the foreign minister-level talks in New York was "arrogant" and asserted that he was "disappointed" by the New Delhi's "negative" response.

adding, "we will not take pressure of any world power."

Khan's comments came as the opposition leader Shahbaz Sharif tweeted. "Pakistan extending an olive branch to India should never be

misconstrued as weakness." PPP vice president Sherry Rehman said the government should have done its homework before approaching India for a meeting.

On Saturday, director general of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor said

Pakistan is a nuclear power and its desire for peace should not be misconstrued as weakness.

"If someone tests our patience, we will give a befitting reply to it and not disappoint the nation," he told a private TV channel.

"We are on positive trajectory of peace and stability after having gone through efforts over the last two decades. We understand the value of peace and shall not allow it to be reversed."

Rejecting allegations of Pakistan mutilating the body of an Indian soldier, Ghafoor said the Pakistan Army is a professional force and can never undertake such non-professional action.

Pakistani information minister Fawad Chaudhry said dialogue was the only way forward to solve outstanding issues.



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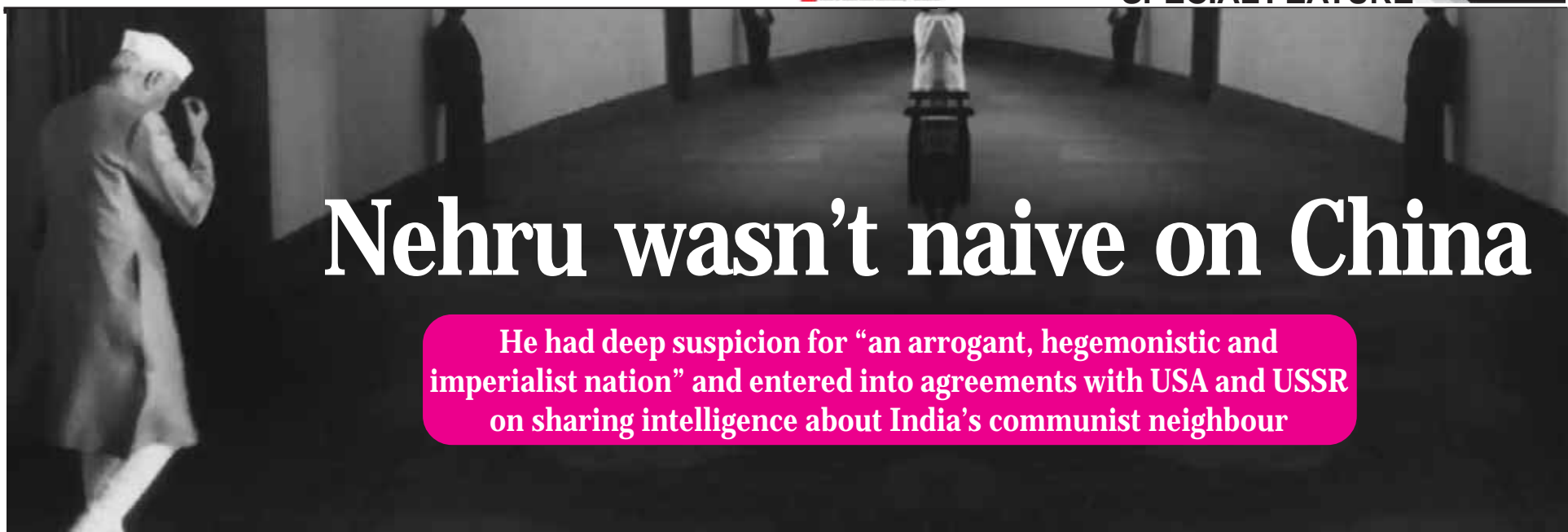
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Nehru wasn't naive on China

He had deep suspicion for "an arrogant, hegemonistic and imperialist nation" and entered into agreements with USA and USSR on sharing intelligence about India's communist neighbour

(News Agencies) It has become fashionable for analysts, diplomats and politicians to question our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's policies and strategies with regard to China. Such views are, however, incorrect.

Let me recount the brief that Nehru gave to my late father, the diplomat and public figure, G Parthasarathi, when he went to see Nehru before leaving for Peking (as Beijing was then called) to take up the position of India's ambassador to China. The date of the Nehru-Parthasarathi meeting was March 18, 1958, and the venue was Nehru's grand office at his residence, Teen Murti Bhavan, New Delhi.

When GP (as he was widely known) entered the room, Nehru was going through some files. It was almost 11 pm. He asked GP what the Foreign Office had told him. Is it Hindi Chini, bhai, bhai? (Indians and Chinese are brothers?) asked Nehru. The PM then went on to say that he did not trust the Chinese one bit. He suggested that they were an

arrogant, hegemonistic and imperialist nation which had, throughout its long history, been characterised by perfidy towards all external powers. So he advised GP that eternal vigilance should be his watchword...

I recall my father quoting Nehru as saying, "If you feel that a particular telegram of yours to Delhi should, because of its extreme sensitivity, be seen only by me, do so. There is no need to bring the whole of the Foreign Office into the picture. You need to be particularly careful to see that Krishna [VK Krishna Menon] does not see any of your telegrams. Why do I say so? Because Krishna, you and I share a common world view that is broadly left of centre, strongly nationalistic and zealous of our nation's freedom of action both at home and internationally." Then Nehru talked about how Krishna Menon was wrong in believing that Communist China would not attack a non-aligned country such as India.

Nehru concluded the fact that they could,

and might very well do so, is the reality India had to contend with. It was a highly reflective GP that went home at 12.30 am.

To understand Jawaharlal Nehru's approach to foreign and security policy, one has to go back to 1949-50. In June 1949, the then United States President, Harry Truman, sent Dean Acheson, the then United States Secretary of State, on a special assignment to New Delhi. He said that the United States wanted to enter into a very special, one of its kind, bilateral security agreement with India. Acheson emphasised that Truman and he were acutely conscious that the agreement should not in any manner impinge on India's commitment to an independent foreign policy and that the character and orientation of the proposed agreement should be left for Nehru to decide. The interest of the United States was only to ensure that democratic India, and not communist China, emerged as the dominant power in Asia.

Nehru said that the United States President should recognise and appreciate the fact that India had won independence barely two years ago, after a long struggle to throw the colonial British out. So, the people of India were very wary of exchanging any other country for Britain. However, Nehru told Acheson that India would readily agree to a top secret India-US agreement on sharing intelligence that related to China. Acheson jumped at the idea and so, over the next two days, after some discussions that involved Acheson and our then intelligence czar, BM Mullick, chief of the Intelligence Bureau, such an agreement was signed.

After further discussion with G Parthasarathi, Nehru wrote a letter to Truman saying: Let the intelligence-sharing begin and grow. Depending on how it develops, he [Nehru] would come back to Truman about widening its scope, and deepening it to a possible military cooperation agreement.

Govt cancels foreign ministers' meet, says 'Imran Khan's real face revealed'?

The meeting was scheduled for when India and Pakistan's foreign ministers attend the SAARC foreign ministers lunch and get-together next week.

(News Agencies) Some 25 hours after it was announced, India on Friday cancelled the proposed meeting between external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj and her Pakistan counterpart, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, in New York citing the brutal killing of security personnel by Pakistan-based entities and the recent release of a series of 20 postage stamps by the neighbour "glorifying a terrorist and terrorism", external affairs ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.

He also launched a frontal attack on Pakistan and its premier, saying "the evil agenda" of the neighbour has been exposed and the "true face of the new Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, has been revealed to the world in his first few months in office".

"In view of the changed situation,

there will be no meeting between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan in New York," the spokesperson said.

The cancellation of the meeting wasn't received well across the border. In comments to local media in Islamabad, Qureshi expressed disappointment at India's announcement. "It is unfortunate that India has not given a positive response. India has once again wasted an opportunity for peace," news agency PTI quoted him as saying.

"The refusal of India shows the Indian government is facing internal

pressure. It seems that India is already preparing for its elections due in the country next year."

Pakistan's minister for information and broadcasting Fawad Husain Chaudhry termed the statement of the Indian foreign office "puerile".

Kumar said the rethink was prompted by "two deeply disturbing developments" since the meeting was announced. He said the "latest brutal killings of our security personnel by Pakistan-based entities and the recent release of a series of 20 postage stamps by Pakistan glorifying a terrorist and terrorism confirm that Pakistan will not mend its ways."



US punishes China for buying Russian arms; may have implications for India



(News Agencies) The United States has imposed sanctions on the Chinese military for buying Russian weapons, including the S-400 air defence missile that is also on India's shopping list. The Trump administration, without naming anyone, said other countries with similar shopping lists should "think twice" about their plans. The punitive actions come under a Russia-related law that requires the US to sanction anyone undertaking significant transactions with Russian intelligence and military services, including arms manufacturers. The action against the Chinese entity is the first instance of secondary sanctions imposed by the US under Combatting America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), a 2017 law that seeks to punish Russia for invading Ukraine and interfering in American elections in 2016. Equipment Development Department (EDD), the Chinese agency sanctioned is a part of the Chinese Military Commission and is charged with R&D, developing, procuring defense equipment for the Chinese military.

China warns US to withdraw military sanctions or 'bear

The US State Department said it was placing financial sanctions on a Chinese military organisation for the recent purchase of Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets and S-400 surface-to-air missiles.

(News Agencies) Beijing on Friday told the US to be ready to "bear the consequences" if Washington didn't remove the sanctions it has imposed on a key Chinese military agency, set up by President Xi Jinping recently, for buying Russian weapons.

The US action violated the basic principles of international relations, the ministry of foreign affairs (MFA), Geng Shuang said.

"We strongly urge the US to immediately correct their mistake and withdraw their so-called sanctions, otherwise the US will have to bear the

consequences," Geng warned.

The US State Department said Thursday it was placing financial sanctions on the Equipment Development Department (EDD) of the Chinese Ministry of Defence recently purchasing Russian Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets and S-400 surface-to-air missiles.

The latest round of military sanctions by the US against China deepens the diplomatic hostility between the world's two largest economies already grappling with the escalating tit-for-tat trade

tariff war.

In a Thursday statement, the US State Department said that the sanctions had been invoked under Section 231 of Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017 (CAATSA) "for engaging in significant transactions with persons on the [List of Specified Persons]."

"These transactions involved Russia's transfer to China of [Russian Sukhoi] Su-35 combat aircraft and S-400 surface-to-air missile system-related equipment."

China's reaction was swift and sharp.

What made it more so was because the EDD was set up by Xi in 2016 under the Central Military Commission, the powerful Communist party body that controls the massive Chinese military apparatus.

The EDD's primary aim is to improve China's military tech and procurement.

"The Chinese side expresses strong indignation over the above-mentioned unreasonable practices of the US side," Geng said at the regular MFA regular press briefing.

"The US actions have seriously violated the basic



principles of international relations and seriously damaged the relations between the two countries and the two militaries," Geng said.

According to agency reports, it was the first time a third country has been punished under the CAATSA sanctions legislation for dealing with Russia, and signalled the Trump administration's will to risk relations with other countries in its campaign against Moscow. When asked about the sanctions' possible impact on US-China military relations, Pentagon spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Logan told the South China Morning Post that "the Department of Defense won't speculate on potential impacts these sanctions could have on mil-mil relations". Speculation on this new dispute won't give out a pretty picture anyway.

Alabama Loves Sessions, But Not Enough to Stand Up to Trump

Nothing the president has said to humiliate his attorney general has eroded support among officials or voters for either man. It just doesn't pay to take sides in this feud.

(News Agencies) Perhaps the most confounding example of divided loyalties in American politics right now is happening in the power corridors of Republican Alabama.

From Montgomery to Mobile, the state's GOP elite has stuck by President Donald Trump with a tenacity almost unmatched in the country. At the same time, those same die-hards have preserved their devotion for a native son the president publicly loathes, a man Trump humiliates with almost weekly jabs about his manhood, his accent, his stature and above all his loyalty. For months now, Trump has pounded on Jeff Sessions like a bass drum at the Auburn-Alabama game. Why, just on Wednesday, the president didn't just criticize the man whose early endorsement had given his 2016 campaign much needed gravitas, he negated him. "I don't have an attorney general."

In a state where tribalism is baked into daily life—Auburn or Alabama, but never both—something almost impossible seems

to be happening:

Republicans are not taking sides in the bitter internecine feud between the president and his top lawman, whom he has openly fantasized about firing. Feud might be too strong a word because it suggests Sessions is punching back, which he has scrupulously avoided with the stoicism of an early Christian. But after initially backing the beloved 20-year senator, whom some call "Dudley Do-Right" and uncompromisingly moral, state Republican officials have stopped defending him. Why, is the question. The answer I got from numerous interviews over the past two weeks as Trump has renewed his shaming campaign is that it's as much about fear of a Trump backlash as it is love.

Conservative Alabama's politicians love Sessions, who helped lead the state's rightward shift, but they're wary of the prickly, shoot-first president more. Who wants to be on the wrong side of Trump's twitter salvos? And who wants to risk alienating a voting bloc that has remained as loyal to him as

any in the nation?

Being on Trump's wrong side is politically dangerous, and the evidence in Alabama is a fresh memory. Alabama 2nd District congresswoman Martha Roby paid a price for withdrawing her endorsement during the 2016 election over Trump's "Access Hollywood" tape. Running this year for a fifth term, she was forced into a Republican primary runoff, which she won after receiving Trump's blessing. During the Republican primaries for lieutenant governor and state attorney general, candidates debated who was a bigger Trump booster.

It's a different story, however, among rank-and-file voters. Some are indeed upset with Sessions over his recusal and their belief that his Justice Department has not aggressively pursued investigations of Trump's election rival Hillary Clinton and the Obama administration. But observers on both sides of Alabama's political spectrum predict Sessions will weather this storm among his home-state voters.



"I can pretty well guarantee that Jeff Sessions' status has not declined one bit as a result of Trump's attacks," said Wayne Flynt, professor emeritus at Auburn University, who has written several books on Southern history, politics and religion.

Rather, Sessions is widely considered a shoo-in if he runs when his old Senate seat is on the ballot in 2020. It's now held by Doug Jones, who became the only Democrat elected statewide in nearly a decade when he won Alabama's 2017 special election to complete Sessions' term.

Even if Trump is impeached by 2020, state Republicans are expected to back Sessions in the primary, and therefore the general election, observers say. "Trump has this unwavering support, but I don't feel they're going to fall out with Sessions," said Steve Flowers, a former

state representative and current commentator and columnist on Alabama politics. "Sessions would win the race going away, if he wanted to run for it."

Trump supporters in Alabama don't always follow the president's lead when it comes to state politics. In the 2017 Senate special election, not only did Trump endorse Luther Strange, who lost the Republican primary, he also backed GOP nominee Roy Moore in the general election. The timing of Trump's endorsement—the Friday before the vote—could have been crucial in a tight race with red-state Republicans struggling over accusations that Moore pursued or sexually attacked teenage girls when he was in his 30s. Out of 1.3 million ballots cast, Moore lost to Jones by some 21,000 votes.

"A lot of people who voted for Trump thought, 'We like the president in

general, but we don't give a damn who he endorses or what he says," Flynt said. "There's a kind of cantankerousness and obstinacy about Alabama voters that makes them remarkably independent." Alabama Republicans will stand by Sessions, in part, because they view him as an authentic conservative ideologue, and not a say-anything-to-get-elected, do-anything-once-there politician. Voters here suffer corruption fatigue, after seeing dozens of state and local officials from both parties convicted or removed, Flynt said. "This is the only state I know of in American history where the chief administrative, legislative and judicial officials were all turned out of office on ethics violations within one year," the historian said, referring to the ousters of Gov. Robert Bentley, House Speaker Mike Hubbard and Moore (chief justice) in 2016 and 2017. The mindset in Alabama is if you think Washington is a swamp, check out the state capital in Montgomery. "Their general perception of politicians is 'scumbags,'" Flynt said. "Even the politicians they vote for."

US-China trade war Donald Trump says it's 'time to take a stand' after tariff move

US President Donald Trump continued to hit out at China days after announcing another round of tariffs, signalling the trade war will not end any time soon.

"It's time to take a stand on China," he said in an interview late Thursday with Fox News. "We have no choice. It's been a long time. They're hurting us."

Trump's biggest strike yet in a growing trade fight between the world's biggest economies will see a 10 per cent duty applied to US\$200 billion worth of Chinese imports, which could rise to 25 per cent next year. He also threatened duties on a further US\$267 billion of Made-in-China goods, which would hit nearly all other consumer products including

mobile phones, shoes and clothes. The latest round of duties comes on top of a 25 per cent tariff already imposed on about US\$50 billion in Chinese goods, which spurred counter-tariffs from Beijing. China plans to retaliate on Washington's US\$200 billion tariff round by slapping levies on US\$60 billion of American goods.

Officials in Beijing worry Trump's latest tariff salvoes mark a steady march towards a long-term competition that could thwart China's rise. Trump's latest comments and the ascendancy of China hawks within his administration will only compound such concerns. The Trump administration has not put a process in place for companies to get exemptions from the most

recent tariffs it is imposing, unlike earlier rounds of the duties, four people familiar with the matter said.

The US has justified its decision by saying that it is giving companies more than three months to transition their supply chains away from China before the tariff rate increases, according to one of the sources.

A spokeswoman with the US Trade Representative's office said there was no announcement at this time regarding an exclusion process for tariffs on the US\$200 billion of goods. The decision is likely to put additional pressure on American companies that say Trump's trade dispute with Beijing is increasing uncertainty and

boosting costs. Industry groups including the National Retail Federation have been pushing the administration to spare firms and consumers from import tariffs.

"Companies cannot shift their supply chains on a dime. It takes months, if not years, to find new suppliers who can meet all of a retailer's sourcing requirements," according to the federation's vice-president of supply chain and customs policy, Jonathan Gold. "These tariffs will unfairly punish US companies and ultimately US consumers."

The administration argues that tariffs give the country leverage as it pushes China to reduce trade barriers and protect

American firms from unfair practices, such as theft of intellectual property.

"We have a recent survey of our membership, and three quarters of our companies are going to be hurt by the US tariffs," William Zarit, chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in China, said on Friday. "We're seeing that – in terms of the supply chains, which are being so disrupted – that about a third of the companies are looking for new supply chains from the US, about a third of the companies are looking for new supply chains from China, and about a third of the companies are putting off investment decisions until they see the dust settle," Zarit said.

How Pakistan ISI used Facebook likes and comments to honey-trap a BSF jawan

Simple likes and comments on social media posts from unknown users can be an ISI trap for the armed force personnel as well as common people. The investigators of UP Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) discovered this alarming trend while interrogating the BSF jawan Achyutanand Mishra, who was arrested from Noida on charges of spying on Wednesday. He has been taken into five-day police remand since Wednesday evening. Mishra was honey-trapped by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) over social media and he was being used to extract crucial information about BSF logistics and troop movement. Inspector general (IG) of police of ATS, Asim Arun said the BSF jawan was honey-trapped by an unknown Facebook user posing as a woman who simply liked his photograph. The jawan walked into the trap laid by the ISI and sent a friend request to the unknown user, he said. Sources said the Facebook ID that was used to trap Mishra had as many as 90 Indians on its friend list. Asim Arun admitted that multiple cases of 'social media trap' by ISI have been reported in the recent past in which people got trapped through simple likes and comments on their posts by unknown people, mainly girls. He said the ISI trap trend is not limited to the armed forces alone but some common men were

also trapped in this manner for recce of important installations and collect crucial information. Citing a case, the IG said the UP ATS had recently tracked one similar case where a 19-year-old youth from Alwar, Rajasthan was also trapped using the same trick and was interrogated around a week ago. "Similar to the BSF jawan case, the unknown social media user first became friends with the unemployed youth posing as defence journalist of some reputed organisation and asked him to collect information about the armed force movement and logistics. The unknown social media user proposed that the youth regularly work for him for a salary of Rs 4,000," he stated. He said the youth was let off as he had not shared any crucial information with the unknown social media user. The IG said the ISI targets such people who are armed forces aspirants or stay

somewhere close to important security and armed forces installations.

Another senior police official said some cases of honey trap were reported where the same trick was used to trap the armed forces aspirants. He said the unknown social media user continued friendship with the aspirants till they got inducted in different forces and then used them to extract crucial information.

He said one similar case was that of an armed force personnel. He said the unknown social media user posed as a girl and promised to marry after being friends with him for over two years. He said the aspirant was in love with the girl whom he had never met and started sharing his training pictures and other details. The personnel was later tracked by the intelligence unit and was terminated from his services, he added.

How Amazon plans to battle Walmart in India

"We are confident that through More, we will be able to address customer needs for choicest of grocery and food items across the country," Roy said. Amazon took a small stake in an Indian fashion retailer — Shoppers Stop — last year, but the More investment is its first big foray into brick-and-mortar retail in the country. It's a move that will intensify its battle with Walmart for the country's hundreds of millions of shoppers.

Walmart took control of Flipkart — India's biggest e-commerce company and Amazon's chief rival in the country — in May, spending \$16 billion on a 77% stake.

The Arkansas-based retailer had been trying to expand its footprint in India for years, but could only open a handful of wholesale distribution outlets because of laws restricting foreign investment in retail. Walmart's purchase of

Ivanka Trump says she always 'wanted to be an astronaut'

Ivanka Trump, first daughter and US President's advisor, said that it has always been her dream to become an astronaut and travel to the space as she toured the Johnson Space Center here. Ivanka, who visited the space centre on Thursday where human spaceflight training, research, and flight control are conducted, spoke to the crew of the International Space Station. "You inspire us all. You actually have my dream job," Ivanka, 36, admitted. "I always wanted to be an astronaut and I always wanted to go to space. You are fulfilling my dream up there," she said. Astronaut Nicole Mann provided Ivanka with a guided tour of the space center, including the Space Vehicle Mockup Facility that holds a full-size copy of the International Space Station. Ivanka posed outside the doors of the Mission Control Center and met chief Holly Ridings, who made history this week after becoming the first woman in NASA's 60-year history to become the chief flight director of the Johnson

Space Center. Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick also was with Ivanka, along with US Senator Ted Cruz and US Rep Brian Babin, both Republicans from Texas, the Houston Chronicle reported. Ivanka toured mock-ups of the station and of the Orion spacecraft which is being built to take astronauts back to the moon for the first time in 50 years, the report said.

The setting up of the sex offenders registry is timely

Second, while in a digital age it is reasonable to expect the use of technology in crime detection and investigation, despite a promise to not to compromise the privacy of any individual, there will be legitimate concerns about the misuse of data. This concern has been tackled partly by allowing access to the registry only to law enforcement agencies. Third, there is a possibility that this registry may tarnish a person's life forever even if he is reformed after serving his legal sentence. While the sex offenders' list could help in enabling justice and monitoring an offender's behaviour, the State must ensure that there is no overreach and misuse of the list. The government has also launched another portal to record complaints from citizens on objectionable content related to child pornography and other sexually explicit material.

Flipkart gives it direct access to an Indian e-commerce market that Morgan Stanley has estimated will be worth \$200 billion by 2026. But most Indians, like many Americans, still prefer to buy groceries in person. Amazon's purchase of US grocery giant Whole Foods last year was driven by a desire to bring offline shoppers into its online ecosystem. It will be hoping More customers do that as well.

The Man Behind Trump's 'Invisible Wall'

It's Lee Francis Cissna, the director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, an agency that not only facilitates legal immigration, but historically celebrates it. Miller is rightly seen as the mastermind of Trump's far-reaching immigration crackdown, but Cissna is arguably just as important because he makes it happen.

Much less visible than Miller or Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, Cissna has quietly carried out Trump's policies with a workmanlike dedication. From his perch atop USCIS, he's issued a steady stream of policy changes and regulations that have transformed his agency into more of an enforcement body and less of a service provider. These changes have generated blowback from immigrant advocates, businesses and even some of his own employees. Leon Rodriguez, who served as USCIS director under President Barack Obama, said the agency is sending a message "that this is a less welcoming environment than it may have been before." While the travel ban and family separations grabbed headlines, Cissna has waged a quieter war, tightening and reworking regulations and guidance that make it harder to come to the U.S. as an immigrant or temporary worker. Most of the changes are technical and haven't drawn the legal challenges of Trump's more high-profile immigration moves. But the policy revisions could reshape legal immigration flows in the coming years, as visa applications that might have passed muster a few years ago are rejected. And the changes made at USCIS, which have pushed visa officers toward the law enforcement space, will continue unless a new director reverses course.

Ur Jaddou, who was chief counsel at USCIS during the Obama administration and now works as director of DHS Watch, a project of the immigrant advocacy group America's Voice, views Cissna as part of a broader faction of immigration hawks in the administration. "I think they want to achieve radical changes in immigration policy to take us backwards to a time when immigration to the country was quite limited," she said. "For

many, many years, they've tried to do it legislatively and they haven't been successful."

The path to how Cissna, a political appointee with a long record of government service, got here is unlikely. In interviews with 20 current and former coworkers, classmates and friends, he comes across as a puzzle: someone obsessed with law and order in the immigration system, framing his own philosophy as a return to the intent of the law—but whose interpretations consistently trend in the direction of making life harder for people who want to come and stay in the United States. At the same time, acquaintances describe him as a thoughtful policy expert with a passion for cultures and language. He's the multilingual son of a Peruvian immigrant and speaks Spanish to his two young children. His wife's mother—born in the West Bank city of Ramallah—arrived in the United States as a Palestinian refugee in 1957, according to immigration documents. Cissna worked at law firms in his late 20s and early 30s, after which his career trajectory ran through the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security. There, Cissna became an expert on immigration policy before moving into more political terrain working with the Senate Judiciary Committee.

He has, according to most who know him, never been animated by apparent anti-immigrant sentiment.

And according to Cissna, that hasn't changed. "I just feel a strong commitment to the law, and to the rule of law," Cissna told Politico Magazine during an early September interview in his office in USCIS headquarters. "None of the things that we're doing, as I've said on numerous public occasions, are guided by any kind of malevolent intent."

To immigration experts and advocates, though, the changes at USCIS are clearly motivated by an overarching goal. Tyler Moran, managing director of the pro-migrant D.C. Immigration Hub, sees Cissna's agenda at USCIS as an extension of Trump's nationalist approach to immigration. "I think it's pretty simple," she said. "They don't want to let more people into the country. ... They just want to put the invisible wall up."

The puzzle of Cissna's transformation, from a Foggy Bottom policy wonk to string-puller in the president's broader immigration agenda, is a window into how the Trump administration's defining obsession has spread into even the most workaday parts of the immigration bureaucracy—and rendered it into something utterly unrecognizable to many veterans of the system, and utterly fearsome to those suddenly caught in its net.

In February, USCIS, typically the quietest of the three agencies that deal with immigration, made headlines when Cissna rewrote its mission statement, a symbolic move that alarmed some employees. Now, instead of securing "America's promise as a nation of immigrants," USCIS' stated mission is to administer "the nation's lawful immigration system, safeguarding its integrity ... securing the homeland, and honoring our values." In particular, critics viewed the removal of a reference to a "nation of immigrants" as an affront to core American values. Cissna told POLITICO at the time that such sentiments "belong chiseled in stone or chiseled in our hearts," not front-and-center in a bureaucratic slogan.

Despite his effort to downplay the significance of the new mission statement, it presaged a stream of policy changes at USCIS throughout the spring and summer that have made it more difficult for immigrants to enter the U.S. legally and stay once they've arrived.

The denaturalization task force, which aims to strip immigrants of their citizenship in cases where it was obtained fraudulently, was perhaps the most extreme to immigration advocates. Cissna framed it in law enforcement terms. "We finally have a process in place to get to the bottom of all these bad cases and start denaturalizing people who should not have been naturalized in the first place," Cissna told the Associated Press in June when he announced the effort. "What we're looking at, when you boil it all down, is potentially a few thousand cases." Just one month earlier, the Justice Department had sued to denaturalize a 63-year-old Peruvian grandmother

who pleaded guilty in 2012 to playing a small part in a multimillion-dollar fraud scheme. Other changes at USCIS will make it more difficult for certain people to obtain legal status. Also in June, the agency issued guidance that expanded the circumstances in which USCIS officers can initiate deportation proceedings. The updated guidance—the implementation of which has been postponed—orders officials to issue a "notice to appear" when a visa applicant is denied and lacks legal status. Out-of-status immigrants could now face deportation for trying to legalize. For instance, an immigrant might have legal status when he or she applies for a visa, but might have slipped out of status by the time the application is processed—and could be deported for such a processing delay. The nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute told Politico Magazine the new policy could lead to a sharp increase in the number of people placed into deportation proceedings each year, with the possibility the agency could issue up to 260,000 notices in a year. That's nearly triple the roughly 92,000 notices issued in fiscal year 2016.

Another major shift could lead to swifter processing of applications, or at least swifter denials, by removing second chances for some applicants. Earlier this month, a new policy kicked in that allows USCIS officers to deny visa applications without first issuing a request for additional evidence or a "notice of intent to deny," which provides an explanation for the rejection. The second chances were part of an Obama-era policy.

Some law enforcement-oriented USCIS employees have cheered the new direction. But other workers who cherished the spirit of welcoming immigrants have been demoralized by the changes, a pain felt with particular acuteness within the refugee and asylum directorate. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Monday that the administration would accept no more than 30,000 refugees in the coming fiscal year, the lowest level since the start of the resettlement program in 1980. That comes after Trump slashed the refugee cap to

45,000 in fiscal year 2018, a stark drop from 110,000 admissions proposed by Obama in 2016.

Cissna soon will roll out what could be the most controversial regulation to come out of his agency under Trump. The proposed regulation, known as the "public charge" rule, aims to keep immigrants from entering or staying if they're expected to be a drain on taxpayers—a strategic attack on both legal immigration and public benefits that likely will trigger yet another immigration court battle. A core provision of the regulation could block an immigrant from obtaining a green card if the person or a family member receives a wide range of public benefits, according to leaked drafts of the measure. The proposed regulation, which is expected before the midterm elections, would effectively gentrify the legal immigration system, blocking poorer immigrants from obtaining green cards or even from entering the country in the first place.

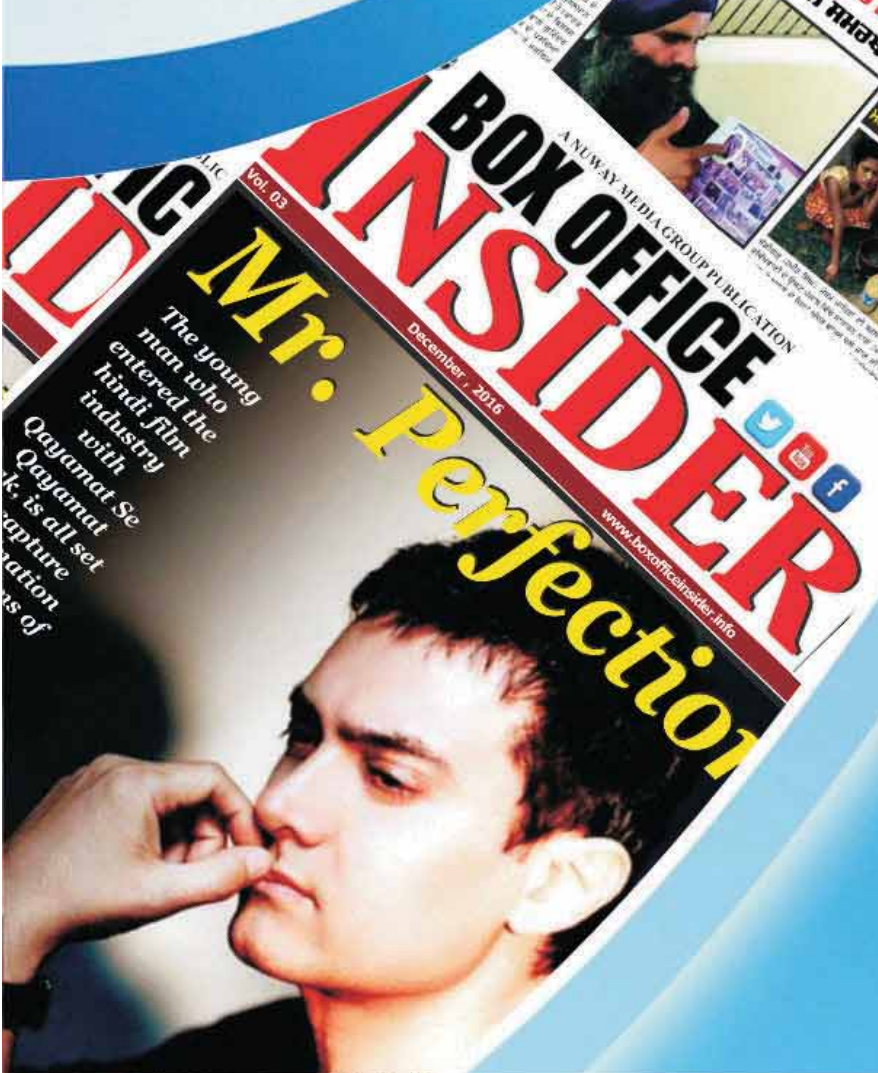
The chilling effect has taken root already. Health service providers claim more immigrants have turned down government aid for infant baby formula and food for children out of a fear it could create a black mark on a green card application. The move also demonstrates the Trump administration's willingness to promote controversial immigration policies even after the fallout over family separations at the border.

The man at the center of this quiet overhaul is Cissna, who, by most accounts, never wanted to be seen as a Spanish-speaking analog to Stephen Miller. People who know Cissna view him as a policy wonk and dutiful civil servant, not someone philosophically opposed to immigration. Most of the friends and associates I spoke with portray him as non-ideological and pro-immigrant, even as he has helped craft the most radical anti-immigration agenda since the 1950s. "When you work in an administration, to a large degree, you implement that administration's policies," said a longtime friend whose employer had not authorized him to speak on the record.





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House to Vote on McCarthy Resolution Admonishing Cities for Allowing Illegal Aliens to Vote in Local Elections



(News Agencies) The U.S. House of Representatives will vote next week on a resolution offered by House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy that admonishes U.S. cities for allowing illegal aliens to vote in local elections, as has been confirmed to Breitbart News exclusively.

The measure, which Democrats are expected to oppose, in two pages states that it is the position of the House of Representatives that

allowing illegal aliens the right to vote disenfranchises American citizens.

The House vote is set to come next week, ahead of the all-important midterm elections. It comes after a number of cities, particularly San Francisco but also Chicago, a number of Boston suburbs including Cambridge, and others, have opened up local voting rights to illegal aliens — effectively disenfranchising American citizens who vote in these

elections by diluting their voices with voices of people who entered the country illegally. “Naturalized American citizens often describe casting their first ballot as one of the proudest moments of their lives. The act is a reminder that they have become Americans, with all the rights and responsibilities of Americans,” McCarthy told Breitbart News. “Unfortunately, a handful of cities like Chicago, Cambridge, and most recently San Francisco allow illegal immigrants to vote in local elections. These radical policies weaken the voting power of law-abiding Americans, including naturalized citizens. Today I introduced a resolution stating that allowing illegal immigrants to vote devalues the franchise and diminishes

the voting power of American citizens. I hope my colleagues will stand with me in protecting the right to vote for every American citizen of legal age, and rejecting all outside or foreign interference in our elections.” Assuming the Democrats oppose this measure en masse, as they are expected to, it will draw a clear contrast with Republicans ahead of the all-important midterm elections. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, who aims to become Speaker again should the Democrats hit the magic number of 24 net gains in the House to retake the majority, of course represents San Francisco, so the message from Republicans could not be clearer: Under Pelosi’s rule, the House of

Representatives would become a place that stands up for illegal aliens over American citizens and disenfranchises Americans in the process.

A similar resolution over the summer in the House found Democrats split three separate ways when it came to their “abolish ICE” leftist rhetoric. Some Democrats voted on a measure to praise ICE, others opposed it, and the vast majority of them voted “present.” In an interview with Breitbart News at the time, McCarthy detailed how the Democrats’ abhorrent mistreatment of America’s immigration law enforcement officers proved they are the “New Socialist Democratic Party” and no longer the party of moderate Democrats like Tip O’Neill or John F. Kennedy. “I’ve never seen anything like

this on the floor of the House,” McCarthy said after most Democrats voted present to avoid praising ICE officers. “What the resolution simply does is it honors all those who work for ICE and it simply states what they do: One, stopping the million pounds of drugs, stopping those who become human traffickers—those people who are preying on our children, two thousand of those they’ve been able to stop. And saving like 900 kids who have been put into human trafficking. And it honors the lives of those six who have been killed in the line of duty, made the ultimate sacrifice in their job. One was even murdered from a cartel in Mexico. And it has one provision in there where it denounces any talk about abolishing ICE.”

Number of Arabic Speakers in America Has Nearly Doubled Since 2000

(News Agencies) The number of United States residents who speak Arabic at home has nearly doubled since the year 2000, new analysis from the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) reveals.

Census Bureau data analyzed by CIS researchers finds that there are now more than 1.2 million U.S. residents who speak Arabic at home. In the year 2000, there were only about 614,000 Arabic

speakers in the country, representing a near 50 percent increase in the total in less than two decades.

Legal immigration to the U.S. from Islamic nations, such as Afghanistan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Somalia has skyrocketed since 2010. For example, immigration from Afghanistan to the U.S. has increased 84 percent in the last seven years. As Breitbart News

reported, nearly half of residents in America’s top five largest cities speak a foreign language at home. In Los Angeles, California, nearly 60 percent of residents speak a foreign language at home.

In 2000, there were about 28.1 million U.S. residents who spoke Spanish at home. Today, there are more than 41 million U.S. residents who speak Spanish at home, an increase of more than 40

percent.

There are now more than 66.5 million residents in the U.S. that speak a language other than English at home. This number is expected to continue to increase should there be no reforms made to reduce the flow of mass legal immigration to the country.

Every year, the U.S. admits more than 1.5 million legal immigrants. In 2017, the foreign-born



population boomed to a 108-year record high, making up nearly 14 percent of the total U.S. population. By 2023, the CIS researchers

estimate that the legal and illegal immigrant population of the U.S. will make up nearly 15 percent of the entire U.S. population.

Official Tapped by Biggest U.S. Public Pension Fund Worked for Predatory Chinese State Investment Fund

(News Agencies) America’s largest public pension fund has tapped a manager of China’s predatory investment fund as its next chief investment officer.

The California Public Employees’ Retirement System, which manages \$360 billion and is frequently described as the most influential pension fund investor in the U.S., has asked Ben Meng to take over the top investment job when its current chief departs at the end of the year, the Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday.

In the Wall Street Journal’s report, Meng is

described as an official of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, China’s foreign-exchange and currency regulator. His job, however, is not writing regulations or supervising Chinese companies’ foreign exchange reporting.

Meng, a former Wall Street bond trader, is a deputy chief investment officer of SAFE. This suggests his job was to invest the assets of SAFE, which is not just a regulator but also one of the world’s biggest sovereign wealth funds. SAFE manages over \$3 trillion of China’s foreign reserves.

China is a closed economy, which means foreign currency flows are tightly controlled. When a Chinese company receives dollars by exporting goods to the United States, it is required to exchange them for China’s domestic currency. The local bank turns the dollars over to the People’s Bank of China, the equivalent of China’s Federal Reserve. The PBOC then turns the dollars over to SAFE, which is charged with investing the funds to further China’s strategic and economic goals. In the past, this mainly

involved buying ultra-safe U.S. assets such as Treasuries and bonds backed by U.S. government-sponsored entities. But in recent times China’s investment strategy shifted to investing in technology and supporting China’s One Belt One Road schemes. An investigation by the U.S. government into China’s actions with respect to U.S. technology found that Chinese investment strategy is significantly “driven by non-market factors. These factors stem from the Chinese government’s extensive intervention — in the



Chinese economy in general, and in foreign investment in particular — to achieve industrial policy objectives.” That investigation led the Trump administration to begin imposing tariffs on China’s exports. SAFE’s investment activities are closely held secrets. Indeed, for the first few

years of its existence, SAFE’s investment arm itself was a secret. But by virtue of its regulatory role—which gives it screening and approval authority over outgoing private investment in China—it has insights into global financial transactions that are likely unparalleled by any investor in the world.

The China-US trade war is a thinly disguised strategic battle

Under the garb of a trade war, this is a high-stakes strategic conflict between a power which wants to preserve the status quo in its favour and one which wants to usurp that throne.

It is a full-on trade war between two of the mightiest global powers and both sides are trying to play hardball. After imposing tariffs on \$34 billion worth of Chinese goods in July, US President Donald Trump ratcheted up the pressure by going in for another \$16 billion worth last month and ordering his administration to prepare to collect tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese trade on top of that. China has responded with its own set of reciprocal sanctions on the US products.

Trump has long accused China of unfair trade practices such as subsidies, currency manipulation and, in particular, of stealing American intellectual property in the form of cutting-edge technology. Against this backdrop, Chinese President Xi Jinping's flagship "Made in China 2025" initiative is viewed with suspicion as it

is aimed at strengthening Chinese foothold in key industrial sectors, including pharmaceutical products, aircraft and robotics. This is reflected in the Office of the US Trade Representative's description of the initiative as part of a plan of "seizing economic dominance of certain advanced technology sectors".

While one can view these developments as a function of President Trump's worldview, there is a wider shift happening in the US in so far as China is concerned. There is a fundamental re-evaluation of America's China policy going on at the moment with questions being raised about the nation's past posture. As a 2017 report from the US Trade Representative to the US Congress underscores: "It seems clear that the United States erred in supporting China's entry into the WTO on terms that have proven to be

ineffective in securing China's embrace of an open, market-oriented trade regime."

These concerns about China's economic behaviour are not America's alone. A number of other leading trade powers, including the European Union (EU), share them. The EU, for example, has been asking China to deal with its excess steel and aluminium capacity, and has even complained to the WTO about the theft of intellectual property and high-end technology. Foreign companies wanting to operate in China have to work with a Chinese partner in a way that means they can easily lose control of their technology. But the EU has refrained from unilaterally imposing additional trade barriers on China like the Trump Administration. While China has responded with



a tit-for-tat approach in retaliating against the US, the future will be difficult for Beijing because China imports much less from the US than it exports there. There are reports about growing criticism of Xi Jinping in China as the future economic prospects of the country look tough. Since the end of the Cold War, the American strategy vis-à-vis China was premised on the assumption that the more the US engages China, the faster China would become more like the US and emerge a responsible stakeholder in managing a global order set by the US and its allies after the end of the Second World War. But this

strategy has a fatal flaw: major powers react to their own set of structural incentives, they don't necessarily respond to the assumptions underpinning the policies of their competitors. The US policy critically underestimated the resolve of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to maintain its position in the nation's domestic politics and its will to attain global power. This has been repeatedly manifest in the Chinese behaviour on issues from East and South China Seas to the Belt and Road Initiative and China's military build-up. Where in the beginning, Chinese leaders were cautious in challenging the US for global hegemony, there is now a real sense in Beijing

of having arrived and Beijing now wants the global order to reflect its interests and values.

This is well recognised in the US today. Compared to the past, there is now a greater awareness of how China has manipulated the international system to serve its agenda. And so the pushback on the economic front is the first major attempt to redirect US-China ties. In global relations, economic order rests on the political order. Under the garb of a trade war, this is a high-stakes strategic conflict between a power which wants to preserve the status quo in its favour and one which wants to usurp that throne. The rest is all theatre!

The Lehman Brothers story signifies grit



Lehmans may have taken irresponsible risks but the spirit that created the bank deserved to continue. It was, after all, the spirit of adventure, ambition and dogged determination.

Yesterday was ten years since the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the financial crisis that it sparked off. A decade later, one of the most talked about plays in London is the story of this former investment bank. I saw it last week at the National Theatre and was riveted. It's hard to believe that the bone dry story of a collapsed bank could make for such enthralling theatre. The audience sat spellbound through the entire three and

a half hour production.

Called 'The Lehman Trilogy', the play tells the story of the bank and does this with just three characters on stage. To begin with, they play the three original Lehman brothers, Henry, Emanuel and Mayer. As the play develops, the three start to act as their own sons and nephews. Yet at every given moment, it's perfectly clear who they are and, though detailed, the story they tell is both easy to follow and

totally gripping.

It begins with the first business the Lehmans set up. It was a small fabric store in Montgomery, Alabama. If my memory is correct, it was some time in the mid-1840s. From this small venture the Lehmans took the next big critical step. They became middlemen buying cotton from nearby southern plantations and selling it on to northern mills. No one had done this before and the profits were remarkable.

The civil war hit them badly. But soon Emanuel, by then based in New York, expanded the family enterprise and they began to

operate as middlemen for steel, rubber and other tradable commodities. It wasn't long before the Lehmans realised that money was the best commodity to trade. They could make money by dealing in money and thus they became a bank. This inevitably expanded into a finance corporation with stocks and bonds replacing hard cash as the traded commodity. The Second World War provided fresh opportunities for profit and soon the Lehmans established in Europe as well. Bobby was the last Lehman to head the family business. During his life he

was the inspiration not just for greater profits but for a vision that set the company apart from almost every other. In a sense Lehman's collapse began with his death though the bank itself continued for a bit longer.

This is not a naturally gripping. To do so they used comedy and drama, satire and mimicry, soliloquies and silence. But above all else, they spoke directly to the audience. They weren't speaking to each other but to everyone in the auditorium.

So that you never forget the denouement that ends

the Lehman story, the play begins in the early hours of the morning after the bank's collapse with a janitor cleaning the premises. It ends with the sound of an unanswered ringing phone — the call that confirmed there was no lifeline for the bank. The story of the Lehman family and their evolving business is told in between.

When the curtain fell on the last act, the audience rose as one to their feet. The applause was loud and continuous. No one seemed in a hurry to stop clapping and start walking out. But I couldn't resist a twinge of sadness.

India can tackle the problem of hot cities

South Asia has a unique opportunity to show the rest of the world the way to providing cooling access for all

The intense heatwave that has struck South Asia in the last few months has proved to be particularly challenging for those living in cities. While global temperatures are rising, urban temperatures are climbing at even faster rates.

The problem is only likely to get worse as South Asian cities grow more crowded, while heat waves are expected to become more extreme, last longer and happen more frequently. One study predicts that cities can expect the average high temperature to increase by 3 to 5 degrees Celsius and their lowest temperatures to increase by 3 to 7 degrees Celsius by 2050. Extreme heat, already the deadliest natural disaster in an average year, will become even deadlier.

This dangerous mix of extreme heat trends was

seen, for example, in Karachi, where 65 people died in the span of three days in May. It underscored the threat of extreme urban heat and the life-or-death risks it creates for poor, vulnerable populations. Chilling Prospects: Providing Sustainable Cooling for All, recently issued by the UN-affiliated Sustainable Energy for All and the Kigali Cooling Efficiency Program, illuminates the massive scale of the challenge facing South Asian cities — but also offers solutions to address the problem.

The report reveals that more than 630 million urban dwellers worldwide, most of them in South Asia, are at risk because of a lack of access to basic cooling services that they need to survive and thrive.

Addressing urban heat is much more than “avoiding a negative”. It is an

investment that would boost urban economies around the world — from Phoenix and New York City to New Delhi, Karachi and Dhaka. A growing body of research finds that the broad benefits of cooling down cities — such as improved energy efficiency, worker productivity, air quality, health and equity — are potentially worth billions of dollars to a single city. This represents an economic benefit for vulnerable low-income urban populations. A 2017 study published in the journal Nature Climate Change estimates that the failure to act on urban heat will cost the average city nearly 6% of its GDP by 2100. On the other hand, the study found that investing in sensible heat mitigating measures, such as so-called “cool roofs” or painting roofs white or other light colours to reflect sunlight, would generate a



1,200% return. As the Cooling for All report highlights, capturing this “cooling access dividend” should be the focus of global efforts to address rising temperatures.

One example to emulate is Almeria, Spain, which has a unique tradition of whitewashing its greenhouses. Remarkably, based on a 20-year study comparing weather station data, researchers found that Almeria cooled down by 0.4°C compared to a 0.3°C rise in temperatures in surrounding regions lacking whitewashed greenhouses. We also know that cool surfaces can make a meaningful difference in indoor air temperatures. Field studies of dwellings in Sanand in Gujarat indicate that a building without

mechanical cooling can be 3-4°C cooler with cool roofs and walls. An alternative strategy is the introduction of “green roofs,” which involves the planting of vegetation on roofs, which also reduces urban temperatures.

Fortunately, some South Asian cities, including Ahmedabad and Dhaka, are recognising the importance of cool and green roofs to combat high urban temperatures and are implementing programmes to encourage their use.

These programmes can also be coordinated with new urban development plans that offer opportunities to radically rethink the design of building to optimise cooling loads and

technologies that can deal with them. In India, for example, 75% of the buildings required by 2030 have yet to be built and so there is a huge opportunity for designing for passive cooling or retrofitting buildings to promote natural cooling and ventilation. Adopting these strategies is important in another way. The growing middle class in South Asia is likely to buy more air conditioners to beat the heat. But many devices will be low-cost and inefficient models that will only consume more energy powered by the fossil fuels that contribute to global warming. We face the prospect of a vicious cycle where a warming planet creates the need for more cooling that could result in more damaging emissions. South Asia already has at hand simple, affordable and efficient solutions at the local level to deal with the problems of rising urban heat. This provides a unique opportunity for the region to show the rest of the world the way to providing cooling access for all.

Why the BJP could lose Punjab for a long time

The temptation to pitchforking Sikhs in an idiotic “patriotism” debate should be resisted, writes Shekhar Gupta.

For several years now, some hyper-patriotic commando-comic channels have been behaving as if they are a strategic asset of the BJP. Every evening you can find more than one of these channels putting either a maulvi, a Kashmiri activist/politician or a retired Pakistani general in the dock, in an abusive manner. At least the Pakistani veterans are handsomely compensated for suffering such nationalist admonition. The rest are just fodder for the TRP mill.

It is useful politics. You can see it written all over the BJP spokesmen’s faces on these channels. The implication is that unless proven to be a patriot, an Indian Muslim’s loyalty is suspect, Kashmiris are in Pakistan’s pocket and are all terrorists. You can then draw a straight, diabolical line.

You can see how cornered Indian Muslims, 200 million of our fellow countrymen, must feel.

Tuesday morning on, it seems even Sikhs, a much smaller minority, have also been marked out for the same treatment. In unleashing the same propaganda machine against the Sikhs, especially as it pertains to an issue linked to one of their holiest shrines, the karmabhoomi of their founder, Guru Nanak Dev, the BJP may be playing with fire that patriotic, and smart, Indians would rather not.

Since Sikhs are only about 2% of India’s population, we need to understand what Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan means to them. This is where Guru Nanak Dev lived, tilled the lands, and, as Punjab

reminds us, gave Sikhism its leitmotif, or its three pillars: naam japo, kirat karo, vand chhako (work hard, chant God’s name, fairly divide and enjoy the harvest). Guru Nanak spent the last 17 years of his life here. The Gurudwara, Kartarpur Sahib, was built at the spot where he died. For the Sikhs, as well as several crore Sindhis who pray to Guru Nanak, this is among their most hallowed shrines.

Founded at the end of the 15th century, Sikhism is the world’s youngest major religion. Its founders were the most liberal and large-hearted saints who drew what they saw as the best from all religions, especially Hinduism and Islam, and the teachings of other Sufi contemporaries. Because the faith is so young and vibrant, it is given to rapid



transformations, even upheavals, and revivalist streaks. The last time it happened was in the 1980s under Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

Sikhs are also a little like the much older Jews in that, remembering their martyrs, victims of (mostly Mughal) excesses and the many holocausts is central to their prayers. As is the wish to visit/reclaim the holy places they left behind in Pakistan because of the Partition. Sikh pilgrim “jathas” (groups) are organised to these places. Some, like Nankana Sahib

and Panja Sahib, are deep inside Pakistan, near Faisalabad and Attock, respectively.

Kartarpur Sahib is next door to our Punjab, just across the Ravi. On clear days, devotees climb to any little mound along the Ravi river for a “darshan” of the shrine across the borders. A proposal for the construction of a causeway and visa-free access to pilgrims has been floating between the two governments for decades. If the borders were opened here, literally millions of Sikhs and Sindhis would go for just a few

hours’ pilgrimage. This is what Pakistani Army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, promised Sidhu, who duly wrote to external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj to move it forward.

In Punjab, this unleashed competitive politics. There’s no way the Akalis, the BJP’s allies, would let the Congress run with this credit. The Badals will thwart it, but without seeming to look like they are denying their fellow Sikhs this opportunity. And “jealousy”, as the most recent Sidhuism goes, “is the jaundice of the soul”.

Therefore, the strategy of making it out to be a giant Pakistan Army-ISI plot, Sidhu their gullible pawn, if not an agent. Then it grows into a Bikram aur Betal kind of fantasy: This is a ploy to make our Punjab release more water in the Ravi; that the Sikhs going for pilgrimage will be brainwashed by the ISI.

Talk therapy after a loved one's death is good for mental health, reduced risk of suicide

Grieving patients who receive talk therapy at the general practitioner's shortly after a relative's death, have a lower risk of suicide and psychiatric illness than others, says a new study.

(News Agencies) Dealing with grief? Talk to a doctor. In a comprehensive study, researchers from Aarhus University show that grieving patients who receive what is known as talk therapy at the general practitioner's clinic shortly after a relative's death, have a lower risk of suicide and psychiatric illness than others. Losing a close family member is psychologically painful. In fact, it is so

painful that the risk of committing suicide or developing other serious psychiatric conditions increases for grieving people who have experienced a serious bereavement. A study now suggests that talk therapy with a general practitioner early in the grief process can reduce this risk. Senior statistician Morten Fenger-Grøn said, "The study shows that patients whose

general practitioners often use talk therapy have a lower risk of suicide and other psychological disorders than others." The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of early treatment with talk therapy or antidepressant medicine on grieving patients. The researchers looked at three specific consequences in connection with the grief resulting from the death



of a close relative: suicide, self-harm, and admission to a psychiatric hospital. The study showed that the risk of a serious psychiatric condition during the grief process would be 1.7% lower if the

patient received talk therapy. The research results have been adjusted for both the patient's characteristics and the general practitioners' propensity to prescribe antidepressant

medications. The study could not, however, provide any precise measurements for the significance of antidepressant medicine in this context. The full findings are present in the journal- Clinical Epidemiology.

How a behavioural program can reduce stress in cancer patients



Cancer patients can take part in behavioural programmes that can reduce harmful stress and improve their moods.

(News Agencies) According to a new study, a behavioural program to reduce harmful stress in cancer patients can be taught to therapists from around the country and implemented at their sites, which effectively improves the moods of their patients.

Researchers designed this program at The Ohio State University. "It's challenging to take a treatment and scale it up to where it will work with a diverse group of therapists and patients under a wide variety of circumstances," said study author Barbara L.

Andersen. The program, now called Cancer to Health, was developed by Andersen and colleagues in the early 2000s. It teaches patients how to think about stress, communicate with doctors and others about their treatment, seek social support, become physically active and take other actions to reduce their stress, improve their mood and enhance quality of life. It consists of 18 weekly sessions and eight monthly maintenance

sessions, as well as homework assignments for patients. Dealing with stress is important because research has found that high levels of stress can lead to not just depression, lower quality of life and negative health behaviours, but also lower immunity and faster disease progression. "We need to help cancer patients deal with their stress, because it has effects on their physical as well as their mental health," Andersen

said. In several studies published between 2004 and 2010, Andersen and her colleagues tested the Cancer to Health program and found it effective with breast cancer patients at the Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital at Ohio State. Results showed that patients who went through the program felt better and also had significantly improved immune responses and a lower risk of breast cancer recurrence. This new study aimed to

see if some of the results could be duplicated around the country. It involved therapists who work with cancer patients at 15 sites, from California to Maine. Most were associated with local hospitals or cancer support communities. All of the therapists came to Ohio State to learn how to implement the Cancer to Health program. They then took the program to their sites, where it was tested with 158 patients with a variety

Teenagers with religious upbringing enjoy well-being in early adulthood

A new study says that people who attended weekly religious services or practised daily prayer or meditation in their youth reported greater life satisfaction and positivity in their 20s.

(News Agencies) Participating in spiritual practices during childhood and adolescence may lead to positive health and well-being outcomes in early adulthood. According to a recent research, people who attended weekly religious services or practised daily prayer or meditation in their youth

reported greater life satisfaction and positivity in their 20s. The study noted that these people were less likely to subsequently have depressive symptoms, smoke, use illicit drugs, or have a sexually transmitted infection than people raised with less regular spiritual habits.

Ying Chen, first author of the study suggested that, "These findings are important for both our understanding of health and our understanding of parenting practices. Many children are raised religiously, and our study shows that this can powerfully affect their health behaviours, mental

health, and overall happiness and well-being." For this study analysed health data from mothers in the Nurses' Health Study II (NHSII) and their children in the Growing Up Today Study (GUTS). The researchers controlled for many variables such as maternal health, socioeconomic status, and history of substance abuse or depressive symptoms, to try to isolate the effect of religious upbringing. The results showed that people who attended



religious services at least weekly in childhood and adolescence were approximately 18% more likely to report higher happiness as young adults (ages 23-30) than those who never attended services. They were also 29% more likely to volunteer in their communities and 33% less likely to use illicit drugs.

Those who prayed or meditated daily while growing up were 16% more likely to report higher happiness as young adults, 30% less likely to have started having sex at a young age, and 40% less likely to have a sexually transmitted infection compared to those who never prayed or meditated.



Happy Birthday Kareena Kapoor Khan

Here's wishing you another year of superb fashion goals and great roles!

Known to be a sass queen whom no one can better, Kareena is the one to look out for if you want to stay in sync with the latest in fashion, most of it, easy to emulate and carry off.

(News Agencies) Like old wine, Kareena Kapoor Khan, too is getting better with each passing day. Whether it's the runway, or a red carpet look or gym gear, she makes sure hers is always the latest fashion goal! Known to be a sass queen whom no one can better, Kareena is the one to look out for if you want to stay in sync with the latest in fashion, most of it, easy to emulate and carry off. Just like the lyrics of the song, Tareefan from Veere Di Wedding goes, "Hor dass kinniya tareefan chahidi ae tenu" (tell me how many more compliments do you want?), Kareena's fashion-forward looks always spell O-H-M-Y-G-O-D, and we mere mortals keep wondering, how can someone look so good all the time?! Here are some of her looks we totally have loved in the recent past, tell us which one's your ultimate favourite:

5 fashion tips to help you find your personal style

Is your fashion quotient restricted to jeans and a top. Experiment and find your own unique sense of style by following these 5 handy pointers.

(News Agencies) Do you typically reach out for a jeans paired with a top every time you go out, just to avoid wearing something uncomfortable? Think beyond this. Ashish Gurnani, co-founder, Postfold, and Shreyasi Pathak, stylist at Vajor, brings you stunning looks to help you break through your sartorial groove this season:

- *Colour pattern: For your office look, try to strike a balance between tradition and modernity. Go for a kurta with a long slit on the side to extend the silhouette of your look. Add a pair of well-fitted pencil trousers in the same colour palette.
- *Layering: For winter, try to go for chic-yet-comfortable clothing like printed palazzo pants in deep, rich colours and team them with long below-the-knee shrugs for a boho look. Add statement earrings and a scarf.
- *Voluminous sleeves: While heading for Sunday brunch or an office outing, go for a fitted dress with voluminous sleeves. The key is to let one feature of your clothing do the talking. Add minimal jewellery to keep things trendy.
- *Extensive jackets: Denim jackets got an extensive ornamental update last season and the trend is here to stay this season as well. You can go for an embroidered denim jacket or upgrade your basic ones with a set of enamel pins. Team this with a maxi skirt and a T-shirt.
- *Maxi dress: There is nothing as effortless as a maxi dress. The comfortable fit and flowy silhouette keeps things hassle-free and allows for ample movement. Choose this look for a sundowner by the beach or for a day of shopping. Go for a printed maxi dress along with strappy sandals in tan for the perfect look.



Only Shilpa Shetty could pull off red pants in such a polished, refined way.

Shilpa Shetty Kundra is here to show you how fabulously versatile red trousers can be, and get you inspired to rock your own pair.

(News Agencies) We all know and love Shilpa Shetty Kundra's edgy sense of style. But even more than that we love that the actor slash reality TV judge slash author just stepped out in a pair of rich red pants and showed off a refreshing, ladylike way to rock them.



Shilpa stepped out for a shoot to promote her new dating reality show, Hear Me,

Love Me, at Mehboob Studios in Mumbai on Monday wearing a vibrant pair of Zara pants (Rs 2,790) so expertly accessorised that she actually managed to look incredibly put together. Shilpa's red hot look spoke volumes and said she felt confident and fashion forward.

How your sexual orientation may influence extent of substance use

If you are lesbian, gay or bisexual, you may be at greater risk of substance abuse, in the form of marijuana, nicotine and alcohol, says new research by Oregon State University.

(News Agencies) Lesbian, gay or bisexual youth, who identify as sexual minorities, meaning they are facing added health risks," said Sarah Dermody. "But there are also differences among the subgroups of youth who identify as sexual minorities, suggesting we need to look beyond the averages to understand what factors may be influencing substance use in this population."

Saamy Square movie review

Vikram plays an angry cop in a sequel which follows the same plot as Saamy

Vikram's new film is exactly the same as Saamy with the only difference being how director Hari has presented the lead character. Rating: 2/5.

Saamy Square
Director and writer: Hari
Cast: Vikram, Keerthy Suresh, Bobby Simha, Aishwarya Rajesh, Soori
Rating: 2/5

Saamy Square is proof that a director requires talent to entertain an audience with exactly the same plot that worked 15 years ago. Director Hari has added just a few elements to present the idea of a sequel. One such an element is to make Vikram's character 'overpowered' (OP), like a character in video games, which wreaks havoc. While it is fun to see characters break loose on the screen when you play a video game, it doesn't look at

attractive in a film. The sequel first introduces the audience to the main players, as it has been 15 years since Saamy released. Aishwarya Rajesh plays the role originally portrayed by Trisha; her part is more a cameo. Aarusamy's son Ramasamy (played by Vikram) is the one to carry forward the legacy of his father and he locks horns with Perumal Pichai's son Raavana Pichai. The name of the villain and the fact that the character is from Colombo is used by the director to stress on how bad he really is. This is quite similar to the manner in which every invader in period films is portrayed as

being barbaric, and so Bobby Simha's Raavana Pichai is one-dimensional. That is not the only problem with the film. While, on one hand, we have Aarusamy and Ramasamy talking about respecting women (Keerthy Suresh as Diya, doesn't think twice before slapping harassers), on the other hand, the film also has Soori who tries to be funny (by using rape in his jokes) and doesn't seem to know how. Comedians should not feature when the topic of rape is being touched upon because there is nothing funny about it. All mention of rape is sure to make women cringe and by introducing

it, in the name of humour, the film only trivialises it. Everything that the lead cop preaches in the film, simply goes down the drain.

However, even if one was to overlook these drawbacks, Saamy Square still has a problem – it has nothing new to offer that wasn't in Saamy already. The male and the female lead fall in love after a misunderstanding, one of them saves the other from a grave situation and another misunderstanding nearly separates them. There are some intelligent 'hero' moments thrown in to keep the audience entertained. The protagonist faces a loss



that is followed by a usual. Also, small bits like challenge, which the way Ramasamy reacts eventually leads to the when he comes in contact with anything that has to do with khakhi, the hunt. The formula for two supernatural element they are 15 years apart. when Ramasamy But does the film engage? 'becomes' his father, The answer is yes but in Vikram's bulging parts. What does make Saamy Square different is Hari's decision to grand gestures in the romantic pack something extra to department are used to show how heroic Vikram's make the oldest trope in the character really is. For Saamy, back in 2003, was interesting. Saamy, back in 2003, was powerful punches that pretty straightforward in make things fly farther than comparison.

Batti Gul Meter Chalu review

Shahid Kapoor film is low on voltage

Shahid Kapoor, Shraddha Kapoor film chooses a serious subject but is let down by its clunky execution.

Batti Gul Meter Chalu
Director - Shree Narayan Singh
Cast - Shahid Kapoor, Shraddha Kapoor, Yami Gautam
Rating - 2.5/5

Batti Gul Meter Chalu begins with an archery competition in a nondescript town in Uttarakhand — in the dark. The one who hits the bull's eye gets enough fuel to keep the neighbourhood community centre's generator thumping for six months. Director Shree Narayan Singh aims to shock viewers with the abrupt beginning of his drama on frequent power outages, but for those who grew up in small-town India or its villages, the scene will only evoke nostalgia. The film is supposed to be a sharp comment on the mirage-like 'badhiya din' — we all know what that is a euphemism for — which are a long way off, despite

what the political slogans would have you believe. However, before we get there, we have to wade through an interminable first half, Shahid Kapoor-Shraddha Kapoor-Divyendu Sharma's love triangle and songs with lyrics that go 'When you gettin gold why go for tamba, when you getting Gabbar why go for Samba.' The film, just like the subject it deals with, fluctuates wildly before it stabilises. Shahid plays SK, a crafty lawyer who will happily break the law to earn an extra penny, with Divyendu as his straight-as-an-arrow friend Tripathi. Shraddha is Lalita Nautiyal, an aspiring designer with a grotesque fashion sense. The trio has been buddies since childhood and now that Lalita is looking for a husband, she has decided to choose between the two. To judge who will make for a better spouse,

she dates the both of them for a week and picks one. You don't need to be the brightest bulb around to predict that this will lead to friction in their friendship. More than an hour into the film, power cuts and inflated bills are nothing more than a minor inconvenience to all involved as the spotlight is firmly on garish clothes, gimmicky performances and the distasteful swayamvar. The film takes almost 1.5 hours to establish what the trailer explained in three minutes — and neither of the two manage to hold your attention for too long. If you are feeling antsy while waiting for the film to pick up pace, rest assured you've got company. Post interval, and a suicide — not a spoiler — the film suddenly shifts towards activism. The fused bulbs and power cuts are no longer about fun and

games as conscience calls SK and he decides to take on the corporate suits on his dead friend's behalf. With the film changing genres and going from a muddled romance to a courtroom drama and social comment all rolled into one, Shahid also finds his pace. From a blackguard using his education — he actually took over seven years to get his law degree — to earn some money on the side, SK vows justice for his everyman friend and lakhs like him around the country. Singh — whose last film, Toilet: Ek Prem Katha, was about open defecation and a nod to the present government's Clean India campaign — is not pulling his punches this time. He bravely takes on the promises made by the successive governments and how they continue to be a no-show, especially for the have-nots in the



country's heartland. too; just like the sexism The power scenario in India issue. If Akshay Kumar is a difficult subject to was stalking Bhumi show on screen but there Pednekar in his last are moments when Singh cinematic outing, Shahid manages to make it takes sexist digs at Yami entertaining and Gautam — the defence enlightening. The fact that lawyer — in a courtroom. he is addressing the The actor, like the director, dichotomy between is playing to the gallery and he knows it. It is ironic that promises made and the a film that aims to shake a reality of welfare schemes nation's conscience takes is brave in itself, given the such a low view of how its film industry's propensity women should be treated. for safe subjects. It is a pity At almost 165 minutes long, the film is extremely indulgent. There is an execution lets Batti Gul entire track about two bus commuters narrating the story so that the director can bung in a joke in the end. Such unnecessary flourishes make the film a stretch. And then, there's That was a problem with the local dialect which may be authentic but tries your patience.

Thugs of Hindostan new poster**Katrina Kaif as Suraiyya will make you weak in the knees**

Thugs of Hindostan's new poster introduces us to Katrina Kaif's character, called Suraiyya. The scene is from a musical theatre show and it looks seductive and magical.

A new poster from the ambitious new YRF film, Thugs of Hindostan, starring Aamir Khan and Amitabh Bachchan, was unveiled on Friday. Featuring Katrina Kaif as Suraiyya, the poster takes us to a musical theatre show ambience. In a shimmering lehenga choli combination, Katrina can be seen looking at the camera. The background looks rich: there are chandeliers, lamps in the shape of musical instruments, candles and comfortable seats on the floor. Seated in the audience are Britishers.

Sharing the poster, YRF wrote: "She's coming to make you go weak in the knees. Since September 18, YRF and Aamir have been sharing the first look motion posters of the film, introducing its main characters. So far the posters have introduced Amitabh Bachchan, Fatima Sana Shaikh and Lloyd Owen (playing the villain). They started with Amitabh, who will be seen as Khudabaksh. Sharing it, Aamir had called him the 'biggest thug of them

all'. Sharing the same poster, YRF wrote: "Wading through storms & battles, the commander of Thugs has arrived. Amitabh Bachchan as #Khudabaksh." The next was the poster featuring Fatima. Called Zafira, she is seen playing with fire. The poster gives a glimpse of Fatima's character, whose advantage is her skill with a bow and arrow, as emphasised in the poster. For added drama, she's seen floating mid-air in the middle of fire and total chaos. "Zafira is fiery and stunning. She is an extremely talented fighter and specialises in combat by bow and arrow. Zafira has perfect accuracy and she doesn't miss a target, ever. Fatima Sana Shaikh as Zafira brings vigour and freshness to Thugs of Hindostan," read the description along with a 25-second video. Aamir also shared the poster in a tweet that read, "The warrior thug! Iskey nishane se bach ke raho!!!" The third poster to be shared was that of the villain of the Aamir and Amitabh film,

character called John Clive. Aamir shared the poster and wrote, "John Clive..not to be confused with Robert Clive..as you can see he is one of the most gentle and kind souls. Loving, caring non violent, and generous. My idol!"

Thugs of Hindostan has been made on a massive budget. Earlier, a source told Hindustan Times, about the film's shoot and elaborate sets, "Since sea and ships play an integral part in the plot, Aamir as well as (producer) Aditya Chopra were sure that they would go all out to present the biggest spectacle that Hindi cinema has ever witnessed. The film's budgets are yet to be ascertained, but the cost for the two ships easily runs into several crores."

The two mammoth ships - weighing two lakh kilos - were built by over 1,000 people, including international designers and ship makers. "It took over a year to build these two ships off the coast of Malta (in Europe). Director Viktor (Vijay Krishna Acharya)

wanted to go the whole hog in terms of scale and create a huge visual experience. Authenticity and aesthetics have both been kept in mind given the fact that it's a period film."

Thugs of Hindostan is based on Philip Meadows Taylor's 1839 novel, Confessions of a Thug. The film releases November 8 to coincide with the Diwali weekend.

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Manto movie review**Nawazuddin Siddiqui pours out a glassful of Manto**

Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Rasika Dugal deliver internalised performances in director Nandita Das' biopic.

Manto
Director - Nandita Das
Cast - Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Rasika Dugal, Rajshri Deshpande, Tahir Raj Bhasin, Rishi Kapoor, Paresh Rawal
Rating - 3.5/5

It is always special when a writer meets a reader who cares. In Manto — the Nandita Das film attempting to unravel Saadat Hasan Manto, wizard of the short story — one such fan spots the writer and leaves concerns of life and death behind to approach the great man. He expresses his admiration (in that awkward way we do when great writers leave the rest

of us without word), and enquires why, in the latest issue of his favourite periodical, there is no new instalment from Manto. "Something political must have taken up the pages," Manto shrugs with a smile, as if to suggest that the story is merely saved for another time.

His nonchalance is deceptive. The country is being ripped apart. Hindus and Muslims are questioning whether to live in the land where their ancestors are buried, or to leave it behind for a shaky promise of peace. Manto may smile, but he was unaware of the missing

story, and doesn't know when it will see the light.

It is a sad day indeed when politics doesn't leave room for prose.

And vice versa. It is too simplistic to look back at Manto's dazzling stories — stories of smells and brothels, of necrophilia and homelessness — and reduce him to the readily admired role of activist or social reformer, when he was a piercing, unflinching observer. Back when he worked at All India Radio, he boasted he could write a story on any subject in the world. Yet his very first published story, 'Tamasha,' was about the Jallianwala

Bagh massacre. Every story may not be political, but prose makes room.

How do you show a writer in action? Das chooses against it. Her film barely gives us a glimpse of Manto writing. We meet instead a man who collects fancy pens but chooses not to use them, a man who proclaims the power of his pencil, a man who claims the sound of a typewriter is too distracting. This doesn't square with legends of Manto at his Urdu typewriter. This film appears less bound by fact, and as fiction it is impressionistic. The writer's greatest hits feature prominently: he



steps out for a smoke, one of his characters offers him a light. This is a sweet, romanticised mood piece. The film opens with Manto in Bombay, struggling to get the fattest film industry cats to pay him what they owe him. The film closes with Manto in Lahore, paid in compliments and contraband ghee. Freelance writers have

always lived in uncertainty. During the partition, he finds himself carrying both a Hindu topi and a Muslim topi to get out of sticky situations, but the struggle gets stickier. Even by Nawazuddin Siddiqui's own standards, he is improbably brilliant in this deeply internalised role, his wariness like a protective cloak.

Eros International joins hands with Ajay Kapoor of Kyta Productions for Pataakha & Kirik Party

Kajol wishes mother Tanuja on her 75th birthday



Mumbai : Eros International Media Ltd (Eros International), the leading Indian film and entertainment company, announced its collaboration with Kyta Productions Pvt Ltd for two forthcoming films – Vishal Bhardwaj’s Pataakha and the Hindi remake of Kannada super hit Kirik Party. Eros will team with producers Dheeraj Wadhawan, Ajay Kapoor, Ishant Saxena, Vishal and Rekha Bhardwaj to release in India the eagerly awaited Pataakha, a Rajasthan-set drama about two warring sisters. The comedy drama starring Sanya Malhotra and Radhika Madan along with Vijay Raaz and Sunil Grover has already created huge anticipation since the release of its trailer and will release on 28th September. Equally exciting is the announcement of the remake of Kannada blockbuster Kirik Party, yet untitled in Hindi which will feature Kartik Aaryan and Jacqueline Fernandez where Eros will be jointly producing with Ajay Kapoor, Dheeraj Wadhawan and Vrithika Laykar and releasing the film worldwide. A romance set in a college campus scheduled to go on floor in October, the film

will be directed by Abhishek Jain of Bey Yaar and Kevi Rite Jaish fame. Sunil Lulla, Managing Director, Eros International Media Ltd said on the announcement, “We are delighted to come on board with Kyta and showcase this brilliant line-up to audiences. Both films boast of a very interesting pool of acting and directorial talent. The initial reactions to Pataakha are phenomenal and we are confident Vishal Bharadwaj’s dramedy will be high on entertainment. We are equally excited to be a part of Kirik Party and are positive audiences will embrace Abhishek Jain’s interpretation of the successful Kannada hit love story”.

Says Ajay Kapoor, Producer & Managing Director, Kyta Productions, “We have found great partners in Eros International, they have the capability and the distribution network to take the films to its deserved potential. We couldn’t have asked for a better platform for their showcasing”.

About Eros International Media Ltd

Eros International Media Ltd.

(BSE Script Code: 533261; NSE Script Code: EROSMEDIA) is a leading global company in the Indian film entertainment industry that acquires, co-produces and distributes Indian films across all available formats such as cinema, television and digital new media. Eros International is part of Eros International Pie, which became the first Indian media Company to raise capital and be listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Eros International has experience of over four decades in establishing a global platform for Indian cinema. The company has a competitive advantage through its extensive and growing movie library comprising of over 2,000 films, which include Hindi, Tamil, and other regional language films. Eros International has built a dynamic business model by combining the release of new films every year with the exploitation of its film library.



Veteran actor Tanuja celebrates her 75th birthday today. Her daughter, actor Kajol, was among the first ones to wish her and she did so by posting a throwback picture of Tanuja on Instagram. Sharing the picture, Kajol wrote: “Happy happy birthday to my super awesome mom who still has the same zest and love for life that she did fifty years back..... a difficult example to follow but the most important influence in my life ! Also in the picture is her grandmother and

my great grandmother who was also one of the biggest influences in my life ! Ratanbai Shilotri!” It may be recalled that Ratanbai acted in a Marathi film way back in 1936 and was a guiding light and inspiration to three generations of actors to come out of the Samarth family, including her daughter Shobhana Samarth (mother of Tanuja and Nutan), her niece, actor Nalini Jaywant, and Nutan’s son Mohnish Bahl. Now, Nutan’s granddaughter Pranutan Bahl is also set for her Bollywood debut.

Akshay Kumar wishes PM Narendra Modi on his birthday, thanks him for supporting causes close to his heart



Megastar Akshay Kumar thanked the Modi government for exempting taxes from sanitary napkins, and getting toilets constructed to eradicate open defecation.

Akshay Kumar has become a crusader for social good, championing many causes such as eradicating open defecation and promoting sanitary hygiene

across India through his films. Wishing Prime Minister, Narendra Modi on his 68th birthday today, the actor took to social media and thanked the PM for all his support. In his video message for PM Modi, Akshay Kumar highlights the fact that how the government under Narendra Modi has supported him in the causes he feels strongly about, and which he has depicted through films such as Toilet: Ek Prem Katha (2017) and this year’s Pad Man. On the work front, Akshay Kumar will be next seen in the fourth installment of comedy franchise "Housefull" and 2.0 with Rajnikanth.

KESARI FIRST POSTER: AKSHAY KUMAR PAYS TRIBUTE TO MARTYRS OF SARAGARHI



On the occasion of Saragarhi Day, megastar Akshay Kumar unveils the first look of Kesari, based on the Battle of Saragarhi in which 21 Sikhs valiantly fought 10,000 Afghans in 1897. To mark the occasion of Saragarhi day, Akshay Kumar revealed the first look of the film through the first look poster on his official Twitter account. Kesari also stars Parineeti Chopra and is scheduled to release on 21st March 2019. With a fierce first look, the actor has left us all stunned, waiting in anticipation for the release.

Eros International Chairman and CEO Kishore Lulla Honored at the 2018 Economic Times India-UK Strategic Conclave

London : Eros International PLC (NYSE: EROS) (“Eros”), a leading global company in the Indian film entertainment industry, announced today that Chairman and CEO Kishore Lulla was recognized as one of the ‘Game Changers of India’ at the 2018 Economic Times India-UK Strategic Conclave on September 11, 2018. Mr. Lulla was honored for his role in changing the dynamics of entertainment in both India and internationally. On the acknowledgement, Kishore Lulla, CEO and Chairman, Eros International PLC, said, “It is a great honor to be recognized by the Conclave as a ‘Game Changer of India’ in the field of entertainment.

Over the last several years there has been a large paradigm shift in India’s entertainment market. Growing broadband penetration and more affordable mobile data plans are driving an ever-increasing appetite for streaming content and Eros remains at the forefront in meeting this growing demand. Through our cutting-edge digital over-the-top entertainment platform, Eros Now, consumers can access high-quality movies and music videos and originals across devices - anytime, anywhere. As a company, we believe in pushing boundaries to expand and grow our platform and content offering globally and to secure industry-leading

partnerships that provide users with an immersive entertainment experience. It is an honor to be recognized for our work to date and we are excited for the opportunities ahead for the business.” The Economic Times India-UK Strategic Conclave is the UK edition of the Economic Times Global Business Summit and features government and industry leaders sharing their perspectives on issues of international significance. The event’s 2018 theme of “New Economy, New Rules” explored India’s rise as a global economic power as well as the development of the UK and India’s strategic partnership.



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