

What Happens When Health Care and Immigration Enforcement Collide

A British policy showdown has lessons for the United States.



STORY ON page 18



Ran-Deep wedding

STORY ON page 30

Facebook, Instagram suffer global outage again

(Agencies): Facebook said Tuesday users had trouble accessing the social network and its other applications such as Instagram for a chunk of the day due to a server software problem. It was the second instance in the past two weeks in which technical issues appeared to affect access to Facebook. "Earlier today, a server configuration caused intermittent problems across all apps globally, creating a degraded experience for users," a Facebook spokesperson told AFP. "The issue has since been resolved, we are back to 100 percent for everyone, and we're sorry for any inconvenience." (Contd on page 18)

Ikea wants to make stuff from the straw now being burnt in India

The first rice-straw product prototypes will be decorations and paper boxes, and Ikea plans to start selling them in India during 2019 or 2020, it said in a statement.

Ikea wants to turn rice straw into household wares in a move that could end up reducing a major source of pollution in India. The Swedish company has set itself a goal of using only renewable and recycled materials by 2030. Ikea is now planning to get Indian farmers to sell it the straw that's left after they harvest rice, instead of burning it. The practice is one of the reasons India is



among the world's most polluted countries, with the mass burnings resulting in dangerous smog levels. With a reputation built over decades for mass production of

cheap furniture, Ikea is rebranding itself as a champion of the environment as customers increasingly demand greener products. It plans to stop using all single-use plastics in its products by 2020. The first rice-straw product prototypes will be decorations and paper boxes, and Ikea plans to start selling them in India during 2019 or 2020, it said in a statement.

Three honored including Bhandari at Deepa Festival of Rana in New York



STORY ON page 3

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'World is accountable, vicious place'

Citing vehement denials by the crown prince and king that they were involved, Trump said on Thursday "maybe the world should be held accountable because the world is a vicious place"



(By Our Staff Reporter): President Donald Trump has disputed that US intelligence officials had concluded that the de facto leader of American ally Saudi Arabia ordered the killing of a US-based journalist critical of the kingdom's royal family. Citing vehement denials by the crown prince and king that they were involved, Trump said on Thursday "maybe the world should be held accountable because the world is a vicious place. The world is a very, very vicious place." Critics in Congress and high-ranking officials in other countries are accusing Trump of ignoring human rights and giving Saudi Arabia a pass for economic reasons, including its influence on the world oil market. Trump said this week he would not impose harsher penalties on Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman over the death and dismemberment of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi

inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul last month. "My policy is very simple: America first, keep America great again and that's what I'm doing," Trump told reporters after a Thanksgiving Day telephone call with members of the military. The crown prince and his father, King Salman, said they did not commit "this atrocity," Trump said. "It's a terrible thing. I dislike it more than you do. But the fact is ... they create tremendous wealth, really tremendous jobs in their purchases and very importantly, they keep the oil price down." American intelligence agencies have concluded that the crown prince ordered the killing in the Saudi Consulate in Turkey, according to a US official familiar with the assessment. The official was not authorised to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Others familiar with the case

caution that while it's likely that the crown prince was involved in the death, questions remain about the extent of his culpability. Several lawmakers have indicated that the US has no "smoking gun" that proves the crown prince was responsible. They have called on the CIA and other top intelligence agencies to share publicly what they told the president about the slaying. "I hate the crime," Trump said while on vacation in Florida. "I hate what's done. I hate the cover-up and I will tell you this — the crown prince hates it more than I do." He said the CIA "points it both ways and as I said, maybe he did, maybe he didn't. But I will say very strongly that it's a very important ally and if we go by a certain standard, we won't be able to have allies with almost any country." He also has pushed back on the idea that his refusal to punish the Saudis more will embolden other governments to go after

journalists and commit other human rights abuses. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has noted that the US has imposed sanctions on 17 Saudi officials suspected of involvement in the killing. "We've sanctioned 17 people — some of them very senior in the Saudi government," Pompeo said Wednesday in a radio interview with KCMO in Kansas City, Missouri. "We are going to make sure that America always stands for human rights." Saudi prosecutors have said a 15-man team sent to Istanbul killed Khashoggi with tranquilizers and dismembered his body, which has not been found. Those findings came after Saudi authorities spent weeks denying

Khashoggi had been killed in the consulate. Some lawmakers have triggered investigations into Khashoggi's death and specifically whether the crown prince was responsible. The investigations were requested under provisions of the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. The act requires the president to report back to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee within 120 days — in this case by February 7 — on whether the crown prince was responsible for an extrajudicial killing, torture or other gross violation of internationally recognised human rights against someone exercising freedom of expression and the administration's decision on whether sanctions are warranted.

New York State Senator Jose Peralta dies from a heart attack aged 47

(By Our Staff Reporter): New York State Senator Jose Peralta has died from a heart attack at the age of 47. The Democrat was pronounced dead on Wednesday at 8pm at Elmhurst Hospital Center in Queens. His family was with him at the time. He had served as the State Senator for New York's 13th District since 2010, when he became the first Dominican-American politician elected to the State Senate. He served for eight years but was unseated in the recent election by fellow Democrat Jessica Ramos earlier this month. She was among those who paid tribute to him after his death on Thursday, writing on Twitter: 'José Peralta is gone too soon. When I met him in 2003 I saw a world of promise for our community & though years later we'd disagree on tackling the issues, I know in his heart he loved his community.'



He was a true public servant. Strength & love to his wife, sons, and loved ones.' Details of what Peralta was doing when he suffered the heart attack remain unclear. A spokesman for the late politician told Pix 11: 'I can confirm that Senator Jose Peralta passed away on Wednesday. We have no further details to release at this time and ask that the family's privacy be respected. Thank you to all who have reached out with words of kindness and support.' Neither Mayor Bill de Blasio nor the Governor Andrew Cuomo has yet paid tribute to him or commented on his death. In October, Peralta's Queens office was shuttered after a staff member opened an envelope which contained white powder. It had not been addressed to him and was intended for Sen. Michael Gianaris but somehow ended up at Peralta's office.

Saudi warns crown prince a 'red line' in Jamal Khashoggi probe

(Insider Bureau): Saudi Arabia has warned criticism of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is a "red line", after Donald Trump heaped praise on the kingdom in defiance of warnings he was giving Riyadh a pass on a journalist's grisly murder. Saudi foreign minister Adel al-Jubeir said on Wednesday that calls for the crown prince to be held accountable for the grisly killing of Jamal Khashoggi would not be tolerated. His comments came as the US president praised Saudi Arabia for keeping oil prices low -- one strand of his argument against punishing Riyadh even though the CIA reportedly found strong evidence that the crown prince, the de facto Saudi leader, was involved in the murder. "In Saudi Arabia our leadership is a red line. The custodian of the two holy mosques (King Salman) and the crown prince are a red line," Jubeir told the BBC. "They represent every Saudi citizen and every Saudi citizen

represents them. And we will not tolerate any discussion of anything that is disparaging towards our monarch or our crown prince." Khashoggi, a US resident who wrote for The Washington Post and had been critical of Prince Mohammed, was lured to the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2, killed and reportedly dismembered. After lengthy denials, Saudi authorities admitted responsibility and said 21 people had been taken into custody. However, a CIA analysis leaked to the US media went further, reportedly pointing the finger at the crown prince. But Trump, on holiday at his



Florida Mar-a-Lago Club on Wednesday, doubled down on a statement from Tuesday that he was essentially ignoring the killing of Khashoggi because of what he said were more important US strategic and commercial interest "Oil prices getting lower. Great! Like a big Tax Cut for America and the World. Enjoy! USD 54, was just USD 82," he tweeted. "Thank you to Saudi Arabia, but let's go lower!" Jubeir insisted that Prince Mohammed had not been involved in the killing. "We have made that very clear. We have investigations ongoing and we will punish the individuals who are responsible for this," he said. He called on Turkey to come forward with all its evidence about the slaying and stop leaking out information. The foreign minister said the murder was a "rogue operation" by intelligence officers.

Three honored including Bhandari at Deepa Festival of Rana in New York

(Agencies)- Rana's 19th Deep Festival was celebrated in Hotel Hillton, New York, in Long Island, where more than 700 immigrant Rajasthanis attended. RANA President Dr. Shashi Shah and Deep Festival Committee Chairman Haridas said that Prem Bhandari, Chairman of Jaipur Foot USA, Dr. Smita Lodha, Renu Jain and Manisha Jalani were honored for their outstanding achievements. On behalf of Prem Bhandari Jaipur foot USA presented 5 min video about his social work in last two decades depicting safe return of more than three thousand Indians from middle east countries in last 10 years and also depicted about other social works. The Guest of honour of the ceremony was Padma Vibhushan P. Jasraj, Deputy Consul General of India New York, Shatrughan Sinha and Congresswomen Gracemeng and Chintu Patel. On this occasion, besides the Rajasthani musical evening, Rajasthani food was also served and at the end of ceremony thanks was given by RANA secretary Rajeev Pandya.

Police seek experts' help to find body of US man killed by Andaman tribe

The access to North Sentinel Island and its buffer zone is strictly restricted under the Protection of Aboriginal Tribe (Regulation), 1956 and Regulations under Indian Forest Act, 1927.

(Agencies): The police are taking help of anthropologists and experts to draw a strategy to search the body of the American national, who was killed allegedly by members of a protected and reclusive tribe when he tried to enter the prohibited North Sentinel Island, Andaman and Nicobar DGP Dependra Pathak said Thursday.

The police are also perusing 13 pages of a journal written by John Allen Chau, 27, which was handed over to them by his local contact Alexander to learn more about the incident, Pathak told PTI.

Chau was killed possibly with arrows. But, Andaman Police PRO Jatin Narwal had said on Wednesday that it was a subject of probe. He had maintained that the death was caused by traditional weapons, adding that it cannot be specifically said whether he was killed by arrows or spears.

Pathak said contacts have been established with experts of

Anthropological Survey of India, forest department, academicians and also of state tribal welfare department to prepare a strategy to reach to the place of incident and also search the body.

"Some success has been achieved in this direction so far," he said but refused to give details.

The access to North Sentinel Island and its buffer zone is strictly restricted under the Protection of Aboriginal Tribe (Regulation), 1956 and Regulations under Indian Forest Act, 1927.

In the journal penned by Chau, he gave an account of his venture to the prohibited island thanking his mother and god for helping him hide from coast guard and navy patrols.

"The mother and god himself helped shielding us from coast guard and navy patrols," read a noting in the journal.

It also talks about Chau successfully reaching the shore of the island with friends and

waiting to make contact with them.

The DGP in a press statement Wednesday had given details of Chau enlisting the help of local electronics engineer Alexander and a water sports service provider and hiring five fishermen to evade the patrolling teams of police, Coast Guard and Navy to approach the island.

For this, the local fishermen were paid around Rs 25,000 by Chau. After dropping Chau, the fishermen had fixed their timings and place to meet each between the shoreline and their high sea fishing area.

"In the morning of November 17, they saw a dead person being buried at the shore which from the silhouette of the body, clothing and circumstances appeared to be the body of Chau," the DGP said, defining the circumstances leading to Chau's death, almost five days after the incident. Subsequently, they returned to Port Blair and narrated the incident to



Alexander and handed him the 13 pages of the journal written by Chau.

Alexander informed Bobby Parks, a friend of Chau, in the US, who in turn informed his mother. His mother informed the US Consulate which in turn alerted the police on November 19.

Police have arrested seven, six fishermen and local contact Alexander for violating the provisions of the PAT Regulation and causing death of Chau. A case of murder has also been registered against anonymous persons, it said.

The Sentinelese people are

among the tribes that survived the tsunami of 2004 without any help from the outside world. For the 2011 Census, enumerators could locate only 15 Sentinelese people - 12 men and three women. However, their numbers could be anything between 40 and 400, according to experts.

The natives of the Sentinel island have past record of attacking visitors to their island.

In 2006, two Indian fishermen, who had moored their boat near North Sentinel to sleep after poaching in the waters around the island, were killed when their boat broke loose and drifted onto the shore.

Air travel is about to get even less romantic

(By Our Staff Reporter): For all the disagreement in the industry about the future of aviation, there's perfect accord on one point: There's going to be a lot more of it.

The world's air passengers flew a combined 7.64 trillion kilometers (4.75 trillion miles) in 2017, according to Boeing Co.'s latest 20-year market outlook. By 2037, that will rise to 18.97 trillion kilometers, with about 40% of the increase happening within five intra-regional markets: China, India, North America, Europe and Southeast Asia.

That's sparking a battle over the biggest bottleneck holding back this growth: airports. The governments that still own many

of them should be more open to privatization to cover a \$78 billion funding gap in needed capital investments, the Airports Council International, an industry group, argued in a report earlier this year. Airlines, airports' biggest customers, see things differently: Costs at privatized terminals are higher and governments should be cautious about such actions in the interests of expanding the aviation sector as a whole, the carriers' body, the International Air Transport Association, argued the same month.

The proximate cause of this fight is probably the enthusiasm in President Donald Trump's administration for selling off U.S. infrastructure. All but a handful of

U.S. airports are owned by the government, thanks in part to tax-advantaged bonds and federal funding that's available only to public terminals. The set-up is so unattractive to private operators that only two sites have bothered to privatize since a federal program to encourage such moves was established in 1996. Leveling the playing field between public and private operators could go a long way toward kindling private investment.

Privatizing an airport doesn't necessarily make it more efficient. One 2008 study found there was little difference between the performance of airports 100%-owned by

commercially oriented government corporations and those majority controlled by private businesses. The key is instead to avoid structures where the incentives for managers are confused or misaligned, such as where private companies are brought in as minority investors or where managers are essentially bureaucrats swayed by political imperatives.

There's a better solution out there, but it's not likely to be very attractive to incumbent airlines, airports, or passengers enamored of the current generation of gleaming terminals: Build more, cheaper airports.

For all that airlines like to see airports as monopolies, there's

often a great deal of competition between them. Airlines that don't like the charges at London's Heathrow can go to Gatwick, or Stansted, or Luton, or Southend, or City Airport instead. If Amsterdam Schiphol pushes up charges too much, it may find carriers and passengers defecting to Brussels, or Dusseldorf.

Charges for hub traffic at Singapore's Changi airport are kept competitive by the threat that rival hubs in Bangkok, Dubai, Hong Kong or Kuala Lumpur will steal away international carriers with better pricing. Both Heathrow and Frankfurt airports post lower returns on capital than their cornerstone airline customers.

Immigration hawks fear DOJ staff exodus

The Justice Department is facing a likely senior staff exodus once President Donald Trump taps a permanent replacement for ousted Attorney General Jeff Sessions, creating a leadership vacuum that has troubled hard-line immigration activists. According to more than a half-dozen former and current administration officials — mostly Sessions loyalists — have either quit or are eyeing the exit as they await Trump's

decision on who will succeed their former boss, who implemented and vigorously defended even Trump's most controversial immigration policies. Among those leaving are Danielle Cutrona, a senior counsel to Sessions who had been with him since his Senate days. She departed DOJ last Friday. Rachael Tucker, a senior counselor to the attorney general, could also exit "in the next couple of months," citing her fidelity to Sessions, or possibly take

another job within the agency, said two sources close to the situation. Acting Assistant Attorney General Jeff Wood, another former Sessions Senate staffer, may also soon make an exit, according to one senior administration official. And while the White House could find another strident immigration hawk to lead DOJ and name ideologically similar aides, several of the names being floated for attorney general — such as former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and George H.W. Bush-era Attorney General Bill Barr — represent a more GOP establishment line on the subject.

It's a situation that conservatives who support reduced immigration have long feared. Even Trump's critics concede that Sessions' staff has dutifully guided the president's hard-line immigration policies, propped up the president's most contested



executive actions and added a record number of adjudicators to U.S. immigration courts. Sessions also made headlines for his defense of the administration's decision to separate migrant children from parents who have crossed the border illegally. More recently, Sessions personally guided the White House as Trump attempted to dramatically limit asylum applications, removing some language in the process and ultimately signing off on the new rule, according to two DOJ officials. "For better or for worse, you cannot say [Sessions] has

not had a very profound impact," said Leon Fresco, head of the DOJ's Office of Immigration Litigation under President Barack Obama. "He's been a guiding force in moving both the DOJ and the Department of Homeland Security to draft and implement some of the most restrictive rules on immigration," he added. A DOJ leadership void could leave DHS to take up the immigration mantle, a prospect that worries advocates of stricter border laws, many of whom have been disappointed in current DHS chief Kirstjen Nielsen's performance. While DHS has the power

to enforce immigration policies — a topic Trump recently claimed Nielsen could be "much tougher" on — DOJ is the agency that can set uncompromising rules. And DHS may soon be poised to get a more pugnacious leader on the subject, increasing the chance that the agency asserts itself more on topics like border crossings. Trump is considering replacing Nielsen with Thomas Homan, a tough-talking lawyer who once recommended charging so-called sanctuary-city politicians "with crimes."



Trump and Pakistani leader face off on Twitter



(Agencies): President Donald Trump has defended his administration's decision to cut off aid to Pakistan, berating the country for not doing "a damn thing for us." In an interview with Fox News' Chris Wallace that aired on Sunday, Trump pointed to Osama bin Laden's presence in Pakistan as proof.

On Monday, the country's prime minister, Imran Khan, fired back, telling the president on Twitter that he "needs to be informed about historical facts." In a series of tweets, Khan said that U.S. aid to Pakistan was a "miniscule" \$20 billion, while the country lost 75,000 people and more than \$123 billion fighting the "US War on

Terror." He also pointed to the supply routes Pakistan provides to American forces. "Can Mr Trump name another ally that gave such sacrifices?" The president responded with tweets of his own, reiterating that Pakistan is one of many nations that took money from the United States but gave nothing in return.

The alliance between the United States and Pakistan has always been tenuous, but tensions have increased since Trump's election. The administration suspended most of its military aid to Pakistan at the beginning of this year for its failure to act against terrorist groups. The U.S. also excluded Pakistani officers from the International Military Education and Training Program and was successful in getting Pakistan back on the global Financial Action Task Force's gray list, which includes countries that have failed to curb terrorist financing. The United States has long complained about Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies playing a double game in the region, protecting some militant groups while taking on others. Pakistan has consistently denied these allegations but also maintained that its top

priority is to protect its own strategic interest, which is believed to include keeping relationships with proxy forces that can aid Pakistan in a fight against India. Pakistanis also are quick to point to America's own unholy alliances, including its support for the Taliban's forebears in Afghanistan. Here's the full exchange between the two leaders. President Trump on FOX News: "Frankly, wouldn't it have been nice if we got Osama bin Laden a lot sooner than that? Wouldn't it have been nice? Think of this, living in Pakistan,

beautifully in Pakistan in what I guess they considered a nice mansion — I don't know, I've seen nicer — but living in Pakistan, right next to the military academy. Everybody in Pakistan knew he was there. And we give Pakistan \$1.3 billion a year and they don't tell him, they don't tell him for years?" "He lived in Pakistan. We're supporting Pakistan. We're giving them \$1.3 billion a year, which we don't give them anymore by the way. I ended it because they don't do anything for us, they don't do a damn thing for us."



Nielsen: Port of entry temporarily closed due to caravan



(By Our Staff Reporter): Defense Department Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen tweeted that the San Ysidro, Calif., port of entry early Monday

morning after government officials were notified that "a large # of caravan were planning to rush the border in an attempt to gain illegal access to the U.S." But the lieutenant general overseeing the Army's active-duty border deployment later cast doubt, in an interview with POLITICO, on whether the migrants had indeed plotted to rush the border. Traffic and

pedestrian lanes northbound from Tijuana were blocked at 3:15 a.m. PST and the port of entry was reinforced with jersey barriers and concertina wire, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol said in a written statement. The lanes were reopened at 6:25 a.m. PST. The port of entry is the busiest in the U.S. But Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan, commander of U.S. Army North, told POLITICO that if there were

"reliable reports" that a mob was about to rush the border, or something similar that could put agents at risk, "we would close the port." The lanes were only "partially closed," Buchanan said. "About half of the lanes were closed this morning but that's it. No complete closure." In a follow-up tweet, Nielsen said that Border Patrol and the Department of Defense

"appropriately responded by blocking the lanes, deploying additional personnel and seeking assistance from other law enforcement and federal assets." The lanes were later reopened for "legitimate trade and travel," Nielsen said. "Unfortunately, some members of the caravan are purposely causing disruptions at our border ports of entry," Nielsen added in a third tweet. "There is a legal and illegal way to enter the US. We have deployed additional forces to protect our border. We will enforce all our laws," she wrote.

Pelosi's bid for speaker imperiled as public opposition grows

(Agencies): Sixteen Democrats vowed Monday to oppose Nancy Pelosi for speaker on the House floor, throwing the California Democrat's bid to reclaim the gavel in serious jeopardy. In a highly anticipated letter that went public Monday, the Democrats praised Pelosi as "a historic figure" but argued that it is time for change at the

top. Our majority came on the backs of candidates who said that they would support new leadership because voters in hard-won districts, and across the country, want to see real change in Washington," the group of Democrats said in the letter. "We promised to change the status quo, and we intend to deliver on that promise." The show of force

underscores the depth of the challenge facing Pelosi, who has led the caucus for 16 years. Pelosi needs 218 votes among lawmakers present and voting to be elected speaker on Jan. 3. House Democrats have won 233 seats, meaning Pelosi can currently afford to lose only 15 votes. The letter includes 11 incumbents, four incoming freshman and one

candidate, Ben McAdams of Utah, whose race has not been called. The letter does not include at least three additional Democratic lawmakers or members-elect who have confirmed to POLITICO that they intend to oppose Pelosi on the floor: Rep. Conor Lamb of Pennsylvania, Abigail Spanberger of Virginia and Jason Crow of Colorado.

That would bring Pelosi's opponents to a total of 19 members or members-elect committed to voting against her — enough to keep her from becoming speaker should those members refuse to budge. Three House races in Utah, Georgia and Texas have not been called but are trending toward the Republican incumbents.

President Donald Trump said Sunday in a Fox News interview that he wants Nielsen to be "much tougher on the border — much tougher, period," amid rumors that he's preparing to fire her.

2020 presidential candidates who could take on Trump



(Insider Bureau): Who is running for president? Potential 2020 presidential candidates have been lining up to take on Donald Trump and the GOP, creating one of the most crowded fields in memory. It's a group packed with traditional politicians, firebrand Trump foes and celebrities who

have never held elected office. We've categorized the possible Democratic presidential candidates into six groups: The Senators list carries Kamala Harris and Bernie Sanders. The House Members include Tulsi Gabbard, Joe Kennedy and Beto O'Rourke. The Governors list is anchored

by Andrew Cuomo and Deval Patrick. The most well known of The Mayors is Michael Bloomberg. The Obama Alums include Joe Biden, Eric Holder and others as potential 2020 presidential candidates. Finally, The Outsiders like Michael Avenatti and Oprah could reshape the road to 2020.

Federal judge halts Trump asylum ban

A federal judge in San Francisco late Monday temporarily halted President Donald Trump's move to restrict asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border, dealing another blow to the administration's immigration agenda. Judge Jon Tigar's ruling suspends implementation of a fast-track regulation and presidential proclamation issued Nov. 9 that barred migrants who cross the border between ports of entry from seeking asylum. The order will remain in effect until Dec. 19, when the court will consider arguments for a permanent ban. The Justice Department didn't immediately say whether it plans to appeal the ruling, though it has challenged similar orders in the past.

The ruling comes as multiple caravans of Central American migrants are massing in Tijuana, an official port of entry. On Monday, Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen

Nielsen tweeted that a migrant caravan planned to rush the border checkpoint, though officials later questioned the seriousness of the threat. "Whatever the scope of the president's authority, he may not rewrite the immigration laws to impose a condition that Congress has expressly forbidden," Tigar wrote in his opinion. "Asylum seekers will be put at increased risk of violence and other harms at the border, and many will be deprived of meritorious asylum claims." Trump made the migrant caravans a central focus in the days leading up to the Nov. 6 election, tweeting frequently about them and announcing at the end of October that he would deploy additional troops to the border. He said little about the caravans in the immediate aftermath of the election but recently resumed tweeting about them.

"The Mayor of Tijuana, Mexico, just stated that 'the City is ill-prepared to handle this many migrants, the backlog could last 6 months,'" the president wrote Sunday. "Likewise, the U.S. is ill-prepared for this invasion, and will not stand for it. They are causing crime and big problems in Mexico. Go home!" Still, military officials said Monday they would begin withdrawing the 5,800 troops that had been deployed to the border. Trump's decision to send them earned criticism from members of both parties, who described it as a pre-election gambit. The general overseeing the deployment told POLITICO some of the troops are already unneeded, having completed the missions for which they were sent. In the asylum ban case, East Bay Sanctuary Covenant v. Trump, the American Civil Liberties Union, which brought the lawsuit on behalf of several

The RBI vs finance ministry: An uneasy truce holds for now

Given their respective short-term interests, it is unlikely the RBI and the finance ministry will ever be on the same page (although it would definitely help if they are in the same chapter, even book)

The immediate crisis in the Reserve Bank of India has passed. The government has not used the buy-now, infamous Section 7 that allows it to direct the central bank to undertake a particular course of action. The Governor of RBI has not resigned. And both sides have gone out of their way so that the nine-hour long board meeting on November 19 ended on a cordial note. It would be imprudent to believe the crisis is over and all is well, though. For years now, and not just under this government, the RBI and the finance ministry have had opposing views on liquidity, interest- and exchange-rates. That

could have been managed — indeed, it has been in the past — but the finance ministry also believes that the RBI slipped in its handling of the fraud at Punjab National Bank and the mess at IL&FS. The ministry also doesn't approve of the central bank's continued insistence that at least half the state-owned banks in the country will remain under the so-called Preventive Corrective Action, which crimps their lending abilities. Then there's the issue of the quantum of reserves the RBI needs. It has around Rs 10 lakh crore and the government's view is that it needs just around half that.

None of these issues has really been addressed by Monday's board meeting. Most have been kicked down the road, with committees being formed (or, to be exact, with an intent expressed to form committees) to look into them. There are reports that the most important of these, to address the issue of reserves, will be formed by the end of the week, but it is a committee and, like other committees, will take its time to arrive at a decision. And so, even as it is important to understand that this isn't a political issue — it is the kind of thing that could have happened, and, indeed,



has happened, under other governments — it is imperative to realise that what we have now is an uneasy peace. For its part, the central bank has been obstinate about its reserves, displayed a seeming lack of flexibility, and not communicated well (and

some of its communication has been intemperate). For its part, the government hasn't trusted RBI to do the right thing by the economy, listened a little too much to market voices and bank managers, and used its officers to respond to some of RBI's utterances

in similar vein. Given their respective short-term interests, it is unlikely the RBI and the finance ministry will ever be on the same page (although it would definitely help if they are in the same chapter, even book)

The Maldives' new regime is an opportunity for India to regain its lost ground

Even before he assumed office, President Solih had spoken of an "India first" policy, a significant shift away from his predecessor Abdulla Yameen's tight embrace of China

The Maldives and India appear to have struck all the right chords for a much-needed reset of the bilateral relationship as the new government headed by President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih assumed office in Male over the weekend. Mr Solih's swearing-in was immediately followed by a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the only head of state or government to be invited to the ceremony — a clear signal, if any was needed, as to which way

the new leadership of the Maldives is leaning. The two countries agreed to focus on the concerns and aspirations of both sides as they work to maintain peace and stability in the Indian Ocean region. Mr Solih spoke of the "dire economic situation" facing the Maldives and Mr Modi assured him that the Indian government was prepared to help the archipelago in "every possible way". Even before he assumed

office, Mr Solih had spoken of an "India first" policy, a significant shift away from his predecessor Abdulla Yameen's tight embrace of China, both for political support in the face of international condemnation of his repressive policies and for financial backing for massive infrastructure projects. It is the huge Chinese debt associated with these projects — with various estimates putting it at \$1.5 billion to as much as \$3 billion, or almost half the country's GDP — that will be the first challenge Mr Solih will have to face. Then there is the issue of keeping together the multi-party alliance led by the Maldives Democratic Party. Though Mr Solih enjoys the support of former president, Mohamed Nasheed, one cannot forget that Mr Yameen garnered almost



42 % of the votes in September's election and still enjoys considerable support. Mr Solih's government will also have to contend with the creeping rise of Islamic radicalisation, with the Maldives recently emerging as a country with one of the highest per capita numbers for foreign fighters operating with groups in Syria and Iraq. Clearly, India will be glad to regain some of the space it had been forced to cede in the Maldives because of Mr Yameen's pro-China stance. The two countries will have an

opportunity to discuss issues such as the continued presence of two military helicopters and associated personnel, which Mr Yameen had wanted to send back, and the denial of work visas to hundreds of Indians in recent months. India will also have to take the lead in working with the Maldives to strengthen both Mr Solih's government and democratic institutions. Thousands of people cheered Solih, from the Maldivian Democratic Party, at a swearing-in ceremony in a soccer

stadium chosen to accommodate a large number of his supporters. Chief Justice Abdulla Didi administered the oath of office to the 54-year-old Solih. The Maldives, an Indian Ocean archipelago known for its luxury resorts, became a multiparty democracy in 2008. Since getting elected in 2013, Yameen had cracked down on political dissent, jailing rivals and Supreme Court justices. But he suffered an unexpected defeat at the hands of Solih in September's presidential election.



The CBI is facing a crisis of credibility

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is facing an unprecedented crisis of credibility. Next week, the Supreme Court will embark on an examination which will have a definitive bearing on that institution and the degree of autonomy it enjoys.

To compound the woes of the already beleaguered organisation, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal have pre-emptively decided to withdraw the permission given by the state governments to the CBI to investigate offences in their jurisdiction. The central government's shrill response to this move speaks volumes.

In addition to the above, an affidavit filed this week by another senior CBI officer makes grave and startling allegations about the extent of corruption and interference prevalent in the highest levels of this government. For Mr Modi, who held himself (and his government) out to be a paragon of probity, these are difficult times.

There are three legal and jurisdictional issues that are pending resolution before the Supreme Court. First, can the appointment or functioning of the director, appointed by way of a high-level committee, be interfered with in any manner without the sanction of that committee? Second, can the Central Vigilance Commission investigate a sitting director and issue orders with regard to leave and transfer in the interim? And third, can a sitting prime minister intervene and mediate in an ongoing criminal investigation? This is a legacy defining moment and the government and ruling party are acutely aware that any adverse order will leave a lasting stain.

These two events are not isolated developments and, taken in the context of the last four years, provide a damning commentary on the misuse of the CBI and the erosion of its integrity

under this government. The behaviour of the CBI itself leads to an inescapable conclusion of political subservience. Its selective mutism on abandoning crucial trials and investigations does not help its cause either.

To illustrate. The CBI chose not to file an appeal when Amit Shah was discharged in the Sohrabuddin Sheikh case. It was not allowed to file an appeal against BJP leader BS Yedyurappa's acquittal by the High Court in a bribery case. It cited "technical reasons" for its abandonment of investigations in Gali Janardhan Reddy's iron-ore export case.

Conspicuously, the CBI abandoned highly publicised investigations against former members of the Congress such as Hemanta Biswa Sarma (the Louis Berger case) and Shankersinh Vaghela once the former joined the BJP and the latter left the Congress. A single inference emerges from the above and it is not a flattering one.

Furthermore, in his seven-page petition filed before the Supreme Court, the CBI director has made a scathing remark that "not all influence that is exerted by the political government would be found explicitly or in writing. More often than not, it is tacit and requires considerable courage to withstand". The CBI director appointed in 2017 is not making this observation in an academic manner.

In the above context, the decision taken by the two state governments to debar the CBI from carte blanche investigations makes eminent sense and is legally sound. The statute that governs the establishment and operations for the CBI is the Delhi Special Police Establishments Act 1946. Since law and order is a state subject, section 6 of the law requires the CBI to seek

state consent before the exercise of its powers and jurisdiction. Additionally, the Supreme Court and High Courts have inherent powers to direct such investigations.

The central government cannot, as a matter of right, demand this consent. That it feels it is entitled to this consent without check or discretion, raises unsettling questions with regard to its intentions and overreach. To further demonstrate this government's zeal in extending the CBI's control without check, we may recall that in January, the CBI approached the Supreme Court (interestingly in an appeal against Congress leader Virbhadra Singh) and used that opportunity to ask for "clarifications" on this restraint contained in section 6. They contended that it would affect its power to investigate. The matter is currently subjudice before the Supreme Court.

This permission, currently in operation in 10 states, was overgenerous to begin with and implied an abdication of the sovereignty of states with regard to criminal investigations of a certain class. Whether other states will follow suit remains to be seen. A licence, however generous, is always revocable, and these two states can decide whether to entrust to the CBI on a case by case basis.

Those who claim that this is business as usual are deluding themselves about the sheer and unprecedented extent of manipulation prevalent under the BJP government. This is a false equivalence drawn to exonerate the BJP government and to distract from the abuses currently occurring. In 2012, when the Bhatta Parsaul protests against the Yamuna Expressway took place, there was a demand for a CBI enquiry.

It is back to the Hindutva card in Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh has always been an important political space. Victory in the state is the route to power in Delhi for any political party. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which swept the state in 2014, and also in the 2017 state elections doesn't seem as comfortable as it should be ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party (SP-BSP) alliance is a threat to the BJP. The BJP's defeat in the Phoolpur and Gorakhpur Parliamentary seats has shaken the party's confidence. The defeat in Kairana has compounded this. This challenge has often figured in the chintan baithaks (brainstorming sessions) of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-BJP (RSS-BJP). Even as BJP leaders downplay the threat, the party's political strategies paint a different picture. Many indicate the BJP's continuous efforts to minimise the impact of a potential SP-BSP alliance in the state. The formation has already dented the BJP's air of invincibility. Now, the conversation in tea shops and village chaupals is about the formidable challenge posed by this alliance. According to media reports, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to launch

his 2019 election campaign from Varanasi. The question is : What are the strategies on which the BJP is working to counter a SP-BSP alliance? For starters, the BJP is trying to create a strong Hindu identity which may help form a social alliance that goes beyond caste in Uttar Pradesh. This is visible in its efforts to play up Hindu fairs, festivals and icons, turning these into political opportunities. Both the Ayodhya-Deep-Diwali and the Prayag Kumbh are examples of this. The BJP and the RSS are also working to ratchet up the Ram Janmabhoomi issue. Changing the names of cities such as Allahabad and Mughal Sarai are part of the politics of reframing Hindutva through the revival of a glorious past. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is regularly shown on television participating in religious ceremonies. The BJP and the Sangh Parivar see this as a way to counter Mandal politics and develop a broad alliance of castes under the Hindutva umbrella. This social engineering is called Samagra Hidutva; under this, the BJP wants to integrate other backward castes (OBCs) and Dalits into the Hindutva fold. The BJP and the the RSS are

holding frequent interactions with Dalits and OBCs. This is important because the SP-BSP alliance is working to form an alliance of Muslims and Yadav-Jatav-Nishads.

The BJP is also trying to project icons, heroes, kings and warriors of the Dalit and OBC-MBC communities, by erecting statues and organising celebrations commemorating them. For instance, Hindu king Suhel Dev is being invoked as the Rashtra Rakshak Hindu Samrat (a Hindu emperor who saved the nation)? by the BJP. Dev is a caste icon for the Dalits and marginalised castes such as Bhars, Tharus and Paseses.

The BJP is also working on creating a non Yadav-Non-Jatav OBC -Dalit alliance, the likes of which helped it emerge triumphant in the 2014 parliamentary elections and the 2017 Uttar Pradesh assembly elections. It is working to solidify the Patel-Maurya-Kurmi alliance among the OBCs and a Pasee-Kori -Sonkar social coalition among the Dalits.



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Asean must be more active in engaging with the Rohingya issue

Myanmar should take the grouping's help to address the crisis. Opposing it will attract international criticism

The issue of over 700,000 Rohingya refugees from Myanmar who are currently in neighbouring Bangladesh is one of the worst humanitarian crises of recent times. A UN fact-finding mission report released in September this year concluded that there was a "genocidal intent" and called for the Myanmar military commander-in-chief and five generals to be prosecuted. While governments and international organisations have spoken out to condemn the disproportionate and overwhelming use of force by the Myanmar military and or the inaction of the Myanmar civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) has largely been silent on the

issue. Governments and activists around the world want to see Asean playing an active and constructive role in helping address this humanitarian crisis. Still, many who understand the complexity of Asean's organisational structure which makes it difficult for the body to play such a role. The fundamental principles of Asean require member states to show mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations; recognize the right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion; and not interfere in the internal affairs of other member countries. These principles have prevented not only individual

member states but the organisation as a whole from engaging with the issue since Myanmar has not invited them to do so. That does not mean Asean member states have completely shied away from the issue. For example, the two Muslim-majority countries -- Malaysia and Indonesia -- have spoken out. The Malaysian government, in particular, has been quite vocal on the issue and criticised Myanmar. And as the Rohingya issue continues to overshadow several other important issues of the region, Asean leaders have begun taking a more visible position, especially under the chairmanship of Singapore.

On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York in September



this year, Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said that Myanmar should start repatriating Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh and ensure that there is security, peace, justice and better prospects for everyone. The regional grouping's frustration was also evident during the 33rd Asean summit in Singapore in November, when, unlike previous Asean summits, the Rohingya issue was discussed in almost

every forum. During the summit, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha said that Thailand, which will chair the regional grouping next year, sees the regional bloc as capable of playing an important role in addressing the situation in Rakhine state in a constructive, tangible and sustainable manner. The key question is whether Myanmar would welcome such diplomatic interventions.

Question all arms deals, but for the right reasons

The Rafale controversy has ended up before the Supreme Court, and it is therefore moot to argue whether the country's top-most court should be weighing in such matters. It has heard the matter, decided not to get into the pricing issue, and reserved its judgement. And there things stand. There are two other dimensions to the problem, though, which are about, one, the very nature of such deals (and where there is a need for clarity and informed debate) and, two, the need for both the selection and the post-selection process being transparent and above board. This holds true for all arms purchases, not just the Rafale deal. India needs to get this right.

As much as the country would like to (and should) manufacture most of the arms it needs, the fact is that it is currently an importer of arms – one of the biggest in the world – and will remain so for the foreseeable future. The need for transparency in the post-selection process is particularly important, especially in deals where corruption is being alleged. That's because the arms business is an infamously competitive one, and it isn't unknown for losing bidders for a deal to indulge in some good old-fashioned mud-slinging. Indeed, in the absence of either a money trail or a beneficiary, it should be ensured that the motivations behind the allegations are above

board. All deals can and should be questioned in the interests of the country and fair-play, but they need to be questioned for the right reasons. Otherwise, the country's already-lengthy process for inducting much needed equipment into the defence forces could be even more delayed. It makes little sense to politicise defence purchases, even less sense to allow commercial rivalry to vitiate such deals. Arms deals are also notoriously complex, but, fortunately, well documented. Thus, the process followed in deals of various sizes and hues (and with countries and companies) is easily available. This is important because the



lack of knowledge itself could result in misunderstandings about a deal. For instance, in the case of Rafale, much has been made of the lack of a sovereign guarantee from France for what is essentially a government to government deal, although several deals, including the

recent G2G one between India and Russia for the S-400 missile system have been done without such guarantees. Here, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure that all pertinent information that can be placed in the public domain, is.

An Anglo-Saxon name for a city isn't unusual, writes Karan Thapar

What's in a name? Unless I'm terribly mistaken, this was the title of a popular strip cartoon in my teens. It would appear in the Sunday papers, which I eagerly anticipated. I'm not sure if it was always funny but it was unfailingly good fun.

Almost four centuries earlier, Shakespeare found better use for this question. "What's in a name?" his delicate Juliet once asked. "That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet." For her this meant there was no need for a

Montague to become a Capulet to be more acceptable.

Unfortunately, Yogi Adityanath disagrees. For him names matter and unlike the strip cartoon he can't see the humour behind them. So names with Muslim connections like Allahabad, Faizabad and Mughalsarai sound discordant to his ears. With one stroke of his chief ministerial pen he's changed them to Prayagraj, Ayodhya and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction.

Now it seems the Yogi could have set a trend. Sangeet Som

wants to rename Muzaffarnagar Laxmi Nagar. Jagan Prasad Garg believes Agra should be rechristened to Agravan or Agrawal. The chief minister of Gujarat believes Ahmedabad would be better known as Karnavati. (On the last I can't disagree!)

All of this has provoked a deliciously wicked thought from the 87-year-old renowned historian, Irfan Habib. He says people with names like Munsif, Majumdar and Shah must change them because they have

Islamic origins. "Shah is a Farsi word not Sanskrit", he's said. Of course, this is not the first time we've taken to changing names. Earlier, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Bengaluru were known by different names that were thought to be too British. Today television anchors trip over themselves trying to get the new names right whilst some of the rest of us cheerfully stick to Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and Bangalore.

In English, regardless of what they're called in their own language, cities are known by and spoken of in terms of the Anglo-Saxon version of their name. So, Germans speaking English call Munchen Munich; Egyptians call Al-Qahirah Cairo; Russians refer to Moskva as Moscow; whilst the Czechs say Prague for Praha. Indeed, this is also true of Paris, Rome, Naples, Florence and Egypt itself. In Arabic, the country is Misr. However, no Arab would use that

India, Russia sign \$500 million navy deal for 2 stealth frigates

Russia's state-run arms exporter Rosoboronexport and India's Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) will sign the contract to build the Grigorovich-class 'Project 1135.6' frigates with technology transfer from Russia.

India and Russia have signed a \$500 million contract to build two stealth frigates in Goa that are expected to be delivered by 2027, two officials familiar with the development said on condition of anonymity.

Russia's state-run arms exporter Rosoboronexport and India's Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) signed the contract in New Delhi to build the Grigorovich-class 'Project 1135.6' frigates with technology transfer from Russia, which is India's top arms supplier.

The deal comes just weeks after the two countries inked a nearly \$1 billion deal to import two other such warships from

Russia. Those ships are being built at the Yantar Shipyard in Kaliningrad and are expected to be delivered to the Indian Navy by 2022-23.

A government official said the warships being built in India will eventually cost a lot more than \$500 million, which is only the upfront value of the deal. "The \$500 million is for the foreign content in the vessels including material, design and specialist assistance. The frigates will cost more factoring in the indigenous content. That cost is being worked out," he said.

GSL is expected to deliver the first frigate in 2026 and the second a year

later, a second official added.

The frigate deal comes a month-and-a-half after India signed a Rs 39,000-crore deal with Russia for the supply of Russian S-400 Triumf air defence missile systems to India, brushing aside Washington's concerns about the purchase. Both the S-400 and the frigate deal are likely to be affected by the US sanctions legislation if India is unable to secure a waiver.

India is in talks with the US to secure a waiver from the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (Caatsa), arguing that its military is

heavily dependent on Russian equipment and the two countries share a unique, time-tested relationship.

India is simultaneously exploring ways to bypass the US sanctions including an alternative payment route for Russian equipment.

The Caatsa legislation passed earlier this year does provide some flexibility for countries such as India that are dependent on Russian equipment, but Washington wants India to diversify its suppliers of military equipment and reduce dependence on Russian military hardware.

India inked an Inter-Governmental Agreement



(IGA) with Russia for the four frigates in 2016. The Indian Navy currently operates six such stealth frigates — three Talwar class and three Teg class — bought from Russia and inducted between 2003 and 2013.

"The best thing is the navy will now have 10 warships in the same class. That's rare. These ships have proved to be reliable, have good

weapons and sensors and the new ones will further sharpen our capabilities," said Admiral Arun Prakash, a former navy chief.

The Grigorovich-class frigates will be powered by gas turbine engines supplied by Ukrainian firm Ukroboronprom's Gas Turbine Research & Production Complex Zorya-Mashproekt, the officials said.

Six killed, 18 injured in explosion at Pulgaon Army depot in Maharashtra's Wardha

At least six people were killed and 18 injured in an explosion on Tuesday at Pulgaon Army depot in Wardha, Maharashtra.

(News Agencies): At least six people were killed and 18 injured in a massive explosion at the Central Ammunition Depot (CAD) at Pulgaon in Maharashtra's Wardha district on Tuesday morning.

This is the second major blast in the depot, around 110 km from Nagpur, in the last two years. In May 2016, 13

persons were killed in a major fire in the depot while disposing off explosives.

According to reports, the incident occurred when ordnance factory personnel and contractual labourers were destroying unused rounds of 23 mm Shilka anti-aircraft ammunition. The operation was happening under the technical supervision of

the CAD staff and contract workers were engaged too, according to Nagpur-based defence spokesman Captain BB Pande.

"Today morning at 7.10 am while carrying out the demolition of old explosives by the staff of ordnance factory Khamaria, Jabalpur, there was an accident. The demolition was being

carried out in the demolition land under the jurisdiction of central arms depot, Pulgaon. While carrying out the demolition, there was an accident (sic)," he said. "The officials of ordnance factory Khamaria, Jabalpur and of ordnance factory Chandrapur rushed to the spot," he added.

The remaining stocks of the ammunition, manufactured at ordnance



factory Khamaria in Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur, had been brought to CAD Pulgaon for disposal as it had the expertise and also the space needed to carry out the operations. The demolition of the explosives was carried out by the staff of ordnance factory Khamaria with the help of an authorised contractor, whose service were used for digging the pit and placing a sand bag over the explosives. Out of the six people killed in the blast, two bodies were charred beyond recognition, said reports. The deceased, who included an army personnel, one from the Khamaria ordnance factory and four contract labourers, were identified

as: Narayan Shamrao (55), Vilas Lakshman (40), Uday Virasingh (37), Pravin Prakash Munjewar (25), Rajkumar Bhovate (23) and Prabhakar Ramdas Wankhede (40).

The injured were rushed to the nearby Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College and Hospital at Sawangi in Wardha district, where three of them are reported to be critical. Pulgaon in Wardha houses the largest weapons stockpile in the country. These stocks include assorted weaponry including bombs, grenades, shells, rifles and other explosives. All the ordnance produced in different factories arrives at this facility before it is sent out to various forward bases.

Sabarimala issue is getting out of hand, says Congress leader Chandy

(News Agencies): Senior Congress leader Oommen Chandy on Tuesday accused the adamant Left-led government in Kerala of handling the issue at the Sabarimala temple ineptly and said the hilltop shrine to Lord Ayyappa has suffered badly because of the controversy. Chandy, the Congress' general secretary, is leading a march of the United Democratic Front (UDF) to the hilltop shrine, which will flout the prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the

Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc). The Congress leader said the government was treating devotees trekking to the Sabarimala temple as terrorists. "All are in a race to make their trekking miserable," he said. "How can the government impose section 144 in a place of worship? It is never heard of in the history of any temple," Chandy said. Also read | 'Police raj' in Sabarimala, says BJP Kerala chief PS Sreedharan Pillai Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala

sought the immediate withdrawal of the prohibitory orders in place after several incidents of violence was reported from the temple and the base camps following the Supreme Court order allowing women of all ages to enter the shrine. The situation at the hilltop shrine was peaceful on Tuesday after Sunday night's incident, two days after the temple had opened on Friday evening for the 62-day annual pilgrimage season as the

stand-off continued over the entry of menstrual age women into the shrine following the top court's order on September 28. More than 70 devotees were arrested late on Sunday for flouting prohibitory orders outside the Sabarimala temple. The row has also affected the footfall of pilgrims to the temple. Nearly a lakh pilgrims throng the temple at this time but only 7,000 trekked to the hilltop from 3am to 6am. Revenue of the temple has also dwindled drastically, officials said.



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2015 police firing probe: Punjab SIT to question actor Akshay Kumar on Wednesday

Akshay Kumar is likely to be questioned in connection with an alleged deal mediated by the actor between Gurmeet Ram Rahim and former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal.

(Agencies): A special investigation team (SIT) of the Punjab Police, which is investigating the incidents of sacrilege of the Guru Granth Sahib and the subsequent firing on protesters in 2015, is likely to question Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar here on Wednesday in connection with an alleged deal mediated by the actor between controversial godman Gurmeet Ram Rahim and former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal. The Punjab Police sources said that Kumar had moved a request that he be al-

lowed to meet the SIT officials in Chandigarh instead of Amritsar, where he had been originally summoned. Kumar will be questioned regarding his alleged role in brokering a deal between the controversial godman, who was later convicted of rape and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment and Sukhbir Badal in Mumbai in 2015 just days before the release of a film of the godman. Kumar has denied that he arranged any such meeting or had any role in brokering the deal. On his part, Badal said on Tuesday that he had never met Akshay Kumar

outside Punjab. "I have never met Akshay Kumar outside Punjab," Badal said. Sukhbir Badal was questioned by the SIT here at the Punjab Police headquarters on Monday. He termed the questioning as a sham and alleged that the Congress government in Punjab led by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh was indulging in political vendetta. Former Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal was on November 16 questioned by the SIT headed by additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Pramod Kumar and Inspector



General Kunwar Vijay Pratap. The senior Badal said that he told the SIT that he had not ordered firing on Sikh protesters agitating against the sacrilege incidents in October 2015. Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had said earlier that his government had no role in the summoning of the Badals and actor Akshay Kumar by the SIT. The SIT was set up by the Amarinder government in

September this year to probe cases of sacrilege of Guru Granth Sahib and the firing ordered on those protesting against the sacrilege cases in October 2015 when the Akali Dal-BJP alliance government headed by Parkash Singh Badal was in power in the state. Two persons were killed in the police firing in Behbal Kalan village near Kotkapura town in Faridkot district.

High alert in Delhi, cops look for 2 suspected Jaish terrorists

Police are checking hotels, guesthouses and vehicles in the city while there is tight vigil on Delhi's entry points.

Two days after a grenade attack in Amritsar killed three people and injured 20 others, police on Tuesday sounded an alert in Delhi and released photographs of two alleged Jaish-e-Mohammed operatives who could try to carry out a terror attack in the city.

Many senior officers on the condition of anonymity confirmed receiving an input about the two men from JeM, who could try to carry out a terror attack.

Deputy commissioner of police (special cell) Pramod Kushwah said they received inputs two Jaish-e-Mohammed suspects are approaching Delhi.

"All police stations have been alerted to step up patrolling in their respective areas and we are looking for the suspects," he said.

Police said that they were checking guest houses, hotels and paying guest accommodations to find the suspects.

In the photo released by Delhi Police on their social media accounts — which have been pasted across the city — the two men are seen leaning on a milestone that reads, Firozpur 9 kilometres and Delhi 360 kilometres.

Firozpur is 133 km from Amritsar, where three people were killed and 20 injured when two men on a motorcycle threw a grenade at a religious congregation on Sunday. An archway is also seen in the background with a Pakistani flag hoisted from the top. A senior officer who did not wish to be named said they were yet to ascertain the whereabouts of

these men in Delhi.

"We got input that they're heading towards Delhi. We have increased vigil in border areas and inside the city. We are questioning second-hand car dealers. Our officers are checking parking lots to spot abandoned vehicles. Security at important installations such as Delhi Metro, IGI airport, inter-state bus terminals and security establishments have been significantly stepped up. There is no need to panic," the officer from the Delhi's anti-terror special cell said.

The officer said the district police had been alerted to maintain high security.

Police are also not dismissing a warning that was recently issued on a WhatsApp group allegedly being run by a member of the



student's wing of Jaish-e-Mohammed, in which they talked of avenging Maulana Masood Azhar's nephew Usman Haidar encounter in Kashmir's Tral on October 30.

Two days before the Amritsar attack, the Punjab Police had re-

portedly issued an alert that at least six to seven Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorists had sneaked into Punjab and are believed to be hiding in Firozpur area. The alert also read that the suspected terrorists may plan to move towards Delhi.

SOS 'open door': Pak-bound plane makes emergency landing in Jaipur

The Karachi-bound SR-20 aircraft, a private plane, was flying with only cockpit crew on board when it made an emergency landing at Jaipur airport.

(By Our Staff Reporter): A Pakistan-bound plane made an emergency landing at Jaipur airport on Tuesday after its pilot received an 'indication of open door'.

The Karachi-bound SR-20 aircraft, a private plane, was flying with only cockpit crew on board when it made an emergency landing at Jaipur airport. The aircraft was on a scheduled flight

from Lucknow to Karachi, reported ANI.

On Tuesday morning, the plane took off from Lucknow for Karachi. The aircraft pilot then alerted Jaipur airport authorities and requested for priority landing at the airport to check the aircraft's doors for safety after the airplane's 'door open' indication was on.

After clearance from Air Traffic

Control (ATC), the plane made a safe landing at Jaipur airport. The State Intelligence Bureau and the aviation securities agency were informed by the airport officials about the incident as per Standard Operating Procedure.

The aircraft was given permission to depart for Karachi after inspections were conducted by the airport team and security agencies.



Malavika's Mumbaistan: Creative Living

(News Agencies): For those who harbour dreams of following the beat of their inner drum and living the creative life, the story of Shireen Mody has much to impart. Four decades ago, when we had interviewed the artist, she'd already made Goa her home, after putting in her papers at the high-flying London ad agency, where she'd been a designer. She told us that for an absurdly tiny amount of money, she had rented a small and cozy cottage, engaged a local couple to care for it, bought a jeep, spent time



on the beach soaking in the sun, painted incessantly and said she could eat oysters all day if she wanted, as they cost ₹1 a piece! To say we were riveted would be an understatement. Forty years ago it had occurred to us, that this was a strikingly-appealing way to live and we have harboured fantasies of doing so ourselves, ever since then. Of course, it must not have been as idyllic as Mody, a Mumbai girl from a well-heeled SoBo family, made it out to be. As an early pioneer, way before Goa became a magnet for all manner of hipsters and trendoids, there must have been many challenges and hardships she'd had to face, but Mody had

stuck it out, producing her exquisite nature-inspired art, subsequently getting married and having a daughter with her German-architect husband, who has since passed away. This week, we received information about her latest labour of love: Studio Arpora, a creative space close to her

home, which would showcase her art along with that of her beautiful artist-daughter, Saffron Wiehl. "It's a gallery with a unique personal touch, unlike most others in Goa. Our hearts and souls went into creating it, reflecting the same values of our art," she said. Today, the studio, featuring the hitherto unseen result of three years of her work, on the singular theme of the beauty of the coconut palm, along with Wiehl's original illustrations, prints, silk-scarves, wrapping-paper and a growing repertoire of items based on her work, stands as a testimony to the decision she'd made to follow her dream and live the

creative life of an artist, 40 years ago. "We opened a few days ago. Gently, without a launch, though we will host one soon," she said. As for us, four decades later, we find we are still here, writing about Mody from Mumbai. Meanwhile, the price of oysters per piece must have skyrocketed for sure. Last week, as a run up to her luxury symposium to be held in the Capital later this month, Delhi-based fashion designer, Ritu Beri, had a series of high-powered meetings with top government officials to take things forward. "The Showcase at The Luxury Symposium 2018, aims to promote and support the various forms of Indian art, craft and brands. The objective is to promote 'brands that bring glory to India and strengthen the voice of India, globally," she said, about the discussions she'd had, along with other delegates with minister for external affairs Sushma Swaraj and Amitabh Kant, CEO, Niti Aayog. According to Beri, Swaraj individually discussed the possibilities and opportunities for the participating brands at the upcoming seminar to work with her ministry and promised to support them through introductions to other relevant

ministries like the tribal and textile ministries. As for Kant, a visionary bureaucrat from the Kerala cadre who had been instrumental in many successful government initiatives, including the 'God's Own County', Incredible India and Make in India campaigns, the encounter was a powerhouse of ideas. "He specially showed a keen interest in understanding the functioning of the start-up brands participating at symposium," said Beri.

The Kushners Come to Town As is known, America's First Daughter, Ivanka Trump, and son-in-law Jared Kushner are at this very moment, even as we speak, winging their way to or already ensconced in Jaisalmer, where they are supposed to attend a destination wedding. Media reports have been stating, without mentioning any names, that

the wedding is in the family of a big industrialist family. However, our US sources have confirmed that the Kushners' are here on the invitation of the groom, a US-based investment banker named Nitin Sehgal, who happens to be a classmate of Kushner's from Wharton, where the two had struck up a close friendship. "Nitin had been bestman at Ivanka and Jared's wedding, and so, it was natural that Jared returned the honour by attending his," says the source. Nice.



A compelling tale of then and now



(Insider Bureau): Based on a true story, Green Book follows the Jamaican classical pianist Don Shirley and his driver, an Italian former New York bouncer named Tony 'Lip' Vallelonga, on a journey into the American Deep South in the 1960s. The casting alone is a coup. Viggo Mortensen brings energy and nuance to the role of

the brash, raw Tony. Mahershala Ali's Shirley is restrained and regal in his vulnerability — a person of colour descending into the heart of racist America ferried there by a Caucasian driver. The chemistry of contrasts is palpable from their first scene.

The title refers to The Negro Motorist Green Book, written

by Victor Hugo Green in 1936, as a guide for African-American road-trippers. Which restaurants you were allowed into, which hotels you could use, which towns had a curfew for people of colour after sundown. Aside from the all-pervasiveness of the prejudice, the film tracks the casual cruelty it entailed, and yet manages to not be grim. Part of this is a result of some artful writing; brash humour mix with poignancy to make you laugh out loud and immediately want to reverse the reaction. Special mention must be made of Linda Cardellini, playing Tony's wife Dolores. The letters exchanged between the couple give the film a romantic rose tint that is enjoyable without being saccharine sweet. The only downside of the film is the predictable happy ending. Overall, though, a great watch that feels timely and, sadly, relevant.

Marvel reportedly changed Avengers 4 title three times already, here's the most likely choice

As the excitement for the Avengers 4 trailer heats up, rumours surrounding the super-secret Marvel film's title are also gaining steam. According to a recent report, Marvel has changed the film's title thrice already, and even though one has been finalised now, it wouldn't be surprising if they were to change it again. MCU Cosmic's Jeremy Conrad wrote on Twitter that the film's trailer will be released by the end of November, as previously reported, and it will also unveil the title to be Avengers: Annihilation. However, he wrote in his tweet, "For a title that changed three times over the last year, it's always possible it changed a fourth time. But I don't think it did." It was previously rumoured that the title could be Avengers: Infinity Gauntlet, which Marvel president Kevin Feige shot down, or Avengers: End Game, which was posted on his website by the film's cinematographer, Trent Opaloch. This has since been called a working title, and has

been effectively dismissed by directors Joe & Anthony Russo, who've said that the title for the fourth film wasn't spoken in Avengers: Infinity War. Fans would know that the words 'end game' were uttered by Doctor Strange towards the end of the film. Feige previously said that keeping the title a secret has backfired on them. "I've said before, it's gotten entirely out of hand. And now we will have no chance to living up to any expectations of what it's gonna be. And it sort of backfired, if I'm honest with you, because the notion was to not talk about it so the focus was to be on Infinity War," he told IGN. Avengers 4 is being touted as the epic conclusion to this phase in the Marvel Cinematic Universe. The film will star Robert Downey Jr, Chris Evans, Chris Hemsworth, Mark Ruffalo, Scarlett Johansson, Jeremy Renner, Josh Brolin, Chris Pratt, Bradley Cooper, Zoe Saldana, Chadwick Boseman, Tom Holland and others.

1984 riots: One sentenced to death, another to life for killing two Sikhs

This is the first death sentence handed down in a case probed by a special investigation team (SIT) after a fresh inquiry into the cases was ordered by the Centre three years ago.

Thirty-four years after the murder of two men in the anti-Sikh riots that followed the assassination of prime minister Indira Gandhi in 1984, a city court on Tuesday awarded the death penalty to one convict and life imprisonment to another.

Yashpal Singh, 55, a transporter, and retired postmaster Naresh Sehrawat, in his late 50s, had been convicted on November 14 for murdering their neighbours Hardev Singh and Avtar Singh by setting them on fire in south Delhi's Mahipalpur.

This is the first death sentence handed down in a case probed by a special investigation team (SIT) after a fresh inquiry into the cases was ordered by the Centre three years ago. Before Singh, another man Kishori was awarded the death penalty in seven cases by a trial court in 1996. The Supreme Court later commuted the sentence to life imprisonment in 1999, according to senior advocate HS Phoolka.

Following inputs from intelligence agencies that the two convicts could be attacked on the court premises, additional sessions judge Ajay Pandey on Tuesday held the proceedings inside Tihar jail. Singh was awarded the death penalty. The court sentenced Sehrawat to life imprison-

ment besides imposing a fine of ₹34 lakh each on the two convicts. The court said that ₹20 lakh each would be paid as compensation to the family members of the Hardev Singh and Avtar Singh.

"For the offence of murder under section 302 Indian Penal Code [IPC], the conduct and unreformed character of convict Yashpal demands rarest of rare penalty.... The conduct and condition of convict Naresh Sehrawat, suggest that his case is not a case where death penalty is the only alternative," the court said.

The two men were convicted in one of the eight cases reopened by the Delhi police SIT constituted in 2015.

Out of the remaining seven cases, the SIT has filed a charge sheet in four cases, while it is still investigating three cases. In one of the three cases, the accused is senior Congress leader Sajjan Kumar. The judge held that the offence as well as the culpability of both the convicts falls within the category of 'rarest of rare' cases. "They being the influential neighbours of the victims, without any provocation, caused horrendous crime of murder and looting in order to eliminate all five victims [three were injured] just because of their

faith, community or religion," the judge said. Seventy-one year old Santokh Singh, the complainant and brother of Hardev Singh, said, "It is a big victory for humanity. We are satisfied with the judgment though we wanted court to award deaths to both the convicts."

Appearing for the state, additional public prosecutor Surinder Kain submitted that this was a pre-planned attack and sought death penalty for both convicts.

"Singh was further involved in leading the mob to the house where the victims had hidden themselves. He was further key in exposing the victims to the rioting mob....," the judge said in the 45-page order, noting that Sehrawat had brought kerosene from the bus to kill the victims.

Additional DCP, Kumar Gyanesh, also a member of the SIT, said, "This judgment will go a long way in restoring the faith of people in judiciary, police and criminal justice system..." The judge said the convicts were "the key in creating the common object of mob psychology and to instil the feeling of revenge and fury in the mob". The sentence was welcomed by Punjab CM Amarinder Singh and SAD leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal. "Justice has finally been meted out to



the perpetrators of the others involved in the at- brought to book..." the heinous crimes. Hope tacks are also soon CM tweeted.



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Victims of mass genocide can't be left in a lurch, says judge in 1984 anti-Sikh riots case

A Delhi court pronounces death sentence for one and life term to another for killing two people during mob violence in Mahipalpur in the aftermath of the assassination of ex-PM Indira Gandhi.

Victims of 'mass genocide could not be left in the lurch and that their allegations should also be given a fair hearing, a Delhi court observed on Tuesday while sentencing two convicts in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case.

Additional Sessions Judge Ajay Pandey noted that for 33 years the two men had escaped the process of law and said that it is time for the court to rise upon the cry of the victims and the demand of the society. The court awarded death penalty to convict Yashpal Singh for killing two men during the riots — the first capital punishment in the case. Co-convict Naresh Sehrawat was given life term.

Sherawat and Yashpal Singh were accused of killing Hardev Singh and Avtar Singh in Mahipalpur area of south Delhi during the riots that followed the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. On a complaint by the victim's brother Santokh Singh, the police lodged a case. But in 1994, the police wanted to close the case citing

lack of evidence. The case was reopened by the Special Investigation Team (SIT).

Judge Pandey said from the testimony of the eyewitnesses, it is clear that Yashpal had come to the spot in the bus on November 1, 1984 and that he was actively involved in the burning of shops of the deceased and the eye witnesses. The court also pointed that there was sufficient material and allegations in the affidavit given by one of the eyewitnesses, Santokh Singh, who is also the complainant.

While sentencing Singh to death, the judge said there is no material before it to consider that convict Yashpal had reformed himself. "He appears to be playing gimmick with the court and victims till date. He appears to be purposely hiding his income and properties," the court said.

"The court is of the opinion that if he did not repent for last 34 years and his mentality did not reform when he was at large in society for such a long period. He attempted to mislead the court in

order to escape his liability, his chances for reformation now are almost negligible," the judge said in his verdict.

While convicting the duo, the court has said that 'fair trial should not be fair to only the accused persons. It also said that the accused had never been even arrested till the pronouncement of their conviction on November 14. "The court recalls the feelings of the victims when the eyewitnesses appeared before the court on November 5 and expressed their grief that the convicts were roaming at large," the judge said. Stressing on the need for justice in such cases, the judge said such incidents break the trust between communities which, once broken, cannot be restored even after decades. "Incidents of this kind breaks entire fabric of trust and harmony against communities, thereby severely affecting the knitting and assimilation of different religious and social groups. The inter-community trust is broken. Large scale migration takes place. In fact, the



1984 riots led to large scale migration of the people of the Sikh community, severely prejudicing their lives and livelihood in denial of the constitutional guarantees. Decades may be taken to rebuild the trust again," the court said. The verdict was pronounced in Tihar Jail after the local police moved a petition in the High Court citing security reasons and possibility of attack on the convicts on the premises of the Delhi court, said a senior police officer. The local police treaded a cautious path because they did not want to have a situation like 2016 when the then JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar was allegedly

attacked in the Patiala House Court. A police officer said the local police had moved a petition on Monday requesting them to not announce the verdict in the court, since they were anticipating a law and order situation. "We had anticipated that the convicts might be attacked since an untoward incident had happened last week also. The court accepted our petition and ordered that the verdict be pronounced in Tihar Jail. A large crowd had gathered at the court premises before the verdict and had the verdict been announced in the court, there would have been chances of a confrontation," he said.

Hundreds march to Manohar Parrikar's residence in Goa, demand his resignation

On behalf of the protestors, Aires Rodrigues, social activist and the leader of the protest march, publicly gave an "ultimatum" of 48 hours to the CM to step down.

Hundreds of people, including some Congress leaders, Tuesday evening marched to the private residence of ailing Goa chief minister Manohar Parrikar, demanding his resignation, and a "full-time" CM in his place.

The people, who came together under the banner of 'People's March For Restoration of Governance', marched for about 1 km, and gave an "ultimatum" of 48 hours to Parrikar to step down as the CM. Apart from the Congress, other political parties including NCP and Shiv Sena also extended support to the protest march, which was initiated by social activists and NGOs.

The protesters demanded Parrikar step down as the chief minister as he has been unwell.

They said the governance in the state had suffered as

Parrikar was ill and remained hospitalised for more than nine months. The police stopped the protest march 100 metres from the chief minister's private residence. Talking to reporters, Deputy Collector Shashank Tripathy said the CM refused to meet the protesters due to his ill-health. On behalf of the protestors, Aires Rodrigues, social activist and the leader of the protest march, publicly gave an "ultimatum" of 48 hours to the CM to step down.

"We need a full-time CM. For the last nine months, the state administration has collapsed. The CM is not meeting his own ministers and MLAs," Rodrigues said. He said the people who marched to the CM's residence had also come to check on his health condition. Rodrigues warned of launch-

ing a state-wide agitation in case Parrikar does not step down within 48 hours.

Congress leaders, including the party's Goa unit chief Girish Chodankar, Leader of Opposition Chandrakant Kavlekar, MLAs Digambar Kamat, Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco, Antonio Fernandes, Francis Silveira took part in the march. The Goa unit chief of Shiv Sena Jitesh Kamat said, "The people of the state are praying for the speedy recovery of the CM, but that does not mean he should continue to put the state administration on hold." Parrikar, 62, has been recuperating at his private residence since October 14 when he was discharged from All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. Health minister Vishwajit Rane had earlier said Parrikar was suffering from pancreatic cancer.

'What's going on': Top Court bristles at reports on CBI officer's petition

(Agencies) : Supreme Court Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, while hearing ousted CBI director Alok Verma's petition on Tuesday, took exception to media reports on the CBI officer Manish Kumar Sinha's sensational claims in a petition filed yesterday. "We want to know what is going on," Chief Justice Gogoi said. "This court is not a platform for people to come and express what they want... This is a place where adjudication of legal rights takes place and we intend to set it right," the top judge said after senior lawyer Fali Nariman clarified that the inquiry report against Verma had not leaked as was believed earlier in the day. But Chief Justice Gogoi pointed to the widely-reported details from the petition filed by Manish Kumar Sinha, a CBI officer who was shunted out of the agency. Sinha was one of the officers transferred on October 24, within hours of Centre asking CBI director Alok Verma and Ramesh Asthana to proceed on leave until further orders. The

two officers have accused each other of being corrupt — Asthana through a complaint to the cabinet secretary in August and Verma through an FIR filed by CBI against Asthana in October.

In his petition against his sudden transfer to Nagpur, Sinha had levelled charges against high-ranking government officials, two of his seniors, a minister, even the country's top vigilance officer.

Sinha's lawyer Sunil Fernandes had yesterday attempted to mention the petition before Chief Justice Gogoi to fast track hearing against the transfer and declared that he had "shocking revelations" to make. "Nothing shocks us," the bench shot back.

Chief Justice Gogoi recalled that the court had declined the request and said the highest degree of confidentiality should be maintained. "And this litigant (referring to Sinha) gives it (copy of petition) to everybody. Our effort is to maintain respect for the institution is not being respected," Chief Justice Gogoi said.

India suggests voting to break UNSC reform deadlock

The reform process has stalled during almost ten rounds of negotiations primarily because 'United for Consensus', a 12-member group that opposes adding permanent members, has used the procedural gambit of preventing the adoption of a negotiating text to be the basis of the talks and move it forward.

To break the decade-long deadlock in the negotiations for Security Council reform, India has suggested adopting the General Assembly's rules of procedure with voting to deny "naysayers" their virtual veto under the current process.

India's Permanent Representative Syed Akbaruddin told the General Assembly on Tuesday: "Naysayers cannot be allowed to cast a dark shadow over the entire membership and hold the overwhelming majority back.

"Some amongst us cannot hold the entire process hostage by bending the rules of negotiations."

The reform process has stalled during almost ten rounds of negotiations primarily because 'United for Consensus', a 12-member group that opposes adding permanent members, has used the procedural gambit of preventing the adoption of a negotiating text to be the basis of the talks and move it forward. It is led by Italy and includes Paki-

stan. To overcome this hurdle, Akbaruddin said that the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN), as the reform process is known, should operate under normal rules of procedure like all other General Assembly processes. "In the General Assembly, all a naysayer can do is, at best, cast a negative vote," he said. After a vote, the majority prevails in the Assembly. The General Assembly works on the basis of "give and take negotiations, focused on a document with the co-chairs or facilitators, acting as agents, for facilitating dialogue," Akbaruddin said. During the meeting of the General Assembly on Security Council reform, he was speaking on behalf of the G-4, which is made up of India, Brazil, Japan and Germany that advocate for increasing the number of permanent members in the Council and mutually support their candidacies for those seats. A majority of the countries that spoke during the

meeting supported expanding the permanent membership of the Council. To help move the negotiations along, Akbaruddin suggested that the negotiations should continue throughout the year. During the last Assembly session, the IGN met only between January and June and voted in July. "The more opportunities for dialogue, the greater the chances for making progress," he said. "Taking the cue from success stories of the past session, we suggest that our discussions on Security Council reforms should begin at the earliest, and there should not be any artificial deadlines to end discussions prematurely in June," he added. During the meeting, Portugal explicitly came out in support of India's permanent membership in the Council. Permanent Representative Francisco Duarte Lopes said: "A more representative Security Council requires, at the very least, the presence of the African continent, Brazil and



India." A majority of the countries endorsed increasing the number of permanent members in the Security Council to give Asia, Africa and Latin America a determining voice. Sierra Leone's Permanent Representative Francis Mustapha Kai-Kai, who spoke on behalf of the 54 nations of the African group, said that his continent demanded two permanent seats to "redress the historical injustice". Representing the 22-member Arab group, Kuwait's Permanent Representative Mansour Ayyad Al-Otaibi called for Arab representation in the ranks of permanent members. The 15-member Caribbean group represented by Guyana's Permanent Representative Rudolph Michael Ten-Pow said that almost half the world's population

in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean has been denied permanent representation on the Council and this should be remedied. US Mission's Political Coordinator Rodney Hunter said Washington supported a "modest" increase in the number of permanent members. But there were discordant voices, too. Pakistan's Permanent Representative Maleeha Lodhi opposed increasing the number of permanent members, and said: "If the Council cannot reconcile the interests of its five permanent members, how will it cope with the interests of a bigger membership?" China's Permanent Representative Ma Zhaoxu opposed setting timelines for reforms or "arbitrarily launching text-based negotiations".

A bitter pill but...: Chidambaram gets back at PM on notes ban, with a twist

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had claimed that demonetisation was a bitter pill necessitated due to the spread of corruption during the Congress regime so that black money "stashed under beds" could be brought back into the country's treasury.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi and former finance minister P Chidambaram fired another salvo at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his sudden decision to ban high-value currency notes that, they said, has hurt farmers and destroyed small industries.

Chidambaram, who was the first to launch his tweet-strike, picked on a justification for the decision that PM Modi had given yesterday. The prime minister had, speaking at a rally in Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh, explained his notes ban decision as a bitter medicine to wipe out corruption.

"The truth, Mr Prime Minister, is that you used note ban as a 'tez' (bitter) medicine to destroy MSME. Now, Government wants RBI to revive that sector!," Chidambaram wrote, in a sharp criticism of the November 2016 move by the government to invalidate old high value currency notes.

A few hours later, Rahul Gandhi delivered his comeback to PM Modi.

"The notes ban has destroyed the lives of crores of farmers. Now they don't have enough money to buy seeds or fertiliser. But even today, the Modi government is making fun of the helpless farmers' plight. Now, even his agriculture ministry is saying that demonetisation broke the farmers' back," he tweeted.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had sought to justify the notes ban, arguing that it was a bitter pill necessitated due to the spread of corruption during the Congress regime so that black money "stashed under beds" could be brought back into the country's treasury.

Modi had said this while addressing a public meeting in Jhabua, 350 kilometres west of Bhopal, where he had gone to campaign for the BJP ahead of the state assembly elections on November 28.

Modi had said: "When termites strike, the most poisonous chemical is required to treat it. Corruption spread on such a scale during Congress regime that I had to use a bitter pill of demonetisation to treat the same

so that those who looted the poor returned the money to the country's treasury."

On November 8, 2016, Prime Minister Modi had, in a televised address, announced that the Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 notes would be rendered invalid from midnight that day. Ever since then, the Opposition and other parties have time and again

criticised the move saying that the decision has badly affected various sectors of the economy. Even as the opposition parties are trying to make it a poll issue, the prime minister and the ruling BJP has claimed it to be a success story and claims that it the decision has helped remove black currency and had reduced corruption.

'Not retiring from politics': Sushma, feted on Twitter, clarifies her 2019 no-contest plan

Hours after she announced that she won't be contesting the next Lok Sabha elections due to her health, Foreign Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj took to Twitter to reassure people that though she may not be contesting the elections, she is not retiring from politics. Sushma, who represents Madhya Pradesh's Vidisha in Parliament, had announced her decision in Indore yesterday where she had gone to canvass for the Assembly elections currently underway. Soon after

Sushma's announcement, Rajya Sabha member Swapan Dasgupta had come out in her support on Twitter. "Retiring from electoral politics on account of health issues doesn't imply she is retiring from politics altogether. There is a great deal of contribution she can make to public life despite not being in the Lok Sabha," he tweeted. Appreciating his comment, Sushma tweeted, "You are right, Swapan. I am not retiring from politics. It is just that I am not contesting the next Lok

Sabha election due to my health issues." Sushma has been suffering from diabetes and had undergone a kidney transplant in December 2016. Congress's MP from Thiruvananthapuram Shashi Tharoor, who is known for his Twitter diplomacy, also tweeted his admiration for the veteran BJP leader. "For all our political differences, I am sorry that Sushma Swaraj will leave Parliament. As chair of the jury for Outlook India's social media awards, I was happy to honour her Twiplomacy.

India vs Australia: Shane Warne wants AUS batting coach Graeme Hick to be replaced



(Agencies): Australia has a lot of great cricketers and it is time to replace under-fire batting coach Graeme Hick with one of them, said spin legend Shane Warne. Warne was critical of Hick, under whom, Australia have lost their last 18 matches out of the past 24 matches in all formats, including the loss to South Africa in the one-off Twenty20 on Saturday. "It's time for a change," Warne was

Warne was critical of Hick, under whom, Australia have lost their last 18 matches out of the past 24 matches in all formats, including the loss to South Africa in the one-off Twenty20 on Saturday.

quoted as saying in the 'Sydney Morning Herald'. "The one thing I would say is ... Australian cricket over the last 25-30 years has had some terrific batsmen. "Graeme Hick has been there for the last few years and seen that the players are making the same mistakes all the time; it's time for a change," he added. Also Read: India vs Australia, Live Cricket Score Updates, 1st T20I at Gabba Warne believes one of the former Australian greats can do justice to the job. "Whether it be Mark Waugh, Ricky Ponting, Michael Clarke and Mike Hussey ... I'm sure any of those guys could do it," Warne said. "We've had great

cricketers for the past 25 years and they [should] be around the cricket team more often. Get Glenn McGrath with the bowlers ... there are so many opportunities.

"Cricket Australia on Tuesday upheld the year-long ball-tampering bans handed to Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft and Warne slammed Australian Cricketers' Association president Greg Dyer for trying to reduce the suspensions. "I think once the bans were in place, even though I thought they were too harsh at the time, you can't overrule them," Warne said.

'Unholy alliance': Governor Satya Pal Malik backs elected government in J-K row

(By Our Staff Reporter): Jammu and Kashmir governor Satya Pal Malik on Thursday defended the dissolution of the state assembly on grounds that he didn't want an "unholy alliance" of opposing political ideologies to assume power by inducing defections, as a bitter war of words raged on between opponents and supporters of his contentious action the night before. Meanwhile, both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the National Conference (NC) veered around to the view that fresh and early assembly elections are the only way out of the political vacuum in the sensitive state, which has been under direct federal rule since June 20.

Malik, who was named J&K governor in August, explained

the rationale behind his decision on Wednesday night in greater detail at a press conference and in media interviews. "I have been saying it since day one of my appointment as governor that I'm not in favour of any government formed in the state with underhand defections and horse trading. I would instead want that elections are held and a selected government rules." He dissolved the state assembly after Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti staked her claim for forming a new government with the support of arch rival NC and the Congress, five months after the collapse of PDP's coalition government with the BJP. She claimed the PDP had the support of 56 MLAs, including its own 28 legislators.

Rape case registered against actor Alok Nath after complaint by writer

In a long Facebook post, the woman wrote a harrowing account of her personal trauma -- how Alok Nath raped and brutalised her in her own home.

The Mumbai Police on Wednesday registered a rape case against actor Alok Nath on a complaint filed by a TV writer-producer, who during the recent #MeToo campaign accused him of rape nearly two decades ago. The case was filed under under section 376 of IPC (rape)," Additional Commissioner of Police Manoj Sharma said

The woman earlier alleged that Nath had all her shows shut down, leading to the closure of her production company. The writer initially did not name

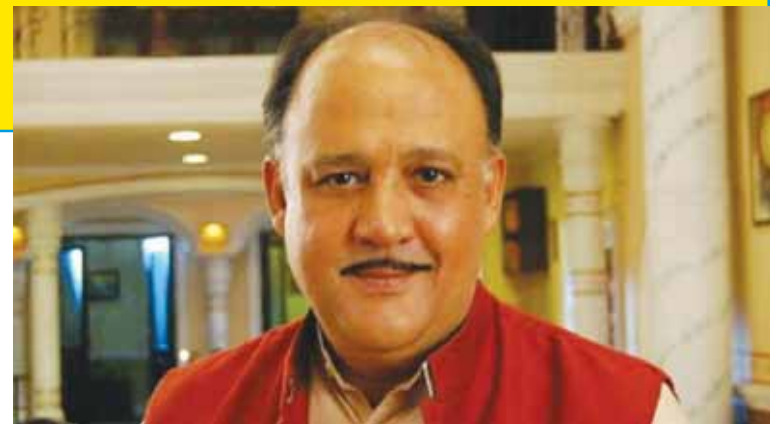
him, choosing to refer to Nath as '#Sanskaar (Cultured) person', but later came out with the name In a long Facebook post, she wrote a harrowing account of her personal trauma -- how the actor raped and brutalised her in her own home.1

She wrote in her post that when she was producing a popular TV serial of the 90s, he was after the show's main actress and persisted even after she declined his advances, taking the opportunity to molest her in a scene. When they had him removed from the

show, he first had the actress changed, the show's storyline changed and came back into it before having it axed.

She alleged that he had her drink spiked at a party at his house, then offered to drop her home. "I can remember more liquor being poured into my mouth and I remember being violated endlessly. When I woke up the next afternoon, I was in pain. I hadn't just been raped, I was taken to my own house and had been brutalised," she alleged.

The writer also mentioned other



ways he harassed and humiliated her subsequently.

On why she had remained silent for so many years, she said: "The only reason I'm telling this story now is because I don't want that any girl should ever fear holding

the truth back."

"What followed because of my silence was even worse. I became easy prey because the message had been put out that I was afraid and so I would not open my mouth. The couple of times that I wrote about what I had gone through created more complications because I stopped getting work. To deal with all the fear and shame I drank myself silly almost every evening and even flirted with drugs," she added. Praising her friends for standing by her and restoring her to health, she said: "I have waited for this moment to come for 19 years. I shout out to each one of you who have suffered at the hands of predators to come out and say it aloud. Don't hold yourselves back." After the Facebook post, Nath's wife Ashu Singh had filed a civil defamation suit on her husband's behalf. This was, however, dismissed by the Bombay High Court

RSS man stabbed Rajasthan religious leader 35 times over land dispute, say police

The post-mortem report into the killing of Swami Avdheshanand in Sirohi says that the seer was "stabbed 35 times", police said Tuesday. The district pracharak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was arrested in the case on Sunday. Avdheshanand was the patron of Ekal Vidyalay (schools associated with the nationalist group Vishva Hindu Parishad) in Sirohi district and was murdered at the district headquarters of the RSS on November 11. The police arrested Uttam

Giri, the then zila pracharak of the Sangh, on Sunday around 11.30pm. On Tuesday, he was produced before a local court, which sent him to juridical custody. Speaking to HT, Sirohi circle officer Vikram Singh said the accused had first spoken of "ideological differences" with Avdheshanand but both also had a dispute over a piece of land. "Avdheshanand had four bighas of land over which he wanted to construct a school. He had asked Giri to raise some funds because of

the position he held in the RSS and exercised influence over the local business groups," the officer said. Police said Giri had initially refused to help saying he neither had the money nor could he arrange it. "On the evening of November 11, Avdheshanand went to meet Giri. The conversation between the two turned violent after Giri lost his cool and stabbed him with a push button knife," the officer said. "According to the post mortem report,

Avdheshanand was stabbed 35 times. He sustained grievous injuries on throat, nose, neck and stomach. The victim's food pipe and the windpipe were severely damaged," Singh said. Also Read: RSS in the dock for Sirohi murder case

One of the followers of Avdheshanand, who didn't wanted to be named, said, "Some people, including Uttam Giri, were unhappy with Avdheshanand ji starting a 'shakha' and wanting to open a 'gurukul' in Sirohi.

What Happens When Health Care and Immigration Enforcement Collide

A British policy showdown has lessons for the United States.

r. Jessica Potter was sitting in her research office in London in January of 2017, reading a newspaper on her computer. She remembers startling her co-workers with an audible gasp after she read a headline: “NHS hands over patient records to Home Office for immigration crackdown.” “I was aghast,” she said. “Public trust in a confidential health system is vital.” The article detailed a Memorandum of Understanding between Britain’s National Health Service (NHS), which provides free health care for people living in the U.K., and the Home Office, which handles immigration and keeps track of undocumented immigrants and people waiting for visas or citizenship. In the document, the NHS agreed to send the addresses of specific patients on request to the Home Office to help it carry out its mission to “reduce the size of the illegal population, and prevent harm caused by illegal immigrants.” The memorandum contended that there were no legal barriers to the data-sharing practice and stated that “the public interest in disclosure outweighs the public interest in maintaining confidentiality.” But Potter, who treats patients with tuberculosis,

thought the memorandum was a disaster, likely to threaten not just her patients, but overall public health in Britain as well. Most of Potter’s patients are immigrants, and she knew that many, legal or not, would refuse to come see her if they thought their home addresses could be handed over to immigration enforcement. Avoiding treatment would be bad for their medical health. It would also threaten the general population, since untreated people can spread diseases to others.

Many doctors and nurses agreed with Potter, and some physicians groups issued scathing statements. British newspapers covered the burgeoning uproar in close detail. Politicians, several of whom were doctors themselves, began writing memos and planning hearings. In the end, the massive pushback forced a change: A dedicated coalition of doctors, immigrant advocacy organizations and politicians was able to get the order rescinded—at least for now. Nearly two years

later, a similar push to limit immigrant access to government-provided health care is playing out in the United States. The U.S. portion of our story begins in September, when the U.S. Department of Homeland Security responded to an inquiry from POLITICO by posting a plan it had been working on to deny residency to legal immigrants who



have benefited from certain government programs, including Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program, or CHIP. In October, after intense pushback from medical and immigrant groups, DHS published a slightly less restrictive plan in the Federal Register that includes Medicaid as a reason for disqualification, but asks for comments on CHIP.

There are distinctions between the U.S. and British policies. The proposed American method of taking health care into account while considering immigration applications, for instance, is different from Britain’s use of data-sharing to find immigrants being sought by the Home Office, or scare them away. (A DHS spokesman says the agency does not get information on immigrants from the Department of Health and Human Services.) But the likely result would be the same, U.S. doctors have warned: Immigrants, even those with papers, will avoid the health care system for fear of losing their chance at permanent residency, or having it taken away. As the Trump administration embarks on this new effort, a look at Britain’s attempt to mix health care and immigration policy—and the bitter reaction to it—holds some telling lessons for the U.S. The Memorandum of Understanding that so upset Potter was all done in secret, quietly signed by the Home Office, NHS Digital (the data-

gathering arm of the NHS) and the Department of Health in November 2016. The idea was that, with the help of NHS records, the Home Office would be able to find the addresses of “immigration offenders,” people who’d overstayed their welcome or gotten into legal trouble and were now lost to the Home Office, which was interested in arresting or deporting them. The measure was also intended to scare undocumented immigrants away

from entering Britain in the first place, or encourage voluntary return to their home countries, or the goals of the Home Office

under Prime Minister Theresa May. Even before she became prime minister, May repeatedly said she wanted to create a “hostile environment” for immigrants who lacked permission to be in the country. NHS data collected later showed the agency was on track to deliver 5,200 or more records in 2018; how many arrests have occurred based on that data is unknown. At the time of the signing, NHS doctors and nurses weren’t informed. The signers hadn’t consulted Parliament, and there had been no public debate. The existence of the memorandum was only revealed more than three weeks after it went into effect in January 2017, as a result of a journalist’s freedom of information act request. The media jumped on the story with pieces like the one in the Guardian that had shocked Potter. Immigrant advocate groups, already on alert because of May’s stated intentions, snapped into action to fight against data sharing and its intended effects. Doctors of the World, whose clinics provide basic primary care separate from the NHS, immediately began warning its patients—many of whom chose the clinics over the NHS because they were already worried about data-sharing—that they wouldn’t necessarily be safe going to the NHS for further care. “It turns out their fears were well-founded,” said Anna Miller, who

handles policy and advocacy for the Doctors of the World. The organization also alerted health care providers with an ad in the BMJ (formerly called the British Medical Journal) warning doctors and nurses that the information they were recording from their patients was being used to arrest them. Liberty, the British equivalent of the ACLU, contacted journalists, blogged, spoke to Members of Parliament, wrote briefing papers and eventually joined a court case. Other groups got active as well, and organizations such as the British Medical Association spoke out against the practice. Sarah Wollaston, chair of the Health Select Committee in the House of Commons, and herself a doctor with the NHS for 24 years, wrote an unusually sharp and direct public letter to the NHS. A Conservative herself, she was questioning the actions of a Conservative government. Did the memo signers consider the impact on people’s confidence in the NHS, and would it discriminate against any groups of people, she asked. Was it done legally? In March 2017, NHS Digital replied. Yes, the chief executive, Sarah Wilkerson, assured Wollaston. The memorandum was done correctly, and with all due attention to confidentiality and legal data sharing. It merely put into words what was already being done and made things more efficient. There wasn’t sufficient evidence to say that the policy was harmful to public health, Wilkerson wrote, and there’s a public interest in immigration control. The Department of Health response echoed the NHS response. But within the government, another agency checked in on the side of the immigrant advocates. Public Health England, which advocates on public health issues, issued a public statement saying that having NHS Digital share information with the Home Office “risks undermining public confidence” in the privacy of their medical records and the integrity of the NHS, and could have “unintended and serious consequences” to both individuals and the wider community. The statement pointed to reports that fear of being reported had been enough to keep even legal immigrants away from the doctor.

Facebook, Instagram suffer global outage again



The independent monitoring site Downtidetector showed a map indicating that outages affected most parts of the world, especially in North America, Europe and Asia.

Outages seemed to stretch from the early morning into the afternoon in California, where the leading social network has its headquarters.

The hashtag #FacebookDown trended on Twitter.

Facebook, which operates the Instagram photo-sharing platform and the WhatsApp and Messenger applications, has been under pressure in recent weeks over its handling of misinformation campaigns, and its hiring of a consultancy that sought to do damage control for the company. Facebook has more than 2.2 billion active users worldwide.

Actress Accusing Michael Avenatti of Domestic Violence Seeks Restraining Order

Mareli Miniutti, a 20-year-old actress from Estonia, reportedly filed a domestic violence restraining order against television lawyer Michael Avenatti after accusing the 2020 Democrat hopeful of domestic violence last week, a report claims. The Blast writes Miniutti, whose IMDb page credits her as having an “uncredited” role in Ocean’s Eight in 2018, filed the restraining order against Michael Avenatti in Los Angeles on Monday. In an apparent response to the report, Avenatti reaffirmed his innocence and said he looks forward to “clearing his name.” Avenatti, the lawyer for pornographic actress Stormy Daniels, has previously denied allegations of domestic violence following his arrest near his Los Angeles skyscraper apartment. “I have never struck a woman, I never will strike a woman,” Avenatti told reporters last Wednesday after being booked and posting \$50,000 bail.

Avenatti said he has been an advocate for women’s rights his entire career and is confident that he will be exonerated. Police did not immediately disclose details about the arrest incident, but Officer Tony Im, an LAPD spokesman, confirmed the victim has visible injuries. Avenatti became famous representing Daniels, the porn actress who alleges she had an affair with President Donald Trump in 2006 and has sued to invalidate the confidentiality agreement she signed days before the 2016 presidential election that prevents her from discussing it. She also sued President Trump and his personal attorney, Michael Cohen, alleging defamation. The Vermont Democratic Party canceled events planned for Friday and Saturday where

Avenatti was scheduled to speak, and they refunded ticket sales. The restraining order is one of a long list of legal entanglements facing Avenatti, which includes a possible criminal investigation by the Justice Department. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-IA) asked for a criminal investigation into whether Julie Swetnick and Avenatti conspired to provide false statements to Congress and obstructed a congressional investigation during the

confirmation process for Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. Grassley wrote in a letter to the Justice Department that Avenatti made serious allegations that required significant resources to investigate. However, Grassley says information from media interviews and elsewhere indicates their statements “likely contained materially false claims.” “I don’t take lightly making a referral of this nature, but ignoring this behavior will just invite more of it in the future,” Grassley said in a statement. Avenatti released a sworn statement in which Swetnick said she witnessed Kavanaugh “consistently engage in

excessive drinking and inappropriate contact of a sexual nature with women in the early 1980s.” Kavanaugh denied the allegations and an FBI background check cleared him of any wrongdoing. Additionally, Avenatti was ordered last month to pay \$4.85 million to an attorney who worked at his former law firm, a California judge ruled. The Los Angeles judge ordered the payout the same day a separate ruling came down evicting Eagan Avenatti LLC from its office space in Southern California after four months of unpaid rent. In the case over back pay, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Dennis Landin ruled that Avenatti personally guaranteed a settlement with attorney Jason Frank, who said Eagan Avenatti misstated its profits and that he was owed millions of dollars. The judge upheld his order to evict Avenatti’s law firm from a Newport Beach office for failing to pay \$213,000 in past-due rent.



U.S. Troops at Southwest Border Coming Home as Migrants Arrive

(Insider Bureau); U.S. troops will start heading home from their mission supporting Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents on the Southwest border this week, just as migrants are beginning to arrive, according to a report by Politico. Northern Command Commander Army Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan

told the outlet in an interview Monday that the first troops will start heading home in the coming days, since some units have completed the missions they were sent for. Some of those units include engineering and logistics units who were tasked with putting up concertina wire and other barriers along the

border. Pentagon spokesman Army Col. Rob Manning told reporters on Monday that units in Texas were done hardening ports of entry. He said 11,426 meters of wire obstacles are currently, there are approximately 5,800 troops deployed to the border. About



New Jersey Jail Refused 92 Detainer Requests for Criminal Illegal Aliens

(Insider Bureau); A New Jersey county jail refused 92 immigration detainer requests for criminal illegal aliens to be deported, according to a report released Friday by the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI). The report cited U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) records on law enforcement agencies which failed to acknowledge ICE detainers and revealed that the Middlesex County Jail in New Jersey did not honor a total of 92 immigration retainers. Of the 92 immigration retainers denied by the jail, 52 of them were for serious crimes — classified by ICE as Level 1 and

2 offenses— such as homicide, sexual assault, and fraud. One of the illegal alien inmates, Luis Rodrigo Perez, 23, was released from the Middlesex County Jail in February after being arrested on domestic violence charges because the jail refused to honor ICE’s immigration detainer on Perez.

Several months later, Perez was accused of fatally shooting two men and wounding two other people in Missouri. Perez had also been a recipient of the DACA program between 2012 and 2014. ICE has had a long history of slamming Middlesex County for its “sanctuary” policies, especially after the federal immigration agency arrested 37 criminal illegal aliens in the area in July. When ICE officials conducted the five-day sweep of the area, they found 16 of the criminal illegal aliens they arrested had been released from the Middlesex County Jail



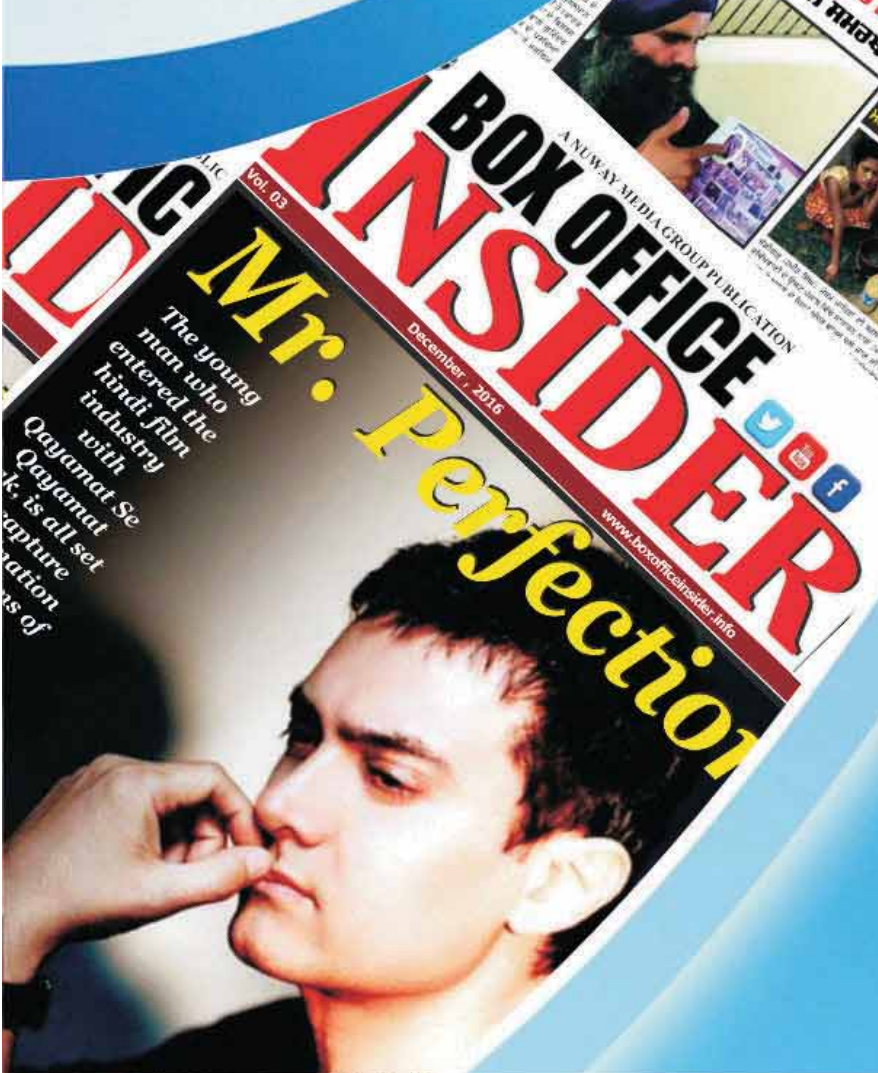
2,800 are in Texas, 1,500 in Arizona, and 1,500 in California. Buchanan told Politico that the end date of the troops mission assisting CBP is December 15, and all troops should be home by Christmas. “Our end date right now is 15 December, and I’ve got no indications from anybody that we’ll go beyond that,” he said. Buchanan said the closure of one entry point along the California border near Tijuana, Mexico, was only partial. The closure came amid reports that the migrant caravan planned to overrun the entry point. If CBP have reliable information that one of their ports is about to get rushed with a mob, or something like that that could put their agents at risk, they could

ask us to completely close the port,” he said. “You understand the importance of commerce at these ports. Nobody in CBP wants to close a port unless they’re actually driven to do so.” Buchanan said troops are done with placing about 75 percent of the obstacles at the border that they planned to. Those obstacles include concertina wire, shipping containers, and concrete barriers at ports of entry. While engineers and logistics troops will head home first, those remaining will be helicopter pilots, planners, medical personnel, and other “quick response” teams of engineers who can help border patrol personnel shut down traffic and ports of entry





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Maldives has a new president, These are the 5 big issues he faces

From Chinese debt and religious violence to rights abuses and graft, a look at challenges facing Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.

(Agencies): Cannons blasted the balmy air of Male with a 21-gun salute on Saturday, just moments after Ibrahim Mohamed Solih finished taking the oath of office as the seventh president of the Maldives. It was a momentous occasion, one that capped a tense, months-long presidential contest, and a subsequent period of post-election uncertainty following years of political turmoil in the small Indian Ocean island nation. In a shock result, Solih, a 54-year-old veteran legislator, defeated Abdulla Yameen in the September 23 polls, held against widespread public anger over corruption and rights abuses, including the jailing of nearly all opposition leaders. In his inaugural address, delivered before thousands of people at the national football stadium in the capital, Solih vowed to establish

justice and tackle corruption. Still, he faces an uphill battle to restore stability and push through democratic and economic reforms. Here, Al Jazeera takes a look at five of his biggest challenges: Chinese debt
In his speech, Solih said the Maldives was "in a precarious financial situation" owing to "reckless development projects", and appealed for help from foreign countries and international organisations to stabilise the economy. Under Yameen, Beijing had loaned an estimated \$1.5bn to the Maldives to fund an upgrade of the country's main international airport - a bridge linking it to Male - as well as massive housing projects in a new population centre. The debt figure is more than a quarter of the country's annual gross domestic product. In March, the

US-based Center for Global Development identified the Maldives as one of eight countries subject to high debt distress because of investments from China. Ibrahim Ameer, Solih's choice for the crucial post of finance minister, told Al Jazeera on Sunday he was "worried" about the debt and said the country needs up to \$300m in budgetary support immediately. The Maldives was now in talks with India, the United States and Saudi Arabia for assistance, the newly appointed minister said. Meanwhile, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was among the 300 foreign dignitaries to attend Solih's inauguration on his first visit to the country, has already pledged help. Unwieldy coalition Solih joined the presidential race at the eleventh hour after receiving the backing of a coalition of four political



parties whose leaders were either in jail or exile. Among them were former presidents, Mohamed Nasheed and Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, as well as tourism tycoon Qasim Ibrahim, who unsuccessfully ran for the presidency twice before. Despite joining forces, the four parties have significant ideological differences and their leaders have clashed fiercely for more than a decade. In 2008, Nasheed and Qasim formed an alliance to end Gayoom's 30-year rule in the country's first multi-party

election. Their coalition, however, fell apart less than 100 days into Nasheed's rule. Qasim then teamed up with Gayoom in 2012 to overthrow Nasheed, in what the latter labelled a coup. "You cannot run an executive presidency as a coalition government," said Ahmed Nihan, an opposition legislator and close aide to Yameen, the former president. "The ministers will not obey the president, they are likely to follow their leaders," he said, referring to the division of cabinet posts among the coalition partners.

"Got \$20 Billion For \$120 Billion Loss" Imran Khan Counters Trump Insult

Donald Trump had said Pakistan doesn't "do a damn thing" for the United States despite billions of dollars in US aid.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday lashed out at U.S. President Donald Trump following his remarks that Pakistan doesn't "do a damn thing" for the United States despite billions of dollars in U.S. aid for the South Asian nation. The friction threatens to further worsen already fragile relations between Islamabad and

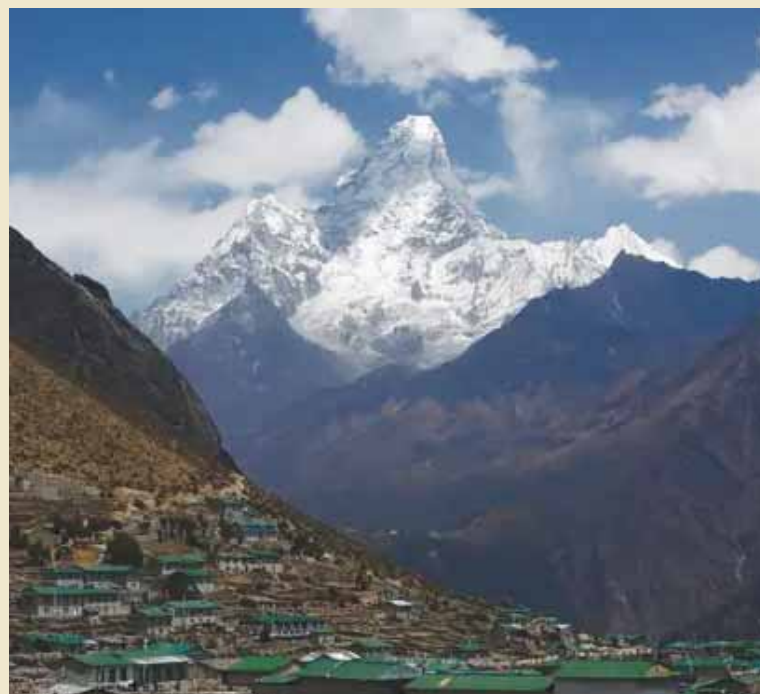
Washington, on-off allies who have repeatedly clashed about the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan's alleged support for terrorists. Khan, who assumed power in August and is known for his fiery anti-American rhetoric, said in a series of tweets that "record needs to be put straight on Mr Trump's tirade against Pakistan"

over the weekend. Trump, during a Fox News TV interview aired on Sunday, defended cutting aid to Islamabad and also suggested Pakistani authorities knew Osama bin Laden's location prior to his killing by U.S. troops in a raid inside Pakistan in 2011. Pakistan denies supporting Afghan Taliban insurgents



Australian climber falls to his death on Ama Dablam peak in Nepal

(Insider Bureau): An Australian climber has fallen to his death while descending a peak near Mount Everest in eastern Nepal. Michael Geoffrey Davis, 33, from Newcastle, died on Ama Dablam on Thursday. He was part of a group of 15 who were going down the 6,812-metre Himalayan peak. He plunged to his death after a huge rock fell and damaged ropes he was using to descend the mountain, the Himalayan Times reported. No one else was hurt. Davis's body was airlifted to Kathmandu for a postmortem examination, the managing director of Top Himalaya Guides, Tshering Pande Bhote, told the newspaper.



waging war against U.S.-backed troops in Afghanistan and Islamabad has also always rejected claims officials aided former al Qaeda leader bin Laden. "Instead of making Pakistan a scapegoat for their failures, the US should do a serious assessment of why, despite 140,000 NATO troops plus 250,000 Afghan troops & reportedly \$1 trillion spent on war in Afghanistan, the Taliban today are stronger than before," Khan tweeted. Trump, in a pre-recorded interview, said bin Laden had been living in "a nice mansion" in Pakistan next to a military academy and "everybody in Pakistan knew he was there". "And we give Pakistan \$1.3 billion a year. ... (bin Laden) lived in Pakistan, we're supporting

Pakistan, we're giving them \$1.3 billion a year - which we don't give them anymore, by the way. I ended it because they don't do anything for us, they don't do a damn thing for us." Khan said Pakistan had borne the brunt of the United States' war on terror, which focused on terrorists that straddle the Afghanistan-Pakistan tribal belt. "No Pakistani was involved in 9/11 but Pak decided to participate in US War on Terror," Khan said. "Pakistan suffered 75,000 casualties in this war & over \$123 bn was lost to economy. US "aid" was a minuscule \$20 bn." Khan also pointed out that Pakistan continued to provide its roads and air space for the re-supply for more than 10,000 U.S. troops currently based in Afghanistan.

Pakistan summons US envoy over Trump's comments

Foreign ministry lodges strong protest following US president's claim Pakistan 'doesn't do a damn thing' for Washington.

Pakistan has summoned a high-ranking diplomat from the United States to lodge a strong protest against President Donald Trump's "unwarranted and unsubstantiated" criticism of Islamabad's role in the Washington-led "war on terror". Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Tehmina Janjua called in the US Chargé d'Affaires (US CdA) Paul Jones to the foreign office in the capital, Islamabad, on Tuesday, after Trump alleged that Pakistan "don't do a damn thing" for the US while defending his decision to cut hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid to the country.

"Conveying her government's disappointment on the recent tweets and comments by the US president, the US CdA was told

that such baseless rhetoric about Pakistan was totally unacceptable," Pakistan's foreign office said in a statement. "The foreign secretary told the US CdA that no other country had paid a heavier price than Pakistan in the fight against terrorism," the statement added. This came a day after Prime Minister Imran Khan hit back at Trump's "tirade", accusing Pakistan of taking money while allowing former al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden to hide in the South Asian country.

In a series of Tweets on Monday, Khan reacted sharply and called on the US president to name an ally that has sacrificed more to fight armed groups after the 9/11 attacks.

"Trump's false assertions add

insult to the injury Pakistan has suffered in US war on terror in terms of lives lost and destabilised and economic costs," he posted on Twitter.

"He needs to be informed about historical facts. Pakistan has suffered enough fighting US' war. Now we will do what is best for our people and our interests." The cricketer-turned-politician added that the US has made Pakistan a "scapegoat" for its failures in Afghanistan, where the Taliban are stronger than at any point since the 2001 US-led invasion.

War of words

In an interview with Fox News that aired on Sunday, Trump once again blamed Pakistan for allegedly sheltering Laden.

"He was living in Pakistan, we're



supporting Pakistan, we're giving them \$1.3bn a year, which we don't give them any more. By the way, I ended it because they don't do anything for us, they don't do a damn thing for us," he said. Shortly after Khan's comments on Monday, Trump doubled down on those claims on Twitter.

"We paid Pakistan billions of dollars and they never told us he was living there. Fools! We no longer pay Pakistan the billions because they would take our money and do nothing for us, Bin Laden being a prime example, Afghanistan being another," Trump posted.

Don't be fooled by rumours: Australia

The Australian High Commission today warned Sri Lankans not to be fooled by false advertising through social media or by people smugglers that it was possible to get to Australia illegally by boat.

It said in a statement that the Australian High Commission was aware of the rumours circulating on social media and said Australia's maritime pathway was closed.

"Australia remains committed to protecting its borders, stamping out people smuggling, and preventing people from risking their lives at sea," it said.

Australian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Bryce Hutchesson warns Sri Lankans not to be

fooled by false advertising through social media or by people smugglers.

"Australia's borders are closed to illegal migration. The tough border protection policies that have secured Australia's borders against the threat of people smuggling and prevented people from dying at sea remain in place."

"Australia maintains a robust operational capability to detect and respond to any people smuggling boat to ensure that no illegal maritime venture makes it to Australia. If you attempt to come illegally by boat, you will be caught."

"Every Sri Lankan people smuggling boat that has

entered Australian waters in the past four years has been stopped, and all those on board returned to Sri Lanka," High Commissioner Hutchesson said.

Australia continues to work closely with regional partners, including Sri Lanka, to identify and disrupt people smuggling ventures before they even get on the water.

In the past five years, international authorities, with the assistance of Australia, have disrupted 78 people smuggling ventures, preventing 2525 people from travelling illegally by boat and leading to more than 614 arrests.

"By working together with our regional partners, we are



shutting down people smuggling syndicates operating in our region and preventing people from getting on dangerous and pointless boat ventures," High Commissioner Hutchesson said.

Since the implementation of Australia's toughest ever border protection measures in 2013, Australia has returned 827 people from 34 people smuggling ventures to their country of origin or departure, including 166 Sri Lankans.

New Bhutan PM likely to visit India soon

The newly elected Prime Minister of Bhutan Dr Lotay Tshering is likely to pay a visit to India soon, an official source said on Tuesday. The official's statement came after India reached out to the Bhutanese leader during the last weekend when the Indian Foreign Secretary Viay Gokhale paid a visit to the Himalayan country.

"Prime Minister Dr. Lotay Tshering's visit is a possibility. He has recently taken over so may

visit soon," said the official indicating India's warming stance towards the leader who was elected to the highest elected office of the monarchy.

The Foreign Secretary paid a visit to Bhutan from 18-20 November and met Prime Minister Tshering and Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dr Tandri Dori.

"Foreign Secretary conveyed that India attaches the highest priority to further expanding its unique ties of friendship and cooperation

with Bhutan, based on the priorities of the Royal Government of Bhutan. The two sides discussed all aspects of bilateral relations, including high level exchanges, economic and development and hydro-power co-operation," said a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs.

During his visit, Mr Gokhale also met with King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk and his father the fourth king Jigme Singye Wangchuck.



How to be South Asian in America

Indian-American actress Tiya Sircar is revelling in the way the country of her birth has finally accepted her for who she is

Tiya Sircar didn't become an actress by chance. She'd been taking acting lessons since she was just seven years old, having already decided that it was her one true calling. But even before that, when she was just about three, she'd begun dance lessons. First Indian classical and folk dance, then ballet, jazz, lyrical and modern dance.... Performance arts was encouraged, but Tiya's parents – both college professors from Kolkata – made it clear that graduation was a necessity. So Tiya got not one, but two bachelor's degrees: one in business/marketing, and another in theatre and dance. And then, armed with all that training, she moved to Los Angeles to pursue her dream.

Doc, software engineer, nerd

Today, at 36, apart from making her presence felt in films like *Again* (2009), *The Internship* (2013), *Walking with Dinosaurs* (2013), *Miss India America* (2015), Tiya is a popular face on American television having been part of shows like *Master of None*, *The Mindy Project*, *The Good Place*, *House MD*, *Hannah Montana*, *Moonlight*, *Numbers*, *Privileged*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Betas* and *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles* and *Supergirl*. She has also been the voice of the popular animated *Star Wars Rebels* series character Sabine. However, only this year has she achieved her pinnacle: her first lead role, as an Indian-American! “When I was growing up, the only

television character who remotely looked like me was Apu from *The Simpsons*,” says Tiya. “He was not the kind of character we were pushing for as a representation of the community. When I started off, I would audition for lead roles, go through the entire



drill, but at the end of the day, the role would always go to some Caucasian actress. And then if I did get a role, the character would be ethnically ambiguous. The actor playing the role would just happen to be an Indian. It was not written as an Indian character.” When they did write desi characters, they wrote them stereotypically. “The character would invariably be a computer scientist or a nerd, or a doctor delivering bad news,” says Tiya. “It is heartening to see that well-rounded Indian and South Asian characters are now being written into scripts. This has happened only in the past three years,” she says. Accent descent Tiya plays Rooni in Comedy Central's show *Alex, Inc.* She plays a complex character, and being an Indian-American is just an aspect.

1“She doesn't exist in the show just as a non-white Indian character. There is much more to her,” explains Tiya. “We touch upon her ethnic background quite a bit, and we have an episode where they celebrate Holi, something I have never seen that on American TV before.” Ethnically ambiguous roles earlier used to be given to African-American actors or Chinese or Japanese actors. But now, South Asia is getting a look in. “It is exciting that we actually have come to a point where even bona fide Bollywood stars are being tempted by the roles American television is offering,” says Tiya. “Anupam Kher was here some months back shooting a pilot of a new show, and Priyanka Chopra played the lead in *Quantico*. What I love the most about her character, Alex Parrish, is that the show didn't really trace her background and ethnicity.

When they did write desi characters, they wrote them stereotypically. “The character would invariably be a computer scientist or a nerd, or a doctor delivering bad news,” says Tiya. “It is heartening to see that well-rounded Indian and South Asian characters are now being written into scripts. This has happened only in the past three years,” she says.

Accent descent Tiya plays Rooni in Comedy Central's show *Alex, Inc.* She plays a complex character, and being an Indian-American is just an aspect.

Panasonic launches Bluetooth-based portable trackers in India

Japanese electronics company Panasonic on Wednesday launched a Bluetooth-based tracker, Seekit, developed by the company's India Innovation Centre located in Bengaluru. Seekit will be available in two variants, Seekit Edge and Seekit Loop, and is priced at Rs 1,599 and Rs 1,299 respectively, Panasonic said in a statement, adding that the devices will be available on various leading ecommerce platforms starting December first

week. To find their belongings using Seekit, users need to simply tag their valuables and connect to the Seekit smartphone app. It features a separation indicator, proximity guidance, last seen location, bi-directional tracking, and voice alerts with high alert mode for tracking and low alert mode to avoid unnecessary alerts.

The device comes with Bluetooth 5 that allows communication with a lower battery consumption,

thus elongating the battery up to 18 months without a charge, Panasonic claimed.

The separation indicator feature alerts the user as soon as the valuable is disconnected, reminding that the valuable is being left behind.

“We are largely focusing on both Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based solutions at our India Innovation Centre. The launch of Seekit is strategically aligned to our objective to create



a smart and connected ecosystem,” said Manish

Sharma, President and CEO Panasonic India and South Asia.

Afghanistan suicide bomber kills scores of Muslim scholars

At least 40 dead and 80 injured at Kabul event marking prophet Muhammad's birthday



(News Agencies): A suicide bomber in Kabul has killed more than 40 people and injured dozens more after targeting a crowd of religious scholars marking the birthday of the

prophet Muhammad.

There are fears the death toll could rise, as hundreds were packed into the large hall near the Afghan capital's airport, more often used to host weddings.

The initial figures were 43 dead and 82 wounded, with nearly one-third of them in critical conditions, the health ministry spokesman, Waheed Majrooh, told local Tolo Television. Images shared by Afghan journalists showed bodies in crumpled piles near a stage and lying by abandoned tables.

No group claimed immediate responsibility for the attack, which was likely the work of the Taliban or the regional affiliate of Islamic State.

The birthday of Muhammad is celebrated by Muslims around the world, but extremists believe marking it is sacrilegious.

In a sign of the toll of long

years of war, the Uranus wedding hall hit by the bombing had been damaged in a previous attack in 2012 targeting a bus carrying foreign workers.

The attack was the worst in the capital for more than two months, since a bloody assault on a gym popular with a Shia minority group. It is the latest of many targeting civilians as they go about their daily business, work and prayer. The first half of this year was the bloodiest on record for civilians, and parliamentary elections in October were the most violent Afghanistan has seen, according to the UN. The Taliban also controls more of

Afghanistan than at any point since it was ousted from government in 2001, and the group's growing strength appears to have spurred international efforts to push for peace.

The US special adviser to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, who served as US ambassador to Kabul for more than a decade, has said he hoped a peace deal could be reached before presidential elections set for April.

There is little sense the Taliban shares that urgency, and no indication that increasingly aggressive Isis forces have any interest in even pursuing negotiations.



Is Nepal falling into a Chinese debt trap?

(News Agencies): China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has ambitions to reshape the global economy by connecting more than 60 countries across Asia, Europe, and Africa through trade and infrastructure projects. All told, it's envisioned that nearly two-thirds of the world's population will in some way be connected through BRI projects in the future. Some economists estimate BRI could increase global trade by 12%.

Despite these benefits, many questions have been raised about China's motivations for the initiative, and whether Beijing can afford the \$1 trillion it has committed to infrastructure projects and its partners can afford the debt they are taking on. Some fear BRI could be a Trojan horse for global domination through debt traps. Sri Lanka is often cited as a cautionary tale. Unable to repay the loans on a \$1.5 billion port construction project, the Sri Lankan government agreed to give China a 99-year lease on the port instead. The ports and shipping minister said at the time: We had to take a decision to get out of this debt trap.

Nepal takes the plunge

Despite fears over loans they can't pay back, many small countries have accepted BRI as an alternative pathway to economic prosperity. Nepal is one of them—it entered into BRI last year with great enthusiasm.

Then, in June of this year, Nepali

prime minister K P Sharma Oli travelled to China to sign agreements worth \$2.4 billion on everything from infrastructure and energy projects to post-disaster reconstruction efforts. The highlight of the deals is an audacious plan to build a railway line through the Himalayas. The line will link the Tibetan border town of Kerung with the Nepali capital, Kathmandu, and tourist towns of Pokhara and Lumbini (Buddha's birthplace). The railway is being trumpeted as a potential windfall for Nepal's tourism industry, with some 2.5 million Chinese tourists expected to visit annually.

If the rail line is developed as proposed, Nepal would also be well placed as a major transit hub for trade between China and its rival, India. One study estimates Nepal's trade could be boosted by 35% to 45% when the rail line and other BRI infrastructure projects are completed. The Chinese government has already conducted a pre-feasibility study on the Kerung-Kathmandu railway. It estimated the 72.25km line from the Chinese border to Kathmandu would cost \$2.25 billion. (Other estimates say the cost might be much more.)

Nepali railway officials say an incredible 98.5% of the line would run through tunnels and across bridges due to the forbidding, mountainous terrain. Is Nepal falling into a

debt trap? The main debate in Kathmandu now is whether this proposed rail line is technically and financially feasible and if it is someday completed, whether it's destined to become a white elephant—an expensive but vastly underutilised transportation line. Then there is the question of cost. Besides Sri Lanka's struggles to pay back the \$8 billion in total it now owes Chinese firms, many other countries are in similar straits.

Economists worry that Laos, which has seen its debt reach 68% of GDP, will have difficulty paying off its share of a \$6 billion rail line being built by China. And in the Maldives, the opposition claims the country is facing a looming debt trap, with \$92 million in annual payments due to China to pay off an airport upgrade and bridge project—roughly 10% of the entire budget.

In Nepal, the burning question has been whether the trans-Himalayan rail line and other infrastructure projects would be built with similar loans, or if the government would be able to secure grants from China instead.

Economists and planners in Nepal believe the rail line would be beneficial to the country's development, particularly because it would end Nepal's reliance on its

traditional ally, India, for trade, fuel, food, and medical supplies.

A two-month blockade of the main trade route between Nepal and India in 2015 gave Nepali politicians greater rationale for diversifying the country's trade partners and becoming better connected to global trade routes. The greater connectivity with China is also expected to boost Nepali exports of special herbs and agricultural products that are in high demand in China.

But given the debt problems in Sri Lanka and other countries, the previous Nepali government was initially hesitant to follow the same path in its dealings with China. Last year, it pulled the plug on a \$2.5 billion hydropower plant being built by a Chinese firm because of the lack of a competitive bidding process. But since Oli returned to power in February, he has pursued much more Beijing-friendly policies. Last month, he reinstated the hydroelectric plant contract. And though Nepal is still seeking grants from China to build the trans-Himalayan railway, it's unclear whether Oli will make this a precondition to starting construction.

China is offering soft loans to fund the railway instead. It also sweetened the deal in September by giving Nepal access to four of its seaports, which will give Kathmandu a viable trade alternative to

Indian ports for the first time. Thus far, Nepal and China have not come to an agreement on the funding question over the BRI projects and construction has yet to start.

Thinking beyond debt traps

Indian politicians and media outlets have been sceptical of China's efforts to woo Nepal, raising fears that BRI is a masquerade for Chinese domination through debt-swap arrangements. But India's real concern is losing its long-standing influence over Nepal, with which it enjoys a \$5 billion trade surplus.

For Nepal and other small countries in the region, however, the benefits that BRI can bring—namely improved infrastructure and greater connectivity to the world—do appear to be too good to pass up. After all, Nepal's main concern is economic growth, development, and improved livelihoods for its people.

For the country to truly benefit from these projects, it needs to enter into them cautiously, with the right funding plans in place. The government views these projects as potentially massive political victories and could overlook concerns over safety issues and financing when signing deals with China.

But Nepal must not fall into the same debt trap as Sri Lanka; otherwise, its aspirations of a brighter future could turn into a mirage.

The Brexit mess in the UK, just got messier

A day after she announced that she had her cabinet's backing for a draft agreement negotiated with the European Union for Brexit in March next year, Ms May was struggling to save the controversial deal

Prime Minister Theresa May is caught in the unenviable position of presiding over the meltdown of her government over Britain's impending divorce from the European Union. A day after she announced that she had her cabinet's backing for a draft agreement negotiated with the European Union for Brexit in March next year, Ms May was struggling to save the controversial deal and her job following the resignation of four ministers and demands for the premier's ouster from a growing number of lawmakers of her Conservative Party. Those who favour Britain's exit from the 28-member European bloc have long

argued that the move would help reassert the country's sovereignty and ability to make laws, as well as stem the inflow of migrants and protect jobs for Britons. Those in the Remain camp have pointed out that Britain, after its exit from the European Union, will still have to implement the grouping's rules if it desires to access the European common market. The dreams of the Brexiteers of countries around the world lining up to forge new free trade agreements, too, are unlikely to be realised any time soon. Moreover, Britain can retain a soft border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, a

crucial outcome of the Good Friday Agreement, only by remaining in some form of customs union.

The Brexiteers, to put it mildly, are caught between a rock and a hard place, and the situation is all of their making. Ms May has struggled with the bad hand she was dealt, highlighting the fears of a no-deal Brexit and contending that the draft agreement she hammered out represents the best possible deal. As the people of Britain grapple with the harsh realities brought on by the Brexit referendum of 2016 — in which a simple majority of 51.9% voted to leave the European Union — there have



been growing calls for a fresh referendum. Of course, matters will get far messier if Ms May is unable to survive a vote of confidence in Parliament.

Whatever the outcome, Brexit will certainly impact the 800-odd Indian companies that have set up shop in Britain and now employ some 110,000 people. They flocked to Britain for the

ease in accessing the European market and some have already started making noises about moving out if Brexit hits their operations. It is unlikely that Britain will remain as attractive an investment destination it has been so far for these firms if Britain's exit from the European Union leads to more chaos and uncertainty.

India's heritage sites have huge economic potential

The creative and cultural industries are fast becoming key components of modern economies. Their impact on development is both economic and non-economic. The prevalence of cultural sites, services and art forms tends to boost tourism, sustain livelihoods, and attract investment. The non-economic benefits of culture include the preservation of history, the generation of knowledge, and the nurturing of creativity.

At UNESCO, we believe that the economic opportunities offered by the cultural heritage in India should be further explored. World Heritage Week 2018, which is presently being celebrated across the country by organisations dedicated to

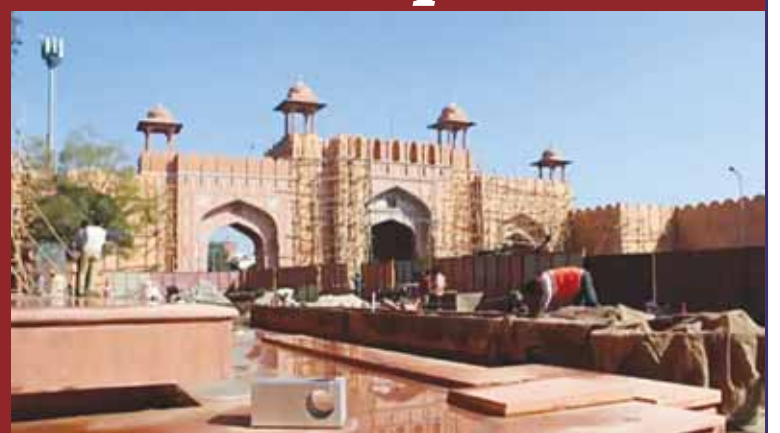
preserving and promoting cultural heritage, offers a much needed platform to reflect on the economic potential of heritage.

India currently has 37 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, a number we are certain will grow in the years ahead. Each of these sites is a potential hub for economic activity. While tourism offers the most obvious source of revenue, every effort must also be made to develop urban infrastructure and revitalise other forms of heritage around these sites in order to build thriving local economies. As Mahesh Sharma, the Indian Minister of State for Culture observed when Mumbai's Victorian Gothic and Art Deco

Ensembles were inscribed as a World Heritage Site in June 2018, international recognition will "boost the local economy", "give a tremendous fillip to domestic and international tourism", and lead to "increased employment generation, creation of world-class infrastructure, and augmentation of the sale of local handicrafts".

The promotion of tourism and related economic activity, however, must be sensitively undertaken. Heritage sites and their surroundings should not be damaged by excessive tourist traffic or the effects of local pollution, as is reportedly happening to monuments such as the Taj Mahal.

Besides World Heritage Sites,



intangible cultural heritage too is a major driver of sustainable development. Uniquely, it can address all three dimensions of the 2030 Agenda: economic, social and environmental.

UNESCO's Creative Cities Network helps cities place intangible heritage at the heart of their development plans. In India, thus far Jaipur, Varanasi and Chennai have been designated as Creative Cities by UNESCO because of the central role played by art, crafts and music in local development. Jaipur's centuries-old legacy of crafts and folk art currently employs over 175,000 people, and has generated a vibrant ecosystem of heritage festivals and tourism. In Varanasi and Chennai, historic musical traditions have given birth to flourishing music industries and networks of music festivals and academies.

Strategic efforts to promote intangible cultural heritage could directly empower women and other disadvantaged groups. For instance, UNESCO's state-level partnership with the Government of West Bengal and the NGO Banglanatak has had an

outstanding impact on the livelihoods of crafts workers, drawing women, youth and underprivileged communities to the sector in unprecedented numbers. The "Arts for Life" project has established a competitive handicrafts sector in West Bengal by helping develop rural craft hubs, enhancing productivity and building sustainable market linkages. With average monthly incomes of craftspeople in the state almost trebling, and the emergence of a new class of rural entrepreneurs, this is a model of how economic returns from intangible heritage can be optimised.

UNESCO will continue to lead global efforts to achieve key targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These include "protecting and safeguarding the world's natural and cultural heritage" and "promoting sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products". On the occasion of World Heritage Week 2018, we reaffirm our commitment to work with the Government of India and other partners to realise the socio-economic opportunities inherent in culture.

Will journalism fall to artificial intelligence?

(By Our Staff Reporter) : Putting Artificial Intelligence (AI) to ever newer uses, China has created the world's first AI news anchor. Two AI newscasters — one speaking in English and one in Mandarin — were showcased at China's annual World Internet Conference, a platform for China's technology and vision. The two newscasters, being robots, need no breaks; and can deliver news typed into their "systems" continuously 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These AI news anchors have been modelled on real life newscasters on Chinese television. They will be able to learn from other broadcast videos, and are capable of reading "as naturally as a professional news anchor."

Both AI broadcasters are, interestingly, male.

As always with news on AI, jokes and semi serious observations about more kinds of jobs that could be lost to AI have been doing the rounds. Could journalism be the next career that could be lost to AI? Driverless cars could put drivers out of jobs; automation has already taken many shop floor jobs; natural language processing and better translation options are taking away even language-related jobs; and now that AI has mastered the ancient Chinese game of Go (it is a far more complicated game than chess, having more than 300 times the number of plays as chess), maybe journalism is the next career that could fall to AI!

We're not especially worried about this one, however. A tireless machine reading text that has been fed into its systems (almost) as well as a human being is most certainly not journalism. Until AI finds itself a nose for news and, more importantly, the ability to speak truth to power, journalists will not be without jobs. The beauty of machine learning and neural networks that power AI is that they allow it to learn skills such as driving and master the ability to deal with multiple probabilities, but the ability to handle moral ambiguities responsibly, and to weigh individual frailty against collective good remains a very human part of the job.

'Writing is very clear on the wall,' says Supreme Court warns Amrapali Group

The top court asked the realty firm to reveal by December 3 the details of all its properties in the name of directors, their family members, relatives, Chief Financial Officers and statutory auditors in India and abroad.

(Agencies): "Writing is very clear on the wall", the Supreme Court warned the embattled real estate firm Amrapali Group on Tuesday over its repeated non-compliance and "hood-winking" of the court's order.

The top court asked the realty firm to reveal by December 3 the details of all its properties in the name of directors, their family members, relatives, Chief Financial Officers and statutory auditors in India and abroad. It gave one last opportunity to Amrapali Group and its directors and promoters to comply with each and every direction passed by the court since May last year. A bench of Justices Arun Mishra and U U Lalit said that Amrapali Group will have to disclose each and every detail and activity including financial transactions by which home-buyers' money was transferred.

"We make it very clear that Amrapali Group should disclose each and every activity in clear terms it took since 2008 onwards related to the construction of residential, commercial,

personal, official and financial where the money was transferred. If all the disclosures are not made by Amrapali Group and its directors then the writing is very clear on the wall," the bench said.

It said the company has to disclose details of assets of all the directors since 2008, assets created in the name of their family members, relatives, Chief Financial Officer and statutory auditors.

The company is responsible for diversion of home-buyers' money, it said. The court asked the embattled group to furnish details of all the land which has been sub-leased, structures raised on it and the financial benefits to the company.

It directed the banks, Noida and Greater Noida authorities and other bodies concerned to cooperate with the forensic auditors saying that they have been acting on the direction of the court and any non-compliance will be treated as contempt of the court. It directed the registry of the court to accept

Rs 1 crore demand draft given by Amrapali's CFO Chander Wadhwa and asked the group to depute four persons for assisting the forensic auditors in their investigation of company's affair. The bench posted the matter for further hearing on December 5 and asked the company to file its reply by December 3. On November 13, in a massive crackdown on Amrapali Group for "wilful disobedience" of its orders, the apex court had attached the company's 100-bed multi-speciality hospital, bank accounts, the building which houses its office, certain firms and a "benami" Villa in Goa. It had asked the CFO to deposit Rs 11.69 crore with its registry within three weeks. It also asked a statutory auditor Anil Mittal to pay Rs 47 lakh.

It restrained the realty firm from alienating its companies through which it had transactions and ordered attachment of such firms.

The top court has also restrained Amrapali Group from creating any third party rights for 86 luxury



cars and SUVs purchased from the company's funds.

It had sought the presence of CMD Anil Sharma and two directors Shiv Priya and Ajay Kumar on November 19 and said that Amrapali Group had deliberately not complied with its earlier order and committed a "serious fraud" by diverting home-buyers' money from one company to other.

It has ordered the attachment of the group's state-of-the-art, multi-speciality, 100-bed hospital situated at Greater Noida for which funds from sister company Ultra Home Construction Pvt Ltd were utilised.

The court has also attached the bank accounts of GauriSuta Infrastructures Pvt Ltd, its director Sunil Kumar and its

assets after forensic auditors disclosed that Amrapali transferred home-buyers' money from one firm to sister companies using it as conduit.

Besides, it has ordered attachment of towers which housed the company's office and 'Aqua Fortis' villa in Goa for no one came forward to claim ownership.

On October 31, the apex court had directed the Amrapali Group to disclose the names of all the companies with which it had any kind of transactions after forensic auditors pointed out that there may be a web of more than 200-250 such firms where home-buyers' money was transferred. The two forensic auditors, appointed by the court to look into the affairs of Amrapali Group

No proof of fraud by Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn in France, says govt



alleged financial misconduct sent shockwaves through the auto industry and raised questions about the future of the sometimes fractious alliance of Nissan, Mitsubishi and Renault.

Nissan and Mitsubishi have already said they will propose removing him as chairman.

The board of Renault is to meet Tuesday to discuss his fate.

Le Maire said Ghosn, who serves as CEO of Renault, was "de facto no longer in a position to lead the group" and called for an "interim leadership".

He said he would meet Tuesday with the state's representatives at Renault to discuss the issue. The French state has a 15-percent holding in the group.

(Agencies): The French government said Tuesday it had found no evidence that auto boss Carlos Ghosn, who heads the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance, had cheated on his taxes in France.

Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire told France Info radio that he had ordered an inquiry into Ghosn's tax affairs immediately after learning of his arrest in Japan but that it showed up "nothing in particular" about his tax situation in France. Ghosn's arrest in Japan for

Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn's arrest throws biggest auto alliance into turmoil

(Agencies): The arrest of Nissan Motor Co. Chairman Carlos Ghosn has thrown the auto industry's largest global alliance into turmoil, with the Japanese carmaker saying it will seek to remove him.

Ghosn, a towering figure in the industry who saved Nissan from collapse and brought it together with Renault SA and Mitsubishi Motors Corp., was detained Monday in Tokyo over a suspected breach of Japanese financial laws, according to NHK. He and Director Greg Kelly have been under investigation at Nissan for several months, and the company is seeking to oust them both, it said.

Both Ghosn and Kelly were reporting compensation to securities regulators in Tokyo that was less than the actual amount, Nissan said, adding that they did this to reduce Ghosn's disclosed compensation. Regarding Ghosn, "numerous other

significant acts of misconduct have been uncovered -- such as personal use of company assets -- and Kelly's deep involvement has also been confirmed," according to the carmaker.

The bombshell allegations threaten to bring down one of the auto industry's most powerful executives, who turned Nissan and Renault into a global challenger to giants Volkswagen AG and Toyota Motor Corp. They also cast doubt over the future of the alliance, a three-way pact that has sought to go deeper under the steady hand of Ghosn, 64. While no longer Nissan's chief executive officer, he's been laying the groundwork as chairman to make the alliance permanent after his departure -- including the possibility of a merger.

The news rattled the European equity market, with shares of Renault falling as much as 15 percent in Paris, while Nissan's global depository receipts sank more than 11 percent.

Nissan said it has been providing information to Japanese prosecutors and is cooperating fully with their investigation. Ghosn went voluntarily with prosecutors, the Asahi newspaper reported earlier. A representative for the Tokyo prosecutors' office said they don't comment on individual cases and a spokesman for Renault also declined to comment.

Ghosn said in September that he will continue to pare back his role at the three automakers he brought together, while continuing to head their alliance. Among the best paid executives in both Japan and France for several years, Ghosn's compensation has regularly drawn criticism. Ghosn receives numerous paychecks in his multiple roles as chairman of the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance, CEO of Renault, and chairman of both Nissan and Mitsubishi.



Parental advice can help reduce youth dating violence

(Insider Bureau) : It turns out, if parents talk to their children about all the non-violent ways that can be used to resolve conflict, it can reduce youth dating violence. According to a recent study, parents who talk to their children about non-violent ways of resolving conflict may reduce children's likelihood of physically or psychologically abusing their dating partners later. However, when parents give

contradictory messages, it implies that violence is acceptable in certain circumstances. "Show the value of parents advocating non-violent responses to conflict. Youths may be getting a mixture of both violent and non-violent solutions from their parents, but in our study, it was those non-violent messages that really protected kids from perpetrating violence in their romantic relationships,"

eight-grade students about their parents' views on handling conflict. The assessment included questions such as whether the child's parents condoned fighting as long as another person started it, or if their parents urged them to stay calm or walk away if another person said something disrespectful to them. The majority of the students - ranging from 82%-88% across all the waves of data collection

- reported receiving a mixture of parental messages that endorsed peaceful as well as aggressive means of handling disputes. Students also were surveyed about their perpetration of dating violence during each three-month period prior to their completing a survey. The students were asked if they had engaged in six forms of physical violence, such as shoving their romantic partner, and four types of psychological aggression, such as intentionally provoking jealousy in their boyfriend or girlfriend. Students rated each act of

dating violence on a 0-3 scale, with a "0" meaning they had never engaged in that behavior and a "3" meaning they had done it 10 times or more. Garthe said the prevalence of dating violence among the students surveyed was high across all years of the study. As many as 35%-45% of the students indicated that they'd committed at least one act of physical or psychological aggression against their boyfriend or girlfriend. These associations between parental messages and youths' likelihood of perpetrating dating violence were consistent for males and females, Garthe said.

Feeling stressed? Millennials, use these tips to make life less stressful

India, with a population of over a billion people, will have the worlds youngest population by 2020. While this sounds promising in terms of the composition of the workforce, the millennial generation is also proven to have higher stress levels in comparison to those of an older generation. Millennials in such major Indian business hubs as Mumbai, Bangaluru and New Delhi likely can relate to a recent survey conducted by Cigna TTK Health Insurance Co. that states 95% of Indian millennials admit to being stressed — more millennials than any other nation in the world. It's an alarming statistic, especially for a nation that thrives

on relaxation techniques like mindfulness, meditation and yoga. The global average for millennials, who now range in age from 18 and 34 years old, by comparison is 86 percent, according to the study. Several studies suggest that there has been a marked increase in stress levels among millennials owing to various factors involving increased competition at the work place, unstable relationships and sedentary/unhealthy lifestyle, among others. The unmanaged stress further leads to depression. Dr Shruthi M Hegde, ayurveda expert at The Himalaya Drug Company, shares a few tips for millennials who lead stressful lives.

Plan your schedule
One minute of planning translates into at least 10 minutes saved. Planning is a great tool to enhance efficiency and also brings down stress. When tasks pile up, it is natural to get overwhelmed. This can be prevented by keeping a simple checklist or to-do list. Once you've been doing it for a few weeks, it becomes second nature. Ensure you have a plan for the day with a clear objective; this allows you to focus on your goals and keeps you motivated. Listen to instrumental music to relax
From time immemorial, music has been known to play a positive effect in soothing a person's



senses. The tempo, lyrics and volume of the music you listen to have an enormous effect your mood. Slow-tempo, quiet music will help you relax - and soothe your frayed nerves. While you are working, you can listen to calm instrumental music. This clears the mind and helps you unwind. If you're feeling low, play upbeat music. This will lighten up your mood and elate your senses.

Sometimes, vocals and lyrics can inspire you and lift your spirits. Get enough sleep and rest
Staying up late in the night is common amongst millennials but can have dangerous effects on mental health. Some people have trouble sleeping early, while others find entertainment or social media preventing them from having an early night.

How Many Times You Have to Have Sex to Make a Baby

Making a baby is serious business. While some couples seem to get pregnant on the first attempt, others can spend what feels like forever trying. But there's an actual number of times it takes a couple to get pregnant, according to a new survey. On average, couples have sex 78 times from the time they decide to start trying to the time they get a positive sign on a pregnancy test. Those 78 times are spread over 158 days, or about 6 months. ChannelMum.com, a parenting

site, surveyed 1,194 parents, and found that most couples have sex 13 times per month when trying to conceive. Although this may sound like 13 times the fun, there are certain anxieties that come with trying to become parents. Eighteen percent of men and women said that sex while trying to conceive sometimes felt like a chore. Another 43 percent felt pressure to conceive and a fear that they wouldn't be able to. "While trying to conceive can be fun, it is also hard work, stressful, and not every couple is lucky enough to get conceive,

so while you're focused on the baby, try to remember about each other too," Siobhan Freegard, founder of ChannelMum.com said. Some people think conception depends on your position. ChannelMum.com found that the most popular position is missionary (used by three-quarters of couples) followed by doggy style (used by 36 percent of couples). Other couples think pregnancy happens based on a woman's cycle, with half of women trying to time sex to fertile



days, and 39 percent improving their diet and taking extra vitamins. Once you make up your mind to start a family, waiting for

your body to catch up can be frustrating. Luckily, there's lots of advice out there — and some of it might even make trying more fun.

Tying the knot: Bringing the retro style back in vogue



(Insider Bureau): Remember Dimple Kapadia's iconic look — the front-knotted top — in the movie Bobby (1973)? Well, cut to 2018, and front knot tops seem to be on top of the sartorial choices of Bollywood and Hollywood divas even today. But guess what, they have made their way to street fashion, too!

Designer Nida Mahmood explains, "The knot top has a great retro feel. I love it when it is a coordinated look. But it looks equally good when a loose shirt is tied into a knot for that careless chic vibe." Mahmood adds, "Team it

with a pair of high-waisted jeans or shorts. It's a great look as it makes the waist look slim and the legs longer." And that isn't all — a DIY idea that Mahmood shares will help you ace the style perfectly. "You could choose a loose top as well. Team it with skinny jeans, skirts, or shorts. Loose top knotted on the side and pulled as one side off shoulder is also a very cool retro look to sport." occasions are best for knotted tops? Celebrity stylist Aastha Sharma comments, "It's a nice and refreshing option to wear to a brunch, a day out, or even at an evening party with high waist pants, low or high waist skirts."



Dhanush showers praise on Pariyerum Perumal, announces next project with Mari Selvaraj

Actor Dhanush recently watched what is being regarded as one of the best Tamil films to have been made in 2018, Pariyerum Perumal. Directed by Mari Selvaraj and produced by Pa Ranjith, the film speaks about caste-based biases and its influences on the life of a young man. Dhanush also announced that he would be working with Mari Selvaraj next. He shared, "Finally watched pariyerum perumal. Mind blown. The rawness and life style shown is so real it feels u r there. congrats 2 d entire team. Also wud like 2 announce dir Mari selvaraj will b doing his next film with me under @theVcreations so excited to work with a talent like him."



The crew of Pariyerum Perumal responded to Dhanush's tweet and expressed happiness over Dhanush and Mari's collaboration. Director Mari responded, "Thank you @dhanushkraj sir for your

words about #Pariyerumperumaal n super excited to work with you. Thank u @theVcreations #dhanu sir." Actor Kathir, who played the lead role in the film, tweeted in response and said, "Super happy for the great news today!! Superb Combination and I'm very much excited about the project. Congrats @mari_selvaraj Na and thank u so much @dhanushkraj sir and @theVcreations Dhanu sir." Dhanush responded, "Good job. Enjoyed your performance and the effort you had put in. All the best for your future endeavours. God bless."

Pa Ranjith, who produced the film also responded to Dhanush's tweet and wrote, "This is a great news. My love to Mari who will direct the talented actor Dhanush with support from brother Kalaiipuli S?Thanu's V?Creations's."



Virat Kohli reveals the main reason behind his prolific run with the bat

Indian captain Virat Kohli has pushed the bar as far as fitness is concerned in Indian cricket. From being a chubby young boy, to now one of the fittest athletes in the game, it has certainly been one impressive transformation. "I will not say something which is inaccurate. I will not say that 'I never thought that fitness will make me look good,' because at some stage everyone thinks that way," Kohli told India Today. Kohli brought a concerted change to his lifestyle, his diet and training process and the

way he has given up on his once staple diet is well documented. The captain himself has conceded he made it a point that fitness will be his goal if and that it will push his cricket to the next level. "Eventually, you realise that it does so much good to you in terms of your mental state, in terms of how you feel and how much more you can do. It is not confined to just sport because even in a work scenario as well, if you are fit, you will be able to work more and achieve more. You will be

able to be more productive because if you lack energy you will not be as productive as you should be," Kohli added. After the initial struggles and effort, the Indian captain says that fitness and high-intensity training has become a part of his lifestyle. "Now, I don't do fitness to look good but to stay fit and obviously, I have professional requirements as well. But even after that (cricket), I don't think it will change and will become a life style," Kohli said.



The Ballad of Buster Scruggs movie review:

The Coen Brothers' Western redefines what a Netflix film can be

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs movie review: The Coen Brothers redefine the Netflix movie. Starring an all-star cast including James Franco, Liam Neeson, Tim Blake Nelson. Rating: 4.5/5.

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs
Directors - Joel & Ethan Coen
Cast - James Franco, Liam Neeson, Tim Blake Nelson, Zoe Kazan, Tom Waits
Rating - 4.5/5

Besides Quentin Tarantino, no other filmmaker has done more for the preservation of the Western than the Coen Brothers. Others have tried - and some of them have even succeeded - but very few of them can drum up excitement for one quite like the Coens.

Even their films that aren't Westerns have elements of the Western in them - films like *Blood Simple* or *Fargo* or *O Brother... Their love for the Old West, the unforgiving simplicity of life back then, and the uncomplicated morality of its characters, is palpable in every frame of their movies, from *No Country for Old Men* - the best modern day Western of all time - to *True Grit* - one of their rare blockbusters.*

Their latest, *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*, is perhaps their attempt to articulate this fondness to a crowd that is gradually losing interest in the genre. Originally intended as an anthology series on Netflix, the Coens - very late in the day - decided to edit it

down into a feature film. The only reason I can think of as to why they'd do this is so that they could avoid having the blemish of a television show in their filmography. As with Tarantino, their legacy is of vital importance to them, and they must feel the need to maintain a level of synchronicity. The result is six short films - ranging between 15 and 20 minutes - that feel like both an introduction and a love letter to the genre. There are, of course, threads that weave in and out of the six episodes in *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*; characters might not recur but themes certainly do. All but one story - the last one - ends in violent death. Each story feels unique, yet cut from the same cloth. These are six tales from the American Frontier, six tales of violence and vengeance, irony and existence, survival and betrayal. Several characters in these stories are shot in the back - by man, by nature, and in the case of one poor soul, quite literally. These are stories about gold diggers and impresarios and trailblazers - before these terms began to be abused to satisfy the egos of undeserving men.

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs begins with a book - one of those

decadent old ones, the sort that Larry McMurtry writes; lavishly illustrated and romantically rustic. A hand approaches. A page is flipped. And we're invited to spend time in the Coens' world, a world where a buffoonish cowboy can sprout angel wings and fly into heaven, and this could be followed almost immediately by the sight of a quadriplegic reciting Ozymandias. The titular Buster Scruggs appears in just one of the six chapters - the first - and has nothing to do with any of the other segments. In fact, each of the six chapters is an ode to different kinds of Westerns - the tone switches from loud farce to existential satire, from dramatic thriller to dark comedy. And like the lens through which they see these different chapters, their filmmaking changes, too. Some stories are dense with their trademark poetic dialogue, and others are near silent. My favourite cinematographer in the world, Bruno Delbonnel, filling in for their regular collaborator, the great Roger Deakins, seems to have been left to his own devices. The result is a work of such stark beauty, sprinkled with such wonderfully stylised vistas and such composed closeups, that you can't help but pause the film



every two minutes, just to admire the prettiness of it all. And my favourite composer, Carter Burwell, writes music that can be grand one moment, and cheeky the next. It's a terrific example of just how masterfully the Coens can alter the mood of their piece - we can go from garish silliness to morbid horror in the span of minutes, and often in the same segment. This is particularly evident in the third chapter, starring Liam Neeson and Harry Melling (Dudley from the *Harry Potter* series), as a travelling act whose fortunes turn as they venture into remote mountain territory. With dwindling finances and a businessman's brain, Neeson's character makes a chilling decision at the end that sort of encapsulates the brutal hilarity of the film and acts as a metaphor for the dying genre itself. Shiny new distractions will always come along; the old must always make way for the new.

The Coens make impeccable use

of the same dramatic irony in chapter five, starring Zoe Kazan as *The Girl Who Got Rattled* - a title that seems almost cruel, paired with the knowledge of what happens in the story. Rarely does a character manage to turn the tables on what fate has in store for them. In fact, it happens only once, in chapter four. The final segment, however, can either be viewed as an abstract summation of everything that has come before, or an encore. It's sort of like the opening scene of *A Serious Man* - the one about the dybbuk. Clearly, this sort of creative freedom is rare to find these days. We often talk about how Netflix has redefined the romantic comedy, how it has become the go-to place for true crime, but we never mention the public service they've done by producing *Godless*, and now *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*. It's fitting then, that with it, the Coens have redefined the Netflix movie itself.

Pihu movie review:

Beware of this silly, sadistic baby-hating movie

Pihu
Director - Vinod Kapri
Cast - Myra Vishwakarma
Rating - 1.5/5

Who would want to watch a baby cry? Nobody, and that's what dooms Vinod Kapri's silly and sadistic film *Pihu*, where a little girl walks precariously around an apartment without being watched or cared for. The idea — of anything in a house being a potential threat — could have been made into a watchable short film, but this is feature-length torture, where the viewer is made aware that they must sit through more than ninety minutes of a helpless and endangered child, despite knowing that nothing can really happen to her before the end.

Watching *Pihu* feels like being stranded on a late-night flight with a loud child, underprepared

parents and no headphones. Things happen to young Pihu — played by an adorable Tweety-bird of a child, Myra Vishwakarma — but none of these appear dangerous, even though the filmmakers try their darnedest to amp up the horror and shoot geysers and irons as sinisterly as possible.

The film opens the morning after Pihu's birthday party, which we hear during the opening credits. She gets up and tries to wake her mother, who cannot be woken — though the film is so loud and sadistic I often wondered if the child will indeed be able to rouse the dead. Right from the beginning, Pihu finds herself in peril as she tackles staircases, stools and sleeping pills, though to me the scariest thing in the film might be the fact that this unsupervised child

chooses a television channel playing a Salman Khan song. Pihu's father is travelling, but frequently shows up in photographs around the house — one of which shows him receiving a Best Engineers Award — and several cute photographs with Pihu, none of which feature the mother. He calls up and talks to his wife and is apparently so driven to argue with her that he is unperturbed by her silence, and is so impassioned about fighting that he locks himself in an airplane bathroom in order to continue talking to her even as air-hostesses want the phone switched off. His big message is that Pihu's mother switch the iron off... Or else.

This entire film is predicated on 'or else,' every scene showing Pihu surrounded by things that

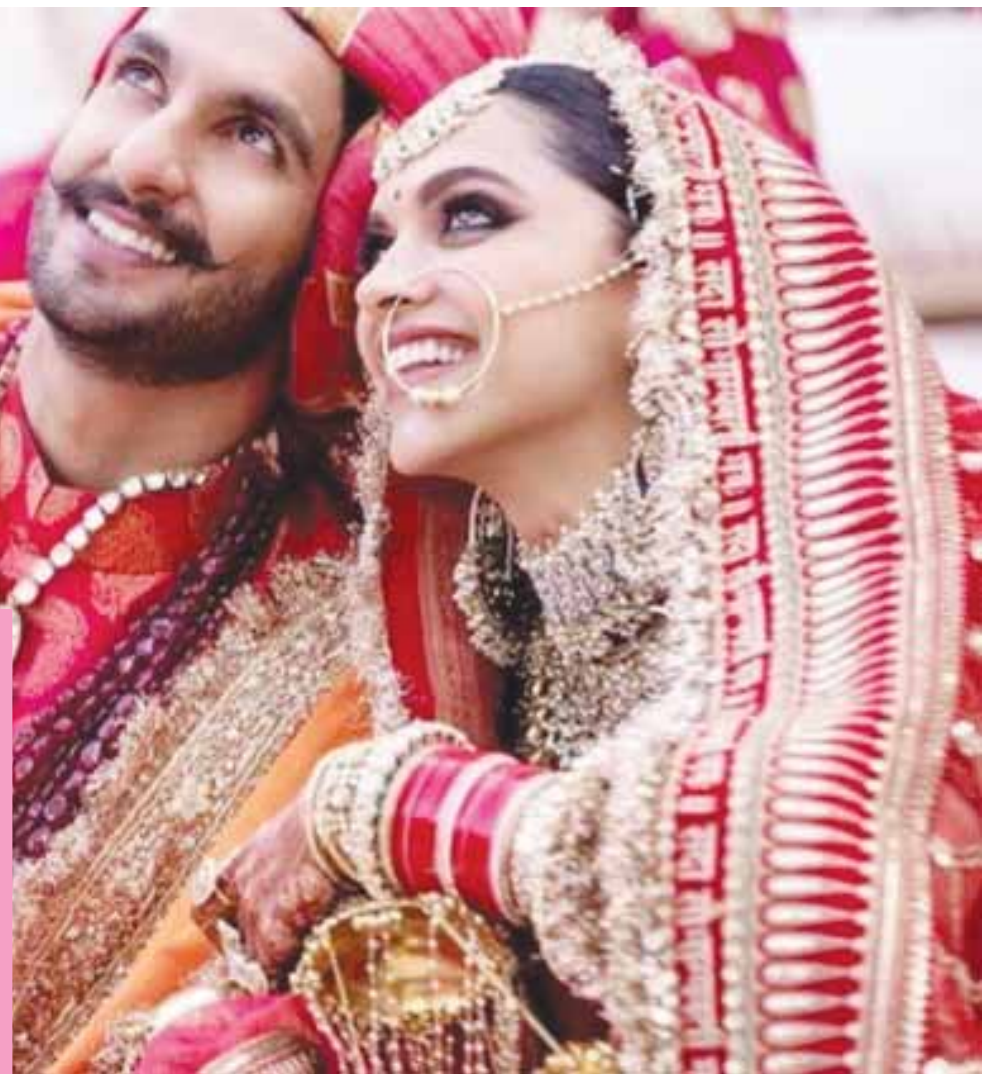


could kill her, from cleaning fluid to an easily climbed balcony railing, and to me this is the most obscene audience manipulation, literally dangling a child off a height in order to force the viewer to feel scared. This is a weird film where the background score

wouldn't sound out of place during a movie exorcism, a film that pushes the camera briefly into the microwave. It also puts the little girl into a refrigerator — prompting my friend Sudhish Kamath to say something that must be quoted: "Ice ice baby."

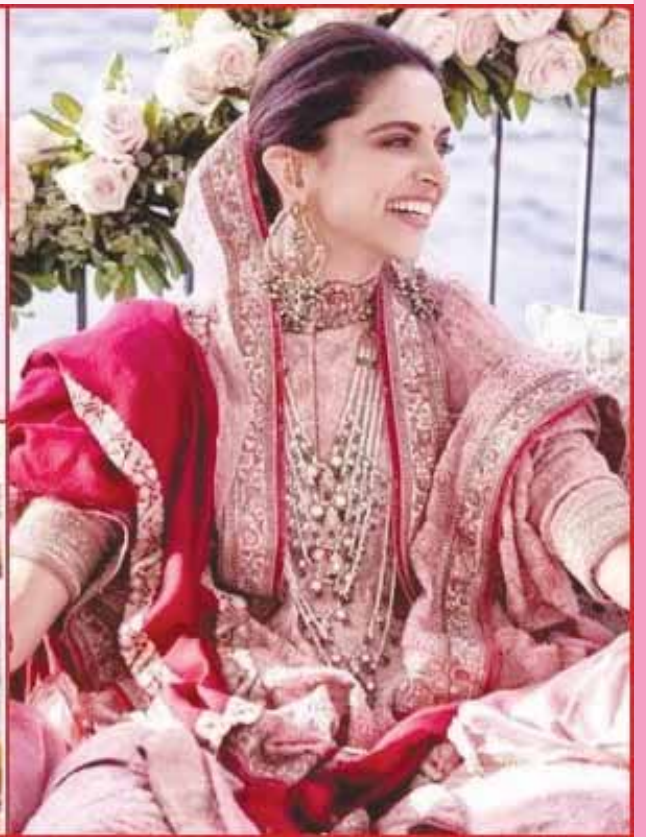
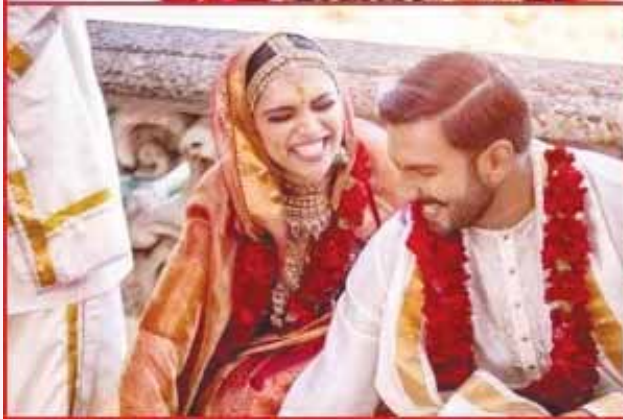
Deepika Padukone-Ranveer Singh wedding:

Ranveer Singh makes me feel I'm home: When Deepika Padukone revealed her secret to Raveena Tandon



Actor Raveena Tandon was so overwhelmed by looking at Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh's wedding pictures that she finally shared what Deepika had once told her during a long chat.

Actors Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh's lavish wedding in Italy, followed by the late arrival of their stunning wedding pictures, have kept fans on their toes. While their well-wishers and fans are waiting to grab every minute detail of their destination wedding, actor Raveena Tandon provided some solace by sharing a secret about the couple on Instagram. Overwhelmed by their wedding pictures that the couple shared on Tuesday, the actor tweeted, "Touch wood! Soo happy! letting you in a secret @RanveerOfficial, on a long chatty flight with @deepikapadukone a couple of years ago, she said "Ranveer makes me feel I'm home" I'll never forget those words, and truly she looks like she's Home. Godbless you both." While Deepika's happiness is easily visible in the pictures, Ranveer's smile also speaks a thousand words about their relationship. The couple dated for six years before tying the knot in a private ceremony in Italy. After a Nandi Puja at Deepika's home in Bengaluru and a haldi ceremony at Ranveer's residence in Mumbai, the couple left for Italy a few days before the wedding. The pre-wedding

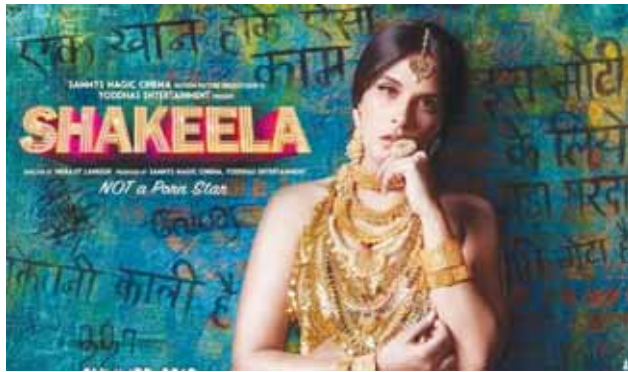


celebrations continued at Lake Como with mehendi and sangeet ceremonies that were followed by a Konkani wedding ceremony on November 14 and Anand Karaj ceremony on November 15. The newlyweds came back home in India on November 17 and received a warm welcome at the airport by their fans. Ranveer's residence was decked up in white lights to welcome the new bride and the couple didn't disappoint by posing for the media on their arrival. They were then spotted twinning in white and cream while leaving for their Bengaluru reception which will be held on Wednesday. It will be followed by another reception in Mumbai on November 28 for their friends from Bollywood.

Shakeela biopic first look: Richa Chadha plays 'not a porn star' as she takes on patriarchy, prejudice

The first look of Richa Chadha's next film, a biopic on adult actor Shakeela, is as good as gold. Highlighting the tagline of the film, 'Not A Porn Star', the poster has Richa covered in gold necklaces as she stands in front of a wall that is scribbled with barbs aimed at her. From taking potshots at her religion to her weight and colour of her skin, the insults fail to affect the fearless".

Shakeela portrays the to fame with her lead roles south. It was this popularity cameos in star vehicles Vikram or Vijay starrer Magan. The success brickbats; women have protest the release of her past. The Shakeela biopic Lankesh and will release in of the film took off in a small



Richa had earlier shared a few stills from the sets as well, in which she is seen wearing the traditional sari of Kerala, kasavu. The actor also met Shakeela to understand her better. She is also expected to make a cameo in the film that also stars Pankaj Tripathi in a pivotal role. The film is bankrolled by Magic Cinemas and Yoddhas Entertainment.

actor as she stands "bold and journey of the actor who rose in adult movies in the which helped the actor get such as Dhool with Azhagiya Tamizh didn't come without the taken to the streets to movies in Kerala in the is directed by Indrajith Summer 2019. The shoot village in Karnataka and



Mowgli Hindi voice cast has Anil Kapoor playing Baloo, Kareena Kapoor as Kaa and Abhishek as Bagheera

Netflix has announced that Abhishek Bachchan, Madhuri Dixit, Kareena Kapoor, Anil Kapoor and Jackie Shroff will voice the iconic characters of upcoming film, Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle. They will lend their voices to the Hindi

Abhishek Bachchan will Kareena Kapoor will voice the Kapoor will voice the friendly Mowgli's adoptive wolf will play the villain, Shere "Bringing the 'bear the Jungle as Baloo, the Dec 7," Anil shared on



of a story I have always loved. He is ready to do whatever it takes to keep Mowgli alive. Wait for Bagheera in Mowgli: Legend Of The Jungle," wrote Abhishek. "Ferocious when provoked, especially when it comes to her man cub! Nisha brings the motherly instinct alive in Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle. So excited to be the voice behind Nisha @netflix_in Dec 7," wrote Madhuri.

The actors of the Hindi version of Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle join an equally impressive international cast of Christian Bale (Bagheera), Andy Serkis (Baloo), Benedict Cumberbatch (Shere Khan), Cate Blanchett (Kaa), Rohan Chand (Mowgli), Matthew Rhys (Lockwood) and Freida Pinto (Messua) who also fulfils the role in Hindi. Mowgli: Legend of the Jungle premieres globally on Netflix on 7 December, 2018.

dubbed version of the movie. voice the black panther Bagheera, mysterious snake Kaa, Anil bear Baloo, Madhuri Dixit will play mother Nisha and Jackie Shroff Khan.

necessities' to Mowgli: Legend of tenacious mentor. On @netflix_in, Instagram. "So happy to be a part

Preity Zinta on her comment on MeToo: It's ironic that someone who went through abuse has to clarify

Actor Preity Zinta's comments on MeToo movement in a recent interview earned her a lot of backlash for shaming victims and laughing about sexual harassment. She has now released a statement on Twitter, in which, she has said that her comments were taken out of context.

"To all the women out there. I am sorry if I have unintentionally hurt your sentiments on the #MeToo movement. It's ironic that someone who has gone through abuse, as I have, has to clarify this," she wrote in her statement. Preity was asked in an



interview if she has experience harassment. She said she 'wished' something like this would have happened to her just so she could respond to the journalist's comments. Her words drew the ire of Twitter for belittling the trauma of sexual harassment victims.

Preity gave clarifications for her words in a series of tweets: "My reason for saying 'I wish something like this would have happened to me' in the film industry with a smile was because I would have reacted and slapped the person. So it never happened and much later when it happened I did react and the whole world saw it."

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