



Priyanka Chopra-Nick Jonas' wedding could clash with Deepika Padukone-Ranveer Singh's reception on Dec 1

STORY ON page 30

Khashoggi saga: It may unleash a power play with far-reaching ramifications

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has clearly decided to use the affair to make a push to project his country as the main Sunni player in the Muslim world while discrediting the Saudi prince.

(News Agencies) The killing of journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, within the Saudi Arabia consulate in Istanbul has unleashed a high-stakes showdown between Saudi Arabia and Turkey, both key allies of the US, and triggered a diplomatic crisis at a time when West Asia can well do without such tensions. Khashoggi had long-standing ties with key members of Saudi royalty before he turned into a vocal critic of crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman. Ever since he went missing on October 2,

(Contd on page 18)



Trump's attacks on media have real-life consequences

Almost as soon as the bombs arrived in the mail, the debate began: What role does violent political rhetoric have on these real-life acts of violence?



Well, truth be told, a version of this debate has been raging for a while. Witness the reactions to President Trump's recent praise of a congressman for body-slaming a reporter. (Contd on page 18)

Next year's Kumbh Mela set to wear different hues with political overtones

In general election year, next year's Kumbh Mela promises to be religion, politics, business, tourism and global branding rolled into one, say analysts.



(News Agencies) Next year's Kumbh Mela, starting on January 15 in Allahabad, will not just be the traditional, religious mega congregation on the banks of the Sangam. In general election year, it promises to be religion, (Contd on page 18)

Major drive against Indians with illegal foreign assets launched by I-T dept; thousands under scanner

The department, in coordination with their foreign counterparts, is investigating offshore bank deposits and purchase of assets by "thousands of Indians", officials said.

(News Agencies) The Income Tax Department has launched a major operation to investigate cases of illegal funds and properties stashed abroad by Indians and may invoke the new anti-black money law for strict criminal action in many such cases, officials said Monday.

The department, in coordination with their foreign counterparts, is investigating offshore bank deposits and purchase of assets by "thousands of Indians", the officials added.

The CBDT Chairman Sushil Chandra confirmed the move but refused to elaborate.



Officials, however, said the taxman, armed with vital transaction details of overseas transactions from the financial intelligence unit (FIU) and other sources, is working on such cases across the country and this was part of a major "concerted" action against black money. (Contd on page 18)

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Workshop on Digital Media



A two day training workshop on making a career in social, digital media and what is Fake News and how to recognize it, was conducted by the Media Success Academy in New Delhi. The talks on above mentioned important topics were very successful and fruitful.

The eminent media personalities of the country as well as scribes representing various states also participated in the workshop which provided them important information given very important information relating to various issues confronting Indian society. Sharanjit Singh Thind, Editor-in-

Chief of South Asian Insider published from the US, senior journalist Trilok Deep Ji Senior art director Kazi Mohammad Raghib, editor of ANI Vinita Pandey, famous writer Pritpal Kaur, Famous blogger Vibha Sachdev and social media expert Ravinder Kumar and media

marketing expert Renuka Ji gave a lot of technical information to all the journalists. The organization's President senior Journalist Sushma Verma, training incharge and senior journalist Parul Sharma, senior journalist Anju Grover and Neelam Jeena, General

secretary and senior journalist Aruna Singh, expressed their views in the context of journalism. The Supreme Court lawyer Aman Mehta gave information about the legal issues related to cyber law. Mr.Kovid Bhardwaj expert on cyber security dwelt upon issues pertaining to cyber security

One Teacher, One School by Ekal Vidyalaya

Bharat Lok Shiksha Parishad provides basic education to underprivileged children in rural parts of India through unique educational initiative, 'Ekal Vidyalaya' -One Teacher one School concept. Bharat Lok Shiksha Parishad or BLSP has been successfully running 16170 Ekal Vidyalayas in villages of several states like Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu region. Working with a mission to eradicate illiteracy from India, BLSP has been adopting villages in remote areas, providing resource management through donor cultivation, regular supervision, periodical evaluation besides, training to Ekal teachers and volunteers.

Bharat Lok Shiksha Parishad

Bharat Lok Shiksha Parishad is a non-profit organisation which has been working in the field of education for nearly two decades. Parishad has been following the principle of Ekal vidyalaya-One teacher, one school. Ekal is a story of social dreamers who believed that change is possible and education can be the medium to bring the change in the life of last man in the last row in the remotest parts of India. The Ekal Vidyalaya Movement has got support from several prominent social leaders, business tycoons and pioneers of social activism. Some of the names Dr. Subhash Chandra (Zee Group), Sh. Laxmi Goel (Essel Group), Sh. Naresh Jain (Jainco Buildcon), Sh. Subhash Aggarwal (Action Group) Sh. Nand Kishore Aggarwal (Crystal Group) and Sh. G.D. Goel (G.D. Builders) etc. Besides that many PSUs and Corporates donating through CSR funds.

Crowd funding is one of the area where donations are receiving for running Ekal Vidyalayas. Donations are also receiving through masses who are contributing 1-10 schools.

Literacy and Ekal

Ekal Vidyalaya Move-

ment has emerged as one of the most pragmatic solution to eradicate illiteracy from India.

Ekal Abhiyan is currently running 76,611 Vidyalayas and 2,055,630 children age 6-14 are getting education through Ekal vidyalaya in the country. In February 2016, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi appreciated the role of EV stating that the foundation's mission is a successful mission and added that it is a significant step in Skill India. He has given the target of 1,00,000 vidyalayas by the year 2022.

Roots of Ekal Vidyalaya

In early eighties many of these social dreamers reached at different places to act on their dream based on the belief that change would come through active participation of local communities.

Late Dr.Rakesh Kumar Popli (an Indian nuclear physicist), Dr. Rajneesh Arora, Dr. Mahesh Sharma from IIT and Mr. Ashok Bhagat from BHU visited Bishanpur in Gumla district in the year 1983 and conducted a situational analysis of this tribal area.

Their study identified education, health along with social, gender & economic disparities as issues needed to be addressed on priority. Dr.RakeshPopli and Dr. Rajneesh Arora started working with a focus on education and eventually developed methodology of informal teaching to ensure literacy among local communities and in particular among children. This laid the foundation of experiment of single teacher schools.

The experience of running schools in tribal areas of Gumla district in Jharkhand and night schools for tribal people in Orissa helped evolving the concept of One Teacher School.

Formally, the concept of "One Teacher Schools" was conceived in Gumla (Jharkhand) in June 1986 in a seminar organised to find out the solution to the problem of illiteracy in tribal vil-



lages. Models from Jharkhand and Orissa were discussed and seen as a way forward. Shri Bhau Rao Devras, a renowned social activist, had outlined the concept of One Teacher School. Dr.RakeshPopli helped in refining the concept.

Ma. Sh. Shyam ji Gupt is a founder, mentor, and one of the strongest pillar of the Ekal Abhiyan. He is a visionary with a mission to both inspire and empower people through education and philosophy of Ekal movement. He is wholeheartedly devoted to Ekal Abhiyan and fully dedicated committed and ready to reach Abhiyan to the new heights.

Ekal Vidyalaya-A unique concept

Ekal has provided fantastic solutions to deal with illiteracy in rural areas. It introduced Joyful Learning system which is a Non-Formal Method of Teaching. Ekal follows a low-cost model in rural education. The timing of Ekal schools is flexible. In consultation with Gram samiti of the village, Ekal schools run so that children can complete their household or domestic chores and still study. Ekal brings the schools and teachers directly to the villages, overcoming the issue of inaccessible schools.

Despite the increase in rural children attending school after the RTE passed, there continued to be need for Ekal schools since government schools were not well run. The teacher's absenteeism and the quality of classroom teaching were deeply disappointing issues. In 2013, Ekal schools were the only source of education in approximately 20% of the villages in which they operated.

Objectives of Ekal Vidyalaya

1: Ekal Vidyalaya is established in a village once a Gram Samiti is formed and takes the responsibility to monitor and support its activities. This brings the local ownership and involvement of the village community. Ekal Vidyalaya ensures five folds education in a village for children and whole village community including rural women, rural youth, farmers & panchayat.

2: Ekal Vidyalaya is to ensure functional literacy among children of the village. Vidyalaya runs usually for 3 Hrs for 6 days in a week with average 30 students. The students are admitted after the assessment of their literacy level, so that accordingly, three groups could be formed. The main purpose is to teach basic skills of reading, writing, basic arith-

metic, general science and basic social study.

3: The other important objective is to create awareness among children and village community towards health & hygiene through demo and providing examples and narrating importance of cleanness in the village, so that they are sensitized to take care of their basic health needs. Village community is also sensitized about the importance of healthy and balanced diet during weekly Vidyalaya

4: Ekal Vidyalaya works with farmers and rural youth to spread awareness about the organic farming. Special camps are organised to train farmers and rural youth to make agriculture a profitable venture. Main focus remains on sustainable models and techniques in agriculture

5: Ekal Vidyalaya extensively runs awareness campaigns on different is-

sources and impart training to urban volunteers so that they can support administration and Ekal work. The branch (chapter) committee members are in direct contact with Gram Sangathans and Sevavratni volunteers.

Education is a gift for life. However, Bharat Lok Shiksha Parishad reaches out to underprivileged children and helps them realise their dreams. BSLP believes that every child can excel provided he/she gets right learning opportunities. Bharat Lok Shiksha Parishad is committed to ensure that disadvantaged children, irrespective of their origin or financial background, are able to get education, play, interact and learn like other children of their age. However BSLP helps children unlock their potential and realize their dreams.



Navjot Singh Sidhu's remarks on Pakistan are valid, writes Karan Thapar

I dare say Navjot Singh Sidhu attracts controversy. He certainly seems to revel in it. Just as the brouhaha over his embracing the Pakistani army chief at Imran Khan's inauguration was dying down, Sidhu has sparked a new controversy with his comments at the Khushwant Singh Literature Festival in Kasauli. Even if this wasn't the case in the past, this time, however, I believe Sidhu is right and his critics mistaken.

Sidhu told the audience at Kasauli — a small number of locals but a larger crowd drawn from Chandigarh and Punjab — that people like him feel a

greater affinity to Pakistan than to India's southern states. As he put it: "When I go to Tamil Nadu, I don't understand the language, there's only one or two words that I can ... not that I don't like the food but still I can't have it for a long time. The culture is totally different." He then added: "But if I go to Pakistan, the language is the same."

This was enough to enrage the Shiromani Akali Dal, who called it "an insult to the nation". It's also infuriated Sambit Patra of the BJP who suggested that Sidhu should join the Pakistani cabinet.

However, the truth is that

states like Punjab — and this could also be true of parts of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and, possibly, Uttarakhand — share language, cuisine, culture, lifestyle and even swear words with people from across the border. This is particularly true of the two Punjabs, ours and Pakistan's. These are bonds determined by history and geography and they simply cannot be denied. They may be politically inconvenient for some people but they remain facts you cannot wish away.

In contrast, language, cuisine, culture and lifestyle

separate Punjab from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Again, this cannot be denied.

Of course, we're one country — and proud to be so — but we're also different people. Isn't this what unity in diversity is all about? That diversity is the richness of India. It's also its novelty.

Insisting that Sidhu is insulting the nation when he says he feels a greater affinity to the Punjabis of Pakistan than he does to his fellow citizens who are Tamils, Kannadigas or Malayalis also ignores the fact that Pakistan was once

part of India and its Punjab province used to be part of the original state of Punjab. Indeed, many who today reside on the Indian side lived for generations in the other part of Punjab. They have family memories and emotional associations that have yet to fade away. Again, these are facts that cannot be denied or ignored. Surely this is the reason why our problems with Pakistan are viewed so differently in the north compared to the south? Indeed, this is why for many Punjabis the Pakistan issue often raises conflicting or contradictory sentiments. We know we have

a problem and we know they are in the wrong but we also want to restore the bonds of brotherhood that once existed in a united Punjab.

Finally, does it occur to Sidhu's critics that what he said could also be true of how Pakistani Punjabis feel? They probably feel closer to people across their eastern border than they do to the Sindhis of the south, the Baloch of the west and even the Pathans of the north. The intricacies and consequences of the India-Pakistan connection are facts that we have to accept. There is no point quarrelling with them.

Shaking the hand of Khashoggi's son could backfire for bin Salman



It was as chilling as it was clumsy.

The images of Jamal Khashoggi's son, Salah bin Jamal Khashoggi, shaking hands with King Salman and then his anointed heir, the Crown Prince, Mohamed Bin Salman, was a remarkable display of the sustained and catastrophic disconnect between Riyadh and the outside world. As if PR is something you shoot yourself in the foot with.

Presumably, the message was to show the King united in sympathy with his grieving subject. But it ignored how many perceive Mr. Khashoggi Jr. -- as a man under a form of travel ban, hence forced to be there. US officials remain convinced Khashoggi's murder could not have happened without the specific approval of the Crown Prince, the man whose hand Khashoggi was forced to shake -- with a TV camera artlessly in shot behind

them. Erdogan's speech was remarkable in its refusal to mention the Crown Prince by name. He made it painfully clear that Turkey has more evidence, likely the same that CIA director Gina Haspel raced back to the White House with Wednesday. But Erdogan's "naked truth" consistently spoke to King Salman, not his 33-year-old son. It was an unabashed bid to create distance between the two, and to remind those around the King that further damaging material - to both Saudi Arabia as an investment opportunity and a regional ally to the Gulf states at a time of Iran's ascendance -- remains in his hands. Hours later, Donald Trump gave his clearest indication yet that MBS may have been behind the murder. He told the Wall Street Journal, asked about MBS's possible involvement: "Well, the prince is running things over there more

so at this stage. He's running things and so if anybody were going to be, it would be him." In case you think he's suddenly been hit with a wave of righteous anger, it's worth re-reading his continued critique of the murder as a real-estate venture gone awry. "They had a very bad original concept, it was carried out poorly, and the cover-up was one of the worst in the history of cover-ups. And they had the worst cover-up ever. And where it should have stopped is at the deal standpoint." It is going to take extraordinary upheaval inside Riyadh for bin Salman to be challenged. That, or an unlikely moment of sobriety from the Crown Prince himself, in the event he elects to step back a little until the furor dies down in a year or two, and the West's memories and spines have weakened. His #Vision2030 is still over a decade away. The Saudis cannot overnight drop the US and West as key allies and turn to Moscow. As former CIA analyst Bruce Reidel quipped, you can't strap a Russian radar onto an American F15. But Riyadh is perhaps past the point of ridicule-no-return. At this point, the Saudi explanation now might as well read: We told everyone to get our dissidents back, so when we wanted to question this guy, they misheard the order as a rendition request, but he's a 60-year-old so he

took on our rugby team of spooks, so we strangled him, so it was just serendipitous we had a body double with us, and a forensic expert in the team, and pure luck -- as Erdogan says -- part of our staff had been out in the Belgrad forest 4 days earlier digging holes. Nobody really senior knew about this, but they are in complete control of everything. Kfanksbye x More damning evidence will without a doubt

to be leaked from Ankara. Wednesday. Bin Salman's More will doubtless have brand is perhaps permanently damaged.



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Pollution in India has now become a national health crisis



India has 14 of the 15 cities in the world with the maximum air pollution. In Delhi, pollution levels attain dangerous proportions as Diwali approaches. The lungs and brains of a large percentage of children are getting irreversibly damaged. The country has the highest rate of deaths from chronic respiratory diseases and asthma. This

is a national health crisis which calls for urgent action. While there is no magic bullet such as odd-even, there are feasible measures which would make a huge difference in a few years. The easiest would be to get all households to use clean energy for cooking with liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), or, electricity.

Burning of cow dung cakes and firewood for cooking not only harms the lungs and eyes of women, it is also a major source of all air pollution. Electricity is targeted to reach all households by next year. Its use for cooking can be promoted. LPG cylinders through Ujjwala can be made to reach everybody in a few years. However, the really poor cannot afford to pay more than Rs 200 or so a month for cooking. The first hundred units of electricity in a month, enough for lighting and cooking, could be provided at Rs 3 per unit, or, a LPG cylinder for Rs 300. This can be done through a subsidy from the government, or, cross-subsidy by the energy companies. A market-based

solution for the burning of crop residue would work best. An attractive enough price for crop residue for conversion to briquettes to be burnt in coal fired stations, or, for generating electricity directly through gasification would put an end to crop burning. The transition would be driven by private investment and without any subsidy. Thermal plants need to offer a viable price for briquettes and the distribution companies for electricity from crop residue. Phasing out the most polluting vehicles, such as old trucks, buses and tempos, at the earliest, is an unavoidable necessity. This has to be a countrywide measure as air pollution moves across villages and towns. Implementation would

be easier if there is a considerably lower price for a new vehicle when the old one is traded in and there is a system of scrapping old vehicles that can be closely monitored. It could easily be done by the government foregoing a substantial portion of the GST on such vehicles. Germany successfully implemented a trade in programme at the time of the global financial crisis of 2008 to generate additional demand for their auto industry. The supply of fuel of contemporary international standards, Bharat Stage Six (BS 6), now being implemented, would make a difference only gradually as more new BS 6 compliant vehicles get on the road.

But for an immediate impact, all new taxi, bus and three wheeler permits for running within cities should be given only for electric vehicles. Sufficient number of charging stations would naturally need to be created well in advance. The huge potential of electric vehicles in reducing air pollution is not being adequately recognised. Old coal-fired thermal power plants in, or, those close to major urban centres need to be closed down forthwith. This can be done without difficulty as there is surplus power generating capacity with much more in the pipeline. However, only a firm central mandate will make this happen.

Pakistan's double game stymies Afghan peace

It continues pretending to be a US ally while harbouring the Taliban's network structure



The US war in Afghanistan has already lasted more than twice as long as World War II, exacting a staggering cost in blood and treasure. With the longest war in American history completing 17 years this month, US patience appears to be wearing thin. Recent American moves — from renewing efforts for a peace deal with the Afghan Taliban to changing the combat strategy — indicate that President Donald Trump's administration is desperate to end the war. The newly-appointed US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad,

blindsided the Afghan government by holding unannounced face-to-face talks recently with the Taliban in Qatar. Khalilzad's negotiations — just ahead of Afghanistan's parliamentary elections that the Taliban sought to disrupt — constituted the second round of US-Taliban direct talks in about three months. The revived Great Game, however, is clouding the renewed US peace effort. US foreign policy, through punitive sanctions and tariffs, is driving Russia, China and Iran to support the Taliban in a bid to tie down American forces in Afghanistan. And

Pakistan, which provides cross-border safe havens to the Taliban, continues running with the hare and hunting with the hounds — pretending to be a US ally while harbouring the Taliban's network structure. To make matters worse, an ascendant Taliban is expanding its territorial control and killing government forces in such record numbers that authorities in Kabul no longer disclose fatality tolls. Afghan military casualties have been rising since 2014, after US forces transferred responsibility for most security to the Afghans. Still, almost 15,000 American troops remain, while some 26,000 US military contractors in Afghanistan continue doing many jobs that soldiers would normally do. Pakistan holds the key to a US peace deal with the Taliban.

Former American President Barack Obama unsuccessfully tried to co-opt Pakistan by extending multibillion-dollar aid packages to that country. Now, under Trump, the US has renewed efforts to win the support of Pakistan's

powerful military generals, including by assassinating the chief of the Pakistani Taliban in May.

In fact, three successive Pakistani Taliban chiefs have been killed by US military strikes, with each assassination intended to win Pakistan's cooperation in the Afghan war. For its part, the US, seeking to preserve the option of reaching a Faustian bargain with the Afghan Taliban, has not included that militia in its list of foreign terrorist organisations. And the only time the US has assassinated a major Afghan Taliban leader inside the militia leadership's sanctuary, Pakistan, was in 2016 when a drone strike killed the new chief after he adamantly opposed any peace talks. US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis, while making an unannounced visit to Kabul last month on his way back from New Delhi, claimed that reconciliation efforts with the Taliban had gained "traction". But the Taliban, while valuing direct talks with the US as a means to

undercut the Afghan government's legitimacy, have little incentive to make peace with America. Through battlefield victories, the Taliban have already gained the momentum against government forces, which are spread thin and on the defensive. An emboldened Taliban, in the recent talks in Qatar, demanded a time frame for an "end to the US occupation" and removal of all Taliban leaders from US sanctions lists. Meanwhile, in response to the increasing Taliban attacks in Afghanistan, Washington has advised Afghan troops to pull back from sparsely populated areas and focus instead on safeguarding cities. Consequently, not only have vast swathes of Afghanistan become no-go zones, but also the priority accorded to force protection is signalling a government in retreat. Further emboldening the Taliban are the new avenues of support from Russia, Iran and China. But while Moscow and Tehran long viewed the Taliban as a major terrorist threat before establishing

contact with the militia, China has always had a dubious approach toward the Taliban.

When 9/11 happened, a Chinese delegation was in Kandahar signing an accord with the isolated Taliban regime. Now, seeking a bigger role in Afghanistan, China is again courting the Taliban. India, a top aid donor to Afghanistan, is the only power to pursue a consistently anti-Taliban policy. India is concerned that the US-Taliban direct talks, besides marginalising the Afghan government, lend respectability to a terrorist organisation that enforces medieval practices. But the US appears willing, as part of a peace deal, to accommodate the Taliban in an Afghan power-sharing arrangement. However, an enduring peace deal appears unlikely as long as Pakistan continues playing a double game and the US refuses to go after the Taliban's cross-border safe havens. The Trump team knows this and yet is seeking to repeat Obama-era failed efforts, including wooing the Taliban.

It is make or break time for the Congress Rajdeep Sardesai

The Congress needs to erase the perception of being a party in terminal decline in the next two months to offer a realistic nationwide challenge to the Modi-led BJP in 2019

For four years and a bit, every time there has been a major state election, the dominant narrative is to call it a "test" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. The truth is, barring defeats in Bihar and Delhi in 2015, and a 'stolen' mandate in Goa in 2017, the BJP leadership has successfully passed almost every election test (in Punjab, it was the BJP ally, the Akali Dal, which was the big loser). The time, therefore, has now come to reverse the storyline: the 2018 winter elections are, above all else, a stern examination of Rahul Gandhi and the Congress president's credentials to lead an anti-Modi front in 2019. In the past 12 months, Mr Gandhi has got away by claiming to have scored a 'moral victory' in Gujarat by bringing the BJP down to double digits and then scraped through with a post-poll jugaad in Karnataka. Now, he and the Congress party are faced with a prospect of a battle in five states where there can be no more excuses for failure. This isn't just about 'momentum' before the big general elections. Remember, the BJP won in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in the winter of 2003 and yet lost the 2004 general elections. You need momentum at times in sports to succeed; in politics, you need it to stay relevant. The next round of elections is a challenge for the Congress to avoid being pushed into near irrelevance, where victory in two, if not three of the five states is critical to re-emerge as a potential magnet for new alignments. Four months ago, in the afterglow of its post-poll alliance in Karnataka, the Congress seemed poised to craft a maha-gathbandhan or grand alliance against the BJP. That alliance is now rapidly coming apart because of a mix of regional contradictions and national aspirations. The decision of the Bahujan Samaj Party's Mayawati not to align with the Congress in the state elections is, unarguably, the biggest blow to opposition unity. Not only is she a key player in Uttar Pradesh, where her potentially game-changing alliance with the Samajwadi Party still seems on track, but she has a single digit, significant vote share in half a dozen other states, including MP and Chhattisgarh. In a bipolar fight in these states between the BJP and the Congress, she could have added a crucial incremental vote to the latter, apart from raising the intriguing possibility of a pan-India Dalit consolidation around the Opposition. But for Mayawati, the key to power – her mentor Kanshi Ram called it the master key or guru killi — has always revolved around staying unpredictable and making short-term deals. Whether her choices are occasioned by the pressure of the numerous cases she and her family members face, or a conscious strategy to keep her options open till the Lok Sabha elections, the fact is, Mayawati has sent out a firm message: the Congress today isn't a bankable deposit that can guarantee fixed returns. It is precisely that perception of being a party in terminal decline that the Congress needs to erase in the next two months to offer a realistic nationwide challenge to the Modi-led BJP in 2019. In each of the three BJP-ruled states of MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, there is ample evidence, anecdotal and psephological, of a creeping local anti-incumbency to varying degrees. In Telangana, too, KCR's decision to go in for a snap poll reflects a measure of anxiety. In Mizoram, the Congress remains the principal national player despite the BJP pushing for a strategic alliance of regional forces. In effect, the Congress for once, actually, has half a chance in each of the five state contestations. And yet, the overwhelming impression is that the Congress could end up squandering the opportunity because of a frayed election machine that appears like a rickety second-hand car when compared with the resourceful BJP Formula One model. The BJP does have the hefty advantage of being financially well-endowed but money power is not always a decisive factor. The Congress must look within too and ask why its deeply factionalised state units have struggled to get their act together. Most crucially, there is the ultimate Kaun Banega Crorepati question: can Rahul Gandhi deliver a major state to the party as its chief campaigner? In recent months, the Congress leader has shown some spunk in taking the fight into the Modi camp. The rhetoric may have got him the headlines but it hasn't yet got him voter endorsement. In that sense, November-December 2018 could be make or break for the Congress leadership. Post-script: At a recent media conclave in Kolkata, a Congress spokesperson insisted that the maha-gathbandhan was a media creation and the party was only pushing for state-wise alliances. The Trinamool Congress leader on the panel retorted, "In Bengal, we don't need any allies." The BJP representative on the debate just smiled. As turf battles intensify, who will have the last laugh?



CBI vs CBI: Now it is up to the Supreme Court

The big question is whether the government has the power to remove the CBI chief. The simple answer to that question is no. The court may be open to the government's arguments, but the law makes it clear that a CBI director can't be removed at the government's discretion

The government finally decided to step into the ongoing war within the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) by, effectively, removing the squabbling Nos. 1 and 2 of the agency from the field of play, and appointing an interim chief. The developments, most of which played out in the intervening night of October 23 and October 24, have resulted in a challenge by the CBI director in the Supreme Court, which will now have to weigh in on the issue; raised questions about the process followed; and, predictably, resulted in howls of protest from Opposition parties. The big question is whether the government has the power to remove the CBI chief. The simple answer to that question is no. The court may be open to the government's arguments, but the law makes it clear that a CBI director can't be removed at the government's discretion. The government may argue that this is a mere divestment of powers, not a removal, pending an investigation, and that it is the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), which enjoys supervisory powers over the federal investigation agency, that passed the actual order, but these are largely technicalities. It is also not clear whether the CVC itself has the powers to do what it did or, whether, this agency, or for that matter any other, has the powers to ask someone who doesn't want to go on leave to go on leave. The CBI director is appointed by a committee comprising the prime minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India, and the director's argument is that only this committee has the powers to remove him; that he is, by law, guaranteed a two-year term; and that the government's action (even if routed through the CVC), infringes on the independence of the agency. It is also not clear whether the court will go into the details of the charges levelled by the director against special director Rakesh Asthana and the latter against the former. That is actually the domain of the CVC and the department of personnel and training, which comes under the Prime Minister's Office, and it is an issue that should have never been allowed to come to a head. By addressing the issue a few months ago, the government may have avoided a sticky legal challenge. In an editorial yesterday, when this newspaper asked for the PMO to act and stop the unseemly slight of the agency's top two officers going at each other using all means at their disposal, it was thinking of an intervention, not surgery. Now it is up to the Supreme Court.



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Sharanjit Singh Thind
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Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind Web Coordinator : Harpreet Singh

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Phone: 917 612 3158 TelFax : 516 342 1076
editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com
www.thesouthasianinsider.com

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Sabarimala row: It takes courage to sit on the fence of religious reform

The battle that ensued this week over the Supreme Court's verdict allowing women of all ages to worship in Kerala's Sabarimala temple demonstrated the power that religious tradition still has to resist change.



The battle that ensued this week over the Supreme Court's verdict allowing women of all ages to worship in Kerala's Sabarimala temple demonstrated the power that religious tradition still has to resist change. The court's verdicts banning instant triple talaq, and decriminalising homosexuality and adultery, also defy tradition.

All three verdicts can also be seen as victories for the women's rights movement in that they give women greater control over their lives and their bodies. But at the

Kasauli festival earlier this month, three doughty fighters in the women's movement poured scorn on religious leaders who opposed reforms.

Zakia Soman, co-founder of the 70,000-plus strong Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan, attacked the Muslim Personal Law Board for its opposition to reforms in Muslim personal law. She was a petitioner in the triple talaq matter in the Supreme Court. Shayara Bano was the original petitioner in that case who received her notice of triple

talaq by speed post. She attacked traditionalists who were still preventing her from seeing her children.

The third champion of women's rights at Kasauli was Masooma Ranalvi who described how, as a seven-year-old Bohra Muslim girl, her genitals had been cut. She explained that the traditional justification for this female genital mutilation was "to curb women's sexual desires". Masooma Ranalvi has now started a debate in the Bohra community on this practice. But the Syedna, the spiritual head of the Bohras, was rigidly opposing its abolition. It is not surprising that those who claim to have religious authority like the Syedna and the Muslim Personal Law Board are the ones who are blocking reforms in India's Muslim communities. The same is so often true in other religious communities. An obvious example is the Vatican refusing to allow the clergy to marry, or women to be ordained

as priests. Among the orthodox Hindu leaders of the opposition to Nehru and Ambedkar's Hindu code bill were Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly and then President of India, the Shankaracharya of Dwarka, and the leadership of the RSS.

When a call for reform comes from the laity, it is almost inevitably seen by orthodox religious leaders as a challenge to their authority, and hence to be resisted. So Zakia Soman's Muslim women's movement for reform of their personal law is bound to meet with stiff resistance and the orthodox Muslim leadership will carry a large section of the community with them. Can it be argued that Nehru avoided a head-on collision with the Hindu orthodox leadership and by compromising achieved most of the reform he had planned.

When Robert Runcie was consecrated Archbishop of

Canterbury in 1980, he became the leader of the Church of England on the verge of a schism between those who wanted women priests and those who opposed this. He insisted he had not become Archbishop to split the Church and refused to come down on either side. Abuse was heaped on him by a press which could only see the issue in black and white terms, but he famously said, "I do wish the press would realise it sometimes takes courage to sit on the fence." As a result of Robert Runcie's courage a schism has been averted, the Church of England now has women priests, and the Bishop of London is a woman.

At the Sabarimala temple, there was literally a head-on collision between religious reformers and traditionalists. But do such differences always have to collide? Obviously there can be no compromise on genital mutilation. But is there no room for compromise on others?

There is more to Sabarimala than just faith

Beyond religious conventions, the controversy is being politicised by every player in Kerala



The Inspector General of Police in Kerala was looking into the TV camera and boasting: "We've deployed the requisite police force. Our personnel won't allow anybody to take the law into their own hands. The honourable Supreme Court's verdict will be implemented in entirety. We'll ensure that no faithful person is prevented from having the darshan of Lord Ayyappa.

Despite his grandstanding, the way the two women from Andhra Pradesh's Godavari district were heckled was beyond imagination. The women had somehow managed to cross the base camp in Pamba, but they couldn't stay hidden from the

eyes of protestors. They made sure that the buses went back with the women who had been insulted and humiliated. Accompanied by two sobbing children, they were feeling vulnerable and fearful, but this didn't perturb the 'faithful'. Where were the police when this was happening? The television channels could have captured the violence in their cameras, but couldn't the police have done more to stop the protestors?

Clearly, the angry mobs were not deterred by the enormous police presence. They were bent upon putting obstacles before the women. What I saw on TV made me recoil. Even before a

couple could reach the base camp, they were surrounded by protesters. The so-called devotees beat the husband up in front of his wife. The scene of the helpless woman crying as she clung on to her husband was really distressing. They were not the only ones feeling helpless. Groups led by women were searching buses and passenger cars for any woman aged between 10 years and 50 years in order to stop them from reaching the temple. Every woman traveller was viewed as suspicious. A number of women journalists were at the receiving end of their wrath. Even as they were being assaulted, the police kept silent. Even the police were not in a position to do anything when their political masters were themselves in a dilemma. Kerala is the nation's only Left Front government. The Supreme Court's verdict is in line with the government's policies, but at times it appeared that even they were reluctant to get singed in the flames of politics. These contentious times are unprecedented in India's politics. It appeared that the BJP and the Congress were standing together

on one platform. The question before them was not one of religiosity or faith, but of electoral compulsions. The 2019 general elections are round the corner. Who'll want to risk playing with the sensibilities of the majority?

That is why, despite the apex court's instructions, women had to turn back from Ayyappa's doors on Wednesday. At the time these lines were being written, even those dispensing justice were feeling helpless. But the issue is not merely about religious faith. It is connected to the anguish of half of India's population. These scenes brought back some traumatic childhood memories resting in the recesses of my mind.

As a child I remembered my mother and her friends would suddenly fall ill. Since, they didn't have fever or cough, why were they not feeling well, I used to ask. The aunts would respond with sheepish laughter. Similarly, when a number of families visited the temple together, a few women would stay outside since they were ill. As I grew up, the reason behind this mystery illness was revealed to me, but a question still bothers me. This

'illness' which lasts for five out of 30 days in a month, is one-sixth of a person's productivity. How can society not benefit from their productivity every month? This tradition has given rise to a number of complications. The Sabarimala controversy is intrinsically linked with this.

Why have those who are bent on killing or getting killed outside the Ayyappa Temple forgotten that at one time our ancestors took on societal evils such as sati, child marriage and dowry? A civilisation that cannot progress in sync with the sensibilities of time cannot be long-lasting. Look at the history of the nation if you need further testimony. Everything will be crystal clear. But what can one do? One more point. If we evaluate Ayodhya in the light of Sabarimala, it will lead to misgivings on a number of fronts. The Sabarimala issue is limited to a particular region. The Ayodhya controversy is decidedly much bigger. The court's decision in the Ram temple issue may go against the wishes of crores of the supporters of one party. What will happen in these circumstances?

Out of power for past 14 years, split looms large over Chautala clan, INLD

Party sources say as this family feud has potential to trigger tremors in the INLD, the party think tank and advisors of Chautala are “exploring even thin possibilities” of rapprochement or to delay the inevitable action.



its warhorses for the next year's Haryana assembly polls, the clan of former chief minister Om Prakash Chautala is reeling under a dangerous power struggle within its members. Already out of power for the past 14 years, the prospects of split in his powerful political family are looming large due to the tussle over controlling the levers of the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD). This is the second major crisis the

supremo Chautala and his elder son and former MP Ajay Singh Chautala were sent to Delhi's Tihar jail for 10 years in a recruitment scam in 2013. Now, all eyes are on Thursday when the party chief is expected to come out of jail for a medical checkup and decide if his rebel grandsons---Hisar MP Dushyant Chautala, his younger brother Digvijay Chautala, the sons of Ajay Chautala--will be booted out

of the party. Party sources say as this family feud has potential to trigger tremors in the INLD, the party think tank and advisors of Chautala are “exploring even thin possibilities” of rapprochement or to delay the inevitable action. The tussle has come out in the open at a time when the party under the command of Abhay Chautala is appearing stronger ahead of elections, due next year. Party leaders say the burden of leading the INLD fell on “fun-loving” Abhay “with least interest in active politics” when his father and elder brother were jailed and the pundits had then predicted that the party would fall apart. However, the INLD chief has been publically applauding Abhay for his

organisational capabilities and bringing the party back on rails. This pat on the back of Abhay, who is seen as INLD's next CM if the party comes to power, is at the heart of the power struggle within it. Sources say another option being debated is to delay expulsion of Dushyant and his brother till Diwali when Ajay will be out on parole and use the occasion to iron out the differences. The trigger behind grandfather Chautala appearing inclined to show his grandsons the doors of the party is the alleged indiscipline of the supporters of Hisar MP Dushyant and his brother during October 7 rally held to mark the birth anniversary of former deputy prime minister Devi Lal, OP Chautala's late father.

When Abhay rose to speak at the rally, activists of Indian National Student Organisation (INSO), INLD's now-disbanded youth wing, which was under the command and control of the Hisar MP and his brother, didn't let Abhay speak. This hooliganism took place even as INLD chief was present. The youth brigade shouted slogans and demanded declaration of Dushyant as the chief ministerial candidate of the party. Party insiders say it is this “daring demand to project Dushyant as party's CM candidate” that was seen as “grandsons challenging their grandfather.” “That's the reasons behind Chautala Senior acting tough and taking decisions faster

than anticipated. He wanted to throw the boys out at the earliest, but his advisors are getting the decision delayed, hoping that the boys will tender an apology and accept their mistakes,” a senior INLD leader said. Top party leaders say when Hisar MP met his grandfather on October 17, he began narrating his side of the story, instead of apologising. “This attitude of Dushyant jolted Chautala who then decided to bite the bullet,” they said. A day later, Chautala's wife Sneha Lata met both her grandsons — Dushyant and Digvijay in Delhi. In the meantime, another effort was made to control the damage when Abhay, along with his three sisters, went to Tihar jail to meet Ajay.

Paytm case: Family of accused says she had stocks worth Rs 10 cr, why would she extort money

Accused woman's mother says, “After Sharma, my daughter was the face of Paytm. Be it the launch of a new firm or scheme or receiving awards on behalf of Paytm, she was the chosen one and deserved every bit of it.”

Sonia Dhawan, the Paytm executive who was arrested this week along with her husband for allegedly trying to extort from the company's founder crores of rupees, was described as someone who was a workaholic devoted to her employers. Three persons, including

Sonia Dhawan and her husband, were arrested for allegedly trying to extort crores of rupees from the Paytm's founder. According to family members, Dhawan had a meteoric rise in Paytm and was its most prominent face apart from founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma. This,

they said, made it difficult to explain why she would want to extort money from a company to “which she has given her 100%”. “After Sharma, my daughter was the face of Paytm. Be it the launch of a new firm or scheme or receiving awards on behalf of Paytm, she was the cho-

sen one and deserved every bit of it,” said Dhawan's mother Rama who lives with her daughter, son-in-law and grandson in Noida's Sector 120. Dhawan, her husband and another Paytm employee were arrested on Monday for allegedly blackmailing and making extortion bid to the e-



wallet company's founder Sharma and have been sent to judicial custody for two weeks. The charges against the three include theft of sensitive personal and corporate data. At the time of her arrest, Dhawan was a vice president and headed the company's corporate communications division. Dhawan's sister Rupali said the family suspects the role of a professional rival who may have framed her. “For the past few weeks, she would tell me how a colleague was conspiring to delay her promotion. She would have heated exchanges with him,” she said, adding that her sibling was also “resisting pressure to sell her stakes in the firm”. According to Ajay Pal Sharma, senior superintendent of police (Gautam Budh Nagar), the evidence

against Sonia so far is the confessional statement of arrested alleged co-conspirator Devendra Kumar, who worked in the administration department of Paytm. “Also, Sonia was the only employee who had access to Sharma's personal details,” said the SSP. The officer said Sharma's personal account and card details were the data being used to blackmail him. “They did not have the company's details or the customers' data. They were probably trying to extort money by scaring Sharma about having more important data than they actually had,” said the SSP. Kapil Jain, the brother of Dhawan's husband Rupak, said that even at the time of arrest, she seemed certain that it was mix-up and that the Paytm founder would clear things up.

Four detained outside Alok Verma's house were IB officers on routine duty: Centre

Four men briefly detained from outside the Janpath house of CBI's Alok Verma were Intelligence Bureau officials on routine patrol duty in a high-security zone and had stopped to check why many people had gathered at the spot, a Union Home Ministry official said on Thursday. “Unfortunately, their presence was projected otherwise,” he said. “This is unlike surveillance, which is done covertly, without any visible appurtenances. One such unit, in early hours of today, halted on Janpath, where there

was an unusual collection of people. This was with a view to check the reason why people had collected at the location,” the official said. Main opposition party the Congress has attacked the government alleging that the men were “snooping” on Alok Verma, who was stripped of powers as CBI chief on Wednesday. “After making CBI as ‘Central Bureau of Investigation’, the (Narendra) Modi government now stoops to a ‘new low’ – Snooping on ‘forcibly removed’ CBI Director through IB,” Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh

Surjewala said. “Let everyone be forewarned – IB is heading the CBI way!” Congress Randeep Singh Surjewala tweeted. The four men were this morning detained by Alok Verma's personal security officers (PSOs), who accused them “loitering around for a long time”. They had come in two cars and were allegedly caught from near the front and rear gates of Verma's house in the national capital. “They had been spotted loitering around for a long time since the early hours. They were finally detained after their behaviour aroused suspicion,” said an officer.



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In plea before SC, Alok Verma claims govt interference in sensitive cases

CBI director Alok Verma has moved the top court under Article 32 of the Constitution and said the DoPT order violated statutory provisions under which CBI is expected to function independently.

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) director Alok Kumar Verma has accused the government of interfering with the independence and autonomy of the premier institution, told the Supreme Court that divesting him of his powers "overnight" by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) and the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) was "patently illegal", and also hinted that he was removed for investigating cases inconvenient to the government. He also hit out at the agency's special

director Rakesh Asthana (whom he didn't name), who too was sent on leave along with the director, for posing hurdles in investigating cases. Verma's petition was mentioned by advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan before a bench led by chief justice Ranjan Gogoi on Wednesday morning. Investigating officers of sensitive cases are being changed, which may jeopardize a probe into many sensitive cases, he said. The court agreed with his request for an early hearing and listed the

matter for Friday. Verma sought the quashing of the "rapid fire" decisions of October 23 by the CVC and the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), as being without jurisdiction and in violation of Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution. They were arbitrary and issued without following the due process of law, he claimed. As CBI is expected to function independently and autonomously, there are bound to be occasions when certain investigations of high functionaries do not take the



direction that may be desirable to the government, Verma mentioned in his petition. He offered to share details of "many cases" which have led to the "present circumstances." Verma did not divulge the same in his petition as they "are extremely sensitive" in nature. Verma's petition has asked to court to

"give independence to CBI from the DoPT" as its latest move "seriously hinders the CBI's independent functioning." Not all influence exerted by a political government would be found "explicit or in writing." "More often than not, it is tacit and requires considerable courage to withstand," Verma claimed.

India to become world's third largest aviation market around 2024: IATA

India will become the world's third largest aviation market around 2024 surpassing the United Kingdom, global airlines' body IATA said on Wednesday as it projected total air passenger numbers to touch 8.2 billion in 2037.



India will become the world's third largest aviation market around 2024 surpassing the United Kingdom, global airlines' body IATA said on Wednesday as it projected total air passenger numbers to touch 8.2 billion in 2037. Releasing the latest update to IATA's 20-year Air Passenger Forecast, the grouping also cautioned that growth prospects for air transport and the economic benefits driven by aviation could be curtailed if protectionist measures are implemented by governments. The present trends in air transport suggest passenger numbers could double to 8.2 billion in 2037, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said.

The Asia-Pacific region is projected to drive the biggest growth with more than half the total number of new passengers over the next 20 years coming from these markets. The growth is being driven by a combination of continued robust economic growth, improvements in household incomes and favourable population and demographic profiles, it noted.

BJP wants Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi to help garner Hindu votes in MP, Rajasthan

The BJP high command will decide on Yogiji's itinerary but yes, we do hope that he will campaign in Madhya Pradesh for there is no denying that he has influence here," says BJP leader Rajneesh Agarwal



Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) units in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan want Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath to campaign for them in the upcoming assembly polls in a bid to consolidate the Hindu vote, according to people familiar with the developments. Adityanath, who took over as UP CM last March, is also the chief

of the influential Gorakhnath mutt. He has been involved in election campaigns in states such as Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh in 2017 and Karnataka in 2018. "The party high command will decide on Yogiji's itinerary. We hope that he will campaign here because he has influence here," said Madhya Pradesh BJP leader Rajneesh Agarwal. Rajasthan BJP spokesperson Mukesh Pareek said there was a demand for Adityanath to campaign in the state because of his personality. "He is a good speaker and also a religious leader. His personality attracts people," he said. Senior party leader Onkar Singh Lakha Singh said the Nath sampradaya (tradition), of which

Adityanath is the head, wields significant influence in Rajasthan. "Since the ninth century, the Marwar area and Alwar have been centres of the Nath faith so Yogi Adityanath is bound to have a resonance in these areas." Party functionaries indicated Adityanath might visit the state in the first week of November. Adityanath is already campaigning in Chhattisgarh, where the BJP is in power, and delivered a speech on Tuesday after chief minister Raman Singh filed his nomination papers. Using references from the Ramayana, Adityanath urged the electorate to vote to a fourth straight term in office. Singh touched Adityanath's feet and sought his blessings.

I do not believe in the culture of criticising corporate: PM

Modi praised industries and corporates for "exemplary social work alongside their business" while saying he does not believe in the culture of criticising them. "In our country, the general culture is to abuse businessmen, industrialists.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said he did not believe in the culture of criticising industry and corporates who he believed were doing exemplary social work alongside their business. Addressing IT professionals and tech honchos at a town hall in New Delhi. Modi praised industries and corporates for "exemplary social work alongside their business" while saying he does not believe in the culture of

criticising them. "In our country, the general culture is to abuse businessmen, industrialists. I do not know why it is so but it has become a fashion. This is not a line of thought I agree with," Modi said. He urged tech companies to contribute their expertise and manpower to bring social change. "We have seen today, in this townhall programme, how leading IT corporates are doing excellent social work, urging their employees to

contribute to the society." Modi had in July said he was not scared to be seen with industrialists as his conscience was clear and that they had contributed to country's development. At the town hall, IT companies like Tata Consultancy Services, Cognizant, Tech Mahindra and Mindtree showcased the social transformation efforts they have undertaken and pledged to support the newly launched 'self4society' initiative.



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PM Narendra Modi calls for 'tax-plus one' system, urges citizens to help build nation

TPM Modi launched the 'Main Nahi Hum' portal to help firms use their technology and resources towards various social causes.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday called for a 'tax-plus one' approach for citizens to do more for the society besides honestly paying taxes. He said more people were

paying taxes because they have faith that their money is being utilised. "Paying tax is 'prakriti' (natural), not the society besides paying tax is 'vikriti' (deformity). But paying tax plus doing more is 'sanskriti' (culture)," he said in his address to IT professionals and tech honchos at a town hall. "I appreciate honest taxpayers whose numbers have increased. But the tax that is paid is part of the system. Social service is tax-plus something. We need to create that," Modi said. Modi praised industries and corporates for "exemplary social work alongside their business" while saying he does not believe in the culture of criticising them. "In our

country, the general culture is to abuse businessmen, industrialists. I do not know why it is so but it has become a fashion. This is not a line of thought I agree with," Modi said. He urged tech companies to contribute their expertise and manpower to bring social change. "We have seen today, in this townhall programme, how leading IT corporates are doing excellent social work, urging their employees to contribute to the society." Modi had in July said he was not scared to be seen and Mindtree showcased the social transformation efforts they have undertaken and pledged to support the newly launched 'self4society' initiative. The self4society, mygov.in' named as 'Main Nahi Hum' – portal will act as a platform for companies to contribute their technology, skills and HR resources towards various social causes, including financial literacy, financial inclusion, small business enablement, and Swachh Bharat.

Yashwant Sinha, Arun Shourie, Prashant Bhushan move SC seeking FIR in Rafale deal

Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie and activist-lawyer Prashant Bhushan moved the Supreme Court seeking registration of an FIR into the Rafale fighter jet deal between India and France alleging "criminal misconduct" by high public functionaries.



Former union ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie, along with advocate Prashant Bhushan, have approached the Supreme Court, seeking the registration of a criminal case and a court-monitored investigation into the Rafale fighter jet deal

between India and France. The petition filed on Wednesday alleges corruption in the procurement of 36 Rafale aircraft by the highest public servants in the country and claims that procedures were ignored to make a new deal with the French company. The National Democratic Alliance government's decision to enter an \$8.7 billion government-to-government deal with France to buy 36 Rafale warplanes made by Dassault Aviation was announced in April 2015, with an agreement signed a little over a year later. This replaced the previous United Progressive Alliance (UPA) regime's decision to buy 126 Rafale aircraft, 108 of which were to be made in India by the state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL).

The deal has become controversial with the opposition, led by the Congress, claiming that the price at which India is buying Rafale aircraft now is ~1,670 crore for each, three times the ~526 crore, the initial bid by the company when the UPA was trying to buy the aircraft. It has also claimed the previous deal included a technology transfer agreement with HAL. The NDA has not disclosed details of the price, citing a confidentiality clause. The deal has also become controversial on account of the fact that one of the offset deals signed by Dassault is with the Reliance Group of Anil Ambani. The Congress claims the earlier deal was scrapped and a new one signed just to provide Ambani this opportunity for an offset deal. Both the government and Reliance have repeatedly denied this. Assailing the procedure adopted by the NDA government for the purchase of the 36 jets, the petition filed by Sinha and Shourie, dissidents from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, says: "...highest ranking public officials, unilaterally, in violation of all mandatory procedures, without obtaining any SQRs from the IAF, or any decision of the Categorisation Committee or any Acceptance of Necessity from the Defence Acquisition Council, entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the French regarding purchase of just 36 Rafale aircraft, all in a 'fly away' condition with no Transfer of Technology and no Make in India." SQRs is short for service qualifying requirements.



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In victory for AAP, Election Commission rejects office of profit case against 27 MLAs

The President signed the order dismissing the plea based on an opinion given by the Election Commission (EC) in July, a senior poll panel functionary said Thursday, PTI reported.



President Ramnath Kovind has dismissed a plea to disqualify 27 Admi Party MLAs of Delhi for allegedly holding office of profit by being

appointed as Commission (EC) in July, family welfare chairpersons of Rogi a senior poll panel department on April 26, Kalyan Samitis attached functionary said the 'Rogi Kalyan Samitis' to various city hospitals. Thursday, reports PTI. (Patient Welfare The order, which is based The EC had found no Committees) are on the recommendation merit in the plea. Such advisory in nature which of the election pleas are sent to the will assist health commission, brings huge President who forwards it facilities, develop and relief for AAP legislators, to the EC. The EC then customise strategies who will now continue to gives its opinion based among others. remain in their positions. on which the President It stated that each The President signed the has to issue 'Assembly Rogi Kalyan order dismissing the plea orders. According to an Samiti' will be provided Rs based on an opinion order issued by the Delhi 3 lakh per annum as grand- given by the Election government's health and in aid.

'Crisis manager' in Odisha Police circle M Nageswar Rao to head CBI



Nageswar Rao, as the Additional Director General of Fire Service and Home Guards of Odisha, had displayed excellent performance in disaster management during cyclone Phalin in 2013 and Hudhud in 2014, recalled a senior officer

The 1986 batch Odisha cadre IPS officer M Nageswar Rao, who has been made interim director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), is known for his acumen in handling disasters in the state as well as neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. The selection of Rao to head CBI was lauded by many as the country's premier investigation agency is, for the first time in its history, hit by a situation akin to a disaster. Describing Rao as a competent officer, former Odisha DGP Gopal Nanda said the former's experience will help in proper functioning of the agency. Rao is considered a "crisis manager" in the Odisha Police circle and has often engaged in difficult situations, he said. He is the second Odisha cadre officer to head the CBI Earlier, Uma Shankar Mishra of the Odisha cadre

had worked as the director of the CBI. Rao's team in 2014 bagged the first Chief Ministers award for Excellence in Governance and Innovation in Public Service for outstanding work during cyclone Phalin and Hudhud. The IPS officer was also awarded Rs 5 lakh prize. As cyclone Hudhud hit Visakhapatnam in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh in 2014, Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik had asked Rao to lead a team of more than 500 Fire Service personnel for rescue operations, an officer said. The Andhra Pradesh government and people of Visakhapatnam highly appreciated the commendable work of the Odisha Fire Service under Rao's leadership. Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandra Babu Naidu had felicitated Rao in a public

function in Visakhapatnam. A recipient of President's Police Medal for Meritorious Service, President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service, Special Duty Medal and Odisha Governor's Medal, Rao demonstrated his acumen in the police from day one of his posting as Sub Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Talcher in 1989-90. In the 80s and 90s, Talcher was known as the 'second Dhanbad' for coal smuggling and criminal activities. Rao, then a young IPS officer, effectively controlled the situation and earned appreciation from one and all. Rao has also worked as SP of Mayurbhanj, Nabarangapur, Bargarh and Jagatsinghpur districts. He was also SP, Railways at Rourkela and Cuttack as well as SP of Crime Branch. In Mayurbhanj, Rao took special interest in launching a programme targeting Lodha tribes members, who had adopted crime as their profession for generations. With assistance and guidance from then Mayurbhanj district collector Hawa

Singh Cahar, Rao brought reform in the community and effectively persuaded the tribe to refrain from crime. Rao has also earned the distinction of being the first police officer in Odisha to use DNA finger printing technique in crime investigation and detected an unknown rape case when he was SP of

Jagatsinghpur district in 1996. The rape case ended in conviction of the accused for seven years. A post-graduate in Chemistry from Osmania University, Rao used his ability to use science in crime detection and solved the rape case. He had also undertaken research work at IIT-Madras before joining the

Indian Police Service (IPS) in 1986. Hailing from Mangapet village of Warangal district in Telangana, Rao also contributed as an SP Crime Branch in successful prosecution and getting the main accused Belu Das convicted in the 1991 Hooch tragedy that killed more than 200 people in Cuttack.

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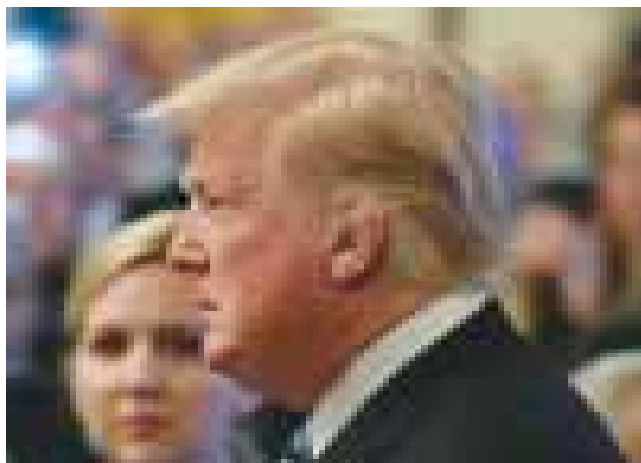
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All US sanctions against Iran will be back in full force on Nov 5: Trump

After withdrawing from the Iranian nuclear deal, Trump has asked all countries to reduce their purchase of oil from Iran to zero or face secondary sanctions.



US President Donald Trump said Thursday all American sanctions against Iran will be in full force on November 5, as he signed into law another legislation imposing hard-hitting sanctions on the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

"On November 5th, all US sanctions against Iran lifted by the nuclear deal

will be back in full force, every sanction that we had on their originally, which would have -- if they would have just left it a little bit longer, would have been so much easier than what we've been through over the last number of years," Trump said at a White House event.

After withdrawing from the Iranian nuclear deal,

Trump has asked all countries to reduce their purchase of oil from Iran to zero or face secondary sanctions. India, being one of the largest importers of Iranian oil, also comes under the purview of American sanctions. To avoid this, India either needs a waiver from the US or has to bring down the purchase of Iranian oil to zero.

Trump said these sanctions will be followed up with even more sanctions to address the full range of Iran's "malign conduct". "We will not allow the world's leading sponsor of terror to develop the world's deadliest weapons. Will not happen," he said.

Moments earlier, Trump signed into law the

Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act (HIFPAA) of 2018, which imposes additional hard-hitting sanctions on Hezbollah.

Read more: Donald Trump blames media for 'anger' after spree of pipe bomb packages

"Hezbollah has kidnapped, tortured, and murdered American citizens, including in its brutal attack in 1983 on our Marine Barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, which killed 241 American Marines, Sailors, and Soldiers, wounded 128 other American service members, and killed a Lebanese civilian.

"Another bombing against the French barracks killed 58 French peacekeepers and five

Lebanese civilians, White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said.

The legislation, Sanders said, will further isolate Hezbollah from the international financial system and reduce its funding.

These sanctions will target foreign persons and government agencies that knowingly assist or support Hezbollah, and Hezbollah-affiliated networks that engage in drug trafficking or other transnational crime, she said.

During a White House event Thursday night to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the attack in Beirut on the Marine Barracks with survivors and

family members of the victims, Trump said over the past year, his administration has levied the highest number of sanctions ever imposed on Hezbollah in a single year, by far.

"Just a few moments ago I signed legislation imposing even more hard-hitting sanctions on Hezbollah to further starve them of their funds. And they are starving of funds," he said.

"We will target, disrupt, and dismantle their operational and financing networks of which they had plenty. They don't have plenty now. And we will never forget what they did to our great Marines in Beirut. We will never forget," the US president said.

Sri Lanka President sacks PM Ranil Wickremesinghe, appoints ex-president Mahinda Rajapakse as new premier

Ranil Wickremesinghe insists that he is still the legitimate prime minister and will fight his dismissal in court.

Maithripala Sirisena installed Sri Lanka's controversial former strongman leader Mahinda Rajapakse as the country's new prime minister Friday, in a shock move that plunged the island into an unprecedented constitutional crisis. Sirisena's office announced the surprise decision after the president

sacked incumbent premier Ranil Wickremesinghe -- who insisted that he was still the legitimate prime minister and would fight his dismissal in court.

"I am addressing you as the prime minister of Sri Lanka," Wickremesinghe told reporters at a nationally televised press conference. "I remain as prime minister and I will function

as the prime minister." There was no immediate comment from Rajapakse, who worshipped at a Buddhist temple shortly after he was sworn in by Sirisena at his office in a ceremony broadcast by a private TV channel loyal to the ex-president. Rajapakse ally and opposition legislator Wimal

Weerawansa asked Wickremesinghe to step down and allow a smooth transition of power.

But Wickremesinghe said he was urging the parliament's speaker Karu Jayasuriya to convene the legislature, where his United National Party and its allies command a majority.

The speaker said he was



seeking legal advice and would announce Saturday if he recognises Rajapakse as the new prime minister.

Sirisena won elections against Rajapakse in 2015 on a platform of economic reform and accountability for atrocities committed during his opponent's 10-year iron-fisted rule which saw the bloody end of Sri Lanka's brutal civil war.

Colombo was on the verge of facing economic sanctions from Western nations over Rajapakse's human rights record before his government lost office. Sirisena's decision to appoint his former foe prime minister threatens the Indian Ocean island nation with fresh turmoil just as it was trying to emerge from the shadow of the civil war, and the legality of the

move is disputed. A constitutional amendment passed in 2015 removed the president's power to sack the prime minister.

"The appointment of Rajapakse as the prime minister is unconstitutional and illegal. This is an anti democratic coup," finance minister Mangala Samaraweera wrote on Twitter shortly after the appointment was announced.

It comes after disagreements between Sirisena and Wickremesinghe over economic policy and day-to-day administration of the government.

Simmering power struggle In May, Sirisena asked his prime minister to end a bitter power struggle and said the coalition government had failed to deliver promised reforms. 1

Two more suspicious packages addressed to Democratic senator Booker, ex-intelligence chief Clapper found

Two more suspicious packages were found on Friday, addressed to Democratic senator Cory Booker and former director of national intelligence James Clapper, amid a manhunt for the serial bomber, or bombers, who earlier sent pipe-bombs to leading critics of President Donald Trump.

The package for Booker was found at a mailing facility in Florida, intercepted before it shipped. And the one meant for Clapper was found at a mailing facility in New York, and was ad-

dressed to CNN's offices — the ex-DNI appears frequently on the news network as an expert on national security.

The total of these packages has gone up to 12 and the FBI, the investigating agency leading the hunt, does not have a suspect, or suspects, and renewed its appeal on Friday morning to the public for information leading to those behind what is increasingly being described as a case of "domestic terrorism".

The new intended recipients fit the pattern that has emerged so

far as they are both strident critics of the president and also the frequent target of his attacks. Booker is also said to be considering a run for the White House in 2020, against Trump if he wins the Democratic primaries. President Trump has condemned these intended attacks and called for unity, but has also attacked his opponents, critics and media for holding him responsible for a fraught political atmosphere in the country that may have motivated those behind the packages, that started arriving last Monday.

Khashoggi saga: It may unleash a power play with far-reaching ramifications

Turkish officials have been behind a string of leaks that appeared aimed at pinning the blame on the powerful Saudi prince. The Saudi stand on the affair — going from a claim that Khashoggi had left the consulate to a claim that he died in a fight with Saudi officials and an eventual admission that he was murdered by individuals who had exceeded their authority — certainly

hasn't helped the kingdom, especially at a time when the crown prince is facing growing criticism for a reputation of recklessness and amassing too much power by sidelining his rivals and detractors. In his death, Khashoggi has become a figure cited by many to back calls for the Saudi crown prince to be reined in before he does more damage in the region through actions such as

the devastating military campaign in Yemen. And while the prince once had the backing of US President, Donald Trump, and his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, Mr Trump has now described the killing of Khashoggi as the "worst cover-up ever" and indirectly acknowledged the prince's central role in the matter as he is "running things" in Saudi Arabia. Turkish President,

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has clearly decided to use the affair to make a push to project his country as the main Sunni player in the Muslim world while discrediting the Saudi prince. Many are hoping Khashoggi's death will lead to much-needed reforms in human rights and associated matters in Saudi Arabia but it may only have unleashed a power play with far-reaching ramifications.

Trump's attacks on media have real-life consequences

But the debate has been renewed now, in the wake of the threatening deliveries to CNN's New York office and several prominent Democratic politicians on Wednesday. The intended recipients all had something in common: They were frequent targets of right-wing criticism.

Or as the Washington Post succinctly put it: "Amid incendiary rhetoric, targets of Trump's words become targets of bombs."

At a rally in Wisconsin on Wednesday night, Trump paired his remarks decrying political violence with fresh criticism of the media.

"The media also has a responsibility to set a civil tone and to stop the endless hostility and constant negative and oftentimes false attacks and stories. Have to do it," he said.

Speaking on CNN, senior political analyst David Gergen said that Trump "hasn't taken an ounce of responsibility or accountability" for his own rhetoric.

"Trump unleashed the dogs of hatred in this country from the day he declared he was running for president, and they've been snarling and barking at each other ever since," Gergen said. "It's just inevitable there are going to be acts of violence that grow out of that."

News industry executives have repeatedly warned that Trump's reckless attacks against the media are having real-world consequences. Some journalists now travel to Trump rallies with

security personnel, for example.

In a statement on Wednesday afternoon, CNN Worldwide president Jeff Zucker spoke out about the problem.

"There is a total and complete lack of understanding at the White House about the seriousness of their continued attacks on the media," he said. "The President, and especially the White House Press Secretary, should understand their words matter. Thus far, they have shown no comprehension of that."

Journalism advocacy groups uphold this view as well. Dan Shelley, the head of Radio Television Digital News Association, pointed out the irony in Trump's recent statements.

On Wednesday, responding to the mailings, Trump said "threats of political violence of any kind have no place in the United States of America."

But, Shelley said, "those words were uttered by the same person who has used harsh rhetoric targeting journalists and political opponents during campaign rallies in an extremely tense and divisive political environment."

Shelley repeated a line he has used recently: "Don't succumb to intimidation and fear," he said to fellow journalists. "Watch your backs, but don't back down."

As reports of suspicious packages piled up on Wednesday, many commentators and political observers urged caution and lamented the rush to judgment that many others were making.

Partisans on the left and the right traded barbs, particularly on social media, where the hashtag #MAGABomber was the top trending topic on Twitter in the US. The hashtag's assertion was that the perpetrator supported Trump's "MAGA," or Make America Great Again, message.

Some prominent Trump supporters and far-right online personalities fought back by suggesting, without evidence, that the bombs were sent by a Democratic operative as part of a supposed "false flag" operation. This term refers to crimes committed by one party that are disguised to give the impression that they are committed by another group.

Rush Limbaugh, the conservative talk radio host who reaches millions of listeners each week, said on his Wednesday show that "it doesn't make any sense for a Republican or conservative to do this."

"But flip that! Flip that around. Would it make a lot of sense for a Democrat operative or Democrat-inculcated lunatic to do it?" Limbaugh asked, suggesting to his audience that it would because he argued the Democrats are worried they were ceding ground in the looming midterm elections.

Ann Coulter, the best-selling conservative author, wrote on Twitter that "bombs are a liberal tactic."

And Candace Owens, the communications director for Turning Points USA, a conservative organization

with close ties to the Trump family, wrote in a now-deleted tweet that "the only thing 'suspicious' about these packages, is their timing."

"Caravans, fake bomb threats — these leftists are going ALL OUT for midterms," Owens added.

The incendiary comments about the bomb incidents were not limited to Limbaugh, Coulter, and Owens. To the contrary, the spreading of conspiracy theories was a common theme among individuals on the fringes of the right.

The "false flag" claims were condemned by numerous commentators on cable news.

Numerous news organizations rallied to support CNN.

On Fox News, "Special Report" anchor Bret Baier ended his hour by saying "days like today remind us of the danger that does exist, and has been condemned from all sides. Our thoughts today were with our colleagues at CNN as they were dealing with this real time, and we're very happy everybody's okay."

And Fox News head of human resources Kevin Lord issued an internal memo in which he expressed support for CNN.

"We condemn all attempted acts of violence against media organizations and our thoughts are with CNN for the safety of all of their employees," Lord said in the memo, a copy of which was obtained by The Hollywood Reporter.

Next year's Kumbh Mela set to wear different hues with political overtones

politics, business, tourism and global branding rolled into one, say analysts. Plans are on to promote the event in prominent cities across the world. The Uttar Pradesh tourism department will hold road shows next month in Berlin, Amsterdam, Lisbon, Dublin and Copenhagen, says regional tourism officer Anupam Srivastava. This, in itself, is a departure from the past, going beyond the all too familiar images of khadau (traditional wooden slippers), kamandal (water pot carried by Hindu holy men), kalpvas (a month-long observance of spiritual austerity on the riverbank) and moksha (salvation). The event on the banks of the Sangam (the confluence of the rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati) will have seers discussing religion, businessmen exploring investment avenues and tourists pouring in for spiritual experience as well as to get a feel of real India, say analysts. The mega religious congregation that begins on January 15 and ends on March 4 is expected to draw 120 million pilgrims, twice

the population of the United Kingdom. Kumbh Mela officer Vijay Kiran Anand says preparations are for a global audience and nearly two million foreign nationals are expected to arrive. Special brochures will be published in Spanish, German and French carrying an in-depth history of and information about the Kumbh, Srivastava adds. A special stall will be put up at the World Travel Mart between November 5 and 7 in London. Webcasting of the mela proceedings to 25 countries is on the cards, Anand says. A separate colony for non-resident Indians (NRI) is also on the anvil. The state information department has been allocated a budget of ~50 crore for a mega branding exercise in the print and the electronic media at the national and international levels.

External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj and ambassadors of 192 countries will congregate at the Sangam in the third week of December to ensure a smooth visit for foreign nationals. A two-day NRI meet is scheduled in Varanasi, about 120km

away, and the delegates will visit the Kumbh Mela, staying in luxury tents. Analysts say all this shows that the Modi government at the Centre and the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh are leaving no stone unturned to make the event a global affair, showcasing the vision for a modern, prosperous and forward-looking India, strategically before the 2019 Lok Sabha election. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to visit Allahabad in November to review the final stage of preparations. Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, who is also a full-fledged monk and head of the Gorakhnath temple, visited Allahabad four times from January to May to discuss and review preparations for the Kumbh. Just a few months after assuming office as chief minister, Adityanath sought to enhance the brand identity of the event and announced in mid-2017 that the Ardh Kumbh 2019 will now be known as the Kumbh Mela. The Ardh Kumbh is held every six years and the Kumbh every 12 years.

Major drive against Indians with illegal foreign assets launched by I-T dept; thousands under scanner

In a number of cases, notices have been issued to individuals or other category of taxpayers to explain their transactions, the officials said. A number of these cases involve high-profile and prominent people, while several high-net worth individuals are under the scanner. However, only those cases will face criminal action under the new anti-black money law which have not been reflected before the taxman in the income tax returns (ITRs) or have been done with an intent to evade taxes, they said. The government brought this new law -- The Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act -- in 2015. The new legislation deals with cases of overseas illegal assets, which till recently were probed under the Income Tax Act, 1961. This new legislation has provisions for a steep 120 per cent tax and penalty on undisclosed foreign assets and income, besides a jail term of up to 10 years.

Your kid's health could be affected by your education qualifications

Parental education beyond 12 years is associated with increases in family health care spending and decreases in specific health conditions and poor health status, including hypertension, diabetes, and asthma.

According to a recent study, parents educated beyond high school invest more in family health care, reducing the likelihood of adverse medical conditions despite differences in family income and health insurance. The study that appeared in the *Southern Economic Journal*, was led by Alan Monheit and Irina Grafova, at Rutgers School of Public Health. They examined the association between parental

education and family health care spending in single-mother and two-parent families based on data from the 2004 to 2012 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS). They found that parental education beyond 12 years is associated with increases in family health care spending and decreases in specific health conditions and poor health status, including hypertension, diabetes, and asthma. According to Monheit and Grafova, higher

parental education was associated with increased total health care spending on both children and parents and was also associated with sizable increases on ambulatory care spending for both family types. For instance, compared to single-mother families in which a mother lacks a high school diploma, single-mother families in which a mother is college educated spend an additional \$1,000 annually toward family



ambulatory health care. The study also found that families headed by single mothers who had higher levels of education spent more for prescription drugs and dental care while two-parent families with more education spent more for dental care and mental health services. "Our study confirms the important association between the educational attainment of

parents and the family's access to and use of health care services," said Monheit. The study's findings support the well-established "Grossman model of health demand," in which health is a "good" that is inherited and increased by investments beyond the price of medical care, and depreciates over time as someone's health naturally deteriorates over time.

Smoking marijuana may increase stroke risk

According to the researchers from the University of Toronto, there are over 80 million people currently living with the effects of stroke globally.

If you are smoking marijuana then you are at an increased risk of developing cerebrovascular effects of cannabinoids or stroke, a new study has found. The findings, presented at the World Stroke Congress in Montreal, showed a rise in stroke incidence among marijuana users from 2010-14 while overall stroke prevalence remained stable.

According to the researchers from the University of Toronto,

there are over 80 million people currently living with the effects of stroke globally.

For the study, the team evaluated the use of the drug rivaroxaban versus acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) to prevent strokes in patients with an enlarged left atrium of the heart.

The study examined a total of 2.3 million hospitalisations among people who used marijuana recreationally among which 32,231 had a



stroke including 19,452 with acute ischemic stroke - sudden loss of blood circulation to an area of the brain.

"We are seeing a very intriguing signal here, and it has biological plausibility, but it is going to require independent validation before making any changes to practice recommendations," said

co-author David Gladstone, Associate Professor from the varsity.

The results showed that the rate of stroke of all types among marijuana users increased from 1.3 to 1.5%. In addition, the rate of ischemic stroke increased from 0.7 to 0.9%, the team said. During the five-year period, the

prevalence of stroke among all patients was stable, findings revealed, they added.

The researchers concluded that these growing trends of stroke among marijuana users "warrant further prospective studies to evaluate the marijuana-stroke association amidst legalisation of recreational use."

Shrinking families helped India grow in 1980s-90s

India's family size has steadily declined and continues to — from 5.2 children per family in 1971 to 2.3 in 2016, which means the family size itself has fallen from 7.2 to 4.3.

The shrinking size of families in India contributed to India's economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s, a United Nations report has found.

India's family size has steadily declined and continues to — from 5.2 children per family in 1971 to 2.3 in 2016, which means the family size itself has fallen from 7.2 to 4.3.

It isn't just India; shrinking family sizes contributed to Asia's economic miracle in the 1980s and 1990s, including in China, according to the State of the World Population Report 2018 by the United Nations Population

Fund (UNFPA).

Still, India deserves special mention because it has, along with Bangladesh, El Salvador, Nepal, Myanmar and Nicaragua, fertility rates that are near replacement level, despite having lower per capita incomes than other countries with replacement-level fertility (or the total fertility rate — the average number of children born per woman — at which a population merely replaces itself from one generation to the next).

"In most other parts of the world, such low fertility is achieved only India's population has doubled

since 1971, from 566 million to 1.35 billion in 2016. The total fertility rate in urban India has already fallen below replacement levels of 2.1.

But wide disparities remain between states and within districts within states. "Although average total fertility for the whole country is 2.3 births per woman, it is above 3 in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, and below replacement level in Maharashtra and West Bengal, and the four southernmost states," said the report.

What's common across regions, however, is that women across all sections of society, irrespective of wealth, education and urban or rural areas, are having fewer children than ever before.

"Though some groups are ahead of the others, families have become smaller across all sections of society," said Shailaja Chandra, former executive director, Jansankhya Sthirata Kosh (population stabilisation fund). Like in Bangladesh and Indonesia in the 1970s and 1980s, fertility declined in India

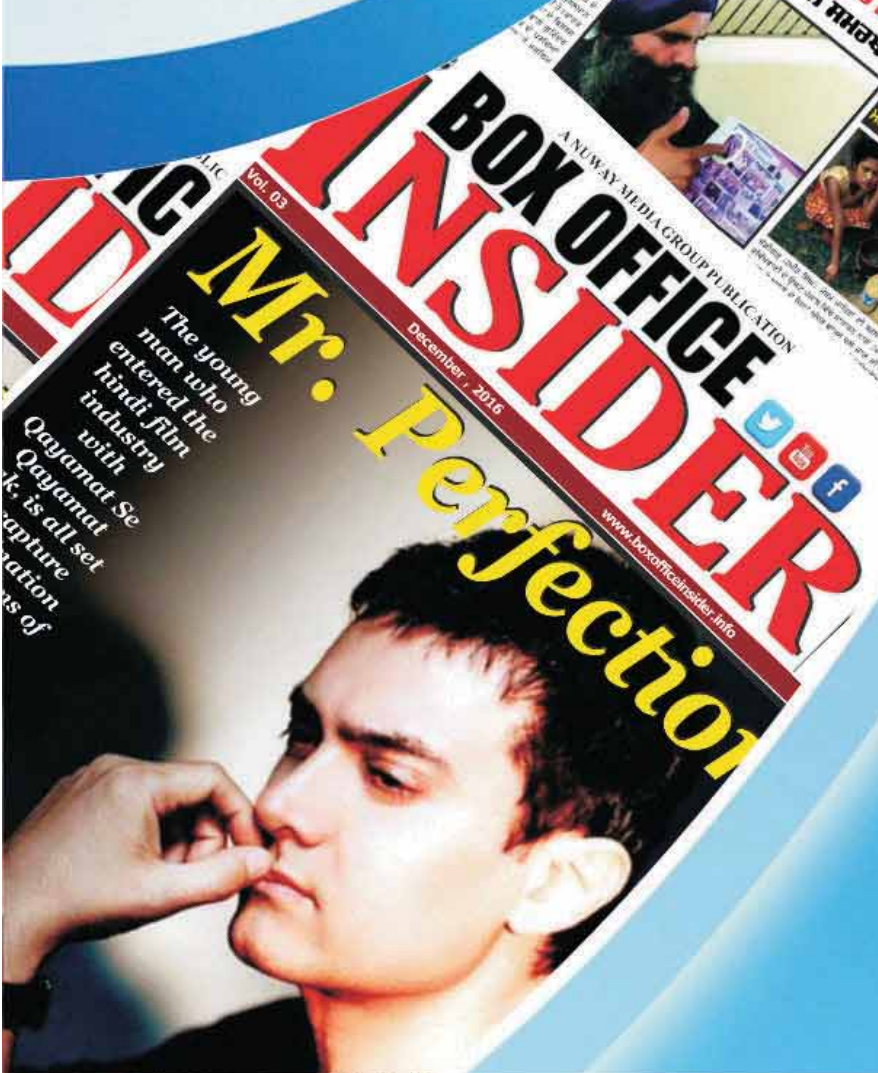
even in poor, rural areas when more women gained access to modern methods of contraception under government-run campaigns and improved availability of contraceptives services, including methods to space children.

"What India got right was increasing institutional deliveries and providing reversible contraceptive services at the health centre after counselling to women after they had delivered their baby, so a woman could choose when and how many children she wanted to have," said Chandra.





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Super Typhoon Yutu hits Northern Mariana Islands, heads toward Asia

(CNN)Super Typhoon Yutu slammed into the US territory of the Northern Mariana Islands Wednesday night, destroying homes and cutting power and water to thousands of residents. The storm strengthened into the equivalent of a Category 5 hurricane with sustained wind speeds of 280 kph (174 mph) before hitting the islands, and is now tracking northwest toward the Philippines and Taiwan. Yutu is the strongest storm on record to hit the remote island

communities of Saipan and Tinian, the largest of the Mariana Islands, home to about 55,000 people. It's also one of the strongest storms to ever hit a US territory, and one of the strongest tropical cyclones on the planet this year. "Tinian has been devastated by Typhoon Yutu," Mayor of Tinian and Aguigan, Joey Patrick San Nicolas, said in a video posted to Facebook. "Many homes have been destroyed, our critical infrastructure has been

compromised. We currently have no power and water at this time." Several areas of the island, which has a population of about 3,500, are inaccessible, and authorities are yet to complete a preliminary assessment of the damage. Heavy machinery has been deployed to clear debris from roads so first responders can reach people cut off by the storm. "Tinian has been destroyed by Typhoon Yutu, but our spirits have not," the mayor's office said. Commonwealth of

Northern Mariana Islands authorities issued a weather warning late Wednesday, cautioning residents on Saipan and Tinian that storm surges "pose life-threatening risk for those living along the coast." Surges of five to seven feet were recorded for those islands. As of 9 a.m. local time, the storm had passed over the islands but Saipan and Tinian will continue to experience damaging winds into the evening, authorities said in an updated briefing Thursday.

China wants to stop buying American soybeans entirely

Hong Kong (CNN Business)First, Beijing slapped tariffs on American soybeans. Now, it wants to wean its farmers off them altogether. China has been facing a potential soybean shortage after it put a new 25% tariff on importing them from the United States in July, part of the escalating trade war between the two countries. China may soon regret slapping tariffs on US soybeans China may soon regret slapping tariffs on US soybeans China is the world's biggest buyer of soybeans, using them as a protein-rich feed for livestock such as pigs and chickens. More than a third of its supply comes from the United States. Beijing's solution to get by without US beans? Give the animals less to eat. One of the country's top

industry groups this month proposed cutting the amount of protein used in livestock feeds, saying animals could get by with less than is required at the moment. The government-run China Feed Industry Association said a reliance on imported soybeans is creating a "bottleneck" for the country's farming industry. But getting millions of Chinese farmers to reduce the amount of foreign soybeans eaten by their pigs is a daunting task that is likely to take a long time to carry out and could cause disruption throughout the country's agricultural industry. The plan would inflict further pain on US farmers already smarting from the tariffs and could eventually mean China no longer needs American soybeans at all. "It's directly linked to the US-China trade war," said Loren

Puette, the director of research firm ChinaAg in Taiwan. "The implication is that China will completely halt all future imports of US soybeans." Threat to US farmers China has alternative soybean sources, the biggest is Brazil, but they don't produce enough to replace its imports from the United States. "Sourcing soybeans from a bunch of trade partners is both expensive and inefficient," said Even Pay, a Beijing-based agriculture analyst at research firm China Policy. "Companies are looking for cheaper, alternative sources of protein." Some local Chinese governments are encouraging farmers to grow soybeans instead of other crops, but analysts say China is a long way from being able to produce anywhere near enough to meet its own needs.

GOP alarmed Obamacare attacks could cost them the House



For weeks, vulnerable Rep. Glenn Grothman had been getting pummeled by his Democratic opponent for voting to curb protections for people with pre-existing conditions — most recently with an attack ad

depicting a little boy with an oxygen mask over his face gasping for air. So on a conference call with GOP leaders last week, Grothman pleaded with party leaders to invest in a nationwide TV ad that could run in competitive districts like his, defending the House GOP's Obamacare repeal bill that passed the chamber last year, according to three sources on the call. Republicans who backed it. Toxic and ubiquitous: Democrats have maintained an almost single-minded focus on health care in their campaign messaging. More than 54 percent of pro-Democratic campaign ads in federal races mentioned the issue between mid-September and mid-October, according to a recent study by Wesleyan University's Media Project. Data provided by Advertising Analytics shows that Democratic candidates and left-leaning outside groups have spent \$90.3 million on health care ads this cycle. That's 43 percent of the total \$209.1 million they've spent on TV ads. Republicans have tried to fend off the attacks by accusing Democrats of lying — and by trying to claim that they're the ones who want to protect insurance safeguards for the infirm. In a Tuesday morning tweet, President Donald Trump wrote that "Republicans will totally protect people with Pre-Existing Conditions, Democrats will not! Vote Republican." But those claims ring hollow given what Republicans voted for last year.

New York sues Exxon Mobil over climate change

New York Attorney General Barbara Underwood sued Exxon Mobil on Wednesday, alleging the oil and gas giant lied to the public and investors about the risks climate change posed to the company. The lawsuit follows an investigation by the attorneys general for New York, Massachusetts and the U.S. Virgin Islands into Exxon's own research into climate change, and whether the company failed to properly warn investors about how potential government regulations on climate change could prevent it from developing its oil and gas reserves. "Investors put their money and their trust in Exxon — which assured them of the long-term value of their shares, as the company claimed to be factoring the risk of increasing climate change regulation into its

business decisions. Yet as our investigation found, Exxon often did no such thing," Underwood said in a statement. "Instead, Exxon built a facade to deceive investors into believing that the company was managing the risks of climate change regulation to its business when, in fact, it was intentionally and systematically underestimating or ignoring them, contrary to its public representations." The fraud alleged in Wednesday's suit reached the highest levels of Exxon management, including former Chairman and CEO Rex Tillerson, Underwood said in a tweet. Exxon denied the allegations in the lawsuit, saying in a statement that New York was doubling down on a "its tainted, meritless investigation" into the company. Company spokesman

Scott Silvestri also criticized the case as the "product of closed-door lobbying by special interests, political opportunism and the attorney general's inability to admit that a three-year investigation has uncovered no wrongdoing. The basis for the lawsuit rests on the idea of "stranded assets," and whether companies will be forced to leave oil, natural gas and coal in the ground because of tightening regulations around greenhouse gases. That notion has gained currency in some investing circles, and some analysts have grown concerned about whether fossil fuel companies will remain viable in the coming years given the potential for carbon-constraining climate policies. The lawsuit alleges Exxon told investors it uses a "proxy cost" to price carbon pollution and to assess the effect of carbon regulation on its business, but that the company actually "applied much lower proxy costs or no proxy cost at all," Underwood's office said in a statement.



Trump has whipped up a frenzy on the migrant caravan. Here are the facts.

Such caravans are nothing new and annual border crossings are not high by historic standards.

President Donald Trump's remarks in recent days about a caravan of Central American migrants heading toward the United States have stirred up a political frenzy — in the process distorting reality and ignoring basic facts. Such caravans are nothing new — a smaller one formed last spring, and similar caravans have been organized regularly for the past two decades. There's no evidence that the caravan includes Middle Easterners, much less terrorists, as the president has suggested, and annual border crossings remain low by the standards of recent history. Amid this blizzard of assertions, basic facts about the caravan and about illegal migration into the U.S. are being contradicted or obscured. Here are a few answers to some elementary questions:

1. Who organized or caused the caravan?

Bartolo Fuentes, an activist and former Honduran lawmaker, initially organized it. In an Oct. 4 Facebook post, he shared a graphic promoting a "Caminata del Migrante" ("Migrant March"). The graphic told migrants and protesters to gather on Oct. 12 at a bus station in San Pedro Sula, one of the most violent cities in the world. "We don't leave because we want to, violence and poverty chases us out," it said. Trump has tweeted that the caravan is a result of "pathetic Immigration Laws" that Democrats refuse to change. But Trump-backed immigration bills that would toughen asylum standards and fund a border wall made no progress this year in the Senate or the House, despite both being controlled by Republicans. It's unclear whether the measures backed by the White House would discourage migration from poverty- and violence-ridden countries such as Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) tweeted an unverified video clip last week that showed a man distributing money to people with backpacks who appeared to be migrants. Gaetz suggested — citing no evidence — that billionaire philanthropist George Soros was behind the cash payout. Trump later tweeted the same video, but mentioned Democrats, not Soros.

2. Is this the biggest migratory caravan on record?

According to an estimate by the Los Angeles Times, the migrant caravan swelled to more than 7,000 people in recent days. Other estimates have placed it in the thousands, and the numbers



appear to be in flux. Caravans from Honduras have occurred since the late 1990s, but this appears to be the biggest, according to Andrew Selee, president of the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute. The effort — partly a practical strategy for migrants to travel safely and partly a public protest — gained little attention in the U.S. until this spring, when Trump drew attention to a group of more than 1,000 migrants who left Honduras en route to the U.S. Mass migration in itself — even from Central America — is nothing new. Hundreds of thousands of Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans fled north to the U.S. and Mexico in the 1980s as those nations experienced brutal civil wars.

3. Are border crossings at record levels?

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said this week that a "record number of migrants" have arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border this year. That's not true. Border Patrol arrested roughly 397,000 migrants in fiscal year 2018, a figure far lower than the arrest levels in the 1990s and early 2000s, when arrests frequently exceeded one million. Arrests dropped to their lowest level in decades during Trump's first year in office. During the past fiscal year they've increased, approximating levels from fiscal 2009 to 2016. Border Patrol arrested a yearly average of roughly 413,000 people at the southwest border. One statistic has reached historic levels: The number of family members arrested at the U.S.-Mexico border rose to roughly 16,658 in September, the most recorded in a

single month since Border Patrol began compiling records of families in fiscal year 2012. But a September 2017 report by the Homeland Security Department that examined available data found that the southwest border "is more difficult to illegally cross today than ever." Seth Stodder, a former DHS assistant secretary under President Barack Obama, said illegal immigration from Central America isn't nearly as intense as what occurred with Cubans and Haitians fleeing in boats in the 1980s and 1990s. "It's more like a dripping faucet than a rushing tide," he said.

4. What's the principal reason migrants are traveling to the U.S.?

Experts cite violence, poverty and family connections in the U.S. as the primary forces driving migrants from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador — as well as the possibility they might be able to remain once they arrive.

5. Are there MS-13 members in the caravan? Are there Middle Easterners in the caravan?

President Trump had claimed there are "some very bad people" in the caravan, and late Tuesday afternoon a spokesman for the Department of Homeland Security tweeted that the agency "can confirm that there are individuals within the caravan who are gang members or have significant criminal histories." Previously, DHS had declined to comment specifically on whether criminals were in the caravan. "Go into the middle of the caravans, take your cameras ... you're going to find MS-13," Trump told reporters Monday night. But DHS did not state that the criminals in ques-

tion belonged to MS-13.

Similarly, Trump said people from the Middle East had joined the group, but he walked back that claim on Tuesday. "There's no proof of anything. But there could very well be," he told reporters in the Oval Office. A Homeland Security Department spokeswoman said earlier this week that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection in fiscal year 2018 arrested more than 17,000 convicted criminals and 3,000 "special interest aliens" — a broad term that includes many countries around the world, including Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Somalia (DHS does not disclose the full list of countries).

6. Trump wants to cut aid to Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador for allowing the caravan to happen. Why? Trump has threatened to slash aid to the three countries for their failure to halt migrants heading north. The pressure on Honduras and Guatemala makes some sense — the migrants passed through those countries before heading to Mexico — but including El Salvador, the southernmost of the three, does not. These countries of the so-called Northern Triangle are some of the poorest in the hemisphere and struggle to provide basic security and social services for citizens. Gross Domestic Product per capita in the United States was roughly \$59,532 in 2017. By comparison, per capita GDP that year in Honduras was \$2,480.13; in Guatemala, \$4,471, and in El Salvador \$3,889, according to World Bank data. To stem the flow of migrants, the Obama administration boosted aid to the Northern Triangle, but that's been steadily

dropping. The aid totaled \$700 million in fiscal year 2017, but the White House has already proposed slashing that to \$435 million in the coming year.

7. There was an earlier caravan last spring. What happened to the people in that caravan?

A migrant caravan that left Honduras in March attracted more than 1,000 people during a month-long march to the U.S. border. But not all those members approached the border together. The Associated Press reported in May that 100 Central Americans sought asylum at a border crossing near San Diego — a fraction of the original group. The Homeland Security Department said roughly 400 people who identified as caravan members entered the U.S.

8. What will a caravan member have to demonstrate to be admitted to the U.S. as an asylum seeker? A person who enters the U.S. without authorization and seeks asylum must prove he or she has "credible fear" of persecution in his or her home country. The test is the first step in an asylum claim and could allow a migrant to remain in the U.S. pending a court date. Of the roughly 400 people who said they were part of the caravan this spring, more than 90 percent passed a credible fear screening, according to a DHS spokeswoman.

9. How will the migrants be greeted at the border by the US government?

Trump has threatened to send the military to the border and shut it down before the migrants can enter. The president already ordered up to 4,000 National Guard troops to the border in the spring (roughly 2,100 are currently deployed), but there's nothing they can do to discourage asylum seekers. In many cases, families surrender themselves at the border and claim asylum, which means more enforcement power won't stop them. When last spring's caravan reached the San Ysidro port of entry near San Diego in late April, U.S. Customs and Border Protection "metered" the flow of people who could seek asylum. CBP officers permitted only small numbers of asylum seekers to enter for processing each day, leaving dozens of families waiting in Mexico for days. A September report by the Homeland Security Department inspector general's office found the practice of metering — which CBP contends prevents overcrowding and related hazards — could actually encourage more illegal crossings.

Kraft Heinz to sell part of India business for about \$630 million

The Kraft Heinz assets that had a network of over 800 distributors in 29 states reported revenue of about Rs 11.50 billion for the 12 months ending June, Zydus noted, adding that the deal will push Zydus' annual revenue to Rs 17 billion.



Kraft Heinz Co will sell part of its Indian business, including brands such as malt-based drink Complian and energy drink

Glucon-D, for 45.95 billion (\$627.18 million), at a time when Indian consumers are demanding healthier, sugar-free alternatives. Indian pharmaceutical and consumer products company Zydus Wellness Ltd and its parent Cadila Healthcare Ltd will jointly buy the assets to expand their portfolio to also include brands such as talcum powder Nycil and clarified butter, Sampriti Ghee, the companies said in a statement on Wednesday. Complian, along with GlaxoSmithKline's

health drinks brands Horlicks, was very popular until about a decade ago, when consumers used these products for supplemental nutrition along with milk. Their popularity has since waned, with sales growth slipping, as consumers grew wary of the sugar content in these products and the health claims made by these brands. "The sale of this niche business fits into our overall global growth strategy and our focus on investing in and growing brands

within our core categories," Kraft Heinz Chief Executive Bernardo Hees said in a statement. Glaxo's Horlicks is also up for sale and sources told Reuters last month that Nestle, Unilever, and Coca-Cola are among the bidders for the business that could fetch more than \$4 billion. Tater Tots-maker Kraft Heinz, which will also sell two manufacturing facilities as part of the deal, said on Wednesday it will continue to grow its Heinz sauces

and other Kraft businesses in India. The deal value includes net working capital of Rs 400 million and cash of Rs 150 million, but does not assume any debt, Zydus said in a statement on Wednesday. The deal will give Zydus, majority owned by Cadila, a chance to leverage its position in the health-food and nutrition segment. The company, which owns sugar substitute Sugar Free, had bought premium healthy fat spread Nutralite in 2006.

How to travel the new, \$800 billion Silk Road

The series of once-legendary pathways connecting cities, from Kashgar to Paro to Constantinople, which originated at the dawn of the common era and collapsed with the fall of the Mongol empire, is now being reborn as a network of highways, railways, and airports linking 65 countries.



Thanks to more than a trillion dollars of prospective investment—led by China's \$800 billion Belt and Road Initiative linking countries stretching between East Asia and Europe—the Silk Road is rising again. The series of once-legendary pathways connecting cities, from Kashgar to Paro to Constantinople, which originated at the dawn of the common era and collapsed with the fall of the Mongol empire in the early 16th century, is now being reborn as a network of highways, railways, and airports linking 65 countries. Add improved safety and easier-to-access visas, and the bazaar-filled cities of Central Asia are more accessible than ever. For travelers, this means a wealth of new destinations to explore—some sprung from deserts overnight and others that have for too long been left off tourist maps. Uzbekistan is reporting a 40 percent year-on-year rise in tourism; Baku, Azerbaijan, has also awakened from its post-Soviet slumber to rank among the fastest-growing tourism destinations in Europe and Central Asia. The growth had been simmering for years; now it's boiling hot. According to Jonny Bealby, founder of luxury travel outfit Wild Frontiers, the region is also

emerging in response to "people looking further and further afield to see places that are more authentic, less spoiled, and less on the beaten track." His company is just one of several tour operators—including Ker and Downey, Abercrombie and Kent, and Remote Lands—helping travellers

realise a suddenly buzzy fantasy of travelling the Silk Road. But completing that journey end-to-end can take anywhere from six weeks to three months. Here, a few locations to prioritize if your vacation days aren't quite that plentiful.

For Food Lovers: Xi'an, China
The heart of the original Silk Road was inarguably the central Chinese city of Chang'an, or modern-day Xi'an. In the eighth century, it was the largest and most cosmopolitan city in the world—a beacon for traders from all corners of Asia. Now an international trade hub with 12 million residents, Xi'an is reclaiming its former glory as the eastern terminus of the Belt and Road—perhaps no surprise, considering it's the hometown of President Xi Jinping

Paytm Payments Bank names Satish Kumar Gupta as MD, CEO

Gupta brings over 35 years of leadership experience to Paytm Payments Bank, with prior senior roles at SBI and NPCI

Paytm Payments Bank Thursday announced the appointment of Satish Kumar Gupta as its managing director and CEO. Gupta brings over 35 years of leadership experience to Paytm Payments Bank, with prior senior roles at SBI and NPCI, the company said in a statement.

Speaking on the appointment, Paytm's Founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma said: "...Gupta comes with over 35 years of experience in the field of Banking & I am extremely delighted to welcome him as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Paytm Payments Bank. His expertise will help us realise the vision that we have set out for our Payments Bank".



Jet Airways seeks loan moratorium to ease cash crunch

The moves show India's biggest full-service carrier -- unprofitable in nine of the past 11 years -- is struggling for survival as two-cent fares in one of the world's most expensive places to buy jet fuel negate the gains from a surge in domestic passenger numbers.

Jet Airways India Ltd. has approached banks for a moratorium on loans and asked for fresh funds to ease a cash crunch, according to people with direct knowledge of the matter, adding to signs the carrier is sliding deeper into trouble. The airline has already grounded about a dozen planes as part of a review of its network aimed at reducing unprofitable domestic routes, said one of the people, who asked not to be identified because the plans aren't public. The Mumbai-based carrier is also studying laying off more employees in non-core areas, the person said. The moves show India's biggest full-service carrier -- unprofitable in nine of the past 11 years -- is struggling for survival as two-cent

fares in one of the world's most expensive places to buy jet fuel negate the gains from a surge in domestic passenger numbers. Indian banks, having suffered setbacks from lending previously to failed Kingfisher Airlines, had earlier rebuffed Jet Airways with their reluctance to extend additional loans to the company. The carrier is continuously evaluating commercial viability of its operations and will make announcements on specific measures, spokesman for the company said in an emailed statement. "The board approved turnaround strategy is under implementation. The strategy encompasses various cost-reduction and revenue enhancement initiatives including working on restructuring of our balance sheet via debt-reduction, streamlining cash flows, payroll optimization, exploring funding options such as capital infusion, monetization of company's stake in its loyalty program, and several other measures, to realize higher productivity and operational efficiencies," the company said in the statement "The board approved turnaround strategy is under implementation. The strategy encompasses various cost-reduction and revenue enhancement initiatives including working on restructuring of our balance sheet via debt-reduction, streamlining cash flows, payroll optimization, exploring funding options such as capital infusion, monetization of company's stake in its loyalty program, and several other measures, to realize higher productivity and operational efficiencies," the company said in the statement.

Bridal mehendi now spells the love story

Pre-bridal shoots showcasing couple's love story is passé, and so is playing AV at the venue. The new-age brides are now incorporating their love stories in their mehendi designs.

Great love stories ought to be told. And if you have had one such amazing one, what's a better day than your wedding to tell all your family and friends about it. Pre-bridal shoots showcasing such stories is passé, even playing AV at the venue has made way to brides embroidering their love stories on the lehenga, such as designer Kresha Bajaj who had embroidered it on her bridal lehenga in 2016. Cut to 2018: the brides are now

tattooing the love stories with their henna tattoos or mehendi. The wedding mehendi is becoming a medium to tell where it all started, where and how the proposal took place and even some of the favourite food and places the couple is fond of.

Actor Yuvika Chaudhary, who got proposed by Prince Narula on a reality show with a heart-shaped parantha, got the moment incorporated in her bridal mehendi. Even actor Shweta Tripathi had the elements of her

journey with her partner, actor-rapper Chaitanya Sharma, in her mehendi design. She says, "I had a rollercoaster added to my mehendi, because he had asked me out, five years ago, at an amusement park. It also symbolises our relationship as we love adventures. Then there were theatre masks, as we both are actors; a football because that's his first love; along with a few elements from our invitation card, and designs from our wedding outfits." A Mumbai-



based fashion blogger Masoom Minawala also customised her bridal mehendi. She says, "I wanted it to describe our love story. So I got a London Eye in my design, because that's where my now-husband proposed to me, when we started dating; and a Mumbai skyline as he proposed to me for marriage there." Brides in the Capital are also lapping up the idea. Niharika

Jain, a Gurugram resident, incorporated sketches of a globe, an aeroplane and tiny hearts, for a package of Rs 35,000. She says, "As a couple we keep travelling; and hearts because we don't fight on our trips." She also adds, "I also got the logo of my husband's wedding photography company included, for I have seen it from inception and has seen it grow so big."

Can weight loss surgery prevent womb cancer?

Online dating may seem like the norm with modern relationships, but that's not the case. Here's how some millennials find dates offline. You may be able to relate, or you may get ideas on new places to meet people.

Weight loss surgery for obese women could prevent womb cancer, suggests a study.

The research, led by University of Manchester and Salford Royal scientists, is published in the International journal of Cancer.

The study found that the precancerous tissue - in the womb of women who had gastric sleeve or bypass surgery for obesity - reverted to normal tissue when they lost weight.

Doctors have long known that womb cancer is caused by obesity, however, until now, the effect of losing weight on precancerous changes in the womb has been poorly studied. Seventy-two women with an average BMI of over 50 - considered to be super obese - had biopsies taken from their wombs during gastric sleeve or bypass surgery.

Of the 72, four were found to have womb cancer, which was treated by hysterectomy. A further six patients had atypical endometrial hyperplasia, a precancerous condition that causes the overgrowth of cells in the womb.

Of the six women with endometrial hyperplasia, three had no signs of the condition when re-tested at eight weeks, after losing around three stone in weight.

The remaining three were treated by a Mirena coil, which releases the hormone progesterone into the womb and reverses precancerous changes. Two were shown to be free of the condition after six months.

Six monthly checks over four years revealed the precancerous tissue did not return for these five women; the last had a hysterectomy.

The remaining 62 women had normal womb tissue at the time of weight loss surgery, but it was high risk for an abnormality, with fast growing cells, cancer-causing pathways switched on and cancer-stopping pathways switched off.

By twelve months after surgery, when the women had lost around seven stone in weight, the high risk changes had reversed.

Dr Emma Crosbie, lead author of the study, said: "We know that super obese women are at much higher risk of womb cancer than normal weight women. But we didn't expect such a high proportion of women having treatment for their obesity to have womb cancer and pre-cancer they didn't know about."

"Thanks to this study, we now know that helping obese women to lose weight can reverse pre-



cancerous tissue changes. It's clear that for super obese women, quick access to weight loss surgery has benefits beyond improving diabetes and risk of heart disease. It can also reduce womb cancer risk."

"Losing weight through dieting is also likely to be effective, but we know that dieting is very hard to do and weight lost is often regained."

Obese post-menopausal women produce oestrogen from their fat stores. But as they no longer ovulate, the lack of progesterone allows the cells in the womb to grow - which increases the risk of cancer.

Inflammatory responses and insulin production are also changed in obese women and can cause cells in the womb to

grow.

"Because the reversal of precancerous changes in the womb was so quick, we think the metabolic consequences of weight loss surgery was crucial," explained Dr Crosbie.

She added: "Not that weight loss surgery is an easy choice. It changes your relationship with food forever, as you'll be eating smaller meals more frequently, and it is important to remember that surgery can be a hazardous procedure.

"That's why it's not for everyone: only about a third of women choose the surgical option. But for those that choose it, gastric sleeve or bypass surgery can now be seen as a preventative measure for womb cancer."



Cycling, walking in nature may improve your mental health



People who commute - walking or cycling - through natural environments are more likely to develop better mental health than those who commute less, according to a new study. Natural environments included all public and private outdoor spaces that contain 'green' and/or 'blue' natural elements such as street trees, forests, city parks and natural parks/reserves and all types of water bodies. "Mental health and physical inactivity are two of the main public health problems associated with the life in urban environments. Urban design could be a powerful tool to confront these challenges and create healthier cities. One way of doing so would be investing in natural commuting routes for cycling and walking," said Mark Nieuwenhuijsen from the University of Barcelona. For the study, published in the journal, Environment International, the research team examined nearly 3,600 participants who answered a questionnaire about their commuting habits and their mental health. The findings showed that respondents commuting through natural environments on a daily basis had on average a 2.74 point higher mental health score compared to those who commuted through natural environments less frequently.

Karwa Chauth gifts for her, 10 last-minute presents that women love

With Karwa Chauth right almost here, you may be feeling a bit of pressure to gift your wife something special. Or, maybe you want to impress a certain someone so they can someday become your wife. Or, perhaps you just want to get something cool for someone you care about, because you know they'll celebrate Karwa Chauth on October 27, Saturday.

No matter what your reasoning, we've come up with 10 unique and romantic gifting ideas for Karwa Chauth, because hey — maybe we're over red roses and chocolate. From very special jewellery to personalised decor items, these

gifts are sure to wow. Zodiac necklace: If she swears by her sign, give her a way to show it off every day.

Personalised mug: Remind her that you love her every day; when she fills this up with her morning coffee, she'll think of you.

Aromatherapy bath set: Filled with essential oils and soaps, it makes for the perfect bath and is sure to help her relax and unwind.

Pablo Neruda's Love Poems: There are few poets more romantic than Neruda. Why not gift some literary love?

Heart pillow: Tell her she gives up her heart the warm and fuzzies by



giving her a warm and fuzzy heart. Custom quote print: Inside jokes? Favourite quotes? Give her something special with a thoughtful print. How cool is this idea?

Decorative light: If she is looking to up her decor game, why not treat her to a hypnotising LED neon light.

Laddoos for your skin? 5 Beauty hacks you probably didn't know!

These crazy hacks are scathing imaginations this season

It's that time of the year again when salon bookings are more difficult to procure than a last-minute visa to your favourite holiday destination. But what if you got parlour-like services from ingredients in your kitchen or puja thali? No kidding! You can actually glow like a goddess by incorporating marigold flowers, dried fruits and more in your beauty regimen!

Marigold flowers

These orange flowers used in pujas double as excellent blemish

removers. "Just grind the flowers in a mixer along with some milk, add 1 tsp oatmeal to the paste and leave it on your face and neck. Wash off after five to seven minutes and see your skin transform!" says beauty expert Suparna Trikha Dewan.

Best for: Reducing dryness, blemishes and dull and patchy skin.

Skin laddoos

Wondering what to do with excess stock of dry fruits before they turn bitter post Diwali? Just make laddoos out of them, not to be had as dessert



Pre-wedding fashion

25 unusual ideas to give traditional Indian a contemporary twist



Wedding wear has gone through a seismic shift. We're no longer looking at vermilion reds and rani pinks as the go-to colour for brides. Not only can you style your high-street pieces like a crisp white shirt or a belt with your wedding wear but also look at monochromes to give your attire a classic touch. Who would've thought?

2 ways to make white your wedding colour

Monochromatic colours are in at

the moment. Besides, white and off-white look beautiful on Indian skin, so the desi bride too must not shy away from white on her big day. Tarun Tahiliani tells you how: A dalliance with drapes: Plain draping can work wonders when it comes to white bridal wear. So, a draped lehenga with a corset and an attached dupatta is ideal. Toast to textures: A traditional lehenga with lots of kalis and gold gota works well too. You could also go for

appliqué in the form of tone-on-tone flowers. Classic embroideries in white like Chikan and resham look beautiful in bridal wear.

4 ways to ace your D-day in a gown

Unconventional wedding dresses is a scary thought for most brides. But breaking away from wedding traditions can be fun. Execute this fab trend in these cool ways, says designer Amy Billimoria

1. Opt for tops that create optical illusion and nude underlays. The key is finding a balance. Keep it safe by choosing one over the other, or release your inner daredevil and go all in!

2. Going for a gown in sheer fabric provides a variety of options for your bridesmaids as well. If you're going for a tank-style gown with delicate lace atop illusion fabric, try finding a fabulous bridesmaid gown to complement it!

3. If you wish to flaunt your curves, choose a sheer couture gown in a nude or a pastel shade.

4. Go minimalistic on the accessories.

but to exfoliate your skin! "Take 100g almond and walnut powder and 50g crushed raisins, knead into little roundels using milk, and store in the fridge," recommends Suparna. To use these, after cleansing the face take one skin laddoo and crush it to form a paste using bit of milk. Leave on for five minutes, dab with milk and scrub off. "It's as good as a one-hour facial," adds Suparna. Best for: Exfoliating, softening and de-tanning.

Moringa and wheatgrass

If your skin and hair is growing duller by the day, mix one tablespoon each of moringa and wheatgrass powder in warm water and drink it in the morning, says beauty expert and author Vasudha Rai. "To make this more potent, add some grated amla to it," she adds. Best for: Dull skin and hair

Castor, almond and avocado oil

For those losing sleep over a receding hairline, and thinning brows and lashes this simple hack will be easy to crack! Mix 50ml each of almond, olive and avocado oil. Store this in a bottle and apply it with an old and washed mascara wand before going to sleep. "Castor oil thickens hair, almond oil is rich in vitamin E, while avocado oil has great nourishing properties," explains Suparna. Best for: Hair loss and renewal.

What Deepika Padukone's wedding lehenga or saree may look like

What will Deepika Padukone's wedding dress look like? Who's the designer? Well, we have some ideas...



The date is set and all the details are seemingly falling into place for Padmaavat actors Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh's destination wedding. After Anand Ahuja and Sonam Kapoor's wedding in May, the second big celebrity wedding of the year is fast approaching and on the top of our list of questions, is what will Deepika wear as she marries Ranveer?

Like Sonam before her, the secrecy behind Deepika's wedding outfit has us wondering what type of look the actor will choose for her big day. Deepika is well-known for her fashion sense, and while we think she might keep up with some tradition, like going for the bridal classic red — we can't wait to see how experimental she gets with her trousseau choices.

The big question on our minds is who will be designing her wedding outfits for all the functions to take place during 14-15 November. We know Deepika will be looking for a perfectly bridal wedding lehenga or saree, and bets are on all of the big names in Indian fashion. Can Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Manish Malhotra, Raw Mango's Sanjay Garg, Anamika Khanna and Rimple and Harpreet Narula be the would-be wedding dress designers for Deepika? She

has worn Sabyasachi on multiple special occasions, after all. Another Kolkata-based fashion designer, Anamika, is also a strong front-runner for Deepika's wedding day outfit — she showed she can mix sexy and elevated with Deepika's ivory saree at TIME's 100 Most Influential People Gala in New York. While the wedding dress designer is still up in the air, one thing we can count on is definitely quite a bit of colour. Deepika posted a photo to her Instagram from Cannes Film Festival 2018, captioned "dreams really do come true..." The image showed her in a sculptural fuchsia pink gown from Ashi Studio's spring summer 2018 couture collection that feels like a nod to what we can expect Deepika to wear for her wedding festivities. Deepika's famous for her whimsical style so we can expect her wedding style to be larger-than-life, and possibly even a little rule breaking. So, will Deepika opt for an opulent A-line silhouette and off-the-shoulder cut or a style featuring stunning floral

embroidery and heavy train? Do you think the stunning bride-to-be will end up wearing something similar to these wedding lehengas or sarees come November 14 and 15? We can't wait to see. We think she'll steer far away from any Sabyasachi lehenga that can offer an Anushka Sharma comparison. But if Deepika goes for all-over embroidery, a rich burgundy or red lehenga might make her bridal look feel distinct. She loves floral patterns, so a 3-D floral embroidery would feel like a good fit. Making a style statement with an ultra-romantic Manish Malhotra lehenga and its over-the-top puffy sleeves, would be so much fun. If wearing traditional red or pink isn't what Deepika has in mind, a dreamy, soft ash shade like this could be a subtle but super chic alternative. This glitzy gold lehenga set from Rimple and Harpreet Narula, the designing duo behind the breathtaking costumes in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's period drama Padmaavat, feels perfectly bridal, while bringing personality and individual style to the forefront.

Latest Nail Art trends that you need to know about

Nail art is directly related to the concept of femininity. Each new design or the latest in-trend shade on the nails adds a lot more to your complete look. Besides, there's not just the art or design that might be appealing for some. There's a growing trend of wearing piercing on the nails too.



The nail care industry has been bullish since the invention of the first nail polish. With colours and styles so fascinating, it was only a matter of time until ones talons were as important as the fancy bag, shoes, and makeup. Nail art is directly related to the concept of femininity. Each new

design or the latest in-trend shade on the nails adds a lot more to your complete look. Besides, there's not just the art or design that might be appealing for some. There's a growing trend of wearing piercing on the nails too. Then, there's the simple and elegant French manicure which

exudes elegance or the Gothic black nail paint that exudes rebellion and aggression. In the year 2012, a nail art documentary called NAILgasm was released that explored the growing trend of nail art, amongst women across the world, on high fashion runways or outside.

Interestingly, nail art is not just limited to women, men too have been using social media platforms like Instagram and Pinterest to stay abreast with the latest trend that they can try at home. It might be easier to have a professional work your nails, but DIY hacks are an easy winner for the world at large. This shift by and large happened in the early 2000s when men had begun understanding that investing in themselves and their appearance was as imperative as how women carried themselves.

The nail art trends that stood out on and off the runway in 2018 include a wide spectrum of designs. From nails painted in solid colours like white or red, the tips have been painted with a feathery touch in a contrasting shade like black or blue to acrylic

nail paint with gel coat to nail jewellery. We've also noticed trends like black nail paint with a diamond-like grey pattern in the centre to striking red nail paint with glitter tips done in a stylish and asymmetrical way. But there's more... some fashionistas, on and off the ramp are also choosing floral art on nails in softer colours to solid purple nail paint and many more. Manicuring originated from mythology:

As per Greek mythology, Eros is identified as the first-ever manicurist. He cut Aphrodite's fingernails while she was asleep and scattered them all over Earth's beaches. These nail clippings were then collected and turned into the semi-precious stone, Onyx (which means fingernail in Greek).

Journey of music: How members of Dilli gharana are keeping up with changing times

Even today, the custodians of the centuries-old Dilli Gharana of music, known for its Khayal gayaki, live and practice their art in the old, romantically named Mausiqi Manzil in the Walled City. But with changing times and commercialisation, they are experimenting with their craft to stay relevant



It will be too much to expect Aalif Iqbal Khan to understand the significance of being the youngest descendant of the Dilli gharana. He is five years old – too young to know the history of the family or the legacy he will have to uphold in the years to come. But the family elders seem to have already decided for him. They enjoy seeing Aalif spend time with his grandfather, Ustad Iqbal Ahmed Khan, 64, the head or khalifa of the clan, in the living room of Mausiqi Manzil, their more-than-200-year-old house in Delhi's Walled City. They film the child when he exerts his vocal chords while sitting cross-legged on his grandfather's chest. "Look how beautifully he sings. There is no match to his talent," says Aalif's mother, Vusat Iqbal Khan, 32, with pride.

Musical families across the country have seen far-reaching changes over the decades because of the evolving tastes of audiences, the death of royal patronage, the impact of technology and plethora of alternative leisure activities. Having felt the ripple effects of this transformation, the family representing the Dilli Gharana of music (gharana refers to a style of presentation) is trying to remain relevant to the times without compromising on its rich history.

The family is one of the oldest in the country to propagate the city's Khayal gayaki – a style of singing popularised by 13th century Sufi poet Amir Khusrau. Over time, members of the clan preserved and promoted more than two dozen sub-genres of singing such as sawela, tirvat, dhamar and sawan geet. Some members of the gharana have mastered musical instruments too, such as the tabla, sitar and violin.

"It is hard to find another family which is such a rich a repository

of Khusrau's compositions. They also know the journey of the compositions and the many influences on each composition over the course of centuries," says Vivek Prajapati, 30, Iqbal's disciple and a PhD scholar at the faculty of music and fine arts, Delhi University.

According to Hindustani classical singer and writer Vidya Rao, the Dilli gharana strongly suggests that one of the influences on the development of Khayal gayaki could be Sufi tradition and music. "Also, it is perhaps the only Khayal gharana where the ghazal is an integral part of the gharana's repertoire," she says.

According to Dr Sunanda Pathak, scholar, performing artiste and author of *Origin and Evolution of Raag in Hindustani Classical Music*, the Dilli gharana's style of presentation offers tremendous scope for developing ragas. "The style is taan pradhan or variation in notes is the primary ornamentation tool," she says.

According to Delhi historian and chronicler RV Smith, "Before Khusrau, there was only bhakti sangeet in India. Khusrau combined the temple music with the music of the Arab peninsula to develop multiple genres of singing, among which, Khayal was the one mostly practiced by the founders of Dilli gharana."

In the old days, classical artists like Siddheshwari Devi, Malika Pukhraj, musicians and composers like KL Saigal, Roshan Lal Roshan, and Mumtaz Jahan Dehlvi (much before she arrived in Hindi cinema as actor Madhubala), were regulars at Mausiqi Manzil. "In 1938, there was a conference near Jubilee cinema in Chandni Chowk, where she sang. Back then she was just Baby Mumtaz," says Iqbal.

The narrow lane leading to Mausiqi Manzil has shrunk even

further over the decades due to haphazard construction. The bylanes resemble tunnels within a tunnel. The windows of one house open into the bedroom of the facing house. Sunlight is a luxury. Goats are parked along with two wheelers, cycle rickshaws and carts. A web of electricity wires sags above passersby.

Iqbal lives with his wife Zohra, son (Saad, 22) and youngest daughter (Sadiya, 23) on the first floor. Pictures of Khan's great grandfather Ustad Mamman Khan, grandfather and teacher Ustad Chand Khan and his brother Jahan Khan hang on the wall, silently watching the proceedings in the living room. Iqbal's books and awards are stacked in a wooden showcase. He takes out a briefcase from a trunk. It contains Chand Khan's manuscripts in Urdu, Arabic and Persian, and all his medals. An old, dark green pouch contains a few of his belongings, including one of his pens and even a tooth! "Babu miyan had asked me to throw it. But I kept it safely," says Iqbal, recalling his mentor.

FILMI SONGS

Times are tough. Iqbal's descendants perform on a freelance basis, take up teaching assignments and perform with him in regional and international concerts.

They are open to trying different formats and styles as long it is in sync with the family's tradition. Iqbal's first cousin and student Imran Khan, 38, was in his early 20s when he was approached for a television reality show. "Ab tum filmi gaaney gaaogey?" his mentor said. But Imran says if he got the offer now, he would accept it. "I don't think playback singing is a bad thing.

I sing for bands. In a mehfil, I sing Sufi songs, ghazals, and film songs," he says. "Hmmm...maybe things would have been different had I participated in that reality show."

Iqbal faced a similar situation in his youth. "Filmmaker Rajinder Singh Bedi offered me a film. I said I would be comfortable if the composition was similar to what Bade Ghulam Ali Khan sahib sang in Mughal-e-Azam. Otherwise, I was not interested. It didn't work out," he says.

More women in Iqbal's clan have been to college than men. Iqbal, a graduate from Delhi's Dayal Singh College, and his younger brother, the late Dr Anis Ahmed Khan, a music scholar, were exceptions. "I am all for education. But it cannot replace talent. And then, look at the sheer number of educated unemployed youth," says Iqbal. After a moment, he adds. "Riyaz consumes lot of time. It does not leave any time for school and college."

Iqbal's family is learning to make the art form commercially viable without degenerating the guru-shishya tradition. In 2012, Iqbal's daughter Vusat quit her job as a communications consultant with the union ministry of information & technology to help her father and add to the family's body of work. Apart from overseeing the management of two family enterprises – the Amir Khusrau Institute of Music and the Sursagar Society – Vusat conceptualised and performed storytelling for two productions (Rudad-e-Shireen and Ghalib, Umrao Ki Nazar Se). "I realised that my family members were not getting the exposure they deserved. Also, they have a

classical music mindset. It is a good thing. But these days, you have to contemporise to become commercially viable. It is the need of the hour," she says.

The experiments didn't come about without disagreements. Sometime in 2015, she was designing a performance of Indian classical vocal and instrumental fusion. Her father did not want to compromise on certain elements. His apprehension was that adding instruments might lead to confusion. "He belongs to the era when the world was straightforward and transparent. But we have to look at the commercial aspect as well. It is very difficult to convince abba ji. But eventually we manage," she says.

Iqbal says he does have a sense of changing times. "In the beginning, our forefathers had the patronage of royal families. Then came the Nawabs. Now, mass media takes us places."

US AND THEM

The family members continue to face prejudice in varied degrees in their neighbourhood. Their customs often leave people bewildered. Touching the feet of elders, especially gurus is the norm; there is no fuss about singing Sai bhajans at private gatherings; Iqbal and his students celebrate Holi, Basant Panchmi and Guru Purnima at the institute. They don't perform during the first 10 days of the month of Muharram because they mourn the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's grandson Imam Hussain – a practice that makes them appear close to Shia Muslims. "Singing and music have no religion," says the khalifa.



Karwa Chauth 2018: How to prepare for the festival if you're a working woman

While Karwa Chauth is all about festivities and showering love on your better half, it's also difficult for the fasting women as it requires long hours of being without food and water. Read these tips on how to prepare for the festival if you're a working woman.

'Tis time for all married and soon-to-be-married women to get-set with their best festive clothes, jewellery, nail art and mehndi designs as Karwa Chauth is just 'round the corner. Karwa Chauth falls on the fourth day of the Hindu luni-solar calendar. 'Karwa' means an earthen pot used to store wheat and 'chauth' means the fourth day. These pots are decorated with attractive designs and sweets and bangles are put inside them before being exchanged with other women

While Karwa Chauth is all

about festivities and showering love on your better half, it's also difficult for the fasting women as it requires long hours of being without food and water. Understandably, it's not the easiest to not eat and get through the day as it will lead to an immediate dip in your blood pressure, give you acidity and the issues arising from it and also make you irritable (yes, there is a concept called being hangry – meaning the anger you feel when you're hungry). More so, when you juggle work and home and get everything

done to a T. We've got some simple tips for you so you can fast for your better-half without losing your energy or motivation this Karwa Chauth: Relax. Don't over-exert your mind and body: This is a good way to start. Take it easier than other days so you don't exert your mind and body. Stress saps energy out faster than you think and believe us, you need every bit of it when you're observing a difficult yet crucial fast like this one. Eat your meal properly when you're preparing for the fast. Eaten before

sunrise, it can contain regular food and sweets. Include some dry fruits, nuts and milk to your meal too. Eating high-protein foods will keep you full for a longer period of time as it takes the digestive longer to process this kind of food. Avoid high-on sugar or fried food as it's likely to make you excessively thirsty and eventually, hungry, sooner than you planned. The good thing about a modern mind-set is that one can opt to modify certain rituals to suit their body's capacity. Women nowadays have also figured ways to fast in a

healthier fashion. The toxins that are released in your body during a period of fasting may affect your health, so you have to counter it by eating right and taking ample rest. You've been preparing for this day as it brings you closer to your significant other, family and friends. Instead of laying focus on not being able to eat your favourite food for a day, distract yourself you're your look of the day, the pictures you'll click and all the love you'll be showered with from people around you and on your social media.

On World Polio Day, check out 5 facts on polio eradication

World Polio Day is celebrated on October 24 globally to generate awareness for the eradication of polio, as well as to honour the efforts of thousands of employees of World Health Organization (WHO) and other organisations committed to the cause. The occasion also commemorates the birth of American medical researcher and virologist Jonas Salk, who discovered and developed one of the first successful poliomyelitis or polio vaccines.

According to WHO, the theme for World Polio Day 2018 is 'End Polio Now'. WHO defines polio as a highly infectious viral disease, which mainly affects young children. It has no cure, but can be pre-

vented through immunisation. Polio vaccine, given multiple times, almost always protects a child for life. The strategy to eradicate polio is therefore based on preventing infection by immunising every child until transmission stops and the world is polio-free.

WHO says Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), the largest private-public partnership for health, has reduced polio by 99%. It is led by national governments with five core partners --the WHO, Rotary International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The GPEI assists coun-

tries in carrying out surveillance for polio and large-scale vaccination rounds.

Polio now survives only among the world's poorest and most marginalised communities, where it stalks the most vulnerable children. When India was still polio-endemic, there were 6,40,000 vaccination booths, 2.3 million vaccinators, 200 million doses of vaccine, 6.3 million ice packs, 191 million homes visited and 172 million children immunised: all this in just one round of the national immunisation days.

Here are five facts on polio eradication, shared by WHO:

1. While polio is a distant memory in most of the world, the disease still exists in some

places and mainly affects children under 5. One in 200 infections leads to irreversible paralysis (usually in the legs). Among those paralysed, 5% to 10% die when their breathing muscles become immobilised.

2. When the Global Polio Eradication Initiative was formed in 1988, polio paralysed more than 3,50,000 people a year. Since that time, polio case numbers have decreased by more than 99%. More than 16 million people have been saved from paralysis because of vaccination efforts against polio.

3. Today, only three countries in the world have never stopped transmission of polio (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria). Despite the progress achieved since

1988, as long as a single child remains infected with poliovirus, children in all countries are at risk of contracting the disease.

4. Unlike most diseases, polio can be completely eradicated. There are three strains of wild poliovirus, none of which can survive for long periods outside of the human body. If the virus cannot find an unvaccinated person to infect, it will die out. Type 2 wild poliovirus was eradicated in 1999.

5. There are 2 forms of vaccine available to ward off polio - oral polio vaccine (OPV) and inactivated polio vaccine (IPV). Because OPV is an oral vaccine, it can be administered by anyone, even volunteers. One dose of OPV can cost as little as 14 US cents.

Almond or peanut butter, find out which nut butter is best for you

Almond butter is garnering attention in the health world lately. The most popular of the alternative nut butters – other varieties include, walnut, cashew, hazelnut butter – almond butter might seem like the next food fad, but it has some legit health benefits. It is a good source of magnesium, vitamin E, and potassium. It's also a great source of selenium, which has been shown to be effective in preventing cancer. Plus, it offers a dose of protein and healthy unsaturated fats to satiate hunger, so it can help you maintain a healthy weight. What is almond butter?

Like any nut butter, it is a spreadable paste made by grinding almonds to a smooth creamy

consistency. Contrary to what the name suggest, it doesn't actually contain any butter and hence is dairy-free, says Ankita Maniktala Kukreja, a certified nutritionist and co-founder, The Butternut.Co.

According to Maniktala Kukreja, almond butter and other nut butters are one of the healthiest food on the planet.

"They contain heart healthy good fats, protein, fiber and a host of essential vitamins and minerals. Apart from being one of the most abundant form of plant-based protein, they also enhance brain function, increase satiety and promote healthy skin," she says.

Almond butter has gained a serious foodie following; you can

simply spread it on some bread or serve it as a dip with your favourite fruit. When choosing an almond butter, Maniktala Kukreja recommends going organic, with little to no added ingredients.

"An important criterion to keep in mind is the ingredient list of the nut butter you choose. Often they include high amounts of refined sugar and hydrogenated oils, which strip away the benefits provided by nuts – and leave you with excess calories and unhealthy fats. A good nut butter is pure, made with few ingredients, without any refined oils and fat; and must contain a high percentage of nuts," she says. Peanut butter vs almond



butter

Want to find out which one is the better butter? In terms of protein, fat, and calories, the two are almost identical twins, says Anupam Dey, a Kolkata-based dietician. Both weigh in at around 200 calories, 17 grams

of fat, 7 grams of carbs, 4 grams of fibre, and about 8 grams of protein for two tablespoons — give or take a gram here and there.

However, the big difference between the two is their micro-nutrient content, says Dey.

Zika virus: One more reason for zero tolerance towards mosquitoes

The disease is spread by the aedes aegyti mosquitoes, which also spreads dengue and chikungunya. So a Zika outbreak can potentially occur in all the places that have reported dengue or chikungunya.

Is Zika here to stay? More than 131 people have tested positive in Jaipur's Shastri Nagar and Sindhi camp neighbourhoods over the past one month, raising fears of the viral infection becoming endemic to cause annual outbreaks.

There are reasons for concern. For one, the environmental conditions in India are conducive not just for the virus to thrive but also the mosquito that spreads it.

Zika is a mosquito-borne virus that belongs to the Flaviviridae family, which includes dengue and Japanese Encephalitis (JE) viruses. It thrives in tropical conditions and causes disease in the Pacific islands, Africa, South America and south and south-east Asia.

The disease is spread by the aedes aegyti mosquitoes, which also spreads dengue and chikungunya. So a Zika outbreak can potentially occur in all the places that have reported dengue or chikungunya.

What's as worrying is the

likelihood of Zika being missed or misdiagnosed even in clinical settings because around 80% of those infected have no symptoms and those who fall ill have mild and non-specific symptoms.

Zika infection may cause fever, rash, joint and muscle pain, headache and conjunctivitis (red, itchy eyes), with the symptoms typically lasting two to seven days. The treatment is symptomatic and there is no vaccine. It has caused no deaths. Hundred and seventeen of the 131 infected people in Jaipur have recovered.

New mums at risk

Zika virus infection was not an issue of public health concern until the infection in pregnant women was linked with microcephaly, a birth defect in which the baby's head is smaller than normal because of abnormal brain development. Pregnant women who get infected also risk their unborn baby, having a stillbirth or preterm birth. In adults and older

children, it can cause neurological disorders including Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), and myelitis (spinal cord inflammation causing paralysis and sensory loss).

With 26 million births each year and one in five (21.1%) of the deliveries still happening outside a health centre or hospital, hundreds of thousands of babies will be at risk of microcephaly and neurological abnormalities if the infection takes root in India.

Zika was first identified in monkeys in Uganda in 1947 and in humans in Uganda and Tanzania in 1952. From the 1960s to 1980s, caused mild fever across Africa and Asia, but the 2015-16 outbreak in Brazil and South America linked the infection to microcephaly in newborns and GBS, which promoted WHO to declare the Zika a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on February 1 to November 23, 2016.

Zika has been reported in 86

countries, with the first confirmed case in India in Gujarat in February, 2017, when three people tested positive in Ahmedabad, which was followed by one case in Krishnagiri district in Tamil Nadu in July of the same year.

Isolation, fumigation

The first Zika case in 2018 was identified when an 85-year-old woman hospitalised with fever at Sawai Man Singh Hospital in Jaipur was screened for Zika after she tested negative for influenza, dengue, malaria and chikungunya. The Indian Council of Medical Research's newly set-up Virus Research & Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDL) that conducted the tests immediately raised red flags and everyone with fever within a 3-km radius of her home in the densely-populated Shastri Nagar neighbourhood was tested for Zika and treated in isolation in a mosquito free zone to prevent the infection from spreading further.

The upside is people with mild or no symptoms have are not as

infectious as those with symptoms, so rapid testing and isolating people with symptoms till they recover completely can contain the infection, as will fumigating to destroy all adult mosquitoes and cleaning larval breeding sites. Breaking the short one-week incubation period of the virus is the way to stop infection. That's how Brazil did it. And that's what we need to do to keep the future generations safe.



Karwa Chauth during pregnancy, is it safe to fast? Everything you need to know

Karwa Chauth 2018: Is keeping a fast if you're expecting a good idea? Or does it pose a danger to pregnant women and their babies? Read on to find out.

Saturday marks Karwa Chauth, when wives dress in their festive best and fast for their husbands' long life. It is one of the biggest Hindu festivals for married women, mainly across north India. But if you happen to be pregnant, you may want to proceed with caution.

You might have been a strict follower of the festival, but if you're expecting, it's time to change your Karwa Chauth plan. From moderation to

modifications and variations, there are many ways to celebrate the Hindu festival, while ensuring yours and your baby's health at the same time.

Fasting during Karwa Chauth usually involves skipping meals all through the day and eating dinner only after offering puja to the moon. But Dr Namita Gupta, gynecologist, Pearl Healthcare, Mumbai says women should bypass

the practice when pregnant. She warns day-long fasting could overly stress pregnant women's bodies.

"Research is very inconclusive on occasional fasting during pregnancy but a Karwa Chauth fast should be avoided, if possible," says Dr Gupta.

She says fasting, even for religious purposes, could be sometimes "dangerous" and "unnecessary" for pregnant women, who are required to have



multiple meals and snacks through the day to keep themselves from feeling ill and also to maintain their blood sugar. Dr Gupta recommends pregnant women consume liquids and drink extra water to keep themselves healthy and hydrated, if skipping the Karwa Chauth fast is unavoidable, provided their gynecologist gives the go-ahead.

"The problem with fasting during pregnancy is that the proper amount of calories per day may not be taken in," says Anupam Dey, a Kolkata-based nutritionist.

But it's not just pregnant women

who should be mindful about Karwa Chauth fasting. Dey says that not getting enough calories before and after the fast could mess with women's hormones and mess with her natural metabolism.

If you are pregnant and still looking to keep the Karwa Chauth fast, there are other, potentially simpler ways to reboot your system, like getting some extra hours of sleep during the day, says Dr Gupta. Note that it's a good idea to consult with your doctor before finalising your Karwa Chauth plan, whether or not you're pregnant



Bazaar, Halloween or Goosebumps 2: Box office predictions to help you pick the right film this weekend

Saif Ali Khan's Baazaar is the new Bollywood release this weekend whereas Hollywood promises a scary treat with Halloween and Goosebumps 2 Haunted Halloween.

This weekend offers a heavy dose of horror flicks ahead of the Halloween besides an intense Bollywood drama Baazaar. Saif Ali Khan is back on the film scene after the success of his web series Sacred Games. The actor is returning as a business tycoon in Baazaar, which is largely based on the stock market. Also starring Radhika Apte, Chitrangada Singh and Rohan Mehra, the film looks promising, judging from its intriguing trailer. Halloween is around

the corner and so is the season of new horror releases at the box office. Hollywood has two horror films lined up for release this weekend – Halloween and Goosebumps 2: Haunted Halloween. Halloween is a sequel of the 1978 film of the same name. Laurie Strode returns to confront the masked man put an end to his menace once and for all. Goosebumps 2 is a horror comedy, based on RL Stine's books for lovers of the spook. Talking to

Hindustantimes.com about the possibilities of Baazaar at the box office, film exhibitor Akshaye Rathi said, "A film like Baazaar woos the urban audience. After the success of Sacred Games, Saif Ali Khan has got a new lease of life with the urban youth audience. Building on the success of Netflix, Baazaar should be able to do well with the audience. Besides that, the backdrop of Baazaar, which is an equity market, affects across the social strata

whether you talk about the rich, super rich or middle class. People across the demographics invest in stock markets in a big or small way, weather directly or indirectly. Whether the film manages to connect and excite all of them will be revealed only on Friday. Saif deserves it as he is a terrific actor." Talking about the competition at the box office, Akshaye added, "The beauty of the Indian market is diversity. We are a country of 1.25 billion



and all of us are spread across different mediums and regions. It is as simple as the demand and supply. I really wish all the films do well simultaneously. All of them have an audience of their own." Last week's Ayushmann Khurrana's

Badhaai Ho shows no signs of slowing down and has held the fort amid positive reviews and word of mouth. The film has been appreciated for its unique storyline, wonderful performances and quirky dialogues.

Netflix's new horror film isn't afraid of getting kooky

From Gareth Evans, director of The Raid, here's another addition to Netflix's fantastic roster of horror films, starring Dan Stevens, Michael Sheen. Rating: 3.5/5.

Apostle
Director - Gareth Evans
Cast - Dan Stevens, Michael Sheen, Lucy Boynton, Mark Lewis Jones
Rating - 3.5/5
To his credit, director Gareth Evans has made a conscious - and rather brave - choice to not repeat himself in Apostle, his first film since his breakout one-two punch, The Raid and its sequel, Berandal. Aside from a couple of muddy fisticuffs, Apostle is a great tonal, stylistic and narrative leap for the filmmaker, known for his flamboyant camerawork and fluid action. For starters,

Apostle is a dense horror-fantasy in the vein of the cult British film, The Wicker Man (not the ridiculous remake starring Nicolas Cage) and director Ben Wheatley's Kill List - a departure from the martial arts mania of his Raid movies. It's more sprawling in its scope - despite the claustrophobia of being set on an island - and more layered in its world-building. This isn't to say that Apostle is a flawless victory - far from it, in fact - but it's a worthy (and necessary) stepping stone for a filmmaker who will only move up the ranks in the years to

come. The year is 1905 and Dan Stevens plays former missionary Thomas Richardson, who goes on a covert mission to rescue his sister from the clutches of a mysterious cult that has confined itself to an island off the coast of England. Led by the firebrand Prophet Malcolm Howe, played by Michael Sheen, the cult prides itself on its independence from the mainland. Howe, along with two other convicts, had washed ashore years ago, and discovered the island's mysterious regenerative properties. Without going into too much detail about the

backstory - part of the film's fun is discovering just how kooky it's willing to get - Howe exploited these almost magical qualities with a mixture of some old-fashioned witchcraft and his natural charisma, and established a self-sustaining community. Sheen, an actor who has done everything from shoddy B-movie franchises to Oscar-nominated classics, plays Prophet Howe with less of a sinister edge than you'd imagine. He cranks up his natural Welsh accent - an accent Tom Hardy once said he admired for its 'mellifluous gentleness' - to almost comical levels. This makes his character seem more like a particularly passionate farmer than a radical leader of a cult. Stevens, meanwhile, has that Ryan Gosling quality of being very difficult to pin down; he's just as capable of playing psychopaths - consider The Guest a major recommendation - and Jude Law-esque heartthrobs. In Apostle, he makes what could have been a fairly run-of-the-mill



character - we've seen several films about cult breakouts - into an altogether more mysterious, and more meaningful person. His struggles with faith are cruelly emphasised in an environment that is as harmful to him as a bar would be to an alcoholic. Horror, more than any other genre, tends to be subjective. What scares one person might be funny to another. For horror to truly take effect, there has to be an almost mystical synthesis of several factors - the environment in which the film is being watched, the willingness of the viewer to submit, and whether or not they're open to revealing their personal

demons. Everyone has a tipping point, and Apostle breaches many thresholds, which makes it a rather foolproof experience - whether you're paranoid about cults, or vulnerable to the sight of blood, Evans has made multiple horror films in one. He's aided by opulent visuals, detailed production design, and a score that sounds like a thousand banshees wailing in painful unison. He also finds time for religious critique - the cultists are essentially pagans - and for subtle feminism - the islanders worship a literal goddess, and the film's female characters tend to be more resourceful than the bull-headed men.

Apostle
movie
review:



'Wild And Wacky'

Koffee with Karan Season 6: A 'Wild And Wacky' Time with Akshay Kumar And Ranveer Singh

Twitter handle and gave us a teaser of the 'whirlwind' coming our way

Akshay Kumar and Ranveer Singh are set to make their debut on this season of Koffee with Karan. The dynamic duo is all geared up to unleash their crazy and hilarious selves as they appear on the

show together for the first time. The 'Gold' star, who never fails to impress his fans with his cheeky comebacks and witty comments, took a dig at Ranveer Singh, performed famous Bollywood hook steps and can be seen

indulging in some candid heart-to-heart conversation.

The Star World team recently posted a promo of the episode on their official Twitter handle and gave us a teaser of the 'whirlwind' coming our way



Priyanka Chopra-Nick Jonas'

Priyanka Chopra-Nick Jonas' wedding could clash with Deepika Padukone-Ranveer Singh's reception on Dec 1

Priyanka Chopra and Deepika Padukone's wedding functions are all set to clash, making it one busy wedding season for Bollywood this year.

Fasten your seat belts and gear up for some high octane action in showbiz for soon after Diwali, the next few weeks are going to be super packed with as many as three big fat celebrity weddings happening in the entertainment industry. Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh have just announced in the sweetest manner that are going to tie the knot on November 14 and 15 and buzz is that the wedding will take place at Lake Como, Italy.

Actor Priyanka Chopra and singer Nick Jonas who shared the good news of their roka ceremony on August 18 are rumoured to have a royal wedding in Jodhpur's Umaid Bhavan Palace in the end of November. And actor-comedian Kapil Sharma, who was away from the scene for quite some time is set to take the plunge with his steady and stable girlfriend Ginny Chatrath, on December 12

We have learned that for Priyanka-Nick wedding, the invitation cards have already been sent out to the invitees. "The wedding will take place on November 30 and the three-day long functions include a sangeet ceremony on November 29 and a reception on December 1. They have invited a select guest list of 110 people including relatives and close friends," informs a source, adding that the sangeet ceremony and the bachelor's night will take place at the Mehrangarh Fort.

As for the prep at the wedding venue, "the authorities have been strictly told not to entertain any queries about the event by the locals or the media. Since it's going to be a high-end affair, they have been instructed to not disclose any information. While the hotel authorities

have been approached for the bookings on mentioned dates, but the advance amount is yet to reach them," adds the source. So what's couple going to wear for their big day? "Both

source..Meanwhile, a source close to Priyanka says that the actor is busy wrapping up her work. "Priyanka is very specific about not letting her work suffer so she wants to finish all her work



Priyanka and Nick will be dressed in Indian designer outfits for their D-Day and they have already started meeting the designers. Nick might wear a Manish Malhotra design," says the

commitments. She will make some Hollywood announcements as well before the wedding and might also push the dates to January," the source shares. Switch to Deepika and Ranveer's special day, details are being kept under wraps from all corners. However, we have learned from sources that the couple will reportedly go for "designer Sabyasachi outfits" for their wedding in Italy".

Further, according to Mid-Day, Ranveer and Deepika's wedding will happen over a span of four days at Lake Como, Italy. They will follow



both South Indian and North Indian customs on November 14 and November 15, respectively. The guest list is ready and only four close friends from the film industry will go to Lake Como. The newspaper quoted a source as saying that since Deepika is close to Shah Rukh Khan and Farah Khan, they will be their by her side when she says 'I do'. There is also an intimate party at November 15. The couple is planning a grand reception on December 1 and the occasion will be graced by their Bollywood friends. Away from Bollywood buzz, there's going

to be this heartland wedding of actor-comedian Kapil Sharma and his long-time girlfriend Ginni Chatrath. After much speculation, Kapil himself shared the good news that he is indeed tying the knot with Ginni on December 12, in Jalandhar. "That's Ginni's hometown. We wanted to keep it low key. But Ginni is the only daughter in her family. Her folks wanted the wedding to be on a lavish scale. And I completely understand their sentiments. My mother also wants the wedding to be lavish," said Kapil, adding that the he was trying hard to keep the news under wraps because he was busy promoting his Punjabi production and didn't want to talk about his personal life during that time. The wedding will be followed by a reception on December 14. Kapil added that though he is "of course happy" to be marrying his devoted girlfriend who stood by him through these testing times, "the happiness that I see on my mother's face is what makes it special."



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