



US Presidential Election 2020 Democratic Candidates Debate Kamala Harris stole the show



(SAI Bureau) Washington DC: When the candidates took the stage in Miami on Thursday for the second night of Democratic primary debates, former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Senator Bernie Sanders were the stars. By the time they walked off, all eyes were on Senator Kamala Harris.

They don't call it the "big tent" party for nothing. At Thursday night's Democratic debate, viewers got a look

at a former Vice President, a few members of Congress, a Midwestern mayor, an entrepreneur, a former governor and a new-age guru. The challenge for this diverse group was to stand out in a positive, engaging way. One thing was clear. These candidates were certainly ready to take each other on - as well as the current President. Unlike Wednesday night's much more genial gathering (Contd. on page 18)

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Mike Pompeo pledges close cooperation with India

The two nations are "friends who can help each other all around the world," Pompeo told a joint news conference with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar after they met.

(By our Staff Reporter)- US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo sought to reduce heightened trade tension with India on Wednesday, promising a renewed focus on negotiating improved trade and investment ties between the two nations. But Pompeo, on a visit to India, gave few specifics of how they would overcome disputes on issues ranging from access to Indian markets for leading American companies to New Delhi's demands for foreign firms to store Indian data in the country, and exports of steel and aluminum to the United States. The two nations



are "friends who can help each other all around the world," Pompeo told a joint news conference with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar after they met. The current differences were expressed "in the spirit of friendship", he added. The disputes have led to higher trade tariffs by the two countries and created unease over the depth of their security alliance. In particular, the sudden introduction of new e-commerce rules for foreign investors in February angered the Americans because it showed New Delhi was prepared to move the goalposts to hurt two of the largest US companies, discount retailer Walmart, and Amazon.com Inc. Walmart last year invested \$16 billion to buy control of Indian e-commerce firm Flipkart. Just days before Pompeo's visit, India slapped higher retaliatory tariffs on 28 US products following Washington's withdrawal of key trade privileges for New Delhi.



A warm reception was given to Ambassador Dhyaneswar Mulay during his visit to New York Which was well attended by community Leaders. Jagdish Sewhani , Kanak Golia, Ambassador Mulay , Sandeep Chakrovarty- Consul General Of India , Shatrughan Sinha Dy Consul General , Professor Saluja, Prem Bhandhari Of Jaipur Foot and Dr Raj Bhayani ,

Maggots ate organs of Indian toddler, US doctor unable to perform autopsy

The pathologist also did not agree with the claim of the foster father that the three-year-old choked to death on milk.



(By our Staff Reporter)- The Indian-American foster father of Sherin, Wesley Mathews, in an unexpected move, pleaded guilty on Monday to injury to a child by omission, a lesser charge, at the start of what was supposed to be his capital murder trial. On the second day of the trial on Tuesday, 39-year-old Mathews said in a testimony that he raised his voice at Sherin while he was trying to get her to drink her milk in the garage. That startled her, and she began to choke on the milk. He initially claimed that as punishment for not drinking her milk he sent Sherin outside at 3 a.m. to stand by a tree outside the backyard of their home in Richardson, Texas. When he checked in on her 15 minutes later, Mathews said Sherin was missing. Two weeks later, when Sherin's body was found in a nearby culvert by a

cadaver dog, Mathews changed his story, claiming he "physically assisted" his adopted daughter in drinking the milk and that the toddler choked. Mathews and his wife Sini Mathews, both from Kerala, adopted Sherin (born as Saraswati) from an orphanage in Bihar in 2016.

Dr. Elizabeth Ventura, the forensic pathologist who performed Sherin's autopsy in October 2017, testified on Tuesday about her conclusions in the toddler's death.

Ventura said she could not determine how Sherin died as the body was too decomposed to get an official cause of death.

She told the jurors -- four women and eight men -- that maggots had eaten Sherin's internal organs away as her body was discovered in a trash bag in a culvert two weeks after her death. Ventura said that due to the decomposition of the child's vital organs like the heart and lungs, she was unable to perform an internal autopsy and determine her cause of death.

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Fundraiser organized for Kate Murray



(By Sharanjit Singh Thind) A fundraiser was recently organized for Kate Murray; Town of Hempstead Clerk candidate, election for which is to be held on Nov. 4 2019. Fundraiser was jointly organized by Pinky Jaggi & Jyoti Bhatia, 2 well known community activists known for their latest initiative Long Island Ladies Council (LILC), among other achievements. Some noted members of community attended the fundraiser in support of candidacy of Kate Murray. Among noted speakers were Jay Singh, Kawaljit Chani, Zahid Syed, Ram Suchdeva, Dr Anila Midha, Rekha Chichara, Hargovind Gupta. Kate Murray was the first republican woman to be elected hempstead town supervisor and served from 2003-2015.

Victory celebrations by Bengali Community in New York : Bijoy Utsab

Jagdish Sewhani was the Speaker at this gathering



(By our Staff Reporter)- Mr Sewhani in his speech said that the Victory In Lok Sabha elections was Victory if India . Indian Voters voted for Development and rejected dynasty. People of India have rejected the opposition party's negative politics and voted for the positive energy and Development policies of Prime Minister Modi. The next five years India will reach at the pinnacle of its Glory under the Leadership Of Modi. In coming state elections BJP is also going to form government in West Bengal with thumping majority.Mr Sewhani further said that to achieve the goal of 5 Trillion economy West Bengal has to play a very important role and it can only be



New York's power couple Ravi & Ranju Batra, an exceptional legal mind Ravi Batra recently joined an initiative of many organizations to celebrate Centennial celebration of Robert Morgenthau, an American lawyer.

From 1975 until his retirement in 2009, Robert was the District Attorney for New York County, the borough of Manhattan, having previously served as United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York throughout much of the 1960s on the appointment of John F. Kennedy.

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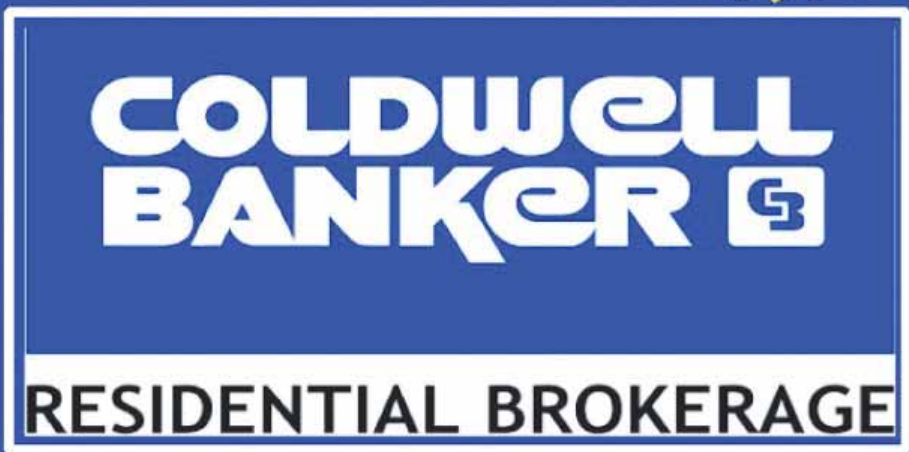
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The Rotary Club of Hicksville South (RCHS) Gala Organized

(By our staff reporter) The Rotary Club of Hicksville South (RCHS) recently celebrated their 10th Anniversary appreciation Gala & the Annual official Installation Ceremony in a Banquet hall in Hicksville, Long Island, NY. Noted businessman Jay Modi took oath of President among other office bearers. Well known businessman Jay Jasbir Singh who is currently President of India Day Parade of Hicksville, Long Island among many other organizations was exclusively honored for his greater contribution to community and society. Many other noted leaders, members of community, businessmen made their presence felt during the event. (Photo credit: Mizan Rahman Facebook)



Danfosal 2nd anniversary foundation gala gala was recently organized in Suffolk County Long Island. Event was fun with a night full of folklore, dancing and cultural presentations. Event was organized by Alvaro Vladimir Lopez. Seen in picture (From left, Sonny (Sharanjit Singh) Thind, Editor & Publisher of The South Asian Insider, Angela Ramos, Assistant director Suffolk County Probation Department, Phil Ramos, New York State Ranking Assemblyman, Zahid Syed, Nassau County Human Rights Commissioner)



Fundraiser organized for Kate Murray



An official Republican party fundraising event was recently held in Baldwin, Long Island to announce candidacy of Kate Murray; Town of Hempstead Clerk candidate, election for which is to be held on Nov. 4 2019. Kate is running along Supervisor candidate Don Clavin , who is currently Receiver of Taxes. All candidates thanked Joseph Cairo, chairman of Nassau Republican Party for energizing the party towards victory in Nov Town elections.

Picture courtesy: Sonny (Sharanjit) Thind

The trade war will dominate G20

Donald Trump and tariffs will dominate the Group of Twenty (G20) summit in Osaka because the United States President's economic vision has narrowed to this single issue. Global markets will watch the trade confrontation between the US and China most closely. Punishing China for a host of economic crimes is one area in which Trump is in alignment with the Washington establishment, so there is little expectation of his finding common ground with Xi Jinping. The expectation is merely that Trump and the Chinese leader will at least agree to keep talking about their differences. But the US president has also criticised almost every major economy at the G20 for unfair trade practices. Trump tweeted most recently against India's high tariff regime. But he has also criticised Japan, Vietnam, the European Union and others for their trade policies. Much of this is simply the US president's penchant for public bluster just before trade negotiations. However, it is also deflecting governmental focus away from dangers to global economic growth. If anything, Trump has helped convert trade into the primary economic constraint to growth. The International Monetary Fund has trimmed its January global growth forecast for 2019 to 3.3%, citing trade

disputes as the "primary threat" to increased growth. India and other governments are privately supportive of Trump's incessant battles with China. Everyone knows that a key reason China has enjoyed such phenomenal export surpluses has been because of hidden subsidies, currency manipulation and the use of non-tariff barriers to imports, notably in services. But Trump's attacks on the tariffs and trade surpluses of all countries, neither of which are particularly relevant in the 21st century, has meant the US has gained little strategic advantage from its stance on China. Instead, the US is being seen as a source of global economic instability. The G20 summit will be largely about how various world leaders will each seek to find a means to manage Trump's trade tantrums. These governments should instead have been wondering how to balance the increasingly disparate economic policies being taken by key governments and central banks. China seems set to continue down the path of debt-driven stimuli to hold up its economy.

The grim aftershock of powerful photographs

Photojournalism peaked in the 1940s in the middle of World War II, owing to images of destruction and victims of war, which were spectacular for the medium then. Not much has changed even now. The recent photograph of the Salvadoran migrant, Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez, and his nearly 2-year-old daughter, Valeria, on the banks of the Rio Grande in Mexico, after they drowned trying to cross the river to Texas, was published on the front pages of most leading newspapers in the world, including in India. It has also taken the social media by storm over the past couple of days. Julia Le Duc, a reporter for La Jornada in Mexico, rushed to the spot after she heard reports of a woman down by the river screaming about the current having taken her family. She wrote in The Guardian, "I've been a crime reporter for many years, and I've seen a lot of bodies - and a lot of drownings." Yet, this one moved her more than the others. It "re-sensitized" her, she said. The softness of the apparent embrace contributes to the photograph's impact, and makes it acceptable enough to be published in the mainstream media without any disclaimers of graphic content. This is dissimilar to Nick Ut's 1972 image of a child, 'The Napalm Girl', which became symbolic of the horrors of the Vietnam War. Ut rushed to save the girl immediately after he made the photograph (her body suffered burn injuries from the bomb) and continued to be lifelong friends with her. The photograph

of the drowned Salvadoran migrants is, however, similar to that of the Syrian boy whose body washed up on a beach in Turkey in 2015. The supposed embrace is also reminiscent of Taslima Akhter's photograph of two workers, who were found holding each other in death, in the rubble of the garment factory building collapse in Bangladesh in 2013. There has been a definite shift in the aesthetic that now appeals to the mainstream viewer when it comes to an image of violence or conflict. Perhaps the graphic nature of violence doesn't carry as much impact as a softer depiction of reality. Yet, the landscape of devastation still holds the spectacle as an integral part of its visual narrative, which is premised on the basic value of the shock it can deliver. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook had millions of users talking about the photograph of the Salvadoran father-daughter minutes after it was published. Unfortunately, there is beauty in damage, no matter how honest the photographer's intent and that seems to have lent a new social afterlife to the visual. Susan Sontag, in her last book, Regarding the Pain of Others, wrote how photographs of victims of atrocities created the illusion of consensus and made real for the privileged, matters that they'd otherwise prefer to ignore.

Any war-like situation involving Iran is bound to hurt India



conflagration in a region already buffeted by numerous security challenges.

Mr Trump's actions have only reflected his lack of understanding and experience of diplomacy and the need to work with other countries to resolve the situation with Iran. Clearly, if the sole intention is to bring Iran back to the negotiating table, the US administration would do better to stick with the sanctions, which have squeezed Iran's oil exports, sent the value of

the rial plunging and placed tremendous pressure on the regime in Tehran. Iran's threat to resume uranium enrichment and to exceed limits set by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is also costing it the support of players such as the European Union, which had so far supported the nuclear deal. For India, any war-like situation involving Iran would have wide-ranging ramifications, both economic, and in terms of the more than 8 million expatriates who live and work in West Asia. More significantly, India may be forced to choose sides in a potential conflict when it really shouldn't have to. The best course for India would be to back a process that leads to a negotiated settlement of the Iran issue.

Since he pulled the US out of the Iranian nuclear deal last year, President Donald Trump has ramped up the pressure on the government in Tehran through economic sanctions to bring it to the table to negotiate a new arrangement to cap Iran's atomic and missile programmes. However, Mr Trump's introduction of military pressure - apparently because of the need to speedily conclude a new deal that he can then use for his re-election bid - has added a dangerous element to a rapidly escalating situation. Following attacks on oil tankers and the shooting down of a US drone, Mr Trump came dangerously close to ordering military strikes against Iran, a move that could have led to a

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Protect our children from the dangers of the Internet

The complete elimination of online child sexual abuse requires a structured and unified response at global levels

In April 2018, Madhya Pradesh police busted a WhatsApp child sexual abuse and pornography group. The group had a Kuwaiti administrator and about 250 members from 28 countries, including India and Pakistan.

Originally known as "Kids Sex Video Only", the name of the group was changed to "Child Porn Only." Many members, as old as 50, were sharing videos of boys and girls aged six to eight years. One of the four local offenders arrested by the police was a 17-year-old boy of class 12.

This is just one case, and there are many children who are losing their childhoods to online child sexual abuse. The internet, a technology originally invented to share and converge information and knowledge, is now infested with pictures and videos of innocent children who have fallen prey to the vicious

trap of cybersex traffickers and paedophiles.

In 2017, The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) detected 78,589 individual URLs showing images of child abuse. Five countries that were responsible for hosting 87% of this material are: Netherlands, United States, Canada, France and Russia. However, this does not tell anything about where this material was being produced or viewed. For instance, it is quite possible that offenders could be viewing material from France, hosted on a server in the Netherlands, showing images/videos of child sexual abuse in South Asia. This is because the internet has collapsed national boundaries.

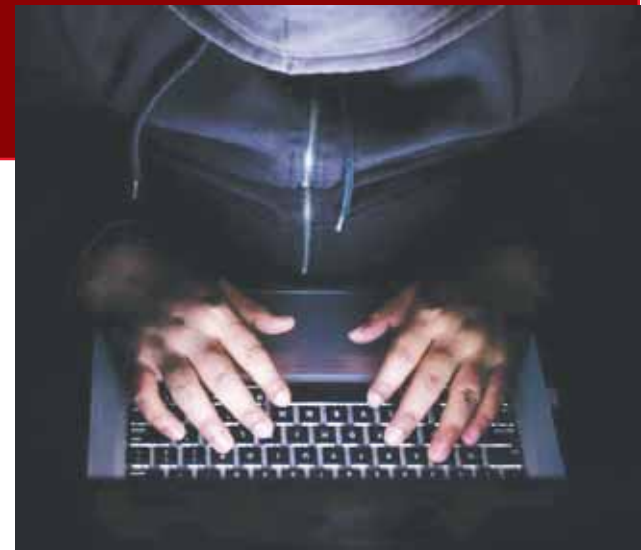
This illicit business requires low set up costs, entails easy dissemination, offers ease of payment and ever-

increasing profit streams. Some studies claim that rape and extreme torture videos of infants as young as 18 months are being traded on fully encrypted platforms for anywhere between \$7000-8000. While this is a heinous crime on the ground, it further accentuates manifold online. Today, children are being lured and enticed on popular online chat sites and then taken to virtual private rooms for making sexually explicit performances on the webcam. Cybersex trafficking of children is proliferating as one of the most brutal forms of modern day slavery. Paedophiles and pimps lure children and their parents striking deals promoting sexual exploitation of children under the garb of travel and tourism.

This is now a full-fledged industry with annual

revenues in excess of \$8 billion itself which does not include exponential profits that data service providers across the globe are booking. Tracking buyers and sellers is virtually impossible, as cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, among others, are being increasingly preferred for making payments for child abuse material online.

As a deterrent, in 2018, IWF removed 105,047 webpages showing sexual abuse of children. However, blocking of child porn websites are just the low-hanging fruit. Checking and curbing the data service providers and individuals from producing, storing and disseminating such content is absolutely necessary. It is important to regulate the internet and weed out such content. Therefore, the elimination of online child sexual abuse is a



gargantuan task that requires a structured and unified response at the highest global levels.

It is for this reason I have been rallying support for a legally binding International Convention against Online Sexual Abuse of Children.

The unequivocal demand for such a convention came out at the culmination of the Laureates and Leaders for Children Summit in Jordan, in 2018.

Over the last 12 months, global leaders and organisations that have come out in support for

such a convention are Pope Francis, German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, Mauricio Macri, President of Argentina, Juan Carlos Varela, President of Panama, His Excellency Prince Albert II King of Monaco, Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway, Sheikha Moza of Qatar, Members of the US Congress and leading civil society organisations including International Trade Union Confederation and Education International among others. We are together working on this so that this legislation sees the light of the day.

Modi's biggest test is improving the condition of India's poorest

His mandate allows him to pursue a reform agenda without constraints; it also allows him to collaborate more deeply with the private sector, while ensuring that there is no crony capitalism, to push growth; and it allows him to focus on improving the economic condition of the poorest Indians.

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi met a range of corporate leaders and economists on Saturday for a conversation convened by the Niti Aayog. With the first budget scheduled for July, this is a part of the larger consultation process the government is having with stakeholders and experts across spheres. The participants gave suggestions to the PM on five distinct, important themes - macro economy and employment; agriculture and water resources; exports; education; and health.

The conversation was a step in the right direction. The government has secured a

spectacular political mandate. But this cannot take away from the fact that the economy is in trouble. There is a debate on the methodology used to measure the growth rate - and irrespective of who is right - there is little doubt that gross domestic product (GDP) has dipped. There is pressure on the fiscal numbers. Consumption is down across the board; corporate profits are hit; the banking crisis shows no signs of abating; private investment is low; manufacturing - the only sector capable of generating jobs on a large scale - has not picked up according to the

demands of the times. The structural crisis in agriculture persists, with low farmer incomes and a mismatch between the (high) share of population engaged in farming and its (shrinking) contribution to the GDP. India is also fast running out of time to take advantage of its demographic dividend - and the prospect of millions of young people, without productive jobs, should worry policy makers. The government also has to ensure smoother transitions in multiple spheres - from rural to urban, agriculture to industry, and unorganised to organised economy.

There is no easy solution.



But Narendra Modi has shown that he has the ability to focus and achieve when he puts his mind to something.

The improvement of welfare delivery systems - which enabled the provision of rural housing, toilets, gas cylinders - in his first term

is an example of this focus. In the second term though, Mr Modi must invest far more deeply in getting the economy in order. His mandate allows him to pursue a reform agenda without constraints; it also allows him to collaborate more deeply with the private sector, while ensuring that there is no crony capitalism, to push growth; and it allows him to focus on improving the economic condition of the poorest Indians. That is Mr Modi's biggest test in his second term.

It's time for a Green Party of India

The major factor in climate change - global warming - is now expected to present bigger problems sooner than expected. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its October 2018 report warned that the swifter pace of global warming makes the earlier proposed trajectory towards two degrees Celsius of average global temperature increase by the end of the century untenable. The consequences we are already witnessing - higher frequency of extreme climatic events, flooding of coastal areas, disruption of cropping patterns and agriculture, and extremely high temperatures that make outdoor activity difficult - will become far

worse.

India is acknowledged to be at ground zero of the global warming challenge. Not only is our country the third largest producer of greenhouse gases, and, therefore, a significant contributor to the problem, it is also expected to be one of the major victims of global warming. The unprecedented floods in Chennai in 2015, for instance, which impacted all strata of society and generated massive insurance claims, brought home the risks of leaving climate change unaddressed.

Yet, despite the threats posed by climate change to the Indian economy, and the many examples we already have of

environmental degradation on a national scale - for instance, the fact that India is already host to 14 of the 15 most polluted cities in the world (as per World Health Organization's global air pollution database), or the fact that water scarcity is a widespread problem across the country - the environmental sustainability agenda was not a major electoral issue in the last general elections.

It is worth asking why. It cannot be the case that environmental issues are not important to local communities. One just has to see the outcry against air pollution every winter in Delhi, to understand that the average citizen understands the hazards,



especially the impact on good health and life expectancy of children. In parts of the country such as the tribal belt, concerns around forest preservation, encroachment, mining, and the displacement of communities are critical election issues.

Is FATF's warning to Pakistan enough?

There has been much talk in recent days of Pakistan facing the possibility of being downgraded from the "grey list" to the "black list" of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) but it is not common for a country to be included in the Paris-based multilateral watchdog's list with harsher financial sanctions and countermeasures. For almost a decade, the only two countries that have consistently figured in FATF's "public statement", as the black list is officially known, are Iran and North Korea. A country is placed

in the black list when FATF's members conclude it is being "non-cooperative" in countering money laundering and terrorist financing.

FATF's latest plenary meeting came to the conclusion Pakistan had failed to meet two consecutive targets for curbing terrorist financing and warned of the "next step" if it fails to make sufficient progress by October. However, China, Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council all asked for Pakistan to be given more time to implement an action plan finalised by FATF. China, which describes itself as

Pakistan's "iron brother ally" is set to assume the presidency of FATF next month, and it remains to be seen if it will be as hard-nosed as the US, the outgoing chair, in getting Pakistan to comply with the action plan.

Members of FATF must now focus on getting Pakistan to deliver on its action plan instead of taking cosmetic steps such as banning groups already proscribed by the United Nations or passing laws to bring domestic systems in line with international obligations. Pakistan must be asked to meet its commitments to FATF



to choke funding to terror groups instead of complaining that other countries are politicising the watchdog's processes. In short, Pakistan must be told that nothing short of demonstrating an irreversible commitment to ending the use of terror as an instrument of state policy will do.

Building a global urban narrative

For a civilisation that some experts suggest dates back eight millennia, four years represent only 0.2% of its history. Yet, in the four years since 2015, Prime Minister (PM)?Narendra Modi's government has been able to start a process that is inspired by our civilisational heritage and paves the way for an even more prosperous future. It is our civilisation that had first given the world well-planned urban settlements, equipped with clean water supply and scientific drainage and waste systems. It is reassuring to recall this today as we observe the four-year anniversary of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Atal

Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), and the Smart Cities Mission. We are at once reclaiming our lost glories and laying the foundation of a New India by 2022, ready to be a developed nation on its 100th anniversary in 2047.

Before detailing each of these flagship missions, it is important to appreciate the context in which they were realised.

It was a sad indictment of our policymaking ecosystem that it took so long to recognise the fruits of urban development. I have said so on numerous public platforms that the urban space in India was subject to criminal neglect. PM Modi recognised

this neglect and carved out an opportunity; he realised that planned urbanisation was a win-win proposition for economic growth and upward social mobility.

Thus were born the three flagship programmatic interventions: PMAY, AMRUT, and Smart Cities Mission in June 2015. Each of these interventions has its specific mandate, objectives, and targets. Yet, the outcomes of one are directly linked to the progress of the other, ensuring a comprehensive approach to development.

The promise of delivering a home to each Indian under PMAY - in the name of the lady of the house



or jointly; and where each home has a toilet, a kitchen, water supply, and scientific waste management - provides a family a dignified life. Of the one crore homes we have to build by 2022, 81 lakh have already been sanctioned, 48 lakh grounded, and 26 lakh handed over to the beneficiaries. I urge the sceptics of the scheme to visit one of the families who received such a home. It will remove any and all doubts, for the stories they tell of their lifestyle now and prior to receiving the home are remarkable. I am confident that the sanctioning of one crore homes will be completed by the end of this year and all homes will be handed over to the beneficiaries by the end of 2021, one year ahead of the target date.

India's water crisis is man-made

According to a study by the federal government think tank NITI Aayog, 21 Indian cities will run out of groundwater by next year, including the capital New Delhi and the information technology hub of Bengaluru.

One of India's largest cities, Chennai, is dealing with a crippling crisis: It has run out of water. In the middle of a particularly hot summer, the four lakes that supply the capital of the southern state of Tamil Nadu have dried up; together they contain just 1% of the volume they did last year. Residents don't have enough water to drink, bathe or wash clothes. People are working from home; malls have closed their bathrooms; and restaurants have shut their doors.

The natural instinct is to blame the situation on climate change and, indeed, the last monsoon's rains were especially weak. While that's certainly played a role, however, Chennai's is largely a man-made disaster - one that more Indian metropolises are soon to suffer no matter the weather.

According to a study by the

federal government think tank NITI Aayog, 21 Indian cities will run out of groundwater by next year, including the capital New Delhi and the information technology hub of Bengaluru. Two hundred thousand Indians already die every year because they don't have a safe water supply, the report said. A shocking 600 million people face "high to extreme" water stress. That Chennai should have run dry first is instructive. Less than four years ago, the now drought-ridden city was inundated by devastating floods. Though located on a flood plain, the city had paved over the lakes and wetlands that might have helped the process of recharging the water table. As a result, heavy rains couldn't percolate into aquifers under the city. Water pooled and surged aboveground. That reduced the resources available to deal with a crisis like

this year's. Elsewhere, demand is the issue. In theory, India receives enough rain every year to meet the needs of over a billion people. According to the country's Central Water Commission, it requires at most 3,000 billion cubic meters of water annually and receives 4,000 billion cubic meters of rain. But too much water is wasted thanks to inefficiency and misuse. The situation is particularly dire in India's northwest, irrigated by the great rivers that rise in the Himalayas. Indians are taught to revere the "green revolution" of the 1970s, when the northwest became India's granary thanks to canals and tube wells that pumped out groundwater. That revolution, however, has turned out to be unsustainable. In 2011, 245 billion cubic meters of water were withdrawn for irrigation - a quarter



of the total groundwater depletion globally that year. Northwestern states should be growing less water-intensive crops; areas in the east of the country that receive much more plentiful rainfall should take their place as the bread baskets of India. But shifting cultivation patterns around is politically problematic. Farmers in the northwest don't just expect to continue to grow water-intensive crops, they also want free or subsidized power with which to run the tube wells that pump out their

rapidly depleting groundwater. Climate change activists have long argued that water will be the political flashpoint of the 21st century. Water-stressed India will likely be one of the first places to test that theory. The state of Tamil Nadu complains that it doesn't receive its fair share of the waters of the Cauvery River; recently, the authority that nominally manages the river accused the government of neighboring Karnataka of holding onto water that it should have allowed to flow down to the Cauvery delta.

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PM's Lok Sabha speech: Modi's message is clear

That the Opposition is not willing to learn from its mistakes

(News Agencies)-- In his reply to the debate on the President's address to the joint session of Parliament, Prime Minister Narendra Modi combined the role of a statesman, a leader focused on governance and improving the lives of the poor, and a sharp and aggressive politician who knows how to attack the opposition where it hurt the most. Put together, Mr Modi's first major speech in the 17th Lok Sabha revealed both his political and governance approach, and the legacy he is focused on creating in this term in office.

Mr Modi used the remarkable mandate the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won under his leadership to drive home the point that citizens had endorsed the work of his government in the first five years.

He spoke about the welfare schemes which addressed the needs of the most deprived. And he emphasised that the government will continue to fight poverty. The Cabinet's decision to expand the scope of the PM Kisan scheme, which provides ₹6000 every year to all farmers, is yet another step in this direction. But this had to be accompanied with embracing modernity, and all the tools of the modern economy. From growth to manufacturing, from jobs to cutting edge research, Mr Modi's references indicated that his government's dual approach will rest on reforms with a human face, or inclusive growth. The PM also spent time focusing on the need to address the emerging water crisis in the country, and spoke of the creation of the Jal Shakti ministry as the nodal



agency to deal with the issue. This is indeed an urgent priority and it is good that the government has decided to invest energy in addressing the issue.

But it was not just governance. Armed with the mandate, Mr Modi also sought to position himself above the daily battles that dominate politics. He spoke of Jawaharlal Nehru; and he reminded the Congress that he had repeatedly given credit to all past governments for the work done for nation building even

when their own party had ignored the contribution of some of their PMs. But at the same time, the PM knew a political attack on him warranted a political response. Taking advantage of the Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury's belligerent, unparliamentary remark (now expunged) directed at him, Mr Modi told the Congress that it had attained such heights that it was now totally disconnected from the ground. This was a clever move because it once again projected Mr Modi and the

BJP as having strong roots, being the voice of the people, while the Opposition lived in an echo chamber. The fact that Mr Modi was speaking in the Lok Sabha on the anniversary of the Emergency allowed to remind the main Opposition about its past and buttress his credentials as a democratic leader. The speech revealed yet again why Mr Modi remains India's sharpest politician, addressing multiple constituencies at the same time, even as the Opposition was left looking petty and unwilling to

learn lessons from its defeat.

Solar energy can help citizens cut power bills, fight pollution

(News Agencies)- Declared as the most polluted city in the world last winter, Gurugram will have to take multi-pronged steps to improve its air quality. One relatively easier step it can take is to switch to solar energy. This option



is relatively easier because, along with reducing the reliance on polluting gensets, this clean, smoke-free source of energy can also bring commercial gains via the reduction in electricity bills. With the introduction of progressive solar policies of Haryana, presence of large buildings, more than 300 sunny days and the presence of International Solar Alliance as well as the National Institute of Solar Energy, Gurugram is quite ideally placed to become a solar-powered city.

The good news is that about 40MW of solar rooftops have already been installed in the city, up from 25MW achieved till last year. With concerted efforts, the city can easily become a 200-MW solar rooftop city by 2022.

Haryana is targeting to add 1,600-MW solar rooftops by 2022. However, only 150-MW rooftops have been installed in the state so far. The potential is huge. However, it is only when households and residential complexes start adopting solar power that the Gurugram would truly become a solar city.

With the installation of 350 kwp of solar power, Wellington RWA in DLF-5 has become the largest RWA solar installation in Haryana. At least five more residential complexes, Hewo Apartment-i, Maple Heights, Davinder Vihar, DLF Icon and Bestech Park View Residency, have also been solarised.

The not-so-good news is that as solar becomes popular, the 30% subsidy that some solar

installers enjoy may soon become a thing of the past. The subsidy will be removed first for institutions such as schools, NGOs etc and then for the households. But with falling costs of solar panel costs and the declining payback

periods, there is every merit in switching to solar energy even without subsidies. Consider this. Payback periods are now as low as four years with subsidy and six years without subsidy. This means that one can recover the cost within this period and subsequently enjoy free gains in electricity bills for the next 19-20 years easily, as the life of solar panels is about 25 years.

The real "game changer" in making solar energy economical has been the provision of net metering. A solar installer becomes a "prosumer" i.e. both producer and consumer of electricity, using the solar energy produced at his rooftop, and feeding the surplus produced into the grid.

Trump is doing all the wrong things on immigration

(News Agencies)- Since his presidential campaign began, President Trump promised to decrease illegal immigration. In recent months, his administration has pushed for additional border wall funding, expanded our military presence at the border, and threatened to increase deportations unless the congressional Democrats agree to strengthen federal asylum laws. Despite these efforts, illegal immigration has recently increased. One reason is that Trump's measures do not reduce the incentives for people to migrate illegally. To shrink illegal immigration, the US needs policies that lower these incentives, especially if these make sense independently of immigration. Expand free trade Trump recently suspended plans to impose increasing tariffs after Mexico agreed to "take strong measures" to reduce cross-border migration, but threatened to reinstate them if Mexico fails to cooperate in the future. This would harm the US and Mexican economies and increase illegal immigration. Immigration and trade are

alternative mechanisms for narrowing differences in production costs across countries. Liberalizing US trade policy would increase demand for foreign labor, shrink wage differences between the US and its trade partners, and reduce the incentive for migration. After the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mexico gained hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs.

Freer trade with Mexico, China, Cuba or South America would improve living standards in those regions and decrease incentives for illegal immigration in the long run, while improving US economic growth. For example, the United States could end its trade war with China, restart negotiations for a free-trade agreement with South America, and normalize trade relations with Cuba.

Free trade also lowers prices for consumers and export costs for businesses. The US Chamber of Commerce estimates that trade with Canada and Mexico supports 14 million jobs.

Jumping Congress ship': Shivraj Chouhan stings Rahul Gandhi

Law and order had deteriorated in Madhya Pradesh, where the Secretariat has become an "adda" of brokers, the former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister alleged.

(News Agencies) - BJP vice-president Shivraj Singh Chouhan took a dig at Rahul Gandhi Wednesday, saying he was the first to jump out of a "sinking" Congress ship instead of trying to save it till the end.

"You would not know today who president of Congress is. We heard that when any ship is sinking, it's the captain who stays on till the end to save. But, the captain is the one who jumped first from Congress' ship," he told reporters here.

Neither Prime Minister Narendra Modi nor BJP president Amit Shah or party activists were resting on their laurels after the party's massive victory in Lok Sabha polls, he said. Chouhan, who is BJP's membership 'pramukh'

(convener), said the party would soon launch its membership drive. The opposition parties were in a bad state with the SP and BSP "splitting" in Uttar Pradesh



and Gandhi "jumping the ship", he claimed. The BJP's target was to form the government after the next Assembly elections in Telangana in 2023, Chouhan said. Asked about the "debate" on the stability of the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh, he noted that it had been formed

with the support of the SP, BSP and independents. Law and order had deteriorated in Madhya Pradesh, where the Secretariat has become an "adda" of brokers, the former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister alleged.

People regret having voted out his government in the Assembly polls, Chouhan claimed and pointed out that the BJP had won all but one seat in

the Lok Sabha elections in Madhya Pradesh. The BJP was not into poaching legislators in Madhya Pradesh but it cannot help if the "many factions in the Congress disintegrate on their own", he said. The BJP would not topple the government, Chouhan added.

VIP chopper scam approver's foreign treatment trip stayed over 'new facts'



(News Agencies) - The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed a Delhi High Court order permitting Rajeev Saxena, an approver in a money laundering case related to the AgustaWestland chopper scam, to go abroad for treatment of blood cancer and other ailments. A vacation bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and B R Gavai also issued notice to Saxena on an appeal filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) challenging the June 10 Delhi High Court order permitting him to visit the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and Europe from June 25 to July 24. The bench, which stayed the High Court order for

three weeks, also asked the director of AIIMS to examine Saxena's mental and physical health and file a report within three weeks. It also directed Saxena's counsel to seek instruction on whether his sister and sister-in-law were willing to stand surety for him by depositing Rs 5 crore each as guarantee for allowing him to go abroad for treatment of blood cancer and other ailments. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the ED, said certain new facts with regard to other offences have come to light and the CBI is formally going to register an FIR against Saxena shortly.



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Mayawati's decision shows an unwillingness to learn

Many regional parties, like the BSP, have reduced themselves to family enterprises

(By our staff reporter)- Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo, Mayawati, at a meeting on Sunday, decided to appoint her brother, Anand Kumar, as the party's national vice-president. She also picked her nephew, Akash Anand, who has been assuming an increasing public profile over the past year, as a national coordinator for the party. Ms Mayawati's decision comes in the wake of a severe drubbing both her party, and the Samajwadi Party (SP), which were in an alliance, received in Uttar Pradesh (UP) in the

2019 national elections. Despite coming together, and representing a vast social alliance on paper, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was able to win 64 of the 80 seats in the state.

This was a moment for Ms Mayawati - as well as other parties from north India, from the SP to the Rashtriya Janata Dal to the Rashtriya Lok Dal, all of whom espouse the cause of social justice - to introspect. All these parties emerged as formations of the marginalised, the oppressed, and the politically unorganised

and shook power structures. The BSP of Kanshi Ram came from the Ambedkarite tradition. It represented an alternative vision, and it was supposed to be a party which brought together Dalits and backwards and ensured proportional representation to these communities. The SP came from the Lohaitie tradition. It mobilised the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in UP, and stitched together an alliance with Muslims at a time when Hindu majoritarian politics was growing. The RJD in Bihar was inspired by the Jai



Prakash Narayan struggle against Emergency, and notwithstanding his grave governance failures, Lalu Prasad Yadav provided a voice to the OBCs and Dalits and security to Muslims in Bihar. The Rashtriya Lok Dal was inspired by the Charan Singh legacy, and aimed to

represent farmers across castes and religions in West UP in particular.

But in 2019, all these parties put together have won 15 seats, across the expanse of UP and Bihar, which has 120 seats. The BSP won ten; the SP five; RJD and RLD failed to win a single seat.

Cashing in on city's water shortage

A few days later, a photographer and I conducted a recce in different areas of the city to find out if what he said was really happening. We wanted to see how many such "businesses" were thriving, how the water mafia actually operated, and the areas they supplied to.

(By our staff reporter)- A few days ago, when I set out to report on how the mafia has gained monopoly over water supply in the city's newer sectors, I came in contact with a Gurugram-based history-sheeter who has previously been accused of extortion and murder and whom I have written about earlier.

I asked him what he was doing these days, and he casually mentioned a "new business" he had invested in. He said its profit margins were high, capital costs were low and needed a bit of "muscle power". The modus

operandi involved setting up illegal borewells in secluded areas to extract water from Gurugram's already depleted water table before selling it off to builders, residents and distributors, he said.

"The water mafia is a symptom and result of Gurugram's unique problem. In the newer sectors, there is no infrastructure development because of how real estate has boomed. As a result, there is a major water shortage. Since I have the muscle power, access to illegal borewells and land to operate my business, I

was able to make good money out of the situation," the illegal supplier told me with little fear of law.

He further said that he ran his "business" on the basis of extensive research and proper strategy.

He told me how his team of young men included two tech-savvy boys, who scoured the GMDA website thoroughly to understand how water is supplied to the new sectors of the city. From the website - which is easy to access and is open for public viewing - they were able to



understand where and when new pipelines will be laid and the number of water tankers which the GMDA supplies to RWAs in developing areas on a daily basis. "From there, we got an idea about the total daily water demand in the areas and how much of the deficit we might be able to meet through tubewell

water," he said, adding that construction sites became a prime target for them as their water demand is incredibly high.

A few days later, a photographer and I conducted a recce in different areas of the city to find out if what he said was really happening.

Reimagining the Yamuna can help transform it

(By our staff reporter)- Throughout the long Delhi summer, a trickle of the city's sewage and waste run-off feeds the river Yamuna. To re- envision the river, a team of international experts comprising urban ecologists, architects and government experts have worked for six years to devise a workable solution. The result - the Yamuna River Project (YRP) - proposes a synergy between India's capital city and the river. To understand the problem, an analogy with the thermometer seems apt: if the mercury reads 103 degrees Celsius

fever on your thermometer, does it mean the thermometer is sick or it's your body? The Yamuna is the barometer of the city's cleanliness; it is simply recording what the city is doing to it. That's why the Yamuna question needs to be reframed. As one of the most rapidly urbanising megacities, Delhi confronts serious challenges, reveals inadequacies in planning, urban design and social equity. The Yamuna has been reduced to a sewage drain, absent both from the urban landscape and from the public

imagination. Over the past decade, it has become increasingly evident that no single entity - the elected or appointed - has the experience to resolve rapid urban degradation. A plethora of municipal agencies, often working at crosspurposes, and with little accountability, fail to address the synthetic nature of the city. Thus the agencies tasked with water supply and sewage treatment have little to do with entities that manage solid waste. The development authorities entrusted with planning

the housing and work spaces consistently fail to estimate the city's growth. The YRP aims to help the city and its citizen re-imagine and transform the sacred river. For centuries, the river constituted not just the defining axis but also the ecological and agricultural lifeline of the settlements preceding present day Delhi. Over the years, multiple agencies have made some progress in cleaning the river. The Delhi Jal Board has for the first time started integrating in its designs the urban design and planning

strategies. The Delhi government has taken a critical first step in consolidating the agencies dealing with water, flood control and irrigation under a single-point leadership structure. The YRP has sought to engage with this dilemma with a multifaceted approach. What if the river floodplain is re-imagined as an urban nucleus, communicating a value system that situates the capital city within its original riparian ecology? In a sense, we seek to create a sanctuary within the megacity.

Food delivery platforms must check the plastic waste that they generate

(By our staff reporter) - E-commerce food delivery platforms have really changed the way urban middle class India eats. The ease of ordering food online, quick delivery, a wide variety of cuisines to suit every pocket and taste, have all made these platforms highly popular, not just with the young generation, but even the elderly! But on the flipside, they have raised two serious concerns- while one is the quality and safety of food delivered, the other is the plastic waste generated by them. Since consumers ordering through online food delivery platforms have no way of personally checking on the eateries, the aggregators have a responsibility to ensure that the food suppliers scrupulously follow the food safety and hygiene standards

prescribed under the food safety laws and most important, that they have the required license/ registration from the food safety authority and display them online. However, the



food safety authority's crackdown on the aggregators and the eateries partnering with them have shown their utter disregard for food safety laws. In fact given the profiles of many of these e-commerce companies, consumers believed that they checked out the food businesses before putting

them up on their platforms and ensured that they complied with the food safety laws. After all, it is common knowledge that no food business can operate without a license/

registration from the state/ central food safety authorities and those in the food business ought to know this only too well. Yet, following consumer complaints of poor quality food, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) found that a considerable percentage of food businesses listed on

online platforms did not have the valid license/ registration. So much so that in July last year, FSSAI had to direct ten aggregators to immediately delist unregistered/unlicensed eateries and submit an action taken report.. In fact the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration's inspections, last October, of 347 food establishments selling food through online platforms, revealed that 112 of them did not have the required license! Worse, many of them were found preparing food in extremely unhygienic conditions. The fact that eventually, under pressure from the central food safety authority, the aggregators delisted as many as 10,500 eateries for not having the required FSSAI license, shows the extent of violation of the law.

25-year-old woman driver attacks man with iron rod in Chandigarh, arrested:Cops



(By our staff reporter) - The incident on Tuesday led to traffic snarls and her crime video went viral on social media. A 25-year-old woman driver who attacked a man with an iron rod in a road rage incident here has been arrested, police said on Wednesday. The incident on Tuesday led to traffic snarls and her crime video went viral on social media. Sheetal Sharma, a resident of Mohali, was driving a

Maruti SX4 and was reportedly reversing her car in a rash and negligent manner while Nitish was coming in a car from behind her. Both of them had an altercation following which Sharma parked her car in the middle of the road, pulled out a rod out of the vehicle and allegedly attacked Nitish. A case under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code has been registered against her, police said.

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भारतीय-अमेरिकन कम्युनिटी द्वारा घोर निंदा

वॉशिंगटन ■ हम हिंदुस्तानी

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आईएस में शामिल हुई महिला को अमेरिका ने एंटी देने से किया इंकार

वॉशिंगटन ■ हम हिंदुस्तानी

अमेरिका ने एक महिला को आईएस में शामिल होने से अस्वीकार कर दिया है। उन्होंने कहा कि यह एक बड़ा कदम है।

PTI issues show cause notice to Siyal for 'physical assault' of journalist, suspends party membership



(By our staff reporter) - Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf on Wednesday issued a show cause notice to Masroor Ali Siyal, a leader of PTI Sindh, for the "physical assault" of a journalist during a media talk show. A video had gone viral over the weekend of Siyal entering into an argument with Karachi Press Club (KPC) President Imtiaz Khan Faran during the taping of a talk show at a private TV channel. Siyal, who was seated next to Faran, is then seen standing up

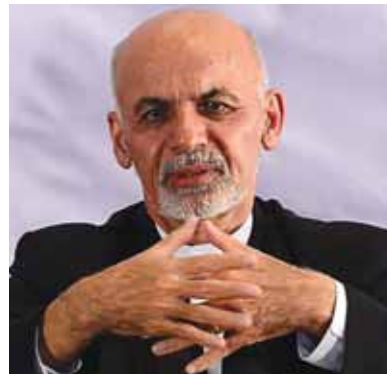
and shoving the KPC president off his seat and later hitting him. The scuffle is stopped with the intervention of the channel's management. "Your behaviour has badly damaged the reputation of the party and created an uproar in the journalist community. You are hereby given a show cause notice to explain your position within 14 days of issuance of this letter, as to why action should not be taken against you in line with the Party Constitution," says the notice handed to Siyal. According to the notice, Siyal's

case has been referred to the Standing Committee for Accountability and Discipline for necessary action as he has violated the party discipline. Siyal's membership to the party has also been suspended with immediate effect till further orders. Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Political Affairs Naeemul Haque in an early Wednesday tweet condemned the "violent reaction" of Siyal, saying "This kind of behaviour is unacceptable in PTI and is totally unworthy of a PTI Leader." He announced that "strict disciplinary action" will be taken against Masroor. PTI leaders barred from press clubs. Meanwhile, the Karachi and Lahore press clubs have placed a temporary ban on the entry of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) leaders in their premises following the alleged assault, it emerged on Wednesday.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to visit Pakistan tomorrow on PM Imran's invitation

(By our staff reporter) - Afghan President Ashraf Ghani shall be paying a two-day visit to Pakistan, beginning tomorrow, on Prime Minister Imran Khan's invitation, Radio Pakistan reported.

A high-level delegation



comprising ministers, advisors, senior officials and businessmen shall be accompanying President Ghani.

Prime Minister Imran Khan will hold delegation-level meetings with the Afghan leader, whereas President Arif Alvi will have a one-on-one meeting with his counterpart.

According to Radio Pakistan, "the wide-ranging talks between

the two sides would focus on strengthening bilateral cooperation in diverse areas including political, trade, economic, security, peace and reconciliation, education and people-to-people exchanges."

President Ghani will also visit Lahore to attend a business forum where representatives from both countries shall be participating.

The visit shall mark his third to Pakistan and follows the recent review session of the landmark Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity, said Radio Pakistan.

According to a statement by the Foreign Office spokesperson: "The people of Pakistan and Afghanistan are bound by fraternal ties reinforced by historical, religious, linguistic and cultural affinities. Closer engagement between the leaders will help foster a stronger and multi-faceted relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan."

How Band-e-Amir National Park became Afghanistan's oasis of peace

(News Agencies)- You can camp. You can picnic. You can even rent swan-shaped paddle boats to navigate one of six deep blue lakes that shimmer high in the Hindu Kush mountains, amid picturesque red-hued cliffs and rocky natural dams. Sounds like an idyllic vacation destination, until you consider that Band-e Amir National Park lies in the heart of Afghanistan, a nation still firmly under "do not travel" advisories from the United States and other countries. It's been close to 10 years since Afghanistan officially designated the roughly 600-square-kilometer slice of central Bamiyan province as a national park in the hope that it would offer citizens a respite from the turmoil that has ravaged their country. So did it work? Or like many dreams for the Afghan nation after it was wrested from control of the ultra-conservative Taliban regime nearly two decades

ago, did it fail to take root? For those who helped create the national park in 2009 after decades of delay due to war, the peaceful Band-e-Amir National Park tells an entirely different story of a country whose recent historical narrative has been defined by violence. "This park serves as an icon for the identity of the Afghan people for essentially a beacon of stability for three decades of chaos that they went through," says Alex Dehgan, the Wildlife Conservation Society's Afghanistan country director from 2006 to 2008. The WCS, along with a number of international agencies and funding partners including USAID and the United Nations Development Programme, assisted the local Afghan government in helping to establish and manage the park. Band-e-Amir National Park is located in central Afghanistan's Bamiyan

province, an area of the country that attracted worldwide recognition and international condemnation when the Taliban destroyed its famous 6th-century Buddha statues in 2001. Despite being one of the country's poorest and least developed regions, Bamiyan remains one of the safest areas of Afghanistan today. "I have been to Band-e-Amir National Park 28 times during the past 15 years and I have not heard a single shot being fired," says Afghan senator Prince Mostapha Zaher, grandson of Afghanistan's last King Mohammad Zaher Shah. "This does not mean that there are no security risks involved." Prince Zaher, who was appointed the first director-general of Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency in 2004, described the national park as "poetry for the eyes, poetry for the soul, poetry for existence."

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US Presidential Election 2020 : Democratic Candidates Debate

members of this group jumped in, interrupting and assailing each other's policies, almost from the very start. In a way, you cannot blame them; they had the advantage of anticipating what a few of the questions would be -- so they were ready to rumble.

The evening's star was Kamala Harris. She seized her moment, delivering sharp, impassioned answers that did not avoid the questions (looking at you, Bernie Sanders). She made easy-to-remember points, noting that Americans should only have to have one job to earn a decent living.

She criticized Trump's tax cuts for benefiting the rich. When her fellow candidates became too rambunctious, she shut them all down, saying "America does not want to witness a food fight. They want to know how we're going to put food on their table." And then she took issue with Biden's past position on busing, offering up an anecdote that was impossible for him to defend: Her personal story of being a child of busing herself was the viral moment of the night, hands down.

The runner-up at this debate was Pete Buttigieg. He presented himself very capably, more earnest new potential leader than youthful upstart. The greatest disappointment was Kirsten Gillibrand, for way too much interrupting and overtalking -- not a good look when you are trying to sell yourself to people who may be seeing you for the first time. And let's just say that Biden and Sanders did not have their best nights.

In general, all of these Democrats deserve commendation for discussing immigration in a thoughtful way, with policy ideas instead of ugly rhetoric. Whether the topic was migrant children or decriminalizing unauthorized entries, everyone on the stage demonstrated that they grasp the nuances and realities of this complex issue far more than our current president.

Twitter is a bad gauge for public opinion, but a decent source for the assessments of professional observers, including some who know the stakes of debates best: veteran campaign strategists and consultants from both parties. Here is a sampling of responses from them, and from some activists and writers.

No one could match Harris ...

From beginning to end, Ms. Harris dominated the debate, starting with a pithy applause line -- "America does not want a food fight; they want to know how we are going to put food on the table," she said, as her rivals shouted over one another -- and culminating with a deeply personal exchange in



which she confronted Mr. Biden over his record on race and desegregation.

"She proved that she can go after a male opponent without suffering the gender stereotype of appearing overly aggressive or overly ambitious. She looked like a winner, plain & simple." -- Patti Solis Doyle, adviser to the 2008 Obama campaign

"Hell of an exchange on race between Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. If Kamala Harris becomes president, it will be because of this moment." -- Frank Luntz, Republican consultant and pollster

"Harris directly confronting Biden on busing/segregationists was historic, powerful, and unimaginable on a presidential stage until very recently, which is itself symptomatic of a world Biden is struggling to defend." -- Rebecca Traister, writer-at-large for New York magazine

Pete Buttigieg received some tough questions, including one about a police officer's fatal shooting of a black man in South Bend, Ind., where Mr. Buttigieg is mayor. He has been off the campaign trail for much of the week dealing with the crisis. But his response at the debate, when asked why the South Bend Police Department has not added more black officers during his time in office, impressed some strategists and activists.

"Because I couldn't get it done," he said, before adding: "I could walk you through all of the things that we have done as a community, all of the steps that we took, from bias training to de-escalation, but it didn't save the life of Eric Logan. And when I look into his mother's eyes, I have to face the fact that nothing that I say will bring him back."

"I can't stop thinking about Pete Buttigieg's answer to that question. It was completely unexpected. Vulnerable, honest,

heartfelt, and not one bit of cowardice in it. It was a leader's answer." -- Charlotte Clymer, spokeswoman for Human Rights Campaign

"Once again, he took responsibility for his failure as mayor to fully address the underlying issues. But he also spoke of the incident in very human terms; of the man who was killed, his family and the impact on his community." -- David Axelrod, former senior adviser to Barack Obama

"If anyone is teaching media training classes for how to speak in English about complicated topics on television--@PeteButtigieg is masterful at it. Never mentions bills, never mentions DC garbely gook." -- Jen Psaki, former spokeswoman for Mr. Obama

But once he started tangling with Ms. Harris, things went downhill fast. There was little dispute that she came out of their exchanges victorious, and Mr. Biden bruised.

"There are very few candidates who are able to connect on an emotional and personal level with voters the way Joe Biden typically does. But in that exchange with Harris, when she looked at him and gave an intensely personal anecdote, he fell far short of doing so." -- Mo Elleithee, executive director of the Georgetown Institute of Politics and Public Service

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand didn't make as much of a mark as Ms. Harris or Mr. Buttigieg, but she did get good reviews. Kamala Harris's takedown of Joe Biden was more lethal than it seems. Of all the Democrats running for president, the two candidates who have most vigorously touted their ability to take on President Trump himself -- personally and directly -- are Joe Biden and Sen. Kamala D. Harris (D-Calif.).

It's this basic fact that helped render the big exchange between Harris and Biden on Thursday night so powerful for Harris, so potentially debilitating

for Biden -- and so revealing about the state of Democratic politics right now. Harris grabbed control of the debate with a simple phrase: "I would like to speak on the issue of race."

"I do not believe you are a racist," Harris said. She then laced into Biden over his nostalgic recollections of white supremacist senators, describing this as "hurtful" given her own personal experience of racial profiling and discrimination.

This created an interesting tension, as Harris seemed to expose personal vulnerability even while ferociously disemboweling a rival. Biden vigorously defended his longtime record on civil rights, but Harris prosecuted Biden over his past opposition to busing, which got him to falsely disavow that opposition and to stumble into a defense of local control on the issue.

As many have noted, Harris here displayed a raw ability to cross-examine an opponent that makes it easier to envision her taking on Trump. Some Trump allies are reportedly now wary of Harris.

But I'd like to argue that there are deeper layers to this exchange, ones involving what's really going on in Democratic politics right now and the ways Harris and Biden are entangled in some of these complexities.

The topic of race is absolutely central to Biden's candidacy, but it's also the source of a big and unresolved tension at its core.

Race is key to Biden's suggestion that our central imperative is defeating Trump and to Biden's claim that he's the candidate to do that. This is true in two ways: an obvious way and a largely unmentioned way.

On one hand, Biden has made his forceful denunciation of Trump's racism central to the argument that Trump is an existential threat to our national character. He launched his candidacy with a powerful

denunciation of the resurgence of white supremacy and Trump's refusal to unambiguously condemn it, and cast the election as a referendum on whether we will permanently come unmoored from our founding ideals.

Biden's discussion of race, then, is central to his aura as the candidate who will salvage our national character from Trump's degradations of it and keep the arc of our history bending toward justice. He's the American elder statesman who possesses the depth, experience and gravity to make this big argument.

On the other hand, Biden's aura of electability turns in part on his alleged ability to appeal to the blue-collar, culturally conservative whites who turned out in huge numbers for Trump amid a candidacy of virulent bigotry that had its founding spark in the conspiracy theory that the first black presidency was illegitimate.

Where is the source of that appeal to those voters supposed to lie? Partly in Biden's roots in Scranton, Pa., and in his image as an old-fashioned labor Democrat (never mind that he's far less populist on policy than Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) or Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.).

But race is also key to that appeal. When we discuss Biden's electability in the industrial Midwest, race is central to what we're talking about, and we all know it.

The most charitable way to put this is that Biden comes from a Democratic Party that precedes its new "wokeness," so those voters might be more comfortable with him. A less charitable way is that Biden's past association with things like his opposition to busing -- which meant capturing the political energy of white racial backlash -- carries an implicit racial and cultural signaling that will reassure them.

One key reason that Biden's nostalgia over white supremacist senators blew up on him is that it ripped the lid off of all this. Just as Harris does, I believe Biden when he insists he was, and is, horrified by their white supremacy.

But what still remains ambiguous is whether Biden does or does not conceive the source of his claimed appeal to conservative whites as rooted in subtle appeals to blue-collar white identity politics, as Jamelle Bouie has detailed.

This ambiguity was pushed forward when Biden adamantly refused to back off his praise for segregationist senators and, worse, when he dressed down African American Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) over the matter.

Budget 2019 Can Nirmala Sitharaman solve India's job crisis?

In fact, noted industry bodies including Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and FICCI have already explained the correlation between creating jobs and boosting growth.

Given the present economic scenario, it may not be possible for the government to invest large funds towards employment generation, but there are many ways in which it could at least kick off the long-term process.

CURRENT JOB OUTLOOK

India's unemployment rate stood

at 8.1 per cent as of June 25, 2019, according to data released by Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). It is also official that India's unemployment rate has touched a 45-year high, spelling more trouble for the Narendra Modi government, which promised to create one crore jobs every year since 2014 when it first came to power.

Meanwhile, the World Bank said India needs to create 8.1 million jobs annually to achieve its growth targets. But creating crores of jobs

annually would require a large pool of investments - something that the government may struggle to accomplish as it needs to focus on fiscal consolidation to avoid further inflationary pressure.

CHOOSING THE BIGGER BATTLE

Top economists have advised the Narendra Modi government to focus on creating more jobs through selective structural reforms - both short and long-term - even if it takes a toll on the

fiscal deficit. As India Ratings' principal economist Sunil Kumar Saha put it, factors such as inflation, fiscal deficit, and current account deficit are issues of a lower priority but fixing dwindling GDP growth and financial sector woes are the need of the hour. In fact, some officials from the finance ministry have already indicated that the government is likely to overshoot its fiscal deficit target for the year as it needs to actively focus on fixing the ailing economy. Given the current sce-

nario, the Modi government may not hesitate pulling fiscal strings, given its proven record of reducing the fiscal deficit in 2014 after coming to power. And with elections out of the way, it has much more space to accommodate some fresh measures to propel the economy. While fiscal deficit could rise to as much as 3.6 per cent of the GDP, it will offer additional funds for boosting the economy - a move that could help the government resolve the issue of falling tax collections.

Who won the debate?

She called President Donald Trump's health care policy "all foam and no beer" - evoking memories of Walter Mondale's "Where's the beef?" zinger, but also a twist on the "All hat and no cattle" expression. She hit Trump later for conducting "foreign policy in [his] bathrobe at 5 in the morning."

But it was her spontaneous retort at Washington Gov. Jay Inslee that made the biggest mark, after Inslee touted his record on abortion rights as stronger than his fellow candidates.

"I just want to say there's three women up here that have fought pretty hard for a woman's right to choose," said Klobuchar,

prompting a roar of applause.

Biggest Fade: Elizabeth Warren The Massachusetts senator was the only one of the top-five-polling candidates on stage, and she dominated the first half of the two-hour debate. She was the first candidate to be asked a second question, then a third. She was asked her fourth question before anyone else was called on a third time.

Warren made the most of those opportunities. Without Bernie Sanders on the stage with her, Warren had the most detailed (and most liberal) policy plans on the stage. The first issues discussed - the economy and health care - were precisely in her wheelhouse.

Botswana legalises elephant hunting and Zimbabwe gets ready to sell them

number and high levels of human-elephant conflict and the consequent impact on livelihoods was increasing.

2) Predators appear to have increased and were causing a lot of damage as they kill livestock in large numbers.

3) There is a negative impact of the hunting suspension on livelihoods, particularly for community-based organisations that were previously benefiting from consumptive utilisation.

4) The lack of capacity within the Department of Wildlife and National Parks leads to long response time to problem animal control reports.

5) The general consensus from those consulted was that the hunting ban should be lifted. They have also uplifted the shoot-to-kill policy.

However, Zimbabwe is taking a lesser cruel path. Zimbabwe is sending their elephants to other countries. According to reports by Bloomberg, Zimbabwe plans to sell their elephants to Angola and is ready to ship them to anyone who wants to buy.

This is not the first time,

Zimbabwe has previously made approximately 2.7 million dollars by selling elephants to China and the United Arab Emirates.

These decisions have divided the internet into two polar opposite groups. One group that is absolutely against the decision and the other one that comprises of the people who stay in these countries and are totally pro the steps being taken.

Even the famous Ellen tweeted about the same.

Supreme Court deals blow to Trump's push to add citizenship question to census

However, critics contend that immigrant households could skip the census over fears the information could be used to scrutinize their legal status.

Roberts wrote in the majority opinion that the administration's rationale appeared to be "contrived" and suggested that Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross presented a misleading reason for adding the question when he said it had been requested by Justice Department officials to protect the rights of minority voters.

"In the secretary's telling, Commerce was simply acting on a routine data request from another agency," he wrote. "Yet the materials before us indicate that Commerce went to great lengths to elicit the request from DOJ (or any other willing agency). ... We are presented, in other words, with an explanation for agency action that is incongruent with what the

record reveals about the agency's priorities and decisionmaking process."

The ruling effectively invites the administration to make another decision on whether to add the question to the census and to develop a new record justifying that decision. It's unclear whether Commerce Department officials could complete that process and sustain it through further legal challenges in time to get the question onto the 2020 questionnaire.

Justice Department lawyers repeatedly told the courts that census questions needed to be finalized by the end of this month in order to produce print versions of the questionnaire. However, a Census Bureau official said that process could be delayed to as late as October with additional funding for the decennial count.

Trump, who was traveling in Japan for a economic summit when the ruling was released, lashed out

against it on Twitter and said he would try to delay the census to get the question on the form.

"Seems totally ridiculous that our government, and indeed Country, cannot ask a basic question of Citizenship in a very expensive, detailed and important Census, in this case for 2020," the president wrote. "I have asked the lawyers if they can delay the Census, no matter how long, until the United States Supreme Court is given additional information from which it can make a final and decisive decision on this very critical matter. Can anyone really believe that as a great Country, we are not able the [sic] ask whether or not someone is a Citizen. Only in America!"

While the census is mandated by the Constitution, federal law calls for the count to be taken "as of the first day of April" next year.

GOP candidate for Queens DA says he may not challenge Democrat Tiffany Cabán



some 3,000 absentee ballots. "I sorta sensed a lot of the enthusiasm for her. I expected it," Kogan said of the results. Kogan struggled to outline a policy platform, and simply laughed when asked what it was.

"Just to keep up the present administration and improve on it if I can," he said, referring to longtime Queens DA Richard Brown, who died in May.

While Kogan was circumspect about his prospects, the Queens GOP said the party is all in on him.

"I'm thinking that we have a really good Republican

candidate, and we're gonna give it our all," county chairwoman Joann Ariola told The Post. "We're committed to running a full-fledged race."

She was shocked to learn about Kogan's reticence.

"That is actually news to me, but I will speak with Daniel later," she said. "The county has every intention of making this a campaign."

Politics watchers have suggested that the party could nominate a new candidate if it puts Kogan up for a judgeship instead, but both Kogan and Ariola denied there have been any discussions on doing so.

Democrats get their man - Mueller - for blockbuster hearings

(News Agencies)- Robert Mueller's long-awaited public testimony next month will give Democrats their best and perhaps last chance to seize on the Russia scandal to try to inflict a decisive political wound on President Donald Trump. The former special counsel's appearance on Capitol Hill on July 17, announced late Tuesday, represents a serious blow to a President who has spent weeks misrepresenting Mueller's final report. Democrats hope the spectacle of the respected former FBI director testifying on television will move Americans against Trump in a way Mueller's dense, 448-page report did not.

The appearance also has the potential to significantly reshape the debate among Democrats over whether to open impeachment hearings, a step so far opposed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who fears a political backlash. "Our interest is for the American people to hear it from him," House Judiciary Chairman Jerry Nadler, a New York Democrat, said on "Cuomo Prime Time." "There has been a campaign of misrepresentation by Attorney General Barr ... by the President, who keeps saying the report found no collusion, no obstruction. That's not true either way." Trump quickly responded to news of Mueller's

looming appearance with a two-word tweet: "Presidential Harassment!" The twin hearings, in the House Judiciary and Intelligence committees, have the potential to become one of the most riveting days of political television and congressional dramas in years. "He commands such credibility in a town where sometimes it feels like the truth doesn't matter anymore," Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, an Illinois Democrat who's a member of the Intelligence Committee, told CNN's Don Lemon. "This is Mueller unplugged. I think there is going to be a Super Bowl-sized audience for it." Should the appearance not

live up to expectations of political pyrotechnics, however, it could further help Trump's aggressive bid to shift the political narrative away from the Russia storm as he campaigns for reelection. Democratic struggles The breakthrough, after Mueller reluctantly signaled that he will not resist a subpoena, comes with House Democrats struggling to effectively build a public case against Trump. Days of private hearings, transcripts of interviews of the President's associates and Democratic outrage have failed to manifestly alter baked-in public perceptions of Trump and the Russia probe -- which



broadly follow partisan loath to be drawn into the lines. Most polls show a majority of Americans still oppose what would be the traumatic national experience of impeachment. "The report is my testimony," Mueller said in May. But Democrats hope that his appearance will be a powerful moment in itself and they will seek to draw out the former special counsel -- a deeply experienced witness after decades in Washington.

Photos Of Drowned Salvadoran Migrant, 2-Year-Old Daughter Spark Outrage

(News Agencies)- Shocking images of a drowned Salvadoran migrant and his two-year-old daughter who died while trying to cross the Rio Grande river from Mexico to the United States have sparked outrage, underscoring the dangers faced by asylum-seekers.

Twenty-five-year-old Oscar Martinez Ramirez fled El Salvador with his 21-year-old wife and their daughter and decided to make the risky crossing from Mexico to the US on Sunday afternoon,

according to a Mexican court report seen by AFP. Ramirez carried the little girl on his back, stowing her inside his t-shirt to keep her safe as they attempted to cross the river. But the pair were swept away by violent currents, drowning before her mother's eyes, who survived the ordeal and arrived on shore.

The two bodies were found Monday in Matamoros in Tamaulipas state.

A series of haunting photographs showing the young father and child lying face-down in water

have stirred anger in El Salvador and Mexico, where the government had faced sharp criticism for its treatment of migrants.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, a leftist who took office in December vowing to protect migrants' rights, has previously come under fire over an AFP journalist's images last week of heavily armed National Guardsmen forcibly detaining two women and a girl at the Rio Grande.

On Tuesday, the Mexican leader said the 15,000 troops his government has

deployed to the US border do not have orders to stop migrants from crossing, and vowed to investigate the controversial detention. International law protects the right of undocumented migrants to cross borders to seek asylum, and Mexico has not typically stopped them from doing so at its northern border.

But Lopez Obrador is facing pressure from US President Donald Trump on the issue, and his government is eager to show results and avoid the punitive tariffs the US leader threatened last month to



impose on Mexican goods. southern border with On June 7, the two 6,000 National Guardsmen. Washington reached an agreement, with Mexico has given Mexico 45 days to take action.

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Indian-Origin Woman Who Pinned Singapore Cop in a Chokehold Jailed

Resshmi B Rasmi shoved Station Inspector Gerald Chan Wee Ming in the chest and pinned him against a wall in a chokehold while he was trying to question her and several others

(By our Staff Reporter)- A 21-year-old Indian-origin woman in Singapore was jailed for three months on Wednesday for assaulting a police officer who tried to question her about a scuffle involving at least six persons. Resshmi B Rasmi shoved Station Inspector Gerald Chan Wee Ming in the chest and pinned him against a wall in a chokehold while he was trying to question her and several others at Orchard Towers shopping centre, a shopping complex with

pubs, in October. Chan, 42, managed to break free from her but Rasmi became violent when his police colleagues tried to arrest her, the Straits Times reported. The woman struggled and swung her arms around, smacking the left hand of another policeman, 21-year-old Sergeant Chng Yong En, the report said. She was arrested after more police officers arrived at the scene. Rasmi pleaded guilty to one count of assaulting Station Inspector Chan. One count of using crimi-

nal force on Sergeant Chng was considered during sentencing. Deputy Public Prosecutor Tan Zhi Hao said that at around 10 am on October 27 last year, police received a call about a commotion in front of a club in the Orchard Road shopping mall. The policemen arrived at the scene and saw a scuffle involving a group of at least six people, including Rasmi.

They managed to defuse the situation and were trying to find out more about it when a man from

the group suddenly ran into a nearby toilet. The other people, including Rasmi, followed him inside, and the officers called for backup, as they did not want to lose control of the situation. Tan said the group became increasingly rowdy and the two officers blocked the door of the toilet to stop them from leaving. When the officers attempted again to establish the facts of the incident, "the group refused to comply and tried to push their way out of the toilet", Tan said. Rasmi, who was

inside the toilet, then charged towards Chan and assaulted him. The officer had a bruise and a scratch mark on his chest and was given two days of medical leave. On Wednesday, Tan told District Judge Luke Tan that Rasmi's actions "could potentially have caused the incident to escalate".

Offenders convicted of assaulting a policeman can be jailed for up to seven years and fined or caned. Rasmi cannot be caned, as she is a woman.

U.S., state, and local enforcement stops companies responsible for over one billion calls



(By our Staff Reporter)- The Federal Trade Commission and its law enforcement partners today announced a major crackdown on illegal robocalls, including 94 actions targeting operations around the country that are responsible for more than one billion calls pitching a variety of products and services including credit card interest rate reduction services, money-making opportunities, and medical alert systems. The joint crackdown, "Operation Call it Quits," is part of the Commission's ongoing effort to help stem the tide of universally loathed pre-recorded telemarketing calls. It also includes new information to help educate consumers about illegal robocalls. In addition, the FTC continues to promote the development of technology-based solutions to block robocalls and combat caller ID spoofing.

"Operation Call it Quits" includes four new cases and three new settlements from the FTC alone. The U.S. De-

partment of Justice (DOJ) filed two of the new cases on the FTC's behalf. Collectively, the defendants in these cases were responsible for making more than a

billion illegal robocalls to consumers nationwide.

Today's announcement brings the number of cases the FTC has brought against illegal robocallers and Do Not Call (DNC) violators to 145. "We're all fed up with the tens of billions of illegal robocalls we get every year," said Andrew Smith, Director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection. "Today's joint effort shows that combatting this scourge remains a top priority for law enforcement agencies around the nation." In addition to the actions by the FTC, 25 federal, state, and local agencies have brought 87 enforcement actions as part of the initiative. State partners announcing enforcement ac-

tions today include the Attorneys General Offices for Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia; the Consumer Protection Divisions of the District Attorneys for the Counties of Los Angeles, San Diego, Riverside, and Santa Clara, California; the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; and the Los Angeles City Attorney.

In addition, the United States Attorneys' Offices for the Northern District of Georgia, Middle District of Florida, and Southern District of Texas, with support from the Treasury In-

spector General for Tax Administration, have contributed five criminal actions.

"Every year, our office gets more consumer complaints about unwanted robocalls than just about any other issue," said Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill. "At best, these calls represent a nuisance for families just wanting to enjoy peace and privacy without needless disturbances interrupting their routines. At worst, they represent scams that successfully steal people's identities or hard-earned money. In Indiana, we are quite serious about stopping illegal robocalls, and our alliances with such partners as the FTC will prove a valuable asset in this mission."

India and the US must aim to stabilise the trade ties

(By our Staff Reporter)- India and the United States (US) are back to rubbing each other up the wrong way. Both governments remain committed to the sense that they are, in the words of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, "natural allies". Yet their very proximity has meant the recurrence of ever-increasing points of friction. India and US trade relations may be darkening right now but it is doing so in part because the economic relationship is much deeper and wider than it has ever been. It is opportune that US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is coming to New Delhi this week and kicking off his government's engagement with the second Modi government. The trade

problems are an outlier in an otherwise sturdy relationship. India and the US have transformed their defence relationship in the past few years. India is a large purchaser of US arms; the two will be signing another round of defence agreements soon; and there is no country in the world with which New Delhi does more in terms of military exercises. The US adoption of the term "Indo-Pacific" is indicative that the two align on the most important strategic issue of the century: how to handle the rise of China. Even on the economic front, there is largely comity. The two worldviews are remarkably similar. There is some geopolitical space between

them, but it is minimal compared to the yawning gap between New Delhi and Beijing, or even New Delhi and Moscow. In the recent diplomatic struggles with Pakistan, Washington sided squarely with New Delhi.

Many of the issues that constitute the present trade dispute are not new. However, under the Trump administration trade issues have achieved a new prominence and the US president will not budge on these issue with any country. The real problem is the breakdown in trust between the two governments that followed earlier rounds of negotiations - a consequence of short-sightedness by negotiators on both sides. There are also

larger trends in the international trading system about which New Delhi seems behind the curve, especially in cross-border data movement and the declining relevance of the World Trade Organisation. The best solution would be a long-term framework agreement on trade and investment policies that would help stabilise the economic relationship. In the next few weeks, however, a set of quick agreements on a cluster of issues and an agreement to talk substantially about the others would be good enough. And, amid all this, for both sides to keep in mind that they are fundamentally on the same side about the things that really matter.

Who killed Girl with Peacock Tattoo 8 years ago in Delhi? Another death solves mystery

The discovery of an unidentified woman's body in a stuffed in airbag dumped outside the New Delhi Railway Station was the beginning of a sensational murder case that remained cold for eight long years. The death of a man living under an assumed identity at a Gurgaon hospital earlier this week was its end. In between, were years of frustration during which the Delhi Police tried to take the murder case to its logical end -- nabbing the murderer. The murder case is not cold anymore, but its end remains frustrating. THE GIRL WITH THE PEACOCK TATTOO On February 11, 2011, the Delhi Police was informed of a suspicious bag dumped outside

the New Delhi Railway Station. Opened, the bag revealed the body of a woman with a peacock tattoo on her abdomen. For an entire fortnight, the woman remained unidentified. Investigators had only one clue to go on -- the tattoo on her abdomen. The tattoo quickly became a talking point when the police published notices seeking information about the dead woman. The media latched on, calling the woman 'The Girl with the Peacock Tattoo' -- it had just been two years since the Steig Larson novel *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* took the world by storm. The thriller novel's film adaptation starring Rooney Mara and Daniel Craig was also in the making.



Nobody initially came forward to claim the woman's body. Frustrated, the Delhi Police performed the woman's last rites on February 23. FINALLY, A NAME The very day the police performed

the woman's last rites, a man approached investigators and identified the girl as his daughter. And finally, 13 days after *The Girl with the Peacock Tattoo* was found stuffed in a bag the police had a name -- Neetu Solanki. Neetu was in her 20s and a bright student who had a law degree. According to a profile published by Livemint, she had a reputation for taking on men who harassed or even teased her. She was petite but "that's the mistake people made", her sister Alka told the publication. Her nerve and audacity was the reason the disbelieving family did not initially respond to the police notices seeking information on the dead, unidentified woman

with a peacock tattoo. "Neetu wasn't someone to be killed or overpowered. She would never die without a fight," Alka told Livemint. Sometime in the middle of 2010, Neetu, who had been working at a call centre, told her family that she was moving to Singapore to work. That was a lie. In fact, according to the police, Neetu had met a man with whom she had fallen in love. The man, who was in his late twenties, was identified as Raju Gehlot, an employee with Air India. Around the same time Neetu told her family she was moving to Singapore, Raju started reporting absent at work. It turns out, Neetu and Raju had started living together in Delhi.

With Narendra Modi taking lead, how BJP is appropriating Congress's issues, leaders

ationalism, protection of cows from slaughter, eradicating poverty, economic reforms, digital technology are today political issues that most identify with the BJP, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as champion. But none of these issues originally belonged to the BJP. They were all Congress's issues. When India got independence, the Congress was symbol of nationalism and talked about bringing development to the country. The Congress had been the ruling party at the Centre for 55 of nearly 73 years post-independence period. It won elections between 1951-52 and

1967 primarily on its nationalistic appeal. In 1971 Lok Sabha election, garibi hatao (eradicate poverty) was the poll slogan of Indira Gandhi's Congress. She got a thumping majority in the election. During the campaign, her common refrain was - "they say Indira hatao, I say garibi hatao". Incidentally, in 2019 Lok Sabha election, PM Modi told his audiences the same - "The Opposition is working on Modi hatao campaign while I am on garibi hatao mission". Like Indira Gandhi, PM Modi won a bigger majority in the polls. It was the Indira Gandhi government that first began

economic reforms with an intent to integrate India's market with the world's. The economy opened up fully under PV Narasimha Rao government when the then Finance Minister Manmohan Singh presented the watershed budget in July 1991. The BJP was against those economic reforms. Several years down the line, the BJP learnt from the policies of the Congress and amended its stand on economy from being conservative to market-oriented. Today, the BJP is the votary of economic reforms and the Congress is opposing all such attempts tooth and nail.



Secularism has been a core political issue for the Congress. From Pandit Nehru to Sonia Gandhi, all Congress presidents vowed to protect secularism. Indira Gandhi, in fact, got the word, "secular" inserted in the Preamble to the Constitution

when she imposed emergency in 1970s. There is another side to it. During the time of Pandit Nehru, the Congress reflected Hindu sentiments more and made all attempts to win the trust of Muslims.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez learns to play the insider's game

In Queens, she's a storm-the-barricades political outsider. But back in Washington, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is working the system. Ocasio-Cortez once again confronted the powerful New York Democratic machine this week and won - helping propel a little-known, left-wing candidate to likely victory in Queens' district attorney primary, over an establishment pick backed by some of her own colleagues. On Capitol Hill, however, Ocasio-Cortez met with Speaker Nancy Pelosi to reshape a contentious spending package for the southern border. And while the

New York Democrat ultimately opposed the bill on the floor Tuesday, she declined to mobilize her army of social media followers against it or rile up the progressive base in a bid to tank it. The freshman firebrand later said that she and her progressive colleagues were "holding out as long as possible" against Democratic leaders to build leverage, a move that she said helped secure key policy wins. "We continued to hold out, and all of a sudden, what we were told was not possible was suddenly possible in order to secure these votes," Ocasio Cortez said of the

Congressional Progressive Caucus' ability to change the bill. "We didn't necessarily have the votes to stop the House version, but I think that's why it's important for us to record our objections to it," she said. "I think we were actually very successful." The latest episode over the border bill underscores Ocasio-Cortez's approach to Congress six months into her hotly anticipated turn in Washington. The progressive star has indeed begun to exert power - but subtly and not the way most people expected. Despite many predictions to the contrary, she



hasn't opted to torment leadership as the conservative Freedom Caucus once did to GOP leaders. Instead, she's working with party elders. It's also a stark contrast from how she's used her huge

megaphone back home, where Ocasio-Cortez helped chase Amazon out of New York to the dismay of Democratic leaders and crown the next district attorney of Queens.

How a luxury hotel was built over newly discovered ancient ruins

Modern architecture and archaeology don't typically go hand in hand. However, the two mixed in an unprecedented way when ancient ruins were discovered under what was to become the Antakya Museum Hotel in Turkey.

The project started when Turkish entrepreneur Necmi Asfuro?lu set out to build a luxury hotel on approximately 200,000 square feet of land in the center of Antioch. His land in the southeastern part of the country is entrenched in history and located near the iconic pilgrimage site of the Church of St. Peter.

When his team began drilling for a basement, they discovered a number of archaeological ruins under the site that dated back to the third century B.C. and included traces from 13 different civilizations. Asfuro?lu still wanted to build his hotel but could not compromise the ruins he had discovered, so he brought in Emre Arolat Architecture

(EAA) and the firm's New York director, Özge Ertoptam??.

"We were excited by the opportunity to do something that has never been done before," said Ertoptam??. "But we also had our doubts whether something could actually be done around the exquisite findings." EAA's outlook changed when the firm discovered an area within the site where there were no ruins. That's because it was the former location of the Parmenius Creek riverbed.

"That is the point where we had the idea, that we could build something, not in it, but above it, by supporting the structure on minimal points where there are no ruins," said Ertoptam??.

EAA now had a plan to marry two different typologies - a public museum where archaeological preservation could continue and a private hotel. Ertoptam?? explained, however, the design was constantly evolving and took about three years. She told



Fox News about an incredible discovery when they were digging for a well, which forced her team to rework their calculations. "There are 66 columns that the building is rising on, and each point is calculated to be on a spot with no ruins, and there are wells to support each of the 66 pillars that are dug underground by hand," said Ertoptam??. "At one point,

however, there was a discovery of a great mosaic in a location where we were going to place a column." The mosaic they found dates all the way back to the second century A.D. and includes exquisite panels with a myriad of mythological figures. "We had to redo all of our calculations and find a new place for the pillar, but it was worth it because it is one of the most exquisite pieces

in the collection," said Ertoptam??.

Ertoptam?? explained that while her team ran into challenges, the project and history inspired her. "The building is a product of today, a product of present, but within it, you are always living together with history in an unprecedented way, and that is the most challenging and rewarding part of this project," said Ertoptam??.

I travelled to a future where AI cameras track your every move



I AM staring into the future of security... and it thinks I'm under 15 years old. Inside a giant hall are hundreds of stands with companies showing off their technology, from artificially intelligent video analysis to fingerprint scanners that could replace credit cards.

'deep learning' are everywhere, but 'privacy' is nowhere in sight" "Deep learning", "security" and "AI" are emblazoned on multiple banners throughout IFSEC, a large security conference at the ExCeL exhibition centre in London. Booths are laden with high-end security cameras, but tellingly, the word "privacy" is nowhere in sight. ...

How smartphone technology is being used to combat memory loss

In order to assist those living with age-related memory loss - including people with Alzheimer's disease and dementia - researchers at the University of Toronto have developed digital technology to help people recall and retain their memories for longer periods of time.

"The HippoCamera is a smartphone-based app that is designed to mimic the function of the Hippocampus, which is a part of the brain that we know is damaged in Alzheimer's disease," said cognitive neuroscientist Morgan Barense on CTV News Channel Thursday. The hippocampus is an area of the brain involved in the creation of memories and is associated with learning and emotions. "Basic science taught us a lot about how the brain supports memory and also how the brain is affected by Alzheimer's disease," Barense said.

"In all of our pockets we have an enormous amount of computing power, so we said can we put these two things together?" Barense said their technology is different from just taking a video on your phone to rewatch later because their app simulates hippocampal replay, mimicking the actual processes the brain uses to learn and recall memories.. Hippocampal replay is when a memory is repeatedly 'broadcast' to the rest of the brain repeatedly, which stimulates the cortex

and causes the memory to be learned and retained. "In Alzheimer's disease the hippocampus is damaged," said Barense. "The idea being that the HippoCamera could scaffold that [and] could simulate this Hippocampal replay." The results have



been promising. Their research subjects - young people, healthy older people and older people starting to show signs of Alzheimer's disease - have shown a "25 per cent boost in memories" and "everyday events [being] recalled for a much longer of time" said Barense. "We're also finding enhanced brain activity... which is associated with memories that were replayed using the app," she said. Barense said researchers plan to roll out the app to people in nursing homes, including individuals who have more severe memory impairments.

India's Exotic Funds Are A \$40 Billion Time-Bomb For Investors

(News Agencies)- Even as the fate of India's shadow banks swings precariously between unexpected defaults and sudden downgrades, there's trouble brewing in another unlit corner of finance. Exotic funds, designed for wealthy investors, have grown to \$40 billion from nothing in just seven years, expanding by 71% in the 12 months through March. Since September, when the surprise bankruptcy of infrastructure financier IL&FS Group triggered a refinancing squeeze for property developers, investors have committed an additional \$9 billion to these so-called alternative investment funds.

Nothing grows this fast in finance

without storing up trouble for the future. In this case, accidents may occur because of a weak property market, leveraged developers and their troubled financiers, the shadow banks. Since nonbank finance companies are facing a liquidity shortage of their own, they're passing on their illiquid, poor-quality builder loans to bespoke funds by indicating 20%-plus returns to investors. Distributors aren't complaining. While the market regulator has put a leash on the expense ratio of publicly distributed mutual funds, there isn't even a strict disclosure requirement on the 6%-10% fees that can be earned upfront for selling pipe dreams privately to

1,000 people, each of whom has to be able to commit at least \$143,000 to qualify.

That's a ridiculously low threshold for a buyer-beware product free to invest in unlisted securities. Whether potential IPO candidates, young startups, distressed assets, commodities or builder debt, alternative investment funds take complex, risky bets.

An economy growing at its slowest pace in five years isn't exactly a cornucopia of easy money. Truly wealthy individuals, who have the stomach for venture capital, private equity or hedge fund-type opportunities outside of public markets, have trained investment staff who can evaluate



exotic funds for their family offices. Instead, these private pools are being hawked to the middle class as get-rich-quick schemes.

Relationship managers at banks are pushing them even to unwitting octogenarians who just need

vanilla tax-free bonds to generate a regular income. Stories of sharp practices and broken promises are beginning to swirl, and conversations with industry sources suggest there's more trouble ahead.

Bitcoin climbs above \$11,000 as memories of popped bubble fade

Bitcoin surged as high as \$11,251.21 on Monday, a 13% gain from late Friday that put it at the highest levels since March 2018. It was at \$10,815 as of 7:10 a.m. in Hong Kong.

(News Agencies)- Bitcoin traded above \$11,000 for the first time in 15 months, recouping more than half of the parabolic increase that captured the attention of mainstream investors before the cryptocurrency bubble burst last year. "The bounce-back of Bitcoin has been fairly extraordinary," said George McDonough, chief executive and co-founder of London-based blockchain and cryptocurrency investment firm KR1 Plc. "Money didn't leave the asset behind, it just sat on the sidelines waiting to get back in." Bitcoin surged as high as \$11,251.21 on Monday, a 13% gain from late Friday that put it at the highest levels since March 2018. It was at \$10,815

as of 7:10 a.m. in Hong Kong. The largest cryptocurrency had a furious run higher in late 2017 that culminated with a top above \$19,500, before an almost-as-relentless move downward over much of 2018. It languished around the \$3,300 to \$4,100 range for several months. Bitcoin's ride back accelerated in April, puzzling onlookers trying to pinpoint a reason for the surge. A study by Indexica, an alternative data provider, showed three main drivers: a more complex conversation surrounding Bitcoin, fewer concerns about fraud and a shift in the tense of how Bitcoin is talked about from the past to the future. "The market

has matured greatly since the last time Bitcoin crossed \$10,000," said Matt Greenspan, a senior market analyst at eToro. "This run is far more justified given the current level of adoption." In contrast with last year, there are now signs of renewed mainstream interest in cryptocurrencies and the underlying blockchain technology, most prominently Facebook Inc.'s Libra. The social-media giant is working with a broad group of partners from Visa Inc. to Uber Technologies Inc. to develop the system, which has already attracted attention and criticism from politicians raising privacy and security concerns. The advent of Libra "is validating the



crypto space and sending all the major digital coins higher," said Edward Moya, chief market strategist at Oanda Corp. in New York. "Bitcoin volatility is likely to persist, with \$12,000 and \$15,000 as the next two critical resistance levels." Still, the speed of the rally has some observers warning caution is once again warranted. To Whitney Tilson, founder of Empire Financial

Research and a former hedge-fund manager, Bitcoin is "exhibit A" in the lexicon of "scams that enrich insiders at the expense of average folks." "Don't get fooled by the dead-cat bounce this year," Tilson said in comments last week. "Mark my words: A year from now, it will be a lot lower. This is a techno-libertarian pump-and-dump scheme that will end in ruin."

Enforcement Directorate attaches assets worth over Rs 9,000 crore in Sterling Biotech PMLA case

The officials said a provisional order of attachment was issued by the central probe agency under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

(News Agencies)- The ED has attached assets worth over Rs 9,000 crore in connection with its money laundering probe against G u j a r a t - b a s e d pharmaceutical firm Sterling Biotech, which is allegedly involved in a multi-crore bank fraud case, officials said Wednesday.

The officials said a provisional order of attachment was issued by the central probe agency under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The value of the attached properties, including those overseas, is stated to be at Rs 9,778 crore. It is alleged

that the company took loans of over Rs 5,000 crore from a consortium led by Andhra Bank, which had turned into non-performing assets. The total volume of the alleged loan default is pegged at Rs 8,100 crore. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) registered

a criminal case in the alleged bank fraud scam based on a Central Bureau of Investigation FIR and charge sheet. The promoters of the firm, alleged to be the main conspirators of the bank fraud, are the Sandesara brothers of Vadodara and they are absconding.



The Bitcoin Bubble Is On



exchange and sell it for BTC and your onscreen balance of Bitcoin goes up, but there is no BTC to cover it. You only find this out when you come to try to withdraw. Shady participants are the Achilles' heel of crypto so you have to be on your toes.

Because of this heightened risk you need to be very careful if you are trading on margin. I am pretty sure that some participants are trying to 'stop loss' drive their clients out of their positions and steal their money.

This looks like a recent example from June 25, 2019:

While it might be a very rich idiot dumping their money carelessly, it is more likely a 'stop drive.' If you have an automatic stop loss, this sort of move can be manipulated to pour your money into the platform holder's account. Such a villainous exchange simple knows where the stops are, works out what they need to sell onto the BID, puts their orders in low on the BID book. They then dump on the bid and trigger stop loss sells, which pour onto their orders. They have sold high and bought low and seen the price snap back up and the stop losses customers have lost a packet.

There are several things a trader needs to do in this volatile environment. Lower their leverage and keep their stops mental and away from round numbers and the platform's awareness. It is and always has been a sad fact that leverage kills and the more you have the faster the demise. In crypto, security hygiene is a must. Rather than sweat the wild gyrations in Bitcoin's price, now is the time to sweat about the security of your crypto.

I think it's Iran and the US/China trade war, others think it's the impact of the Facebook, 'Facebank' move with their Libra project. We could both be right. Whatever the reason, the rise is escalating and moving to levels I've predicted - but at a faster pace than I was expecting.

Today's move hits levels where I'm expecting a pause and some period of sideways trading, but the market won't listen to me.

If this pace keeps up we are going to hit the bubble phase ahead of time, which means we might be in for an early correction too. This will be great for traders because volatility is their fuel but it is not so good for investors, who hate a crazy ride.

I am expecting new highs in the low 20ks, but I'd prefer them to be in the months ahead, not in a few days' time and only for an hour or two. The technical setup looks tremendous. You can judge a parabolic move by the scale of its base and the current base makes for a breathtaking projection: I won't even bother drawing it, it's just too wild. If this is the ride we are going on over the next days, set your exit price or if you plan to HODL for years,

best look away. The thing is, this move is not driven by FOMO (fear of missing out) like last time, there are no hordes of ingenues wanting in, this move is driven by crypto's use cases and the potential adoption of crypto by the mainstream via Facebook's move.

I am expecting a pause here as per my previous article a few days ago but this kind of commodity price spike starts to look like the vertical is developing. The drivers of this move are emergent and we are mid stage of a consequent repricing, that might not take a rest. The drivers of this move are not going to subside anytime soon and will even increase rather than lessen.

Now a cautionary. Companies short of BTC, are going to be in desperate trouble right now and these might include some of the more sketchy exchanges, who might have turned their platforms into the equivalent of crypto fractional reserve banks. An exchange can issue you phony BTC on their exchange because balances are accounting numbers, not coins in wallets. So you can add your Litecoin or Dogecoin to a wallet in an

IBM, Orbs, ConsenSys Work Together On Global Blockchain Settlement Platform For Telecoms



The ITW Global Leaders' Forum (GLF), which is a network of leaders from the world's largest wholesale carriers, announced Monday the launch of a blockchain-based platform. Known as the Communications Blockchain Network (CBN), this will revolutionize the ICT Service Provider industry's commercial settlement infrastructure, representing an opportunity worth billions to the global industry. The CBN is expected to go live in the coming months and will be governed by a collaborative, industry-wide framework. Currently, 11 carriers have agreed to support the establishment of the platform, including A1 Telekom Austria, China Telecom Global, Colt Technology Services, Deutsche Telekom Global Carrier, IDT, Orange, PCCW Global, Tata Communications, Telefonica, Telstra and TNZI. Additionally, the GLF is partnering with leading technology providers to develop the reference architecture and support the creation of an open, interoperable ecosystem for both ICT Service Providers and technology vendors. Over ten technology providers have already confirmed support for the platform, including IBM, Orbs, ConsenSys, R3, Amartus, Clear Blockchain Technologies, CSG and their Wholesale business, Difitek, Internet Mobile Communications, Subex, Syniverse, and TOMIA. A diverse mixture of blockchain technologies can provide significant benefits that will transform inter-service provider settlement processes by enabling automation and improving security. This will also help build consensus and create a global framework. The overall objective for the CBN is to serve the wider ICT community by avoiding fragmentation. This will accelerate the adoption of automated settlement applications, while facilitating the development of open-source standards and APIs that enable service-provider interoperability. For the past fourteen months the GLF and its partners have been putting rigor and processes behind this platform and we believe that now is the time to launch.

Trump says Google, Facebook should be sued over bias allegations

President Trump on Wednesday said tech giants Google and Facebook should be sued over alleged bias toward conservatives.

"We should be suing Google and Facebook and all that, which perhaps we will," Trump said during a phone interview with Fox Business Network. Trump also attacked Twitter, claiming without evidence that the company is "making it very hard" to "get out my message" by making it more difficult for people to follow him.

"Twitter is just terrible, what they do," he said.

The president reportedly complained about his follower count during an April meeting with Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, who explained his lost followers were largely bots. Republicans have long accused Google and Facebook of suppressing conservative content and ads, something they say violates free speech protections. Others say the sites are private companies that are not

bound by the First Amendment and have the ability to regulate the content that appears on their platforms.

Some GOP lawmakers have suggested that Congress should remove protections under Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act in order to hold web platforms legally liable for content posted by users.

"These people are all Democrats. It's totally biased towards Democrats," Trump said, citing anti-Trump

comments made by one Google employee published by a website run by conservative activist James O'Keefe.

The employee, Jen Gennai, said the video was recorded by people who lied about their identities, filmed her without her consent and "selectively edited" the footage.

Executives from the tech companies have long denied institutional bias at their companies, and Democrats have repeatedly said there is

no evidence to back up conservatives' claims there is widespread bias at companies like Google, Facebook and Twitter.

"We build our products with extraordinary care and safeguards to be a trustworthy source of information for everyone, without any regard for political viewpoint. Our rating guidelines are publicly visible for all to see," a Google spokesperson wrote in an email responding to Trump's comments.

Several IVF attempts can signal higher risk for any eventual pregnancy

Women who attempt IVF several times before they get pregnant are at higher risk of having pregnancy complications involving their placenta.

This might be because the woman's uterus had an undiagnosed health problem all along that caused the failed attempts, or it could be because some of the extra IVF interventions harm the uterus in some way, says Caitlin Sacha of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Pregnancies achieved through IVF were already known to have a slightly higher risk of several health problems, including complications involving the placenta, the organ that supplies nutrients to the baby in the

womb. But we don't know why these arise.

Sacha's team examined the placentas of 477 women who had given birth after IVF, noting whether they had got pregnant with their first treatment cycle, their second, or if they took more attempts than that.

Those who needed more treatment cycles had a higher chance of two different problems with their placenta: inflammation and abnormal umbilical cord blood vessels.

For instance, 9 per cent of those who took three or more attempts to get pregnant had an inflamed placenta, compared with 5 per cent for those who took two tries, and 1 per cent among those who got pregnant first time. Such

inflammation can cause premature birth.

When a first attempt at IVF fails, women are more likely to be recommended interventions, such as having growths known as polyps removed from their womb or taking higher doses of medicines to make them produce more eggs, says Sacha. "As patients fail, they often undergo more aggressive protocols."

But Michael Feichtinger of the Medical University of Vienna, says the inflammation could be causing the repeated IVF failures. "The question is what's the chicken and what's the egg." Team member Irene Souter says that either way, the findings suggest obstetricians should be



on the lookout for placenta problems in women who required multiple attempts at IVF.

Most people who have IVF in the US switch to using donor sperm or eggs after about four failed attempts, although some carry

on for many more treatment cycles with their own sperm or eggs, if they can afford it, says Souter. The findings were announced today at the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology meeting in Vienna.

Can your gut bacteria really make you a better runner?

Want to become a better runner? You're probably going to have to run faster, smarter and longer. But a piece of the puzzle may lie in a surprising place: the bacteria in your gut.

We know exercise can alter the gut microbiome. Now George Church at Harvard University and colleagues say that the microbiome may be a critical component of physical performance. The Boston marathon is famously tough to get into, due to its ever-faster qualifying times. The researchers took daily stool samples from 15 runners in the 2015 race, one week before and one week after they ran, along with a sedentary control group, to see what was in their gut. A genetic analysis found a significant increase in one genus of bacteria,

Veillonella, post-marathon. The results were then successfully replicated by analysing the stool samples of 87 ultramarathoners and Olympic trial rowers before and after exercise.

The correlation raises the prospect of a causal link between the bacteria and physical performance, the researchers say. To find out more, one strain of Veillonella taken from one of the Boston marathoners was then put in mice. It allowed them to run 13 per cent longer on a treadmill than a control group without it. Further tests saw the team put forward the idea that the bug has a role in breaking down lactic acid, which can lead to fatigue during running.

The research potentially points the way to a future where probiotic supplements could



change your microbiome and make you a better runner. But it's too early to tell if that will come to pass, Church says. "This is worth enjoying as pure science for now. Until we complete the human trials, it is merely an interesting correlation in humans and a much stronger cause and effect shown in mice."

Marathon mice

We simply don't know if Veillonella-boosted humans would be able to run longer like the mice, and there are reasons to be cautious given the large differences not just between

humans and mice, but among humans too, says Church.

David Relman of Stanford University says he likes the fact the study is looking for a plausible chain of links between the microbiome and exercise performance. But he doesn't think the bar has been cleared in terms of the observations to back up the paper's conclusion. For example, there is no control group for the 87 rowers and ultramarathoners. "We don't know that if running up and down the stairs here in a middle-aged white guy wouldn't produce the same thing," says Relman.

Fifteen Boston marathoners is a very small sample, says Patrick Schloss of the University of Michigan. He would like to see a study over a longer period of time, beyond just before and after exercise. His verdict is: "they need to do a lot [more] to show that it's [the bacteria] enhancing performance." A tailored probiotic supplement doesn't exist yet, and may be a long way off. In 2017, Jonathan Scheiman at sports biotech firm FitBiotics and part of the research said he hoped to have a product launched by the end of 2018, but that has come and gone.



China Diary: And now for something completely different

In this week's column, Vir Sanghvi shares his experiences from a recent travel to Sichuan, China and its capital city, Cheng Du, the home of the panda.



Du is the capital, is the home of the panda. Almost from the moment I landed, all my preconceptions were put to rest. I ceased to think of any India-China competition within five minutes of leaving the airport. There is simply no comparison between China and India in terms of economic development. They are at least 20 years ahead and their levels of prosperity leave India far, far behind. And keep in mind that Cheng Du is only a provincial capital, not one of the country's great cities. The second big revelation for me was how little the Chinese needed foreigners. Such cities as Shanghai have an international air about them with fancy restaurants run by white people and large expatriate communities. Cheng Du, on the other hand was as entirely Chinese as is possible to imagine. The city was heaving with tourists. But they were all domestic Chinese tourists. Nobody there felt the need to attract Western tourists; and you got the sense that they did not care. The third revelation was Chinese hospitality. I stayed at the Ritz-Carlton which, in the absence of the Dutch General Manager (who was away while I was there) was entirely Chinese run. There were no expats and the overwhelming majority of the guests were also Chinese. But

in terms of service, efficiency, warmth and value for money, it was one of the best hotels I have stayed at in a long time. Each day, the senior staff would think of new things for my wife and me to do and would go ahead and make all the arrangements. (Which helped because nobody in Cheng Du speaks much English.) One Saturday, Kevin Xue, the Chief Concierge, took us on a tour of the city centre in his own car, stopping at places that only locals would go to. (You could argue that the hotel did this because I am a journo. But most hotels elsewhere in the world usually work out that I am a writer, so it is a level playing field. Besides nobody in Cheng Du wants Indian tourists or cares about anything that appears in an Indian paper.) A fourth revelation was how relaxed everyone seemed to be. Our image of the Chinese is of hardworking humourless people. That caricature makes no sense ---- at least not in Cheng Du, where the locals are known to be laidback. At restaurants, people from other tables would try and help us with our order because we spoke no Mandarin. (It didn't matter that the people who tried to help usually spoke no English; it was the sense of fellowship and the laughter that made the whole experience so

much fun!) Servers would be horrified if you tried to tip them, would go out of their way to help you and there was neither the robotic sense of duty or the sullen resentment you find at restaurants in many Asian cities. The entrance to People's Park, Sichuan (Vir Sanghvi) Kevin took us to People's Park, a sort of Hyde Park-Lodhi Garden equivalent in Cheng Du. Its two most striking features were a) a vast tea house where you could order one cup of tea and stay the whole day, reading, chatting, playing cards or whatever. Nobody hassled you. The second was an open air dance area where they played music and locals came to dance (Western style - foxtrot, waltz etc.) with a complete lack of self-consciousness. Neither of these places, with their relaxed, joyous air, conformed to the Indian caricature of China or the Chinese. Yet another revelation was the social mobility. We met one member of the middle management team at the hotel who had saved up enough money to buy a Mercedes for himself. He had started at the Ritz six years ago, when the hotel opened, as a driver, had taught himself English, and had risen rapidly through the ranks to reach his present position and salary.

Show me an Indian who says that he or she is completely neutral or open-minded about China and I will show you a liar. All Indians have mixed feelings about China. Even if it does not date back to the 1962 War and the current border clashes, there is always a sense of competition, if not of outright threat. Nearly every time we talk about our economic development, we compare ourselves to China. Over the last two years for instance, we have been told (in tones of glee) that China's economic boom is over and that India is now the fastest growing economy in the world. I don't know China well. I went

there over a decade and a half ago and was impressed by the economic progress but was told by Indian sceptics that it was wrong to judge the country on the basis of Shanghai and Beijing. The rest of China, I was assured, was much less developed. I went back to China last week and keeping in mind the warnings about being hoodwinked by Shanghai and Beijing, gave those cities a miss. Instead I went to Cheng Du, a city that most Indians are only dimly aware of. I went for the food (which you can read about in Rude Food this weekend) though the city is more famous for its panda viewings. The Sichuan region, of which Cheng

Toy Story 4 movie review

Utterly shattering; Pixar and Tom Hanks' legendary series adds another masterpiece

Toy Story 4 movie review: Pixar's latest film, starring Tom Hanks and Tim Allen, is an anomaly -- a fourth entry in a franchise that has only produced masterpieces. Rating: 4.5/5.

Toy Story 4

Director - Josh Cooley

Cast - Tom Hanks, Tim Allen, Annie Potts, Tony Hale, Keanu Reeves

Rating - 4.5/5

The very existence of Toy Story 4 is bittersweet. Because of it, Pixar's magnificent saga can no longer be called the greatest film trilogy of all time, and that's devastating. But it is an anomaly -- a fourth entry in a franchise that has only produced masterpieces.

Every film Pixar makes, those on the inside have said, is treated like the first and last one. Which is why, until its takeover by Disney in 2006, it had produced only one sequel. There have been operational changes since then, and now, Pixar is like any other animation studio - far too reliant on brand awareness and celebrity voice talents. Since the Disney

takeover, half of its 14 films have been follow-ups to pre-existing films.

If you believe Pixar, none of the Toy Story sequels were planned, but organically birthed, after many years of brainstorming and the studios' typically rigorous production process. This is not true, because the third film, like the second, was supposed to be the last, until it broke box office records and made over \$1 billion. Despite all this, Toy Story 4 is different. It is, for instance, the first film in the series to actively seek answers to questions that have baffled better minds. What is the nature of existence? What is the difference between being loyal and free? What does it mean to have a conscience? In several scenes, the brash Buzz Lightyear (Tim Allen), prompted by Woody (Tom Hanks), seeks solutions to difficult situations by listening to his 'inner voice'.

Woody, meanwhile, operates on nothing but heart, and instinct. We find him, and the rest of the toys - everyone from the Potato Heads to Rex, from Jessie and Hamm to Slinky Dog - two years after Andy gave them away to Bonnie. The previous three films perfectly captured the life-cycle of a toy - from being discovered by a bright-eyed child, to staying loyal to them through thick and thin, until finally, it is time to move on. Toy Story 4 is not as much a continuation of this story, as it is an epilogue - like the '19 Years Later' chapter in JK Rowling's Harry Potter saga; overwhelming not because of what the future holds, but what has happened in the past. Woody had no control over his own creation, nor did he choose his 'kid'. But through some mysterious magic, he had the ability to make a difference in Andy's life, and then in Bonnie's. Having served his



duties to both, Woody finds himself playing second fiddle to a new toy, created by Bonnie with her own hands - a Frankenstein's monster of sorts, made from a discarded plastic spork, some glue and an ever-reliable piece of string. She calls him Forky. Sensing Bonnie's love for her new toy, Woody takes it upon himself to teach Forky the meaning of life, and the importance of the role he has been chosen to play. But Forky is having none of it. He's like a newborn baby, with no idea of how the world works. He insists on hurling himself into the nearest trashcan every chance he gets, not because he

thinks of himself as being worthless, but because he is a spork; it is the only home he knows. Some toys are valuable, some not so much; others, like Toy Story 3's Lotso-Huggin Bear and this film's villain, Gabby Gabby, are abandoned. Debutante director Josh Cooley - operating, as expected, under the guidance of Pixar's famed (and all-male) 'brain trust' - makes the wise decision to keep Toy Story 4 as narratively lean as the previous films in the series. It is mostly set during an afternoon, when Bonnie misplaces Forky, and Woody takes it upon himself to locate him and return him to her.

Kabir Singh movie review

This Shahid Kapoor film is injurious to health

Kabir Singh movie review: This Shahid Kapoor film is perhaps the most misogynistic Indian film in a long time -- the hero is a bully, an abuser of women, an insensitive lout, an alcoholic surgeon, and a foulmouthed hothead.

Kabir Singh

Director: Sandeep Vanga

Cast: Shahid Kapoor, Kiara Advani

Rating: 1.5/5

There are so many shots of cigarette smoking in Kabir Singh I'm surprised they didn't rope in Akshay Kumar for a supporting role, to keep reminding the film's leading man to replace cigarettes with sanitary napkins. Substance abuse is, however, the least toxic thing about this misogynistic film. This is a film about a bully, an abuser of women, an alcoholic surgeon, and a foulmouthed hothead - and that's just the so-called hero.

Director Sandeep Reddy Vanga, remaking his Telugu hit Arjun Reddy, gives us a character who nearly rapes a woman at knife-point, and later pees his pants.

Incontinence is not traditionally heroic, therefore I assumed Vanga would make a cautionary tale. Instead, Kabir Singh applauds its pathetic protagonist, and ends up an obnoxious celebration of toxic masculinity. Shahid Kapoor does well to play Kabir like a hand-grenade who lost his pin hours ago. He's always seething, even on the football field, and I hoped this film would dissect the performative aggression popularised in children by sporting icons like Virat Kohli, (complete with repeated use of that unimaginative swearword that makes the curser appear like he's invoking Ben Stokes), but no such luck. Kabir mouths off to the dean, proprietorially stakes his claim on a girl he stares at, and bullies anyone in his path as he

moves her into the boys' hostel. It's a shame, because there's some sharpness here. Kabir's riposte to the dean is scathing but smart - "You're the dean of the college, just an employee doing his job. I'm a student of this college, and this is my college" - a fine line showing the character's need to wear entitlement with pride. The film looks slick, and is smartly shot by Santhana Krishnan Ravichandran, who captures obvious places in intriguing ways, like stairways and, in one memorable shot, a two-man fight on a single mattress. These good bits are overlooked, however, when Kabir slaps the heroine, saying "Who knows you in college? Your identity is that you're my girl." Ugh. And this monstrosity is three hours long.

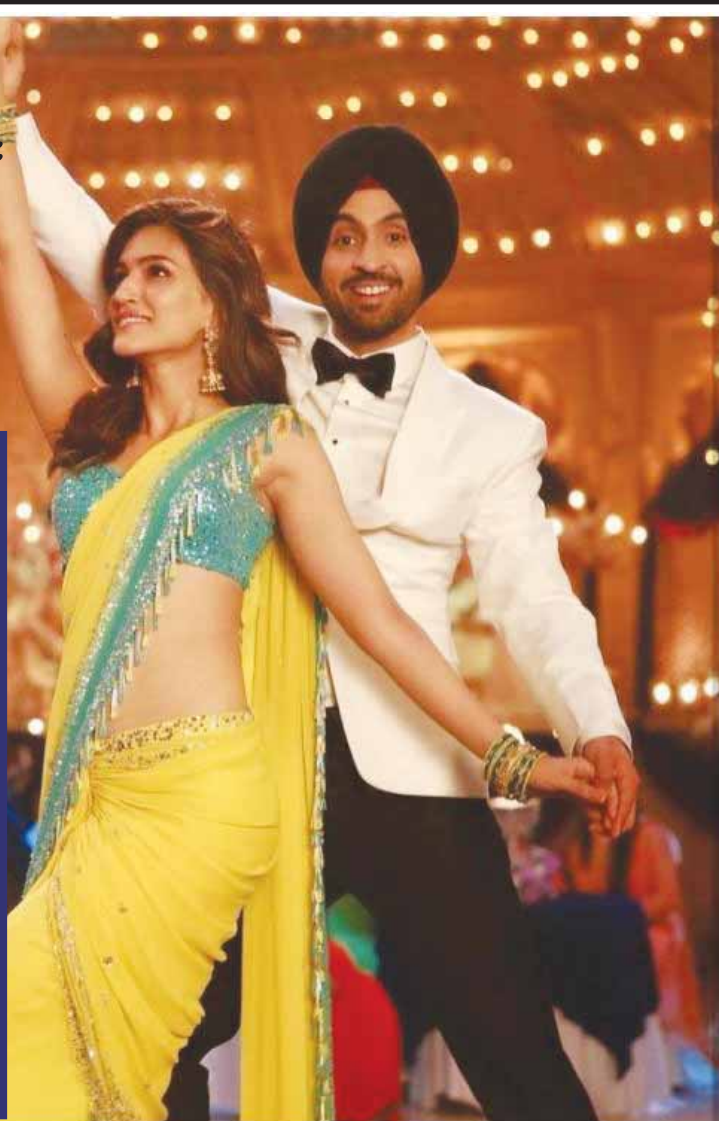


At some point, Kabir loses 'his' girl - played simperingly by Kiara Advani, who it's hard not to feel sorry for - but Vanga continues to project him as hero, turning him into a 'genius' surgeon who operates only when drunk. Later, when confessing this during a medical negligence hearing, he does so with wounded nobility, like a man who thinks the Oath doctors take means they must act hypocritical.

Kabir gets more repulsive by the scene, but other characters thinking he's wrong doesn't help when the creators don't agree. A cautionary tale can't end with the villain getting what he wants, while Kabir Singh rewards his sins with a happy freeze-frame. The best lines come from the boy's grandmother, played by Kamini Kaushal, who wisely says, "Suffering is very personal. Let him suffer." If only.

Arjun Patiala song Main Deewana Tera

Diljit Dosanjh, Kriti Sanon's dance number is the perfect way to woo a girl



The makers of Arjun Patiala claim to have the perfect party song as part of their album in the form of their latest track, Main Deewana Tera. The song has lead actors Diljit Dosanjh and Kriti Sanon grooving to its quirky tunes. Decked up in a shimmering sari, Kriti remains unfazed as Diljit tries hard to woo her with his funny antics and dance steps. Choreographed by Vijay Ganguly, the makers claim the hatke and unique dance steps are sure to make people put on their dancing shoes. The music for this party anthem has been composed by Sachin-Jigar

along with Guru Randhawa. Guru has written the song and lent his voice to it as well. Talking about it, Sachin says, "We really hope it's the next party song. We have been grooving to it from the time it was made! Main Deewana Tera is an ode to every film song where the hero is trying to win over the heroine. Much like the film it takes a dig at itself for being yet another dance number." Talking about composing music for Arjun Patiala, Jigar adds, "It's always interesting to work on an original score. Even though

remixes are fun, creating something from scratch has its own joys. The song pe suhaga was working with Dino (Dinesh Vijan) and T-Series. We share a great working relationship and it's always super to create music with like minded people." Arjun Patiala follows the humorous journey of a small town cop. Unlike other movies based on policemen, this one is a laugh out loud spoof on the genre. It also features Ronit Roy, Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub and Seema Pahwa in pivotal roles.

Karisma Kapoor shares bikini pic on 45th birthday, says 'Love yourself at every age' and Katrina Kaif is all heart



Actor Karisma Kapoor turned 45 this year but has proved age is just a number by sharing a picture of herself in a bikini, for the first time. The picture shows her dressed in a black monokini, soaking some sun on the poolside in New York. She shared it on Instagram with an apt option, "Love yourself at every

"Happy happy birthday hotstuff!" One more celebrity stylist Eshaa Amiin reacted, "love love love this hotness u r such an inspiration."

Karisma was joined by friends Malaika Arora and Amrita Arora in New York on her birthday and pictures from their get-together party were shared by



Several of her fans and friends showered her not just with the birthday wishes but also hailed her timeless beauty. Actor Katrina Kaif shared a heart emoji in her response to the post and actor Kiara Advani also wished her on the occasion. Karisma's friend Amrita Arora wrote, "Whoa girl!" with several fire emojis. Producer Rhea Kapoor also wrote, "YASSSSSS." Celebrity stylist Tanya Ghavri wrote, "Uffff too hot" while another stylist Mohit Rai commented,

Malaika on her Instagram. The girl gang can be seen posing for selfies in the pictures. Malaika was spotted leaving for New York on Monday night at the Mumbai airport. She was accompanied by boyfriend Arjun Kapoor, whose birthday falls a day after Karisma's. Arjun will turn 34 on June 26. Karisma has been vacationing in the US with her family since quite a few days. She had shared pictures of her fun time with sister Kareena Kapoor and mother Babita on Instagram on Monday.

Hrithik Roshan's Super 30 goes to Cambridge as Anand Kumar screens trailer for students

The trailer of actor Hrithik Roshan's next film, Super 30, was screened at the Cambridge University in the presence of Anand Kumar, who inspired the Vikas Bahl film. Kumar is visiting the Cambridge University and showed the film's trailer to students. A mathematician from Bihar, Anand Kumar's initiative Super 30 has attracted several filmmakers and documentary makers. Under the initiative, Anand trains 30 underprivileged students every year to crack the much-coveted IIT JEE. Hrithik plays Anand in the film,

which also stars Mrunal Thakur. Anand gave a motivational speech at the varsity and also talked about the film. He said Hrithik had shown remarkable character playing his role as a teacher and director. Vikas took care of the minutest of details to capture the essence, visiting remote villages to talk to the family members of the students and to get a feel of the real-life situation. An India Today report quoted him as saying, "Today, if I am here, it is only because of education. Super 30 also talks about the power of education to usher in a silent

revolution and bring about generational change. It is the best bet to beat poverty and help build an egalitarian society by giving the deserving their due and rewarding merit. I am confident the film will become an inspiration for many from the underprivileged sections of the society." Anand said that he was from Bihar, a state of India that was once known for its glorious tradition in the field of education with institutions like Nalanda University and Vikramshila, but later slipped to the bottom of the ladder on virtually all parameters of



human index. "Education is the way forward to turn the tide and efforts are on in that direction. If my initiative can work as an inspiration for some, it will make my life meaningful," he said.

Anand's Super 30 has so far helped nearly 540 students from the underprivileged sections of the society successfully chase the IIT dream with unmatched passion.

Brooke Burke, 47

looks younger than ever as she shows off her unbelievable figure in barely there bikini bottoms during Malibu beach day

Another sunny day is another day at the beach for former *Dancing With The Stars* co-host Brooke Burke.

The 47-year-old pinup beauty showed off her trim figure on Wednesday as she hit the beaches in Malibu in colorful, barely there bikini bottoms.

The fitness guru is inspiring her followers every day with workouts to help them get in shape. The mom of four proved hard work in the gym pays off as she danced in the waters in Malibu. She paired her tiny bikini bottoms with a 3/4 sleeve, white rash guard top that was zipped down enough to show off her tanned chest.

The former *Playboy* cover girl

frolicked in the water as she caught some rays outside the famed coastal town. She initially shared a photo from the shoot on Saturday for the Summer Solstice.

On the sexy snap she said, 'Today's [summer solstice] marks the season's beginning. Perhaps a new chapter, a new season a new you.'

She continued, 'I see this as a time to dance, celebrate & romance. Laugh, love deeper, & transistor into a new beautiful space full of more light. Create your own rituals for happiness.'

She encouraged her followers to let the longest day of the year 'Mark the time to reach the highest expression of yourself.

It's time to hold yourself to a higher standard, never traveling below your full potential.'

Mother to, Neriah, 19, Sierra, 17, Heaven, 12, and Shaya, 11, wore her hair down and in perfect beachy waves.

It's been a year since Brooke and ex-husband David, 47, announced their divorce after seven years of marriage.

The pair had been together since 2006 and share Heaven and Shaya. Brooke had Neriah and Sierra from a previous marriage.

Both parents try to co-parent and communicate when it comes to the kids. She told *US Weekly* in April that the exes have 'A beautiful relationship right now, which is really valuable.'



Tom Hiddleston reveals who helped him land role of Loki in Thor

Actor Tom Hiddleston opened up about the "life-changing" friendship that helped him land the role of the Marvel villain Loki in the 2011 film *Thor*. The 38-year-old star spoke to *The Hollywood Reporter* and revealed it was Kenneth Branagh, the director of the film, who cast him for the role. "It had a life-changing effect on me. It happened quite organically, almost by accident," Hiddleston said of his friendship with the 58-year-old actor-director. "He saw me



in a Shakespeare production in a theatre in London, he then asked me to perform with him in the television series *Wallander* for the BBC. We then did a Chekhov play in the West End, and then he cast me

as Loki in the first *Thor* film," Hiddleston explained. He added, "So actually we ended up spending about 12 months working together in different media." Hiddleston appreciated the industry for helping him star in the movie alongside big stars like Anthony Hopkins, Stellan Skarsgard, Natalie Portman, as well as Chris Hemsworth. "At the end of that experience I had learned so much from him. But then I realized that he used to look up to Derek Jacobi and Anthony Hopkins.

Avengers Endgame vs Avatar : Marvel epic beats original box office haul of James Cameron's film

A few days ahead of its wide re-release in American theatres (as of now), *Avengers: Endgame* has beaten an *Avatar* record that Marvel would hope translates to a more significant victory in the coming few days. With \$2.75 billion in the bank in exactly two months of release, *Endgame* has beaten *Avatar*'s original box office haul, before the film was re-released itself.

In its original theatrical run, *Avatar* made \$2.749 billion worldwide. It added \$33 million in its 2010 re-release, which gave fans nine minutes of

extra, unseen footage. *Endgame* would need to make more than that to beat the \$2.788 total of *Avatar*, which remains unbeaten in almost a decade.

Crucially, *Forbes* reports that *Avatar* made over \$200 million in China in around 90% fewer theatres than there are now. *Endgame* is the third highest grossing film of all time in China, with a total haul of over \$600 million. *Endgame* is the second highest grossing film in the US, after *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, and the highest grossing film of the year in India,

as well as the biggest foreign import ever.

The re-release will include a post-credits scene that wasn't included in the original theatrical cut, which is still playing in theatres, and made a little less than \$2 million in the US this weekend. The new version will also include a special Stan Lee tribute, according to Marvel president Kevin Feige, and a tease for *Spider-Man: Far From Home*. *Endgame* will need to make approximately \$35 million worldwide in its re-release in order to beat *Avatar*'s record. By comparison, the 2012 3D only re-



release of Cameron's *Titanic* added \$350 million to its total. Inspired by *Titanic*'s success, Steven Spielberg oversaw a 3D

re-release of the first *Jurassic World*, which made \$100 million. A re-release of *The Lion King* made close to \$200 million.

Budget 2019: Can Nirmala Sitharaman solve India's job crisis?



(News Agencies) Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman is all set to present her maiden budget on July 5 at a time when India's economic growth has slumped sharply and questions have been raised over a rise in unemployment. Official GDP data shows that

India is no longer championing economic growth and has even lost its fastest-growing economy tag to China in the last quarter of 2018-19. GDP growth slowed to 5.8 per cent in the first three months of 2019-20, the lowest in the last five years.

The country has also witnessed a slowdown in demand, which according to consumer-oriented surveys, is a result of dampening purchasing power and a drop in employment rate - a reason why several noted economists have flagged the issue.

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Who won the debate?

The best zingers, biggest rivalries and most talkative candidates from the first Democratic presidential debate.



(News Agencies)- Who won Wednesday's first Democratic presidential debate? On a stage this crowded - 10 candidates debated in Miami - it's not like there was one clear victor.

But several candidates are bound to see their poll numbers and donations rise or fall based on their performances in front of tens of millions of TV viewers. It just will likely take days - or potentially weeks, given the upcoming July 4th holiday - to become apparent. (Don't put any stock in those online polls the night of the debate: They aren't scientific, and they can be rigged, as disgraced attorney Michael Cohen says he did for his then-client, Donald Trump.)

In the meantime, here are POLITICO's awards and demerits for the night, based on our immediate impressions of the candidates' performances: Best Zinger: Amy Klobuchar The Minnesota senator came prepared with a handful of seemingly canned lines. They weren't great, but they weren't terrible either.

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Supreme Court deals blow to Trump's push to add citizenship question to census



(News Agencies)- The Supreme Court on Thursday dealt an unexpected blow to the administration's attempt to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census, prompting a threat by President Donald Trump to try to delay the count.

In a surprising decision, Chief Justice John Roberts joined the court's liberals in ruling that official explanations for the move were implausible and legally inadequate. The high court returned the case to lower courts for further action, raising doubts about the administration getting the go-ahead to add the question before upcoming deadlines to finalize the census questionnaire.

Roberts said the administration failed in its duty to provide a "reasoned" explanation for the decision. "What was provided here was more of a distraction," he asserted. Several lower courts previously found that the administration violated federal regulatory law when it added the question. The administration argued that citizenship data will assist with anti-discrimination provisions in enforcement of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

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GOP candidate for Queens DA says he may not challenge Democrat Tiffany Cabán



(News Agencies)- The Republican candidate for Queens district attorney, who is expected to take on Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez-backed left-wing Democrat Tiffany Cabán in November, admitted to The Post on Wednesday that he hasn't raised any money and may not even go through with the campaign.

"I don't have much of ... I don't expect it will be much of a campaign on my behalf," said candidate Daniel Kogan, 61, a private attorney in Ozone Park. "I haven't decided to make an active campaign yet. It was an

honor to be nominated, but I haven't started an active campaign."

The stunning admission came less than a day after Cabán - who is running on a social justice platform of closing jails and decriminalizing low-level offenses such as turnstile-jumping and sex work - seemed to upset Democratic Party-backed hopeful Melinda Katz in a too-close-to-call primary. Cabán, who declared victory Tuesday night, enjoyed a slim, 1,000-vote lead Wednesday as elections officials began to tally

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Botswana legalises elephant hunting and Zimbabwe gets ready to sell them



(News Agencies)- Ever heard of something like too many elephants? No? People of Botswana and Zimbabwe know exactly what we are talking about. The two countries of South Africa don't just share a border, they also share the same problem. Too many elephants.

Yes, that is correct. Botswana houses over 1,35,000 elephants. These elephants who roam freely on the lands of the country now are unaware that their future might be in danger. The Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism released an official statement in which they said, "Government of Botswana has taken a decision to lift the hunting suspension."

The reasons that they gave for this harsh decision were, "1) The

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