



Trump Plus One: Did He Keep His Promises?

A year after the president's first speech to Congress, he's done much less and much more than he said he would.

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Union Budget 2018

'Vikas purush' Narendra Modi set to be 'man of the poor'



The political message of the last full Union Budget before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections is that from a 'vikas purush' in 2014, Narendra Modi will now go back as the 'gareebon ka neta'.

During his budget speech, finance minister Arun Jaitley mentioned how the political leadership of the country had seen 'gareebi' (poverty). This was not a leadership for which poverty was a 'case-study'; they were the case-study themselves. In that passing reference, lies the clue to understanding the political message of the last full Union Budget before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. In 2014, Modi went across India and projected himself as a 'vikas purush', the development man. Next time, as Jaitley's speech made clear, Modi will go back as the 'Gareebon Ka Neta' (messiah of the poor).

5-point welfare message
 The shift in image is not sudden. It can, in fact, be traced back to Rahul Gandhi's 'suit-boot ki sarkar' barb at Modi in 2015 and the defeat in the Bihar elections. Ever since then, Modi has consciously sought to distance himself from big business and

emphasise his government's focus on the poor. Indian demographics remain such that a party which is seen as favouring the elite — and only the elite — cannot win. There is another compulsion. The government, as senior ministers privately admit, knows well that it will not be able to generate the jobs it had promised and young India aspires for by 2019.

(Contd on page 20)

A Nation Within 4 Temples

The millennia-old idea of Bharat has been gripped in confusion since Indian independence. Now is as good a time as any to clear the haze.

Patriotism, nationalism, nation and country are not independent concepts. They are so inter-related that none of them can be comprehended in isolation. Patriotism is not just love for a piece of geography. It is devotion to the idea of one's nation—in which a territory, people and their history, culture and ancestry converge. A nation needs territory, but it is not equal to just territory. Also, not all nations' nationalism is alike. (Contd on page 20)



Uttar Pradesh To Repeal 1000 British-Era Laws In One Go, And Most of Them Are 150 Years Old



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India Association of Long Island honors "Bharat Ke Veer" Indian Armed Forces Veterans on 69th Republic Day Celebration



(By a Staff Reporter) : India Association of Long Island (IALI) celebrated 69th Republic Day of India, on Friday 26th January, 2018 at Plainview Public Library, 999 Old Country Road, Plainview, NY 11803, hosted by IALI Committee members. This is the first time in the history of IALI, that it hosted and celebrated India's Republic Day. It was an idea of Executive Council to celebrate our national holiday as proud Indians.

Program started with welcome speech by Secretary Mrs. Shashi Malik. American and Indian national Anthems were sung by young children and adults respectively. Flag hoisting was done by President Mrs. Gunjan Rastogi along

with IALI founders, past presidents and "Bharat Ke Veer" Indian Armed Forces Veterans. President Mrs Gunjan Rastogi Honored Veterans of Indian Armed Forces, Wing Commander S.H Butani, Squadron Leader D. K Nagia, Major D. Gulati and Mr. P. Shilagani. Cultural program featured, patriotic songs by IALI members and admirably enacted performance by seniors of Happy Seniors Home, dances by young children from Arya Dance and Krishna Arts dance schools.

The Program was graced by the attendance of Nassau county Executive Honorable Laura Curran and Oyster Bay Town Supervisor Honorable Joseph Saladino, both of them praised Indian

community for their contributions to society, they both received a tremendous ovation from the audience. Citations were awarded by the County and Town of Oyster Bay to the President Mrs. Gunjan Rastogi and the IALI.

Also in the Hallway, Paintings by accomplished artists Aruna Saxena, Japneet Kaur, Deepa Makkar and Satish Joshi all IALI members were showcased. Sumptuous Dinner was catered by Mint Restaurant. Program was attended by overwhelming crowd of more than 200 people. Library auditorium was fully packed to its capacity with the IALI founders, past presidents, well known community leaders, members of the association and

guests in attendance. The New Delhi Republic Day parade was featured on the big screen during the President's speech, which took the audience back home. It reminded everyone of being in India, audience felt they were sitting in India and watching the Republic day parade. President Mrs. Gunjan Rastogi thanked the Executive Council for doing a great job and welcomed new members to growing IALI family.

President Mrs. Gunjan Rastogi also sent a message of peace and love and keeping with that theme IALI will be celebrating Valentine's Day on Saturday, February 10th 2018 at the Inn at New Hyde Park, Jericho Turnpike, NY.



Sikh soldiers to get new war memorial in London



London : The UK government has agreed to support and fund a national memorial to honour the sacrifices and contribution of Sikh soldiers who fought for Britain and its allies during the two World Wars. More than 83,000 turbaned Sikh soldiers gave their lives and more than 100,000 were injured during the wars. "We are indebted to all those servicemen who volunteered to serve and fought to defend the freedoms we enjoy today," said UK communities secretary Sajid Javid yesterday as he announced government backing for the new memorial in London. "A Sikh war memorial in our nation's capital will honour their sacrifice and ensure that this part of our shared history is never forgotten. So, I'm delighted to get behind this campaign and ensure its success," he said. The campaign for a new Sikh war memorial was led by Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, Britain's first turbaned Sikh MP, who now has the support of the UK's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to help set up a Working Group to find a suitable location. Once an appropriate site has been identified and

detailed plans agreed, the ministry has agreed to provide funding towards the project.

Absolutely thrilled to have hosted a historic cross party gathering in @UKParliament for the launch of central... <https://t.co/T5gd6p4hnY>

— Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP (@TanDhesi) 1517349887000

"The part played by Sikh servicemen really stands out - a contribution that is all the more remarkable when you consider that these brave men travelled thousands of miles to fight for a country that wasn't their own," said Javid. Over 27,000 people had signed an online petition by Dhesi, the Labour party MP for Slough who also submitted an Early Day Motion (EDM) in the House of Commons on the issue, which attracted cross-party support from over 260 MPs. "Given that the Sikh community, which is very proud of its military traditions, there has been a demand for more than a decade for a Sikh memorial in a prime

central location in London," Dhesi said. "Britain owes a huge debt to the Sikh service men and women who fought alongside British troops in the First and Second World Wars. I look forward to supporting the work of the new National Sikh War Memorial Trust in lobbying for proper recognition of these courageous individuals," added London Mayor Sadiq Khan.

According to official records, despite making up only 2 per cent of the Indian population when the First World War broke out, Sikhs accounted for more than 20 per cent of the Indian Army's manpower. Sikh soldiers from Punjab and surrounding states saw action in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, most notably on the Western Front and at Gallipoli. On the Western Front Sikhs fought and died alongside their British, Indian and Commonwealth counterparts. Their contribution was essential to the war effort and of the 22 Military Crosses awarded to Indian soldiers, 14 went to Sikhs.

Indian techie found dead at his apartment in Texas



HOUSTON: An Indian software engineer was found dead at his apartment where he was living as a paying guest in the US state of Texas, according to officials. Venkannagari Krishna Chaitanya, 30, who moved to the US three years ago, was living as a paying guest in Arlington, a suburb of Dallas in Texas, said sources at the Indian Consulate here. When Chaitanya did not come out of his room for a long time, his landlord broke in and found his body. HOUSTON: An Indian software engineer was found dead at his apartment where he was living as a paying guest in the US state of Texas, according to officials. Venkannagari Krishna Chaitanya, 30, who moved to the US three years ago, was living as a paying guest in Arlington, a suburb of Dallas in Texas, said sources at the Indian Consulate here. When Chaitanya did not come out of his room for a long time, his landlord broke in and found his body. "We are in touch with the family in India and coordinating transportation of the mortal remains to India as soon as possible," Houston Consulate General Anupam Ray's office sources told media.

Indian-origin man charged with killing 3 teenagers in UK crash

LONDON: An Indian-origin man was on Monday remanded in custody by a UK court on charges of three counts of death by dangerous driving after a road collision that killed three teenage boys in London last week.

Jaynesh Chudasama appeared by Uxbridge Magistrates' Court in London, where he was denied bail and remanded to appear before the Old Bailey court in London on February 26.

The 28-year-old had been arrested

by Scotland Yard officers after a fatal collision near a bus stop in Hayes, west London, on Friday evening. The Metropolitan Police have named the victims of the crash as Harry Rice, 17, and 16-year-olds George Wilkinson and Josh McGuinness.

They were on their way to a friend's birthday party when they were killed.

A second man, aged 34, was also arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving after handing himself in to a north London

police station on Saturday evening, following a police appeal. He continues to remain in custody as he is questioned.

"Detectives from the Roads and Transport Policing Command continue to lead the investigation and a number of enquiries are ongoing," said Superintendent Colin Wingrove, the local borough commander. "There is understandably a lot of shock and grief in the local community. These three young men had their whole lives ahead

US judge orders release of immigration activist Ravi Ragbir

WASHINGTON: A US judge has ordered immediate release of prominent Indian-descent immigration activist Ravi Ragbir and granted him a temporary reprieve from deportation to his native Trinidad and Tobago, saying his detention was unnecessarily cruel.

Ragbir, 43, was arrested on January 12 during a routine check-in with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and ordered immediate deportation, irking local community in New York.

In a seven-page decision, Manhattan Federal Court Judge Katherine Forrest on Monday said US Immigration and Customs Enforcement violated Ragbir's rights by denying him due process and "the freedom to say goodbye."

Forrest said that Ragbir's sudden

and "unnecessary detention" after living in the US "without incident, reporting as required to immigration authorities and building a home, a family, and a community was wrong".

Forrest said that Ragbir should have been given time to organize his affairs before being taken into custody.

"There is, and ought to be in this country, the freedom to say goodbye. That is, freedom to hug one's spouse and children, the freedom to organise the myriad of human affairs that collect over time."

"It ought not to be-and it has never before been-that those who have lived without incident in this country for years are subjected to treatment we associated with regimes we revile as unjust, regimes where those who have long lived in a country may be

taken away without notice from streets, home, and work. And sent away," Forrest said amidst cheers from the supporters of Ragbir who had gathered at the courthouse.

Ragbir arrived in the US from Trinidad and Tobago in 1991 on a visitor's visa. He became a lawful permanent resident in 1994.

According to New York Immigration Coalition, Ragbir, a Brooklyn resident and executive director of the New Sanctuary Coalition of New York, has been under the threat of deportation for nearly a decade following a conviction for wire fraud in 2001. He was placed into removal proceedings in 2006 and spent twenty-two months in immigration detention before being released in February 2008.

Trump's State of the Union address

No change in stand on immigration and trade

Trump's speech indicated he will do nothing to address the long-term structural issues that bedevil the US society.



United States President Donald Trump's first State of the Union address on Wednesday showed how little the original agenda that he brought to office has changed in the past year. This, despite one of the lowest approval ratings of any first-year US president, a poor success rate in passing legislation even with majorities in both legislative houses and little evidence of an ability to grow in his office. President Trump remains supremely confident that he has been and remains on the right track.

Trump's speech remained faithful, for example, to his dislike for both immigrants and trade. He did offer some concessions on the children of existing

illegal migrants, but continued to demand his Mexican wall, an end to the visa lottery system and restrictions on family chain visas. Mr Trump did call for more merit-based visas – something that would benefit educated Indian migrants. But his tenor remained hostile and his connection of immigrants to crime and terror were specious. He also repeated suspect claims about the effects of trade on the US and claimed, without evidence, that he was successfully renegotiating a number of existing trade agreements.

Mr Trump was on solid ground with his claims that the US economy was booming. Unemployment levels have indeed fallen, growth is up and corporate

earnings are rising. Much of this had little to do with Mr Trump. The US economy was recovering before he was elected. It can at best be said the president did not get in the way of such growth. Nonetheless, it is the prerogative of politicians to take credit for any positive trend that happens while they are in office.

However, Mr Trump's speech indicated he will do nothing to address the long-term structural issues that bedevil US society. While lowering corporate taxes made economic sense, the administration's tax reductions for even the wealthiest of Americans will only aggravate inequalities that have

been spilling over into class and racial tensions. The poor education, drug addiction and health care issues that affect the US working class received only a passing mention in the speech – and are receiving even less attention in Mr Trump's actual policy actions. Ironically, these afflictions are most evident among the angry white voters who brought Mr Trump to power.

The State of the Union is thought to be a reflection of the President's domestic agenda. Mr Trump continues to adhere to a vision of his country marked by the closing of doors and the preservation of privilege.

Economic Survey: Worst is over, things are getting better but work needs to be done

The big picture presented by the survey is of an economy that is becoming increasingly tax compliant, and is poised for growth, although there are still challenges when it comes to both consumption-driven growth and increasing private investment

The annual Economic Survey presented by the finance ministry's economists is usually a good explainer of the state of the Indian economy, although it isn't an indicator of the contents of the Union Budget which follows it.

The survey projects that the Indian economy will expand by between 7% and 7.5% in 2018-19, a number not very different from that estimated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It also estimates that the economy will expand by 6.75% in 2017-18. The fact that things are looking up on the economic front is already evident in several so-called high-frequency indicators (or, simply, data that is collected and presented relatively frequently).

History will likely recognise the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax and the introduction of a bankruptcy code as fundamental structural reforms, and the survey acknowledges both. The second, along with the effort to recapitalise banks, addresses what is popularly called the twin balance sheet problem (bad loans



on the books of banks, and debt on the books of companies). The first, apart from creating a unified market, is also helping formalise the Indian economy and should, over time, result in an increase in tax revenue. Indeed, the survey points out that it has already resulted in an increase in the number of enterprises that pay indirect taxes. The big picture presented by the survey – it also points to an increase in the number of people filing income tax returns, the return of growth in India's export trade, and other positives – is of an economy that

is becoming increasingly tax compliant, and is poised for growth, although, as the document admits, there are still challenges when it comes to both consumption-driven growth and increasing private investment.

The real challenge – apart from rising oil prices which could wreak havoc on India's finances, as the survey points out – lies elsewhere. The biggest issues facing the Narendra Modi government in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections in 2019 are employment and the ongoing crisis in agriculture. The survey picks

both as issues that need to be addressed immediately. Worryingly, it points out that "climate change – whose imprint on Indian agriculture is already visible – might reduce farm incomes by up to 20-25% in the medium term". The solution will involve more science (and the survey acknowledges this) but it should also involve more markets.

As for employment, the survey is right in listing "private investment and exports" as the only two "truly sustainable engines". India would do well to focus its efforts on creating an environment conducive to private investment and on increasing its export competitiveness. That might well hold the key to creating jobs, although doing so against the countervailing forces of increasing automation and rapid strides in Artificial Intelligence will take some doing. For those looking for a pithy message in the Economic Survey, it is simply this: The worst is over; things are getting better; but there's work to be done. It's now up to the finance minister and the Union Budget.

India's Judiciary Is In Crisis - Major Overhaul Is The Only Way

Trump Tries for a Reset

Four senior judges of India's Supreme Court have raised serious concerns about the integrity of the country's judiciary. They have accused the highest court in the land of bench-fixing and collaborating with government. These charges cannot be ignored as minor internal matters. The judges themselves consider them so important for the future of India's democracy, that they have broken our longstanding tradition of collegial silence, and have gone public.

The grim matters our judges have raised are symptomatic of a deep malaise. Nearly every aspect of India's judiciary – its jurisdiction, structure, method of appointing judges, transparency, and accountability – has failed to serve the Indian people.

India's judiciary has denied, delayed, or botched justice in far too many cases. Consider some measures of its performance. There are more than 22 million cases pending in Indian courts, of which six million have been delayed for more than five years. Even in the Supreme Court, the number of pending cases has grown from less than 700 in 1950, to more than 60,000 today.

The courts are also notorious for corruption. According to Transparency International's latest Global Corruption Barometer, 45% of Indians who went to court in 2016 said they had to pay a bribe. This was the second highest level of corruption in the entire Asia Pacific region.

Indian courts also cater brazenly to the nation's elite, moneyed, and well-connected. In 2013, two Supreme Court justices declared: "We can say on oath that only 5 percent of the time is being used for common citizens, whose appeals are waiting for 20 or 30 years. This court has become a safe haven for big criminals."

Tweaking the judiciary here and there will no longer bring results. We must consider the following broad reforms:

1. Check on Jurisdiction A 1988 Law Commission report concluded that the Supreme Court of India has one of the widest jurisdictions of any apex court in the world. This has not only overburdened the courts, it has allowed judges to delve into areas that should be the responsibilities of our Executive or Legislative branches. The highest constitutional court of the nation is busy with regular appeals pouring in from all over the country, many in areas that do not even belong with the judiciary.

Public Interest Litigation is one such example of courts' expanding jurisprudence. Constitutional expert and winner of the Padma Bhushan award, Dr Subhash Kashyap, wrote, "For some decades... the judiciary may be said to be under a narcissus complex, looking at its image of a creator or artificer of law... Through the so-called creative jurisprudence, the principles of Constitution... are being eroded."

But what is needed is a check on jurisdiction, not just better ways of handling the workload. Courts must have some external restrictions on their powers, just like all other branches of government. These restrictions can be provided by following the US model in the following three ways.

2. State Judiciaries India is too vast a nation for a unitary judiciary, centralised in the Supreme Court. Often proposals have been floated for setting up regional benches of the Court across the country. In 2010, Justice VR Krishna Iyer argued in favour of decentralising the entire system. He wrote, "Decentralisation has a paramount desideratum if access for the people to judicial institutions has to become a reality." "Up until now," he said, "judicial reform has been a tinkering exercise, not an engineering project... This is unfortunate." This would of course necessitate making the powers of state and federal governments distinct. Our Constitution's Concurrent List of overlapping powers must therefore be abolished. It is only allowing each government to interfere in other's areas, and avoid responsibility. R. Jagannathan, editor of Swarajya, has also called for the scrapping the Concurrent List, as it "creates needless confusion."

3. Accountability and Transparency Giving government control over the judiciary makes no sense. But that does not mean that an important organ of government can be left without checks, or accountability to the people. In the wake of those four judges' exposé, our scholars have called for more transparency and accountability of the judiciary. Some have demanded that Parliament pass the long pending Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill. This would establish an oversight committee, and allow scrutiny of judges. Others have appealed to senior justices to "prize open the veil of secrecy." The issue of accountability is intertwined with the method of appointing judges. No democratic institution can last without the people's involvement in selecting its officials. India has been struggling with this for decades. All methods of appointment—by the President, PM, Collegium, etc.—have failed to deliver. Now there are calls for government to prepare a Memorandum of Procedure. But this too would place the Executive, the biggest litigant, in some control over judges' appointments, transfers, and promotions. The Rajya Sabha is ideally suited to provide such oversight, of course, with some reforms of its own. It can act as the approver of judges nominated jointly by the Executive and Collegium. It can pass legislation to establish new courts or change jurisdiction as described above. And, as the states' council, it can be the house to scrutinize the performance of state-run judiciaries.

The time has come for India to have a world class judiciary. The only way to get one is through bold, visionary steps.

Where policy was concerned, the story of Donald Trump's first year in office was simple: The populist of the campaign trail, the man who won the Republican nomination and the White House by ignoring conservative orthodoxy and promising the moon, was replaced by a president who essentially conceded control of his agenda to Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell and spent down his limited political capital pursuing conventionally right-wing policies — unsuccessfully on health care, successfully on taxes, but in each case without much moderate or bipartisan support.

There are many reasons — one for almost every tweet — that Trump arrived at his first official State of the Union address as a wildly unpopular president despite a reasonably strong economy, but his failure to follow through on his campaign's populist promises is high on the list. So you could read tonight's remarks (a better idea than listening to their somewhat soporific delivery) in part as an attempt to hit the reset button, to pitch himself as a centrist dealmaker rather than a predictable ideologue, to leave the legislative struggles of his first year behind and get back to selling people on things they actually want.

Thus even as he touted his tax cuts, Trump effectively buried further efforts at Obamacare repeal by suggesting that the repeal of the unpopular individual mandate sufficed as health care policy. There was no mention of deficit reduction or spending cuts, nor of the entitlement reforms dear to the heart of the House speaker just behind him. Apart from a long riff on immigration and a nod to judicial nominations, the conservatism of the speech was heavy on generalities about flag, faith and family, with more polarizing issues like abortion mentioned only by implication. Apart from the Islamic State, North Korea and Guantánamo Bay, the foreign policy section was ... strikingly empty. America First, it seems, means not having to bore viewers by bringing up anything about the world beyond our shores except our enemies. And then for domestic policy there was a list of ideas that Bernie Sanders might campaign on in 2020: cheaper prescription drugs, a \$1.5 trillion gusher of infrastructure spending, even a promise to pursue paid family leave. Not conservative ideas, these — but mostly popular ones.

In this sense, and also in the canny and sometimes moving choices of inspirational figures in the balconies, I suspect the speech was effective, that it might help lift Trump temporarily upward from his mean of 38 percent approval toward the "we're holding the House by our fingernails" promised land of 44 percent. But an effective speech is not the same thing as an effective agenda, and right now there are no prospects for Trump's popular ideas getting enacted or even really considered on the Hill. His party's ideologues don't want them, the opposition party doesn't want to make a deal with Trump to get them, and his White House doesn't actually have any detail behind the rhetoric. The ideas are just things that the president would probably like to do but that someone will talk him out of, or that he'll forget about, or that he'll offer in a halfhearted way and that Congress will never bother to take up.



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For national and regional players, the stakes are high in the northeast elections

To underestimate the importance of these elections for either the people of these states or the national polity would be a mistake.



In Delhi's political imagination, the real political battle of 2018 begins in Karnataka. It then ends with the three states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, setting the stage for the Lok Sabha polls of 2019. But before that, in February, three key Northeastern states - Nagaland, Meghalaya and Tripura - go to polls. And to underestimate the importance of these elections for either the people of these states or the national polity would be a mistake.

It is important because the thread of electoral democracy within the constitutional framework binds Nagaland, home to Asia's oldest insurgency and with a strong conception of its own uniqueness and claims of sovereignty with India. Elections have created and sustained a Naga political elite which stands at the forefront of defending the Indian system and is ready to unfurl the Indian flag. It may not address the alienation of its people entirely — which is why the peace process with rebel groups is so important — but a democratic government provides a channel to articulate some of their concerns. This time around, elections have become contentious. A significant section of Naga civil society and political opinion, tired of the long drawn peace talks and seeking closure, wants a 'solution before election'. But the Centre is clear that this cannot be a reason to postpone polls. Articulating this, BJP's general secretary, Ram Madhav, has said the state needs 'elections for solution'. As the peace talks enter the final lap, Delhi feels having an elected legitimate government in Kohima strengthens its hands.

It is important because it has provided a democratic platform to tribals in a Bengali-dominated polity like Tripura to articulate their aspirations. This, among other factors, has weakened the militancy that used to engulf the state till a decade and a half ago.

It is important because democratic churning and elections have given Meghalaya's diverse social groups — across the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo hills — a platform to arrive at a power-sharing arrangement. This, in turn, has brought a degree of stability and relative peace in the state, allowing it to focus on economic opportunities. But besides the significance these elections have for the respective states, the three polls are also important for the three larger parties and national politics. Take the Left. The CPM, already a pale shadow of its past after

losing Bengal, is reduced to being in power in only Kerala and Tripura. In Agartala, barring a period of five years from 1988-1993, it has been in power for 40 years. But today it confronts an aggressive BJP machine which has deployed its resources and leadership, and is displaying its ability to co-opt leaders and ally with disparate groups. A loss for the Left in Tripura will mark the end of its hegemony in the state; it will leave the CPM with no state across North, Central, West and East India; it will deprive the party of resources to recover; and it will generate despondency across its ranks and sympathisers. The Congress is fighting to retain power in Meghalaya. It has a strong CM in Mukul Sangma, who cannot be underestimated. But it is also saddled with anti-incumbency, factional feuds and confronts

both a strong BJP and a stronger local challenger in the National People's Party. Retaining power will be a morale booster. But losing power and seeing BJP enter government, in this Christian-dominated state, will reduce the Congress to only three states across the country. The Congress will then only have Mizoram in the entire belt from Delhi all the way to India's eastern-most borders. For the BJP, the polls represent yet another opportunity to shed its old tag of being a Hindi heartland party and expand its national footprint. It hopes to continue its quest for both a 'Congress-mukt' and, in Tripura's case, a 'CPM-mukt' Bharat. Entry in government in all three states will take the BJP's national tally to 21 states. A spike in numbers in Nagaland and Meghalaya, in particular, will allow the BJP to

claim it is not just a Hindu party. But a defeat or a dismal performance here will show to the party that heartland Hindutva will extract its costs in other pockets of India. The elections will show if the BJP's moment of supreme political dominance or as Yogendra Yadav terms it, political hegemony, persists or whether cracks are beginning to appear.

Nagaland, Tripura, Meghalaya may be small states. But their elections - like elections elsewhere - provide an opportunity to citizens to negotiate with their political elites. Their specific geographical locations, with specific histories of political violence, lend them greater sensitivity. The outcome here will shape not only the politics of the states but the fortunes and political strengths of India's national parties.

India is losing productivity worth billions due to cancers that can be prevented

The costs and logistical difficulties in implementing screening and treatment programmes in the BRICS countries underscore the importance of cancer prevention, says a new study. But close to 60% of cancers in India can be prevented

The BRICS grouping of countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — are losing billions of dollars in productivity owing to cancer, says a research paper published in the Journal of Cancer Epidemiology. India recorded a total productivity loss of \$6.7 billion in 2012 because of cancer, representing 0.36% of our GDP. This is second only to South Africa which recorded a productivity loss of \$1.9 billion, or 0.49% of its GDP. While the cost per death of productivity lost in India was less than \$20,000, the lowest among BRICS countries, the highest productivity losses — \$0.74 billion — because of the lip and oral cancers are a cause for alarm. Beyond the impact on public health and loss of human life, the disease also imposes a steep economic cost on a country's economy. Taking the loss of productivity owing to premature death into consideration can provide policymakers additional perspective when they chart out strategies for prevention and control of the disease. Originally grouped together as rising emerging economies, the five BRICS countries today comprise more than 40% of the world's population and 25% of global GDP. The five

economies collectively lost nearly \$46.3 billion in 2012 on account of cancer-related deaths that could have been prevented with proper treatment and adequate infrastructure, says the paper. The costs and logistical difficulties in implementing screening and treatment programmes in the BRICS countries underscore the importance of cancer prevention. Doctors say close to 60% of cancers in India can be prevented. Around 40% cancers in the country (such as lung cancer and cancers of mouth) are caused by tobacco use and another 20% from infections such as hepatitis B that cause liver cancer and human papillomavirus, which can lead to cervical cancer. Cancer cases in India are rising not just because of better diagnostic facilities but also owing to the shift in the way we lead our lives. Tobacco and alcohol use, consumption of processed food, air pollution and obesity are among its biggest triggers. India recorded an estimated 3.9 million cancer cases in 2016, data available with the National Cancer Registry Programme of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) shows. Obesity grew two-fold in India between 2005 and 2015 — 20.7% of women



and 18.6% of men are obese, shows National Family Health Survey-4 data released this year. ICMR estimates say India is likely to have more than 17.3 lakh new cases of cancer and more than 8.8 lakh deaths due to the disease by 2020.

But the silver lining is that cancer risk can be slashed significantly by curtailing tobacco use, getting vaccinations for certain types of cancer and adopting a healthier lifestyle. Changes that reduce the burden of cancer will also have a positive effect on the economy. A combination of tobacco control, alcohol control, vaccination programmes and cancer screening will lead to significant gains for both the health as well as the economy.

Last-mile issues can make or break the promise of Aadhaar

These avoidable implementation challenges on account of Aadhaar can be significantly resolved by a clear legal articulation of permissible uses of Aadhaar through suitable amendments to Section 57 of the Aadhaar Act. It is also crucial that RBI and other regulators address instances where providers cite Aadhaar to create self-styled, exclusionary practices.

While the Supreme Court examines the constitutional validity of Aadhaar, we reflect on Aadhaar's early promise of enabling easier access to bank accounts and payments, particularly welfare entitlements. Elsewhere we write about Aadhaar's potential for financial inclusion and note the progress made in recent years. In this column, we look at the experience of the financial sector when using Aadhaar in various implementation processes and flag areas for improvement. We believe this kind of implementation surveillance is critical to realising the full potential of Aadhaar in a service delivery context.

First, it is our understanding that the Aadhaar project was designed for online authentication of biometrics and not for physical, Aadhaar card-based identification. The Aadhaar Act does not recognise the Aadhaar card, which was issued for convenience. Over time the card has been misinterpreted as an ID, much to the users' detriment. Service providers often insist on consumers' Aadhaar card as a

pre-requisite for availing services despite it having the weaknesses of physical ID, particularly ease of falsification and susceptibility to making unauthorised copies.

Second, financial institutions often ask for Aadhaar along with another ID such as Voter ID. When demographic details on the two documents don't match, the burden is on the customer to reconcile these differences. We recall a recent experience of a microfinance customer who was denied a loan because the date of birth on her Aadhaar card was different from that on her Voter ID. Though she got her Aadhaar updated in eight days, it was needless. This business process is useless to the financial institution and poses an unnecessary hardship on the consumers. Such practices need to be discontinued. Due to similar linkage issues, 16 out of 100 randomly surveyed pension beneficiaries were reported as not receiving pension entitlements in Ranchi, according to the EPW.

Third, the issue of proof of address has been an enduring challenge to financial inclusion in India. Recognising this challenge, the Reserve Bank of India amended its KYC Guidelines in



2016, to state that "a customer shall not be required to furnish separate proof of current address if it is different from the address recorded in the Officially Valid Document (OVD). In such cases, the Regulated Entity (RE) shall merely obtain a declaration from the customer indicating the address to which all correspondence will be made by the RE."

This is specifically emphasised in the case of migrant workers and transferred employees who may not have proof of current address. Aadhaar being an OVD is subject to this guideline. However, customers continue to be denied accounts on this ground. Financial

institutions need to monitor this violation of RBI guidelines without delay.

Instances of denial of services by banks should be reported to banking ombudsmen. During a recent field research, we met Sujata (not her real name) who hails from West Bengal and works in Gurgaon as a domestic help. She has been denied a bank account in Gurgaon because her Aadhaar card is linked to her address in Bengal, even though her employer is willing to certify her current address. Helpless, Sujata uses her brother's bank account to transfer money to her son in Bengal. She understands the precariousness of this

arrangement but to resolve this, she has to forego a week's wages and travel to Bengal or obtain a new OVD for her address in Gurgaon. UIDAI's provisions for updating an address online are often inaccessible to people such as Sujata. These avoidable implementation challenges on account of Aadhaar can be significantly resolved by a clear legal articulation of permissible uses of Aadhaar through suitable amendments to Section 57 of the Aadhaar Act. It is also crucial that the RBI and other regulators address instances where providers cite Aadhaar to create self-styled, exclusionary practices.

In the fight against pollution, set time-bound goals

The recent attempt to introduce emissions standards for the thermal power industry puts in perspective the governance process for essential air quality safeguards

There are a few things that need to be understood when discussing pollution. Air pollution takes a long time to develop, as does resolving the problem. Remedial measures require continuous and focused follow through, and not knee-jerk reactions each time air quality deteriorates on a seasonal basis.

Second, air pollution knows no borders. Air quality can be impacted by occurrences many miles away, from adjoining states, to countries across the seas. So, it is useful to recognise what issues we can have a direct impact on, and which ones we cannot.

Third, air pollution is created in numerous ways (power, transport, industry, dust, waste,

agriculture), which therefore need multiple lines of attack on all fronts. While understanding the contributing shares of each of these sources is important, there is no point in deflecting action on any one source by getting bogged down in debating relative shares. All major sources are bad and need to be attacked.

Finally, the action plan must have quantifiable time-bound objectives against which progress can be tracked rather than relying on a set of disparate open-ended measures. National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are in place, so action needs to be planned and tracked against these standards. This focus will ensure that we do not lose momentum each time we get a seasonal improvement.

There have been many positive measures over the past few years dealing with cleaner fuels, renewable energy, improved technology etc. Continued focus on implementation and enforcement remains necessary. While individual measures makes sense, action must be planned holistically to keep track of the overall progress being made. The recent attempt to introduce emissions standards for the thermal power industry puts in perspective the governance process for essential air quality safeguards.

Thermal power plants are major sources of a range of pollutants, including particulate matter, SO_x, NO_x, and mercury. This is particularly true of older



plants, that are not only more polluting but also are inefficient and use copious amounts of water. In December 2015, the MoEFCC introduced comprehensive emission standards for thermal power plants, and allowed 24 months till December 2017 for implementation. The deadline of December 7, 2017 passed, and little was done by the industry to comply. It must be noted that the largest owner and operator of thermal power plants are federal (NTPC) and state-owned utilities. The recent judiciary-driven action in the National

Capital Region (NCR) is welcome, but this is a nationwide problem and must be tackled accordingly. While the courts have done an admirable job in announcing ad hoc measures, the executive must develop a comprehensive inter-sectoral long-term policy with specific targets and timelines if we are to see the change that is so urgently required. Even if the MoEFCC and the CPCB become more visibly active, the question of their jurisdiction over activities under control of other Ministries such as power, industry,

(Contd on page 24)

India should join BRI, says Chinese expert

SINGAPORE: India should leave its bilateral disputes with China aside and join the Beijing-backed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a Chinese scholar has said.

"We will keep the door open on India's participation in the BRI. China has repeatedly extended invitations to India to be part of the BRI," said Associate Professor Huang Yunsong, Associate Dean, Sichuan University School of International Studies.

"But India is not interested in BRI at this stage," he told PTI after addressing a BRI symposium in Singapore on Monday.

He pointed out the number of disputes between China and India, but stressed these should

not be used against the BRI.

Touted as Chinese President Xi Jinping's ambitious project, the One Belt One Road initiative focuses on improving connectivity and cooperation among Asian countries, Africa, China and Europe.

The BRI also included the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which India opposed as it goes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

"There are a lot of issues between India-China since 1947, such as the China Pakistan relationship," he said. Among others issues, there were growing trade imbalance between the two countries, Doklam border situation, Tibet and Dalai Lama, he pointed out.

"China has an agreement with

Pakistan that it will not back any side in their (disputed) claims on Kashmir. It is between Pakistan and India," stressed Huang who is well versed on China-South Asia issues.

But he also noted the positive points, for India and China having agreed to work on border disputes at its own pace while taking a more cooperative approach in pursuing economic activities between the two countries. He called on India to offer more favourable terms for Chinese investments as a way forward to manage the trade deficit. According to figures, India's trade deficit with China was \$51.08 billion in 2016-17. Huang also called for removal of tax-based restriction on exports of Indian iron ore and



cotton to China. "India should imports," said Huang, who is also the Coordinator, Centre for South Asian Studies at Sichuan University of China. He also called for removal of restrictions on Iron ore and cotton for export to China. China may allow pharmaceutical

Pakistan: 11 Citizens Killed in Migrant Tragedy



PARIS — The Latest on Europe's migration crisis (all times local): Pakistan's foreign ministry has confirmed that up to 11 citizens from the country are among migrants who drowned after a boat capsized off Libya's coast. Ministry spokesman Mohammad Faisal told The Associated Press that Pakistani diplomats had reached Libya's coastal area to collect more details. He said that Pakistani authorities will try to bring back the bodies of Pakistanis killed in the tragedy.

The U.N. migration organization says its partner agencies are reporting that about 90 migrants are feared to have drowned in the capsizing and that the boat was carrying mostly Pakistani migrants.

But Faisal dispelled the impression that most of the drowned migrants were Pakistanis, saying only 11 Pakistanis died. Serbian authorities say they have removed dozens of migrants from Belgrade's streets and transferred them to migrant centers.

Authorities said in a

statement that there have been no incidents during the early Friday raid in the Serbian capital. A video published by Serbian media showed migrants coming out of a run-down building and being moved onto a bus.

About 4,000 migrants remain stuck in Serbia trying to move on toward wealthy European Union nations.

Pak SC removes controversial Chairman of ETPB

AMRITSAR: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday removed the controversial Chairman of Pakistan's Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Saddiq ul Farooq for his negligence which led to the drying of the holy pond of one of the most revered clusters of Hindu temples at Katas Raj.

According to Pakistan media reports Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Mian Saqib Nisar led the hearing by a three-member bench in the suo motu action against drying up of Katas Raj temple complex pond because of the industrial impact and removed him from his position while hearing the Katas Raj Temples case.

Katasraj is known for its cluster of temples especially Shiva temples and buildings of Sikh and Hindu heritage

situated in Chakwal district of Pakistan's Punjab.

Taking a suo moto notice of depletion of the pond of Katasraj temples due to operations of a nearby cement factory that had sucked out the underground water the SC of Pakistan had issued a notice to ETPB chairman Saddiq ul Farooq on Tuesday.

Media reports further state that the court had ruled that chairman was not eligible to hold his office.

Farooq had earlier courted controversy after he was blamed for selling Gurdwara properties in Nankana Sahib and Lahore and acquiring of properties for the construction of Baba Guru Nanak University in Nankana Sahib. He was even manhandled by local lawyer's community who had ransacked the ETPB's office in Nankana Sahib.

Will continue hydrographic surveys in Indian Ocean: Navy chief

MUMBAI: Indian Navy has carried out hydrographic surveys of many island nations in the Indian Ocean region and will continue to do so, its chief Admiral Sunil Lanba said on Wednesday.

His comments came in the backdrop of a revised agreement between India and the Seychelles for the development of infrastructure facilities on Assumption Island, which lies southwest of Mahe, the largest island of that country. "We have carried out hydrographic surveys for (a) number of island nations in the Indian Ocean region, and we will continue to do that," Lanba told reporters after the launch of Karanj, the third state-of-the-art Scorpene-class submarine here.

The two countries had signed an agreement to develop infrastructure on Assumption Island during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Seychelles in 2015. "We are not going to acquire Assumption Island, but (the Indian) government is going to make some facilities there," he said. On Sri Lanka formally handing over the strategic



southern port of Hambantota to China on a 99-year-lease, in a USD 1.1 billion deal, the Navy chief said, "Hambantota is a commercial harbour and Sri Lankans have assured us that it will be used as commercial harbour only."

Last year, the Indian Navy had carried out a joint hydrographic survey of Sri Lanka's Weligama Bay and southern coast, in a reflection of the growing cooperation between navies of the two countries. Hydrographic survey data for more than 7,000 nautical miles was collected during a two-month-long exercise.

A group of Sikh's from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces of Pakistan had also opposed him for intervening in the functioning of Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (PSGPC) and Sikh religious affairs.

When contacted Farooq told TOI "It is a political decision against PML(N), no act of parliament was considered before giving the judgement, I will file the review petition".

Sanjay Kathuria, a Hindu pilgrim who had gone to Katasraj on the occasion of Mahashivratri last year told that they had registered their complaint with Chairman for drying of the holy pond. "It's an appreciable decision of Pak SC to remove a person who has failed to fulfill his duties especially towards minority community".

Trump's what-if presidency

The president delivered a State of the Union that suggested an alternate political reality.



President Donald Trump stood before Congress and the nation Tuesday night and invited people to imagine an alternate universe.

Think of it as the what-if presidency.

What if he had not spent a year compulsively lashing his opponents and taking steel wool to the country's cultural, ideological and racial wounds? What if a special prosecutor did not have his sights locked on the administration over possible electoral collusion with Russia and obstruction of justice?

And what if—perhaps the biggest stretch of all—Trump somehow brought to heel the impulsiveness and improvisation that define his politics and replaced these, even partly, with strategic purpose?

The 80 minutes Trump stood at the House speaker's lectern suggest an answer: He would be in a commanding position in American politics after one year in power, with his own party firmly locked down and Democrats on the defensive.

The speech also illuminated how well-positioned he would be to fortify his standing in the year ahead.

Whether by accident or design, Trump is presiding over a strong economy — the kind that has historically rewarded

incumbents lavishly — and his recent legislative victory overhauling the tax code has made him the toast of C-suites on Wall Street and beyond. Through a mix of intimidation and accommodation, a man who spent most of his adult life with no consistent partisan allegiances has turned the Republican Party into his tool, as GOP cheers during Tuesday's speech and cable TV air kisses afterward indicated.

With some artful deal-cutting, Trump also would have a strong chance to expand his base with an agreement on immigration and an even more potent trillion-dollar-plus infrastructure program that would power jobs and likely deepen support in the Midwestern industrial states that Trump snatched from the Democratic column in 2016 to claim the presidency.

Okay, now. Time to snap out of it. The upbeat view of Trump's potential — as demonstrated by a flag-waving, pep rally-esque State of the Union that slathered praise on a long roster of constituencies and target groups but seemed to avoid (at least by Trump standards) gratuitously offending others — requires willfully ignoring other political and psychological realities.

The political reality is that the

vision of Trump and Trumpism on display in the State of the Union is not one voters see more than occasionally. If it were the norm, rather than the exception, it is hard to imagine Republicans losing big in Virginia and Alabama as they did late last year, or that Trump's average approval rating would be 40.1 percent, or that many of the same Republicans who were clapping along in the House chamber would be privately saying they pray Trump is somehow not again on the ballot in 2020.

The psychological reality, as many of the Republicans tied most closely to Trump well know, is that he could not stay in State of the Union mode — or stay away from Twitter tirades — if he tried.

Trump may have been disciplined during the State of the Union speech, said a senior GOP leadership aide on Capitol Hill — but, this person added, "None of that matters if he goes back and tweets crazy shit."

"I'd say there's a good amount that he's actually accomplished," said the aide, who readily acknowledged that Trump's own antics have overshadowed much of his agenda. "The issue is that no one can ever focus on any of that because we're consumed by distractions over his Twitter, his erratic public remarks, the

discord on the personnel level and the Russia investigation." They have all "combined into basically a media firestorm every other day about something that the Trump White House is doing."

The question to be answered in coming days is whether the State of the Union speech represents a passing rhetorical shift — some speechwriter's notion of the appropriate tone for this occasion — or a more significant shift in strategy.

Trump mentioned the word "together" — Americans coming together, the two parties coming together, and so on — 13 times.

And while some Democrats rolled their eyes at appeals for bipartisanship from a president who insults opponents with such ease, the reality is that party leaders, including Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, have repeatedly signaled their willingness to strike bargains with Trump on immigration and infrastructure. Yet Schumer can't compromise without worrying about backlash on the left as his party tries to recapture one or both chambers of Congress, and House Speaker Paul Ryan can't negotiate a deal on immigration and the status of "Dreamers" without potentially enraging his right flank. But thanks to his unusual connection with

supporters, Trump has uncommon freedom, as illustrated by the speech. He massaged right-wing erogenous zones — lower taxes, conservative judges, support for "beautiful coal," and elimination of the Obamacare individual mandate. He pivoted with ease to words that from any other Republican president would soothe Democratic ears — record-low unemployment for African-Americans and Hispanics, turning away from "decades of unfair trade deals that sacrificed our prosperity and shipped away our companies, our jobs, and our nation's wealth."

He is still Teflon Don — the man who famously bragged during the 2016 campaign that he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and not lose support from his base. Or, as Tennessee Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander observed in an interview: "President Trump has the opportunity to be Nixon to China on immigration. Because I think if he says this should be the legal status of these Dreamers, they should have someday ... citizenship, this is sufficient border security. I think the country is more likely to accept that. So he may be able to do what President Bush and President Obama tried to do but couldn't."

'A lunar photobomb!'

International Space Station spotted crossing in front of the supermoon in stunning new NASA photo

A new photo from NASA shows the International Space Station photobombing Tuesday night's supermoon - just hours before the rare 'super blue blood moon.'

NASA tweeted the picture and wrote: 'A lunar photobomb?! The Space Station and its six passengers pass in front of the full moon last night in this incredible NASA image.'

The space station was traveling at about five miles a second.

The lunar trifecta in the early hours of the following morning had not been seen by much of the world for more than 150 years, but was caught in spectacular photos gracing the world's skies earlier this week.

A 'super blue blood moon' is the result of a blue moon – the second full moon in a calendar month – occurring at the same time as a super moon, when the moon is at perigee and about 14 per cent brighter than usual.

It also combines with a blood moon – the moment during a lunar eclipse when the moon, which is in the Earth's shadow, takes on a reddish hue.

While people in the eastern Hemisphere saw their last Blue Moon total lunar eclipse in 1982, for the Western Hemisphere, the eclipse was the first blue moon total eclipse since 1866.

While much of the world has experienced a 'super blue



blood moon', the moon above the UK was just a super blue moon.

This occurs when a blue moon occurs at the same time as a super moon, but without also combining with a blood moon.

Despite the UK not experiencing a lunar eclipse, and therefore missing out on a blood moon, many pictures seemed to show the satellite glowing red.

Dr Daniel Brown, an astronomer at Nottingham Trent University, told MailOnline this is because when the moon is quite low in the horizon - for instance when it is rising or sinking past the horizon - the atmosphere of the earth will redden it independent of an eclipse.

A lunar eclipse occurs when the sun is on the other side of the Earth while the moon is located on Earth's opposite side.

'Most of the time the full moon sits above or below Earth's shadow and the moon remains flooded with sunlight', explains Dr Tanya Hill, an Honorary Fellow of the University of Melbourne, writing for The Conversation.

'But twice a year, the three bodies fall into line so that Earth casts its shadow on the moon.'

The Earth's shadow is not completely black but has a reddish hue, which has led many cultures to describe it as a blood moon.

Sunlight manages to reach the moon but first it has to pass through Earth's atmosphere.

Democrats furious over Trump's immigration rhetoric

The opposition party says the president has made a Dreamers deal only harder to reach.



Democrats were infuriated by President Donald Trump's first State of the Union speech, claiming the president put an immigration deal even further out of reach with what they called bigoted remarks during the 80-minute address.

After Trump and his White House team teased a bipartisan theme, the minority party was waiting to hear something conciliatory about how to protect hundreds of thousands of young immigrants

facing deportation. Instead, Democrats booed Trump's reference to "chain migration" and fumed afterward that his remarks conflated immigrants with gang members and did little to give so-called Dreamers any reassurance at all.

"The tone was of a divider-in-chief," Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) said in an interview. "It was a red-meat appeal to the anti-immigrant base of his party, not the unifying, coming-together appeal that we all know is

necessary."

Trump reiterated his proposal to offer 1.8 million undocumented immigrants a pathway to citizenship, dramatically scale back legal immigration and spend billions on a border wall. His only explicit reference to Dreamers, however, was his line that, "Americans are dreamers, too."

Democrats called it a nativist appeal that belittled a cause — extending protections provided by the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program — that is supported by both parties.

"He's laying out pillars that are not going to get him a deal from Democrats. A lot of empty rhetoric," said Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.). "Those words were not helpful."

"Nothing about the Dreamers," said Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio). "He had opportunities to

heal. I've never seen a president that cares nothing about reaching out to people that didn't vote for him."

But Trump's Republican allies pushed back on Democrats' complaints. Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn of Texas said it was a "good speech" that was "consistent with everything I've heard from him."

"If Democrats don't figure out a way to negotiate, then the DACA program will end and that's not an outcome I think anybody would like," Cornyn said. "But they will be responsible for it. I think they need a little reality check."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) had urged her members to resist jeering Trump during his speech. But a smattering of boos was heard in the House chamber after Trump said that "a single immigrant can bring in virtually unlimited

numbers of distant relatives."

Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-Calif.), who has a bipartisan DACA-border security bill in the House, tilted his head back and laughed when Trump called his immigration proposal a "d o w n - t h e - m i d d l e compromise."

But it was Trump's "Americans are dreamers, too" remark that rankled Democrats most.

"Really stoking the fires, from my perspective, of bigotry," said Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.). Rep. Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.) said after hearing Trump's speech "you would think coming out of this that every undocumented alien is actually a member of MS-13." That was a reference to Trump's repeated mentions of the violent gang in the context of his desire to reform immigration policy.

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Modi still a 'suit-boot' person, keeps distance from poor: Rahul



over the price of the black jacket he wore yesterday at a concert here, Gandhi said, "You will not see him (PM) hug a poor person, talk to a poor person or even engage with a poor person. You will see him with others."

"There is a particular distance he maintains from the poor people which he does not with Mr Obama or others," he told journalists.

"The fact of the matter is that he (Modi) is still a suit-boot person. He has not done anything ...," Gandhi said.

The Congress president said the prime minister had promised to create 2 crore jobs a year but failed to achieve the target.

In an apparent retort to Rahul Gandhi's suit-boot ki sarkar jibe, the BJP had claimed the Congress President wore a jacket worth \$995 at a concert organised by his party in the poll-bound state yesterday.

"So @OfficeOfRG, soot(pun intended!)-boot ki sarkar with 'black' money fleeced from Meghalayan State exchequer by rampant corruption? Instead of singing away our woes, you could have given a report card of your inefficient govt in Meghalaya! Your indifference mocks us!," the BJP's Meghalaya unit tweeted.

The party's state unit also

tweeted an image of a jacket similar to the one Gandhi wore having a price tag of USD 995 (little over Rs 63,000).

The BJP, which intends to give a tough fight to the ruling Congress in the Meghalaya Assembly elections, also accused the Congress of distracting voters by organising a soiree.

"Rock concert distraction tactics by the @OfficeOfRG to take away focus of Meghalayan voters from real issues on ground! A prince can fuss over 'fuddy-duddy chopper' rides & cancel his Tura trip, but ever wondered how people in Meghalaya travel," the BJP tweeted.

SHILLONG: Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday fired his "suit-boot ki sarkar" salvo at Prime Minister Narendra Modi afresh, saying he

Polls can't be reversed: EC tells Nagas



GUWAHATI: The Election Commission has told the Naga umbrella group of tribal bodies and civil organizations in New Delhi seeking postponing the February 27 election until centre concludes the 20-year-old peace talks with NSCN (IM) with a solution that the polls cannot be reversed.

The Core Committee of Nagaland Tribal Hohos and Civil Organizations

which is spearheading the 'solution before election' drive has convinced all parties, including the Congress, to stay away from the polls. BJP, which pulled out of this drive on Tuesday after initially agreeing to it, has

decided to name its candidates on Thursday. "We are in the election process and we will be issuing the tickets to all our candidates tomorrow," BJP state president Visasolie Lhounghu said.

Convenor of the umbrella body, Theja Therieh told TOI that the state BJP unit had sought time till Wednesday to consult its high command on reviewing

its decision to back out of the poll boycott call. "BJP leadership in the state told us that they have written to their high command for a directive. We are still waiting for their response," Therieh said. He added, "If BJP or any other party decide to go with the election that will amount to betrayal."

He said that the full bench of the Election Commission met the delegation of the core committee in New Delhi and heard its demand. "The commission has acknowledged our demand but said that it is not in a position to review the election notification. The commission is duty-bound. It is a stalemate now unless government of India takes a call," he said.

Therieh said that the electorate is divided over the solution before election demand. "The people at the grass root

do not understand the politics behind all these push for election before the solution...there is a division among the electorate." He said that the decision to call for a Nagaland bandh on Thursday was taken on January 29 in the meeting of all the apex tribal hohos and mass based organizations. "But, confusion is spreading that the bandh may not be observed uniformly. Nevertheless, this bandh was a unanimous decision of all concerned and therefore the bandh will go ahead as resolved," he said.

"The very purpose of this bandh is in pursuance of the resolutions adopted collectively by Tribal Hohos, mass based organizations and all political parties that Nagas prefer to have solution first rather than election now," he said.

Shopian incident: Soldiers provoked to the ultimate, fired in self-defence, says Army



NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR: The Army on Wednesday asserted its soldiers had only opened "controlled fire in self-defence" after issuing enough warnings to the violent mob pelting stones on its convoy at Shopian in south Kashmir last Saturday, which left three civilians dead+ and seven

others in the administrative convoy were surrounded and attacked by the violent protesters, in response to the state police lodging an FIR charging "Major Aditya" and personnel from the 10 Garhwal Rifles battalion with murder and attempt to murder under the Ranbir Penal Code for the incident at Ganwapora Chowk.

soldiers injured.

The Army on Sunday had also filed a "counter-FIR+ ", detailing how four of its vehicles that were separated from the 16

"We have done our internal inquiry. The soldiers responded after being provoked to the ultimate. It was an act in self-defence and to protect government property," said Northern Command chief Lt-General Devraj Anbu on Wednesday, amid a political slugfest between coalition partners People's Democratic Party and the BJP in J&K.

"A generic FIR should have been filed by the police ... I think they have prematurely put the name of an individual (Major Aditya) in it. The FIR is an initial step and the investigation is yet to commence," added Lt-Gen Anbu.

The Army, in fact, contends Major Aditya who was leading the "administrative convoy" was quite some distance away from the site where the firing occurred at

Ganwapora on Saturday. "He was with the 16 other vehicles that were separated from the four vehicles surrounded by the over 200 stone-throwing protesters," said an officer.

The junior commissioned officer (JCO), in charge of the four vehicles, fell unconscious after being hit on the head by a stone while he was trying to reason with the protesters. "The mob even tried to lynch the JCO and snatch his weapon, and also extensively damaged the vehicles despite warnings. Given the extreme gravity of the situation, the soldiers had no recourse but to open fire," he said. "It was a desperate situation. The usual norm is to fire below the waist ... but the civilians who got hit above the waist could have been bending down to pick up stones," added the officer.

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Govt changes its mind on orange passports, removing last page with address proof

Owing to protest and concerns from various quarters, the government has reversed its decision to make changes to the passports, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said

Your passports will retain the last page with your address and other personal details. Yes, they can be used as address proof. And, they won't sport orange jackets.

Owing to protest and concerns from various quarters, the government has reversed its decision to revamp passports, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said in a release on Tuesday.

"After comprehensive discussions with the various stakeholders, the MEA has decided to continue with the current practice of printing of the last page of the passport and not to issue a separate passport with orange colour jacket to ECR (emigration check required) passport holders," the ministry said in the release. A decision was taken by the ministry on the recommendations of a three-

member committee comprising officials of the MEA and the Ministry of Women and Child Development, not to print the last page of the passport booklet. The MEA had decided to issue a passport with an orange jacket to holders with emigration check required (ECR) status, with a view to help and assist them on a priority basis. ECR status is issued to citizens who have not passed 10th standard and such

passport holders have to take clearance from the immigration office while travelling abroad for work.

The ministry had received several individual and collective representations requesting it to reconsider these two decisions. "The decision of the MEA on both these issues was reviewed in the light of these representations", said the release.

Without the last page, the



practice of using the passport as an address proof would have stopped. The decision to have an orange jacket, critics said, would discriminate against citizens on the basis of educational qualifications.

Only time will tell what political choices I make: Shatrughan Sinha



NEW DELHI: BJP MP Shatrughan Sinha has said only time will tell what political choices he makes during the next Lok Sabha polls and also shrugged off speculation his party may deny him a seat.

The actor-turned-politician yesterday joined 'Rashtra Manch', a political platform launched by another disgruntled BJP leader Yashwant Sinha to take on the government's policies, saying there was no forum within the BJP for him to air his views.

Asked on the sidelines of an event here if he will fight the next Lok Sabha polls, Sinha, who has turned a critic of the Centre's policies, shot back, "Why are you doubting it?"

To another question

about speculation that the party leadership may not give him a ticket due to his public attacks on the government, he said similar claims were made during the previous Lok Sabha polls and that his name was among the last ones to be declared.

This is not an issue whether they (BJP) will give me ticket or not. It will also have to be considered why they would not give me the ticket. I had the highest vote share margin ... Secondly, Whether I will take it or not, or from where I will fight, or not fight ... only time will tell. I have no worries. I am fearless," he said yesterday. Sinha had won the 2014 elections from Patna Sahib constituency by securing over 55 per cent of votes.

In Delhi's 'jumbo loss', major gain for Uttarakhand tiger reserve

Forest officials are likely to confiscate all seven domesticated elephants in Delhi and shift them elsewhere. Four of them would be donated to Rajaji Tiger Reserve.



The tourists at Rajaji Tiger Reserve would soon be able to go on safari astride four elephants that are likely to be shifted to Uttarakhand from Delhi after being confiscated from their owners.

Delhi currently has seven domesticated elephants owned by four people. All of them are kept in crowded localities and allegedly in poor conditions. The Delhi forest department is likely to shift them to sanctuaries outside the national capital, including 'donating' four to the Rajaji Reserve. Two others will be sent to Kalesar in Haryana. It will be a windfall for the Uttarakhand forest department that had earlier planned to bring six elephants from Karnataka. For this a proposal worth over Rs 25 lakh was submitted to

Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA).

This comes days after a team of officials from Rajaji visited Delhi's crowded Sangam Vihar locality where six of the elephants are being kept in captivity by their owners. The other elephant is kept at JJ Cluster in Laxmi Nagar, another crowded area.

As per the officials in the know of things, acting on a complaint by People for Animals (PFA), an NGO that works for animal welfare, a committee comprising wildlife officials had recommended that all the seven domesticated elephants in Delhi should be confiscated as their health was poor and the animals were kept in bad conditions. he owners, who have the

ownership certificate, had, however, moved Delhi high court challenging the committee's report. The HC rejected their plea saying that chief wildlife warden has the powers to issue and cancel the ownership.

Section 40 of The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 states that the ownership certificate could issued only if the owners have proper infrastructure and capacity to keep the animals.

The HC also directed to form a separate committee to inspect the elephants.

The committee comprising officials of the forest department, the central zoo authority and the vet of the National Zoological Park in New Delhi, submitted its report in July 2017. The report stated that the elephants were kept in poor conditions in crowded localities. Most of the animals were suffering from poor health and had cracked nails.

"It would be wiser to shift them to safer confines with relatively larger natural environs away from human habitation," the report said.

A senior Delhi forest official requesting anonymity said that they were likely to confiscate the elephants by this Friday.

Rising oil risks PM Modi's reforms as populism may take prominence



have criticized excise tax increases by the government that have deprived Indians of the benefits of low crude prices. Signs that all this is leading to a pause in fuel pricing are becoming evident. State refiners and marketers Indian Oil Corp., Bharat Petroleum Corp. and Hindustan Petroleum Corp. barely revised gasoline prices between Nov. 1 and Dec. 14, when elections in Modi's home state of Gujarat and the Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh took place. BJP won both. Diesel prices rose by just about 1 percent during the period, while Brent prices gained 5 percent. This year, elections are scheduled in eight states, including in three where Modi's

Bharatiya Janata Party is seeking re-election. This will be followed by federal elections in the first half of 2019. "On the global front, crude prices are rising, but I don't expect much increase in India's retail prices for gasoline and diesel," said Vaibhav Chowdhry, an analyst at KR Choksey Shares & Securities Pvt. in Mumbai. "There might be a price-cap again." Prime Minister Narendra Modi's energy reforms may be facing their toughest test yet. Soon after Modi came to power in May 2014, crude oil prices went into a tailspin. The resultant bonanza helped buffer government finances and led to the decontrol of fuel prices+. Now, as the commodity that forms almost a

fifth of the nation's import bill reverses its direction and a long election season looms, one of Modi's key reforms may be in jeopardy. That's bad news for India's state-run oil marketers. Pump prices in India for gasoline and diesel are near record levels as the government raised taxes on the fuels. A public backlash may leave little room for further increases. Crude's rally may force the Indian government to choose between cutting excise duty on petroleum products or reintroducing fuel-price caps to control inflation," Kunal Agrawal and Kar Wai Lee, analysts at Bloomberg Intelligence, said in a Jan. 29 note. "Reducing duty would impact state finances, while price caps would dent state refiners' revenue."

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opposition. Modi's opponents

Yogi Adityanath's visit to Ravidas temple leaves Mayawati fuming

LUCKNOW: Hours after chief minister Adityanath Yogi visited Sant Ravidas temple in Varanasi to commemorate the birth anniversary of 15th-century ascetic on Wednesday, BSP chief Mayawati said that such visits were mere 'drama' of BJP leaders



who never followed the principles of the social reformer while taking to violence.

Mayawati slammed the BJP and its associated organisations of misusing power to orchestrate violence in Kasganj that

killed one person. The former UP chief minister, in fact, squarely blamed the right wing groups for carrying out a 'Tiranga Yatra' in Kasganj without taking due permission of the district administration.

The BSP chief also recounted the initiatives taken during her previous government in the name of a mystic poet, including the renaming of Bhadohi as Sant Ravidas Nagar, construction of a polytechnic and a degree college in the name of Ravidas in Chandauli and Faizabad, respectively.

Mayawati had last visited the Ravidas temple in Varanasi 2008 when she was a CM. She was expected to visit the temple in 2016 but she cancelled her programme citing a security threat.

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If it was not for each and every one of you today who have supported our endeavours to become a reliable source of information, we would not have been able to voice our appreciation today. We as a family will continue to move forward with every article printed, with every word typed and with every voice incorporated into the publication that has stood to uphold the value of information and knowledge. Because with each idea shared, we as a community continue to move forward. And to all, thank you for sharing this achievement with all of us here today, working towards a new tomorrow.”

**-Sharanjit Singh Thind
Editor In Chief & Publisher**

CJI decides to recommend removal of Justice Shukla

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra has decided to recommend the removal of Allahabad High Court judge Justice S N Shukla as part of an in-house procedure after he was found guilty of misconduct by an internal probe into a medical college admission scam.

According to court sources today, the CJI is expected to write to the President and the Prime Minister soon about his recommendation that is required under the in-house procedure to remove a sitting high court judge. A three-judge in-house committee, comprising Madras High Court Chief Justice Indira Banerjee, Sikkim High Court Chief Justice S K Agnihotri and Madhya Pradesh High Court judge Justice P K Jaiswal, had concluded there was sufficient substance in the allegations

contained in the complaint against Justice Shukla and that the aberrations were serious enough to call for initiation of proceedings for his removal.

Following the committee's report, the CJI, in accordance with the relevant in-house procedure, advised Justice Shukla to either resign or seek voluntary retirement forthwith.

Sources said after he refused to do so, the CJI had asked the Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court to withdraw judicial work from him with immediate effect which was done yesterday. Justice Shukla has reportedly gone on long leave.

"In case the judge expresses unwillingness to resign or seek voluntary retirement, the chief justice of the concerned high court should be advised by the CJI not to allocate any judicial

work to the judge concerned and the President of India and the Prime Minister shall be intimated that this had been done because allegations against the judge had been found by the committee to be so serious as to warrant the initiation of proceedings for removal..." reads the in-house procedure dealing with the process of removal of high court judges in such cases.

Since Justice Shukla has not resigned as yet, as per the in-house mechanism, the CJI is bound to write to the President and the Prime Minister for initiation of proceedings to remove the judge by way of an impeachment motion, sources said. When the CJI writes to the President and Prime Minister for removal of a high court judge, the Rajya Sabha chairperson appoints a three-judge inquiry



committee in consultation with the CJI under the provisions of the Judges (Enquiry) Act, 1968 to look into the allegations. The committee appointed by the Rajya Sabha Chairperson would examine the evidence and records and would then opine if the same formed the basis for whether or not removal motion be

debated in the Upper House. Justice Shukla, who was heading a division bench in the high court, had allegedly defied the categorical restraint orders passed by a CJI-led bench of the apex court last year to permit private colleges to admit students for the 2017-18 academic session.

PM Modi to inaugurate Global Investors' Summit 'Advantage Assam'



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday will inaugurate the Global Investors' Summit 'Advantage Assam' here. The two-day event, starting today, will showcase the state's manufacturing opportunities and geostrategic advantages to foreign and domestic investors. Global Investors' Summit 'Advantage Assam' The Summit has been organised by the Assam Government, in association with the industry body the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), aiming to position the state as India's Expressway to Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. There are number of focus sectors, identified by the state, which include agriculture and food processing, organic farming, bamboo, handloom, textile and handicrafts, inland water transport, river front development and logistics.

Budget 2018: What worries me is that fiscal arithmetic may be faulty, says Manmohan Singh

Former prime minister Manmohan Singh in his reaction to Arun Jaitley's budget said the fiscal arithmetic could be at fault. "I don't think I can blame the budget for being motivated by scoring points in elections, but fiscal arithmetic is at fault," he told The Indian Express, adding "this budget is high on projecting a bright picture but how will that be sustained (by the underlying fiscal arithmetic)." Budget 2018 When questioned if the budget was reform-oriented, Singh said the word reform has been used and abused too many times. "I don't want to comment on it," he said. "Real issue is whether farm crisis is a thing of the past, if not, what



is the strategy to deal with the farm crisis," Singh added. Budget 2018 While Jaitley promised implementation of the Swaminathan formula of setting minimum support prices for crops to give farmers 50% return over production

cost from the upcoming kharif season, Singh questioned the implementation. "How will farmers income be doubled? How will these promises be fulfilled?" he said. Budget 2018 So there should be a separate discussion on the issues of farmers, job creation, health and education," the Congress leader said. He also panned the government over its claim to double the farmers' income by 2022, saying it was "impossible" to do unless the country's agricultural growth is 12 per cent. Singh said that unless the growth of 12 per cent is achieved in the agriculture sector, the claim of doubling the farmers' incomes was just a "hollow assurance". Indian Express

Uttar Pradesh To Repeal 1000 British-Era Laws In One Go, And Most of Them Are 150 Years Old

In a first, Uttar Pradesh is set to repeal 1000 British era laws, most of which are some 150 years old. The Times of India reported that the Yogi Adityanath led government is planning to repeal the laws in one go and has drawn up a list of such "obsolete" laws. "UP government will table a bill in the forthcoming budget session for their repeal," TOI reported. "Many such laws have lost relevance in the wake of new legal provisions enacted over the years," UP law minister Brijesh Pathak quoted as saying.

Based on National Law Commission recommendations, a list of such laws was drawn up.

"Such laws include the Mirzapur Mining Act, King of Avadh State Act 1888, Avadh

Taluqdar's Relief Act of 1870, Avadh State Act of 1869, United Province Act of 1890, King of Avadh Validation Act of 1917, Improvement in Towns Act of 1850, Sales of Land For Revenue Arrears Act of 1845, Forfeited Deposit Act of 1850, Coroners Act of 1871, Local Authority Loans Act of 1914, Agriculturist Loans Act of 1884 and the Sikh Gurudwara's (Supplementary Act) of 1925." In December last, the government had passed a bill repealing 15 laws on the recommendations of the Law Commission of India, which included obsolete rules that were notified during the President's Rule in the state and British rule before Independence. The British-era rules included The Police (Agra) Act, 1854, The Mirzapur

Stone Mahal Act, 1886.

The Centre too had shown zeal in repealing archaic laws. After the Modi government came to power, a two-member panel was set up to look into the repealing of archaic laws and the panel also consulted the Centre and the state government before recommending the legislations to be repealed. Some 1824 acts were repealed after Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over the reins of the government.

Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had said 1029 old laws were first repealed by Parliament in 1950 and the last time such old laws were abolished during the Atal Behari Vajpayee government that repealed old laws in 2004, the law minister said.

A Nation Within 4 Temples

An organically evolved nation is the collective consciousness of a people with shared history and values. Here are two contrasting examples of nationalism for a closer inquiry— the US and Israel.

The US prides itself as a 'melting pot'—or a 'plate of salads'—nation of immigrants long populating its geography, even though Samuel Huntington described it as a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) nation. The US is less an organically, more a mechanically evolved nation. Organically evolved nations are different. Their national consciousness can exist without even a territory! It did in the case of the Jewish nation, which existed in the consciousness of the Jews for two millennia without a territory. The Jewish people were strewn around 100 nations in the world, including India, for two thousand years. It was in 1947 that the Jewish people got a piece of 'their' territory back—present-day Israel. Their consciousness as nation got them their land. National consciousness can regain lost territory, but mere territory cannot regain lost national consciousness. The idea of the Jewish nation is the very contrast of the idea of US as a nation. Jewish nationalism is actually a racial concept. Yet, the world recognised it. A territory with a mere collection of people is no nation just because it is ruled by a State; for example, former USSR, Yugoslavia and the likes. Love of territory, sans the idea of nation, is not patriotism. Nor is it nationalism. Territorial nationalism or territorial patriotism equals just a landlord's love of his land. Patriotism is love of one's nation and the land of its ancestors. Now let's look at how our great ancestors and leaders captured the idea of Indian nationalism. The Indian nation existed from times immemorial. The Vedas speak of a 'rashtra'. In the Vishnu Purana, Vayu Purana, Linga Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Agni Purana, Skanda Purana, and Markandeya Purana, the larger India was known, millennia before, as Bharatvarsha, its people as Bharatiyas, its ruler as Chakravartin. The -Puranas emphasised spiritualism as the

soul of Bharatvarsha. In Hind Swaraj, Mah-atma Gandhi's fundamental text, he drew on the ancient idea of Bharatvarsha as India's spiritual nationalism. Gandhi said that our ancestors who established Setubandha (Rameshwar) in the South, Jagannath in the East and Haridwar in the North as places of pilgrimage were no fools. He asserts that the ancestors knew that worship of God could have been performed just as well at home and yet they argued that it must be (as) one nation, and established holy places in various parts of India, thus firing the people with an idea of nationality in a manner unknown in other parts of the world. Even the advent of Muslims, Gandhi said, would not make any difference as they ought to be assimilated into the mainstream nation. Maharishi Aurobindo was of the view that Indian Nationalism is Hindu nationalism which is no "creed, religion, faith" and said that the Hindu nation was born with Sanatan Dharma that is nationalism. Emphatic indeed, were both Gandhi and Aurobindo. **Vivekananda on spiritual nationalism**

Swami Vivekananda's nationalist exhortations are said to have triggered the freedom movement. The British police repeatedly found his literature in the hands of freedom fighters and even mulled action against the Ramakrishna Math. The tallest of leaders attributed the freedom movement to him. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Reading Vivekananda has made me love the country a 'hundred fold'. Subhash Chandra Bose described him as "the spiritual father of the modern nationalist movement". C. Rajagopalachari wrote, but for him "we would have lost our religion, not have gained our freedom; we owe everything to him." Rabindranath Tagore also told fellow Indians, "if you want to know India, study Vivekananda". For Jawaharlal Nehru, secular India's icon, Vivekananda "was one of the great founders of the national movement, who inspired the freedom fighters". Even Aurobindo and Subramanya Bharati were inspired by Vivekananda. What did Vivekananda have to say

about the Indian nation and nationalism? "A nation in India," he declared, "must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune". Comparing the three living nations of his times—English, French and Hindu—he said, 'the Hindu nation is still living' because of its religion. He termed religious conversions as perversions. Vivekananda went the farthest to -defend the Hindu -character of India.

Supreme Court: Hindu heritage and culture

Finally in the year 1995, the Supreme Court of India itself confirmed the core Hindu cultural character of India. Referring to the concepts 'Hindutva' and 'Hinduism', the Supreme Court ruled, "No meaning in the abstract can confine it to the narrow limits of religion alone, excluding the content of Indian culture and heritage. The term 'Hindutva' is related more to the way of life of the people in the sub-continent." The Court also recalled its previous judgement

in the Ayodhya case, where Justice Barucha speaking for himself and Justice Ahmadi, said, "Hinduism is a tolerant faith. It is that tolerance that has enabled Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism to find shelter and support upon this land". In saying so, he almost equated Hinduism to secularism. As late as in 2017, the Court refused to review its 1995 judgement on the Hindu cultural character of India.

Secular distortion

Vivekananda, Gandhi, Aurobindo and the Supreme Court independently converge on Hindu culture and way of life manifesting on Indian nationalism. But the post-Independence secular discourse is devoid of the true sense of India. It has so distorted the idea of the Indian nation that whatever inspired the freedom movement—whether it be Vande Mataram, composed by Bankim Chandra, or the ideal of Rama Rajya revered by

Mahatma Gandhi or the concept of Hindu nationalism expounded by Swami Vivekananda and Maharishi Aurobindo—is regarded in the contemporary discourse as communal and even anti-secular. This is what has created confusion in India about what is nationalism and patriotism. Unless the secular discourse discards the distortion and falls in line with the views of the great men who shaped India and the Supreme Court, the confusion is bound to continue.

The Supreme Court's verdict -clarifying the concepts of Hinduism and Hindutva was delivered in context of the 'Ramesh Yeshwant Prabhoo versus Prabhakar K. Kunte' case where the charge on Prabhoo was of using the terms 'Hinduism' and 'Hindutva' for an incendiary -effect on people while canvassing for elections. The Bombay High Court ruled against Prabhoo, and the SC upheld the decision, but went on to assign meaning to the terms -'Hindutva' and 'Hinduism'.

'Vikas purush' Narendra Modi set to be 'man of the poor'

The fact that absence of jobs is coupled with rising rural and agrarian distress has made it a politically dangerous moment.

The budget reveals that the Modi government's political response to this situation is welfare to ensure 'ease of living'. The welfare mix — and political messaging for 2019 — will have five components.

One, the government will continue to proudly proclaim Ujjwala, the distribution of gas cylinders to women, as a key measure which has changed the way people in rural India live. Two, Jaitley mentioned Saubhagya, the promise of electrifying poor households. Three, the government believes that toilet construction under Swachh Bharat has helped create a votebank of women. The budget mentioned this will continue.

Four, there is a strong push for both rural and affordable

urban housing. And finally, recognising how an illness can devastate a poor family and is often the difference between a reasonable life and poverty, the government has brought health to the political centre-stage. Take it together. And you know the government's poll card for 2019: cylinders, power, toilets, housing and health.

In its focus on the poor, the middle class supporters of the BJP have begun asking: What about us? The budget does not cut taxes. It imposes an additional cess to pay for education and health. It makes television and mobiles more expensive. It imposes capital gains tax for those who invest in markets.

The middle class vote may not be as enthused about the party, but the BJP believes it will still prefer Modi to Rahul Gandhi. Party strategists point out that recent elections show that urban pockets firmly

remain with them.

This approach also stems from Modi's own beliefs. In a significant speech in March 2017, the PM first spoke of the capacity of the poor.

"I can see their power. If the poor get educated, he will give results. If he gets to work, he will do more for the country." He then recognised the responsibility of the middle class.

"They have to pay taxes... They have to conform to norms of society. They have to bear the maximum economic load..." Modi then linked the two.

This element of Modi's philosophy has guided the budget. To the middle class, the government is saying: Bear with us, do your bit for society... To the poor, it is saying: We are with you. Whether the formula works, and multi-class alliance stays together, will be tested in 2019.

In the fight against pollution, set time-bound goals

President Donald Trump's first speech to Congress, initially hailed as a triumphant pivot from Keystone Kops chaos to presidential message discipline, was quickly overshadowed by a new Russia furor involving Attorney General Jeff Sessions. Sessions promptly recused himself from the Russia investigation, which not only destroyed his relationship with Trump and paved the way for the fateful appointment of Special Counsel Robert Mueller, but ensured that no one would remember anything the president actually said in his prime-time State of the Union-style address.

Really, though, Trump might have been fortunate that the substance of that February 28 speech vanished so abruptly down the national memory hole. Because as Trump prepares to give his first real State of the Union on Tuesday, some of his forgotten promises from last year's address to Congress look absurdly grandiose in retrospect.

This is what Trump vowed would happen because of his leadership: "Dying industries will come back to life ... Our military will be given the resources its brave warriors so richly deserve. Crumbling infrastructure will be replaced with new roads, bridges, tunnels, airports and railways gleaming across our very, very beautiful land. Our terrible drug epidemic will slow down and, ultimately, stop. ... Above all else, we will keep our promises to the American people."

Well, not yet. The industries that were dying before Trump took office are still dying; for example, U.S. coal consumption has dropped to its lowest level since the 1970s, despite Trump's efforts to gut restrictions on coal-plant pollution. The military is continuing to make do with just about the same resources it had during the Obama administration. Trump has not yet submitted his long-promised infrastructure bill, and his plan reportedly envisions little new federal spending on public works; his initial budget actually proposed cuts in infrastructure investments for our very, very beautiful land. As for the opioid epidemic—which is now so rampant that it's driving U.S. average life expectancy downward—Trump did declare it an emergency, but has not really done anything about it,

except insofar as he has pushed for massive cuts in Medicaid, which would produce massive cuts in substance-abuse treatment programs. During his campaign, Trump had vowed to protect Medicaid from cuts, but he's been rather selective about which promises to the American people he's chosen to keep.

One promise from that speech that Trump has definitely kept was to reduce taxes on corporations. "It will be a big, big cut," Trump vowed. Sure enough, the Republican-only bill that Trump signed was a big, big cut, permanently slashing the corporate rate from 35 percent to 21 percent while eliminating the alternative minimum tax for corporations. However, Trump also promised a border adjustment tax to make up for some of the loss in revenue, which didn't happen, while his promise of "massive tax relief for the middle class" ended up as modest and temporary tax relief for some middle-class families. And even though Trump complained that the national debt grew on President Barack Obama's watch, his tax plan alone will add \$1.5 trillion to the debt, reversing the deficit-reduction trends of the Obama years.

The other main area where Trump's policies have, in fact, reflected the spirit of his speech is immigration. Granted, he hasn't yet fulfilled his most prominent promise: "We will soon begin the construction of a great, great wall along our southern border." But his crackdown on undocumented immigration is having a real impact. Arrests at the border are way down, because fewer migrants are trying to sneak across, while arrests inside the U.S. are way up, because federal immigration agents are no longer focusing exclusively on criminal undocumented immigrants. Trump promised to make the U.S. a less welcoming country to outsiders, and he has delivered.

But Trump has failed to deliver on most of his promises, largely because, as some of us warned the night he made them, most of the promises were undeliverable. For example, Trump spent a long section of his speech laying out his principles for repealing Obamacare and replacing it with reforms that "expand choice, increase access, lower costs, and provide better health care." But achieving all those goals was not

compatible with repealing Obamacare, which had extended coverage to 20 million uninsured Americans while reducing medical cost growth to the lowest level in decades. Trump supported the Republican-only repeal legislation even though it did not really aim to achieve his stated goals, but it ultimately failed because several Republicans concluded it would undermine those goals.

In fact, while Trump's claim that "Obamacare is collapsing" was completely false last year—there wasn't a single "bare county" in America with no insurers, and independent analysts believed the Obamacare exchanges were stabilizing—it's less false now. Trump has cut off payments to insurers that helped encourage them to serve the poor, killed the mandate that discouraged healthy Americans from going uninsured, and shrouded the program's future in uncertainty. Lately, he's even claimed that he's already essentially repealed Obamacare, but that's not true, either.

As the president prepares to address the nation again, it's worth keeping in mind that the things Trump says often lack any real-world connection to the things Trump does. He promised last year to "promote clean air and water," but his Environmental Protection Agency has launched a crusade against air and water regulations, and has yet to side against polluters on any major issue. He promised to "work with members of both parties" on a variety of issues, but so far his legislative agenda has been relentlessly partisan. He talked like a populist, pledging to focus on "families who just want a fair shot for their children," but he has governed like a corporatist, siding with employers and investors over workers and consumers almost every time their interests have collided.

The first promise in Trump's 2017 speech, following an opening riff about Black History Month and the importance of civil rights, seemed uncontroversial to the point of banality: "We are a country that stands united in condemning hate and evil in all of its very ugly forms." But Trump would break even that promise, too, refusing to condemn neo-Nazi agitators in Charlottesville,

repeatedly retweeting white supremacists, making a point of attacking prominent African-Americans like Jay-Z, Steph Curry, Jemele Hill and the NFL players who have publicly protested police brutality. Trump also promised that "our neglected inner cities will see a rebirth of hope, safety, and opportunity," but he has yet to announce any major policies to help inner cities, and his budget proposal would have slashed funding to inner cities.

It is true, as Trump recently tweeted in all-caps to Jay-Z, that the black jobless rate has declined to the lowest rate since the government began monitoring it in the 1970s. That's awesome. But the black jobless rate was dropping long before Trump took office, from a high of 16.5 percent in 2011 to 7.8 percent when Obama left the White House. It's good that it's kept dropping to 6.8 percent today, but Trump has done nothing to change its trajectory. He's merely stopped calling that trajectory a catastrophe, and started calling it evidence that he's made America great again.

In fact, by the standards Trump used to trash the Obama era in his speech to Congress, the Trump era has been another economic nightmare. "Ninety-four million Americans are out of the labor force!" he complained last year. That was true at the time, if you included students, retirees and the disabled, but today, 95.5 million Americans are out of the labor force. "Over 43 million Americans are on food stamps," Trump said last year. This year, it's still over 42 million. "Our trade deficit in goods last year was nearly \$800 billion!" Trump marveled. Under Trump, the trade deficit is increasing.

Of course, the Trump economy is not a nightmare at all; it's fine, just like the Obama economy was fine. All that's changed is the spin. Crime was historically low last year when Trump was denouncing the "lawless chaos" that had overrun America, and it will still be low on Tuesday night if he declares victory over the chaos. America wasn't a nightmare before Trump, but claiming it was helped get Trump elected, and now he'll get to take credit for the non-nightmarish state of the union.

In the fight against pollution, set time-bound goals

transport, urban development, agriculture etc. remains. Given the seriousness and complexity of the problem and the urgency of providing solutions across jurisdictions, the recent formulation of an inter-ministerial committee under the leadership of the prime minister's office is a welcome and much-needed move. Appropriate citizen and business behaviour must be incentivised by providing financially viable alternative courses of action. Fines and diktats have limited

effectiveness. For example, just banning farmers from burning stubble has not made a difference to farmer behaviour. What is needed are technical alternatives that make economic sense for the farmer in order to change behaviour.

Industry needs to be made aware of the policy pathway in advance in order not to disrupt production. For example, the ban on pet coke, as desirable and necessary as it is, was enforced with no lead time provided, resulting in

disruption to production and employment. Yet where industry has been given significant lead time, as in the case of thermal power plant emission standards or conversion to BS IV fuels, they have failed to make use of the notice provided. Policy action must be accompanied by greater access to data and increased consumer awareness. This will be possible through installation of a far greater number of air quality monitors and appropriate dissemination of the data collected. Our role as

citizens is to push accountability and to comply and ensure compliance with rules of those around us.

Before we despair at ever improving air quality in Delhi and its environs, we must remember that such situations have prevailed in other major global cities such as London, Los Angeles etc. and have been tackled successfully. Beijing, too, has made progress. This did not happen overnight but took several years working to a thought out comprehensive plan. We can, and must, do so too.

We need far more stringent laws to save farmers and food items from pesticide toxicity

India needs a new pesticides management law to address issues related to the unsafe use of pesticides. It must also ensure strong enforcement to address farmers on how to avoid acute toxicity and prevent chronic toxicity due to pesticide residues in food items.



A special investigation team, set up by the Maharashtra government to probe the deaths of 40 farmers and farm labourers in Amravati and Yavatmal districts last year from pesticide poisoning, has blamed the administrative machinery as well as the victims for failing to follow safety protocols while handling such toxic substances. To prevent such incidents from happening again, the panel has recommended measures, including a ban on monocrotophos — a widely used insecticide — and unregistered plant growth regulators, besides

dedicated quality control staff to check pesticide quality, intensive care units in district and rural hospitals, and stringent IPC sections against farm owners and labourers not adhering to stipulations.

In a country in which agricultural infrastructure is in a

flux (district extension centres that are responsible for taking scientific knowledge to the farms for better yield and productivity are in dire straits) and the “link between science and agriculture has snapped,” as M S Swaminathan said recently, these proposals seem too ambitious. Instead of putting the onus on farmers, as the report seems to have done, the role and responsibility of the manufacturers of these pesticides must be scrutinised first. In fact, the Insecticide Act says that “manufacturers and distributors of insecticides and operators shall arrange for suitable training in observing safety precautions and handling safety equipment provided to them.”

Moreover, two of the pesticides blamed for these deaths—monocrotophos and oxydemetonmethyl — are classified as Class I pesticides by the World Health

Organization because of their acute toxicity. They are banned in several countries, including the EU. However, they are widely used in India. A CSE report says: “As per the data available with the Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage, a body under the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Class I insecticides (pesticides) accounted for close to 30 per cent of India’s total consumption of insecticides (pesticides) by weight in 2015-16. Every year, there are about 10,000 reported cases of pesticide poisoning in India.

India needs a new pesticides management law to address issues related to the unsafe use of pesticides. It must also ensure strong enforcement to address farmers on how to avoid acute toxicity and prevent chronic toxicity due to pesticide residues in food items.

Bollywood, and not just the political class, has let down Padmaavat

Irrespective of whether or not Padmaavat is a fine film, by refusing to publicly take on the frenzied bigotry of the Karni Sena, Bollywood has opened itself up to similar lunatic threats in the future

Much has already been said on the sins of omission and commission by the state governments of Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat that made it possible for mobs to assault a bus carrying school children and openly instigate violence against the actors of Padmaavat. Nor has the Opposition been unequivocal in criticising the frenzied bigotry of the self-appointed Karni Sena, with individual Congress and BJP leaders (General VK Singh; Digvijaya Singh) even uniting across the trenches to give it legitimacy. The political patronage of these goons, which has ranged from tactical support to gutless ducking, has been slammed universally.

But there is another dimension to the Padmaavat debate, and that is the tragic and fearful unwillingness of the Hindi film industry’s own stalwarts to stand up and be counted. This was the moment for Bollywood to come together against extortionist pressure and to unionise against the by now familiar circus of imagined grievances and public threats. If the biggest stars

of India — arguably with more social influence and following than any politician — would have marched through the streets of Mumbai or worn black bands in protest — or if nothing else, co-ordinated a mass Twitter agitation — would the state governments and the police not have been under severe pressure to contain the thugs? And this united rage should have been shown almost a year ago, when the sets of Padmaavat were first targeted by hooligans. What explains the outspoken comments on Padmaavat by movie stars from southern India when contrasted with the craven and cowardly silence of most of the Mumbai-based icons (save some honourable exceptions)? Deepika Padukone has certainly shown admirable and dignified strength, amid the worst sort of abuse and threats. But how many of her colleagues have openly stood shoulder-to-shoulder with her when she most needed it?

Veteran actor Sharmila Tagore told me that the reason the industry gets repeatedly coerced into capitulation is

because “we never speak in one voice”. She accused the industry’s “big boys of taking problems straight to ministers instead of fighting them united”.

I have repeatedly had the same arguments with friends who are directors, producers and actors. Not just about why they don’t resist blackmail more firmly; but also about why, as leaders of civil society, they don’t take more public positions on key issues unlike how Hollywood does. They always point to the trauma of the kind the Padmaavat team has endured to underline how much is at stake and how vulnerable they are to random attacks.

I’d argue it differently. If commerce is privileged over principle every time, the film industry should accept that it will remain a sad little supplicant to the whimsical diktats of one or the other offended group. Don’t all of them look on at the shameful saga of the past few months and feel they’ve had enough? Won’t this be the tipping point for the industry to grow a spine and tell these pathetic bullies where to get

off? Else they will continue to be at the receiving end. Today it’s Padmaavat; tomorrow it will be someone else.

It is unfortunate to see truly iconic superstars quiver in diplomatic silence. They don’t seem to be able to see the downside of being constant apologists. And this includes the ones with cult following — even India’s most beloved star, Shahrukh Khan. In 2015, when he turned 50, he did a handful of interviews with some of us, in which he challenged hatemonger trolls who would mock those with an independent opinion with threats of ‘Go to Pakistan’. He bravely took on violence in the name of beef politics by saying “Our religion cannot be defined or showed respect to by our meat-eating habits. How banal and silly is that”.

I don’t care if Padmaavat is a fine film or a terrible film. Those who did not publicly take a stand have opened themselves up to a similar set of lunatic threats in the future. Politicians have let down Padmaavat; but so has the film industry.

Mohan Bhagwat's views on removing caste and religion from politics are welcome

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat should also make it clear that every Indian has the right to choose whom to marry, what to eat, what to read and view, and when to dissent



The founder of the RSS, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, and its second and most powerful sarsangchalak, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, were firmly in favour of building a society based on religion and caste. But RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat seems to feel differently.

At a recent meeting, he lamented that vote bank politics will continue to the detriment of society as long as people vote on caste and religious lines. Coming from the leader of an avowed Hindu organisation, this is a welcome thought. Mr Bhagwat said that everyone is free to practise his or her religion of choice, again in contrast to many in the RSS who feel that minorities are about to either overrun India numerically or are actively trying

to convert Hindus through marriage or inducements.

Mr Bhagwat has on several earlier occasions spoken of the need for tolerance and inclusion, signalling that he is not as hidebound as some of his predecessors. But the challenge for the RSS in general, and Mr Bhagwat in particular, is to rein in the fringe Right-wing groups which seem to draw strength and legitimacy from the RSS.

While the RSS may say that it has nothing to do with organisations like the VHP, Bajrang Dal and Karni Sena, the latter clearly consider themselves close affiliates of the organisation. Mr Bhagwat feels that it is this excessive emphasis on caste and religion that has impeded the prime minister's development agenda, and indeed he is

not off the mark.

It falls to him now to aggressively speak out against the attacks on the Dalits and minorities and push his followers to work for a more inclusive and tolerant India. Just how intolerant people have become was seen from the recent violence over a film on a fictitious queen. The depredations of the gau rakshaks, who are nothing more than thugs engaged in extortion and violence under the guise of religion, and those of the self-styled moral brigade against young couples are well documented now.

Like religion, Mr Bhagwat should make it clear that every Indian has the right to choose whom to marry, what to eat, what to read and view, and when to dissent. This is the bedrock of

democracy and Mr Bhagwat can use his considerable influence over his flock to make them a catalyst for positive change.

The RSS exerts an influence on the ruling party at the Centre and many states and Mr Bhagwat can also nudge them towards putting development at the centre again. The RSS has long held a homogenous view of India according to which everyone has to fall in line with the wishes of the majority. Caste and religion are indeed a drag on our politics. If Mr Bhagwat can address both at least within the BJP, he will have done the nation a signal service at a time when it is riven by so many fault lines. It will also show how far he has come from the vision of the RSS' founding father Hedgewar.

From Amir Khusrau To Filthy Abuse

India these days is -being -identified with -Hinduism. Our history tells us why patriots must stand against this.

English dictionaries are practically unanimous in defining patriotism as "love of, or zealous devotion to one's own country" (so in the venerable OED). Inherent in this definition is the presence of other countries in comparison to which one places one's own country on a higher pedestal. The OED quotes Horatio Smith (1836) to the effect that patriotism is "too often the hatred of other countries disguised as the love of one's own"! One need not go so far, but, certainly, the placing of one's country in one's estimation above other countries is a common, if not essential, element of patriotism.

Patriotism thus requires not only the recognition of one's own country, but also some degree of knowledge of, or concern with, other countries. First, of course, there has to be the consciousness of belonging to a country. Even in the Buddha's time (c. 500 BC), there was no name or recognition of India as a country. The Sixteen Kingdoms (solah mahajanapada), which constituted the known or familiar group of kingdoms, all lay in North India. Ashoka's use of 'Jambudvipa' for a larger region in the third century BC and the Kalinga ruler Kharavela's reference to 'Bharata' in the first century BC are the first indications of the consciousness of a geographically definable territory, in

which similar cultural conditions and social organisation (above all, the caste system) prevailed. But recognition of such a country, and even contempt for those who lived outside it—the Mlechchhas—did not imply any love or deep consciousness of belonging to India, a fact the Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang noted in the seventh century. No attempt at comparison of India with other countries has been traced simply because of an apparent lack of interest in lands outside India. Thus there is no ancient Indian text describing either Greece or China or any other country. It is, therefore, not surprising that the rich Sanskrit literature of ancient India should lack any text or poem setting India as an object of love and admiration or as different from, or superior to, other countries.

The first truly patriotic text came from the pen of the poet Amir Khusrau of Delhi in Persian. He knew all about Arab-Iranian and Turkic cultures and something about the Greek as well and so could with some substance make claims of India's superiority over them. He does so at great length, in his Nuh Sipihr composed in 1318. He begins by justifying the writing of his ode to 'Hind' because it was his "country of birth, his place of abode, his native land". When he speaks of India, he has definitely in mind what we now deem to

be the territory of India, as shown by his list of India's spoken languages ranging from Kashmiri to Tamil (Ma'bari), and from Bengali to Sindhi.

Amir Khusrau extols the superiority of the climate of India over that of Iran and Central Asia in that it has no harsh winters so that a poor peasant here can spend the night in the open with one old sheet of cloth; and flowers bloom in all seasons. Then he proceeds to claim superiority of ancient Indian ('Hindu') sciences, logic, astronomy and philosophy, over those of other countries. The Hindus had discovered Divine Unity and so were superior to Christians who believed in Trinity. India's classical music too is the object of special praise. He cites three great contributions of India to the world, viz. firstly numerals with positional values (hindsa) including zero; secondly, the Panchatantra animal stories, which spreading from India were rendered in various foreign tongues; and, finally, the game of chess. The historical accuracy of these claims does Amir Khusrau great credit. Finally, there is a paean of praise for Sanskrit, the language of the learned, originating with the four Vedas. After an aside on India's birds and animals, he ends by praising the spirit and love of Hindu women who burnt themselves to death on the pyres of their husbands. Remarkable as it

seems to us today, Amir Khusrau's patriotism was yet passive, amounting to a sincere, but largely uncritical admiration of the country and its culture. Two hundred and fifty years later under the great Akbar (reigned 1556-1605), conqueror and empire-builder, there took place what can only be called a Renaissance, based on a proclamation of the supremacy of Reason, a flowering of art, and a policy of tolerance, under the principle of Sulh-i-Kul, 'Absolute Peace', unique for its time in the world. An appeal to Indian patriotism was an inalienable part of this court-directed movement. Akbar's minister Abu'l Fazl's Ain-i-Akbari contains in its last portion, after a description of Mughal administration and of the provinces of the Empire, a very detailed 'Account of Hindustan', covering Indian culture, sciences, religion and society. Here he declares his patriotic bias by showering fulsome praise on the good qualities of the Indian people. What marked Akbar's reign was not, however, only such display of simple patriotism, but in addition a constructive effort not only to explore but also to reform. There was a major effort to translate Sanskrit texts into Persian, so as to gain access to Brahminical philosophy and scientific knowledge. The critical element is evidenced in Akbar's attitude to sati.

Why it is critical to involve people in solving water woes

The Union government has finalised a Rs 6,000-crore scheme to tackle the country's depleting groundwater level. The government plans to give 50% of the money to states, including gram panchayats, as incentives for achieving targets in groundwater management

The Union government has finalised a Rs 6,000-crore scheme to tackle the country's depleting groundwater level. The Atal Bhujal Yojana, which is now awaiting the Union Cabinet's clearance, will be launched in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Haryana, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, covering 78 districts, 193 blocks and more than 8,300 gram panchayats. Half of the Rs 6,000 crore will come from the government's budgetary support and the World Bank will give another Rs 3,000 crore.

This scheme comes at a very critical time for the country. According to a World Bank

report, about 245 billion cubic metre of groundwater is abstracted each year in the country. This figure represents about 25% of the total global groundwater abstraction. In the past four to five decades, 80% of the rural and urban domestic water supplies in the country have been dependent on groundwater, the report added. Nearly two-thirds of India has underlying hard rock formations, which allow water to recharge only very slowly. The excessive extraction of groundwater, the debilitating impact of climate change on monsoons, which recharges aquifers, and lax implementation of water

harvesting laws will impact not just the population's drinking water needs, but also agriculture and industrial growth.

The most heart-warming aspect of the scheme is the sharp focus on community water management and behavioural change. The government plans to give 50% of the money to states, including gram panchayats, as incentives for achieving targets in groundwater management. The remaining 50% of the funds will be given to states for

strengthening institutional arrangements such as providing a strong database and scientific approach to help them accomplish sustainable management of groundwater. Certain states of India, such as Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, have shown the benefits of aquifer management. For example, instead of blaming the monsoon and fate, farmers in water-stressed Anantapur district have formed a collective –

Kolagunti Ummadi Neeti Yajamanya Sangham — to “share groundwater with each other” to sustain their crops. In Telangana, several villages in six districts — Mahbubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Warangal, Medak, Karimnagar, and Adilabad — are also piloting a similar participatory groundwater management programme. This is the way forward, and it's heartening to note that the government has finally taken note of such solutions.



Happy R-Day!

There is a lot wrong with our society politically, economically and socially. Will we ever be able to melt our social and communal identities into a national whole to achieve greatness?

The biggest perk of editing Outlook is the privilege of publishing great writers like Ramachandra Guha. I am indebted to him for this special Republic Day issue because it was his article that triggered the idea to seek essays on patriotism from other equally eminent writers. But am I qualified to write about nationalism and patriotism? The question was asked by innumerable trolls who abused my forefathers for pointing out the mismatch between the patriotic cry for honour for Rani Padmavati and our everyday victims of rape and murder. How dare I mix up Rani Padmavati with some Dalit girl getting raped, mutilated and murdered? Last week, when I wrote about the Nirbhaya of Haryana, some five women had been raped. The number rose to ten on the tenth day, just in Haryana. Yet, the trolls were attacking my progenitor and his ancestors for my piece on

the honour or lack of it for the victims? For them Deepika Padukone ought to be riding a lion with the hologram of the Indian map in the backdrop and we ought to be burning buses to celebrate patriotism. All for the nation, indeed! What did your dad do for this nation? A troll asked. He probably didn't get to do much as he was tortured and locked up for his politics at the dawn of our independence. But more than my dad, two of his friends had impressed me a lot.

Puthupally Raghavan, a Gandhian-turned-communist ideologue, and another, R. Gopinathan Nair, the founder-publisher of the Communist Party's mouthpiece, Janayugam or People's Age. Raghavan, one of the tallest leaders of Kerala's freedom movement, never hankered after power or its trappings, and died unsung. No mean scholar himself, he had helped Robin Jeffrey write his seminal work,

The Decline of the Nair Dominance. The asthmatic Raghavan's last struggle was against a rock-crushing unit in his neighbourhood, which didn't let him breathe peacefully till the last. Nair was the son of a Travancore palace physician and ironically it was this feudal connection that got him a licence for the Communist Party's newspaper. The initial capital was his mother's jewellery. But Nair was cast aside when the party turned the newspaper into a company. Many decades later when Janayugam was relaunched with renewed capital and communist vigour, Nair was forgotten. I have seen true patriotism in these and many other lives. Every nook and corner of this country had such great examples of people “failing” so that another generation could live without the fetters of colonialism and feudalism. They were givers who happily lost out to the



smart takers of the post-independence generation. Though Nair was a “failure”, many Janayugam newspaper agents did become successful legislators. Now, just 70 years after independence and nationhood, we seem to have completely forgotten our priorities. Some imagined hurt over a fictional character and a movie (most probably a costume drama) has become a national issue instead of 10 rapes in as many days in the national capital's backyard.

In this issue we have

dissected patriotism from the Left, Centre and Right perspectives by such scholars as Irfan Habib, S. Gurumurthy, Apoorvanand, Saji Narayanan and R. Balashankar. As a chronicler of everyday injustices, all I can say is that there is a lot wrong with our society—politically, economically and socially. Our institutions are all in a shambles. Will we ever be able to melt our social and communal identities into a national whole to achieve greatness? Not till we hold a mirror to our miserable lives.

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4 Indian airlines interested in Air India stake sale: Report

CAPA also expects Air India's domestic and international airline operations, including budget subsidiary Air India Express, will be sold as a single entity while subsidiaries such as aircraft maintenance, catering, ground handling and hospitality will be hived-off.



New Delhi More Indian airlines could show interest in the flag carrier Air India, consulting firm CAPA has said in its 2018-19 outlook released in Mumbai on Tuesday. "Up to four Indian carriers could express interest - Jet Airways, IndiGo, SpiceJet and Airlines, a Tata partner in

Vistara," in Air India, CAPA said in its report "Indian Aviation: Review of FY2018 & Outlook for FY2019" IndiGo has already shown interest while Tata's which run Vistara has said they too would like to see the terms and Singapore

domestic and international airline operations, including budget subsidiary Air India Express, will be sold as a single entity while subsidiaries such as aircraft maintenance, catering, ground handling and hospitality will be hived-off. Real estate will be transferred into a special purpose vehicle and working capital debts will be restructured. Meanwhile, India's air traffic is also likely to cross 150 million passengers by next fiscal CAPA said "Domestic traffic expected to grow by 18-20%, crossing 150 million annual passengers, with capacity growth closer to 25%," the firm said The

domestic traffic will touch 125 million by March 2018 alone and international traffic will be 65 million. Growth could however be hampered because of capacity issues. "Growth may be tempered to 15% if some capacity inductions are delayed. International traffic to grow by 12% or more, to reach 70-75 million passengers," it added. The firm expects the airline industry to post a loss of \$350-375 million. IndiGo, SpiceJet, GoAir and Jet Airways are likely to be profitable while Air India, AirAsia India and Vistara are likely to be unprofitable. The airports

sector could see an IPO by GMR group which runs Delhi and Hyderabad airports besides those outside. "IPO by GMR is likely. Disinvestment of MIAL (GVK group-run Mumbai International Airport Ltd) cannot be ruled out after it won the concession for Navi Mumbai Airport. Both GVK and especially GMR likely to focus on international opportunities," it added. CAPA expects IndiGo's fleet size to reach over 230 by 2018-19 from 153 currently. IndiGo has 445 planes on order. Jet's fleet size is likely to touch 122 from current 117. It has 86 planes on order.

ArcelorMittal says profits more than doubled in 2017

ArcelorMittal's bottom-line net profit rose to \$4.6 billion, up from \$1.8 billion a year earlier.



Global steel giant ArcelorMittal said on Wednesday that its net profit more than doubled last year as the worldwide market for steel improved.

ArcelorMittal said in a statement that its bottom-line net profit amounted to \$4.6 billion, up from \$1.8 billion a year earlier.

Underlying or operating profit jumped by 30% to \$5.4 billion on a 21% increase in sales to \$68.7 billion, the statement said.

"The combination of improving market fundamentals and delivery against our strategic objectives contributed to a successful year for the company," said chief executive Lakshmi Mittal.

Looking ahead, market conditions were "favourable," and the demand environment "remains positive," the company said.

"The market environment remains supportive but the industry must continue to address the twin challenges of overcapacity and unfair trade," said Mittal.

GDP growth revised to 8.2% in 2015-16, FY17 unchanged at 7.1%

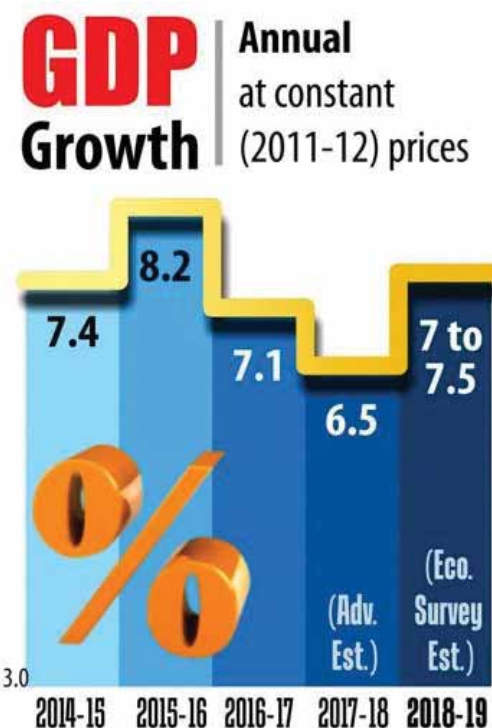
The estimates of GDP and other aggregates for the years 2014-15 and 2015-16 have undergone revision due to use of latest available data on agricultural production



Estimates on May 31, 2017. The estimates of GDP and other aggregates for the years 2014-15 and 2015-16 have undergone revision due to use of latest available data on agricultural production; industrial production especially those based on the provisional results of Annual Survey of Industries (ASI): 2015-16 and final results of ASI: 2014-15; government expenditure and also more comprehensive data available from various source agencies and State/UT Directorates of Economics and Statistics.

The Central Statistics Office Wednesday revised the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate for 2015-16 to 8.2% from the earlier estimates of 8% and kept the 2016-17 growth unchanged at 7.1%. The real GDP or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices for the years 2016-17 and 2015-16 stands at Rs 121.96 lakh crore and Rs 113.86 lakh crore respectively, showing growth of 7.1% during 2016-17 and 8.2% during 2015-16, the CSO said in a statement. In terms of real GVA (gross value added), it said the GVA at constant (2011-12) basic prices grew 7.1% in 2016-17, as against a growth of 8.1% in 2015-16. According to advance GDP estimates of CSO, the GVA growth on 2011-12 price was estimated at

6.6 per cent for 2016-17. The CSO Wednesday released the first revised estimates of national account for 2016-17 along with second revised estimates for 2015-16 and third revised estimates for 2014-15 (with base year 2011-12). Under the third revision, the CSO has estimated GDP growth in 2014-15 at 7.4% from earlier estimates of 7.5%. The CSO said that the first revised estimates for 2016-17 have been compiled using industry-wise/institution-wise detailed information instead of using the benchmark-indicator method employed at the time of release of Provisional



5 surprising reasons you have dark circles and how you can deal with them



From lack of iron, oversleeping to excessive salt intake, here are a few reasons why you could have dark circles.

Dark circles beneath our eyes are a mood spoiler. They make us look old and tired. Usually, most of us believe that it's because of lack of sleep we develop dark circles. While, this is true in most cases but it's not the only reason why get dark circles. Here is a list of a few uncommon reasons why you could be suffering from dark circles.

1) Lack of iron- Iron deficiency

is one of the reasons why you may have dark circles. Iron carries oxygen throughout the cells in our bodies. Lack of iron means lack of oxygen in cells. A diet rich in green vegetables and fruits like apple should do the trick for you to get rid of dark circles.

2) Oversleeping- While its lack of sleep that leads to formation of dark circles. However, excess of everything is bad. Hence,

oversleeping can also lead to you having dark circles. It leads to accumulation of fluid around your entire face. So, next time if you are planning to sleep through the weekend then think twice.

3) Consumption of salt- If you consume salty products such as chips, salted dry fruits then you ought to stop. Excessive consumption of salt leads to water retention, which leads to dark circles. Exercise

moderation when it consumption of salt.

4) Excessive exposure to sun- While being in the sun is good, since it's the best source of Vitamin D but if you spend too much time or don't use sunscreen then you can get dark circles. Sunlight increases the level of melanin in the body, which makes the skin dark. Always use sunscreen when you are out in the sun.

5) Make up and products- Sometimes the mascara, eye-liner or concealer you use, could be causing you dark circles. The reason is that at times we get an allergic reaction from using them. Also, the scratching and rubbing that takes place while applying and removing make-up, can cause dark circles. Always check if the product suits you or not and be gentle while applying and removing them.

Traumatic brain injury linked to dementia risk even after 30 years

The study found that the risk of dementia was higher for those with a severe traumatic brain injury or multiple injuries on the brain and was similar in men and women.



People who suffer a traumatic brain injury – occurring when an external force injures the brain – may be at increased risk of developing dementia even after 30 years, says a study. A traumatic brain injury, also known as intracranial injury, is the leading cause of death and disability worldwide, especially in younger individuals and has also been associated with the risk of dementia in older age. The researchers found that the risk of a dementia diagnosis was highest during the first year after the injury. During the first year, people who had suffered a traumatic brain injury were four to six times as likely to get a dementia diagnosis as those without it. While the risk decreased over time, it was still significant after over 30 years. However, after a period of 15 years, the risk of dementia diagnosis was found increased by about 80% in those who had at least one traumatic brain injury compared to those who did not have one. “The findings of this study suggest an existence of a time- and dose-dependent risk of developing dementia more than 30 years after traumatic brain injury,” said researchers including Anna Nordstrom from the Umea University in Sweden. The risk of dementia was higher for those with a severe traumatic brain injury or multiple injuries on the brain and was similar in men and women. In the study, published in the journal PLOS Medicine, the team matched 1,64,334 individuals with traumatic brain injury with control participants who did not have the injury. In a case-control cohort, 1,36,233 individuals diagnosed with dementia at follow-up were matched with control participants who did not develop dementia, and in a third cohort, the researchers studied 46,970 sibling pairs with one individual having a traumatic brain injury.

Vaping could increase lung, bladder cancers and heart disease risk: Study

Although e-cigarette smoke has fewer carcinogens than tobacco smoke, E-cigarette smokers might have a higher risk than non-smokers of developing lung and bladder cancers and heart diseases, a study found.



Vaping may raise the risk of cancer because it leads to DNA damage, even though it contains fewer carcinogens than tobacco smoke, a US study has found.

The report in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences did not compare the cancer-causing potential of traditional cigarettes to e-cigarettes.

However, in studies on lab mice, those exposed to e-cigarette smoke “had higher levels of DNA damage in the heart, lungs, and bladder, compared with control mice exposed to filtered air,” it said.

Similar effects were seen when human lung and bladder cells were exposed to nicotine and nicotine-derived nitrosamine ketone (NNK), a carcinogenic nicotine derivative.

These exposed cells are more likely to mutate and become cancerous than control cells.

“Thus, although e-cigarette smoke has fewer carcinogens than tobacco smoke, E-cigarette smokers might have a higher risk than non-smokers of developing lung and bladder cancers and heart diseases,” said the study, led by Moon-

shong Tang of the Institute of Environmental Medicine at New York University. According to outside experts, much more work is needed to uncover the true risk of vaping, which is widely seen as a safer alternative than traditional cigarettes. Ed Stephens, senior Research Fellow at the University of St Andrews, called the report a “valuable contribution” to the field of research.

Unfortunately, no direct comparisons were made with tobacco smoke; instead the authors cite another study that found a key biomarker related to such genetic damage to be present in very much smaller quantities (97 percent less) in the urine of vapers compared with smokers,” he added.

“That study and this new research are both consistent with the widely-held view that vaping is not without risk of cancer and other diseases, but that risk is usually considerably lower than smoking.” Peter Hajek, director of the Tobacco Dependence Research Unit at Queen Mary University of London, said the study methods are of “unclear relevance for effects of vaping.”

“Human cells were submerged in nicotine and in off-the-shelf bought carcinogenic nitrosamines. It is not surprising of course that this damaged the cells, but this has no relationship to any effects of e-cigarettes on people who use them,” he said. “No comparison with conventional cigarettes was made, but in the text of the article, the authors acknowledge the key bit of information that is of crucial relevance in this story: Vapers show a reduction in these chemicals of 97 percent compared to smokers. They should have added that his may well be the level that non-smokers obtain from their environment.”

A comprehensive review of the scientific literature, released earlier this month by the US National Academies of Science, found that vaping is likely less harmful than cigarettes, but may lead to addiction in young people. However, it cautioned that the true health effects of the habit remain unclear, since the trend is relatively new.

About 18 million American use e-cigarettes, which are battery-powered devices that heat a nicotine containing liquid.

Are you rich?

It's likely that you'll prefer short affairs over long-term relationships

Being wealthy may cause people to prefer having flings or short term relationships, a study has found.



Researchers studied the relationship preferences of 151 heterosexual male and female volunteers (75 men and 76 women) by asking them to look at pictures of 50 potential partners, and to indicate whether they would prefer a long or short-term relationship with each.

Then, they were shown a series of images of luxury items related to wealth, including fast cars, jewellery, mansions, and money. Finally, the participants revisited the images of their potential partners, and sorted them by their preferred relationship type again.

After viewing the wealth images, both male and female participants selected more partners for a short-term relationship compared to the original result - an increase of about 16%. "Evolutionary psychologists believe that whether someone prefers a short-term relationship over a long-term one depends partly on their

circumstances, such as how difficult it might be to raise children as a single parent," said Andrew G Thomas, from Swansea University in the UK.

"When those circumstances change, we expect people to change their preferences accordingly. What we have done with our research is demonstrate this change in behaviour, for the first time, within an experimental setting," said Thomas, who led the research. After participants were given cues that the environment had lots of resources, they became more likely to select individuals for a short-term relationship. "We think this happened because humans have evolved the capacity to read the environment and adjust the types of relationships they prefer accordingly," Thomas said.

For example, in environments which have lots of

resources, it would have been easier for ancestral mothers to raise children without the father's help. This made short-term mating a viable option for both sexes during times of resource abundance.

"We believe modern humans also make these decisions," Thomas said. The researchers also found that participants changed their relationship preferences after being shown a slideshow of dangerous animals, and videos of people interacting with infants. "When the participants were given cues that the environment contained young children, they were more likely to select individuals for a long-term relationship," said Thomas. "Dangerous environments seemed to cause both men and women to choose more long-term partners, though some women chose more short-term partners instead," he said.

Is your hug left-sided or right?

It reveals how you feel about the one you're hugging



If you are feeling emotional, you are more likely to embrace others from the left side than from the right, a study has found.

Hugs, which have been part of social interactions between humans since birth, demonstrate emotions such as affection, love, sadness or afraid, depending on the side we embrace others.

Hugs occur in both positive and neutral contexts: we hug when we are sad or afraid, or simply when saying hello.

While most people showed an increased preference for right-sided hugs, left-sided hugs occurred more frequently in positive as well as negative situations, the study showed.

"This is because of the influence of the right hemisphere, which controls the left side of the body and processes both positive and negative emotions," said lead author Julian Packheiser from the Ruhr-Universitaet-Bochum in Germany.

"When people hug, emotional and motor networks in the brain interact and cause a stronger drift to the left in emotional contexts," Packheiser added. Moreover, predictions about which hand will be on top during an embrace can be based on the participants' handedness and footedness, the researchers observed.

"Handedness and footedness can indeed predict the lateralisation of an embrace," Packheiser said.

Right-handed people usually tend to hug the other person from the right side, much more often than left-handed people.

However, a strong left-hand drift was observed in an embrace between two men, even in neutral situations.

But, "our interpretation is that many men consider embraces between men to be something negative; therefore, they tend to perceive hugs as negative even in a neutral situation, such as saying hello," explained Sebastian Ocklenburg from the varsity.

Accordingly, the right hemisphere is activated due to negative emotions and affects the motion to the left.

For the study, published in the journal *Psychological Research*, the team examined more than 2,500 hugs to determine the nature of positive and affectionate hugs. In order to study neutral embraces, they analysed over 500 clips of actors who offered blindfolded hugs to strangers on the street.

Moreover, the researchers asked 120 test participants to hug a mannequin after listening to various positive, negative and neutral short stories via headphones.

Sexual arousal makes a woman's brain react differently than a man's. Here's how



Turns out, a woman's mind is much more complex than a male's when it comes to intimacy. According to a recent McGill University study, a female mind reacts much more and is more stimulated than a male one when aroused. In the study conducted on 20 men and 20 women, each of the individuals was shown erotic film clips while their brain vitals were scanned by two scanners. One of the scanners was an MRI machine that tracked stimulation in their brains. The other was a heat-seeking camera that measured levels of arousal through participant's genitals. While not massive, the recorded difference between stimulation levels between male and female brains highlighted the consistent disparity between the two counterparts. "There were no brain regions in men with stronger brain-genital correlations than in women", the study stated, according to the Independent. While interesting, the sample size for the study was too small, according to Qazi Rahman, a psychology lecturer at King's College London. He further added that more detailed research would be required to draw such certain conclusions. However, he did not deny the complexity of female arousal.

Shocking! man throws footwear at Baahubali actress Tamannaah Bhatia

Shocking! man throws footwear at Baahubali actress Tamannaah Bhatia. A miscreant threw a shoe at actress Tamanna Bhatia on Sunday afternoon at a jewelry store in Hyderabad. While the shoe missed its mark, it did shake the actress. She was there to inaugurate the Himayatnagar store. With the sudden shock, security personnel took notice of the incident and searched for the culprit who was later arrested. Shocking! man throws footwear at Baahubali actress Tamannaah Bhatia According to reports, the arrested man was identified himself as Khareemulla from Musheerabad, who called himself a 'die-hard' fan of the actress. However, he justified his action as his displeasure about Tamanna not working in Telugu films as of late. Shocking! man throws footwear at Baahubali actress Tamannaah Bhatia Ravinder, Circle Inspector, Narayanguda Police Station confirmed the incident. He said, "The person has been taken into custody and a case registered against him".



Fans praise Parineeti Chopra for sharing a pic with visible stretchmarks



Fans praise Parineeti Chopra for sharing a pic with visible stretchmarks. Bollywood actress like Parineeti Chopra post a picture of herself flaunting her stretch mark. The actress who was last seen in Golmaal Again, took to Instagram recently to post a picture of herself wearing a crop top and denim jacket. She wanted to primarily show us her sunglasses. Within minutes of her uploading the pic, fans applauded her for keeping it real and not photo shopping the images to hide the stretch marks. The actress had left everyone impressed with her physical transformation after she lost a lot of weight through a strict diet and workout regime. This drastic weight loss could have left stretchmarks on the body. Apart from the praise worthy comments, the picture has already garnered over 6 lakh likes on the photo and video sharing app.

BFF Kareena-Sister Malaika Surprise Amrita With The Naughtiest Birthday Cakes, Strictly For Adults

Kareena Kapoor Khan, Karisma Kapoor, Malaika Arora Khan and Amrita Arora Ladak are undoubtedly the hottest girls-squad of B-town. They never fail to impress us with their sartorial choices. This sibling duo BFFs are often seen partying, gyming or hanging out together. They are with each other on all the occasions, celebrating them in the best way possible.

And now the occasion they came together for is Amrita's 40th birthday. Amrita entered the 40s club on January 31, 2018, and she is celebrating it with her close friends in Goa. Her sister, Malaika and best friend, Kareena organised this special party for her. Since it is an important milestone in her life, they wanted it to be a memorable one. Her birthday was no less than a glittery affair, and it was strictly for "adults"! With the boho-chic themed party and an adult cake, the gang definitely seemed to have a gala time. After the clock struck 12, Amrita's friends treated her with two naughtiest birthday cakes. No wonder why any of their kids were not spotted at the birthday bash. Amrita with her girls-squad, her husband Shakeel Ladak, Saif Ali Khan, Seema Khan, Maheep Kapoor, Ritesh Sidhwani and wife Dolly Sidhwani and Natasha Poonawalla went to Goa in a private jet. The girls were seen dressed up in glittery outfits and feathery headbands. Kareena and Karisma were glowing in golden ensembles with their shimmering outfits while Malaika has taken on a quirkier avatar with a feathered crop top paired with white shorts. Check out some more pictures from the birthday bash:



Lara Dutta to judge a dance reality show

Lara Dutta judge: Reality Shows have been ruling the majority of television these days and keeping this trend in mind, another new show is in the pipeline and will be telecasted soon. Lara Dutta has been roped in to judge the upcoming dance reality show, 'High Fever... Dance Ka Naya Tevar' with choreographer Ahmed Khan. Lara Dutta judge On being quizzed about her new project The show will not see celebrity

participation but regular people dancing in jodis. This will include mother-daughter, father-son, husband-wife and teacher-student jodis among others, who are ready not just to take up the dancing challenge but to also prove their relationship dynamics. Lara says, "I am a family person and relationships hold a lot of importance in my life. I personally believe that when you attempt something with your loved one, you are

bound to succeed. When I was approached for this show, I knew that I had to be a part of it because I could resonate with the concept. While I love dancing and I am trained in certain forms, I can tell you that I dance better with my daughter because we dance like there is no one watching us. That's what I will be judging the contestants on — the beauty and 'tevar' of their relationship translating into their performance.

Shah Rukh Khan is sure no one has ever misbehaved with women on his film sets

Shah Rukh Khan will be seen on a BBC show soon where he will talk about sexual harassment in Bollywood and the rising feeling of dissent in the country.



Superstar Shah Rukh Khan, known for his chivalrous attitude, says nobody has dared to misbehave with a woman on his film sets. The actor, who was feted with a Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum summit in Davos along with Hollywood celebrities Cate Blanchett and Elton John, spoke to BBC World News at length on gender equality in Bollywood and the cultural differences in India.

In the midst of the raging debate over sexual misconduct allegations against powerful men in Hollywood, Shah Rukh was asked if he has witnessed sexual misconduct in the Hindi film industry and done anything about it. "At a level when I'm making films or working in films, we are very clear about the attitude to women. Even the smallest aspects, of the names coming first in title, which is not going to do anything, but the kind of respectability," Shah Rukh said on the "HARDtalk on BBC World News" show.

"Even this small thing needs to be done just to bring about the equality... Just see what we've reduced ourselves to. You know, to put a girl's

name in front just to show what little guys we are, thinking of them as equals. And that is sad and that is strangely dichotomous when you're talking about creativity, and you have boys and girls working together." "I have never personally, first hand and nobody, if I may say, nobody dared misbehave with a woman on my set, I am very clear on that," he added. A transcript of the interview was provided to IANS by BBC.

On inter-communal tensions and divisions that the world has been observing in modern-day India, the actor said: "There will be dissent for everything and I think, like you would also believe and we all believe, there has to be a discussion on it." Shah Rukh believes there cannot be a radical standoff when there is dissent.

"I think you can have a discussion and then you can talk about it in our country - we are the biggest democracy - and if you are the biggest democracy, dissent is a part and parcel of that and as much is discussion.

"So, when you have a story and

you know when you go out sometimes, there's dissent, but as a filmmaker, as a citizen of a country and the world, you know when there's dissent, can we just have a little bit of discussion about it and sort it out instead of you know taking standoff positions... So it is possible," he added. Questioned if there is a kind of Hindu nationalism that is not fostering good inter-communal ties, Shah Rukh said: "Because of social media, whenever a certain thing, when small factions or fractions of things happen now, they seem a little bigger. But the beauty of all this is that within all this trolling and anger and people expressing themselves, they're all also connecting.

"I just see it on social media. I don't see it live anywhere and I would be wrong to comment on it that way, but I think if you have this kind of dissent or whatever if people claim it, I think just a bit of discussion especially, finally, if it's not going to be inclusive, everybody will suffer. But I think we're not at that stage at all in our country," he added. The episode will air on Wednesday night.

Check out the explosive trailer Urvashi Rautela starrer of 'Hate Story 4'



Urvashi Rautela starrer of 'Hate Story 4' trailer out. Finally the makers of 'Hate Story 4' after a series of sizzling posters and videos, have unveiled the trailer of the thriller. Actress Urvashi Rautela is back with more hate this time. She and Ihana Dhillon will be raising the temperatures to a new high with their seductress avatar in the film. The movie that is helmed by Vinod Pande has Karan Wahi and Vivan Bhatena depicting the role of brothers who fall for the same girl. 'Hate Story IV' stars Urvashi Rautela, Vivan Bhatena, Karan Wahi, Ihana Dhillon & Gulshan Grover. It is produced by Vikram Bhatt and Bhushan Kumar and is slated for 9th March 2018 release.

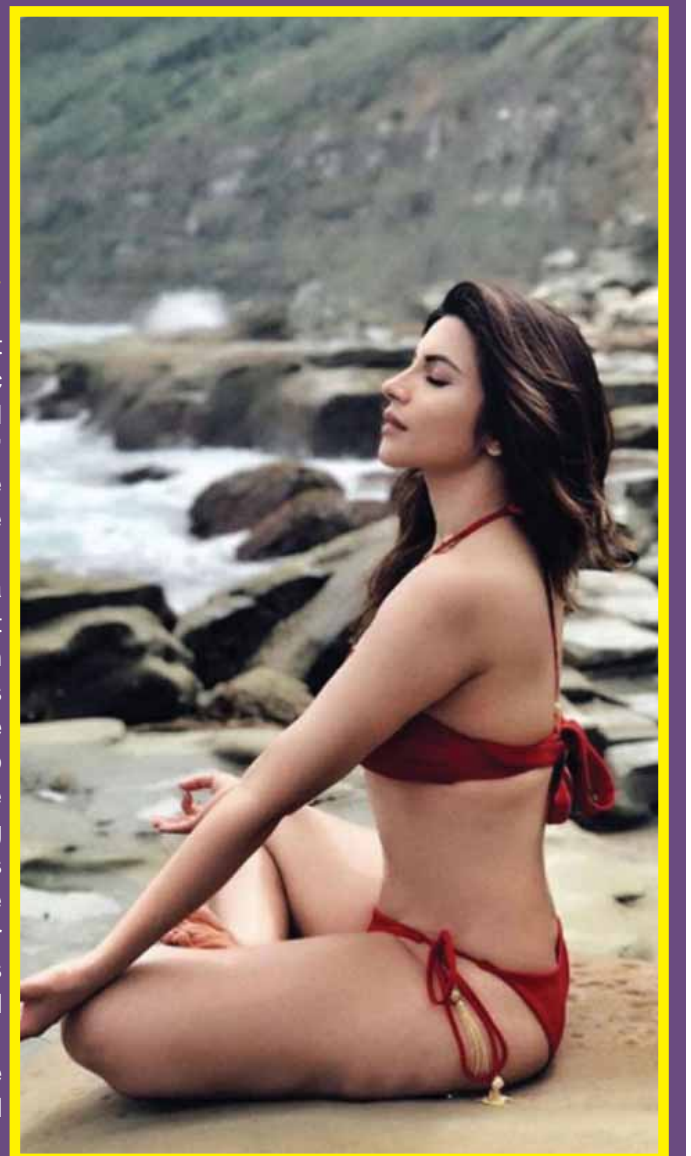
Oh So Hot!

A Bikini-Clad Shama Sikander Meditates Amidst Nature's Serenity

Television actress Shama Sikander is known to break the Internet with her steamy pictures. She has once again posted an uber chic photo of hers meditating amidst nature's beauty and looked breathtakingly gorgeous in the maroon two-piece. The 'Maaya' actress is promoting world peace and wrote, "World peace can be achieved, when in each person the power of love replaces the love of power. #AbDilKiSunn (sic)."

A few days ago, Shama shunned the social media trolls with a powerful post and had written, "A woman has B***S...that's what makes her different than men and I'm grateful that I'm a woman and a blessed one indeed. Yes "I HAVE B***S" and nice ones indeed.. they are "juicy" and also are "melons" or whatever else you prefer calling them. I think it's time for all those TROLLS who like to give my body parts names like these to get over it and move on in life. They're mine and I love them... #BodyShaming #NotTolerated #RespectWomen #LoveForBikini The gorgeous beauty had uploaded her sexy pictures from the beach in a white bikini and flaunted her curves. Shama got immensely trolled for those pictures and was called by several sleazy names. The actress was reportedly holidaying in Melbourne with her alleged boyfriend and posted the pictures from the foreign shore.

Shama Sikander is a television actress, who rose to fame from the daily soap, 'Yeh Meri Life Hai' and is known for making bold appearances.



Sanjay Leela Bhansali defends portrayal of jauhar in Padmaavat : It is an empowering act of war

Sanjay Leela Bhansali has talked about his film Padmaavat and why he chose to portray jauhar the way he did.

Director of controversial film, Padmaavat, Sanjay Leela Bhansali has shared his understanding of why the lead character in the film committed jauhar at the end. According to him, it was an act of war, carried out by the women.

In an interview to Mid-Day the director said Rani Padmavati, played by Deepika Padukone, decided to wage her own war on the enemy (Alauddin Khilji, played by Ranveer Singh) by committing jauhar. "Jauhar, in this context, is an act of war. Our men have died on the battlefield, but the war doesn't end there. They believe that the Rajputs have been vanquished. But, the women wage the [final] war," he said.

Padmaavat tells the story of Padmavati, who commits jauhar, an act of self immolation, with a thousand other women upon learning that they will all be captured by Khilji and his forces. The portrayal of the act has earned criticism from several film

critics, viewers and other fellow Bollywood artists such as Swara Bhaskar. Swara recently wrote an open letter to Bhansali, saying how his film made her feel as if her entire being is 'reduced to a vagina' and how women have a right to live even if they are raped.

Like many who did not agree with Swara's opinion, Sanjay also said the decision was Padmavati's to make. "They decide that not a single woman or child would be subjugated to rape, or violation. That's what happened then. So, are people questioning Padmavati's decision?," he said.

"This film is based on a story in which the character performs jauhar. The character doing so was convinced that it was an act of war. I feel it's an empowering thought. She didn't allow the enemy to win. It was a victory of dignity and honour. This is what transpired, and I can't question her. In those days, when there was no solution, harakiri [method of suicide] was prevalent. I can't

question it. It is like asking why the Taj Mahal was made when the money spent in doing so could have been used for charity. Some will stand for it, some against it," he said.

The director said it is healthy to debate art but one must not impose their opinions on him. "And that is okay, because any work of art should be debated. But don't oppose my authority to make what I want to, or to narrate it in a particular way. No one is compelled to agree with everything that I have said. As long as we agree to disagree, and the work is thought provoking, it's wonderful," he added. Padmaavat has been in trouble ever since it began shooting in early 2017. Outfits such as the Karni Sena demanded a ban on hearing rumours of an alleged dream sequence between the sultan and the queen, 'misrepresentation of history' and 'disrespect towards the Rajput community'. Its December 1



release was postponed to January 25 due to the turmoil all over the country. Rajasthan, Haryana, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh state governments had also installed a ban on the film until the Supreme Court paved the way for the film's release across India. Even then, theatre associations refused to screen the film in the four states. In the rest of the states across the country, the film opened to mixed reviews but a positive reception among the viewers. Most theatres in Delhi, Mumbai and other cities saw heavy police security after a school bus was attacked in Gurugram a day before the film's release.



Sanjay Leela Bhansali's epic makes Rs 220 crore worldwide in first week

Deepika Padukone, Shahid Kapoor and Ranveer Singh's Padmaavat has made Rs 220 crore in the first week since its release. The film was made at an estimated Rs 180 crore budget.

Padmaavat, director Sanjay Leela Bhansali's magnum opus, may have had the most difficult release a film has had to face in the country but the box office numbers may just work as a soothing balm for the wounds. The controversial epic on the life and times of a Rajput queen has raked in Rs 220 crore worldwide in its very first week.

The film, starring Deepika Padukone as Rani Padmavati, Shahid Kapoor as Maharawal Ratan Singh and Ranveer Singh as Alauddin Khilji, has made Rs 143 crore at the domestic box office and

Rs 76 crore internationally. Film trade analyst Taran Adarsh shared the figures in a tweet on Wednesday. "#Padmaavat shows no signs of slowing down... Biz is SUPER-STRONG on weekdays... Wed [limited previews] 5 cr, Thu 19 cr, Fri 32 cr, Sat 27 cr, Sun 31 cr, Mon 15 cr, Tue 14 cr. Total: Rs 143 cr. India biz. Overseas opening weekend: approx \$ 12 million [Rs 76.24 cr]. OUTSTANDING!," he wrote in his tweet. Padmaavat released on Thursday, January 25, but also hosted paid previews on January, February 24. It tells the story of Khilji's

conquest of Chittor upon falling for the queen's beauty. The film received tremendous flak due to rumours of an alleged dream sequence between the sultan and the queen, 'misrepresentation of history' and 'disrespect towards the Rajput community'. Its December 1 release was postponed to January 25 due to the turmoil all over the country.

Outfits such as the Karni Sena and the All India Brajmandal Kshatriya Rajput Mahasabha put bounties on the actor and director's heads and asked for a nationwide ban on the film. Rajasthan,

Haryana, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh state governments had also installed a ban on the film until the Supreme Court paved the way for the film's release across India. Even then, theatre associations refused to screen the film in the four states. In the rest of the states across the country, the film opened to mixed reviews but a positive reception among the viewers. Most theatres in Delhi, Mumbai and other cities saw heavy police security after a school bus was attacked in Gurugram a day before the film's release.

House of Cards' Resumes Production, With Diane Lane and Greg Kinnear

Kevin Spacey is out. Diane Lane and Greg Kinnear are in. The sixth and final season of "House of Cards" will introduce new characters as it tries to move past a sexual misconduct scandal that put the Netflix series in peril and forced out its biggest star. Mr. Spacey, who played the central character, Frank Underwood, a ruthless politician who becomes president, was shown the door amid allegations of sexual misconduct last year. Production for the new season, after a three-month hiatus, resumed on Tuesday. Netflix did not disclose what roles Ms. Lane or Mr. Kinnear will play other than that they will be brother and sister. Mr. Kinnear,

54, and Ms. Lane, 53, are both Academy Award nominees. Robin Wright, the co-star of "House of Cards," will be at the center of the final season. The return to production ends a three-month odyssey that began shortly after The New York Times published an investigation detailing sexual harassment and assault allegations against the Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein and a national reckoning on sexual harassment began in earnest. In October, after Anthony Rapp, an actor, accused Mr. Spacey of inappropriate sexual behavior, Netflix announced that the next season of "House of Cards" would be its last, and suspended production not long

after. Mr. Spacey apologized to Mr. Rapp, but numerous other allegations against him emerged. Though "House of Cards" is past its peak in terms of cultural relevance, it is a landmark for the streaming service. It gave Netflix a bold entry into the TV landscape when it debuted in 2013, and in the five years since, the tech giant has upended the TV industry. Netflix said it would spend up to \$8 billion in content this year, dwarfing all rivals. Other tech companies like Apple, Facebook and Google are now springing into gear and investing hundreds of millions of dollars to create their own original programming.



Netflix has paid a price for sexual misconduct scandals. The streaming service said last month that it had taken a \$39 million write-down for unreleased programming, which David Wells, its chief financial officer, said was related to the "societal reset around sexual harassment." Netflix had been planning a movie starring Mr. Spacey about Gore Vidal, the writer, and a stand-up special with Louis C.K., the comedian, who was also accused of sexual misconduct. Both have been tossed away. The final season of "House of Cards" is expected to be eight episodes, down from the usual 13, and may be released this year.

It will change the landscape of superhero movies forever

First reactions to Marvel's Black Panther are out

The first reactions to Marvel's Black Panther were unleashed on social media following the Monday premiere.

Marvel's eighteenth film, Black Panther, premiered in Los Angeles on Monday, and while formal reviews are currently under embargo, the reactions from those in attendance are

extremely positive. Marvel traditionally screen their movies well in advance of theatrical release to build buzz. The film is already poised to open to huge box

office numbers - online ticket platform Fandango reported that Black Panther broke the record for the most pre-sales for any Marvel film.

The attendees included filmmakers and journalists, who all took to their Twitter handles to rave about director Ryan Coogler's movie. They said that it was by far the most political Marvel had ever been - Captain America: Winter Soldier and Thor: Ragnarok were also considered uncommonly political for Marvel - and they singled out Michael B Jordan's performance as Killmonger, the main villain. Some compared him to Loki, perhaps the most



acclaimed villain of any Marvel Cinematic Universe movie. Several directors of other Marvel movies also chimed in. Scott Derrickson, director of Doctor Strange, wrote, "Every Marvel movie is the unique voice of its director. Marvel seeks out those voices and supports them. #BlackPanther." Guardians of the Galaxy's James Gunn called it an 'extraordinary work,' while Peyton Reed, director of Ant-Man, said that "Ryan Coogler knows what he's

doing. Long live T'Challa!" Black Panther is scheduled for a February 16 release. The cast includes Chadwick Boseman as T'Challa, Michael B Jordan, Danai Gurira, Lupita Nyong'o, and recent Oscar nominee Daniel Kaluuya. Black Panther was introduced in Captain America: Civil War. The cast and crew of the film, as well as some of the other guests, dressed in colourful traditional outfits. Here are some of the best looks from the 'purple carpet'.



Anurag Kashyap Ended Up Revealing A Fascinating Reason Behind The Failure Of 'Bombay Velvet'

While Anurag Kashyap has made some of the best films that'll go out to define contemporary Hindi cinema, Bombay Velvet isn't one of them.

An on-screen telling of Gyan Prakash's seemingly unadaptable book, Mumbai Fables, the Ranbir Kapoor-Anushka Sharma starrer remains one of the most expensive failures in recent memory, largely because of the scale it was mounted on (an entire town was recreated in a far-off place in Sri Lanka), the cost of its top star

cast, and most importantly, the fact that it was an inconsistent and a confused film.

One reading of the film, when it came out, was that Kashyap is at his best when the resources are scarce. It's probably when he thrives. But this was just a reading, an interpretation. Now, we have confirmation.

Just like you can't generally expect Karan Johar to make a film in say, 10-15 crores (we're not counting the short he made in the anthology, Bombay Talkies,

where Karan wanted costume changes for the girl who played a beggar before somebody pointed out that homeless people, well, don't have much of a wardrobe), Kashyap doesn't work well with money. Not too much money, for sure (Velvet's budget was nearly 100 crores). In the interview with Film Companion, Kashyap started talking about the clash he often feels between his cinematic reality and his actual reality and how he channels his real-life angst in his films.



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