



Imran Khan talks peace

“If India takes one step forward, we will take two” says Pakistan new PM



(News Agencies) Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party chief Imran Khan, the next prime minister, recently pledged to match every step India takes towards Pakistan with two, in his first speech after declaring victory, “thanks to God,” in a divisive general election marking only the second civilian-to-civilian transfer of power in the country. “We want to improve our relations with India, if their leadership also wants it. This blame game that whatever goes wrong in Pakistan is because of India and vice-versa brings us back to square one,” 65-year-old cricketer-turned -politician Khan

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PM Modi talks trade at BRICS

In his address, PM Modi said India wants to work with the nations on the Fourth Industrial Revolution and called for sharing among them the best practices and policies in the area.



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Taj Mahal turning yellow: SC pulls up Centre, UP governments

The Supreme Court said it was “surprising” that the Archaeological Survey of India, which is responsible for the protection Taj Mahal, was not consulted.



(News Agencies) Irked by the lack of coordination between various agencies of Centre and Uttar Pradesh over maintenance of the Taj Mahal, the Supreme Court on Thursday pulled up the two governments and asked them who was responsible for the upkeep of the monument that is turning yellow in colour due to multiple sources of pollution.

(Contd on page 22)

Vijay Mallya risks being declared a fugitive economic offender

Case to be first under new law on fugitive offenders



(News Agencies) On August 27, a special court in Mumbai

hearing a case against Vijay Mallya will decide whether the former liquor baron can be tagged a “fugitive economic offender” under the new law passed by Parliament on Thursday.

Mallya’s case will be followed by similar applications by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against Nirav Modi and his uncle Mehul Choksi. The duo have been summoned by a special court hearing matters pertaining to violations of the money laundering act, on September 25 and 26, respectively. These applications were filed by ED when the new Fugitive Economic Offenders Act was still an ordinance.

ED’s application against Mallya was filed in June, soon after the agency filed its second charge sheet in the case against him. The court has summoned him on August 27. If the promoter of the defunct Kingfisher Airlines does not appear

before the court, he risks being declared a fugitive economic offender, besides properties linked to him being confiscated. The ‘fugitive’ status to the beleaguered liquor baron will help ED attach assets worth over Rs 12,500 crore.

IAAC announces the appointment of Dr. Nirmal Mattoo as incoming Chairman of the Board

Aroon Shivdasani, Executive and Artistic Director retires after 20 years of glorious service. Will continue as Brand Evangelist Advisor.



Yash Paul Soi, Anil Bansal, Rakesh Kaul, Hema, Dilip Chauhan, Roger Chugh, Anu Jain, Aroon Shivdasani, Dr Nirmal Mattoo, Nutan kalamdani, Niti Sundaran, Rajeev Bhambri, Sunil Hali, Anurag harsh and Rajeev Kaul

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Insurance

Property & Casualty

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Indian Consul General in New York, Sandeep Chakraborty recently visited Shani Temple of New Hyde Park, New York (Shri Saneeswara Temple). Consul General interacted with temple devotees and was honored with a Shawl by Temple President Shridhar. Some noted individuals among present during the occasion were; Community leader Umasen Gupta, Former Human Right Commissioner Sharanjit Singh Thind, Filmmaker Raj Rahi, & Jasbir Jay Singh of Hum Hindustani Weekly.



An interfaith paper, first from South Asian community, launched

A known name in Sikh community, the paper's publisher Darshan Singh Bagga has also started a foundation to give back to society.



Hicksville, NY: An interfaith journal titled 'One World Under God' was launched here July 22 at an event where speakers from six major world religions gave presentations on how their faiths endorse and reinforce the Principles of America as enshrined in the Declaration of Independence: ...that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

Defendants Charged with Posing as Federal Agents and Defrauding Immigrants Out of \$6 Million

SAN DIEGO – Three individuals were arrested today in connection with a scheme to defraud victims seeking immigration status in the United States. As part of the fraud, two of defendants – Hardev Panesar and Rafael Hastie – posed as officers of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and promised that they could obtain immigration status for people in exchange for exorbitant fees. Gurdev Singh is also charged with assisting his conspirators in the fraudulent scheme.

According to a federal grand jury indictment unsealed today, although Panesar and Hastie have never worked at DHS, since at least 2014 they falsely claimed to be DHS agents and falsely stated they had the authority to obtain lawful immigration documents and legal status for individuals who lacked such status in the United States. Panesar and Hastie also falsely claimed they had the power to stop deportation proceedings.

According to the Indictment, the defendants defrauded victims out of approximately \$6,000,000 from the scheme.

Panesar, Hastie and Singh collected fees from victims under the guise that they would be able to provide immigration documents, and concealed from victims the fact that they would never be able to obtain immigration documents or status in the United States. Instead, the defendants converted the proceeds from the scheme to their personal use and benefit. Panesar, Hastie, Singh and others have solicited and recruited victims across the United States, including California and Indiana, and Mexico.

Panesar and Hastie convinced victims that they were agents, in part, because they showed fake agency credentials when meeting with the victims. Panesar and Hastie also provided immigration applications to victims and took fingerprints supposedly for immigration forms. They often demanded more money to speed up the process or guarantee the immigration documents by a certain date. Panesar, Hastie, and Singh never delivered on their promise to provide immigration documents, despite collecting thousands of dollars from each of the more than 150 victims.

Former Owner of Sleep Study Businesses Convicted of Fraud Conspiracy

A federal jury convicted a Sterling, Virginia woman today on health care fraud and tax charges for operating a fraudulent sleep study clinic in Northern Virginia.

Assistant Attorney General Brian A. Benczkowski of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney G. Zachary Terwilliger of the Eastern District of Virginia; Assistant Director in Charge Nancy McNamara of the FBI's Washington Field Office; Acting Special Agent in Charge Kelly R. Jackson of IRS Criminal Investigation (CI) Washington D.C. Field Office; Special Agent in Charge Bret D. Mastronardi for the Office of Personnel Management Office (OPM); Special Agent in Charge Robert E. Craig for the Defense Criminal

Investigative Service's (DCIS) Mid-Atlantic Field Office; and Special Agent in Charge Maureen Dixon of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG) made the announcement.

After a two-week trial, Young Yi, 44, a citizen of South Korea, was convicted of one count of conspiracy to commit health care and wire fraud, seven counts of health care fraud, one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States, and one count of filing a false tax return. She is scheduled to be sentenced on Nov. 2 by U.S. District Judge Liam O'Grady of the Eastern District of Virginia, who presided over the trial and remanded her into the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service.

IAAC announces the appointment of Dr. Nirmal Mattoo as incoming Chairman of the Board

Aroon Shivdasani, Executive and Artistic Director retires after 20 years of glorious service. Will continue as Brand Evangelist Advisor.



(Contd from page 1) Dr. Nirmal Mattoo has been appointed by the Board of IAAC as its new Chairman effective July 1, 2018. In its evaluation, the Board concluded that Dr. Mattoo's background as a philanthropist supporter of the arts and artists, educator, author, humanitarian doctor and successful businessman with a strong track record of building non-profit centers of excellence made him uniquely qualified to head and lead a precious asset of the Indo American community. This announcement was made at a gala gathering at the Indian Consulate in New York on July 30th attended by over 160 people from the arts, media and Indo American community. Consul General



Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty opening remarks. The IAAC Board thanks Aroon Shivdasani who has announced her

retirement, for her exemplary sacrifices and contributions over the course of a lifetime in founding and building IAAC to the point that it is the premiere art and cultural organization of the Indo American community. The existing Board members and advisors have also retired, and their services are acknowledged with gratitude. Finally, the heart and soul of any community is its volunteers and it is gratifying that they will all continue to serve IAAC. Dr. Mattoo stated, "Aroon has been a trailblazer in fostering the arts and the artist community in a non-judgmental, nurturing manner that has inspired love, understanding, pride and joy.

Queens man confesses to fatally stabbing cousin

(Insider Bureau) A Queens man stabbed his cousin to death at their home early Monday — and then confessed to the crime when cops showed up, police said.

"The perpetrator made a statement to police," Chief of Detectives Robert Boyce said.

"I'm guilty, I'm the one who killed him," Boyce quoted Lovedeep Singh, 24, as saying.

Singh was arraigned Monday on murder and weapon possession charges and ordered held



without bail. Boyce said Singh argued with the 26-year-old victim inside a Richmond Hill home on 117th St., near 91st Ave. The men were roommates.


Family members identified the slain man as Sharanjit Singh. "We were good friends, and I've known him personally for a long time," said Barjinder Singh, whose brother-in-law is the victim's

cousin. Sharanjit Singh, a livery car driver, moved to the U.S. from India in 2013, he said. His parents still live in India. "He came for better opportunities and better life," Barjinder Singh said. He

described Singh as energetic and happy, "always looking to help and get ahead in life by doing right. Worked hard. Drove for multiple hail services for extended hours."

Sharanjit Singh and Lovedeep Singh were "good friends," he said, adding that he knew nothing about the motive.


A third cousin living in the home awoke to find Sharanjit Singh stabbed, then called 911 "and tried to apply pressure on his wound," Barjinder Singh said. Police responded to a 2:27 a.m. 911 call and found the victim had been stabbed in the armpit and shoulder. He was taken to Jamaica Hospital, but he could not be saved.



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To curb lynching, our hopes are pinned on the judiciary

I feel if the Supreme Court takes suo moto cognisance of attack on Agnivesh in Pakur, the callousness that the authorities display while dealing with such incidents can be reined in

Shashi Shekhar

Last week, the Supreme Court berated politicians saying that they cannot leave the dispensation of justice to the mob and bring in a new legislation to control mob lynchings and deal strictly with such offences. Little did the honourable bench realise that hundreds of kilometres away, in a nondescript Jharkhand town called Pakur, a different script was being enacted.

A few hours later, we watched on television as 78-year-old Swami Agnivesh was brutally assaulted in public. Those attacking him were shouting provocative slogans. The police later registered the case under stringent provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

There was a big hue and cry over this incident in the Jharkhand assembly. Television channels kept debating it for hours, but apart from Jayant Sinha, no other party leader came forward. A day earlier, Shashi Tharoor's office was similarly vandalised in Thiruvananthapuram.

Not just this, the evening after Swami Agnivesh was brutally assaulted, during an acrimonious debate, a maulana slapped a lady lawyer of the

Supreme Court on live television. Pay attention to these three incidents. These are not mere attacks on a politician's office or physical assaults on women or senior citizens. In the name of religion and civilisation, Indians are becoming irreligious and uncivilised every passing day. Consider the statement of Nida, who has been fighting a battle against triple talaq and halala. She told the Minorities Affairs Commission that she feared for her life. She is most afraid of the crowds that assemble for Friday prayers. Why has the same crowd that once gave a sense of security, become a source of fear?

A few people are consistently trying to tarnish the dignity of our nation.

Even before this, in the name of security, reservations, and appeasement, our politicians had been pandering to their vote banks. The only difference now is that these days, social media has made the flow of currents blowing from the political quarters a round-the-year affair. Those fanning these fires include people of diverse opinions and political beliefs. We Indians appear to be overcome with mob frenzy. This is dangerous.

Had mobs been capable of

dispensing justice, they wouldn't have had to level bizarre allegations on French queen Marie Antoinette that led to her execution. She was accused of having physical relations with her son. Similarly, while murdering the czar's family in Yekaterinburg, the mob never thought that among those killed was the helpless teenaged son of Nicholas II. He had nothing to do with the deeds or misdeeds of the royal family. Why was he murdered then? The common lesson from these examples is that a mob is driven by frenzy, not justice. If we allow it to run amok in every Indian city and town, shameful incidents such as those seen in Pakur and Hapur will be repeated every day. Please pay attention. The incidents in France and Russia were the result of short-term anarchy triggered by revolutions. They were able to control them. Our country hasn't passed through a similar tumultuous period. So, the situation in India is relatively more serious.

I feel if the Supreme Court takes suo moto cognisance of the incident at Pakur, the callousness that the authorities display while dealing with such incidents can be tackled. The

attackers in Pakur are the first to have violated the Supreme Court's directions. Here questions are bound to be asked about the role of the police. Everybody knew Agnivesh was in town. What was the intelligence wing doing? The police have footage of the incident. What explains the delay in taking action? Isn't it a violation of the Supreme Court's directive of dealing 'strictly' with such incidents? Of course I don't think I am capable of giving advice to the court, or cast any doubts over the wisdom of the esteemed bench.

Look at the sorry state of affairs. Almost every political party is caught in the quagmire. When the Agnivesh issue was

raised in Parliament, home minister Rajnath Singh gave a statement that we have regularly met the chief ministers concerned and 'urged' them to take action. In these cases the Centre's rights are limited to just suggestions and requests. Law and order is an issue that state governments look at. What are they doing? If you look at the list of incidents, it will be clear that this is the state of affairs whether it is in states ruled by the BJP or Kerala, ruled by the Left Front. Even Bengal, governed by Mamata Banerjee, is on the boil.

In such a scenario, what recourse does the common man have than to pin all hope on the judiciary?



Imran Khan may bat for friendly ties with India, but he could be stumped by the army

International media has carried several stories of Imran Khan's path to office being paved even before the polls and now election monitors and human rights groups have also echoed suggestions that local media was under pressure not to scrutinise the process, which is now being questioned.

Having set course for the Prime Minister House, Imran Khan lowered his voice at one point during a televised address — almost appearing hurt — to say he was troubled that over the past several days Indian TV channels were painting him as some sort of a “Bollywood villain”. This, he said, despite the fact he had many friends in India due to his cricketer ties. Not long afterwards, he also said that India and Pakistan need to improve their relations, benefit from trade opportunities, and address a common curse: poverty. There was one caveat: the peaceful resolution of the “core” issue of Kashmir first. Khan, the former iconic cricketer, who formed the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) in 1996 and struggled at times forlornly for over two decades before being declared the winner in this month's general election, was speaking before embarking on the task of government formation.

As opposition parties, which lost the election, were protesting against Khan's victory and attributing it to rigging that, they alleged, happened mostly during the counting of ballots and results tabulation, the PTI leader was making his first address to the nation. He looked prime ministerial. His tone was so measured that few were familiar with it, at least given his language and mannerism since he refused to accept the 2013 election results, which gave the Nawaz Sharif-led Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) a huge win.

Khan, the accomplished all-rounder who led Pakistan to victory in the 1992 World Cup, blamed the Sharif triumph on match-fixing by the then military chief. He loved cricketer analogies, telling his supporters to look out for the ‘umpire's raised finger’ (the new army chief's) when he launched his unsuccessful sit-in to try and force Sharif from office. The umpire didn't oblige.

When eventually the Panama Papers weakened Sharif and his troubles compounded after falling out with the military reportedly over differences about national security policy priorities, Khan's petition to the Supreme Court to inquire how the PM's family came to own undeclared properties in London's expensive Mayfair district acquired greater significance.

It was this petition that resulted in the former PM's disqualification from holding office last April followed by his and daughter Maryam Nawaz's sentencing to prison terms by an Islamabad court earlier this month. The court tried both under the Supreme Court's supervision.

The court verdict came as the father and daughter were in London at the bedside of the former PM's critically ill wife Begum Kulsum Nawaz. Both were imprisoned as they returned to appeal their conviction. All through his anti-Nawaz campaign and Sharif's trial, Imran kept saying to his supporters that the “wicket will fall” soon. It did. In fact, it now seems the whole PML-N team has been bowled out and Khan is the man of the match, as the daily Nation's banner headline declared the day after the election. However, from now on, Khan will have to play on a tricky wicket that he is unaccustomed to.

The international media has carried several stories of Khan's path to office being facilitated even before the polls and now election monitors and human rights groups have also suggested that local media was under pressure not to scrutinise the process, which is now being questioned.

But it would be foolish to deny Khan's popularity among a sizeable section of the country's population that he has invigorated with his energetic anti-corruption campaign and his promise of a ‘naya’ Pakistan, which would be egalitarian and where meritocracy will prevail and not dynasties as in Sharif's party.

Having promised to construct five million low-cost homes for the poor and provide 10 million jobs during his term in office, he will assume office carrying a heavy burden of expectation at a time when higher oil prices, a trade and current account deficit, dwindling forex reserves and a fast-depreciating currency will test his economic team's skills and expertise.

He may want friendly relations with India and may be well-placed to start a dialogue, given that he will enjoy the military's support, with the hardliners in Delhi, but may find himself cramped in the give-and-take that must happen in any negotiations.

Also, when he tries to implement his agenda in a Pakistan facing a resource crunch, there may be friction with provincial governments (to whom the bulk of the resources were devolved after a Constitutional amendment in 2010) and with State institutions that get a sizeable share of the Centre's budget. All eyes will be on his innings.

On Iran oil crisis, India needs a long-term strategy

An oil shock will hurt even more at a time when the global economy is staring at the prospect of a trade war, inflation is worsening, and depreciating rupee are threatening to jeopardise macroeconomic stability

US President Donald Trump's decision to renege on the US-Iran deal had created considerable disquiet in India, given its implications on our energy security. Iran is a major exporter of petroleum to India, and the US will want India to cut back and eventually eliminate its oil imports from Iran within less than four months. This newspaper had taken a position that the US cannot push India into cutting back its oil imports from Iran.

Recent data from the petroleum ministry is bound to worsen these worries. In response to a Lok Sabha question, the petroleum ministry has given statistics which show that oil imports from Iran accounted for almost one-fourth of our total oil imports from the West Asian countries in the first quarter of this fiscal year. The share of Iran in total oil imports from the region has jumped by almost ten percentage points in this period compared to what it was in the fiscal years 2016-17 and 2017-18. While oil trade is extremely crucial for Iran's economy, India also stands to gain from it.

Price of oil imports from Iran has always been less than that of Saudi Arabia since 2016-17. If India were to stop its oil trade with Iran, it would face a double whammy: lose a supplier of cheap oil and face even greater price because of the supply shock, which Iran's exit from the global oil markets will create. To be sure, it is still not clear whether India will cease its oil imports with Iran. The government's reply in the Lok Sabha has steered clear of answering the question whether refiners have been asked to prepare for such eventualities. This could be a manifestation of the government still being undecided or not wanting to show all its cards at the moment. An oil shock will hurt even more at a time when the global economy is staring at the prospect of a trade war, inflation is worsening, and a depreciating rupee is threatening to jeopardise macroeconomic stability.

Having said all this, we also need to understand that India's high import-dependence on its energy needs mean that it is always vulnerable to sudden shocks — geopolitical or otherwise — in the global petroleum markets. Our import dependence in oil is a big reason why India cannot exploit policies such as currency devaluation to make its export competitive, as increased oil bills offset gains in exports. While diplomatic efforts must be made to find an interim solution to the crisis at hand, there are no substitutes to pursuing the long-term goal of self-sufficiency in energy.



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Plastic has turned into an environmental disaster

Cutting down trees to increase the production of paper products combined with the increased energy used to make them has an equally detrimental effect on the environment



I once read that garbage isn't exactly rocket science, but given the filth around us, one would think it is. Single-use plastic grocery bags came into existence 50 years ago. It was the answer to a question no one was asking and solution to a problem that did not exist. In the past, people carried stuff in cloth bags, sacks etc. Today, we see plastic bags and bottles reach the landfill after being used for a mere 12 minutes.

Out of the millions of plastic bottles being bought today, not to forget straws and cups, only 20% is being recycled. The rest simply finds its way to the landfills where it does not degrade or it is thrown into rivers and seas. This is even affecting the wildlife, marine and land animals, who eat the plastic and suffer fatal consequences.

Plastic has become an environmental disaster. Most plastic is made from petroleum or natural gas; non-renewable resources extracted and processed using energy-intensive techniques that destroy fragile ecosystems. The manufacturing

of plastic and its destruction by incineration pollutes air, land and water and exposes workers to toxic chemicals, including carcinogens.

Pick any product off a grocery store shelf, it is either made using plastic or packaged in plastic, we even go as far as to wrapping our vegetables in cling film just so that we can extend their shelf life. We often hear the term "biodegradable plastic", which is just a green spin to make you spend more money.

People need to first understand what it means for something to be biodegradable.

Something is considered biodegradable if it can be broken down by living things, usually by microorganisms like bacteria and fungi. The meaning of biodegradable gets complicated for plastic. There are certain conditions such as temperature and moisture which effect how well plastic breaks down. This means that biodegradable plastic will not simply break down wherever it ends up. More so, if not disposed off correctly or if it

ends up as litter, it might not break down at all.

Compostable plastic, on the other hand, will break down when placed in a composting facility. When disposed off correctly, a compostable plastic will almost completely biodegrade within 6 months. This is an improvement from 100 years for a normal plastic bag to break down in landfill.

Another form of plastic we see in the market is non-woven bags, which are made from non-woven polypropylene (NWPP) fabric. People seem to think they are cloth bags; however, they are 100% plastic and are even covered under the plastic ban. Given their cross-hatched design, these bags get mistaken for cloth. NWPP is a polymer known for its strength and durability, cheap and easy to manufacture. Being resistant to photo-degradation, NWPP takes at least 300 years to degrade. If they reach the landfill, these bags may never degrade. A limited life also means that they end up in a landfill where they are burnt. Burning of

NWPP releases toxic dioxins into the air, which affects our already heavily polluted environment. The additives they contain leach in to contaminate soil and water. Some types of NWPP are recyclable, but only 1% are recycled world over. Recycling NWPP is prohibitively expensive and energy-intensive.

Plastic, in general, does make sense to use if disposed of correctly, which is something we don't see happening and the plastic waste is simply sent to the landfill, where it sits for generations and we wonder if it ever breaks down.

People then turn to paper bags, which degrade faster but still are not a better solution for the environment. Cutting down more trees to increase the production of paper products combined with the increased energy used to make them has an equally detrimental effect on the environment.

What we can do is to simply reuse cloth bags and try and be more aware. The best way to reduce one's plastic footprint is to simply USE LESS PLASTIC.

Expensive technologies cannot solve India's waste problem

The core question India needs to address: how to reduce the generation of waste in an economy, which thrives on spiraling consumption and production

India generates over 150,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste (MSW) per day. According to the World Bank, India's daily waste generation will reach 377,000 tonnes by 2025. To tackle this challenge, several Indian municipalities have invested in smart bins. While Bangalore, Raipur, Dehradun and Dharamshala have already installed these bins, Chennai, Surat, Mumbai, Chandigarh are all set to do the same. These smart bins are different from the usual bins: they have twin underground chambers (one for biodegradable and the other for non-biodegradable waste) and are fitted with sensors, which sends out alerts when a bin is about to get full. These bins are expensive: the cost of procurement and installation of one bin is between Rs 4 to 8.5 lakh and a

special crane-mounted truck, which pulls out the bins from the chambers and carries them to a landfill, is between Rs 50 and Rs 55 lakh.

Unfortunately, these bins don't contribute much to managing municipal waste because there's no segregation at source — household or commercial. So having two bins does not serve any purpose as users/collectors dump mixed garbage in them. Moreover, in most cities, the waste finally goes to landfills or dumping grounds without any processing.

For any recycling, sorting/ segregation, human handling is a must and this task is carried out by waste collectors/pickers, either from dustbins or at processing sites. The smart bin, however, eliminates the possibility

of human intervention at the site, thus impacting the livelihood of the waste picker community. Landfills are more dangerous areas for them to work in and the quantum of waste to deal with is larger, more varied there. Dharamshala, which made to the smart city list in 2016, initially planned to install 225 bins. So far the municipal corporation has installed about 70 bins at the cost of Rs 7 crore. However, its smart bin experience was marred in the first month after a few of the underground concrete structures caved in due to the hilly terrain and lack of consideration for underground drainage in an area that sees heavy rainfall. A city that has only one disposal site and is yet to plan the setting up of a waste processing unit, it makes little sense to spend crores on the

new bins. It is also an oversight of the Solid Waste Management rules 2016, which requires segregation, processing and recycling of waste. The rules hold urban bodies, administration as well as users at source, responsible for managing the waste. However, instead of focusing on implementation, policy makers and urban bodies are focused on facelifts. Instead of these expensive bins, the government must initiate other steps: segregation and processing, organising and capacity building of citizens and waste handlers, and come up with a strong regulatory system. The core question of how to reduce the generation of waste in an economy that thrives on spiraling consumption and production, will also need to be faced sooner or later.

China's strategic ambitions seen in the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka

New Delhi's Indian Ocean woes aren't confined to Sri Lanka. Across the Indian Ocean's littorals, the Chinese navy has been preparing to establish a stronger security presence. On Pakistan's Makran coast, the PLAN has deployed regularly, including at Gwadar, also constructed by CMPorts. Earlier this year, the PLA is said to have initiated talks with the Pakistan military for another outpost at Jiwani.

Sri Lanka's decision earlier this month to move a naval unit to Hambantota port, now leased to the China Merchant Ports Holdings Ltd for period of 99 years, isn't good news for New Delhi. With reports in the media that China is considering 'gifting' a frigate to the Sri Lankan Navy, it seems clear that a process for the creation of a Chinese naval outpost in India's near-neighbourhood has just begun. Beijing's move creates the grounds for the insertion of PLAN training and support teams at Sri Lanka's naval command, which is bound to result in the positioning of greater Chinese naval assets at the facility.

To be sure, Hambantota's maritime significance for Beijing has never been in doubt. The port's location at the southern extremity of Sri Lanka, overlooking South Asia's vital sea lanes, makes it an important commercial asset for China. But Beijing's investment in

Hambantota also has a strategic dimension. As a recent New York Times report revealed, the deal involved huge sums of money contributed to former President Mahinda Rajapaksa's re-election campaign in 2015. When Beijing's revised its loan interest rates from 1-2% floating to 6.3%, it became clear Hambantota was more than just an investment opportunity for China.

Colombo, of course, rejects suggestions that its deal with CMPorts is driven by anything other than economics. When it comes to China, Sri Lankan analysts suspect many Indian observers suffer from paranoia that induces zero-sum thinking. New Delhi, they complain, does not give enough credence to Colombo's assurances that Hambantota port will be civilian and under the explicit control of Sri Lankan authorities.

Yet, India's misgivings deserve closer examination. If the PLAN's salami-slicing approach

in the South China Sea is any indication, China's gameplan in Hambantota is likely to be one of incremental control. In the near-term, Beijing would conform to the commercial template, avoiding any naval deployments to the port city. Over time, however, there is little doubt that China's leadership would seek to leverage its possession for strategic gains.

Beijing will perhaps start by asking Colombo to allow naval access for logistics. Since Sri Lanka had already announced a naval command at Hambantota, Colombo won't have much option but to accommodate Beijing's request. China would then offer to assist Sri Lanka in upgrading existing communications facilities, gradually expanding the enterprise into an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance outpost. Eventually, China would aim to establish a dual use commercial/military facility for forward-



arming, restocking and refuelling of high-end naval assets. Willingly or inadvertently, Colombo would be co-opted into the plan.

The complex nature of China's investment at Hambantota says something about Beijing's strategic motives. Since August 2017, when the deal was first signed, Colombo has claimed control over Hambantota International Port Services Ltd. (HIPS), the holding company in charge of port security. However, CMPorts has publically revealed it holds 58% stakes in the firm (as against Sri Lanka Port Authority's 42%). With majority stakes in the project, it seems unlikely the Chinese state-owned company will allow Sri Lanka a veto over future PLAN deployments at Hambantota.

Oddly enough, only select portions of the pact have been made public, with the Sri Lankan government hesitant to place the document in parliament for a thorough discussion. It is possible CMPorts insisted on the inclusion of clauses that clarified its superior stakeholder status in resolving disagreements. The prospects of greater Chinese undersea presence in the region may have caused Ranil Wickremesinghe, the Sri Lankan Prime Minister, to call for the deployment of anti-submarine warfare platforms in Sri Lanka's near-seas. It also appears to be the single most important reason India is seeking control of the loss-making Mattala airport at Hambantota.

But New Delhi's Indian Ocean woes aren't confined to Sri Lanka. Across the Indian

Ocean's littorals, the Chinese navy has been preparing to establish a stronger security presence. On Pakistan's Makran coast, the PLAN has deployed regularly, including at Gwadar, also constructed by CMPorts. Earlier this year, the PLAN is said to have initiated talks with the Pakistan military for another outpost at Jiwani.

In Maldives, China reportedly has a plan to construct a naval facility at Gadhoo Island in the Southern Laamu atoll, close to the one and a half degree channel — the main trading route between Africa and Asia. This has coincided with a downturn in India-Maldives relations, and a refusal by Male to extend visas for Indian security personnel deployed on the southern Islands, ostensibly to prevent surveillance over Chinese assets in the region.

More troubling for India is China's increased openness about its naval force projections in the Indian Ocean. A deployment of a three-ship task force in January 2018 was perceived by some as a warning for Delhi to desist from using military force in the Maldives. Not surprisingly, the PLAN is more indifferent than ever to Indian sensitivities in South Asia. Beijing seems to be signalling to New Delhi that it will not let the latter's security concerns come in the way of its own strategic ambitions. Many in India's strategic community then seem convinced Hambantota will be a crown jewel in China's "string of pearls" strategy. Perhaps, it is the price India will pay for not making its red lines in the Indian Ocean clear to China.



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PTI's win: A step ahead in the democratic transition

Imran Khan's detractors overlook the fact that he is extremely ambitious and strong-headed, and is neither a businessman nor has commercial stakes anywhere -- and most importantly, doesn't have a history of financial corruption unlike his opponents.

Election 2018 was a big snub to conventional politics, i.e. the status quo which has ruled Pakistan for nearly seven decades, and which Imran Khan has been relentlessly attacking. He himself eventually compromised this fundamental plank of his policy by coopting the so-called electables into his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), yet this doesn't seem to have hurt him

Pakistan's fourth consecutive election demolished old myths, brought down several stalwarts and created new controversies. The entire polity aligned with former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has decried what they term the manipulative electoral process under the caretaker government.

A stunning upset was the elimination of Sharif's former right-hand man, Nisar Ali Khan. He had disassociated himself with the PML(N) after Sharif's disqualification in the aftermath of the Panama Papers scandal. After his decision to fight independently, Nisar appeared to be the pawn that the military establishment was reportedly banking on to bring in more votes which would benefit the PTI.

Nisar Ali Khan, who had won eight consecutive victories since 1985 from his Rawalpindi constituencies, fell victim to his own indecision and

inconsistency.

Other stalwarts who bit the dust in their own strongholds were Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman, long term chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, Asfandyar Wali Khan, and Sirajul Haq, whose party enjoyed five years as a coalition partner of the PTI in the conflict-ridden Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They had turned against the PTI before the elections. In the past, they were considered as close proxies of the establishment, particularly against Benazir Bhutto, who had been a victim of an acute slander campaign in the 1990s, led by Husain Haqqani and these clerics. Here is why the Election 2018 should be seen as a big step forward in Pakistan's democratic transition:

First, although all those who lost the election, led by the Sharifs, have alleged rigging, the chief observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission to Pakistan, Michael Gahler, seemed satisfied on Thursday morning. "Our observers visited as many as 300 polling stations in 87 constituencies and I have personally visited four polling stations... there is improvement as compared to the previous election held in 2013," Gahler said in Islamabad.

Second, despite being dubbed a close ally of the



security establishment, the PTI had already assumed the high moral ground with literally no financial corruption scandal despite the adverse circumstances created by the mighty Muslim League at the centre. Millions of poor people felt that the PTI would bring in improved health, education and other government services such as police, local government and justice. Third, deployment of nearly 350,000 troops in and around polling stations fuelled suggestions that they might be used to rig the process, but these troops, along with CCTV cameras and party agents at polling

stations, have in fact deterred any possible manipulation of the ballot.

Fourth, all those projected as the proxies of the security establishment — Nisar Ali Khan, Mustafa Kamal (ex MQM), and Mulla Khadim Rizvi (Tahreek Labaik) — have lost the elections. At the same time, Baloch and Pashtoon critics of the military — such as Akhtar Mengal, and Mohsin Dawar, who had been spearheading the Pashtoon Rights Movement (PTM) — have emerged victorious in Waziristan.

Fifth, most parties raised a hue and cry over the radical

religious right joining the electoral race through two major outfits, Tehreek Labaik (Rizvi) and Allah Akbar Tehreek. They did get votes but remain largely marginalised by the mainstream parties, with their parliamentary support slipping to less than five percentage. What lies ahead? A thumping victory notwithstanding, the PTI faces a minefield of problems: a stagnating economy, shrinking government revenues and declining exports. And if the Sharif-led opposition embarks on an agitational path to protest what he claims is an electoral fraud, it will further hamper any fiscal and administrative reform that Imran Khan will try to implement. Lastly, critics often refer to Imran Khan as the military's favourite. But this is to overlook a simple fact; Khan, an extremely ambitious, strong-willed person, is neither a businessman nor has commercial stakes anywhere. Nobody has been able to accuse him of corruption and this is his biggest asset. So, if he has nothing to hide, why would he kowtow to the military establishment? Being a nationalist, Khan's outlook on foreign relations is very much in sync with that of the military establishment. He advocates a nationalistic narrative that focuses on self-confidence and integrity. Now he has to negotiate the turbulent political landscape complicated by a fledgling economy.

With Khan at helm, expect tension between India and Pakistan to go up

Imran Khan's India policy is no different from that of the Pakistan army's and the only hope, albeit slim, is that he will want peace in the region to focus on his promise of building a 'naya Pakistan.'

The mention of Imran Khan conjures up images of the pace bowler lifting the world cup for his country, but that was in 1992. Twenty-six years on, it is clear that Captain Khan has undergone a fundamental change. The swagger has been replaced with a carefully crafted image of a man who speaks a conservative, hard-line language.

Khan is an untested political entity who lacks administrative

experience but the fiercely fought election and his victory speech have given us a peep into where he and his party — Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) — stand vis-a-vis India. Unlike the 2013 elections, when Nawaz Sharif made better relations with India a poll issue, Khan, in public rallies, went out of his way this time, to rub it in that while Sharif sold his country's political interests for his own



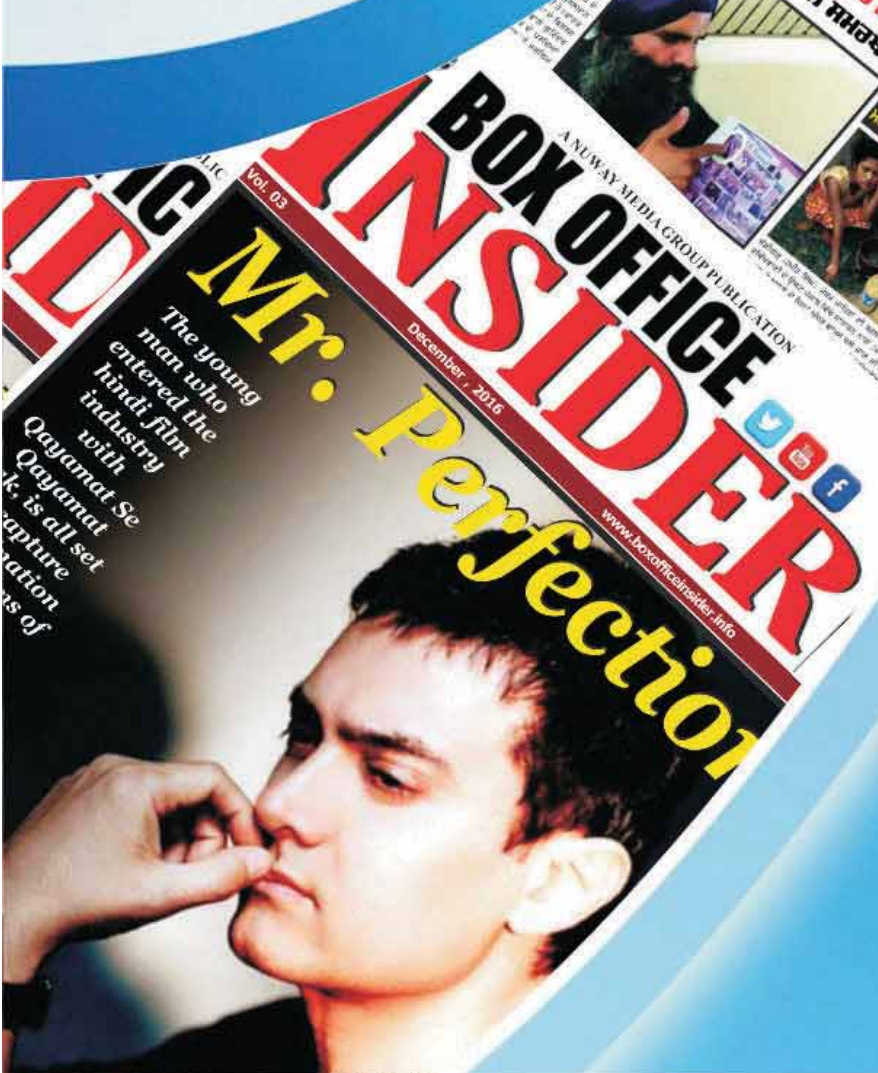
business interests, he would focus on Pakistan's national interest. Throughout the campaign, Khan spoke a language that the deep state (the army-ISI combine) likes to hear, especially when it comes to India. In his first address after his victory, he, however, extended a hand of friendship and said dialogue was the way forward. The frostiness in ties

between the two neighbours is likely to continue. While India is clear that it will engage only after the neighbour walks the talk on terror, Khan underlined human rights violations in Kashmir and called it out as the 'core' issue. Khan's Kashmir focus has also been spelt out in his party's manifesto too. It is clear that he is not a Sharif, who would be willing to offend the army by accepting an invite to Modi's oath-taking ceremony. The manifesto also talks of improving ties with its neighbours but has linked the Kashmir issue to the United Nations Security Council resolution, an instrument that India has rejected as outdated.



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Lok Sabha passes law to deal with human trafficking, sex workers not to be harassed

The Lok Sabha on Thursday passed a comprehensive law to deal with human trafficking, with Union minister Maneka Gandhi stating that the legislation does not intend to harass sex workers.



(Agencies) The BJP-led NDA government on Thursday used its superior numerical strength in the Lok Sabha to pass a proposed anti-trafficking law that some of the opposition parties including the Congress, CPM and BJD wanted referred to the

standing committee.

Assuring the House that she would tackle the "lacunae" pointed out by the members in the four-hour discussion on the draft law, the Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi said the bill is intended

to go after human traffickers and not the victims — a concern raised by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who was the first speaker from the opposition. Members cutting across party lines supported the bill but wanted it referred to the standing committee. Gandhi said "the bill is long overdue... The law is victim-centric and conviction rate will hopefully improve after the Bill is enacted". The Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018, provides for confidentiality of victims, witnesses and complainants, time-bound trials and repatriation of the victims. "This is a bill that has a compassionate view of people who have

been victims of sex racket," she added. The legislation proposes to create institutional mechanisms at the district, state and central levels. It calls for punishment ranging from 10 years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine not less than Rs 1 lakh. With provisions for prevention, rescue and rehabilitation, the proposed law also covers aggravated forms of trafficking such as forced labour, begging and marriage. For the first time, buying and selling of human beings was being made a cognisable offence, she added. "The proposed bill will hit organised nexus of trafficking," Gandhi said. Tharoor said the victims (of trafficking) were the "least priority" in the bill. Gandhi had opening the discussion said it attempted to create a legal, economic and social en-

vironment for victims. TMC lawmaker Pratima Mondal described some provisions of the proposed law as "vague" and the gradation of offences as illogical. Experts said while the stringent punishment in the proposed law will act as a deterrent once it is passed, the bill as passed by the LS has certain deficiencies. "The Bill fails to make a distinction between victims of sexual exploitation and consenting sex workers and puts them on par. This would certainly raise the issue of a violation of the right to work as per Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution of India," Sushila Ram Verma, chief legal consultant at The Indian Lawyer, said. She described the creation of the National Anti-Trafficking Bureau as a "laudable feature" of the proposed law.

No one will be treated as foreigner if name does not appear in final NRC draft: Assam CM

Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Thursday sought to allay fears among people on their names missing from the NRC, saying no one will be treated as a foreigner if his or her name does not appear in the final draft of the state's citizens list.

(News Agencies) Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Thursday sought to allay fears among people on their names missing from the NRC, saying no one will be treated as a foreigner if his or her name does not appear in the final draft of the state's citizens list.

Chairing a high-level security review meeting here, he asked officials to guide people, whose names do not figure in the final draft of National Register of Citizens (NRC) to be published on July 30, through the procedure of claims and objections.

"If someone's name does not appear in the complete draft, he or she is not to be considered a

foreigner. Public should be clearly explained the process of claims and objections after publication of the NRC," Sonowal was quoted as saying by one of the officials present at the meeting.

The chief minister also directed the officials not to refer any case to the Foreigners Tribunal based on the NRC final draft, the official said. The Home Ministry had yesterday asked the Assam government not to take any action against those whose names do not figure in the NRC.

"There is no question of referring the persons whose names do not figure in the draft NRC to the Foreigners' Tribunal as people are entitled to file claims and ob-

jections and due opportunity has to be given to them before final publication," an advisory of the ministry had said.

In Delhi, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said that people will get adequate time to register claims and objections and if those not satisfied can also approach the foreign tribunal. The NRC is being updated with March 24, 1971 as the cut-off date for legitimate claim to Indian citizenship in Assam.

The final draft will be published on July 30. The first draft of the NRC was published during the intervening nights of December 31 and January 1, containing 1.9 crore names out of a total appli-



cations of 3.29 crore people.

The exercise is aimed at identifying illegal immigrants in the north-eastern state bordering Bangladesh. Assam is the only state in the country having an NRC which was first prepared in 1951.

The chief secretary, the director general of police, the NRC state coordinator, deputy commissioners and SPs of all districts were present at the meeting and Sonowal asked everyone to remain alert.

Earlier in the day, Director General of Police Kuladhar Saikia also held a meeting with senior officials.

Sources said the meeting discussed the situations that may arise after publication of the final draft of the NRC.

NRC state coordinator Prateek Hajela has also said that people

whose names do not feature in the complete draft NRC need not worry.

"Applicants who do not find their names in the complete draft NRC need not worry. All genuine Indian citizens as per cut-off date of 24th March 1971 (midnight) will be included in the Final NRC," he said in advertisements in the print and electronic media.

Hajela's office has set up a control room in which people can call up for information and to complaint over the complete draft of the NRC which is scheduled for publication on July 30.

Besides, people can check their names for verification in websites, helplines, and via SMS, the advertisements said. They can also go through print version of the complete draft in their designated NRC Seva Kendras.

Sabarimala petitioners in SC, seeking ban on women entry, warn of Ayodhya rerun

(News Agencies) Petitioners seeking a continuation of the ban on entry of women into the Sabarimala temple on Thursday warned the Supreme Court of "another Ayodhya" if the shrine's customs were tinkered with.

"I do not want another Ayodhya in Kerala. Your Lordships will have to be very circumspect when exercising judicial review in matters of faith," senior advocate Kailasanatha Pillai, appearing for outfit Akhila



Bharatha Ayyappa Seva Sangham, said and added that religious customs cannot be viewed in isolation. The top court's Constitution Bench is hearing petitions seeking revocation of the ban on entry of women

of menstruating age into the Sabarimala temple. Those defending the prohibition argued that the women's entry was restricted because of the celibate nature of the temple deity, Lord Ayappa. Arguing that the deity's celibate character cannot be altered, the petitioners stated that the deity, being a living entity under the Constitution for the purpose of taxation, also had the fundamental right to preserve his "dharma". (Contd on page 18)

One in three packaged foods have genetically modified content: CSE

One in three packaged foods tested by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) had genetically modified (GM) content, the activist group said on Thursday, highlighting the need for regulations on the manufacture, import, and sale of such foods.



(News Agencies) One in three packaged foods tested by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) had genetically modified (GM) content, the activist group said on Thursday, highlighting the need for regulations on the manufacture, import, and sale of such foods.

CSE tested 65 products by just picking them up from markets in Delhi, Gujarat, and Punjab. Of these 30 were made in India and 35 imported. All but two of the 21 that tested positive for GM content were imported and most of them were imported into India by third-party importers and not by the brand owners.

The food products that tested GM positive include infant food for children with allergies, edible oils, corn and pancake syrup, popcorn, ce-

reals and snacks. "Genetically modified processed food cannot be sold or traded in India without government approval but we found they are being widely sold here. As high as 80% of the packaged foods that we found (GM-)positive were imported from abroad," said Sunita Narain, director general, CSE.

While many of the imported foods are American, they are rarely imported from the US by the third-party importers who usually prefer to import the same products from West Asia or South-East Asia. Section 22 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, prohibits the manufacture, distribution, sale or import of GM food unless regulated.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is in the process of

formulating regulations for the production, import and sale of GM foods.

"No approvals are being done for want of regulations and companies are taking advantage of the loopholes. Once the regulations are in place, we will grant approvals keeping the regulations in mind on a case-to-case basis," said Pawan Agarwal, CEO of FSSAI. The Coalition for a GM-free India slammed the government's stand on the issue.

"... the government knowingly created a regulatory vacuum in which there is no authority taking responsibility to put a check on such GM foods from coming into our food supply chain," said the Coalition in a statement.

GM foods are those produced from genetically modified

organisms or ingredients that have had changes introduced into their DNA, using genetic engineering techniques, as opposed to traditional cross-breeding.

Of the 21 products that tested positive for GM, the labels of 13 did not mention they had GM content; three products made false claims that no GM ingredient had been used.

The companies don't see themselves to be in the wrong. For instance, Kellogg's Froot Loops tested positive but a company spokesperson said: "Kellogg India, as a responsible corporate citizen, abides by the food regulations of India. Kellogg India does not use any GM ingredients in the products manufactured or marketed by Kellogg India" The Froot Loops that tested positive for GM were imported by a third-party

importer based in New Delhi.

Other products that tested positive included those made by Quaker Oats Company, and American Garden Co., and General Mills Inc. although in all of these cases the products were imported by third-party importers. In the case of infant food for lactose-intolerant children, though (two products of Abbot were tested and found to have GM content), the products were imported into India by the local subsidiary of the manufacturer, Abbot. "All of Abbott's infant nutrition products in India fully comply with local regulations, our products have been approved by FSSAI and BIS, and are safe to consume," said an Abbott spokesperson. BIS is short for Bureau of Indian Standards.

No GST on sanitary napkins shows shift in government's priorities

The government had earlier said reducing GST on sanitary napkins will harm local manufacturers whose gains may now be hit due to exemption.

(Agencies) On 21 July, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council decided to change the GST rate on sanitary napkins from 12% to zero. The decision is a complete U-turn from the earlier stance taken by the government in response to the demand for exempting sanitary napkins from GST.

Speaking at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit in November 2017, Union minister Arun Jaitley had given two arguments against exempting sanitary napkins from GST. Because inputs used in manufacturing sanitary napkins were taxed at 12% or 18%, while the final product was taxed at 12%, effective taxation on the product had become lower compared to the pre-GST effective rate of 13.68%, Jaitley argued. This is because manufacturers are entitled to claiming input tax credit (ITC) under the GST regime. Jaitley also argued that the removal of GST on sanitary napkins would

also entail removal of integrated GST on imports, giving an unfair advantage to imports from China, especially against small-scale domestic manufacturers of the product.

An earlier press release by the ministry of finance had also made a similar point. "Reducing the GST rate on sanitary napkins to Nil, will however, result in complete denial of ITC to domestic manufacturers of sanitary napkins and zero rating imports. This will put domestically manufactured sanitary napkins at a huge disadvantage vis-à-vis imports, which will be zero rated," the release said.

How will the government's present decision to exempt sanitary napkins from GST impact prices and production?

The effect on prices is difficult to predict. Sachin Menon, national head of indirect taxes at KPMG India, said that the price effect of being exempted from GST will depend



on the value addition component and tax rates on inputs used in the manufacturing of sanitary napkins. A hypothetical example given in the table above can help understand why this will be the case.

The table shows two scenarios with different tax rates on inputs and different value addition component in manufacture of sanitary napkins, which used to have a GST rate of 12%. Exempting a product from GST will not lead to an equivalent reduction in the cost of the product because the manufacturer will not be eligible to receive ITC once the final product's GST has been waived.

Row 7 in the table shows the

final price of the sanitary napkin in a 12% GST regime, assuming the manufacturer deducts the entire ITC from the final price, and row 6 shows the prices in a zero GST regime where the ITC deduction is not available to the manufacturer.

As can be seen from row 8, although prices fall in both cases after GST exemption, the magnitude is significantly different. To be sure, things could be very different in the real world, where two-three large companies such as Procter & Gamble and Johnson & Johnson control a huge share of the Indian market. If the companies decide to collude, they might be successful in withholding the benefits of exemption from GST rates. Yet

another possibility could be a face-off between the government and companies due to such behaviour leading to allegations of profiteering.

While the jury on how GST exemption will affect the prices of sanitary napkins is still out, there is more clarity on other things. Unless the government decides to increase tariffs on sanitary napkins to compensate for the effect of integrated GST becoming zero, imports will gain in competitiveness by the amount of per unit ITC forgone by domestic manufacturers.

According to World Bank data, average annual sanitary napkin imports into India from China were to the tune of \$ 31.6 million between 2012 and 2016. China's average annual sanitary napkin exports to the world during this period were valued at \$1.4 billion. This suggests that China has the ability to exploit the Indian market in case the present policy change makes imports more competitive. A tariff increase at the current juncture – when there is a looming threat of a global trade war – might trigger other unforeseen actions by India's trade partners.

Bollywood hits the jackpot



[where] there's a hit every month. The second half will have to be horribly bad to reverse this progress."

Trade winds of change

Usually, the first quarter of any year is conventionally reserved for low to medium budget films, but thanks to Padmaavat's postponed release, January started off with a bang. "The good part is that the [last six months prove] that audiences are coming to theatres, be it for English, Hindi or even Punjabi cinema," says trade analyst Girish Johar referring to Punjabi film Carry On Jatta 2 that made ₹31.25 crore net, an unprecedented feat for a regional language film. "Even Hollywood has performed well with Avengers: Infinity War of course and films like Black Panther and Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom." A film like Hichki, which released in March during a period of examinations, managed to make a respectable ₹46.18 crore net. "It broke the trend of a traditionally dull period," says Johar. With such happy num-

bers, a surprising trend has emerged. One that we've not witnessed yet and that which proves variety is the spice of life. "If you look at the top seven or eight films that have worked, no two are similar," says Kapoor. "People are reacting to stories and characters, and different genres are interesting." These box office good tidings have extended to the South as well, where according to trade analyst Sreedhar Pillai, Bollywood has penetrated Tamil Nadu, a feat that's equivalent to "crossing the final frontier". "Sanju, a film that was not dubbed into Tamil, [in its original language] has done about ₹2.5 crore net in the state," says Pillai. "I think the biggest hit of the year has been Sanju, Padmaavat is number two. The third biggest hit this year is Raazi and female-centric films are doing better."

Future forecast

In the coming months, Bollywood's got some big-ticket releases like Akshay Kumar's Gold; Thugs of Hindostan with Aamir Khan and Amitabh Bachchan; and Shah Rukh Khan's Zero. Then

there are the usual action suspects with Paltan (Jackie Shroff, Suniel Shetty, Arjun Rampal); and Rohit Shetty's Simmba. And finally, the widely anticipated, blockbuster-budgeted Rajinikanth's 2.0 which also features Kumar as an antagonist. It looks like a packed second half and these films will have to really tank badly for the box office gods to frown down.

The Dhadak story

Made on reported budget of ₹50 crore and released to more than 2,000 screens all over the country, Dhadak has managed to make ₹47 crore net in the five days since its release. The Hindi film is remake of the Marathi Sairat that not just crossed ₹100 crore net but also performed well in metros and single screen areas. On the other hand, Dhadak has been restricted to high-end multiplexes so far with very little business from single screen areas. While Dhadak will certainly not climb the same heights as Sairat, it has a multi-crore satellite and digital rights deal that will definitely push it past the break even mark.

(Agencies) In the first six months of the year, we've already had six Hindi ₹100-crore films; one for almost every month of the year. While April didn't have a release for the three-figure club, June had two with Sanju (₹290.58 crore net and counting) and Race 3 (₹166.11 crore net). The Sanjay Dutt biopic and Padmaavat (₹282.28 crore net), which released in January, alone made more than ₹572 crore net. And the total box office collections from January to June have so far

amounted to ₹1,787 crore net, approximately ₹300 crore more than 2017's earnings in the same period. Box office analysts are certain that 2018 will reverse the curse of diminishing returns that we've been suffering with over the past few years. "This year's [figures] are up about 25% to 30% despite Baahubali 2: The Conclusion's (₹510.36 crore net) release last year," says Shailesh Kapoor of Ormax Media, a firm specialising in trade insights. "We've never seen such consistency

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Rahul Gandhi meets Congress spokespersons to set new narrative to take on BJP in 2019 elections

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday met party spokespersons who contribute articles to newspapers and online publications and sought their views on constructing a social and economic narrative to counter the ruling BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.



(Agencies) Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday met party spokespersons who contribute articles to newspapers and online publications and sought their views on constructing a social and economic narrative to counter the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, said three participants. Apart from discussing the challenges before the Congress in the run-up to 2019 elections, the meeting also discussed the strategy of enhancing the party's presence on social media and other platforms, the three participants said on condition of anonymity.

Senior leaders P

Chidambaram, S Jaipal Reddy, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Randeep Singh Surjewala, Anand Sharma, Shashi Tharoor, Manish Tewari and Jairam Ramesh were among the spokespersons-cum-columnists who attended the meeting at the Congress party's "war room" in the national capital.

Pawan Khera, Priyanka Chaturvedi and Jaiveer Shergill were among the media panellists who took part.

While concerns were raised on how to counter the BJP attempts at perceived polarisation, Gandhi, on his part, reiterated that Congress leaders were free to express their views, but should desist from making any "provoca-

tive" statements, said the first participant.

Tharoor explained the "Hindu Pakistan" remarks he made when Rajeev Shukla mentioned that some Congress leaders make "inflammatory" comments and "hurt" the party's image. Tharoor had said that India would turn into a "Hindu Pakistan" if the BJP is re-elected to national power next year.

At this point, the second participant cited above said, Gandhi intervened and insisted that those who cross the Congress' line will not be defended by the party.

Some participants stressed the need to counter the kind of negative campaign on which the

BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi won the 2014 Lok Sabha elections with a similar narrative, but others said the Congress should continue to focus on "positive canvassing".

A leader said the BJP continues to raise the Bofors issue to dent the Congress party's image.

According to the third participant, the spokespersons also were asked to not only write on issues such as the agrarian crisis, unemployment and corruption but also provide solutions and making these key talking points in the run-up to the 2019 polls.

The Rafale aircraft deal, in which Gandhi has alleged wrongdoing, also came up for discus-

sion.

"The purpose of the interaction is to discuss challenges before the Congress party in the run-up to 2019 elections as to understand and construct a common narrative," read the invite to the Congress spokespersons-cum-writers.

"The meeting is intended to also pool our resources for dissemination of the views through the limited space that we get in print and online publications," it said. For the past few weeks, Gandhi has been interacting with different sections of society. He met Muslim intellectuals on July 11 and also women journalists on July 24.

CBI to investigate if Cambridge Analytica violated IT Act, IPC, says Ravi Shankar Prasad

Facebook has faced increased scrutiny in the United States and the European Union over how Cambridge Analytica obtained the personal data of 87 million Facebook users. The consultancy allegedly used the data to support US President Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign.

(Agencies) Union information technology (IT) minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Thursday said the government had asked the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe if data analytics firm Cambridge Analytica illegally obtained and misused data of Indian voters. "The government has entrusted this issue to be investigated by CBI for possible violation of the Information Technology Act, 2000 and IPC (Indian Penal Code). It is suspected that Cambridge Analytica may have been involved in illegally obtaining data of Indians which could be misused," Prasad said, replying in Rajya Sabha to a motion on misuse of social media platforms for spreading rumours and fake news.

The IT minister added that Cambridge Analytica's initial response was that data of Indians had not been breached, and that

this isn't in conformity with what has been reported by Facebook. "Cambridge Analytica also did not respond to a subsequent notice," Prasad said.

In March, a whistle-blower claimed Cambridge Analytica misused a partnership with Facebook to access data of millions of Facebook users. The analytics company allegedly used the data to possibly influence voters in the Brexit vote and the US presidential election in 2016. Around 87 million users were affected; of which 562,000 were in India, according to Facebook.

Participating in the discussion, leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad expressed serious concern over incidents relating to abuse of social media that lead to mob lynchings. "It is a matter of shame that such incidents happened in a

civilised nation like India and tarnish its image within as well as abroad," he said.

Facebook-owned WhatsApp has come under scrutiny in India after forwarded messages on the platform have allegedly incited mob fury, triggering multiple cases of lynching across the country, where there are more than 230 million monthly active users of the messaging app.

Prasad said that WhatsApp had informed the government that it will introduce fact-checking and fake news verification mechanisms to help people check the veracity of content on the platform.

"The government has asked these platforms to provide technological solutions so that verified fake news and provocative messages can be filtered," Prasad said, allaying concerns of members that social media platforms

were being used to spread rumours and fake news.

Trinamool Congress leader Derek O' Brien said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in 2014 using social media to condition the minds of people. Communist Party of India (Marxist)'s KK Ragesh demanded that special courts be set up to handle such cases. Nominated Rajya Sabha member KTS Tulsi called the incidents of abuse of social media that lead to mob lynchings a "special kind of violence." Replying to the opposition member's criticism, Prasad said the government would strengthen the legal framework to ensure that social media and instant messaging service providers operating in India do not deprive their Indian users of the right to hold them accountable under Indian law. "We are seriously considering that

through appropriate rules all social media platforms should be required to locate their grievance officer in India," Prasad said.

The duty of such a grievance officer, Prasad added, should be not only to receive grievances on a real-time basis but also to inform law enforcement agencies in case of any violations. The government also plans to issue directives in public interest requiring all social media platforms to ensure that they do not become "vehicles for promoting hatred, terrorism, money laundering, mob violence and rumour mongering."

Prasad said that though the government does not regulate content appearing on social networking platforms, such platforms are required to follow due diligence under the IT Act.





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Abolish practice of confessions in churches, says National Commission of Women

A central agency also needs to do a proper investigation into the increasing incidents of rape and sexual assaults in churches of Kerala, NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma said.



(News Agencies) The National Commission of Women (NCW) has recommended abolishing the practice of "confessions" in churches as it can lead to blackmailing of women.

A central agency also needs to do a proper investigation into the increasing incidents of rape and sexual assaults in churches of Kerala, NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma said.

"The priests pressure women into telling their secrets and we have one such case in front of us, there must be many more such cases and what we have right now is just a tip of the iceberg," she said.

The recommendations come in the backdrop of a rape case against four priests of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church who have been accused

of sexually exploiting a married woman belonging to their church.

The issue came to the fore after the victim's husband wrote to the church, alleging that the priests blackmailed and abused his wife, a school teacher.

The National Commission of Women has constituted an inquiry committee to look into al-

leged sexual assaults against women in churches, and has sent its findings to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi and the DGP of Kerala and Punjab. "The woman was socially harassed. She left her job after the incident as her photograph was circulated on so-

cial media. The two priests are at large and they need to be nabbed," the DCW chairperson said. In another incident, a nun, in a complaint to the Kottayam district police chief last month, alleged that Jalandhar Bishop Franco Mulakkal raped her and had unnatural sex with her multiple times at a small town near Kottayam between 2014 and 2016.

I can become CM anytime, but not interested: Hema Malini

"If I want to I can become that (CM) in a minute, but I don't like to be tied up. My freedom of movement will end," she said when asked if she would become the CM if she got the chance.



The apparent reference was to the post in Uttar Pradesh, now held by her party's Yogi Adityanath.

She said she got to become an MP because of her film career. "I am known mainly because of my name in Bollywood, call it 'dream girl' or Hema Malini," she said adding that she had done a lot of work for the BJP even before entering Parliament. Calling her Mathura constituency as the 'nagri' of Krishna, she said she loved working for the 'Brijwasi' people and added that she has done much work in her constituency as an MP during the last four years, referring in particular to the state of the roads.

(News Agencies) Politician-actor Hema Malini has said she can become the chief minister anytime but would rather be free to pursue other interests.

"I am not too keen," the BJP MP from Mathura in Uttar Pradesh told reporters Wednesday evening in Rajasthan's Banswara city.

"If I want to I can become that (CM) in a minute, but I don't like to be tied up. My freedom of movement will end," she said when asked if she would become the CM if she got the chance.

She called the water crisis a global issue which should be the concern of every stakeholder. The MP praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he has worked for farmers, women and the poor, and the country had progressed under his leadership. "It is difficult to find a prime minister like him. Leaders of other parties may say anything but we need to see who has done more work for the country," she said. Hema Malini, who is a Padma Shri winner and Bharatanatyam dancer, was in Banswara to perform at a religious function.

Dying Humayun told father Babur to respect cows, Brahmins: Rajasthan BJP chief's faux pas

BJP's Madanlal Saini, however, got his history wrong as Babur was Humayun's father and had died in 1531, 25 years before Humayun breathed his last in 1556.

(News Agencies) Rajasthan BJP president Madanlal Saini got his facts mixed up when he said that a dying Mughal emperor Humayun told his father Babur that he should respect cows, women and Brahmins if he wanted to rule India. "When Humayun was dying, he called Babur and told him: 'If you want to rule Hindustan, you must keep three things in mind: respect cows, Brahmins and women'," Saini said. Saini, however, got his history wrong as Babur was Humayun's father and had died in 1531, 25 years before Humayun breathed his last in 1556. The Rajasthan BJP chief's remark on Tuesday came days after a Muslim man was allegedly beaten to death by a mob on suspicion of cow smuggling in Alwar district. Several Twitter users pointed out the facts in history and some even ridiculed the leader. Rakbar Khan (28) was beaten to death by cow vigilantes while he and an associate were taking two cows on foot through Lalawandi village in Alwar district on



July 21 to his village in Haryana on allegations that they were smuggling cows for slaughter. Condemning the killing, Saini said no one should take the law into their hands. The government has acted swiftly and punished the accused, he said. He also opposed cow slaughter, saying that even during the reign of Aurangzeb, who was very rigid, cow slaughter was banned. "Muslim emperors did not allow cow slaughter. How are these people their followers? And the person who is documented was a cow smuggler and there was a case against him," he said. Several BJP MLAs have made outrageous statements in the wake of the Alwar lynching. Labour minister Jaswant Singh Yadav said that Muslims should respect the sentiments of Hindus and stop the business of smuggling cows. While condoling Rakbar's killing, he said Muslims should stop eating beef. BJP MLA Bhanwari Lal Singhal blamed the Meo community for being involved in crimes in the Mewat region.

Sabarimala petitioners in SC, seeking ban on women entry, warn of Ayodhya rerun

(Contd from page 12) "The deity too has fundamental rights under the Constitution. The deity has the right to preserve his dharma and it's the will of the deity that is expressed in the form of temple customs," advocate Sai Deepak who appeared on behalf of People4Dharma, a trust floated by women devotees, said. Justice DY Chandrachud, a judge on the bench led by Chief Justice Dipak Misra, re-

marked that due to essentiality doctrine under the Constitution the judges of the Supreme Court "are now assuming a theological mantle. "We are not expected to do this," he said.

"There is a problem with our jurisprudence. The essentiality aspect has taken charge of Article 25 (of Constitution that gives the right to practise one's religious faith if it's essential to the belief) but it should not be so,"

the judge went on to say. "The test should be whether a practise subscribes to the constitution irrespective of whether it is essential or not," the judge said in his oral observations.

Responding to Justice Chandrachud's comments, advocate Sai Deepak said: "Sometimes judges will have to play the role of theologians while deciding matters of religion."

US Congresswoman claims China resumed Doklam activities, India says status quo prevails

Troops of India and China were locked in a 73-day-long standoff in Doklam from June 16 last year after the Indian side stopped the building of a road in the disputed tri-junction by the Chinese Army.



(News Agencies) A US Congresswoman has claimed that China has “quietly resumed” its activities in the Doklam area and neither Bhutan nor India has sought to dissuade it, an assertion that was denied by New Delhi on Thursday.

Congresswoman Ann Wagner made the claim during a Congressional hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee for Asia and the Pacific. During the hearing, she posed a question to a State Department official, Alice G Wells, on Beijing’s actions in the Himalayan region and compared them with its manoeuvres in the disputed South China Sea.

Tensions between India and China reached their peak during a 73-day standoff in Doklam near Bhutan over Beijing’s construction of a road in the area. The standoff ended after both

sides agreed to disengage, and there have been no confirmed or official reports of China resuming any activities since then.

“Although both countries backed down, China has quietly resumed its activities in Doklam and neither Bhutan nor India has sought to dissuade it. China’s activities in the Himalayas remind me of its south China Sea policies. How should our failure to respond to the militarisation of the South China Sea inform the international response to these Himalayan border disputes?” Wagner asked.

Wagner did not elaborate on her claim of China resuming its activities.

In her response, Wells, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, did not directly refer to Doklam, but told

Wagner and other lawmakers: “I would assess that India is vigorously defending its northern borders and this (the situation at the northern borders) is a subject of concern to India.”

Wells said US looks to the Indo-Pacific strategy put forward by the Trump administration in light of the ‘South China Sea’s Strategy’, a reference to China’s aggressive claims of sovereignty over all of South China Sea. Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims.

“How do we maintain the region to be open, to have maritime security, to not have militarisation that would imperil the 70 per cent of global trade?” Wells said. “We need to do that by giving authority to sovereign nations to have choices in how they develop, to have choices in their partnerships,” Wells said.

In New Delhi, Minister of State for External Affairs Min-

istry VK Singh told Rajya Sabha on Thursday that there have been no new developments at the site of the face-off with China in Doklam and its vicinity, and status quo prevails in the area.

“Since the disengagement of Indian and Chinese border personnel in the Doklam area on August 28, 2017, there have been no new developments at the faceoff site and its vicinity. The status quo prevails in this area,” Singh said in a written reply to a question on whether China has constructed new roads in the southern part of the Doklam Plateau.

In a statement later, Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Raveesh Kumar repeated Singh’s comments.

Although the Congressional hearing was to discuss the Trump administration’s budget request for the financial year 2019 for South Asia, the sub-

committee chairman, Congressman Ted Yoho, raised the issue of China’s aggressive posture in South Asia.

“What are your thoughts on what is the best way to counter China in that region?” Yoho asked.

US should not be seeking to compete with China dollar for dollar, Wells responded.

She added that instead of a state lending on terms that may not be to the benefit of countries or their citizens, the US and its companies are providing USD 850 billion in foreign direct investment in the region, which is far more than what has been injected by China.

“We’re trying to gather like-minded countries who can bring resources to the table, who can coordinate assistance and an effort so as to provide countries with meaningful alternatives,” Wells said.

A history of disappointment: Imran Khan unlikely to do much for Pakistan, India ties

The preliminary assessment about PM Imran Khan, as far as the India-Pakistan bilateral relationship is concerned, is not very reassuring.

(News Agencies) “Kaptaan saab jittenge janaab, pitch tay fauj nay banaya” (Captain-sir will win – the pitch has been prepared by the army) -- this was the received wisdom about the Pakistan elections in the early hours of Wednesday as millions of voters were preparing to cast their votes. While the official results are yet to be announced (at the time of writing this commentary), it is evident that the high office of Prime Minister of Pakistan awaits the country’s former cricket captain. Clearly, those on the inside track had been given advance information about the winner, even before the counting of votes had concluded. But as the cynics in Pakistan had been pointing out, the hand of God had blessed the ‘kaptaan’

even before the first vote was cast!

Khan’s former wife Jemima Goldsmith was ahead of the pack and tweeted around noon on Thursday : “22 years later, after humiliations, hurdles and sacrifices, my sons’ father is Pakistan’s next PM. It’s an incredible lesson in tenacity, belief & refusal to accept defeat. The challenge now is to remember why he entered politics in the 1st place.”

Whether Khan’s Pakistan-Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) forms the federal government in Islamabad independently, or in coalition with ‘like-minded’ parties, the preliminary assessment about PM Khan, as far as the India-Pakistan bilateral relationship is concerned, is not very reassuring.

There has been a boilerplate policy framework in place in Pakistan since the General Zia-ul-Haq military coup (July 1977), wherein the Pakistan army has wielded total control over critical security-strategic and foreign policy issues ; and almost all of them are driven by a visceral anti-India anxiety-cum-hatred. These issues include Kashmir, support to terror groups and the nuclear weapons.

A brief review of the India-Pakistan bilateral relationship since the emergence of civilian rule, beginning with Benazir Bhutto as PM in December 1988 to Nawaz Sharif in 2018, would point to a clear pattern of the khaki constituency trumping the elected leadership if they stepped out of line – and



ruthlessly at that. The fate that befell Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, his daughter Benazir and now Nawaz Sharif, are testimony to this army consistency.

Thus, whether it is on Kashmir (back to the 1948 UN resolution was the Imran Khan campaign rhetoric) or restoring the sanctity of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-Pervez Musharraf accord of January 2004 , which committed Pakistan not to let its soil be used for terrorism against India, it may be inferred that the pace and orientation of the bilateral relationship with India will be determined more by Rawalpindi, the army gen-

eral headquarters, than Prime Minister’s Khan’s office in Islamabad.

To my mind, the most significant and corrosive element in the Pakistan election is the fact that as many as 460 candidates backed by terror groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its affiliates, including some rabid anti-Shia groups, were allowed to stand as candidates. Despite many voices within Pakistan being raised against according political legitimacy to those invested in religious extremism and terror, the deep state allowed this electoral transgression.

Marines may face memory loss and brain damage from firing ultra-powerful rocket launchers



(Insider Bureau) Firing ultra-powerful rocket launchers could leave US Marines with memory loss and brain damage and with few options to receive proper care.

Currently, the majority of military men and women tested and treated for traumatic brain injuries at hospitals run by the Department of Veterans Affairs served in combat.

But a growing number of service members say that just participating in training exercises where they fired launchers and set off explosives have left them with physical and neurological problems.

However, due to the lack of studies on the subject, they often pay for scans and test to diagnose a TBI directly out-of-

pocket. Two former Marines told NPR that they fired hundreds of rounds during military drills over a span of two years and now struggle with balance, concentration, spatial awareness and memory. Several studies have been done to show the short-term effects of firing these heavy-duty weapons.

A 2016 study published in the Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology found that service members who were exposed to more blast exposure from these high-grade weapons suffered problems with memory and reaction times. Another study published in the Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation in 2015 found that repeated exposure to low-level blasts showed symptoms similar to a

concussion, including nausea, lightheadness and confusion. There have been no little to no research however on any type of long-term brain damage that is sustained. Chris Ferrari and Daniel, gunners in the Marine Corps who trained all over the world, told NPR that they believe they did suffer injuries that have impacted them decades later. During their time in the Marines in the 1990s, the pair would often fire a type of weapon known as the Mk 153 Shoulder-Launched Multipurpose Assault Weapon, or SMAW for short. It has a range of as far as 550 yards and has the power to destroy objects such as bunkers or tanks. The pair told the radio station at they felt their brains 'rattle' during the hundreds rounds they fired over

Service members say repeatedly firing shoulder-launched weapons during training exercises have left them with brain injuries

They suffer from problems with balance, concentration, memory and spatial orientation

Currently, the majority of military men and women treated for traumatic brain injuries at hospitals run Department of Veterans Affairs served in combat.

the course of two years. Hearing loss is common among military men and women, and therefore there is a limit on how many times a weapon can be fired in a day as well as required hearing protection. But there have never been any protocols issued due to a fear of brain damage in service members. Daniel told NPR that when he was serving in the Marines, nobody in top command ever discussed safety during the exercises. 'I remember they were saying you're only allowed to shoot three of these things a day because it's, like, really bad for you,' he said. 'And then I would shoot three and then [Chris] would shoot three. And then the guys 10 feet from us would shoot six and then the other team would shoot six.' Chris said he would experience several headaches and the inability to concentrate. Daniel added that sometimes he would feel dizzy and nauseous.

Neither of the men has fired one of the weapons or set of explosives in almost 20 years but both say they suffer from problems. Daniel says his memory is not as good as it used to be while Chris says he has trouble concentrating and controlling emotions. Both have trouble keeping their balance and lose their sense of spatial orientation. Then there's the problem of care. The Department of Veterans Affairs currently gives priority treatments to those who can prove their medical problems are linked to their service. Because of the lack of studies conclusively proving that firing weapons leads to long-term brain damage, Daniel says he has been asked by the VA to pay out of pocket for various tests. Dr Joel Scholten told NPR that there are current studies being done to see if the guidelines at VA of who gets tested for traumatic brain injuries should be changed.

More than 460 immigrant parents 'are never going to see their kids again'

(Insider Bureau) It's likely that many of the immigrant parents who have been separated from their children at the southern U.S. border will never see their kids ever again, a former senior official at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said today.

'There's a very high likelihood that a lot of these parents are never going to see their kids again and their kids are going to stay in the U.S.,' John Sandweg, former acting director of ICE, told CNN Thursday.

The news comes as the Trump administration is poised to miss a court-ordered deadline to reunify all families who have been divided by a zero-tolerance policy that the president reversed course on last month. Officials from ICE and the Office of Refugee Resettlement did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

'If they have a relative in the

U.S., there's a chance that that relative will be appointed their legal guardian,' Sandweg said. 'But many of the other kids are actually going to go into the foster care system. They could become wards of the state, be subject to adoption.'

He said that there is no way that parents could have anticipated the division of their families.

'These families thought that there was very little risk that they would be separated from their children,' Sandweg said. 'They thought there was a risk for sure that they would be deported back to their home country, but they thought they were going to be deported as a family. The idea that they could be permanently separated from their children never crossed their minds.'

Two additional former U.S. immigration officials agreed on Thursday that reuniting families that have had a parent deported

would be difficult or even impossible – unless the government is willing to commit resources to working with their home countries to locate the parent.

'That's just true as a matter of arithmetic,' said Leon Fresco, former deputy attorney general in charge of the Office of Immigration under President Obama, in an interview with DailyMail.com.

'I don't know how many of the people who have been removed won't see their children again, but the problem is once the person is removed you lose accountability and track of that person,' Fresco added.

It will require massive coordination between countries and agencies to make reunification a reality for families in which a parent has already been deported, said Leon Rodriguez, a Washington D.C.-based attorney and former



director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services under the Obama administration. 'Given all the different steps and connections that need to be made in order to confidentially match a parent and child, unfortunately it's a real possibility (that reunification won't happen)' Leon told DailyMail.com. Many parents were misled or coerced into agreeing to deportation without their children, according to court documents filed by the American Civil Liberties Union this week. According to most recent numbers, at least 463 parents have been deported from the country without their children,

said Michelle Brané, director of Migrant Rights & Justice during a news conference Thursday.

'We have no idea what choices those 463 parents made and what information they were given and whether they had any choice,' Brané said. 'A lot of people were given misinformation before they signed documents.' It also remains unclear how many children were left alone after their parents were deported. In addition, 900 parents currently have a final order of removal, according to court documents. However, it's unclear if the 463 parents who have been deported are included in that number.

Joe Biden's glamorous niece wins sweetheart plea deal and avoids jail after she faced felony charges for a \$100,000 credit card scam



(By Our Staff Reporter) Former Vice President Joe Biden's niece, Caroline, avoided jail time Thursday in Manhattan Criminal Court in a sweetheart deal on a felony conviction for a \$100,000 credit card scam. Caroline, 31, offered an apology while

promising her wild ways are behind her, as she accepted her sentence of two-years probation.

'I not only acknowledge my conduct and take responsibility but deeply regret the harm caused,' she told Justice Curtis Farber.

'I can assure you that I have made amends, full restitution, completed community service and that nothing like this will ever happen again,' Biden said, according to the New York Post.

Decked in a fitted black dress and ankle booties with her blonde locks flowing, Caroline happily had her felony conviction tossed. As part of her deal she plead to a lesser charge of petit larceny.

She has since paid the full restitution of \$110,810.04 and completed 10 days of

community service.

'I love the children, and I'm still working with the volunteer service program now and that's been very fulfilling,' she said in Manhattan Supreme Court.

In 2017, Biden used a borrowed credit card to make purchases totaling more than \$110,000 at the high-end Bigelow Pharmacy in Greenwich Village.

Prosecutors previously said Caroline asked to borrow a credit card from a victim, who was not identified in court documents, to buy a single item for \$672.

But instead Biden opened an account at Bigelow Pharmacy and spent more than \$110,000 between April 2015 and June 24, 2016, buying the store's lavish products.

On May 5, 2017, police



arrested her and initially charged her with grand and petit larceny. This was not her first run-in with the law: in 2013, Caroline was arrested for harassment, resisting arrest and obstruction of justice after she got into a fight with a roommate over rent.

She also told to police while she was being arrested: 'I

shouldn't be handcuffed! You don't know who you're doing this to!' Biden, who has been reportedly in and out of rehab for anger management and a drug addiction, also managed to escape jail at the time when the court ordered for her charges to be dropped if she behaved for six months.

Elections in India, Brazil, EU 'real tests' for Facebook in crackdown on fake accounts: Zuckerberg

Facebook has been mired by controversies around data leaks of about 87 million users globally and fake news being circulated through its platform. It has drawn flak on these issues from policy makers across the world, including India that has shot off two notices to the firm over the data breach.

(By Our Staff Reporter) Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg believes that the upcoming elections in countries such as India and Brazil will be "real tests" for the social media giant and has exuded confidence that the firm will "get this right" given its recent crackdown on fake accounts. The US-based firm has been mired by controversies around data leaks of about 87 million users globally and fake news being circulated through its platform. The company has

drawn flak on these issues from policy makers across the world, including the Indian government that has shot off two notices to the firm over the data breach.

"Over the next 18 months, there are important elections beyond the US, in Brazil, India, and the EU, and these will all be real tests for Facebook," Zuckerberg said during a recent investor call.

He further stated that he is confident that the company "will get this right given our results

during last year's French and German elections, the Alabama special election, as well as this month's presidential election in Mexico, where our systems found and removed thousands of fake account pages and groups that violated our policies".

Zuckerberg pointed out that the company is getting rid of financial incentives for spammers to create fake news and has stopped pages that repeatedly spread false information from buying ads. "And we also use

artificial intelligence to prevent fake accounts that generate a lot of the problematic content from ever being created in the first place," he added.

Facebook, which has over two billion users globally, including over 200 million in India, had faced backlash on the Cambridge Analytica data breach issue where the UK-based data mining firm was accused of harvesting personal user data of 87 million global users of Facebook illegally to influence polls in several countries.

During a joint hearing of the US Senate Judiciary and Commerce committees earlier this year, Zuckerberg had emphasised that he wants to ensure protection of integrity of elections, mentioning that he knows the importance of the upcoming polls in countries such as India, Hungary and Brazil.

Apologising for the "major breach of trust", he had promised to take steps to protect user data.

In response to the first notice of the Indian government, Facebook had admitted that nearly 5.62 lakh people were "potentially affected" by the data breach incident. Last month, India's Election Commission had asked Facebook to examine blocking of political advertisement during last 48-hours before elections in the country.

At a June 4 meeting of the Committee constituted by the Election Commission of India (ECI), a Facebook representative had then agreed to examine providing a window or button on the Facebook page for flagging complaints about violation of election laws, according to minutes of the meeting reviewed by PTI. The representative had at that time also agreed to examine if the number of Facebook reviewers attending to complaints against contents posted by users can be increased from current 7,500 persons.



Parallel cinema's gentle giant, Saeed Mirza is out with his new memoir

In conversation: about the politics that have shaped his films and the cost of forgetting one's roots



(By Our Staff Reporter) In one of the many stories, real or imagined, about the countdown to the Russian Revolution, is a story about a pickpocket. As protesters throng a railway station to occupy it, the Tsar's police prepare to crush the challenge with their full might. The pickpocket decides to join the protesters even though this meant letting go of a day's earnings. That one day in his life, when he became a revolutionary, was to determine the rest of his life.

The act of solidarity can be a moment of art as much as politics. And the pickpocket, the artist, and even the worker, hesitant to join a strike, can at any moment close ranks and assert their right to it. Saeed Mirza, 75, one of the front-ranking directors of India's 'parallel cinema', knew this. Through the '70s and the '80s, Mirza made films based on this unstable yet transformational moment as it was being experienced in an urban setting, and in his case, in his city of Bombay.

The '70s and the '80s were the decades when the aftershocks of global and national upsurges such as the Vietnam War, the anti-Apartheid movement, Naxalbari

and its suppression, the great Bombay mill strike and its failure, were still being felt and decoded. "How the universal and the local intersect, I've always tried to understand that," says Mirza during a conversation about his latest book, *Memory in the Age of Amnesia*, and his films. One cannot understand one without the other.

Parallel tracks

Much like his films, Mirza's book is the journey of disparate strands – the Gujarat violence; medieval scholar Ibn Khaldun's intervention to save the city of Damascus and its libraries; Mirza's own residential building in Mumbai; the rise of the mill workers' hero, Krishna Desai, and his murder – trying to arrive at substance and meaning.

In his films too, Mirza's heroes seem to have several tracks running in their heads and for a considerable amount of time are unable to decide on which to run.

In *Arvind Desai ki Ajeeb Dastan* (1978), a businessman's son trapped in a businessman's life is caught between making profits and to be seen as doing the right thing by his workers.

In *Mohan Joshi Haazir Ho*

(1984), the fate of a building depends on the tenants unanimously calling out the landowner's greed; by the time they unite the building comes crashing down.

A car mechanic (Albert Pinto *ko Gussa Kyoon Aata Hai*, 1980) overstates his proximity to rich car owners because they let him drive their cars during the servicing period and looks down on his father for joining the mill workers' strike but in the end joins them himself.

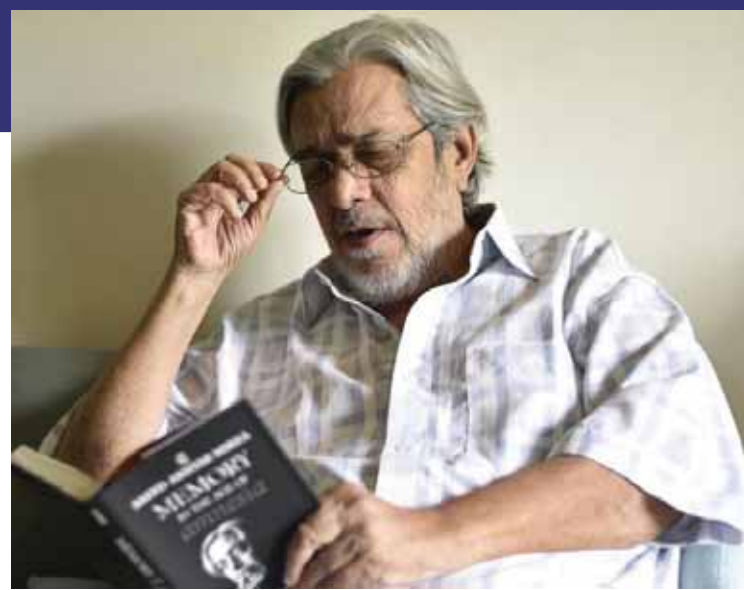
This may or may not be ideological confusion. Mirza, an avowed Leftist, makes his case dispassionately; his films ask questions.

Disappointed love

Saeed Mirza was born in Bombay in the early '40s. His father Akhtar Mirza, a migrant from Bhopal, got work as a writer in the film industry. Mirza says his "work was good but he was uncompromising which meant he did less work." Saeed Mirza inherited that spirit. Saeed's long-time collaborator Sudhir Mishra who has assisted him in many of his films such as *Mohan Joshi...* says "like his father, Saeed had to find resources to survive. He had to create his own Bombay." And he did.

Mirza's cinematic city is not the place of durability or of happy endings or a city where, if a man works hard, is guaranteed his place. However, till the early '80s, before the riots upset all settled social equations in the city, Saeed would not rage against Bombay, says Mishra. It's as with the rains. Despite all its problems, for Bombayites, there's no such thing as a terrible wet day.

"That all is not lost is still evident in *Albert Pinto*.... In *Naseem* [Mirza's 1995 film made in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid demolition and the ensuing Mumbai riots] what remains is a cry of pain, yet knowing Saeed I don't think he wants to be anywhere else," adds Mishra. "Like all Bombayites proud of the city's cosmopolitanism, the riots showed that this cosmopolitanism was a surface thing, the city's spirit might collapse; well, so be it, he would collapse with it...."



Mirza chose to walk away. By the '80s, the National Film Development Corporation of India also stopped funding parallel cinema. Mirza, who had wanted to make a film on Krishna Desai, the mill-worker leader – there's a chapter on him in the book – could not move ahead with the project. But wouldn't the film have got an audience, especially as the superstar of the time, Amitabh Bachchan, was riding a career raging against the system from the dock (Deewar) coal-mine (Kaala Patthar) and railway station (Coolie)?

"Sure," says Mirza, "Krishna Desai would have been a great film but would have been a guaranteed failure. Bachchan's films channelised generic anger. His films were safe. When anger becomes specific and closer to the bone, people can't take that." Mirza changed tack and co-directed *Nukkad* (1986) with Kundan Shah for television.

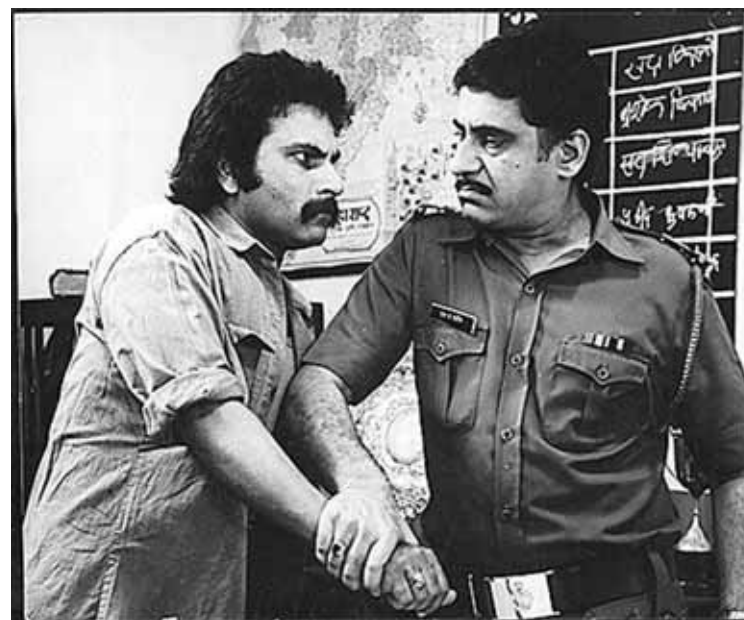
Pavan Malhotra, the Salim of *Salim Langde Pe Mat Ro* (1989), who also had a major role in *Nukkad*, says the streets have always been important for Mirza. "The structure of the serial was so open that in any episode you

could talk of anything. *Gagar mein sagar* (in a pitcher was an ocean). In little incidents, he could bring in the universal.... In *Nukkad*, a beggar looked like a beggar. He knew how to bring out the poetry of the ordinary face," says Malhotra.

New life

Since 2000, Mirza has written important books on India in the form of memoirs. In 2008 he wrote a novel, *Ammi: Letter to a Democratic Mother*. In his new book, which is part fiction, a tale within a tale and several opinion pieces, he has held back no punches.

He writes about the "contentious and questionable journey to the pinnacle of power" of men who have been "responsible" for "permanent scars" on India's history. "For the people of India," he says, "at least to the 31 per cent who voted...it was simple: what happened, happened. The country had to move on and there was no future in looking over one's shoulder at the past. For these people, it was a memory erased or overlooked." And that is what's eating Saeed Mirza.



If India takes one step forward, we will take two

said late on Thursday afternoon after his party emerged as the single largest in the National Assembly according to local media. "This is not how we will grow, and it is detrimental to the subcontinent," said Khan, who complained that he had been treated by the Indian media like he was a Bollywood villain. "If they take one step towards us, we will take two, but at least we need a start." An official announcement of the seat tally by the election commission was still awaited, more than 24 hours after polling ended. A tally by Dawn newspaper showed PTI leading in 120 seats, shy of the 137 (out of 272 contested seats) needed for a majority in the National Assembly. However, only 49% of the vote had been counted at the time of going to press. Jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) trailed with 61 seats and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) led in 40, with the others split among smaller parties. Khan should have no problems finding

coalition partners from smaller parties and independents, observers said. The election was marred by allegations of vote rigging levelled by the PML-N and the PPP, which said their monitors in many voting centres were either kicked out during counting or had not received the official notifications of the precinct's results, but instead got handwritten tallies that they could not verify.

"It is a sheer rigging. The way the people's mandate has blatantly been insulted, it is intolerable," PML-N leader Shehbaz Sharif, Nawaz Sharif's brother, told a news conference as the counting continued. Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam have been jailed on corruption charges.

Although PTI workers and supporters started celebrations before the final results, no statement — or even a tweet — was issued by Khan until he made the public address.

"I am a person who arguably knows the most people in India because of my days in cricket," Khan said, singling out the

Kashmir issue as the biggest hurdle in relations between the subcontinental neighbours.

"The biggest problem is Kashmir, every international organisation has said that there are human rights violations taking place in Kashmir," he said. As of press time, India had no comment on the Pakistan election in the absence of an official declaration of the results.

On other foreign policy matters, Khan called for mutually beneficial and not one-sided relations with the US, said his administration would strengthen relations with China, noting Beijing's investment in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and spoke of an open border with Afghanistan. He also said he wanted stronger ties with Iran and to help Saudi Arabia resolve its "inner tensions."

The next government will need to compete for influence over foreign policy with the military, which has ruled for much of the nation's history and faced accusations of meddling in the campaign — allegations it denied. Khan has for long

criticised the US for drone strikes in Pakistan, taken a hard line against India and expressed support for China's \$60 billion infrastructure programme.

"Khan as prime minister is unlikely to challenge the army's authority on policies including national security, defence, and relations with India, Afghanistan, and the US," Shailesh Kumar, Asia director at Eurasia Group in New York, wrote in a report.

In his speech, Khan also pledged to build a new Pakistan, having reached the doorstep of the PM's office after 22 years of struggle.

"I want to share the kind of Pakistan I envision — the type of state that was established in Madina, where widows and the poor were taken care of," he explained.

"Our institutions will be stronger, everyone will be held accountable. First I will be subjected to accountability, then my ministers and so on. Today we are behind (other countries) because there is a separate system for those in power and a separate one for ordinary citizens," he said.

"We will introduce a system that has never been implemented before — a kind of governance system that has not been seen before in this country," he said, promising to

improve the tax culture, generate jobs for the young, and spend money on human development.

"Our government will decide what we will do with PM House. I would be ashamed to live in such a large house. That house will be converted into an educational institution or something of the sort," he said.

Khan, who has denied allegations that he had the backing of Pakistan's military, said accusations of vote rigging would be investigated.

"I feel that this election has been the fairest in Pakistan's history. If any party has any doubts, we will open the results of those constituencies up for investigation."

Election Commission of Pakistan secretary Babar Yaqoob told reporters early on Thursday that counting had been delayed by technical failures in an electronic reporting system and the tallying was now being conducted manually. "There's no conspiracy, nor any pressure in delay of the results. The delay is being caused because the result transmission system has collapsed," Yaqoob said. In a tweet on his official account, Pakistan's military spokesman Asif Ghafoor called accusations of interference in the election "malicious propaganda."

PM Modi talks trade at BRICS, Summit, meets Xi on sidelines

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday reaffirmed India's commitment to multilateralism, international trade and a rules-based world order as he participated in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) summit in South Africa.

Modi, who arrived in Johannesburg on the last leg of his Africa tour, presented the country statement of India at the BRICS leaders' closed session.

"At the session with fellow BRICS leaders, I shared my thoughts on various global issues, the importance of technology, skill development and how effective multilateral cooperation creates a better world," Modi tweeted.

He also met Chinese President Xi Jinping, who earlier urged fellow leaders of the BRICS emerging economies to "reject protectionism outright".

Modi along Xi, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Brazilian President Michel Temer and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa posed for a group photograph on the second day of their meeting. The leaders reiterated their

resolve to fight terrorism, but the names of terrorist organisations including the Pakistan-based ones were missing from the joint declaration.

The Xiamen Declaration of the last BRICS summit, which was celebrated last year as a victory for Indian diplomacy, had named Pakistan-based terror groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

"We condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations wherever committed and by whomsoever. We urge concerted efforts to counter terrorism under the UN auspices on a firm international legal basis and express our conviction that a comprehensive approach is necessary to ensure an effective fight against terrorism," the joint statement said. "We recall the responsibility of all States to prevent financing of terrorist networks and terrorist actions from their territories."

In his address, PM Modi said India wants to work with the nations on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and called for sharing among them the best practices and policies in the area. The 4IR

is the fourth major industrial era since the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century. Modi said technological innovations can help enhance service delivery and productivity levels. "High-skilled but temporary work will be the new face of employment. There will be radical changes in industrial production, design, and manufacturing," he said.

In his address, Xi called for a concerted effort by global institutions such as the United Nations, the G7 and the World Trade Organisation to fight unilateralism and protectionism.

Xi also called for dialogue to settle disputes on global trade, underlining remarks he made at the opening day, urging a rejection of unilateralism in the wake of tariff threats by US President Donald Trump. Trump's warnings have given the BRICS nations fresh impetus to enhance trade cooperation, and their leaders found a collective voice championing global trade at the summit.

Taj Mahal turning yellow: SC pulls up Centre, UP governments

"First the environment ministry files an affidavit, then ASI, then the Uttar Pradesh government. What is happening?" said Justice MB Lokur after he perused the draft vision document given to the court by UP. The document has been prepared by Delhi-based School of Planning and Architecture (SPA) and the court questioned the state's concern in the matter.

Justice MB Lokur along with Justice Deepak Gupta are hearing a PIL filed in 1984 by environmentalist MC Mehta for protection of Taj. Top court has been issuing directives to preserve the World Heritage site.

The court took exception to the fact that the vision document was prepared without consulting the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), agency

responsible to maintain the Mughal-era mausoleum.

"Why have you given a draft plan? Are we supposed to vet it for you? Is it our job to vet it?" the bench asked the counsel appearing for the state government. "The right hand does not know what the left hand is doing," commented Justice Lokur.

He said: "Someone has to take responsibility. There has to be one authority which takes charge. It seems that authorities have washed their hands off the Taj. We are now in a situation where a vision document is prepared without ASI's involvement."

The judges were shocked to know that despite the top court's 1996 order, polluting industrial units continue to operate and expand in the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ) — over 10,400 square km of area surrounding Agra.



As we complete 15 Years

“Words cannot express the monumental journey that each and every person reading this has crossed through. The South Asian Insider has completed fifteen year journey, that has brought a wave of information and has amassed everyone together in this community. Few people can claim to have been a part of a tireless effort to soar through the top of the skies of the newspaper industries and be able to remark on it, 15 years later. We believe an order of gratitude is granted to all of you. To everyone who has stayed with The South Asian Insider through our path, thank you.

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**



Facebook shares fall by nearly 20%, wiping out over \$120 billion in market value

Facebook's shares fell the most in its history as a public company, wiping out more than \$120 billion in market value. The stock was trading at \$179.92 at 9:41 a.m. in New York.

(Agencies) Facebook Inc. plunged as much as 20 percent Thursday after the social-media company showed signs of slowing growth following months of scandal and criticism that delivered a suckerpunch to earnings.

The social-media goliath's financial performance had previously seemed immune to fierce critiques of its content policies, its failure to safeguard private data, and its changing rules for advertisers. But on Wednesday Facebook reported sales and user growth numbers for the second quarter that fell short of analysts' projections, leaving investors reeling.

The company's shares fell the most in its history as a public company, wiping out more than \$120 billion in market value. It marks the largest ever loss of value in one day for a US traded company. The stock was trading at \$179.92 at 9:41 a.m. in New York.

The company told Wall Street the numbers won't get any better this year. Chief Financial Officer David Wehner said revenue growth rates would

decline in the third and fourth quarters. Analysts who follow Facebook were blindsided, asking frequently on a conference call with executives for more information on exactly how the company's financial future had changed so dramatically.

"I think many investors are having a hard time reconciling that deceleration," Brent Thill, an analyst at Jefferies LLC, told Facebook executives, asking for a little more clarity on the reasoning. "It just seems like the magnitude is beyond anything we've seen, especially across a number of the tech (companies) we cover."

Before the results, Facebook had 44 buy ratings, two sells and two holds. A few analysts tempered their outlook Thursday.

For Facebook, financial stumbles are rare. The last time the company missed revenue estimates was the first quarter of 2015. But the results followed a period in which data-privacy issues came under harsh scrutiny, with Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg

testifying before U.S. Congress for hours on the company's missteps.

The quarter was also marked by Europe's implementation of strict new data laws, which Facebook said led to fewer daily visitors in that region. The company was bombarded by public criticism over its content policies, especially in countries such as Myanmar and Sri Lanka where misinformation has led to violence. And it continued to suffer fallout from investigations into Russian manipulation of the platform during the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

All of those problems are hitting amid a harsh truth for the company: Facebook, the social network with 2.23 billion active monthly users, can't grow forever. "The core Facebook platform is declining," said Brian Wieser, an analyst at Pivotal Research Group.

Facebook said it had 1.47 billion daily active users in June, compared with the 1.48 billion average of analysts' estimates compiled by Bloomberg. The company's user base flatlined in its biggest market, the U.S. and

Canada, at 185 million daily users, while declining 1 percent in Europe to 279 million daily users. Overall, average daily users increased 11 percent from the period a year earlier.

Revenue increased 42 percent to \$13.2 billion in the quarter. Analysts projected \$13.3 billion. The social network still holds one of the world's most valuable sets of data on what people are interested in, and makes that audience easily available to advertisers. The company remains in a dominant position in mobile advertising alongside Alphabet Inc.'s Google. "As we have written about extensively, the advertising industry — and digital advertising no less — has limits to growth, which we think is the primary factor constraining Facebook's revenue opportunity," Wieser said in a note after the earnings.

"Deceleration such as management guided toward suggests that while the company is still growing at a fast clip, the days of 30%+ growth are numbered." Wehner gave three different reasons why the

company's revenue growth would decline: currency headwinds, greater investments in new kinds of content-sharing, like disappearing videos, and greater user control over privacy -- a direct response to criticism the company has fielded.

After the General Data Protection Regulation went into effect in Europe, Facebook started asking people to check their privacy settings and make sure they wanted to share certain kinds of data. Facebook is rolling out a version of those protections to the rest of the world. If users choose to share less data with Facebook, that could hamper the company's ad-targeting abilities, making it less attractive to marketers.

While privacy was an issue in Europe, politics played a role in North America, which is the company's most lucrative advertising market. Facebook disrupted some business by putting in place new rules to get all political advertisers to verify their identities. The company may have halted more ad purchases than expected as it applied a broad definition of what's considered "political."

Vijay Mallya loses attempt to appeal against UK high court order in favour of 13 Indian banks

Vijay Mallya has lost his attempt to appeal against a UK high court order in favour of 13 Indian banks to recover funds amounting to nearly 1.145 billion pounds. The UK's Court of Appeal refused him permission to appeal against the high court order dated May 8.

(Agencies) Vijay Mallya has lost his attempt to appeal against a UK high court order in favour of 13 Indian banks to recover funds amounting to nearly 1.145 billion pounds, in another setback to the embattled liquor tycoon.

The UK's Court of Appeal refused the 62-year-old businessman, who is separately undergoing an extradition trial in a UK court over fraud and money laundering charges by the Indian authorities, the permission to appeal against the high court order dated May 8. In the ruling, Judge Andrew Henshaw had refused to overturn a worldwide order freezing Mallya's assets and also denied permission to appeal, which left Mallya with the only option of turning to the Court of Appeal. Judge

Henshaw's order marked the first recorded case of a judgment of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) in India being registered by the English High Court, setting a legal precedent. The Court of Appeal judges looked into Mallya's application seeking permission to appeal and decided against it on Wednesday.

As a result of the high court order, the Indian banks — State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, Corporation bank, Federal Bank Ltd, IDBI Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Jammu & Kashmir Bank, Punjab & Sind Bank, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of Mysore, UCO Bank, United Bank of India and JM Financial Asset Reconstruction Co Pvt Ltd — have the right to enforce the

Indian judgment against Mallya's assets in England and Wales.

"In the event permission has been refused, then the decision of the judge is final and Mallya does not have any further recourse of appeal against his decision," said Kartik Mittal, senior solicitor at London-based Zaiwalla & Co LLP.

"The English judicial system does not give parties an unfettered right to appeal. The right to appeal is restricted. A party can only appeal a decision of the first instance Court if the first instance Court or the Appellate Court gives the party permission to appeal," he explained. "A party is granted permission to appeal only in cases



where the appeal appears to have a real prospect of success or there is some other compelling reason why the appeal should be heard. Therefore, in majority of the cases permission is refused," he added.



Sexual arousal makes a woman's brain react differently than a man's. Here's how
A recent McGill University attempted to study how men and women's brains reacted when aroused. Read on to know what they found.

(Agencies) 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. The findings are published in the Journal of Sexual Medicine.



How to make someone fall in love with you

Five ways

According to science

(Agencies) You can't cast a spell on your would-be-lover. But you can take a cue from these researches and potentially up your chances of developing romantic feelings. After all, science knows best.

Look, we'll say up front that you can't 'make' someone fall in love with you. The feelings are either there or they aren't.

However, there are some scientific studies out there that explain how certain techniques or behaviours can actually increase your chances of falling in love with somebody. So, no, you can't cast a spell on your would-be-lover. But you can take a cue from these researches and potentially up your chances of developing romantic feelings. After all, science knows best.

1. Play hard to get

In a dream world, you could approach your crush, declare your love for them, and receive an honest appraisal of their feelings in return. But, unfortunately, things are never that

simple in real life. That's why people play games; specifically they play hard to get. According to the 'scarcity principle' invented by Robert Cialdini, objects that are rare, unique, or limited in time will make people desire them more. In one study of college students, four women were shown pictures of men they were told either liked them 'a lot,' 'an average amount,' or who 'were uncertain of their feelings,' and then we're asked to rate how attractive they found each photo. If you guessed that they found the 'uncertain of their feelings' guys the most attractive, you'd be correct!

2. Make googly eyes

We've all heard that 'eyes are the windows to the soul.' Never underestimate the power of eye contact. According to a 1989 study, participants who exchanged mutual and unbroken eye contact for two minutes reported increased feelings of passionate love for each other, even if they were total strangers.

3. Notice what hobbies and interests they have

While it's a romantic notion that opposites attract, science tells us that people tend to fall in love with those who are very similar to ourselves. Studies have linked similar backgrounds and similar levels of physical



attractiveness to the process of falling in love. So while it's a terrible idea to try to change yourself in order to have more in common with or please somebody else, if your crush is, say, a big GoT fan, and you've always been curious about watching that show, perhaps it's time to finally figure out what everyone means when they quote 'Winter is coming.'

4. Bond over an adrenaline rush

In 1973, a study found a connection between adrenaline rushes and sexual attraction. Test subjects were put in a scary situation (a shaky bridge), and then had to rate their feelings toward other participants. Compared to the control group who were on a safe, non-rickety bridge, the people who thought

their lives were in danger were much more attracted to their fellow test subject. Now, don't go finding a rickety bridge to stand on with your crush. But a roller-coaster date might be a perfect (and much safer) choice.

5. Try the '36 questions'

If you are friendly with the person you have your heart set on, why not try the '36 questions' made famous by Mandy Len Catron's modern love essay in the New York Times from 2015. In it, she describes love researcher Arthur Aron's 1967 study of interpersonal closeness that resulted in 36 questions that can make anyone, even two strangers, supposedly fall in love.



Is the cure for cocaine addiction in the gut?

Bile may break up the reward system that makes users feel high, study suggests



(Agencies) Bile acids could prove an unusual tool in the battle to prevent cocaine addiction. Researchers found that the unlikely substance, released by the liver to aid in fat absorption, also alters the brain's reward system and can reduce the high addicts get from the addictive drug. Giving lab mice surgery to ramp up their bile acid production lowered the amount of dopamine they produced in response to cocaine, the study revealed.

And it also left mice less likely to return to their cocaine-associated lab chamber, which indicated to the

researchers that cocaine was 'probably less rewarding.'

Study co-author Dr Aurelio Galli, a biologist at the University of Alabama said: 'These findings redefine the physiological significance of bile acid signalling.

'They highlight the importance of determining whether bile acid analogues represent a viable pharmacological treatment for cocaine abuse.' Some four million people in the US use cocaine a year, and in 2016 the stimulant was involved in 10,375 deaths in 2016.

There are no medications currently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat cocaine addiction. People addicted to the drug must quit cold turkey. But the University of Alabama researchers' discovery could change that.

The team carried out the study using an experimental treatment called bile diversion surgery, which is

typically used for weight loss. Bile is released at the end of the small intestine, increasing the amount of bile acids that enter the general circulation.

Mice treated with this surgery have less appetite for high-fat foods, which suggests that bile acids affect brain reward pathways. The study revealed the surgery also produced an elevation of bile acids in the brain, resulting in a reduction in dopamine release in response to cocaine. The team also gave the mice a drug, called OCA, that mimics the effect of bile at its receptor in the brain (TGR5 receptor). It showed OCA mimicked the cocaine-related results of bile diversion surgery in untreated mice, bolstering the theory the drug's effects were reduced with elevated levels of bile acids. Dr Galli added: 'Knocking out TGR5 from the brain's nucleus accumbens – a central reward region – prevented bile acids from reducing cocaine's effects,

confirming that signalling through this receptor was responsible for the cocaine-related results of bile acid elevation.' Bile acids are normally released from the gall bladder into the upper part of the small intestine. There, they emulsify fats for absorption, before being recycled further down the small intestine.

The drug OCA, which affects the bile acid receptor, is already approved for the treatment of primary biliary cirrhosis, an autoimmune liver disease.

The researchers said this offers 'fast translational opportunities' for the drug to be used for other treatments.

Dr Galli said: 'This study also contributes to a greater understanding of how gut-based signalling influences higher order central functions such as reward.' The researchers said further research can now determine whether bile acid is a viable treatment for cocaine abuse.

Why cuts in your mouth heal 10 times faster

Scientists discover oral cells are on standby to repair wounds but do not act the same way on skin in discovery that could pave the way for new treatments

Wounds in your mouth can heal up to 10 times faster than skin cuts, a study has revealed.

Injuries inside the mouth recover quicker because the tissue in the mouth is constantly ready to regenerate itself, research found.

Mouth wounds also close up without leaving a scar, which has led scientists to look at a way of mimicking the process to improve the treatment of skin wound healing.

Researchers discovered the mouth has more activity in proteins which reduce inflammation and fire up the cells

needed to close wounds.

Boosting the amount of this protein in mice's skin quickens skin healing time by a third – the scientists hope their findings can improve medics' ability to treat damaged skin.

Researchers from the University of California in San Diego tested the difference in healing speed by making cuts on 30 volunteers' arms and inside their mouths.

While the arm injuries closed up at a rate of around 0.1 millimetres a day, those in the mouth healed three times faster, at an average of 0.3 millimetres a day.

And the difference is because there are proteins controlling the healing process in the mouth which are not present in arm skin. These proteins mean skin cells are constantly repairing or on standby to fix the lining of the mouth, but the same thing does not happen on the outside of the body.

Mouth injuries heal quickly – in as little as six days without leaving a scar, in the study – whereas arm wounds often take longer than two weeks to fully recover.

The oral wounds healed approximately five to 10 times faster than skin wounds,' researcher Silvio Gutkind told the New

Scientist. The researchers now suggest the mouth could hold clues to how to make skin heal faster all over the body, after boosting the levels of one of the proteins in mice shortened skin healing time from nine days to three. One expert suggests moist membranes in the body may heal better because we evolved from underwater creatures. Luis Garza, a skin researcher and dermatologist at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine told Science News: 'We spent most of our time learning how to repair wounds underwater. So it makes sense that we repair wounds really well on our moist mucosa.'



US named the 'most dangerous place to give birth' in the developed world by in-depth report

Women face a higher risk of life-threatening complications during childbirth in the US than in any other 'developed' nation, a USA Today investigation claims.

The number of women who die in childbirth has risen dramatically in the US since 1999 while these fatalities have dropped in every other wealthy nation, including the UK, France, Japan, Germany and the UK.

For its investigation, USA Today spent four years examining hospital records and interviewing women who had survived dangerous childbirth complications across the country.

These women are among the 50,000

who sustain serious injuries during labor and delivery, and that only stands to grow unless doctors and hospital employees are given better training in the future.

Historically childbirth has always been a dangerous endeavor.

But medical advances – especially those made in the last couple of decades – have changed that for most countries in the world.

'Instead, the US continues to watch other countries improve as it falls behind. Today, this is the most dangerous place in the developed world to give birth,' the report says.

However simply not diagnosing common problems during childbirth is

leading to an alarming number of deaths in the US, where 26.4 women per every 100,000 that give birth do not survive the process – a sharp increase from the rate in 1990.

USA Today combed through hundreds of thousands of pages of internal records from hospitals looking for patterns in the childbirth-related complications that their patients experienced.

The most common problems were excessive blood loss and severely high blood pressure – simple problems that can easily be treated if doctors catch them in time.

Worldwide, about five women die every hour of preeclampsia, or high blood

pressure during or immediately following pregnancy.

USA Today investigated the death of Yolanda Mention, who died due to the common complication.

After giving birth to a daughter, Serenity, at a South Carolina hospital in 2015, Mention was sent home. Neither she nor her doctors seemed to realize that her blood pressure was dangerously high. She returned to the hospital the days later with classic symptoms of severe postpartum preeclampsia: high blood pressure and a splitting headache. But during the hours she was left uncared for in the waiting room, Mention had a stroke and died at age 38.

Excessive social media use reduces sleep among children

The research was conducted among the Canadian students aged between 11-20 years which revealed a dose-response relation between the over-use of social media.



(Agencies) According to a recent study published in a journal named Acta Paediatrica, the excessive use of social media can lead to reduced sleeping hours among children. The research was conducted among the Canadian students aged between 11-20 years which revealed a dose-response relation between the over-use of social media and the shorter sleep duration among the students.

There were in total 5242 participants in the study out of which 63.6% slept less than recommended and 73.4% students reported that they used social media for at least an hour per day. "The impact social media can have on sleep patterns is a topic of great interest given the well-known adverse effects of sleep deprivation on health," said senior author Dr. Jean-Philippe Chaput, of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute. He further added that electronic screen devices are pervasive in today's society and they are just starting to understand their risks and benefits.



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.

(Agencies) 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.

Questions a person should ask a partner before getting married



sometimes create problems in a relationship. Ask your partner a simple question: How important is the role of sexual compatibility in a marriage? This simple question will help both you approach a topic, which many are uncomfortable talking about. Having this conversation will definitely help you understand each other better.

For some, the past sexual experience of a partner may not

matter but a few might still be apprehensive about it. It's always a good idea to clear these doubts so that you can start your married life without any baggage from the past. You can always ask your partner if he or she wants to know about your past. In case, you too want to have an idea about your partner's past, let him or her know this. Most of us have some sexual fantasies that we

would love to indulge in some day. Some might even have kinky fetishes which might not be agreeable to another? It's a good idea to have an idea about a partner's sexual preferences and fantasies. However, don't judge a person based on his or her sexual preferences, but take your relationship to the next level only when you are comfortable to be part of such fantasies or fetishes.

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(Agencies) Before marrying a person, most of us discuss a lot of things related to money, future and family. But very few musters the courage to ask anything related to sex life. Maybe, the still associated taboo related to sex hinders people from speaking about that aspect of married life, but we need to accept the fact that problems in the bedroom can shake the foundation of a conjugal life. Hence, it is very important to be on the same page sexually (not just emotionally) with your life partner. Here are six sex-related

questions you should ask your partner before taking the plunge... Do we really need to explain why it is important to get an idea of your partner's sexual health? Ask your partner if he or she had any sexually transmitted diseases (STD) in the past, and share your own history as well. Surprisingly, some people may not even have a clue if they are suffering from any STDs. Hence, it is a great idea to get a medical test done by both partners before tying the knot. Not all have compatible sex drives and if the difference is too great, it may

Did you catch your partner lying?

(Agencies) While love just happens, it takes time to 'build' trust. Would not it be a wonderful world if we could trust people easily? Or, better still, once the trust is built, if it can never be broken? Between these 'ifs' and 'buts', we have to admit that trust is as fragile as a dream. So, when we catch the person we love most lying to us, our world comes to a halt. We may cry or keep mum, but the struggle to accept this fact is beyond anyone's imagination. So how should you deal with such a situation? Here are a few thoughts that you might like to ponder upon: Sometimes we fight to accept the fact that someone we love can lie to us. So, many people take the easy way to deal with it by feigning ignorance. But that's a big mistake. Acceptance is the first hurdle, after crossing which you will come across the next big

hurdle—confrontation. Once you are ready to confront the person, how should you approach the issue? Never use an accusatory tone. Instead of focusing on why your partner lied to you, you should tell the person how the lie had affected you and the relationship.

Doing so would encourage your partner to participate in a constructive conversation because when a couple starts playing the blame game, the guilty will only take a defensive stance. Be patient, listen and then speak. Although it's difficult to ask direct questions, but the road to discovery, be it anything, is never easy. Don't beat around the bush. Take a deep breath and ask whatever is troubling your mind. But be prepared that the answers could be very different from what you might be expecting.

Mission Impossible Fallout vs Sanjay Dutt's Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster 3: Who will win at box office?



Tom Cruise's Mission Impossible 6 is going to fight it out with a new film in Bollywood franchise, Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster this week. Who will win?

the monstrous success of The Jungle Book in 2016 changed the equation between both the film industries forever. The film registered a tally of Rs 188 crore.

In next two years, it became a trend and now most of the Hollywood films that perform well in the overseas markets also do well in India. For example, Avengers: Infinity War, Deadpool 2 and Black Panther made cinema hall owners happy in India. Avengers: Infinity War raked in more than Rs 250 crore in India. A film like Incredibles 2 that doesn't have a vocal fan following in India has already earned more than Rs 40 crore.

Compare these numbers with films like Soorma, Veere Di Wedding and Dhadak, and

you'll realise how Hollywood is eating into Bollywood's pie. They are not the secondary choices anymore.

Now, it's Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster 3's turn to battle it out with global superstar Tom Cruise's Mission Impossible Fallout. Film trade analyst Atul Mohan acknowledges the stiff competition. He says, "MI is a known franchise that's the advantage, but it wasn't a show-stealer even the last time. The buzz around this one is definitely bigger though."

Sanjay Dutt seems to be the biggest draw of director Tigmanhsu Dhulia's Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster 3. Mohan says, "Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster 1 and 2 have done decent business. Now with Sanjay Dutt in the cast, it has

become slightly bigger as well. He has started picking up roles as per his age. He might not be the lead, but he increases the value of an ensemble cast."

The initial screen count will also come into play. Mohan says, "MI is not coming in 3D, so it could be closer to 1500 screens. Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster 3, on the other hand, is likely to be released in closer to 2000 screens."

The opening day numbers of both the films will set the tone of their fight over the weekend. If MI: Fallout shows more than 60% occupancy then it's only going to get bigger from there onwards, and that wouldn't be exactly a good news for traditional Bollywood filmmaking and marketing.

Move over Bollywood clashes, now Hollywood biggies can give Hindi releases a run for their money in the traditional desi market too. This Friday will see Sanjay Dutt's Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster going head-to-head with Tom Cruise's Mission: Impossible-Fallout. Trade is giving both the films a fair chance and it is anybody's guess how the weekend box office will turn out.

In the last few years, Hollywood has been giving a really tough competition to

Bollywood. This tussle tilts more in favour of Hollywood if a big budget film releases with an average budget one.

Actually, the trend started in 2015 when Fast And Furious 7 scored a magnificent earning of more than Rs 172 crore, a mark very few Bollywood films touch. Then there were films like Jurassic World (152 cr), Avatar (145 cr), Avengers-Age of Ultron (Rs 111 cr), Spider Man 3 (108 cr) and 2012 (102 cr) that had crossed the coveted Rs 100 cr line quite easily. But

Taapsee Pannu had a witty reply for troll who called her the 'worst looking actress in Bollywood'

Actor Taapsee Pannu was called mean things by a troll on Twitter but she gave it back to him in a witty and perfect reply.



You would never expect anyone to come up with mean things to say about Taapsee Pannu's looks but that's the world we live in. A troll attacked Taapsee on Twitter but the actor kept her cool and gave it back to him with a witty reply.

"Worst looking actress in Bollywood. Hope i don't have to see her again. 2..3 movies more n she will be out of Bollywood," the trolled had written. Taapsee took it upon herself to set the record straight. She assured him that she has three films lined up for release and has signed two more already.

"But 3 toh already ho gayi (I have already got three)... #Mulk #Manmarziyaan

and then #Badla and sorry to disappoint u but main already do aur sign kar chuki hu (I have already signed another two)... thoda toh aur jhelna padega (you will have to bear with me some more)," she wrote in her tweet.

Her fans also loved her way of giving it back to the troll. "She is the best," a fan wrote. "Mam waiting for these 3 to come #Mulk #Manmarziyaan and #Badla and we will appreciate each performance of yours," wrote another.

Another troll replied on the same thread to say that never realises when Taapsee's movies appear or disappear from theatres and that he is following her only to stay up to date with controversies

Mulk. Taapsee replied that she is happy she could provide him some sort of entertainment.

"Matlab Entertainment toh provide kar rahi hu main aapko. Matlab actress ka kaam toh ho gaya (So I am providing you some sort of entertainment. My job as an actress is done) P.S-please apna taste behtar keejiye toh picturein bhi dekh payenge. (Please improve your taste so you could also watch movies) Jai ShreeRam," she wrote.

Taapsee will soon be seen with Rishi Kapoor in Mulk, with Abhishek Bachchan and Vicky Kaushal in Manmarziyaan and with Amitabh Bachchan in Badla. Mulk will hit the theatres on August 3 while Manmarziyaan will be out on September 14.

Saif Ali Khan teases Sacred Games 2, says Kareena was taken aback by Cuckoo's willy

Saif Ali Khan reflected on Sacred Games' success, talked about how his wife Kareena Kapoor was 'taken aback' by it, and what the future holds for Netflix's first Indian original series.



Saif said that he is 'a fine technician' but that perhaps 'directing and showrunning, not just producing, did not suit him,' because he was under such immense pressure the whole time. Saif speculated that maybe Motwane knew he'd have a 130 million-strong audience to satisfy this time.

Saif said now that the show's over, Motwane is a much happier person, and much more fun to be around. "It might be a little premature to say, but I don't think he's directing the second season," Saif said, hinting that someone 'quite exciting' might be brought on board for that role.

"I think he was under so much pressure that he didn't have any

fun," Saif said. Masand also reminded him that he'd begun shooting Sacred Games days after his film Chef bombed at the box office, and had told him that Motwane wasn't the kind of director who'd offer too much praise.

The second season, Saif said "will be emotionally fraught with more stress, they might bring his (Sartaj's) ex-wife into it".

"A little bit more action," he said, "the bomb threat and I think the 'sacred' angle will come into the games a bit more, it develops." Saif had said in a previous interview that the three more seasons of eight episodes each had been planned for the show, pending

Netflix's go-ahead.

It has also been reported that Pankaj Tripathi, who played Guruji in a cameo in the first season, will return for a more central role in season 2. Tripathi told Mid-Day recently that, "Guruji is a larger-than-life part and will become the most sought-after character in the series. My character becomes as big as Gaitonde."

Kashyap had previously told Hindustan Times that Tripathi will become a big player in the show. Saif, meanwhile, is excited about the future - especially the world of online streaming. "The Mahabharata would be bloody perfect for a Netflix show," Saif said.

(News Agencies) Saif Ali Khan hesitates to call Sacred Games a comeback, but he's happy with the response India's first Netflix original series is getting, and especially pleased about how his performance has been received. Saif sat down with journalist Rajeev Masand for a chat about the show, and where it could go in future seasons.

Saif compared the response he's been getting to 'the old days' when he'd deliver a super hit. Certainly his wife, Kareena Kapoor Khan,

was 'surprised by how good it was'. Saif said she watched the first four episodes of the show, but he had to make her watch the second half later. "She was quite taken aback by Cuckoo's willy," he laughed, adding that the both of them were surprised that they could get away with this nowadays.

Speaking about co-director Vikramaditya Motwane, who directed 'the Saif timeline' while Anurag Kashyap did the Nawazuddin Siddiqui scenes,

Masala entertainers have been my education, says Ranveer Singh

Ranveer Singh will soon be seen in Rohit Shetty's Simmba. He was last seen in Padmaavat.



(News Agencies) He has played myriad roles since his Bollywood debut in 2010 with Band Baaja Baaraat. Actor Ranveer Singh, currently busy with Rohit Shetty's Simmba, credits his career in the Hindi film industry to his love for masala entertainers. Masala entertainers, are in fact, his "favourite" genre.

"Mainstream Hindi films, masala entertainers are the reason I ever wanted to become an actor. When I was a kid, I used to only watch these kind of films. It has been my education, it has been a part of my upbringing. So, it is a huge deal for me that I am finally doing something that is a true blue masala entertainer," said Ranveer.

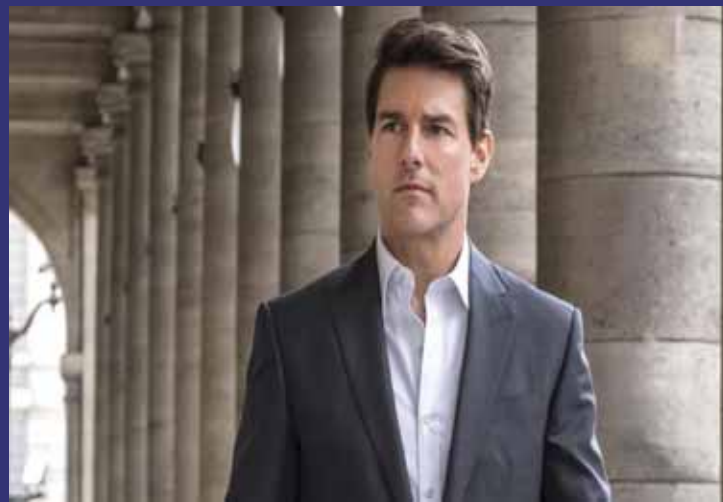
In Simmba, Ranveer will be seen playing a flamboyant policeman

Sangram Bhalerao. He feels he has earned this opportunity. "Having put in the work over few years, I'm getting to be a leading man in Rohit sir's film. I regard him to be the finest proponent in the masala genre. He is the undisputed best in the business of masala entertainers. It could not be sweeter, it could not be better," said the actor. For the Padmaavat star, the entire Simmba team is like a close-knit family. "The Simmba journey so far has really been an enriching experience for me." This will be the first time Ranveer will be trying his hands at mass comedy. He says it is his home territory as he is a big fan of actor Govinda. "I'm a huge Govinda fan. Yes, I'm going to try my hands at

mass comedy but I always thought this would be home territory for me because some of my favourite films that I have grown up watching are Govinda's films. Mass comedy is something that I thought I would be adept at," he said. Calling the film a "full on family entertainer", Ranveer, 33, says he has realised that comedy is serious business. "So like I said there are 'Navarasas' (nine flavours) - there is everything in the film -- there is action, there is drama, comedy, it's got these big action sequences, big songs, it's a full on entertainer for the family. Out of all the Navarasas, the most difficult one for me to play I realised is comedy. You really have to nail it. Your timing has to be just perfect," said Ranveer.

Tom Cruise's injury added Rs 550 crore to Mission Impossible Fallout budget

Tom Cruise's injury on the set of Mission: Impossible - Fallout added \$80 million (app Rs 550 crore) to the film's budget, making it the most expensive film in the series.



(News Agencies) Tom Cruise's insistence to perform his own stunts in Mission: Impossible - Fallout cost Paramount Pictures a pretty penny. According to a new report, the sixth Mission Impossible film's budget ballooned after Cruise broke his foot while performing a dangerous stunt, which forced production to take an eight-week hiatus.

The Hollywood Reporter says that the film's final budget rose to a series high of \$250 million (Rs 1700 crore), more than the previous record of \$170 million (Rs 1100) for Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation.

Cruise injured his foot while jumping from one building to another, and the shot made it to the final cut of the film. "I knew instantly that I'd broken my foot," he said in a recent featurette, but managed to pull himself and complete the shot because he knew they wouldn't be able to do another take. And he was right. The film went into hiatus and Paramount was adamant about keeping the prime July release date. The THR report says that insurance covered the additional cost because Cruise was injured while making the movie, but the studio finds itself in a tough spot because that decreases profit margins. The last two Mission: Impossible films - Ghost Protocol and Rogue Nation - both went on to gross close to \$700 million worldwide.



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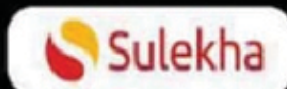
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