

The South Asian
INSIDER

Voice of South Asian Community

Since March 2002

Telangana Encounter
**Mixed
reactions**



Page 10

Vol. 16

Issue 28

Friday 06 December - 13 December 2019

\$1

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Sundar Pichai named Alphabet CEO

But Google's holding company Alphabet may have outlived its usefulness. Why does Alphabet even exist?



Story on
Page 17 & 18

Also Read

No better person :
Page 17

Under Pichai,
Alphabet's moonshot
projects may face more
scrutiny :

Page 17

GOOGLE'S THIRD
ERA, What's next now
that Sundar Pichai is
CEO of Alphabet

Page 18

Warren calls for Larry
Page testimony,
despite change of
guard at Alphabet

Page 18



Kamala Harris, first Indian-American woman in US presidential race, bows out of 2020 bid

Indian-origin man in US convicted for illegally distributing opioid pain pills

Harris could still stay in the race, but as a running mate with whoever wins the presidential ticket eventually.

(By a staff reporter) Kamala Harris, the first Indian American woman to run for the White House, announced Tuesday she was suspending her bid for lack of funds. First-term Senator Harris's campaign was struggling with depleting resources and several offices had been shut down in recent weeks and staff downsized. There had also been reports of bitter in-fighting among factions in the campaign. Harris told her supporters in an email she was suspending her campaign because of lack of funds. "I've taken stock and looked at this from every angle, and over the last few days have come to one of the hardest decisions of my life," she wrote. "It is with deep regret - but also with deep gratitude -



that I am suspending my campaign today," she added. Harris could still stay in the race, but as a running mate with whoever wins the ticket eventually. Speculation started soon after she made her exit official. The first-time Democratic senator had entered the race with much fanfare and expectations. She had also reported high fund collections figures and made a mark in the first

debates with an epic take down of former Vice-President Joe Biden, the frontrunner. She was sixth in latest RealClearPolitics average of polls at 3.4%, behind Biden, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, Pete Buttigieg and Michael Bloomberg. Even while Harris, whose mother came from Chennai and father from Jamaica, polled among the top five candidates for months, her candidacy

was marked by ambivalence on issues closest to Democrats, such as healthcare. She made several flip-flops that raised serious questions about her understanding of the issue. While she ran as an African American, a pitch that was clear from the start when she held her first news conferences as a candidate at a predominantly black college, she failed to find traction among African Americans, most of whom have supported Biden and continue to do so. There are now 15 candidates left in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination to take on President Donald Trump in 2020 and try and deny him a second term.



A 27-year-old Indian-origin man in the United States has been convicted for conspiring to distribute an opioid pain medication outside the usual course of professional practice and without any legal medical purpose. Anmol Singh Kamra of Philadelphia, a pharmacy technician, conspired with George Fisher, a physician, and Frank Brown, both charged separately, to illegally distribute thousands of oxycodone pills to people suffering from addiction. From about December 2012 through about March 2016, Kamra, Fisher, and Brown carried out a scheme to turn the pharmacy into a "pill mill" in which Kamra knowingly filled fake oxycodone prescriptions written by Fisher in sham "patient" names, and gave the oxycodone pills to Brown to sell in street level drug deals, United States Attorney William McSwain said. Kamra would sell drugs without a prescription and then ask Fisher to backdate a fake prescription in an attempt to cover the tracks.

Looking to Buy/Sell ?

We know the difference between Home & House



Honesty, Integrity & Experience

Since
2007

*Specializing in
Investment &
Income
producing real
estate

Whitestone Real Estate

1900 Hempstead Tpke.
Suite 306 East Meadow
New York 11554
Tel: 516 246 9022

(Whitestone Real Estate & Asset Management Corp. is a
Licensed New York State Real Estate Broker)

Sharanjit Singh Thind
Associate Broker/Notary
Phone: 917 612 3158

**Some Call us a Media House
Others call us an Institution to learn from**



**Delivering News,
Uncomprimised
& Unbiased for the
Last 16 years**

Email : thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

Website : www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Invest in First Mortgages

EARN 8-15%

**ANNUALLY ON WELL
SECURED, SHORT TERM,
1ST MORTGAGE LOANS.
MONTHLY DIVIDENDS**

For details & disclosures

WREAM

Whitestone Real Estate Asset Management Corp.
Phone: 917 612 3158 Email: whitesone1979@gmail.com

Real Estate Broker/Investor/Private Lender Since 2009

ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾਨ

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

Since April 2005 Editor: Shanjit Singh Thind

PUNJABI DUNIYA

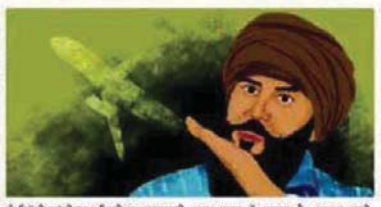
Weekly

Vol. 14 Issue 15 Wednesday 02 Jan to 08 Jan, 2019 www.PUNJABIDUNIYA.com Published Weekly from New York

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

ਪੇਸ਼ਾਗਤ: ਸਭ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਹ ਸਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਸੰਯੁਕਤ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਲਈ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਡਾਲਰ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਮੁੱਲ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਾਲ ਦੇ 25,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਡਾਲਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਹੈ।

ਇਹ ਮੁੱਲ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਾਲ ਦੇ 25,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਡਾਲਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਡਾਲਰ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ।



ਇਹ ਮੁੱਲ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਾਲ ਦੇ 25,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਡਾਲਰ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਹੈ।

ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ

ਨਵੀਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ: ਸਿੱਖ ਨਸਲਦਾਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਢੀ ਕ੍ਰਮੀਕਾ ਨਿਰਾਪਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਦਾ ਕਰਿੰਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨਸਲਦਾਰੀ 1984 ਵਿਚ ਹੋਏ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਰਨੇਲਿਆ। ਇਹ ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਦਾ ਕਰਿੰਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨਸਲਦਾਰੀ 1984 ਵਿਚ ਹੋਏ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਰਨੇਲਿਆ।

ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਦਾ ਕਰਿੰਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨਸਲਦਾਰੀ 1984 ਵਿਚ ਹੋਏ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਰਨੇਲਿਆ। ਇਹ ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਦਾ ਕਰਿੰਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨਸਲਦਾਰੀ 1984 ਵਿਚ ਹੋਏ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਰਨੇਲਿਆ।

Insurance
Property & Casualty
(See Full Page Advt. on Page 31)

Business, Liability, Disability, Workers Comp., E & O, Auto, Home,

917-612-3158
www.whitestonecorp.com

WE THANK OUR CUSTOMERS FOR THEIR TRUST & LOYALTY

26 YEARS OF EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

INDO US EXPRESS, INC

HICKSVILLE, NEW YORK

WORLDWIDE COURIER FREIGHT-FORWARDER
DOMESTIC & LOCAL DELIVERY

CALL US AT: 212-447-5720 or FAX 516-932-3750
ALTERNATE NUMBER: 347-538-7041
OR EMAIL US: INDOUSEXPRESS@GMAIL.COM
www.indousexpress.com

GREAT SERVICE, 7 DAYS A WEEK, 365 DAYS A YEAR!
CALL ABOUT OUR SPECIAL RATES
TO INDIA/WORLDWIDE

Thinking of Buying/Selling ?

WINZONE REALTY INC.

Baldev Singh

Associate Broker/Notary Public

146-20 34 av. Flushing NY 11354
Cell : 917-224-7395
Email : josanalbaldev@yahoo.com

At 70, NATO is weak and divided

It, however, has a role to play in the global balance of power



The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is celebrating its 70th anniversary. While the logic of the alliance is stronger today than it has been since the Cold War's end, it lacks a consensus on what constitutes

its primary threat. The debate on prioritisation and tactics is dragging on because of the nature of political leaders in its anchor members.

The big fissure is about how to tackle a newly aggressive

Russia. The United States is schizophrenic, with President Donald Trump an unabashed admirer of Moscow while the rest of his government sees in it a new Soviet Union. The Europeans are almost as divided.

Germany and France feel engagement with Russia remains important, while central Europeans are fiercely opposed to their former coloniser. Turkey has the second largest military in NATO, but is increasingly taking an independent line when it comes to Syria, Russia and even the Islamic State. There are also murmurs that NATO needs to look more closely at China. Beijing is making major inroads into Europe's digital and infrastructure space: 10% of Europe's ports are owned or run by Chinese firms. All of this is compounded by differing approaches to NATO itself. Britain hosted the summit but was distracted by another Brexit election. France is resurrecting ideas of a Euro-centric security system. Mr Trump is ambivalent about the alliance. Germany takes a

fatalistic approach to the alliance.

In the past, India tended to see NATO as an instrument of Western dominance. It saw the alliance's dilution as contributing to the creation of a multipolar world. But that formulation is questionable today. NATO's first major military action after the Soviet collapse was against al-Qaeda and the Taliban. And while New Delhi has a different, more positive, view of Moscow than many members of NATO, it is also evident that any recession of Western influence ultimately benefits China. Though it is geopolitically still an arm's length away, India increasingly has an interest in seeing NATO remain a source of global stability and a contributor to a balance of power preferred by New Delhi.

Modi's governance philosophy

The prime minister believes structural reforms will yield results



Delivering the inaugural address at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit on Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid out the fundamentals of his governance philosophy. He also spoke, with great coherence and clarity, about the underlying reforms the government is undertaking, which, he believes, will lay the foundation for a better tomorrow.

In the run up to the 2014 elections, Mr Modi said he

believed in minimum government, maximum governance. He has now built on that underlying philosophy, arguing that the poor must never feel the absence of government, and the citizen, the pressure of government. This is a positive goal. It also explains why the PM has been so focused on expanding welfare programmes, and improving its delivery. Critics may argue that the Indian State still exercises way too much power in regulating

citizens. Many within this government's broad ideological ecosystem too have sought to regulate people's choices. But if Mr Modi can succeed in turning this around and deepening individual freedom, it will be liberating for citizens.

Within this broad framework, the PM spoke of three major areas of focus. The first, which has been under-reported, is in the realm of administration. This includes transparent

appointments, lateral entry for professionals, more expert feedback, termination of the services of underperforming babus, and encouraging integration of all services to prevent them from working in silos. No one can deny the importance of this work, given India's antiquated bureaucratic processes, which have often stalled progress. The second area is the emphasis on aspirational districts, which have lagged behind on development indicators. Focusing on these, through special plans, sharp implementation and constant monitoring, will indeed lift India's human development index.

And the final area is the economy. The PM seems to believe that he has done the difficult part of dealing with legacy issues in the last five-and-a-half years. This involved taking steps to sort out the banking mess; initiating measures for relief in real estate; embarking on structural reforms in taxation, ease of doing business, labour laws,

disinvestment. All these have led to what the government thinks are short-term adversities for stakeholders. But it has also cleared the basis for more sustained, cleaner growth. The PM now thinks that coupled with the government's push on infrastructure, if Indian banks start taking decisions without fear, Indian capital begins to step up and invest, and Indian markets respond, there is a better tomorrow. This is once again a positive message. It is what bureaucrats, bankers, business and consumers want to hear in the current phase of slowdown. It is based on not treating mistakes as malfeasance, as the Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee suggested. What it needs to be backed with a sustained plan to ease supply constraints, and boost incomes and demand to revive the virtuous economic cycle. Mr Modi has shown he has the intent and has a plan. With his overwhelming personal popularity and political majority, it is time to build on these reforms.

Dem impeachment report on Trump is a political attack with no factual basis, no GOP support

One day after Republicans issued a 110-page report arguing that President Trump did not commit an impeachable offense, Democrats doubled down Tuesday with a roughly 300-page report claiming that he did. The House Intelligence Committee voted 13-9 on a party-line vote to adopt the Democratic report - with all Democrats voting in favor of sending it to the House Judiciary Committee and all Republicans voting against the move. If nothing else, this undermines the repeated promise by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., that any impeachment should be bipartisan. Her original premise was correct.

Impeachment is a grave step of last resort to remove a duly elected president. The act of wrongdoing must be sufficiently egregious, and the evidence so clear and convincing, that the constitutional remedy of impeachment merits support from both political parties represented in Congress.

However, unlike previous presidential impeachments, not a single member of the president's own party has yielded on the matter. It also reflects the sentiment of most Americans who are split along party lines. This alone should give Democrats pause to reconsider the dangerous path they have undertaken.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., presided over five days of impeachment hearings involving a dozen witnesses. Contemporaneous with the release of his report Tuesday, Schiff tweeted: "The impeachment inquiry uncovered overwhelming and uncontested evidence that president Trump abused the powers of his office to solicit foreign interference in our election for his own personal, political gain." Schiff's claim is brazenly untrue on many levels.

Schiff contorts the facts. First, if the evidence was "overwhelming," surely Republicans in Congress and Americans at large would be so persuaded. They are not. The evidence was conspicuously underwhelming. As detailed in my previous column, Schiff's witnesses offered a stream of hearsay, opinion and speculation that Trump demanded a "quid pro quo" from Ukraine - an investigation of former Vice President Joe Biden in exchange for nearly \$400 million in U.S. military aid. Yet, where is that demand or pressure or condition stated in the transcript of the July 25 telephone conversation between President Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky? If the evidence was, as Schiff claims, "overwhelming," there would be a phrase or sentence somewhere in the transcript of the call establishing proof. It

is nowhere. Second, Schiff's contention that the evidence is "uncontested" is demonstrably false. The Republican report itself consumes 110 pages contesting the alleged evidence. Perhaps Schiff didn't bother to read the Republican report, since he is convinced of his own certitude or teased by hope out of ignorance. Maybe he didn't listen as Republicans spent hours during cross-examination casting doubt on the knowledge and credibility of the purported "fact witnesses" who trafficked in rumor, innuendo, and rank conjecture. To argue that all of the Democratic claims were "uncontested" is to believe in the tooth fairy and the Easter bunny. Third, Schiff's assertion that Trump "solicited foreign interference in our election for his own personal, political gain" is nothing more than an assumption or supposition. There is no mention whatsoever of an election in the transcript of the Trump-Zelensky conversation. Trump asked Zelensky to look into Biden's recorded "quid pro quo" boast saying that as vice president Biden stated he would withhold \$1 billion in U.S. aid from Ukraine if the chief prosecutor in Kiev was not immediately fired. In doing so, how was Trump requesting political interference for personal gain? Schiff cannot possibly know Trump's motive.

The House Intelligence Committee chairman can only intuit the president's intent. His clairvoyance or telepathy is not evidence in support of an impeachable offense. Trump has stated repeatedly that he wanted to determine whether Biden committed a corrupt act by extorting taxpayer dollars to force the firing of a prosecutor who was investigating the Ukrainian natural gas company that was paying his son Hunter anywhere from \$50,000 to \$83,000 a month to serve on its board.

Was Biden's demand intended to protect his son? If a president has reason to believe that a public officeholder may have engaged in corrupt behavior involving a foreign government, he has every right and duty to request that nation's leader to investigate. The president is entitled to do so under the terms of a 20-year old treaty with Ukraine. Biden does not enjoy immunity or amnesty simply because he is now a candidate for office as he pursues the Democratic presidential nomination. Schiff's emphatic pronouncement that Trump committed impeachable offenses serves as the predicate for Wednesday's hearing before the House Judiciary Committee, chaired by Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y.

By Gregg Jarrett

NATO should die if allies won't increase defense spending as Trump wants

The NATO summit continued for its second and final day in London Wednesday, after President Trump renewed his necessary and reasonable call for all NATO members to recommit to spending at least 2 percent of their gross domestic product for defense. Trump has been criticized by European nations for demanding that NATO members pay their fair share of defense spending, rather than simply relying on the U.S. to pick up a hugely disproportionate share of the costs.

The president should make clear to our NATO allies that they need to spend more on their defense to keep NATO relevant, or else NATO needs to die. Making that point so bluntly won't please our allies, but you can bet it will get results.

Nations like Germany - which are among the richest on the planet and can surely defend themselves against Russia - need to meet such an obligation. If they can't - or if they simply won't - America has the right to reconsider its commitments to NATO, and whether NATO needs to exist.

Open any history book and one fact becomes clear rather quickly: no alliance between nations, let alone a grouping of nations, lasts forever. Either the threat that brought the alliance together disappears, or the shared advantage of the alliance simply ends. That's Geopolitics 101. NATO was created 70 years ago to defend Western Europe against the powerful Soviet Union, which at the time exercised control over satellite nations in Eastern Europe and posed a real threat to nations further west. But just because NATO was needed in decades past doesn't mean it is needed now and

will be needed far into the future. The Soviet Union no longer exists and has been replaced by a much weaker Russia and smaller independent nations on its border. In fact, parts of the Soviet empire are now NATO members, firmly aligned with the West. Russia remains a threat to the U.S. and the collective European continent, and there is no denying that. Moscow has enough nuclear firepower to destroy the entire planet and end civilization. Russia is modernizing its conventional armed forces and specializing in things like information warfare, cyber technology and electronic warfare to gain key asymmetric advantages over the West. And Russia even cleaved off a piece of Ukraine back in 2014 - something it has paid a high price for due to economic sanctions. But let's not kid ourselves for one second. Russia is not now and never again will transform itself into the menace that was the Soviet Union. Through decades of constant trials and tribulations, NATO stared down the mighty Soviets. Thanks to generations of Americans and Europeans and countless other allies around the world, democracy peacefully triumphed over communist tyranny. So what does one of the most successful alliances of all time do when its primary enemy is defeated? What happens when no one wants to admit that either the structure and mission of the alliance need to change, or it needs to end? Sadly, NATO came up with an answer that might haunt us for decades. It expanded eastward.

By Harry Kazianis



ISSN No. 1554 06X

Editor in Chief & Publisher :
Sharanjit Singh Thind
Editor (Political Affairs-India) :
Aruna Singh

Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah

Photographers: Hamad

Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind

Special Correspondent :

Gagandeep Singh (INDIA)

Web Coordinator : Harpreet Singh

A Publication of Media Partners Capital, Inc.

REGD & MAILING OFFICE :
P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

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

Disclaimer The South Asian Insider is a weekly newspaper published every week by The South Asian Insider. It's available in community & religious centers, ethnic grocery stores and also available by mail, email & online to subscribers. The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various writers, authors and forum participants in The South Asian Insider do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Editor. All advertisers advertising in The South Asian Insider assume responsibility for accuracy of their advertisements. The South Asian Insider and/or people associated with it are not responsible for any claims made by the advertisers and don't endorse any product or services advertised in The South Asian Insider. We strongly urge consulting your lawyer before buying/contracting/hiring through the ads published in the newspaper. We are in the business of selling space and claims made by the advertisers are not authenticated or confirmed by an independent source

Why India-Japan ties matter more than ever

At a time of global geopolitical flux, the two champion freedom, norms, inclusivity, and free and fair trade

Whereas India-China and Japan-China ties are unlikely to become non-adversarial in the near future, the forthcoming summit between prime ministers Shinzo Abe and Narendra Modi will cement the Japan-India relationship as Asia's fastest growing relationship, and open the path to a military logistics pact to allow access to each other's bases. Indeed, the deepening relationship between Asia's richest democracy and the world's largest democracy serves the goal of forestalling the emergence of a Sino-centric Asia. Recently, the Indian and Japanese foreign and defence ministers held their first joint meeting in a

so-called "two plus two" format. India has set up such a "two plus two" dialogue with all the other Quad members. The Quad offers a promising platform for strategic maritime cooperation and coordination. But there is no guarantee it will fulfil that promise. The India-Japan entente is a central pillar of the United States-led strategy for a "free and open Indo-Pacific" - a concept authored by Abe. Today, Japan and India serve as the linchpins for establishing a rules-based Indo-Pacific order. However, US President Donald Trump's "free and open Indo-Pacific" strategy, like his

predecessor's pivot to Asia, hasn't been translated into a clear policy approach with any real strategic heft. It is thus important for Japan and India to contribute their bit. The evolving paradigm shift in Washington's China policy, however, has put pressure on Chinese President Xi Jinping to improve his country's relations with India and Japan. Xi is expected to visit Japan in the spring. Xi's informal summit with Modi in October yielded few tangible results. But India's commitment at Mamallapuram to enter into bilateral talks over its lopsided trade relationship with China represented a diplomatic win for Beijing.

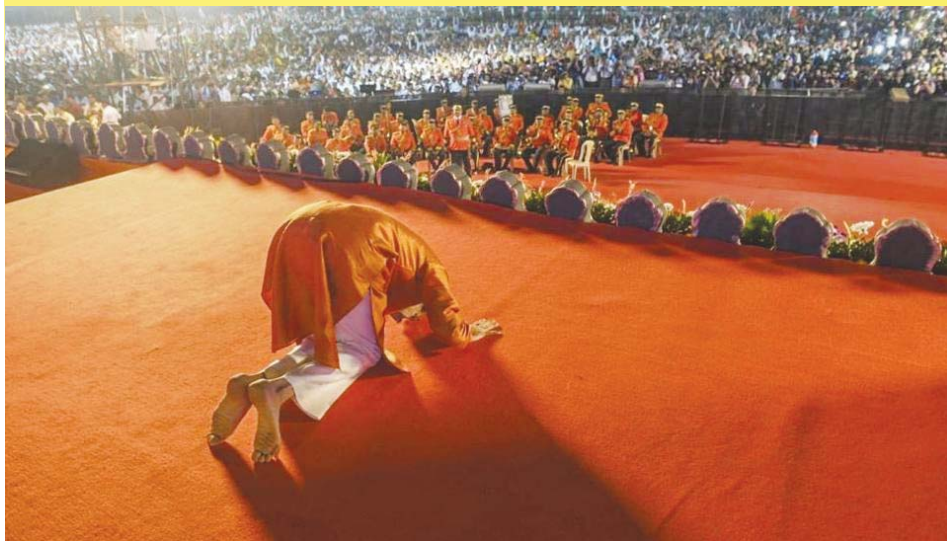


It allows China to initiate what it is good at - endless negotiations, as its 38-year-long border talks with India illustrate. In fact, Xi, seeking to shield his country's burgeoning trade surplus with India, sought at Mamallapuram to rope India into the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). India already has free trade

agreements (FTAs) with 12 of the other 15 RCEP member-States, and is negotiating an FTA with Australia. In this light, India's entry into the RCEP would have effectively established a China-India FTA via the backdoor. India's recent withdrawal from the RCEP, like the earlier US pull-out from the Trans-Pacific Partnership

(TPP), has created a dilemma for Japan. While Japan took the lead to establish the TPP without the US, Tokyo does not want the RCEP negotiations to conclude without India, because it would build a China-led trading bloc. This suggests Japan may not join the RCEP without India reversing its withdrawal.

What does Maharashtra teach us?



There is an old saying: "A photograph is worth more than a thousand words". I would like to draw your attention to some pertinent photographs - Sharad Pawar sitting in a chair and Shiv Sena chief, Uddhav Thackeray, bowing to him in respect; Supriya Sule welcoming Maharashtra's newly-elected legislators, and hugging Aditya Thackeray and Ajit Pawar in the Vidhan Sabha annexe; Devendra Fadnavis announcing his resignation after a mere 80 hours of being sworn in as

chief minister (CM) for a second time; and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokespersons confident of proving the party's majority in the House just before its government collapsed. And, at the end of it all, a photo of the new CM, Uddhav Thackeray, prostrating before the public. You may find contradictions in these images. Each of them have various meanings and subtexts to them. Let us first look at the BJP high command. The Narendra Modi-Amit Shah

combine has won most of the elections the party has fought in the last six years. Even when they did not win, they were able to turn things around in their favour by various means. Like Maharashtra, Haryana too voted for a hung assembly. But then, Dushyant Chautala, a staunch critic of the BJP, went on to befriend it. In Maharashtra, the Congress and Nationalist Congress Party were working overtime to prepare a joint programme with the Shiv Sena. But suddenly, on November 30, they found Fadnavis taking

Recent developments in the state have lessons for all political forces and constitutional offices

oath as the Maharashtra CM for the second time. This time, Ajit Pawar was suddenly in the role of Devendra Fadnavis' ally. This is similar to the BJP's experiments in Goa, Bihar, Haryana and Manipur. For Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray, this was a bolt from the blue. But they remained steady in their course. Within 24 hours, it was proved conclusively that NCP's only real leader was Sharad Pawar. The Maratha satrap once again proved that he is unparalleled as far as grassroots-level political battles are concerned. Now that Uddhav Thackeray has taken office as the state's CM, the BJP's old guard could well be wondering whether the party should have changed its strategy well in time. It is clear that the BJP will have to deal with some uncomfortable questions.

For example, Jharkhand is going through assembly elections at present. Will developments in Mumbai have any impact on Ranchi? This will be followed by the Delhi elections early next year, and Bihar at the end of 2020. Although the Janata Dal (United) is part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), it refused to ally with the BJP in the last assembly elections. Will it now try to impress on the BJP that it is indispensable? In politics, the indispensability factor helps you bargain harder. There are, however, questions for the other side too. The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)'s victory comes after a series of defeats for the Opposition at the hands of the BJP. There is an atmosphere of joy and enthusiasm in the MVA camp. But they shouldn't forget that

although Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress leaders have been able to present a united front, uniting the rank and file of these parties on the ground will be a real challenge. Thackeray will have to keep in mind HD Kumaraswamy's fate in Karnataka, when his government collapsed due to internal contradictions. The key question is whether the new CM will be able to work in harmony with his new allies. The NCP, in particular, will seek to exercise power. The BJP must be watching this with great interest. While Uddhav Thackeray has just crossed one phase of the political chakravayuh, maze, in the next five years, he will have to work hard to keep everyone happy. If he succeeds, his role will be that of the victorious Arjun in Mahabharata.



Iran must address the emerging discontent

The regime faces no danger, but it needs to review its domestic and foreign policy

Iran is experiencing the worst urban unrest it has faced in four decades. Its interior minister admitted 29 out of its 31 provinces were affected. In Mahshahr and Shiraz, the government brutally killed hundreds because it lost control of these cities. Outwardly, the unrest was triggered by an overnight decision to massively increase domestic oil prices to help bridge a government deficit.

The deficit, in turn, was caused by a depression: The International Monetary Fund says the economy shrank 9.5% this year.

Iran's periodic public protests are no longer middle-class students asking for freedom. They are increasingly led by unemployed working and lower-middle class youth, once the social base of the Islamic revolution. While the regime is in no danger of being

overthrown, Tehran needs to weigh the costs and benefits of its actions at home and abroad. Sanctions may have hurt its economy, but domestic policies are even more harmful. It has failed to diversify away from oil at a time when the sheen is off black gold. Its religious foundations and regime militia have a parasitical hold on as much as a third of the economy. Even more damaging to foreign

investment than sanctions is Tehran's constant habit of flouting contracts - a practice that puts off even Indian firms. Iran's foreign policy is also questionable. Tehran can claim to have massively expanded its influence across West Asia. But this informal empire is secured with militia, and is causing blowback from other regional powers. Polls show rising anti-Iranian sentiment in the Arab

Sunni world. How this benefits Iran at a time when its home front is in a shambles is a question. The announcement of the priesthood's Guardian Council that it would seek to be more inclusive in its choice of parliamentary candidates this year is a small but positive step. If Iran's Islamic revolution is to thrive, it needs be less about Islam and revolution, and more about modernity and governance.

Decoding tribal alienation in Chhattisgarh

Two recent reports point to State excesses and insensitivity. STs deserve a fairer deal



A panel appointed by the Chhattisgarh government to review the cases against scheduled tribes (STs) in the state's Maoist insurgency-affected region has prepared its

report. And the findings are harsh. Headed by Justice (retired) AK Patnaik, the panel said that tribals are alienated from the mainstream due to a large number of criminal cases

pending against them. This may have, it added, even pushed them to Maoism. As reported in the Hindustan Times, the panel lists 313 cases registered under the local excise law for withdrawal.

It says that members of the ST community are often unaware of the amendments made to the excise law, changing the limit of liquor one can possess. This is often the reason for such a high number of cases under the Excise Act, pushing them to years in prison.

It is not just the cultural insensitivity while implementing a law that raises difficult questions about the nature of State authority. Security excesses, especially during anti-Maoist operations, are also responsible for the tribal disaffection with the government. On Sunday, The Indian Express reported on the findings of a one-member judicial commission set up to probe an alleged encounter in which 17 people, including six minors, were killed in the state's Bijapur district in June 2012. The

state had then claimed all of them were Maoists. But the commission concluded there was no firing by the villagers; there was no evidence to suggest they were Maoists; the villagers were assaulted and killed from close quarters; and the security personnel may have fired "in panic".

Governments have often talked of the development-first approach and winning the hearts and minds of the tribal population.

But, on the ground, the administration has often been insensitive to questions of tribal rights over resources, their cultural practices, and has treated them with suspicion. The two reports acknowledge this fundamental flaw. Both the Centre and the Chhattisgarh government must empower tribals, rather than treat them as second-class citizens.

The draft seeds bill favours the industry over farmers

A 2001 law protects farmers' interests. But the seeds bill neutralises many of the enabling measures granted in it

There is a draft seeds bill awaiting Parliament, which seeks to replace the old Seed Act of 1966. A law regulating seed production and trade is needed to ensure that farmers are protected against spurious seeds, and that seed producers are obliged to put only seeds of good and reliable quality on the market. The current draft bill leans towards the interests of the seed industry rather than the farmer. The 2001 law, the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Act (PPVFRA), protects farmers' interests. The draft seeds bill aims to neutralise many enabling measures granted in the PPVFRA. Here are a few examples.

In the PPVFRA, adequate seed supply and seed price is to be managed by government through the provision of compulsory licensing in the Act. In the seed bill, there is no mechanism to regulate seed supply or seed

price. This could result in high seed prices, and even a lack of adequate seed supply. The parliamentary standing committee on agriculture had made a strong recommendation for regulating seed supply and seed price through the law itself. The seed bill does not require the seed industry to declare the parents of the variety they register. Hence, there is no opportunity to claim benefit sharing as provided in the PPVFRA, according to which if a plant breeder uses farmer varieties to breed his variety, he is required to pay a part of the profits of the new commercialised variety into a national gene bank. In the absence of parentage/passport data of a variety, the new seed owners could have free access to all available crop genetic diversity, without having to go through prior informed consent or engaging in benefit sharing. All this amounts to

legalising the piracy of valuable genetic materials, commercially successful varieties, and breeding lines developed by farmers and public sector breeders. When a new legislation is drafted, there is a provision for people to raise objections before a right is granted if they fear there is wrongdoing. This feature exists in the PPVFRA, but it is missing in the seeds bill.

Seed failure happens when shoddy companies sell shoddy seeds. To protect farmers against this, there are provisions within the PPVFRA to claim compensation. In the seeds bill, the farmer cannot claim compensation within the purview of the law. Here, he must approach the consumer courts under the Consumer Protection Act to claim compensation for the failed seed. This is manifestly unfair since the government has washed its hands off its responsibility and laid the burden



on the farmer. He will spend his money and run around from pillar to post for years claiming compensation, which may never come. The soft penalties in the bill for violations by the companies must be raised so that it hurts to break the law to exploit farmers. Then there is the exemption for offences committed by companies. This clause seeks to absolve company officials from any punishment for violations, saying that if they prove it happened without their knowledge, they are not liable. Clearly, this must go. The current seeds bill bears the

imprint of the seed industry which never masks its displeasure at the enabling provisions granted to farmers in the PPVFRA, in recognition of their enormous contributions as breeders and conservers of genetic diversity. Since 2004, when the first draft was presented, several knowledgeable people and a Parliamentary Standing Committee have sent in recommendations to improve the seeds bill. Gene Campaign along with the National Commission on Farmers had organised a national consultation on making the seeds bill more equitable.

Kamala Harris drops out - Here are 2020 candidates who will benefit most from her exit



It's shouldn't have come as a surprise, since she's been hovering just ahead of entrepreneur Andrew Yang in the national polling, but the decision Tuesday by Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., to suspend her campaign for her party's presidential nomination is still a shock.

Harris started the campaign very clearly in the top tier. She effectively questioned a number of President Trump's appointees

in the Senate, had apparent appeal to moderates and showed early fundraising prowess. The senator from California had a few good moments in the debates, such as when she sparred against former Vice President Joe Biden in the debate on the issue of busing to achieve racial integration in schools. But she was never able to build strong momentum with likely Democratic primary voters. **KAMALA HARRIS DROPS OUT**

OF PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Even though Harris' support (3.4 percent in the latest RealClear Politics national average) was small, her withdrawal from the race is a bit of shakeup among the second tier of candidates - particularly those who are positioning themselves as a moderate and younger alternative to Biden.

If I had to pick the one candidate whom this benefits, I'd pick Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., who is

now the last remaining woman among the moderates. She's done between OK and very well in the recent debates, and may be a safe haven for those voters who are uncomfortable with Biden but want to support some who is moderate rather than on the far left.

I'd also look closely at the two remaining Democratic candidates who, like Harris, are African-American: Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey and former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick.

One of the few successes Harris had was winning a number of endorsements of members of the Congressional Black Caucus. Those members of Congress are now free agents. Will they move to Biden and consolidate his strength in the African-American community, or will they seek an alternative?

In their past races, both Booker and Patrick have shown appeal across the Democratic political spectrum. It's puzzling that Booker, in particular, has not been able to get any traction so far. It's

possible that the withdrawal of Harris from the nominating contest may give Booker and Patrick (who didn't announce his candidacy until Nov. 14) another chance. The final potential beneficiaries of Harris dropping out are in the top tier, particularly Joe Biden. The biggest wound he's suffered to date was at the hands of Harris, when she attacked him for his past position on school busing for integration. The normally loquacious Biden seemed flummoxed about how to respond. The fact that he remains a leading candidate for the Democratic nomination is a sign that Biden, despite all his gaffes, retains staying power. But remember: There are still 15 remaining candidates: Four in the top-tier for now, two deep-pocketed billionaires, and nine candidates in search of an opening. So the race for the Democratic nomination to run against President Trump is still in the early stages and the outcome remains far from certain.

By Arnon Mishkin

Telangana encounter

Mixed reactions: Praise for police, words of caution

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati commended Hyderabad Police and also slammed the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh for not doing enough for the safety of women in the state.



(By our staff reporter) NEW Delhi: There have been mixed reactions to the killing in an encounter with police of the four accused in the rape and murder of a 26-year-old veterinary doctor in Telangana. Officials said the four men were shot dead around 3.30am under a bridge on the Bengaluru-Hyderabad national highway near Chattanpalli village in Shadnagar. While some leaders have commended the police, some others were more cautious in their reaction. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati commended Hyderabad Police and also slammed the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh for not doing enough for the safety of women in the state. "Police in Uttar Pradesh and also in Delhi should take inspiration from Hyderabad Police, but unfortunately here criminals are treated as state guests. There is jungle raj in Uttar Pradesh right now. Hope the attitude changes for the better," Mayawati said while speaking to news agency ANI in Lucknow. "Crimes against women are on the rise in Uttar Pradesh, but the state government is sleeping," she said. Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Uma Bharti also said in a series of tweets that all the policemen who executed the encounter deserve to be felicitated. "This is the biggest incident in the 19th year of this century that will guarantee women's safety," Uma Bharti tweeted in Hindi. "I can now believe that people in governance in other states will find ways to teach criminals an immediate lesson," she said. "Grief of the

family whose daughter went away from the world after suffering mercilessness will never be alleviated, but that sister's (rape victim) soul will find peace and the fear among other girls of India will be lessened. Jai Telangana Police."

Bharti's party colleague Rajyavardhan Rathore also tweeted his "congratulation" for Hyderabad Police. The former sports minister said that this would set a precedent in the country. "I congratulate the

Hyderabad police and the leadership that allows the police to act like the police. Let all know this is the country where good will always prevail over evil (Disclaimer for holier than thou- police acted swiftly in self-defence) #Encounter #hyderabadpolice," Rathore tweeted. The mother of the young woman who was gang-raped and murdered in

December 2012 in Delhi also congratulated the police. "I am extremely happy with this punishment. Police have done a great job and I demand that no action should be taken against the police personnel," she said, according to ANI. However, while BJP MP Maneka Gandhi condemned the encounter, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor was more

cautious in his reaction. Maneka Gandhi said that one cannot take law into one's hand. "Jo bhi hua hai bohot bhayanak hua hai is desh ke liye (what happened is really bad for the country). .. you cannot kill people because you want to. You cannot take law in your hands, they (accused) would have been hanged by Court anyhow."

I found Vikram lander': Chennai techie finds debris on Moon, Nasa confirms

Subramanian believed that from the beginning when he joined the space hunt from his computer in Chennai the pictures of the lunar surface put out by LROC were his only clues.

(News Agencies)- Premier US space agency Nasa announced on Monday it had found the Chandrayaan-2 moon lander Vikram not far from where it was supposed to land in September, based on a tip from an Indian engineer and blogger. The techie said he had separately launched his own search as a "challenge" as even Nasa had seemed clueless at the time. "It was something challenging as even Nasa can't find out so why can't we try out?" he said in an email in response to a request for comments. "And, that's the thought that led me to search for the Vikram lander. I don't think Vikram lander would have made such an impact on the minds of the Indian public if it had landed successfully. Since, it was lost, there was a lot of discussion in public forums as well as on my Facebook regarding what malfunctioned etc," he said. Subramanian believed that from



the beginning when he joined the space hunt from his computer in Chennai the pictures of the lunar surface put out by LROC were his only clues.

Subramanian also changed his Twitter bio after the US space agency credited him for helping find the moon lander.

"A Mechanical Engineer, Blogger, App Developer, QA Engineer & I found Vikram Lander, read his Twitter bio.

"Vikram Lander found," said the headline of an announcement

from Nasa's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter Camera (LROC) center on its website, and acknowledged upfront the role played by Shanmuga Subramanian, a Chennai engineer who first alerted the center to the crash site.

"Thank you for your mail informing us of your discovery of Vikram lander," read a more personal acknowledgment from John Keller, deputy project scientist at the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter Mission

of Nasa. "The LROC team confirmed that the location does exhibit changes in images taken before and after the date of the landing." LROC is a system of three cameras mounted on the orbiter that captures high resolution black-and-white images of the lunar surface. Working on that tip, the LROC looked around the area pointed out by Subramanian and, it said, located the site of the primary impact as well as other debris around the impact location. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had lost touch with the lander shortly before its scheduled landing on September 7, which was to be a major milestone for India's space programme and a marker of its growing international stature as one of a handful of countries to have reached the Moon. Nasa, the only space agency to put a man on the Moon and a growing partner and mentor for the ISRO had said, "Despite the loss (of Vikram lander), getting that close to the surface was an amazing achievement."

Shiv Sena spots a conspiracy in PM Modi's 'offer' to Sharad Pawar



(News Agencies)-The Shiv Sena on Wednesday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party and described Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reported 'offer' to Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar to join hands as a "conspiracy" to stop the Sena from getting the chief minister's chair.

The Sena, in an editorial in party mouthpiece Saamana, attacked the BJP top brass and asked why didn't they recognise Pawar's potential till his party got 54 MLAs elected in the Assembly elections.

"In the election campaign, Amit Shah had asked 'What had Pawar done for Maharashtra?'

Pawar answered this question later. If Shah and others had doubt about what Pawar has done, then what experience did Mr Modi want to utilise? Pawar has immense experience. But to realise this, why did Modi-Shah take five-and-a-half years?" the Sena asked in an editorial on Wednesday.

The Sena also taunted the BJP leadership saying Maharashtra has "tasted" Pawar's experience. "Now, the Gods of Delhi too have got the taste of it," it said.

In an interview to a Marathi news channel, Sharad Pawar had said that during his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month, PM Modi had inquired if the two parties could work together.

"After our discussion on the unseasonal rain, PM Modi said he would be glad if we could work together. He pointed out that our opinions on issues of development, industries often converged. I told him we have good personal equations and that will not change. I also told him on national issues, I will always support him. But I cannot join him because my party's ideology is different and we had taken a different path," Pawar said in the interview.

"Their aim was to not let the

government that works on the ideals of Shivaji Maharaj come to power. It was their 'conspiracy' to not allow a Chief Minister from Shiv Sena," the Sena said. The Sena also taunted the BJP leadership saying Maharashtra has "tasted" Pawar's experience. "Now, the Gods of Delhi too have got the taste of it," it said. BJP had emerged as the single largest party with 105 seats in October's state elections. It had a pre-poll alliance with the Sena but the two partners split over a tussle on sharing the chief minister's post. The Sena, which had claimed both parties had a pact to share the CM's post for two-and-a-half-years each, later teamed up with the NCP that had 54 seats and the Congress.

1984 riots could've been avoided if Gujral's advice was heeded: Manmohan Singh

If the advice by late Inder Kumar Gujral had been heeded, perhaps the massacre that took place in 1984 could have been avoided," former PM Manmohan Singh said on Tuesday.

(News Agencies)-The riots that followed the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 could have been avoided had the late Inder Kumar Gujral's advice to call in the army at the earliest to tackle the violence had been heeded, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Wednesday at a function to mark the 100th birth anniversary of Gujral, one of his predecessors. "...when the sad event of 1984 took place, Gujral ji on that very sad evening went to the then home minister Shri (PV) Narasimha Rao and told him the situation is so grave that it is necessary for the government to call the army (in) at the earliest. If that advice had been heeded,



perhaps the massacre that took place in 1984 could have been avoided," Singh said. Singh said both Gujral and him shared the same legacy of being Pakistani refugees who went on to become prime ministers of India. "Gujral ji and I were born in the same district of Jhelum in Pakistan and that was a bond which sustained us for a large part of the journey that he and I have travelled together (to become Prime Ministers)...," Singh said. Born in Jhelum on December 4, 1919, Gujral hailed from a family of freedom fighters and actively participated in the freedom struggle since 1931

and went to jail in 1942 during the Quit India Movement. He served a brief stint as the 12th Prime Minister of India and also became the third PM to be elected from the Rajya Sabha after Indira Gandhi and HD Deve Gowda. Leaders across the political spectrum paid homage to Gujral.

Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar, railway minister Piyush Goyal, external affairs minister S Jaishankar, former president Pranab Mukherjee, former vice president Mohammad Hamid Ansari and Communist Party of India (Marxist) chief Sitaram Yechury were among those present at the function. "I am enormously proud that I started

my career in Moscow under Mr Gujral when he was the ambassador...he in a sense had a Saturday Club in his embassy. The officers meeting were deliberately non-hierarchical, he would insist that young people spoke first... there was something very special that I learned from him which was: somewhere policy ends and politics begins and unless you actually spend time with someone in political life you don't get the politics part of it. You can have wonderful political analysis but that will founder on the practicality of politics...," Jaishankar said.

ITBP jawan in Bastar camp shoots down 5 colleagues, then kills himself

(News Agencies)-Five Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel deployed in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region to fight Maoists were shot dead by another soldier at the paramilitary force's camp on Wednesday morning. The constable who turned his service weapon on his colleagues shot himself dead, a senior police officer said.

Two more jawans were also injured in the incident that took place a little before 9 am.

"The incident took place at the Kedarnar camp of ITBP's 45th battalion in Narayanpur," Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P said. Police said the provocation for the fratricidal killing at a camp 350 km from state capital Raipur is still unclear.

In Delhi, an ITBP spokesperson confirmed that the constable shot himself after firing at seven personnel. Of the five security personnel that were killed, two were head constables.

Those killed were identified by

ITBP as head constable M Singh, constable Sujit Sarkar, head constable Duljit, constable Biswarup Mahato and constable Brijesh AC

Narayanpur, a left-wing extremism affected district in Chhattisgarh, is crucial for anti-Maoist operations because it provides direct access to the densely forested Abujhmad.

Straddled between Maharashtra



and Chhattisgarh, Abujhmad, or the 'unknown hill' has been the epicentre of Maoist activities for decades. About a dozen Central Committee members of CPI (Maoist) are said to be still camping there. The forest, stretching across 6,000 sq km, has not been surveyed since Independence because of the terrain, and over the last few decades, Maoist guerrillas. The state had tried to conduct a survey in 2017 but had to abort the plan after attacks by Maoists.

P Chidambaram to walk out of Tihar jail, gets bail from Supreme Court after 105 days

P Chidambaram has been in custody since his dramatic arrest televised live by a team of Central Bureau of Investigation officers late on August 21.

(News Agencies)- P Chidambaram, arrested from his Jor Bagh house in central Delhi in August, was granted bail by the Supreme Court on Wednesday in the money laundering case linked to the INX Media case. Economic offences fall under the category of grave offences but bail should not be denied in all economic offences, said Justice AS Bopanna who read out the verdict for the three-judge bench. The top court's order implies that the former finance and home minister can soon walk out of Tihar prison. The bench led by Justice R Banumathi, which accepted his appeal for bail on Wednesday in the case probed by the Enforcement Directorate, had earlier in October granted him bail in a related case investigated by the Central

Bureau of Investigation. But Chidambaram cannot leave the country without the permission of the special court trying his case. Justice Bopanna said Chidambaram will also have to cooperate in the investigation and not make any statements to the press relating to the case. The court order also explicitly mentioned that Chidambaram should not attempt to influence the witnesses or tamper with the evidence. The Centre, which had fielded its second most-senior law officer Tushar Mehta to contest Chidambaram's bail request, had asked the court to keep Chidambaram in jail on grounds that there were witnesses who had backed out due to the former minister's influence. Chidambaram's son Karti, who is also an accused in the INX Media

case, welcomed the verdict. "Phew. At last after 106 days," he tweeted. The Congress counted the verdict as an instance of truth finally prevailing while Congress leader Shashi Tharoor insisted that the court shouldn't have kept the Rajya Sabha member in jail for so long. "But justice delayed is justice denied. This should have been granted much earlier. Nothing is different from three months ago," Tharoor tweeted. P Chidambaram, who turned 74 during his incarceration has been in custody since his dramatic arrest televised live by a team of Central Bureau of Investigation officers late on August 21. Chidambaram had just addressed a media briefing to declare that he wasn't in hiding and headed home where CBI officers scaled the wall and whisk



him away to the CBI He was granted bail by the top headquarters where he was finally placed under arrest. The CBI was investigating Chidambaram in a case relating to alleged irregularities in Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) clearance granted to the INX Media group for receiving overseas funds of Rs. 305 crore in 2007, during his tenure as the finance minister.

nuway group

The South Asian
INSIDER **Josh** **BOI** **India** **पंजाबी** **सुनी** **Ethnic** **Strategies**

Most Trusted News Media Company Serving South Asian Americans

The Only South Asian American Media Group that Gives you Maximum Cost Effective Reach

3 Million + Views on YouTube & Half Million fan like on Facebook

Box Office Perfection

Email: sst@nuwaygroup.com
www.nuwaygroup.com
 Phone: 917 612 3158

www.humhindustanusa.com

हम हिंदुस्तानी

संस्थापक संपादक : जसवीर 'जे' सिंह

Price: 50¢

फरवरी 22-28, 2019

वर्ष 9, अंक-8

मोदी का एलान-ए-जंग

बूंद-बूंद को तरसेगा पाक



नई दिल्ली ■ हम हिंदुस्तानी ने एक बार फिर नया एलान किया है। एलान करने वाले मोदी सरकार ने पाकिस्तान के खिलाफ एक नया एलान किया है। इस एलान में मोदी सरकार ने पाकिस्तान के खिलाफ एक नया एलान किया है। इस एलान में मोदी सरकार ने पाकिस्तान के खिलाफ एक नया एलान किया है।

वार्शिंगटन ■ हम हिंदुस्तानी (अमेरिका) में भारतीय हितों की रक्षा के लिए एक नया एलान किया है। इस एलान में भारतीय हितों की रक्षा के लिए एक नया एलान किया है। इस एलान में भारतीय हितों की रक्षा के लिए एक नया एलान किया है।

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

भारतीय-अमेरिकन कम्युनिटी द्वारा धर निंबा

The China-Pak nexus is a threat. India is countering it well

Such decisiveness and swiftness of action are essential for India to successfully navigate the challenging period ahead. With a clear assessment of threats and boldness, a better future awaits India

(News Agencies)-There is a churn in international politics. In Asia, this decade has witnessed the rise of countries such as India and Vietnam. Japan is seeking to regain its lost influence in the region. But the most dynamic of all these nations is China, which poses a challenge to the existing world order and the primacy of the United States (US). China's President Xi Jinping declared as much at the 19th Party Congress in 2017, when he advocated a concept of "community of common destiny of shared values". In this backdrop, countries are exploring the possibility of new relationships, while assessing the impact of potential changes on their societies, security and values. The US and western nations are apprehensive of China's challenge. So are China's neighbours. India is especially affected - not only by

China's rise - but mainly by its territorial acquisitiveness. Within a few years of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the communist regime in Beijing declined to accept India's 4,057 km-long border with China and suggested it wants to open negotiations. As China grew in strength, it proceeded to lay claim to large tracts in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, including Aksai Chin which it had occupied forcibly, and the major portion of Arunachal Pradesh, including Tawang. In recent years, China has advanced claims on Ladakh. Incorporated in China's constitution is the 'China Dream', which includes the "rejuvenation of the great Chinese nation" or, as China explains, the "recovery of territories lost through the imposition of unequal treaties by imperialist foreign powers". Asked about China's territorial ambitions and its limits, retired

Colonel Liu Mingfu, who is an influential military strategist often quoted by Xi, stated in 2019, that the map used by "the current Chinese government is the clear standard for national sovereignty and territory". What is of greater concern for India is the growing collusion between China and its "iron brother" Pakistan, converging on the strategically important larger region of Kashmir comprising Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), Gilgit, Baltistan and the Shaksgam Valley. The launch of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), with its multitude of projects to be built by Chinese workers with Chinese loans, in addition to lending permanence to Pakistani and Chinese occupation of Indian territory, is giving tangible shape to the fusion of Chinese and Pakistani military power. China's strategic long-term interests in the



Karakoram region and port of Gwadar are evident. China's support for Pakistan has also become more overt, with Beijing insisting since April 2015 that India should resume talks with Pakistan and resolve the Kashmir issue. It has also argued that Pakistan is a bigger victim of terrorism. In a bold and decisive move on August 5, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government unveiled India's uncompromising stance on issues of sovereignty and territory. After decades of procrastination on the status of Kashmir, the Modi government, at the beginning of its second term, unequivocally asserted that Kashmir is an integral part of

India, with no outside element having a role. The earlier policy of diffidence and indecision was replaced with determination. The amendment of the temporary Article 370 in the Constitution was approved by a two-thirds majority in both houses of Parliament, showing that the move had broad-based national support. It showed too that India would act alone when it came to its national interests and national security. The government's move has been timely, and comes just before the China-Pakistan nexus begins to more directly threaten Kashmir. India has now begun to mainstream Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of the country, further consolidating its sovereignty

Delhi's Colombo challenge

Both have started well. But the Tamil issue will remain thorny

(News Agencies)-India's proactive approach led to New Delhi being the destination of Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's maiden foreign visit less than two weeks after his election. External affairs minister S Jaishankar visited Colombo within a day of Mr Rajapaksa taking office to establish contact with the new regime in Sri Lanka, and to send out the message that New Delhi wished to make a fresh start with the Rajapaksa brothers. India's outreach to Mr Rajapaksa is based on the government's new approach of working with whoever is chosen by the people of neighbouring countries, instead of propping up favourites. Mr Rajapaksa too sent out the right message, telling the Indian leadership that the country will remain a priority for his government, and that no "third force" will be allowed to come in

the way of bilateral cooperation. This is significant because of the fraught relationship New Delhi has had with Mr Rajapaksa and his brother, current Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, who was perceived as close to



China during his earlier stint as president. In his interactions with the Indian media, Mr Rajapaksa acknowledged the misunderstandings dating back to his brother's presidency, but also made it clear India needn't worry about Sri Lanka's relations with Pakistan or China. However, he added that other countries in the region must make greater

investments in Sri Lanka to provide an alternative to China's largesse. Mr Rajapaksa gave ample hints that his government is doing a rethink about the devolution of powers to the northern and eastern regions of Sri Lanka, where Tamils are in a majority. According to Mr Rajapaksa, development, and not just devolution, is the answer to the Tamil question. Given that the Indian side has called on the new Sri Lankan government to take forward the reconciliation process to fulfil the aspirations of Tamils, it is clear the two countries will have to find common ground on this and other issues. Such accommodation is all the more necessary in view of Sri Lanka's proximity to strategic sea lanes of communication and China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean region. Indian diplomacy has its task cut out.

Donald Trump's new Afghanistan gambit

President Donald Trump is once again trying to negotiate a United States (US) military withdrawal from Afghanistan. Last week, he announced his government had restarted negotiations with the Taliban. The last round collapsed in September. Mr Trump was vague about what he hoped to accomplish, saying only he hoped the Taliban wanted "a real deal". In this round, he is attempting to keep Afghan President, Ashraf Ghani, on board. The Afghan leader did lay out some tough prerequisites for an agreement, including a ceasefire and the closure of cross-border terrorist havens, which are based in Pakistan. Not much of this should come as a surprise. Mr Trump has been desirous of pulling US troops out of almost every overseas theatre, including Europe and Korea. Afghanistan has been a particularly high priority because of its \$50-billion annual price tag, and a general weariness among Americans for what has become the US's longest war. With re-

election approaching, Mr Trump is desperate for some policy successes. Many Democratic presidential candidates have pledged a similar pull-out. New Delhi has been bracing for a US withdrawal from Afghanistan now for some 15 years. Indian officials publicly speak of being thankful to the US for battling the Taliban for so long, and understand that its citizens want the war to end. India may hope Mr Trump's latest gambit will run aground, but it cannot bank on the US holding the Taliban at bay. Its focus is as much on shaping the circumstances of such a withdrawal, ensuring it is done so as to minimise Pakistan's influence in a post-withdrawal Afghanistan. That may yet be some time away. The present process could be as short-lived as the last one. Or the US could withdraw cold turkey, leaving Afghanistan at the mercy of the Taliban. Either possibility cannot be ruled out when someone like Mr Trump is in search of what he believes to be victories.

Bangladesh-India Relations: A Tangled Skein



(News Agencies)-India's biggest challenge when dealing with its immediate neighbours is, first and foremost, the sense of its sheer size that dwarfs the combined size of all the others. This huge size, in combination with the fact that India is the only country that has contiguous borders with all its neighbours-except Afghanistan (which has a somewhat dubious advantage of separation from the Indian landmass by intervening Pakistan)-adds to the psychological complexity in all when viewing their respective relationships with India, as indeed it explains, not a little, India's own behavioural pattern in its relations with the neighbours it towers over! Viewed through this prism, size matters, for better or for worse.

Having described generically the dynamics that very likely drives or defines the different sets of relationships that each of India's neighbours perhaps harbours towards the South Asian behemoth, I will focus here more on the relationship between Bangladesh and India than on the others.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Bangladesh's struggle for its independence from Pakistan in 1971 would have been far more prolonged, painful and bloody, or perhaps even rendered impossible, without India's support to it politically, economically, militarily and diplomatically, not to mention the whole-hearted support of the Indian people. Yet barely three and a half years after that defining moment, this relationship, haloed by the blood of martyrs co-mingling in the soil

as they fought a common enemy, turned not only sour but became increasingly protean, with more downs than ups in the period between 1975 and 2008. Why? Many in Bangladesh find Indian official attitude patronising, hectoring, insensitive and largely, if not entirely, self-serving. The propensity to shift goalposts to suit their own convenience is a repetitive theme. There were honourable exceptions to this behavioural pattern, notably during the years of initial bonhomie in the early post-Liberation years (1972-75), during the respective stewardships of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu in

Bangladesh and Mrs Indira Gandhi in India; during the pre-midterm period of the Deve Gowda-Inder Gujral government in India and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's first term in office in Bangladesh, when the signing of the landmark 30-year Ganges Water Sharing Treaty (1996) and the treaty on ending cross-border insurgency (1997) were signed; and notably, in more recent times, during the UPA-2 government led by Dr Manmohan Singh in India with Sheikh Hasina as prime minister in Bangladesh, both displaying extraordinary vision and boldness. These were the periods when remarkable events happened.

It was following the elections in Bangladesh in December 2008 that a significant turn-around took place. Winning a massive landslide victory that also gave her a massive mandate, Sheikh Hasina demonstrated a visionary leadership matched equally by great boldness and political courage, embarking on pro-active engagement with the INC-led UPA government headed by Dr Manmohan Singh, also regarded in great esteem and respect by most Bangladeshis. Within the short span of two years, she addressed India's security concerns palpably to India's satisfaction; successfully concluded the Protocol to the Land Boundary Agreement that had been entered into by her illustrious father in 1974; resolved the maritime boundary dispute by willingly referring it to arbitration by the ITLOS under the UNCLOS; got sweeping (and practically one-way) trade concessions from India; and signed the historic Framework Agreement for Cooperation and Development in September 2011 with her Indian counterpart, which enabled Bangladesh, together with India, to launch the dynamic initiative for commencing meaningful discussions with Bhutan and Nepal for sub-regional cooperation that was to

become known as BBIN.

India and Bangladesh agreed upon the first post-Partition cross border trade in power and energy cooperation, with India supplying 250mW of power to Bangladesh (this power trade has since grown exponentially) and allowing India transit of Over Dimensional Cargo of power plant equipment across IWT protocol route from Haldia to Agartala. Having broken the ice, Bangladesh persuaded India at the highest level to agree to embark on a joint-venture hydro-power generation in Bhutan for importing-wheeling into Bangladesh using Indian grid. India also agreed to discuss rivers on a regional, holistic basin-wide management basis rather than piecemeal sharing of individual rivers. This was a major shift in Indian position since 1947, enabling Bangladesh, India and Nepal to discuss the Ganges basin; and Bangladesh, Bhutan and India could similarly optimise management of available waters in the lower Brahmaputra. West Bengal's persistent intransigence on the Teesta issue and the Indian Centre's continuing adversarial relations with the recalcitrant state since then has served as impetus to growing disenchantment with India in Bangladesh.

629 Pakistani girls sold as brides to China

(News Agencies)-Page after page, the names stack up: 629 girls and women from across Pakistan who were sold as brides to Chinese men and taken to China. The list, obtained by The Associated Press, was compiled by Pakistani investigators determined to break up trafficking networks exploiting the country's poor and vulnerable.

The list gives the most concrete figure yet for the number of women caught up in the trafficking schemes since 2018. But since the time it was put together in June, investigators' aggressive drive against the networks has largely ground to a halt. Officials with knowledge of the investigations say that is because of pressure from government officials fearful of hurting Pakistan's lucrative ties to Beijing.

The biggest case against traffickers has fallen apart. In October, a court in Faisalabad acquitted 31 Chinese nationals charged in connection with trafficking. Several of the women who had initially been interviewed by police refused to testify because they were either threatened or bribed into silence, according to a court official and a police investigator familiar with the case. The two spoke on condition of anonymity because they feared retribution for speaking out. At the same time, the government has sought to curtail investigations, putting "immense pressure" on officials from the Federal Investigation Agency pursuing trafficking networks, said Saleem Iqbal, a Christian activist who has helped parents rescue several young girls from China and prevented others from being sent there.

"Some (FIA officials) were even

transferred," Iqbal said in an interview. "When we talk to Pakistani rulers, they don't pay any attention."

Asked about the complaints, Pakistan's interior and foreign ministries refused to comment. Several senior officials familiar with the events said investigations into trafficking have slowed, the investigators are frustrated, and Pakistani media have been pushed to curb their reporting on trafficking. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they feared reprisals.

"No one is doing anything to help these girls," one of the officials said. "The whole racket is continuing, and it is growing. Why? Because they know they can get away with it. The authorities won't follow through, everyone is being pressured to not investigate. Trafficking is increasing now." He said he was

speaking out "because I have to live with myself. Where is our humanity?"

China's Foreign Ministry said it was unaware of the list.

"The two governments of China and Pakistan support the formation of happy families between their people on a voluntary basis in keeping with laws and regulations, while at the same time having zero tolerance for and resolutely fighting against any person engaging in illegal cross-border marriage behavior," the ministry said in a statement faxed Monday to AP's Beijing bureau. An AP investigation earlier this year revealed how Pakistan's Christian minority has become a new target of brokers who pay impoverished parents to marry off their daughters, some of them teenagers, to Chinese husbands who return with them to their homeland.

China suspends US warship visit to Hong Kong, sanctions American NGOs

The escalation of the China-US diplomatic tussle comes in the backdrop of the two largest economies in the world trying to reach a "phase 1" deal to resolve the ongoing trade war.

(News Agencies)-China on Monday suspended US warships and military aircraft visits to Hong Kong and sanctioned American NGOs including Human Rights Watch in retaliation against Washington passing two bills supporting pro-democracy protests in the city last week. The escalation of the China-US diplomatic tussle comes in the backdrop of the two largest economies in the world trying to reach a "phase 1" deal to resolve the ongoing trade war.

China did not hit back with new tariffs on US goods as part of its retaliatory measures against the two bills.

Beijing has repeatedly blamed Washington and other western countries for fueling the protests have rocked the financial hub of Hong Kong since June.

The protests began over a controversial extradition bill but

evolved into a broader demand for more democratic reforms.

"China has suspended the approval of the request by US aircraft and warships to visit Hong Kong in response to the latest Hong Kong-related bill passed by the US lawmakers," official media quoted the Chinese foreign ministry as saying.

"China also started sanctions on US-headquartered non-governmental organisations (NGOs) including Human Rights Watch, National Endowment for Democracy, National Democratic Institute, and International Republican Institute for supporting extremist, violent activities in Hong Kong," ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said at the routine press conference in Beijing.

"China urged the US side to stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs," Hua



said, adding: "China will take necessary actions in accordance with the situation to safeguard the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong, as well as national sovereignty, security and development interests," Hua said". Hua added that there was sufficient evidence to show that some "...organisations have supported anti-China disrupters in Hong Kong and instigated them to commit violence and

crimes and secessionist activities."

"They should take the major responsibility for the current unrest in Hong Kong and should be sanctioned as a price for what they did," Hua said

Last week, US President Donald Trump signed two bills that backed protesters in Hong Kong and threaten China with possible sanctions on human rights.

The Hong Kong Human Rights

and Democracy Act, which the Senate and House passed, puts the special treatment that Hong Kong enjoys under US law under tighter scrutiny linked to the extent of Hong Kong's autonomy from Beijing.

"The second Bill banned the export of crowd-control munitions, including tear gas, rubber bullets, stun guns and tasers, to the Hong Kong police force," Reuters reported.

Polar Bear Seen Painted In Cryptic Graffiti In Russia, Scientists Alarmed

The man-made markings on a wild polar bear thought to be roaming northern or eastern Russia have alarmed conservationists and spurred speculation in the local press.

(News Agencies)-On grainy, shaky footage, a polar bear lumbers into view, its off-white pelt barely distinguishable from the pockmarked snow of its environs - until it turns its flank to the camera, revealing mysterious graffiti scrawled across its side.

The man-made markings on a wild polar bear thought to be roaming northern or eastern Russia have stumped scientists, alarmed conservationists and spurred speculation in the local press. The writing, apparently spray painted in black onto the animal's fur, reads clearly: "T-34." What, exactly, that means is less clear. Notably, the tag spells the name of a famous Soviet-era tank introduced during World War II and often credited with outgunning and outmaneuvering its German contemporaries. It's unclear whether the lettering was a practical joke or a sign of escalating frustration from some Arctic-dwelling Russians who have described a "mass

invasion" of polar bear interlopers pushed into human settlements by climate change.

The video first surfaced in a WhatsApp group for indigenous people of Chukotka, an autonomous region in the Russian Far East, and was then posted to Facebook by a World Wildlife Fund employee based there, BBC reported. From there, it circulated online and in Russian and international outlets - though researchers still haven't authenticated it or determined precisely where the video was taken. And they haven't located the bear pictured, either.

But the graffiti dismayed them nonetheless. The WWF worker who posted the video wrote in a caption: "Why?! He won't be able to hunt without being noticed!" Other experts have agreed, saying the polar bear may now have trouble blending into its surroundings and the markings could be a giveaway to the potential prey it tracks through snow and ice.

One scientist told a state news agency that the writing must have been done while the bear was sedated, so clear and steady the lettering.

A spokesperson for WWF Russia told BBC that the writing on the bear was "quite a shock" and "looks like a bad joke." But if the bear came from near the Russian archipelago Novaya Zemlya, as some have suggested, the sentiment behind the statement could have been quite serious.

In February, officials in the Arkhangelsk region, where the archipelago is located, declared a state of emergency after at least 52 polar bears swarmed a town of roughly 2,000. They called it a "mass invasion of polar bears in residential areas." TASS, another state news outlet, reported that the animals had entered offices and apartment buildings, menacing residents and occasionally attacking passersby. They marauded through playgrounds,



stared down dogs and feasted on garbage. "The people are scared," regional officials said in a statement. "They are frightened to leave homes and their daily routines are broken. Parents are afraid to let the children go to school or kindergarten." Residents have been barred from hunting the animals, which are classified as a vulnerable species, but if the government's efforts to protect the remote island community fail, officials may kill the bears, TASS reported. The International Union for Conservation of Nature estimates that there are 22,000

to 31,000 polar bears worldwide, a number increasingly threatened by climate change-caused destruction of their sea ice habitat. As temperatures warm, Arctic ice thins, pushing the animals onto the shore, away from the seals on which they usually feed. Ravenous, they scavenge for meals, which sometimes brings them into contact with humans. It's a collision that may become more common. But for whoever filmed the "T-34" bear, the experience appeared novel. In the video, two men can be heard chatting excitedly.



Insurance



Are you paying too much for Auto, Home, Business, Workman Compensation, Contractors, General Liability, E&O ?

Call us today for complimentary analysis of your policy.

NLight Financial LLC



Sharanjit Singh Thind
Licensed Insurance Broker/ Notary Public
(Service with Honesty & Smile, Since 2012)

**1900, Hempstead Tpke., Suite 306
East Meadow, New York 11554
Cell: 917 612 3158 Tel Fax: 516 246 9022**

Email: info@nlightfin.com

www.nlightfin.com

'No better person': Google's Sundar Pichai named CEO at parent firm Alphabet

Google chief executive Sundar Pichai will assume the CEO role at parent firm Alphabet in a shakeup at the top of the Silicon Valley titan, the company said Tuesday. Pichai will take over from Larry Page, a co-founder of the internet giant, at the holding firm which includes Google as well as units focusing on "other bets" in areas including self-driving cars and life sciences. Page and Google co-founder Sergey Brin "will continue their involvement as co-founders, shareholders and members of Alphabet's board of directors," the company said. In a letter to employees, Page and Brin wrote: "We've never been ones to hold on to management roles when we think there's a better way to run the company." They added that Pichai "brings humility and a deep

passion for technology to our users, partners and our employees every day" and that there is "no better person to lead Google and Alphabet into the future." Alphabet was formed in 2015, giving a separate identity to the original company Google and other projects such as autonomous car unit Waymo and smart cities group Sidewalk Labs. The 47-year-old Pichai, born in India, takes the helm at a time when Page and Brin have been noticeably absent and the company faces a torrent of controversies relating to its dominant position in the tech world. Pichai is likely to fill a void at the company as it faces antitrust investigations and controversies over privacy and data practices in the United States and elsewhere. The company has also faced allegations of failing to adequately address sexual harassment in the workplace and of

straying from the ideals espoused by the founders in the company's early code of conduct which included the motto "don't be evil."

"He's a technologist but he's been a steady hand for the last few years and has proven his ability to conduit business at the highest level," said Roger Kay, analyst at Endpoint Technologies Associates.

Kay added the move "ratifies that the (Google) founders have stepped aside almost entirely." Pichai will have a new role as he faces up to claims from President Donald Trump of "bias" in internet search results, and the latest charge from Amnesty International that its business model leads to human rights violations by enabling surveillance of users. Earlier this year, Pichai met with Trump and

appeared to ease the US president's concerns that Google was unwilling to help the US military but was boosting China and its military. Trump tweeted after the March meeting that Pichai was "totally committed" to US security. Last December, Pichai kept calm as he parried US lawmakers over complaints of political bias and intrusive data collection.

"We build our products in a neutral way," Pichai said in one exchange with a lawmaker, and added later: "We approach our work without any political bias." Chennai to Silicon Valley Born to humble beginnings in the southern city of Chennai, he studied engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Kharagpur before heading to the United States to further his studies and career.

Under Pichai, Alphabet's moonshot projects may face more scrutiny

Alphabet's (GOOGL.O) leadership change has some investors hoping that the owner of Google will take a hard look at the cash-burning ventures championed by its founders.

Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin announced on Tuesday they were stepping aside as executives of the Internet behemoth they founded 21 years ago, with trusted lieutenant Sundar Pichai, who has run the core Google search business since 2015, taking the reins as CEO of parent Alphabet.

Shares of Alphabet rose 2% on Wednesday,

with some investors saying Pichai's pragmatic approach and his background at Alphabet's core business may make him less patient about money-losing projects fostered in recent years by Page and Brin. One of the biggest changes for Pichai will be taking responsibility for those so-called "moonshots," which are aimed at diversifying Alphabet's business.

Alphabet has plowed billions of dollars into ventures Wall Street has never been completely sold on, including self-driving cars, atmospheric balloons to deliver internet service, delivery drones and smart contact lenses. "The question is, will they continue to spend money on these

other bets? Under the new leadership, are they going to take a harder look at all of these businesses and start to try to focus more on ones that provide growth," said Daniel Morgan, a portfolio manager at Synovus Trust Company, which owns Alphabet shares worth over \$100 million. "That would add an extra excitement about the stock." Alphabet's Other Bets division, which includes those ventures, had an operating loss of \$3.4 billion last year, compared to a \$36.5 billion operating profit delivered by Google. Pichai now faces the challenge of balancing the potential benefit of bold, uncertain bets

about future technology with their short-term costs. Investments in Other Bets have already been cut over the last two years, as Alphabet pushes more money into Google's cloud computing and consumer hardware businesses. Pichai could continue that trend. "I don't think this means they're going to discard their other bets. I think they'll continue to explore other potential business opportunities, but those may be under greater scrutiny," said Peter Jankovskis, co-chief investment officer at Oak Brook Investments LLC, which holds shares of Alphabet on behalf of its clients.

Alphabet's days could be numbered under its new CEO

The tech world has gone a long time since a day like Tuesday, where the industry's tectonic plates shifted in a fashion sudden and dramatic enough to send newsrooms into momentary turmoil. Being sent into momentary turmoil is half the fun of being a reporter, of course, and so I didn't even mind when I had to throw out a half-written column about political ads (that hoary old topic again?!) in favor of a send-off for Google's departing co-founders. Now that we've had a day to consider the implications, it seems striking that there are only two real lines of thinking emerging.

The first is: remind us who Sundar Pichai is, and also can he possibly resolve the many challenges in front of him?

The second is: why does Alphabet exist again?

Let's take them in order.

Sundar Pichai is the 47-year-old CEO of Google, and as of yesterday, the CEO of its parent company, Alphabet. He comes from humble beginnings, as Mat Honan captured beautifully in this profile from a few years back. Pichai joined the company in 2004 and ran Chrome and Android before being named CEO in 2015. He attended the 2013 Google holiday party while still a Chrome executive and was very nice to me personally, which is consistent with virtually all other reports of his behavior. Pichai also has a lot on his mind. His

most important job lies within Google still, and it's not just cleaning up the effects of Google's culture on its products. Instead, it's stabilizing the culture itself. After that, it's navigating the new world of regulation, antitrust, the techlash, and well-justified privacy concerns from its users (aka everybody who goes online).

Google's internal culture is changing rapidly, and the list of how employees are beginning to lose faith is not short. There's the James Damore mess, the Google Walkout that followed the revelation of Andy Rubin's payouts, the scaled-back TGIF all hands meetings, and most recently the accusations of employee retaliation.

Then there are all the Congressional hearings to come, with Pichai likely to be cast in the role of punching bag for lawmakers concerned about data privacy, competition, algorithmic bias, and other thorny issues.

On the other hand: Wall Street likes him. Shares of Google rose 1.9 percent after he was named CEO of Alphabet, adding \$2.3 billion to the net worth of Page and Brin.

And what about Alphabet, the holding company Google established in 2015 when it made Pichai CEO? Well ... no one is quite sure why we need it any more. The original idea, as Shira Ovide writes here, was to "give operational independence and a separate budget to nascent projects inside the company such as driverless cars, health-care initiatives and novel approaches

to internet services."

But that may not make sense much longer, Ovide continues:

Shielding Google from those "other bets" such as driverless cars no longer seems so urgent. Alphabet and other tech titans — particularly those effectively controlled by their founders — have a relatively long leash from investors to invest in both the projects that generate earnings now and on whatever comes next. Amazon, for example, spent \$14 billion to buy a niche grocery store chain, and it's investing in far-flung businesses such as health care and entertainment.

Amazon has always received a longer leash to tinker than most other companies, but I think Google's cash firepower also lets it experiment without creating an artificial structure to shield Google from its less mature corporate cousins. There may be a reason that Alphabet never became a blueprint for other technology companies that wanted to keep up with the times.

Plenty of columnists weighed in over the past day to suggest that Pichai running Alphabet won't change much, but Matt Levine offers a compelling reason that it might. Page and Brin seemed to be focused mostly on distracting side projects, but Pichai wasn't hired to play the role of visionary founder. His job is to be a professional CEO in the Tim Cook mold — and that could mean more focus

on YouTube and Google's other core moneymaking activities:

Pichai will still get detailed YouTube information, and Page still won't, but now Pichai is the CEO of the whole public company. Presumably — who knows! — he will devote more of his time to YouTube, which is both a huge cash generator and a political lightning rod, than he does to, like, Moonshot Number 13 or whatever. Perhaps this will change Alphabet's disclosure; perhaps they'll find a way to keep things vague. But surely it will change Alphabet's business. Having the CEO involved in the money-generating business is different from having a CEO who isn't. It feels weird to type that. Usually it's just a given. Most public-company CEOs spend a lot of their time working on the parts of the business that make the money! Alphabet was an unusual experiment in not doing that, but now it seems to be over.

Are Alphabet's days as a holding company numbered? Ben Thompson thinks so, noting that the company's "other bets" division lost \$941 million in a single quarter. The team at The Information thinks so too, calling it obsolete.

If the result of yesterday's changing of the guard is that the other bets wither away, and Pichai focuses Google on its core suite products, that would seem to me like a very big change indeed.

(By Casey Newton for Verge.com)

GOOGLE'S THIRD ERA, What's next now that Sundar Pichai is CEO of Alphabet

Yesterday's news that Sundar Pichai is taking on the new role of CEO of Google's parent company Alphabet was not exactly a "knock you over with a feather" kind of announcement.

In a strictly technical, definitional sense, this is an "era-changing" moment because there's a new CEO for Alphabet. Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the founders of the company, are stepping back from running things and any time the founders change jobs, it means something. Arriving randomly on a Tuesday afternoon, it felt

they're not going away, they're just handing over the reins. In their letter, they wrote:

We are deeply committed to Google and Alphabet for the long term, and will remain actively involved as Board members, shareholders and co-founders. In addition, we plan to continue talking with Sundar regularly, especially on topics we're passionate about.

Their characterization of how they'll be "actively involved as Board members, shareholders and co-founders" is a vital part of

he doesn't have ultimate lacking before.

power. Page and Brin are not These distinctions are in charge, but they control the necessarily arbitrary, but I company. It's a situation as find it useful to split Google convoluted as the corporate into three distinct eras. The structure of Alphabet itself. first is the early startup Alphabet was formed in 2015 days from the Stanford dorm as a weird holding company room up until Eric Schmidt's for Google, designed in part to "adult supervision" led distance Page and Brin's Google to IPO and to buy various pet projects from YouTube and DoubleClick - Google's core business. That's roughly 1996 to 2007. Next when Pichai was put in charge is Google's monumental of Google as the CEO. Since growth across mobile, ads, then, I think Pichai's tenure the web, and everything else has been marked by a few you can think of - roughly major stories that are really 2007 to 2015. I see the the same story: he has spent founding of Alphabet in 2015 a significant chunk of his time as an explicit attempt to cleaning up the messes that start Google's third era. But resulted from Google's culture what it really was a up to that point. midlife crisis. Splitting off

Pichai's rise through Google's experimental divisions into ranks was well deserved separate companies inside because he has calmly and an umbrella corporation consistently delivered good might have made sense in products. From the very first theory, but in practice Google Toolbar to Chrome to everybody knew the truth: it Google's online apps to was all Google and so-ordering its scattered called "other bets" on the hardware efforts, he steadily side.

took on more of Google's It didn't really start the new user-facing products until, era, is what I'm saying. But eventually, he took on the job now that Pichai is running of CEO.

Alphabet officially alongside All of the stuff Google made (above? contiguous with?) was innovative and smart but Google, he can do the same also directionless and product cleanup work for the unpolished. Pichai's job was Alphabet companies.

to take Google's products out That is, if Page and Brin will of permanent beta. At the let him. They did promise to same time, he's had to "continue talking with ensure future technologies - Sundar regularly, especially especially those based on on topics we're passionate AI - turned into real about." It's something to products. From a purely watch out for in the future, product perspective, which but it's also not the most of course includes the important job Pichai has lucrative ad products that right now.

make the whole thing go, His most important job lies Pichai has been very within Google still, and it's successful. not just cleaning up the

Pichai is not a corporate effects of Google's culture suit - Google is still Google on its products. Instead, it's and will still toss out weird stabilizing the culture itself. ideas and still do weird stuff After that, it's navigating the to the web and Android all new world of regulation, the time - but there's a antitrust, the techlash, and sense of direction in the well-justified privacy past few years that was concerns from its users (aka

everybody who goes online). Google's internal culture is changing rapidly, and the list of how employees are beginning to lose faith is not short. There's the James Damore mess, the Google Walkout that followed the revelation of Andy Rubin's payouts, the scaled-back TGIF all hands meetings, and most recently the accusations of employee retaliation - just to name a few big moments off the top of my head.

Only so many of those scandals can be laid at the feet of Google's previous management. If I could only pick one major failure of Pichai's now four-year-old tenure as CEO, it would be the inadequate and increasingly antagonistic way the company is interacting with its most politically active employees. And external pressures on Google are just as difficult to navigate: at some point the US federal government will get its act together and enact more tech regulations - or even antitrust actions. The EU is already there on both fronts with the GDPR and the new rules about Android.

If the first era of Google was developing the technology, and the second era was growing to a massive scale, the third era is contending with the effects of that scale.

That reckoning isn't happening because the founders formalized their already reduced roles by handing over the CEO title. It's happening because both internally and externally, we don't know how to deal with a company as big and powerful as Google. We just know that Page and Brin aren't the ones to figure that out anymore.

The third era of Google was already here and has been for some time - yesterday's CEO announcement just made it official.



surprising and big.

But it also felt a little like a non-event, just a formalization of how things have been working anyway. The consensus is that Page hasn't been doing the necessary, public-facing part of being the CEO of Alphabet and maybe not much of the non-public work, either. So somebody needs to steer Alphabet, and Pichai is the obvious, steady choice.

Google tells me Page and Brin will continue to stay on as Alphabet employees -

the story. As Kara Swisher has repeatedly pointed out, they retain special, company-controlling shares of stock. It gives them leverage over not just Pichai but also the board itself. So the circle you have to square is that the co-founders have near-absolute power to do whatever they want with the company - and that they apparently haven't been doing much.

Those aren't strictly contradictory ideas, but instead weirdly orthogonal ones: Pichai is in charge, but

Warren calls for Larry Page testimony, despite change of guard at Alphabet

United States Senator (GOOGL.O), Google's parent Elizabeth Warren said on company. "We do still expect Wednesday that she still you to testify before expects Larry Page to testify Congress," she said in a in Congress, a day after he tweet, while congratulating stepped down as chief Page on "the move". She executive of Alphabet Inc added that while Google co-

founder Page's title may have changed, he is still a part of Alphabet's board of directors and retains "effective control". Sundar Pichai, who has been the chief executive officer of Alphabet's Google for four

years now, succeeded Page at the helm of Alphabet on Tuesday, making him the public face of a company long associated with its iconic founders. Warren, vying for the Democratic nomination to take

on President Donald Trump in November 2020, has vowed to break up Amazon.com Inc (AMZN.O), Google and Facebook Inc (FB.O) if elected to promote competition in the technology sector.

Mass animal sacrifice begins despite outcry from activists

The Gadhimai festival, thought to be the largest mass-slaughter of animals on the planet, is underway in Nepal, despite fierce objections from animal rights groups.

The Hindu religious event has been held every five years for the last 260 years in Bariyarpur, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) south of the capital Kathmandu. Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to attend the two-day event in the belief that animal sacrifices will please the goddess Gadhimai and bring them good fortune.

But Manoj Gautam, an animal rights activist with Nepal's Jane Goodall Institute, said the religious aspect seems to have

been lost in recent years.

"There is no compassion. There is no spirituality. It is just sport. It is wasteful," he said.

An estimated 500,000 goats, buffalo, pigeons and other animals were slaughtered in 2009, according to Humane Society International (HSI). That number dropped to about 30,000 in 2014, the NGO said.

In 2015, the event's organizers, Gadhimai Temple Trust, announced there would be no more animal sacrifices, according to CNN affiliate News18.

Yet, this year's slaughter has gone ahead regardless.

In September, Nepal's Supreme Court ordered the government to come up with a plan to phase out



the animal sacrifice and pass laws making it illegal, according to a translation of the verdict published by Asia for Animals, an animal rights group.

Gautam said his organization used drones to tally up the number of buffalo that had been rounded up before the slaughter. They spotted somewhere

between 1,600 and 1,800, he said. It's unclear how many other animals will be sacrificed, as they are brought to the festival by local people as offerings.

It's Not Just Trump. The American People Are Skeptical of NATO, Too.

of a national survey that my colleagues and I at the Eurasia Group Foundation recently conducted. For a second year in a row, when faced with a hypothetical scenario in which Russia invaded Estonia, a NATO ally, Americans were roughly split on whether they wanted the United States to respond militarily. And that was after respondents were reminded of Article 5, the part of the NATO treaty that obligates the United States to respond to such aggression, and after they were told that U.S. action could be the only way to expel Russia. Trump has seized on NATO's troubles, dismissing the treaty as "obsolete." That critique is not particularly constructive, and his transactional accounting of member states' financial contributions smacks more of petty grievance than of grand strategy. But his provocations have led to some soul searching. French President Emmanuel Macron recently worried aloud about "the brain death of NATO" and encouraged Europe to "regain military sovereignty" and "reassess the reality of what NATO is in the light of the commitment of the United States." Macron doesn't lay this all at Trump's feet, though; he says it was "very astute" for the United States to refocus on the rest of North America, as it did beginning under President Barack Obama, and to shift the U.S. geopolitical gaze toward Asia. In the wake of these comments, NATO will now

convene a group of experts to strategize about the alliance's future—an encouraging step.

If every crisis also represents an opportunity, leaders ought to use their meeting in London and subsequent gatherings to reimagine NATO's mission. Doing so could revive the popular support that gives it license to operate.

Russian meddling in democratic elections might be a place to start. It's increasingly clear the main threats to open societies are not military. If NATO remains a military alliance, it is unfit to respond to these types of threats. Three years after Estonia acceded into NATO in 2004, Russia in fact did attack the Baltic country. But because it was a cyberattack on banks, media outlets and government agencies, and there was no major loss of life, the alliance was powerless. One could imagine, in our era, that the integrity of European democracy would be better defended, Russian hostility better deterred and public support better assured if a cyberattack on one NATO country were treated as a cyberattack on all.

NATO members might argue the alliance is adapting to modern times by expanding—it has grown from 12 countries 70 years ago to 29 today. But, on some level, expansion perpetuates the problem NATO seeks to solve.

This sprawl has brought in a motley set of national interests to a body that requires consensus. Would Bulgarians fight for Belgium if it were

attacked? Or, as Macron ponders, if Syria "decides to retaliate against Turkey, will we commit ourselves under [Article 5]?"

The real danger of an alliance with neither a clear purpose nor a clear adversary is its tendency to unnecessarily provoke citizens of nonallied countries. As Michael O'Hanlon at the Brookings Institution has pointed out, Russians see "a psychologically and politically imposing former enemy that has approached right up to their border." NATO has strengthened autocracy and weakened democracy movements in and around Russia.

This was utterly foreseeable. In fact, it was foreseen by the man whose policy of containment helped to defeat Soviet communism. In 1998, at 94 years old, George Kennan spotted the perversity of expanding NATO when, he said, "Russia's democracy is as far advanced, if not farther, as any of these countries we've just signed up to defend from Russia." Kennan predicted, "Of course, there is going to be a bad reaction from Russia, and then [the NATO expanders] will say that we always told you that is how the Russians are." In a sense, his prophecy has come true.

It's not just President Donald Trump who is skeptical of the North Atlantic alliance, in other words. It's the American people. To the extent that U.S. citizens

think about NATO at all, they disagree about whether honoring its commitments would be worth the sacrifice.

This wavering commitment likely signals a belief that American protection is no longer necessary for European security or that the United States has different priorities from when NATO was created 70 years ago. If NATO wants to earn the confidence of American citizens—who, after all, elect the American president whom NATO allies deal with—the alliance must rethink its mission for the 21st century.

To be sure, most Americans still have a general sense that NATO is important to our country's security, according to another recent survey by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. But even that survey found the same divide on whether Americans would opt to retaliate against a Russian attack on a NATO ally. As recently as the late 1990s, nearly 70 percent of surveyed Americans supported sending U.S. troops to defend a new NATO member from a military attack.

What's going on? NATO is in the midst of an existential crisis; its original mission is a vestige of an earlier era. Even the current secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, acknowledges that there's no imminent military threat from Russia (whose economy has dwindled to the size of Italy's), and the Germans certainly don't seem intent on territorial expansion. So, Americans who retain a positive

impression of the alliance might yet hesitate to sacrifice blood and treasure on a mission they don't see as vital to their interests.

If the Russian military is not the nemesis of the 29 NATO member countries, then who or what is? In a news conference with Stoltenberg on Thursday, Macron ventured it was terrorism, not Russia or China. This isn't so far-fetched: The only time any member country invoked Article 5 was when the United States did so after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. But Macron's comment quickly led to derision from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who suggested Macron "doesn't know what the fight against terror is" and should "have his own brain death checked out first." In a case of badly entangled alliances, Erdogan is annoyed because French troops are in Syria working with Kurdish forces that Turkey considers terrorists, while Turkey is striking a deal with Russia on controlling parts of Syria that were once patrolled by the United States.

NATO has a proud history and could yet have a productive future. But it must seek a new purpose that Americans—and the citizens of other member states—can get behind. And it must heed Ismay's call to use the kind of clear language that is only achievable with clear purpose. Only then will it be more than an alliance in search of both a mission and an adversary.

Who to know and what to look for as impeachment moves to its next phase

has been unfair. Look for relentless procedural fights and "point of order" interjections that threaten the flow of the hearings. Republicans also intend to mount a substantive defense: that Democrats are moving to impeach Trump over differences in policy and a belief that he's a bad president - but that the evidence doesn't support allegations of high crimes and misdemeanors.

The big risks for Trump

The Judiciary Committee's proceedings are the first that will permit Trump a chance to participate either directly or through his White House counsel. So far, however, the White House has given no indication he will do so.

Trump may be loath to lend legitimacy to a process he hates and is eager to discredit. But after weeks of demanding his rights to "due process," refusing to participate may undercut his arguments. It also deprives Trump of another chance to make his case to the public.

First up

The first Judiciary Committee hearing on Wednesday will feature a panel of constitutional experts discussing the definition of "high crimes and misdemeanors" and whether Trump's conduct, as described by the Intelligence Committee and other House investigators, meets the standards set out in the Constitution.

Rules adopted by the House also permit the Intelligence Committee's counsel, along with counsel of other committees that have investigated aspects of Trump's conduct as president, to present the evidence they unearthed.

A speedy process

Once the Judiciary Committee completes its series of hearings - the number and topics of which are still yet to be announced - the panel is expected to draft the actual articles of impeachment that will be considered by the House.

The most significant question facing the panel? Whether to limit the charges to "abuse of power" based on the Ukraine probe or include "obstruction of justice" based on evidence supplied by special counsel Robert Mueller. Democrats also seem likely to charge Trump with "obstruction of Congress," which would capture broad efforts by Trump to deny witnesses and documents to congressional investigators.

Democrats have eyed Christmas as an unofficial deadline to impeach Trump on the floor and send the articles of impeachment to the Senate, which indicates a pretty quick turnaround if the committee holds hearings into next week.

But Speaker Nancy Pelosi has publicly insisted there is no hard timetable to vote on articles, which suggests the process could spill into 2020. Any delay would raise new questions about whether Democrats should wait on the outcome of multiple court cases that could force additional witnesses to testify.

How the hearings will go down

The Judiciary Committee hearings will follow a similar format to those of last month's Intelligence hearings. Judiciary Chairman Jerry Nadler and his counsel will get the first 45 minutes to question witnesses, followed by a 45-minute round for top Republican Doug Collins and his counsel.

Nadler can call for additional rounds of up to 45 minutes, an option the Intelligence Committee occasionally used. But if he doesn't, the second round of questioning will revert to traditional committee format: 5 minutes of questioning per lawmaker, alternating between Democrats and Republicans. Unlike the Intelligence Committee's, the Judiciary Committee's hearings will give Trump's White House lawyers some ability to participate in the process.

Under the rules governing impeachment hearings, the president's counsel has the opportunity to question witnesses under guidelines and limits determined by Nadler. Similarly, if Trump's counsel chooses to participate, he may raise objections during witness questioning, though Nadler and the Democratic-controlled committee have the final say. Trump's lawyers also have the chance to submit additional evidence and offer a closing presentation, again subject to Nadler's judgment.

Republicans on the committee may also call witnesses or offer evidence - including by subpoena - but only with Nadler and the full committee's approval. Who to watch

Democrats

Rep. Jerry Nadler: The chairman of the panel is an impeachment veteran, having played a vocal role opposing President Bill Clinton's impeachment both in committee and on the House floor. He and Rep. Zoe Lofgren, who worked as a committee aide during the Nixon impeachment proceedings,

have more constitutional know-how and experience in the process than nearly every other Democrat in the House. Nadler will work to showcase his expertise while fending off efforts by Republicans to turn the hearing into an ugly fight over the process.

Rep. Hakeem Jeffries: Jeffries, the fifth-ranking Democrat in the House and who is often mentioned as a possible successor to Pelosi, will be an important figure during the hearing. He is both a conduit to leadership and a significant player in his own right.

Rep. Lucy McBath: McBath is easily the most endangered Democrat on the committee, hailing from a district that had been held by Republicans for more than a decade. The freshman is as close as it gets to a bellwether for other vulnerable Democrats anxiously monitoring the process and hoping the politics end in Democrats' favor.

Rep. Val Demings: Demings is a rising star in the Democratic Caucus and has emerged as a prominent spokeswoman for the party throughout the impeachment process. A former police chief from Florida, Demings serves on both the Judiciary and Intelligence committees - giving her a chance to play a prominent role in the public and private Ukraine hearings that form the core of Democrats' impeachment case. Republicans Doug Collins: The top Republican on the panel is an ardent Trump defender and a skilled procedural brawler. He's spent the weeks leading up to Wednesday's hearing advocating for more robust minority rights, sending a series

of letters seeking details and pleading with Democrats to conform with due process rules provided during the Clinton impeachment. Collins has been angling for a Senate appointment by the Georgia governor, but he appears likely to be passed over, despite Trump's support.

Rep. John Ratcliffe: Like Demings, Ratcliffe sits on both the Intelligence and Judiciary committees. He's a vocal Trump backer who has lent his credibility as a former U.S. attorney to try to undercut Democrats' impeachment case. Ratcliffe, who was briefly Trump's pick to be director of national intelligence before his nomination unraveled, has emerged as a hard-nosed questioner who can drive home a sharp counterpoint during his five-minutes of questioning. Rep. Matt Gaetz: A top Trump defender and Democratic antagonist, Gaetz made headlines during the Intelligence Committee investigation for leading a band of Republicans into the secure hearing room where an impeachment deposition was taking place. The stunt, which led to a lengthy delay, was a headache for Democrats and divided Republicans on the question of his disruptive tactics. He may deploy them again in his role on the Judiciary panel. Rep. Jim Jordan: Jordan is a co-founder of the hard-line Freedom Caucus and always eager for a fight. He was added to the Intelligence Committee last month so he and a top staffer, Steve Castor, could help lead the president's defense during the two weeks of public hearings. Now he's back on familiar Judiciary Committee turf where he'll play a similar role.

Nithyananda Country: Rape-Accused Nithyananda Declares His Own 'Hindu Nation Kailaasa': Report

on October 10, 2019. The website has been registered in Panama with its IP located in US's Dallas.

However, it is yet not clear where the so-called 'Kailaasa' nation is located. But the website explains: "Kailaasa is a nation without borders created by dispossessed Hindus from around the world who lost the right to practice Hinduism authentically in their own countries."

"Though the Kailaasa movement

is founded in the United States, and spearheaded by members of the Hindu Adi Shaivite minority community, it is created for, and offers a safe haven to all the world's practicing, aspiring or persecuted Hindus, irrespective of race, gender, sect, caste, or creed, where they can peacefully live and express their spirituality, arts, and culture free from denigration, interference and violence," it read.

According to the website, the Hindu nation also has a flag

known as 'Rishabha Dhvaja', which features Nithyananda himself, along with Nandi, the vehicle of Lord Shiva.

'Kailaasa' is also set to have several government departments including education, treasury, commerce, and so on. But what stands out is a 'Department of Enlightened Civilisation' which will work on reviving Sanatana Hindu Dharma.

This so-called 'country' also claims to eventually have a 'Dharmic Economy', and a Hindu

Investment and Reserve Bank, where cryptocurrency will also be accepted.

The website also proclaims that it has its own passport and one can apply to be a citizen of 'Kailaasa'.

"The citizens will be given a Kailaasa passport which, by the grace of Paramashiva, the holder of this passport is allowed free entry in all eleven dimensions and fourteen lokas, including Kailaasa," it said.

Nithyananda is also accused of

allegedly raping his former disciple under the garb of spirituality.

Last month, Gujarat Police arrested two of his associates, and also booked him under charges of abduction, wrongful confinement, voluntarily causing hurt, intentional insult to provoke breach of peace and criminal intimidation under the Indian Penal Code as well as charges under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act.

North Korea warns US to prepare for 'Christmas gift,' but no one's sure what to expect



(News Agencies)-North Korea will send a "Christmas gift" to the United States, but what that present contains will depend on the outcome of ongoing talks between Washington and Pyongyang, a top official has warned.

The ominous comments, which some have interpreted as a sign that North Korea could resume long-distance missile tests, comes as the clock ticks closer to the country's self-imposed end-of-year deadline for nuclear negotiations with the Trump administration.

Talks between the two sides have appeared to be in a rut in recent months, with North Korea conducting several shorter-range missile tests.

In a statement translated on the state news agency, Ri Thae Song, a first vice minister at the North Korean Foreign Ministry working on US affairs, accused US policy makers of leveraging talks with Kim Jong Un for domestic political gain.

"The dialogue touted by the US is, in essence, nothing but a foolish trick hatched to keep the DPRK bound to dialogue and use it in favor of the political situation and election in the US," Ri said, using the acronym for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"It is entirely up to the US what Christmas gift it will select to get," added Ri.

In 2017, North Korea referred to its first test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) as a "gift" for the US on the Fourth of July holiday. That launch sparked what became a

tense, months-long standoff between the two sides.

What happens in the coming weeks will likely determine if Washington's next so-called "Christmas gift" turns out to be similarly volatile.

"It's hard to predict because it could go either way," said Duyeon Kim, senior adviser on Northeast Asia and nuclear policy to the International Crisis Group. "It really depends on the circumstance and the situation,



which will better inform how North Korea reacts.

An important meeting On Wednesday, North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency announced that the country's most powerful political body, the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, will meet at the end of December "in order to discuss and decide on crucial issues in line with the needs of the development of the Korean revolution and the changed situation at home and abroad."

Whatever North Korean leader Kim Jong Un plans to do with respect to nuclear negotiations

will likely be finalized at that meeting, according to Duyeon Kim.

"The outcome of this meeting and Pyongyang's policy line will depend on how happy they are with Washington and will be revealed in (Kim Jong Un's) New Year's Day address," said Duyeon Kim.

Diplomats from Pyongyang and Washington have been attempting to negotiate a trade that would see Kim give up the country's nuclear weapons and the ballistic missiles used to deliver them in exchange for relief from punishing US and United Nations sanctions that have crippled the North Korean economy.

Though North Korea first detonated a nuclear device in 2006, Pyongyang successfully test-fired missiles that could potentially hit the US mainland with a nuclear warhead for the first time in

2017 -- upping the stakes significantly and increasing the urgency to reach a peaceful solution to a decades-long struggle.

Washington, for its part, has not voiced increased alarm over the status of talks with North Korea. Speaking in London on the sidelines of a NATO summit Tuesday, US President Donald Trump said "we'll see what happens" when it comes to North Korea.

"My relationship with Kim Jong Un is really good, but that doesn't mean he won't abide by the agreement we signed," Trump said. "I hope he lives up to the

agreement, but we're going to find out," added Trump.

"(Kim Jong Un) definitely likes sending rockets up, doesn't he? That's why I call him "Rocket Man."

Kim's back on a horse North Korea's decision to hold the meeting was announced the same day as KCNA released dozens of photographs showing Kim Jong Un on horseback

touring Mount Paektu, an active volcano that sits on the country's border with China, alongside his wife and other officials. This was Kim's second trip on horseback atop the mountain since October. While the photographs are the butt of jokes and mockery online, the images of Kim on horseback touring the mountain are imbued with potent symbolism.

According to legend, Mount Paektu is the birthplace of Dangun, the mythical founder of the first Korean kingdom some 4,000 years ago.

Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Un's grandfather and North Korea's founding father, is also believed to have led a cavalry unit against the Japanese occupation from a base on the mountain.

Putting Kim on a horse at Mount Paektu, wearing a similar coat to the one his grandfather was often seen wearing publicly, is likely meant to remind North Koreans of the Kim family's legacy of fighting imperialism, according to Michael Madden, an expert in North Korean leadership at the Stimson Foundation.

"Kim Jong Un is taking on the anti-imperialist credentials of his grandfather," added Madden.

Donald Trump Calls Justin Trudeau "Two-Faced", Cancels NATO News Conference



(News Agencies)-During his two days at the NATO summit near London, Trump has repeatedly engaged in lengthy question and answer sessions with reporters -- taking up so much time that his fellow leaders were caught on video mocking him. Watford, United Kingdom: US President Donald Trump cancelled on Wednesday a planned final news conference scheduled for after the NATO summit, following two days of sharp disputes with allies.

"When today's meetings are over, I will be heading back to Washington," Trump tweeted.

"We won't be doing a press conference at the close of NATO because we did so many over the past two days. Safe travels to all!"

During his two days at the near London, Trump has repeatedly engaged in lengthy question and answer sessions with reporters -- taking up so much time that his fellow leaders were caught on video mocking him.

But as the event drew to a close, he expressed anger at Canada's "two-faced" prime minister Justin Trudeau for the joking remarks and cancelled a previously arranged press briefing.

Rep. Duncan Hunter pleads guilty to misusing campaign funds

The California congressman showed no emotion in the courtroom when he pleaded guilty to misusing campaign money.

(News Agencies)-GOP Rep. Duncan Hunter showed no emotion in the courtroom when he pleaded guilty to misusing campaign money in San Diego on Tuesday.

Outside federal court, the California congressman declined to say when he would leave office. Prosecutor Phil Halpern noted Hunter's honorable service in the Marine Corps and his

place in a family that has been a Southern California political dynasty. But he had a sharp rebuke for the congressman's claim that the investigation was a politically motivated "witch hunt."

Story Continued Below

"No figure, regardless of what office they occupy, should be allowed in this country to cry 'witch hunt' or 'fake news' and

attempt to deflect their criminal wrongdoings," he said. Halpern vowed to seek a prison term for Hunter of at least a year, although his plea agreement calls for up to five years. Hunter, 42, changed his not guilty plea Tuesday. He had denied wrongdoing for more than a year. He gave a brief statement outside court saying he failed to properly monitor campaign funds. Prosecutors



say he and his wife spent more than \$250,000 in campaign money on personal expenses.

Margaret Hunter pleaded guilty earlier this year and had agreed to testify against her husband.

A woman lied on her resume to land a \$185,000-a-year job. Now she's going to jail



TORSTEN BLACKWOOD/REX/GETTY IMAGES

(News Agencies)-A woman who lied on her resume and faked "glowing" references to land a high-paying job with an Australian regional government has been sentenced to at least a year in prison.

Veronica Hilda Theriault, 46, was convicted Tuesday of deception,

dishonesty, and abuse of public office, relating to her 2017 application for the chief information officer role, which came with an annual salary of 270,000 Australian dollars (US\$185,000).

Theriault worked in the position with South Australia's

Department of the Premier and Cabinet for over a month and earned about 33,000 Australian dollars (\$22,500) before being fired. She pleaded guilty to all charges and received a 25-month sentence with a non-parole period of a year.

The court heard that she

submitted a fraudulent resume to the department with false information relating to her education and prior employment. After she was granted an interview, she also posed as a previous employer during a reference check, in which she "gave glowing feedback" about her own performance.

Tall tales

But the lies didn't end there. In earlier submissions, the court heard that Theriault used a photo of supermodel Kate Upton as her LinkedIn profile photo, according to CNN affiliate 7 News.

And after starting the position in August, she was found to have hired her brother, despite him lacking the qualifications to perform the role.

Her case became suspicious to the department after her mental health deteriorated shortly after she started working in the position.

In his sentencing remarks,

Judge Michael Boylan said he had taken Theriault's mental health into account, but he added that the charges were "serious" and there was an element of planning in her deceitful conduct. "You fraudulently obtained employment for which you were paid a large salary and in the course of which you may have had access to sensitive material," he said.

Theriault's defense counsel previously told the court that she was "deeply ashamed and embarrassed" by the revelation, and her crimes involved a "unique set of circumstances that were unlikely to be repeated," according to 7 News.

The court was also told she had previously used resumes with false information to obtain employment at two companies in 2012 and 2014.

CNN has reached out to the Department of Premier and Cabinet for comment.

George Zimmerman sues Trayvon Martin's family, others for \$100M

(News Agencies)-George Zimmerman, the onetime neighborhood watch volunteer who was acquitted in the 2012 shooting death of Trayvon Martin in Florida, has sued the boy's family and others for damages in excess of \$100 million. The lawsuit was filed Wednesday in Polk County Circuit Court and cites information from a documentary about Zimmerman's case "that accuses the Martin family of engineering false testimony." Zimmerman is represented by

Larry Klayman, the founder of conservative legal-rights group Judicial Watch, and is seeking "\$100 million in civil damages, alleging defamation, abuse of civil process and conspiracy," according to the Miami Herald. It claims the defendants "have worked in concert to deprive Zimmerman of his constitutional and other legal rights." The 36-year-old fatally shot Martin, an unarmed black 17-year-old who was staying in the gated townhouse community in Sanford where Zimmerman lived and was serving as a neighborhood watch

volunteer in February 2012. In 2013, Zimmerman was acquitted of all charges in the case. The lawsuit names Martin's mother, Sybrina Fulton, who has become a gun control advocate in the wake of her son's death and is running for a seat on the Miami-Dade County Commission, as the lead defendant. At the time of his death, Martin lived with Fulton in Miami Gardens and was visiting his father in Sanford. The lawsuit "presses the Zimmerman version of events, with allegations of efforts by the Martin family to produce a false



narrative through dishonest accounts from witnesses," according to the Herald.

The suit also names prosecutors involved in the case for alleged false prosecution. Additionally, Harper Collins is named because

of its October release of "Open Season: Legalized Genocide of Colored People," a book written by lawyer Ben Crump, who represented the Martin family. Crump is also identified in the lawsuit.



White House life has led to friction between Melania and Ivanka Trump, source says

(News Agencies)- Melania Trump and Ivanka Trump are without doubt the key women in President Donald Trump's life. Both are glamorous women. Both fashionable. Both smart and savvy about their public personas. Both equally powerful and influential when it comes to the President of the United States. But despite maintaining a warm relationship over the last two decades, stepmother and stepdaughter have found the White House years more challenging, according to a source familiar with the dynamic who notes friction between the two. Of late, the two women are described as "cordial, but not close," by someone familiar with both. Months of overlapping objectives, trips, events and interactions with the President have created a shaky alliance,

as reported in "Free, Melania: The Unauthorized Biography," available Tuesday. A spokeswoman for Melania Trump, Stephanie Grisham, tells CNN that the two women "always shared a close relationship and still do today." Melania Trump's first big solo trip was to the African continent, as was Ivanka Trump's first big solo trip. The first lady was the first to introduce highly produced mini-videos of her events for public consumption, and now Ivanka Trump also makes her own short films, with voice-overs and music. While these points may seem trivial, the similarities have reportedly caused static. On presidential trips, when Melania Trump goes, the first daughter's profile diminishes - and when the first lady is absent, Ivanka Trump steps up. It has created an odd dynamic

that has left Ivanka and Melania Trump switching off front seat-back seat as the two women in Trump's orbit, a relationship that has created friction. It was during Trump's presidential campaign that family life shifted to politics, and the dynamics changed as well. Melania Trump, uninterested in the constant travel involved on the campaign trail, and hoping to maintain a semblance of normalcy for her young son, stayed away for the most part, remaining in New York City. Out on the campaign trail, it was Ivanka Trump who stepped into her space. Ivanka Trump, a seasoned public speaker who is comfortable in the spotlight, was able to serve as surrogate campaigner in lieu of Melania Trump. The President's daughter maintained her role as one of the most prominent female

of first ladies. Ivanka Trump lent her support to women's economic development, child tax credits and pushing for STEM programs for children and young adults. "The most important investment we can make as a country is in the next generation of Americans, and we're doing just that through our tax code," said Ivanka Trump in one of her social media videos, designed to capitalize on her photogenic popularity. Ivanka Trump also learned to navigate the media, often selectively leaking her involvement, or lack thereof, in headline-making policies. The tension between the two manifested itself over credit for influencing the President into changing his mind on one of his administration's most controversial policies: child separation at the border. When images of children being separated from their families flooded Twitter feeds and news programs last year, a source said Melania Trump told the President the zero-tolerance policy had to end, and quickly. She organized a trip with little notice to fly to McAllen, Texas, and see for herself what was happening at an immigrant intake facility. "I'm headed down to Texas," Melania Trump told Donald Trump, according to one White House source. Shortly thereafter she went, but she didn't leave until she was certain her husband would sign an executive order

ostensibly ending the zero-tolerance separation policy. Ivanka Trump, at the same time, was also letting it be known that she was trying to convince her father to pull the plug on zero tolerance. This all coincided with a few punishing days for her on social media. (As the photos and stories of families being torn apart ran rampant, Ivanka Trump had posted some personal shots of herself and her young sons on Twitter and Instagram, a move that her most gentle critics called "tone deaf," and the harsher ones deemed an example of her living "in a bubble.") Both women, separately, and with their own signature styles -- Melania Trump quietly and one-on-one with her husband, and Ivanka Trump via the media and her relationships with lawmakers -- were pressing for action.

When the President did sign the executive order, he gave both women credit.

"Ivanka feels very strongly about it," but also, next breath, "My wife feels very strongly about it."

But Melania Trump boarded her government jet wearing the now-infamous, \$39 "I really don't care, do u?" jacket, a lost-in-translation message that was possibly a jab at Ivanka Trump, for drifting into the first lady's lane.

Melania Trump wearing anything that inexpensive, much less from fast-fashion brand Zara (a label worn with frequency by Ivanka Trump during that period,) was out of step with the first lady's regular sartorial preferences, and overt negative messaging was not by experience or observation Melania Trump's style. Her spokeswoman, Grisham, after the offensive jacket took over the news cycle, officially said that she had worn it as a message to a meddling media.

In a way, Ivanka Trump and Melania Trump are splitting -- and will continue to split -- the traditional roles that most spouses or female counterparts to male politicians have, but they share the most critical component: the President's ear. They are the only two members of the administration who have the freedom and power of total job security -- one a first daughter and the other a first lady.



Raped her while she was alive, raped her when she was dead

Confession of a rapist and murderer on camera

In a rare video confession, an accused of rape and triple murder case of Uttar Pradesh, has given chilling details of how he raped a woman and her 10-year-old daughter, killed the woman, her husband and their infant son in cold blood.

That goes in the head of a rapist? This has been an intriguing question in the minds of all general public, police and judges. In a rare video confession, an accused of rape and triple murder case of Uttar Pradesh, has given chilling details of how he raped a woman and her 10-year-old daughter, killed the woman, her husband and their infant son in cold blood. The incident took place last week in Azamgarh. Accused Nasiruddin was arrested on Monday. The video of his questioning by the police has surfaced in which he tells how he planned and executed rape and murder.

The accused tells in the video that he had marked the target a couple of weeks in advance. He had conducted a reconnaissance to ascertain that the family is lax in taking proper safety measures.

He had already checked that entering the target's home was not difficult as it is not properly latched when the family retires for sleep at night. On the fateful night, accused Nasiruddin took a stimulating drug before he set out to commit rape. He says when he reached the victims' home, he found the lane deserted. Someone had switched on a bulb outside their home. He removed the bulb from its holder and headed towards the main door of the target's home. He could be heard telling in the video that he pushed the door open and as he entered the room, a bamboo stick fell on the ground. The woman's husband, 35, woke up hearing the sound and was immediately hit by the accused. "I hit him with a brick that I had picked up from outside. I hit him twice. He fell from the bed onto the ground.

The woman got up hearing the sound. I hit her too. I saw a baby sleeping in between. I hit him. I hit everyone I saw," Nasiruddin tells police in the video.

The baby was a four-month-old boy. He died in the brick attack. The man too died. Another son of the couple aged four was also injured. Having killed two, Nasiruddin says he pulled the woman and raped her. "She was still moving when I did it I got bloodstains on my shirt near the shoulder as she was shaking her hands and body. When I was going out, I saw the stain and came back to clean it," he tells the police. The police had earlier said that he engaged in sex with the woman, even after she died, for three hours in the house and made a video of the act, which he later showed to his sister-in-law. When asked why he attacked the 10-year-old girl,



Nasiruddin said, "She got up asking her mother to give her water. I told her to sleep back quietly. She asked me 'who are you?' and started shouting 'thief, thief, momma, there is a thief in our home'. I hit her with the brick that I had kept on the bed. Then I did the same to her." Police later told that Nasiruddin spent around three hours in the victims' home. After committing rape and murder, he tried to dress the scene to make it look like a burglary gone wrong. He spread out clothes all around the room. He tells the police in the video that before exiting the room, he flipped an album of photographs.

He says he identified the person in the photograph as one who had recently moved in from Saudi Arabia. He says that is why he covered the woman - whom he raped and killed, and indulged in sex even after she was dead - with a bedsheet and a mattress. The video confession has come at a time when the nation is debating how to make it safer for women in the wake of gangrape and murder of a Hyderabad veterinarian. She was raped, murdered and burnt in Hyderabad last week. Protests are being held in various parts of the country demanding severest punishment to the culprits.



Millions visit US National Parks each year, many hoping to catch glimpses of animals including bison, mountain goats and alligators. What they don't expect to see are the rats, domesticated cats, feral hogs and many other non-native animals that also thrive there.

The number of invasive animal species in US national parks has put the protected lands under a "deep and immediate threat," says a new study published in the Biological Invasions journal on Monday.

An invasive species is any

organism that lives in an ecosystem to which it is not native to and causes harm. Invasive species are among the biggest threats to native wildlife, according to the National Wildlife Federation.

Non-native species may not have any natural predators. This allows them to breed and multiply quickly and then compete with native populations for valuable food and habitat resources, says the NWF.

Some are even capable of changing the conditions of their new environment, such as altering the soil chemistry or

introducing new diseases.

Just a fraction are under control. The report was produced by experts from the US Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation, the US National Park Service and university departments.

The group studied how big the threat of invasive species is to the nation's parks. Of the 1,409 reported populations of invasive species in National Parks, the report says, only 11% are under control.

"From American Samoa to Guam, the northernmost reaches of Alaska, the

southwestern deserts, and the Virgin Islands, National Parks protect some of the nation's most important ecosystems, native iconic plant and animal species, cultural resources, and the stories and values that define America," says the report. Based on the values of the National Parks and the level of threat to their ecosystems, the authors urged the National Park Service to declare the issue a "service-wide priority."

In order to tackle the enormous undertaking of controlling the entire park service's non-native invasions, the study lays out an assessment of how the Park Service should respond.

What to do about it Many parks have their own methods for responding to invasive species, but the report insists that the threat is too large to be addressed on only a park-by-park basis. Instead, it says there needs to be a system-wide approach that involves everybody from National Park Service leadership down to their staff and visitors.

Collaboration is key to solving the issue of invasive species because many parks don't

have staff trained to deal with invasive species, making it difficult for them to handle the damage caused by the invaders.

To support park staff, the report recommends creating ways for parks to share information more easily with one another. That way, they could exchange solutions, strategies and much-needed expertise.

The report says it is also essential to partner with communities and organizations outside the parks.

Introducing non-native species has been banned in National Parks since 1968, but animals still make their way into the protected lands from the surrounding area. To prevent this, the report recommends working with neighboring landowners and communities. David Hallac, superintendent of the National Parks of Eastern North Carolina and co-author of the report, told CNN that communicating with outside groups is essential. Hallac previously worked at Yellowstone National Park and Everglades National Park, where he helped to control invasive populations.

NASA's mission to touch the sun is unraveling our star's mysteries

Although the sun sits at the center of our solar system, mystery has surrounded the star and its behavior. In August 2018, NASA launched the Parker Solar Probe to draw closer to the sun than any satellite before. Now, the first data from the probe's initial close passes of the sun have revealed some of the star's strange activity.

The probe was designed to help answer fundamental questions about the solar wind that streams out from the sun, flinging energetic particles across the solar system. Its instruments may also provide insight about why the sun's corona, the outer atmosphere of the star, is so much hotter than the actual surface. The corona is one million degrees Kelvin, while the surface is around 6,000 Kelvin. Understanding the solar wind and the blazing heat of the corona are key. They both play a role in space weather and solar storms, and understanding the solar wind could enable better prediction of space weather. Solar wind and the corona's temperature also

impact ejections of mass from the corona, which could impact the global power grid and telecommunications on Earth, as well as our astronauts on the International Space Station. The energized and accelerated particles streaming away from the sun in the solar wind are also responsible for the northern and southern lights we see on Earth.

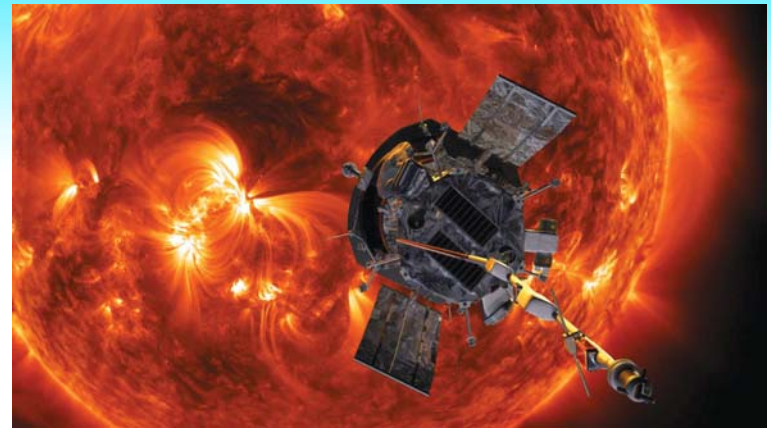
"There was a major space weather event in 1859 that blew out telegraph networks on Earth and one in 1972 that set off naval mines in North Vietnam," said Stuart Bale, one of the study authors and professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley. "We're much more of a technological society than we were in 1972 -- the communications networks and the power grid on Earth are extraordinarily complex, so big disturbances from the sun are potentially a very serious thing. If we could predict space weather, we could shut down or isolate parts of the power grid, or shut down satellite systems that might be vulnerable."

During its first close encounter with the sun, the Parker Solar Probe essentially kept itself suspended over a hole in the corona for a week, watching solar wind particles streaming along the line of the sun's magnetic field and out into space. Four studies revealing the first science results from the probe's 14,912,908-mile flyby of the sun published Wednesday in the journal *Nature*.

NASA's Parker Solar Probe observed a slow solar wind flowing out from the small coronal hole -- a long, thin black spot seen on the left side of the sun.

The scientists were surprised to observe actual flips in the magnetic field, sudden 180-degree reversals before flipping back in seconds or even hours later.

"These switchbacks are probably associated with some kind of plasma jets," Bale said. "My own feeling is that these switchbacks, or jets, are central to the solar wind heating problem."



Since the initial close pass, the probe has completed two more. During its closest approaches of the sun, called the perihelion, the probe also encountered dust. Scientists believe these impossibly tiny particles are the remnants of asteroids and comets that came too close to the sun and melted, only leaving microns behind. The dust is initially trapped in orbit around the sun before being kicked out into space and eventually outside of our solar system. Rogue plasma waves are also shot out from the sun and joined with the solar wind.

But the probe also spotted the

theorized and elusive dust-free zone around the sun for the first time, where particles are heated to the point that they turn to gas. The probe's instruments observed that the dust began to thin out about seven million miles from the sun.

"This dust-free zone was predicted decades ago, but has never been seen before," said Russ Howard, principal investigator for the Wide-field Imager for Solar Probe instrument suite. "We are now seeing what's happening to the dust near the sun."

The scientists also observed that the sun's magnetic field is pulling the solar wind in the same direction as the star's rotation at great distances, not just up close. This increases the speed of the solar wind as it streams away from the sun.

"To our great surprise, as we neared the sun, we've already detected large rotational flows -- 10 to 20 times greater than what standard models of the sun predict," said Justin Kasper, one of the principal investigators for an instrument suite on the probe and a professor of climate and space sciences and engineering at the University of Michigan. "So we are missing something fundamental about the sun and how the solar wind escapes. This has huge implications. Space weather forecasting will need to account for these flows if we are going to be able to predict whether a coronal mass ejection will strike Earth, or astronauts heading to the moon or Mars."

The sun is the only star we can study fairly closely with a spacecraft. Previous study of the sun from Earth has been like trying to understand the origin of a waterfall by standing at the bottom of it, Bale said.

"Now, with the Parker Solar Probe, we are getting closer and closer to the top of the waterfall,

China is rolling out facial recognition for all new mobile phone numbers

Facial recognition checks are about to become even more ubiquitous in China, as rules come into force requiring anyone registering a new mobile phone number to submit to facial scans.

While the government says the implementation of biometric data "effectively [protects] citizens' legitimate rights and interests in cyberspace" and helps fight fraud, the move brings with it considerable privacy and security concerns in one of the most tightly controlled online environments in the world.

The country already enforces "real-name registration" policies which require people to link online accounts with their official government ID. But the latest move, which was formally adopted Sunday, further removes any sense of anonymity in using the Chinese internet.

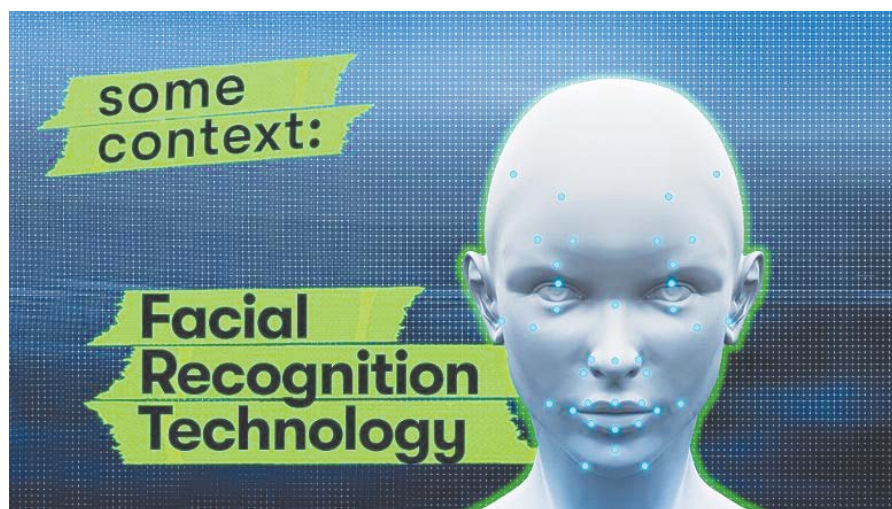
More than 850 million people across China -- about 65% of the population -- use their mobile devices to access the internet, according to the government, far more than those who use desktop services. Apps like Tencent's WeChat have largely become the internet for many Chinese people, offering everything from messaging and social

networking to taxi services, food delivery and tax payment. The new rules only apply to mobile phone numbers registered from December 1, and not to those already registered. Facial recognition, meanwhile, is everywhere in China, from airports and office buildings to trash sorting facilities. Last

the country's state-run mobile providers to protect sensitive information about their customers. Writing in September, four Chinese researchers specializing in AI and biometrics wrote that potential breaches involving this type of information could have "severe and lasting" ramifications for the people affected.

"Facial recognition-powered surveillance systems, if improperly deployed or secured, will not only fail to effectively safeguard public safety, but also may infringe on people's freedom/privacy and provide a source for abuse," they added. The US-based Electronic Frontier Foundation, a nonprofit that recommends

opting out of the tech whenever possible, notes that it's "easy for companies and agencies to tout the convenience of this sort of massive data collection and sharing scheme." "But as we've seen in notable privacy fiascos over the last few years ... it's the customers and passengers who will bear the burden when things go wrong, and they will go wrong."



week, Beijing's subway system even began trialing new facial recognition gates at security checkpoints.

Privacy concerns

While anyone registering a new phone number in China was already required to provide ID and photos, the addition of full facial scans introduces more concerns about government surveillance and the ability of

Why India should close a trade deal with the US

As the economy slows, a pact will send the right message to investors, and change the narrative about India

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States (US) in September, in which President Donald Trump made a cameo appearance at the "Howdy Modi" event in Houston, the two leaders were expected to announce a trade deal. But, the two sides could not agree on the contours of such a deal before that landmark trip ended. Media accounts suggested that, over subsequent weeks, New Delhi and Washington appeared to be near a trade deal several times. Nonetheless, as 2019 draws to a close, India and the US are still without a deal.

Two recent bilateral visits give hope, however, that the two countries might reach an agreement soon. In mid-November, India's commerce and industries minister Piyush Goyal visited Washington to hold discussions with the US Trade

Representative (USTR), Robert Lighthizer. And, subsequently, a USTR delegation was in India to continue the talks. Reports say that the two sides are nearing a breakthrough. At a time of general economic slowdown, a trade deal with the US in the waning days of the year would end the economic news for India on a high note.

It is worth noting that since India opened up its economy, the US-India bilateral trade has grown at a spectacular rate. The trade in goods increased from \$5 billion in 1991 to nearly \$88 billion last year. In 2018, India was America's ninth largest goods export market. When trade in services is also included to the mix, the volume of bilateral trade last year was \$142 billion.

This huge increase in the trade volume does not mean that the two countries were or are on the

same page on every trade issue. The US continues to voice its long-standing concerns in primarily two areas: Lack of adequate market access and protection of US intellectual property rights in India. Over the years, India has listened to these concerns and has made concessions. The result is there for all to see: Last year, American companies exported goods and services to the tune \$25.2 billion to India.

The concerns about market access and intellectual property rights have never become wedge issues in the US, except during presidential election cycles. For example, President George W Bush imposed tariffs on Indian steel to woo voters in the critical battleground state of Ohio, ahead of his 2004 campaign. Not to be outdone, his challenger Senator



John F Kerry vigorously went after the Indian outsourcing industry. President Donald Trump has stated that he believes trade wars are good for the US economy. While trade disputes with Canada, Mexico and China have attracted most of the headlines, Trump has opened new battlefronts with a number of countries, including India.

In May, his administration escalated the disputes with India, when it ended Indian participation in the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), which had allowed India to export a number of goods to the US at low tariffs for decades. In retaliation, India increased tariffs on 28 US goods.

Rebound in India services offers glimmer of hope for economy: Study

The IHS Markit India Services Purchasing Managers' Index rose to a four-month high of 52.7 in November, the first time in three months that the reading has been above 50 to mark an expansion in output.

India's dominant services sector rebounded last month, providing some cautious optimism the economy may be turning the corner.

The IHS Markit India Services Purchasing Managers' Index rose to a four-month high of 52.7 in November, the first time in three months that the reading has been above 50 to mark an expansion in output. The improvement was driven by higher orders and strengthening business confidence. The index is still below its long-run average of 54.2.

"Although the services economy shrugged off some of the weakness seen in September and October, the latest PMI results continue to sound a note of caution regarding demand and the underlying state of the sector," said Pollyanna de Lima, a principal economist at IHS Markit.

The rise in the services index followed data earlier this week showing manufacturing also improved in November, resulting in the composite PMI index jumping to 52.7 from 49.6. What Bloomberg's Economists Say The improved PMI data for November strengthens our view that the worst



might be over for the economy and a shallow recovery lies ahead. Recent efforts by the RBI and the government are beginning to now show results and economic activity should pick further momentum over the next few months. Abhishek Gupta, India economist The latest surveys offer a glimmer of hope for the economy after data last week showed growth weakening to a six-year low of 4.5% in the July to

September quarter. While services growth weakened last quarter, industries like finance and real estate, and trade, transport and communication posted solid expansion of 5.8% and 4.8% respectively from a year ago. Government officials see last quarter's growth as the bottom of the cycle, with the economy's fundamentals remaining strong.

Modi govt considers easing foreign control rule to aid Air India sale: Report

The government is considering amending a rule to allow overseas control of local airlines, according to a person familiar with the matter, which may help its indebted national carrier lure a foreign suitor after multiple failed attempts for a sale. At a meeting in early November, India's Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade asked the aviation ministry if it would be feasible to change the so-called "substantial ownership and effective control" clause, the person said, asking not to be identified as the details aren't public. The rule mandates that control of an airline always remain in Indian hands, one of several reasons global firms have been wary of bidding for Air India Ltd. Doing away with the "substantial ownership" clause will enable an overseas stakeholder weigh in on major decisions of local airlines.

That may lure foreign investors to the Air India sale without forcing the government to go down the politically contentious route of lifting the cap on overseas equity investment. Currently, foreign airlines are barred from buying more than 49% in a local carrier, and foreign investors, other than airlines, need government approval to buy a stake bigger than 49%. An email to the DPIIT was unanswered. A representative for the aviation ministry didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.



The **ONLY** temple in the world outside India
dedicated to Shri Shani Maharaj

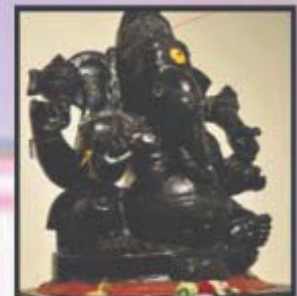
Shri SHANI DEV Mandir, New York

Sarvamangala Shri SANEESWARA Temple, New York

Regular Poojas' and Homas' are conducted on daily basis:

Special Poojas:

- + Sri Saneeswara homam
- + Sri Saneeswara - parikara pooja
- + Sri Saneeswara harati
- + Sri Navagraha Homa
- + Poornima: vrata Pooja
- + Pradosham Pooja
- + Sri Sankatahara chaturthi Pooja
- + Sri Satyanarayana Vratha
- + Birthdays / Weddings / Upanayanam & More... ..



**1616 Hillside Avenue, Temple Suits
New Hyde Park NY 11040**

Ph: 718 740 9400 / 516 358 9400

Email: temple.navagraha@gmail.com

Temple Hours: 8.00 am to 9.00 pm

The Temple entrance is in the western side parking lot behind Hot Breads & Maharajas in New Hyde Park NY

Functions of the space:

*Temple / Community Events / Senior Social Day Care Center /
Art & Music School / Library / Spiritual Lounge / Gift Shop*

www.NavagrahaUSA.com



Kingfisher Calendar 2020 to be unveiled in a few weeks

It's that time of the year when calendar buffs are gearing up for the big splash and, as every year, the iconic Kingfisher Calendar is all set to be unveiled in a few weeks from now. On Friday the final versions of the images, to be featured on the Kingfisher Calendar 2020, were released, and the photo shoots

are scorching as ever. This will be the 18th edition of the calendar, and as every year it will be shot by ace photographer Atul Kasbekar. The 2020 calendar features several top models including Aditi Arya, Aishwarya Sushmita, Pooja Chopra and Zoya Afroz. From Aishwarya Sushmita flaunting her curves in hot pink bikini against

the backdrop of the azure blue waters of South Africa to Zoya Afroz acing the glam quotient in a black swimsuit, the upcoming calendar promises a feast for the eyes. The Kingfisher Calendar has been an epitome of fashion, sensuous beauty and picture-perfect locations. In every edition, we endeavor to keep it exotic and

It's that time of the year when calendar buffs are gearing up for the big splash and, as every year, the iconic Kingfisher Calendar is all set to be unveiled in a few weeks from now.



exuberant. This year, we are very excited about what we have shot around the western cape of South Africa, which provided a great backdrop and a plethora of

options to set a picture-perfect frame," said Kasbekar. The 2020 calendar, which has been shot in South Africa, will be unveiled in January.

Katy Perry to Kim Kardashian: Flipping over the flipped out ponytail



While a high ponytail has been fashionistas' favourite for the longest time, it seems the retro flipped ponytail is taking over, with the likes of Jennifer Lopez, Katy Perry, Kim Kardashian West and Kylie Jenner giving a big thumbs up to it. It was only recently when JLo set the internet on fire while walking for an

Italian brand in an iconic tropical dress, with her hair styled in a retro flipped ponytail. And we soon saw it on other divas too. Katy Perry was snapped rocking this hairstyle at Karan Johar's party during her recent visit to India.

"Delving into the past for inspiration is nothing new, and celebrity

hairstylists often look for old and popular hairstyles and give it a modern twist. It's a trend from the 60s. Inspired a lot from style icon Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis (former First Lady of the US), whose flipped end hairdo was quite iconic," says hair and makeup expert Jason Arland. How to ace the retro flipped



trend This hairstyle looks best on medium-length hair. Your hair has to be really sleek and straightened to get the perfect shape. "While doing a retro-flipped ponytail, you

can either tie the base of your pony with a ribbon or with a rubber band and wrap a section of the hair around it to give that hair tied around your ponytail look," suggests hair and makeup expert Abhijit Chanda.

Looking to Buy/Sell ?
Sharanjit Singh Thind Real Estate Broker/Notary
Tel: 917 612 3158 (See Advt. on Page 2)



The Irishman movie review

Martin Scorsese confronts mortality in Netflix's most ambitious film yet

The Irishman movie review: Legendary director Martin Scorsese unites Robert De Niro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci in a rare cinematic treat. It is the most ambitious film Netflix has ever produced.

The Irishman
Director - Martin Scorsese
Cast - Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, Joe Pesci, Ray Romano, Bobby Cannavale

There is no truth that Martin Scorsese's camera can't capture. Even if it is buried beneath four inches of digital makeup. In *The Irishman*, his long-gestating passion project about life, loss, and misplaced priorities, the legendary filmmaker cashes a blank cheque he's had in his back pocket for what seems like decades, trading it in for bonus runtime and a budget that would normally be assigned to the sort of films that he likes to compare to theme park rides. Released on Netflix after an unconventional theatrical roll-out, *The Irishman* is a story about men coming to terms with their mortality - both in front of and behind the camera. It's certainly not a film

that even Scorsese, in all his immortal brilliance, could have made as a young man. It is at once dense with detail, yet feels curiously lean on plot. At a staggering 209 minutes long, *The Irishman* requires the sort of commitment that you probably haven't made since the last time you trusted Ashutosh Gowariker with your money. Unlike the director of *What's Your Rashee*, Scorsese remains one of the few living filmmakers, besides perhaps Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Quentin Tarantino, who can justify an extended runtime. Despite how long *The Irishman* is, it always feels like a movie and never a miniseries. Although many of you might consume it like one. Scorsese has called it 'a costly experiment', which is more a comment on the technical wizardry at play and not necessarily on the narrative, which is, rather surprisingly, very

traditional. Steven Zaillian's multi-layered screenplay - there are flashbacks within flashbacks - spans several decades, as it traces the rise and fall of two men, the corrupt union leader Jimmy Hoffa and the low-level Mafia hitman destined to kill him, Frank Sheeran. At the height of his fame, the Hoffa was said to be as popular as Elvis Presley and The Beatles at the height of theirs. "I heard you paint houses," the Teamster, as played by Al Pacino, growls at Sheeran (Robert De Niro) in their first conversation over the phone, referencing the film's original title, which Scorsese retains in the opening credits. It is also a euphemism for murder, an act that Sheeran carries out several times in the film, with a mundane deadness that one would normally associate with actually painting houses. In one scene, Sheeran curb-stomps a shop



owner not with any authority, but credit, he always maintains an almost as if it is a part of some sort of established routine, like he's getting groceries. Scorsese shoots this scene in an unbroken long shot, highlighting the workmanlike manner in which Sheeran carries out the most terrible deeds. It is a happy coincidence then that the digital de-ageing robs De Niro's eyes of any humanity. Whether or not this was Scorsese's intention, or simply evidence of an imperfect technology, is unclear. The inconsistent effects make it difficult to read Sheeran as a character - again, this could be intentional - but to De Niro's

owner not with any authority, but credit, he always maintains an almost as if it is a part of some sort of established routine, like he's getting groceries. Scorsese shoots this scene in an unbroken long shot, highlighting the workmanlike manner in which Sheeran carries out the most terrible deeds. It is a happy coincidence then that the digital de-ageing robs De Niro's eyes of any humanity. Whether or not this was Scorsese's intention, or simply evidence of an imperfect technology, is unclear. The inconsistent effects make it difficult to read Sheeran as a character - again, this could be intentional - but to De Niro's

Knives Out movies review

Daniel Craig, Chris Evans give us a whodunnit Agatha Christie would be proud of



Knives Out movie review: The Daniel Craig-starrer is two hours well spent with a hilarious and just clever enough whodunnit. Think of it as reading an Agatha Christie masterpiece.

Knives Out
Director: Rian Johnson
Cast: Daniel Craig, Ana de Armas, Chris Evans, Jaime Lee Curtis, Toni Collette
Half an hour into *Knives Out*, you wonder who is having the most fun - writer-director Rian Johnson who recently took a trip to a galaxy far far away and landed at a stately mansion in the suburbs with a dozen Hollywood aces at his disposal, or Daniel Craig's gentlemanly sleuth who is immensely excited about wearing a Southern accent thicker than his tweed overcoat.

Or, is it us? Out there with a hundred others; laughing and wincing in a dark theatre, brought together by our collective 'oohs' and 'aahs' with every big reveal, every step towards the missing piece of the puzzle. Let's just say, we are all winners here. With *Knives Out*, Johnson goes much smaller in scale since his last outing - the billion dollar mammoth known as *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*. However, one look at the top billed cast of *Knives Out* could make you reconsider your definition of small scale. Craig plays sassy sleuth Benoit

Blanc, a straight descendent of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, minus the 'stache or the Belgian accent. And what good is a pop culture detective without a fake accent and a name that reminds you of fancy stationery! We join Benoit on a murder investigation of an octogenarian writer (played by Christopher Plummer) who is found with his throat slit, on the night of his birthday. His entire family - including selfish daughters, parasitic sons and Nazi grandkids played by Jamie Lee Curtis, Don Johnson, Michael Shannon, Toni Collette, Chris Evans and others -- is rounded up for investigation at their eerie and nauseatingly excessive mansion, with a game of *Clue* definitely used as inspiration for set design. As the investigation takes off, we are also introduced to Martha, the

immigrant caregiver from 'Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil' (none of her masters can seem to, or frankly, care to remember), played by Ana de Armas. She becomes our eyes and the subject of our sympathy as she navigates through her master's death, the peril it poses to her, and not to mention, the horrible family straight out of one of the more rabid episodes of *Succession*. The greedy, malicious family members maybe two-dimensional but Johnson never lets things get boring or unfunny. Shiny and pristine on the exterior, these are also the people hiding illicit affairs and a lust for privileges they do not deserve. They pride themselves as self-made, liberal and woke, but mask their hatred for the deserving under a thin veneer. From their party chatter about the

Mexicans 'taking over' America to discussing babies sleeping in cages, over bottomless glasses of champagne, Johnson gives multiple moments for you to point a finger at the rich and privileged and laugh at their hypocrisy. He brings out their ugly and embarrassing sides when destiny gives them just what they deserve and that cathartic moment is met with roaring applause and crackling laughter. After *Ready or Not* and this, I wonder if I am enjoying watching the rich meet their comeuppance more than I ought to. As for the whodunnit part of it, there are twists and turns aplenty despite revealing the true identity of the killer from the get-go. One begins to wonder if you can even call it a whodunnit when you pretty much know 'who has done it' from the second scene itself. However, there are still faces to

How Panipat, Bajirao Mastani, Tanhaji are related: Here's a look at Indian period dramas and their timeline



With a bunch of historical films releasing in the last five years and many more in the pipeline, getting the history behind them can be overwhelming. Presenting a timeline.

Come December 6, ace filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker's ambitious period drama, Panipat, will unveil in theatres. Starring Arjun Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt and Kriti Sanon, the film has been talked about (often mocked at) ever since its trailer was released. One of the criticism it has had to face was that it looked and felt exactly

like Sanjay Leela Bhansali's Bajirao Mastani and Padmaavat! People commented incessantly how Arjun looked like Ranveer Singh's Bajirao. Many also felt that Sanjay's Ahmed Shah Abdali looked quite like Ranveer's Khilji.

Truth is there was bound to be overlaps, not because the filmmaker and his creative team were lazy and thought imitation was the best form of flattery, but because the events fall in the same period of Indian history, particularly Arjun's Sadashivrao Bhau and Ranveer's Bajirao. They both

belonged to same era of Indian history - Bajirao 1 (1700 - 1740) and Sadashivrao Bhau (1730 - 1761) - and belong to the line of Maratha rulers and commanders. While Bajirao 1 was a Peshwa (prime minister during Maratha rule of India), Sadashivrao was a leading commander of Maratha army.

Ahead of the film's release, we bring to you a timeline of various events from Indian history and films that were made in the past around them, ones that are in the pipeline and some more recent releases.

A chronological guide to timeline

of period films

Sikandar (1941)

Event: Battle between Alexander and Porus on the banks of river Jhelum (Punjab) in 326 BC

Starring: Prithviraj Kapoor, Sohrab Modi

To the millennial, this might come as a surprise that Kareena Kapoor and Ranbir Kapoor's great grandfather, Prithviraj Kapoor was a once a dashing young man who played an anti-hero, Alexander The Great, in an epic Bollywood drama called Sikandar (Persian for Alexander). The year was 1941.

The story goes back to 326 years before the birth of Christ (326 BC), when the Greek general Alexander had conquered much of what was then known as the civilisation. After conquering Persia and the Kabul valley, Alexander set his eyes on the Punjab region. King Porus (Puru in Sanskrit) asked the neighbouring kingdoms to join hands to rebuff the invader, but was forced to meet Alexander alone on the banks of river Jhelum in Punjab and lost the battle. It was recorded by Greeks as the Battle of the Hydaspes (Hydaspes being Jhelum in Greek).

A famous interaction is often

ascribed to the two - Alexander asks the conquered king as to how should he be treated. To which, Porus replies that Alexander should treat him as a "king would treat another". The dialogue features in the film too. Asoka (2001)

Event: Conquest of Kalinga by King Asoka of Magadha around 260 BC

Starring: Shah Rukh Khan, Kareena Kapoor

Nearly 10 years after making his film debut, Shah Rukh Khan decided to get into film production and one of earliest productions was Asoka, based on the legendary Magadha king of ancient India. Shah Rukh plays young king Ashoka while Kareena Kapoor starred as princess of Kalinga, Kaurvaki (also Karuvaki), whom he falls in love with but gets parted from. In time, unknowingly, the two find themselves on either side of war on the plains of river Daya (near Bhubaneswar, modern-day capital of Odisha).

Deeply disenchanted by the bloodshed that see thousands perish, Ashoka embraces Buddhism and ushers in an era of peace and prosperity.

Deepika Padukone keen on desi superhero film, has wanted to 'play a superwoman for long time': report

Actor Deepika Padukone has been wanting to play a superwoman onscreen for a while and is also keen on making an Avengers-like film for Indian audience. According to a report in Mid Day, the actor is keen on creating a desi superhero film to be spearheaded by her.

The report adds that the film is undergoing final edits to its script and that it should be on floors in 2020. She is keen on exploring an Avengers-like franchise of superheroes for fans of Indian cinema. The report, quoting a source, said, "Deepika has been keen on playing a superwoman for a long time. Discussions on the superhero franchise are at a nascent stage. She is in talks with producers, directors and actors to take it further."

She is also interested in bringing in desi superheroes that Bollywood has already produced so far. It may

be recalled that Hrithik Roshan and Tiger Shroff have worked in what can be dubbed as desi superhero films such as the Krish franchise (owned by the Roshans). Tiger starred in a film called A Flying Jatt, where he also played a superhero. Shah Rukh Khan's character in Ra.One could also be called one. Shankar's Chitti, Rajinikanth as a robot, could also make the cut.

Deepika, meanwhile, will be seen in two upcoming major projects -- her home production, Chhapaak and Kabir Khan's ambitious '83. While the former chronicles the life of an acid attack survivor and is inspired by the real-life story of Delhi's Laxmi Aggarwal, the Kabir Khan film is a re-telling of the events leading up to India's spectacular win at the 1983 cricket World Cup where minions India beat the mighty West Indies. While Ranveer Singh will essay the role of Kapil Dev in the

film, Deepika will be seen as his wife, Romi Dev. In Chhapaak, Deepika's character is called Malti and she has been paired opposite Vikrant Massey.

Speaking about Chhapaak, Deepika has said that this role impacted her the most. Speaking at The Print's Off The Cuff chat show, she had said, "I literally had to burn the piece of prosthetic that I was wearing on the last day of shoot. It impacted me in a way that I had never experienced before. That was my way of trying to let go of everything that I had experienced. I literally burnt it. Prosthetics are expensive. We get charged per piece of prosthetic that the artist makes. But I took a call as a producer - I said I don't care, I need to heal emotionally."



Kendall Jenner struggles to contain her perky assets in TINY string bikini as she peruses a drinks menu while frolicking poolside in Miami

She is known to sashay down runways all around the world. Yet Kendall Jenner was taking her supermodel prowess from the catwalk to the pool on Wednesday as she put in a showstopping display in Miami. The Keeping Up With The Kardashians star, 24, looked incredible in a scanty bikini with a tiny top and bottoms which flashed her posterior and a mass of underboob as she was joined by her sister Kourtney Kardashian, 40, and pal Bella Hadid, 23. Kendall looked phenomenal for the outing as she made the most of her lithe physique by opting for as little material

as possible. She scraped her hair into a high ponytail while going make-up free and donning a pair of trendy sunglasses to perfect her sunny style. She opted against wearing any accessories bar an extremely delicate necklace with a tiny 'K' pendant. Kendall also rocked a white manicure. In typical Kardashian style, Kendall ensured the outing was well-documented as she took to Instagram to share a smouldering selfie. She shared not only a selfie of her bikini body but also a duo of cosy snaps - one with Bella and another with Bella, Kourtney, Fai Khadra and one-half of DJ group Pizza Boys.

While Kendall is living it up in the sunshine, her father Caitlyn Jenner is languishing Down Under on I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here. The athlete - who Kendall and her sister Kylie still call dad despite her transitioning to female - is going down a storm with ITV viewers. Last week, the stunners sparked speculation they are flying to Australia to support their dad Caitlyn. They boarded a private jet with Kylie's daughter Stormi, 21 months, on Wednesday and shared a slew of snaps to document the flight. It is not yet known who will greet Caitlyn, 70, across the bridge upon her exit, but

their flight comes a day after Kendall hit back at claims she wasn't supporting her dad during her jungle stint. Taking to Instagram, Kylie, 22, shared a video of herself driving up to the private jet, before posting a sweet photo of Stormi gazing out of the window. The make-up mogul also shared a snap of her pink Louis Vuitton bag and several views of the cloudy landscape. In one caption, she cryptically wrote: 'I love you'. Kendall, 24, meanwhile, told her followers she too was embarking on a trip as she shared a photo of the plane and wrote: 'Kylie is coming to pick me up'.



No Time To Die trailer: Daniel Craig's final James Bond film looks like his biggest.

The first trailer for No Time To Die, Daniel Craig's final film as the iconic British spy James Bond, has been released online. The trailer sets up Craig's final adventure as Agent 007, offering fans a mix of the tropes that they expect, as well as cool new surprises. Once again, when a new threat presents itself, Bond must be summoned out of retirement by M. He is introduced to a massive conspiracy and a new antagonist who likes to 'play god'. Oscar-winner Rami Malek is introduced as Bond's latest nemesis, following in the footsteps of classic Bond villains and sporting a physical deformity and grotesque appearance.



There is also a side-plot that involves Dr Madeline Swan, played by Spectre's Lea Seydoux, and a brief cameo by returning villain Blofeld, played by Christoph Waltz. Director Cary Joji Fukunaga seems to have mounted the film on an epic scale, showing off massive action set pieces and globe-trotting action. The trailer also introduces new characters played by

Lashana Lynch -- she is, like Bond, also a 00 agent -- and Ana De Armas. We see returning players like Q, played by Ben Whishaw, Moneypenny, played by Naomie Harris, and Leiter, played by Jeffrey Wright.

'Black Widow' Trailer Gives Scarlett Johansson Her Superhero Close-Up

The "Black Widow" teaser trailer dropped on Tuesday (watch it below), alternating slam-bang action with bits of reflection from Scarlett Johansson's Marvel superhero.



"I used to have nothing but then I got this job, this family," she says in a voiceover after peering into the mirror. "But nothing lasts forever." Black Widow, aka Natasha Romanoff, fights impressively with Yelena Belova (Florence Pugh) before their guns-and-knives battle takes a sisterly turn to target "unfinished business." The film, scheduled for release in May, takes place between "Captain America: Civil War" and "Avengers: Infinity War." That explains why Black Widow is around to kick butt at all, given that she sacrificed herself in "Avengers: Endgame." David Harbour of "Stranger Things" looks appealingly kooky in the preview as Red Guardian Alexei Shostakov. He endures fat-shaming from Rachel Weisz's Melina Vostokoff and a smile of agreement from Natasha. Some weapons aren't meant to kill.



INSIDER

Voice of South Asian Community

Since March 2002

Thinking of Buying/Selling ?

Baldev Singh
Associate Broker/Notary Public
146-20 34 av. Flushing NY 11354
Cell : 917-224-7395
Email : josanaldev@yahoo.com

Vol. 16

Issue 28

Friday 5 December to 13 December 2019

\$ 1

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Who to know and what to look for as impeachment moves to its next phase



threshold of "high crimes and misdemeanors" that constitute impeachable offenses.

What Democrats want

To communicate to Americans the gravity of Trump's alleged misdeeds and why they warrant his impeachment. If the Intelligence Committee revealed a president using his power to pressure Ukraine to investigate a 2020 rival, it's up to the Judiciary Committee to show why such a transgression amounts to an "abuse of power" that demands his removal from office.

How Republicans plan to fight back

If you thought the Intelligence Committee's hearings showcased Congress' partisan dysfunction, get ready for a much bigger circus. The Judiciary panel has a slew of Trump's fiercest allies who plan to defend Trump in part by arguing the entire process undertaken by Democrats

Cond Page on 20

(News Agencies)- The impeachment investigation of Donald Trump has largely ended. The work of impeaching the president now begins.

The House's impeachment proceedings move this week to the Judiciary Committee, the historical home of the impeachment process

where any articles of impeachment against Trump will be drafted.

The committee's job will be less about unearthing new bombshells and more about fitting already-known evidence into the impeachment framework envisioned by the framers of the Constitution. In other words: proving Trump's conduct crossed the

It's Not Just Trump. The American People Are Skeptical of NATO, Too.



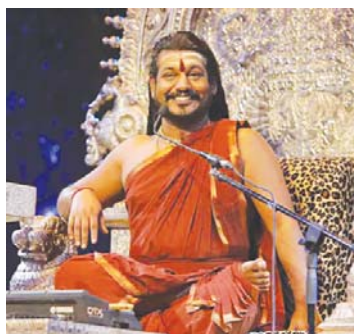
(News Agencies)- When it was created in 1949, the purpose of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was clear. With the horrors of Nazism still vivid as the Cold War commenced, NATO's first secretary general, Hastings Ismay, said the alliance existed to "keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in and the Germans down."

Lord Ismay had a knack for plain language. It helped to popularize NATO among its member states' citizens, which he regarded as one of his most important responsibilities: An organization that exists to defend democracies should, after all, earn popular support. But as the heads of NATO member countries gather this week in London, some of that popular support is in jeopardy. This is one of the conclusions

Cond Page on 19

Nithyananda Country: Rape-Accused Nithyananda Declares His Own 'Hindu Nation Kailaasa': Report

(News Agencies)-While the Gujarat Police is looking for self-styled godman, Nithyananda, in an alleged case of kidnapping and wrongful confinement of children to make them collect donations from followers to run his ashram in Ahmedabad, a website named Kailaasa.org has come up suggesting that he has founded his own country and designed its flag, constitution and emblem.



The website says that the fugitive self-styled godman has declared a 'Hindu sovereign nation' and even has a cabinet along with a prime minister for his so-called nation "Kailaasa".It has also called for donations for the country and through it, an opportunity to gain citizenship of the "greatest Hindu nation", Kailaasa, reported news agency IANS. According to cyber experts, the website was created on October 21, 2018 and it was last updated

Cond Page on 20

Mass animal sacrifice begins despite outcry from activists



Cond Page on 19

Home Business Auto Insurance

(See Full Page Advt. on Page 16)



NLIGHT INSURANCE

(A Division of Nlight Financial LLC)

Call : 917-612-3158