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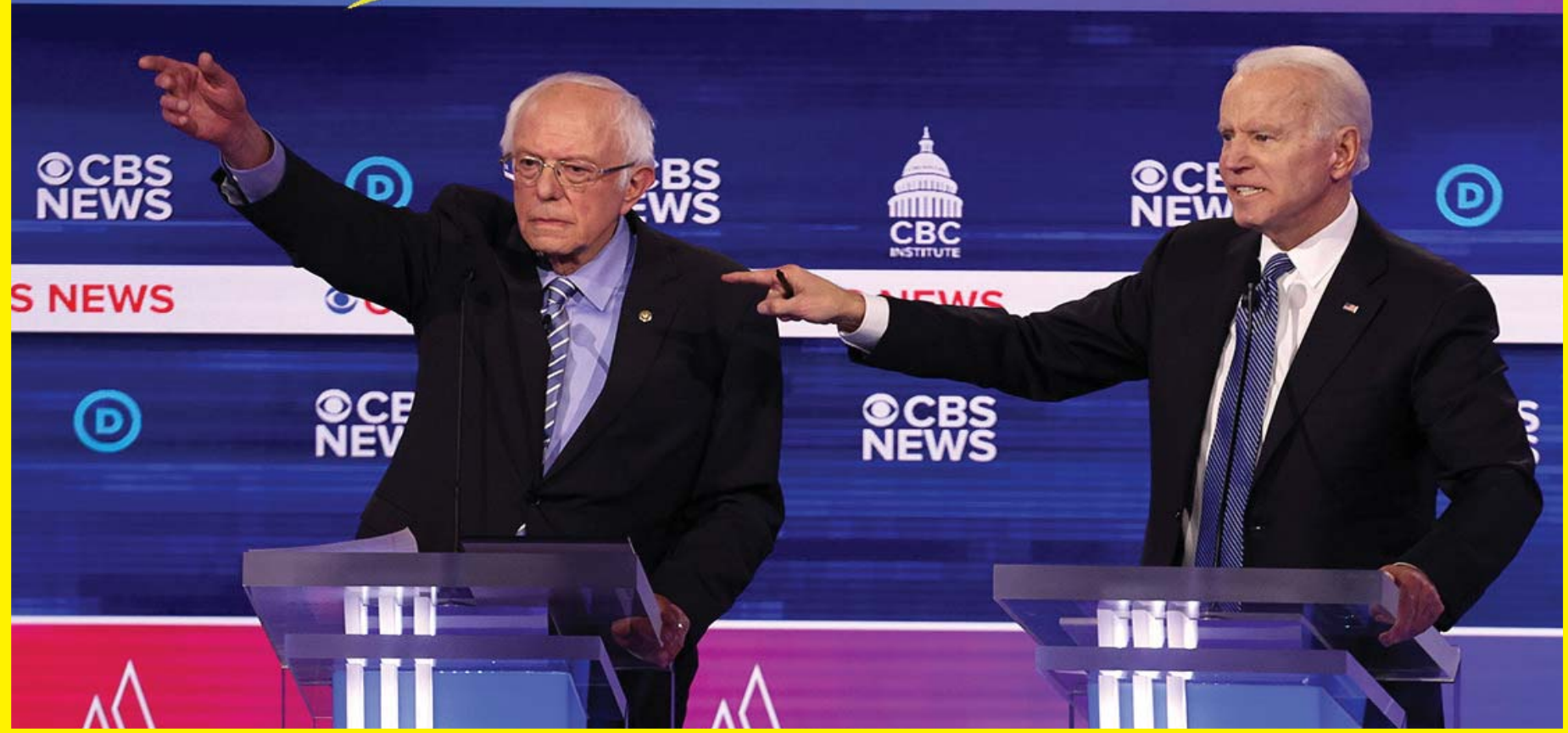
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BIDEN BERNIE *Clash*


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Colorado Man Sentenced to 83 Months in Prison for Role in \$7.2 Million Biodiesel Tax Credit Scheme

(News Agencies) A Colorado resident was sentenced to 83 months in prison on Friday for his role in a biodiesel tax credit fraud scheme, announced Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Richard E. Zuckerman of the Justice Department's Tax Division. According to court documents and statements made in court, Matthew Taylor and his co-conspirators defrauded the United States by filing false claims for tax credits under a federal program that encourages production and use of renewable fuels. They created a fake company, Shintan Inc.

(Shintan), that purported to be in the business of creating renewable fuels. From 2010 to 2013, the coconspirators then sought and obtained from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) over \$7.2 million in tax credits for renewable fuel produced, of which Taylor personally received \$4.5 million. In fact, Shintan produced no qualifying renewable fuel. To avoid detection, Taylor and coconspirators transferred the fraudulently obtained funds through a series of bank accounts belonging to Shintan and other shell companies. "Filing false renewable fuel

tax credit claims is not just a crime against the IRS but a crime against all taxpaying citizens," said Andy Tsui, IRS--Criminal Investigation Special Agent in Charge. "Those engaged in this fraud should stop in their tracks and look at the consequences which include being sent to prison as a convicted felon and paying back all the taxes owed plus steep penalties and interest."

"Friday's sentencing shows the severe consequences for those who try to profit by defrauding renewable fuels programs," said Lance Ehrig, Acting Special

Agent in Charge of the EPA's criminal enforcement program in Colorado. "EPA and our law enforcement partners are committed to holding accountable those who seek to defraud taxpayers for personal profit." On Feb. 27, 2019, Taylor pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to defraud the United States, one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering, and one count of money laundering. In addition to the term of imprisonment imposed, U.S. District Chief Judge Philip A. Brimmer ordered Taylor to serve four years of supervised release

and to pay approximately \$7.2 million in restitution to the United States.

Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Zuckerman thanked special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation and Environmental Protection Agency-Criminal Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and Trial Attorneys Sarah A. Kiewlicz and Stephen K. Moulton of the Tax Division, who prosecuted the case.

Additional information about the Tax Division and its enforcement efforts may be found on the Division's website.

A diaspora chapter ends: doyen of Asian media in UK passes away

He was the founder-editor of the Garavi Gujarat newsweekly and the Asian Media Group, whose titles include Eastern Eye, Asian Trader and Pharmacy Business.



(News Agencies) Ramniklal Solanki, who arrived in the UK in 1964 as a correspondent for Indian newspapers and went on to found the multi-title Asian Media Group that closely reflected the achievements and setbacks of the Indian diaspora over several decades, passed away on Sunday after a brief illness aged 88.

Home secretary Priti Patel, whose parents arrived from east Africa, paid tributes to Solanki: "Generations of British Gujaratis including my parents avidly enjoyed his publications. He wrote with great empathy chronicling the plight of the East African Indian community through expulsion and the challenges of settling in Britain".

"But as the British Indian community flourished, its success was celebrated

and acknowledge by Ramniklal through new publications recognising the professional contribution of our community to the cultural and economic strength of Britain", she added.

Described as a giant in Gujarati-language journalism and pioneer of the Asian media in the UK, Solanki's career began over six decades ago when he wrote for local papers in Gujarat and as the London correspondent of the Mumbai-based Janmabhoomi Group of newspapers.

He was the founder-editor of the Garavi Gujarat newsweekly and the Asian Media Group, whose titles include Eastern Eye, Asian Trader and Pharmacy Business. His contribution was honoured with royal honours OBE in 1997 and

CBE in 2007.

Lacking finance and latest technology, Solanki and his wife Parvatiben launched Garavi Gujarat as a cyclo-styled, black and white news-sheet from a small house in Wembley on April 1, 1968. It soon gained a following, becoming the largest-selling Gujarati newspaper outside India and a focal point for the community.

Solanki and his publication closely covered the arrival of Asian immigrants expelled from east Africa in the early 1970s, as the families faced hostility while adjusting to a new life in Britain. He visited refugee camps and heard accounts of those affected by the political upheaval in Idi Amin's Uganda.

Solanki's group hosts annual events and awards such as GG2 Leadership

Awards, the Asian Business Awards, and Asian Trader Awards, which are from politics and other

spheres, including diplomas from the Indian high commission. In 2014, attended by leading lights former Prime Minister David Cameron was the

chief guest. Solanki is survived by wife Parvatiben, sons Kalpesh and Shailesh, daughter Sadhana and 11 grandchildren.

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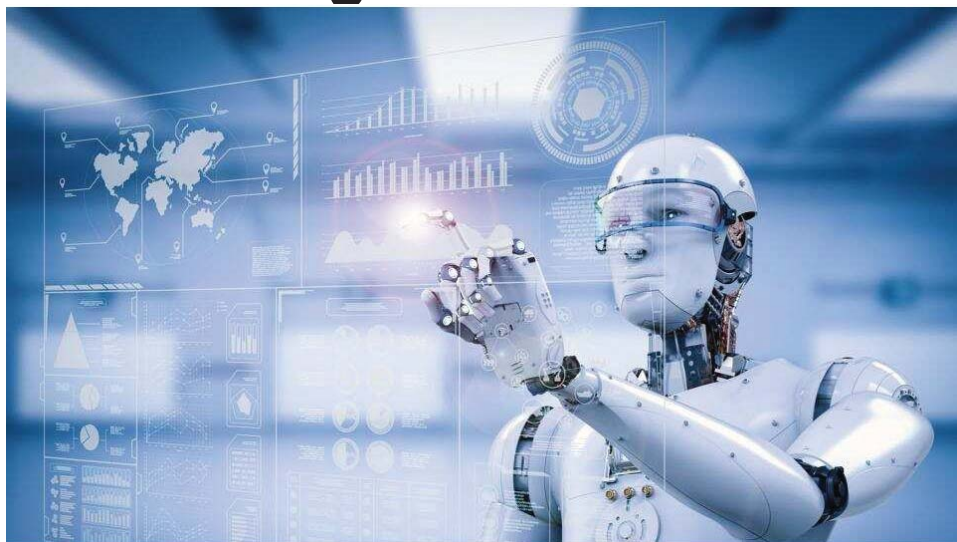
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Indian-origin scientist developing robots to do tough tasks



(By Our Staff Reporter) The team has designed a system that lets such types of robots learn complicated tasks that would otherwise hinder them with too many confusing rules. Humanoids or robots are in news for taking up certain chores like in restaurants or as cleaners but researchers led by an In-

dian-origin scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) are now working on robots that can learn new tasks solely by observing humans. The team has designed a system that lets such types of robots learn complicated tasks that would otherwise hinder them with too many confusing rules.

One such task is setting a dinner table under certain conditions. At its core, the system gives robots the human-like planning ability to simultaneously weigh many ambiguous -- and potentially contradictory -- requirements to reach an end goal. In their work, the re-

searchers compiled a dataset with information about how eight objects -- a mug, glass, spoon, fork, knife, dinner plate, small plate, and bowl -- could be placed on a table in various configurations. A robotic arm first observed randomly selected human demonstrations of setting the table with the objects. Then, the researchers tasked the arm with automatically setting a table in a specific configuration, in real-world experiments and in simulation, based on what it had seen.

To succeed, the robot had to weigh many possible placement orderings, even when items were purposely removed, stacked, or hidden. Normally, all that would confuse robots too much. But the researchers' robot made no mistakes over several real-world experiments, and only a handful of mistakes over tens of thousands of simulated

test runs. "The vision is to put programming in the hands of domain experts, who can program robots through intuitive ways, rather than describing orders to an engineer to add to their code," said first author Ankit Shah, a graduate student in the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AeroAstro) and the Interactive Robotics Group. That way, robots won't have to perform preprogrammed tasks anymore. "Factory workers can teach a robot to do multiple complex assembly tasks. Domestic robots can learn how to stack cabinets, load the dishwasher, or set the table from people at home," Shah added. Robots are fine planners in tasks with clear "specifications," which help describe the task the robot needs to fulfill, considering its actions, environment, and end

goal. The researchers' system, called PUnS (for Planning with Uncertain Specifications), enables a robot to hold a "belief" over a range of possible specifications. The belief itself can then be used to dish out rewards and penalties. "The robot is essentially hedging its bets in terms of what's intended in a task, and takes actions that satisfy its belief, instead of us giving it a clear specification," Shah noted. The researchers hope to modify the system to help robots change their behaviour based on verbal instructions, corrections or a user's assessment of the robot's performance. "Say a person demonstrates to a robot how to set a table at only one spot. The person may say, 'do the same thing for all other spots,' or, 'place the knife before the fork here instead,'" Shah added.

Nirav Modi to seek bail again in UK court

In November 2019, Nirav Modi offered to furnish a security deposit of £4 million and obey stringent restrictions, but chief magistrate of the Westminster Magistrates Court denied his bail. Ever since his arrest in March 2019, Modi has been denied bail five times.

(By Our Staff Reporter) Diamantaire Nirav Modi, who is lodged in the Wandsworth jail and is facing extradition to India for major financial offences, will seek bail again on Thursday in the high court of England and Wales after being denied it on five occasions since his arrest in March 2019. He was last denied bail in November, when he offered to furnish a higher security deposit of £4 million and obey stringent restrictions, but chief magistrate Emma Arbuthnot of the Westminster Magistrates Court said the grounds for earlier refusing bail had not changed. A spokesperson of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said on Wednesday: "The bail application is regarding a change of circumstances. Mr Modi has increased the security and of-

fered more stringent bail conditions than the last time". Modi's lawyer had alleged at the November hearing that he had been assaulted in the jail, faced threats from inmates, and denied access to a laptop to prepare for the extradition trial in May. However, the CPS lawyer appearing for India insisted that there had been no change in material circumstances; besides, he said the raising of the security deposit from £50,000 to £1 million, to £2 million and then to £4 million showed Modi's access to large funds. Modi's defence team had described the 'bail package' offered as unprecedented: £4 million security deposit, wearing an electronic tag, constant surveillance of phones and movement, and restricted use of the internet.

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Indian citizen jailed for 5 years in UK for payment diversion fraud

Satish Kotinadhuni was sentenced at the Southwark Crown Court to five years for conspiracy to commit fraud by false representation and six years for conspiracy to convert criminal property. The other four members of the gang were three Nigerians and one German citizen.



(News Agencies) Indian citizen Satish Kotinadhuni is among five people convicted and jailed for offences relating to a £10 million payment diversion fraud, which includes stealing log-in details of individuals and companies, and spoofing them to pay

into 'mule' bank accounts. Scotland Yard said on Friday that Kotinadhuni, 44, was arrested at his home address in east London on June 6, 2019 and charged with conspiracy to commit fraud and conspiracy to convert criminal property.

He was sentenced at the Southwark Crown Court to five years for conspiracy to commit fraud by false representation and six years for conspiracy to

convert criminal property. The other four members of the gang were three Nigerians and one German citizen.

'Mule' bank accounts are those controlled by the fraudsters instead of their legitimate holders. The accounts were sourced from dishonest people who were prepared to 'sell on' their own bank accounts for a fee whilst knowing that they would be used for fraud. Kotinadhuni was

described as a 'mule herder', who would procure hundreds of other people's bank accounts for use in the fraud.

The police said officials of the economic crime unit identified 235 separate frauds, committed from 2014 to 2019, amounting to £9,218,522.76.

The main method employed was the use of malware to steal the log-in credentials of email accounts belonging to

businesses and private individuals worldwide. This would allow the fraudsters to monitor the chosen email accounts for high value financial transactions. Having identified a legitimate financial transaction between two parties, email conversations were intercepted and spoofed so that victims were duped into paying funds into the UK-based 'mule' bank accounts.

Indian-Origin Peers, Leaders Rally Behind Priti Patel Amid Bullying Row

Indian On Student Visa In US Pleads Guilty To Enticing Minor To Have Sex

The letter of support comes as UK prime minister told MPs that he was "sticking by" Priti Patel because she is an outstanding minister.

(News Agencies) London: Indian-origin peers in the House of Lords, business chiefs and community leaders are among a group of over 90 cross-sector representatives who signed a letter on Friday in support of Priti Patel, Britain's first Indian-origin Home Secretary engulfed in a bullying row amid resignation of a top civil servant in her ministry.

Describing the 47-year-old senior cabinet minister as a "tough, assertive and effective leader", the letter published in The Daily Telegraph says they have all worked with Ms Patel in formal or informal capacity and do not recognise the picture that has been painted of her in recent days. "She is certainly a tough, assertive and effective leader, but even under extreme pressure she has never crossed

a line or lost her temper. She expects high standards, but is always professional," reads the letter.

"Those of us who have been employed by her at difficult times in our lives - during illness, a personal crisis or bereavement - also know how caring and compassionate she can be," it notes.

The signatories include Conservative Party peers Lord Rami Ranger and Lord Ranbir Singh Suri, business people like Nitin Singhal, Managing Partner of Fresco Global, Ankit Patel, Director of Nationwide-Paper.co.uk, and Trupti Patel, President of the Hindu Forum of Britain, as well as former Charity Commission chief William Shawcross and Australian political strategist Sir Lynton Crosby.

Sachin Aji Bhaskar faces a maximum penalty of life in prison. He pleaded guilty before Senior US District Judge William M Skretny to sexual enticement of a minor.

(News Agencies) New York: A 23-year-old Indian with a student visa in the US has pleaded guilty to sexual enticement of a minor girl, prosecutors have said. Sachin Aji Bhaskar faces a maximum penalty of life in prison. He pleaded guilty before Senior US District Judge William M Skretny to sexual enticement of a minor. The charge carries a minimum penalty of 10 years in prison, a maximum penalty of life in

prison, a fine of USD 250,000 or both, US Attorney James P Kennedy said. Prosecutors alleged that Bhaskar communicated by text and email with an 11-year-old girl for the purpose of engaging in sexual activity. Through those communications, Bhaskar enticed the victim to engage in a sexual activity with him in August, 2018, they said. The sentencing in the case is scheduled for June 17.

Indian Among 15 New Coronavirus Cases In UAE: Health Officials

(News Agencies) Dubai: An Indian national is among 15 new cases of the deadly coronavirus in the UAE, taking the total number of confirmed infections in the country to 45, UAE health officials have said. The Ministry of Health and Prevention (MoHAP) on Friday said in a statement that 13 out of 15 new cases in the UAE recently arrived from abroad.

They were diagnosed through early monitoring and reporting systems implemented in the country and are three Emiratis, two individuals from Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia and Iran as well as a person each from Thailand, Morocco, China and India, the statement said.

"The UAE announces recovery of two cases of COVID-19 and reported a 15 cases of different nationalities have tested

positive for the virus, taking to 45 the total infections in the country," the MoHAP tweeted on Friday.

Five people in close contact with COVID-19 patients have also been screened, placed under health quarantine and subjected to preventive measures to curb the spread of the virus in the country, the statement added.

All cases are being monitored round-the-clock, are in a stable condition and are receiving all necessary health care required, the statement said. Meanwhile, two Chinese patients, including a 10-year-old boy, diagnosed with the deadly coronavirus in the UAE have recovered from the illness, the MoHAP said, adding that the total number of recovered cases in the UAE now stands at seven.

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India should return to its secular roots

Its image is getting undermined in the Islamic world. This will hurt.

On Monday, Iran's foreign minister, Javad Zarif, on Twitter, condemned what he called the "wave of organised violence against Indian Muslims". Iran's statement comes soon after the Indonesian minister of religious affairs said that riots in India were "inhuman". Turkey and Malaysia have been critical of India's moves on Kashmir and the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, or the

CAA; Bangladesh has also expressed its unease with the CAA.

When Narendra Modi took over as prime minister in 2014, one of his key achievements was building ties with the Islamic world. Recognising India's national interests and strategic imperatives, Mr Modi travelled extensively to Muslim-dominated countries, particularly in West Asia. New Delhi was also careful to keep up its ties with Iran, despite

pressure from the United States. It saw Indonesia as an important middle power in Asia-Pacific. Bangladesh was perceived as India's closest friend in South Asia.

Some of the criticisms are extreme. Some States have an abysmal record of human rights themselves, and lack the moral authority to point fingers. But in diplomacy, perceptions matter. And the fact is that key diplomatic gains are in

danger of being frittered away because of contentious domestic developments. It is not enough to think that the world is prejudiced against New Delhi. In fact, enhancing India's stature has been a key element of Mr Modi's agenda. But the sense that his government has been insensitive to minority concerns has gained ground — in the West, but also in the Islamic world. This will have geopolitical



costs. It will also make return in Afghanistan. India India vulnerable to needs to mend its image. transnational extremism, Returning to its secular roots and reaching out to neighbourhood is fragile, Muslims at home is the first step. with a possible Taliban

Coronavirus will wreak havoc on the US economy



The coronavirus is an existential threat to our record-long economic expansion. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says it is likely that COVID-19 will become a global pandemic. If the CDC's warning comes to pass, then recession will be difficult to avoid.

This is also the assessment of global investors, who have dumped stocks in recent days as they vastly marked up the probability of a downturn. The stock market was overvalued and thus vulnerable to any turn of events that didn't stick to script. The downdraft in stocks — about 11.5% — has wiped out an astounding \$3.4 trillion in stockholder wealth.

China's experience

provides a good case study on how COVID-19 could wreak havoc on our own economy. Travel, tourism and trade will be significantly disrupted, if not shut down. The airlines and hotel chains are already grappling with cancellations. Workers won't be able to get to their jobs if they are sick or quarantined, and if schools and daycare centers close, parents will have to stay home with their children and work fewer hours.

Without workers, businesses will produce less, and workers who aren't working will buy less. This adds up to lower profits — or even losses. And that is what has stock investors particularly nervous. Most businesses will have little choice but to be more cautious and

hold the line on investments and hiring. The hardest hit will have no choice but to lay off workers.

Worse, businesses were already on edge before COVID-19 showed up in China. The trade war between the United States and China has been especially disconcerting. It did significant damage to the global economy. Here at home, it has basically pushed the manufacturing, agriculture and transportation industries into recession. President Trump signed a "phase one" trade deal with the Chinese earlier this year, just in time to avoid a full-blown downturn, but businesses remain uneasy. They figure the president will double down on his trade war if re-elected.

The trade war put the economy on its heels, and it would not take much of a push to put it flat on its back. COVID-19 may be more like a full-body blow.

Even more complicating is the trouble policymakers will have adequately responding to the economic fallout of the virus. Before the stock market closed its historically bad week Friday, Federal Reserve Chairman Jay Powell issued a statement all but saying that the Fed would soon lower interest rates. Sure enough, on Tuesday, the Fed did an emergency rate cut — the first since the 2008 financial crisis.

Cutting rates is the right move, but rates are already extraordinarily low. The federal funds rate — the rate the Fed directly controls — is now only hovering between 1% and 1.25%. That's because the Fed was forced to cut rates three times last year to offset the ill-effects of the trade war. If the virus strikes as the CDC warns, the funds rate will quickly fall to zero, and the Fed will be unable to effectively do much else.

The Trump administration and Congress could get together and pass legislation to provide fiscal

stimulus to the economy — temporary deficit-financed tax cuts and increases in government spending. Such stimulus was provided in the midst of the financial crisis when the Obama administration struck a deal with the Senate. That worked, and the recession ended a few months after the stimulus was implemented. But it's hard to imagine President Trump, who keeps hammering Congressional Democrats over their criticism of his handling of the administration's response to the virus, striking any such deal — at least not anytime soon.

The American consumer is the firewall between continued economic growth and a recession. Unlike businesses, consumers have been feeling pretty good. Buoyed by low unemployment and (until now) record stock prices,

all of the consumer surveys show that our mood has rarely been so upbeat.

However, our perceptions are fickle and can rapidly turn, perhaps more quickly now than ever before. The huge Baby Boom generation is far and away the largest owner of stocks, with well over half of all stockholdings, according to Moody's Analytics analysis. Members of this generation, in their 50s and 60s, hold stocks that make up the bulk of their retirement nest eggs. When stock prices are up, they feel great. But if stock prices stay down after the current slide, and that nest egg shrinks, you can imagine how they will feel and act. The consumer firewall will crumble. There is no good time for a global pandemic, but this is an especially bad time.



Delhi riots: How India has failed its riot victims. Twice over

After a week of reporting every day from Delhi's riot-torn neighbourhoods, a few facts have emerged through a haze of toxic rhetoric and fake news.

First, the violence was not a spontaneous clash or argument-gone-wrong between two groups of people, supporting or opposing the citizenship legislation. Every riot victim I have met, Muslim and Hindu, has spoken of the assaulters being complete strangers and outsiders to their immediate colony. In fact, within local communities, Muslims and Hindus have for the most part shielded each other. The pattern of violence and multiple eyewitness accounts all point to a deliberate unleashing of men, armed with swords and iron rods, into targeted areas.

Second, notwithstanding a few good men in the police force who stood their ground and did their job courageously, and notwithstanding the fact that in parts of north-east Delhi, the police too came under ferocious attack, the police, for the most part, has enabled this carnage.

Though Right-wing trolls want to push a religious wedge through the debate over the role of the police, please talk to victims. Once again, you will find Muslims and Hindus saying the exact same thing — the police, was at best, unresponsive. Hundreds of SOS calls were not taken seriously. Sunita, the wife of Prem Singh, a poor rickshaw puller, who was shot dead when he stepped out to buy milk, was turned away from the police station when she went to file a missing person report. Hari Singh Solanki, whose young son, Rahul, was killed by the mob, told me, "Had the police responded on time my son may have been alive today." The exact same sentiment was echoed by Jitendra Kumar, the owner of Pandit Medicos, a small pharmacy that was burnt. The police failed people of both religions. But the ineptitude, haplessness or callousness was egregiously compounded by reports of communal bias and wilful complicity when it came to police action in Muslim neighbourhoods.

I have met multiple victims who speak of the police charging at their houses alongside violent mobs. We have seen video evidence where policemen too are hurling stones. And there is the bone-chilling video, where young men are lying injured and bleeding on the road, pleading for help as the police purportedly make them sing the national anthem. Faizan, from that video, is dead. We met the family of

Kausar Ali, another young man from the video. He is critically injured and in hospital.

The third inconvenient truth: India has failed its riot victims twice over. The usually omnipresent politician who makes sure to insert himself into every photo-opportunity is entirely missing on the ground. Through the week, I have met abjectly poor people, whose poverty has amplified their grief and loss. Most cannot even afford the Rs 800 an ambulance run needs.

At the Guru Teg Bahadur hospital, there is still a trickle of desolate families looking for bodies and, more important, for clarity and closure. Here I met Nasruddin, who is visually impaired and cannot see, and his young wife Gulshan, all of 25 years old. They travel from their village in Uttar Pradesh by a tempo or auto rickshaw every single day in search of the body of Gulshan's father, Anwar. He was burnt alive and his body is unidentifiable, save a single leg that is intact but has been severed from the body. Another family has also laid claim to the same body, so DNA tests must be conducted. This grief-stricken couple spends 12 hours at the hospital every day from dawn to dusk, with no help or support except what community activists are able to provide. While journalists like myself share the small cash we carry to help victims get by, one day at a time, this is ad hoc and insubstantial. Where is the government? Why is there no government help-desk at the hospital? Why are there no government officials to hand-hold riot victims, to supply ambulances and vehicles, to offer food and water and transport? Isn't this the basic job of the Indian State? The prime minister appealed for calm during the riots but has made no attempt at outreach with the riot victims. The home minister, to whom Delhi Police reports, lashed out at Opposition parties for instigating violence, but expressed no emotion for the victims. The Delhi chief minister has shown a tentativeness in relief efforts and outreach that is totally antithetical to the crusading anti-corruption activist whom people first rallied around. Rahul Gandhi has "visited" the riot-torn areas, but one week after the worst is over. And we, the people — we want to move on, we don't want to hear the grim details, we want to talk about something else, anything but the fact that 53 are dead in violence of the kind the Capital has not seen in decades.

By Barkha Dutt

Biden still has a lot of problems as a candidate

Former Vice President Joe Biden had an incredible week. After a strong victory in South Carolina on Saturday and the consolidation of former opponents behind his campaign, Biden performed far better than anyone expected on Super Tuesday. In states like Virginia, he generated the kind of turnout that Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' supporters keep promising. In Texas, he upset the pundit establishment by pulling off a dramatic victory against Sanders and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren. As if all of that was not enough, former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced he was stopping his campaign and endorsed the former vice president. On Thursday, Warren suspended her campaign, taking away the final mainstream alternative for Democrats who don't like Sanders.?

As the comedian Larry David would say on "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "things are looking "pretty, pretty good" for the former vice president.?

Biden's success does not dispel the concerns that have existed about his candidacy from the day he formally announced. While the desperation that Democrats feel to find a low-risk candidate who could defeat President Trump seems to have had an impact on the primaries and caucuses, the problems with Biden as a candidate remain strong. He will need to grow and nurture a robust coalition, making sure that large numbers come out to vote, despite a checkered record during his time as a public servant — on issues such as school busing, Iraq, crime and Anita Hill.

The wear and tear someone his age may feel has often been evident on the debate stage and on the campaign trail. He has always stumbled in his impromptu speeches, frequently making the kinds of gaffes that

make him easy prey for opponents. And President Donald Trump will continue to try to tarnish Biden's reputation as he did with his unfounded efforts to secure a public announcement that Ukraine would investigate Biden and his son, Hunter Biden. ?

What can Biden do to make himself a stronger candidate as he attempts to secure the nomination??

The most important challenge is to move beyond the argument of electability.

Even though this remains the top concern of Democrats, issues do matter. We know who Joe Biden is as a person but we still need to hear more about what he will stand for as President. If Biden learns anything from his competitors' campaigns, it should be that simply promising a non-Trump presidency is not enough. Many Democrats don't think the status quo is acceptable anymore. If Biden secures the nomination, he needs to be more direct about how he envisions tackling core issues such as health care, climate change, economic insecurity, racial injustice and immigration.?

As the competition within the Democratic Party fades, Biden also needs to conduct some serious outreach, just as Sanders would have to do should he pull off the nomination. On Super Tuesday, Biden, Sanders, and Warren showed that collectively they have attracted what could be an incredibly powerful coalition in November — Latinos, African Americans, younger voters, and disaffected middle-class independents. Biden can't afford to ignore those voters who didn't come into his fold. With the same fervor he has spoken about reaching out to Republicans, he needs to connect with voters who rallied and organized for his opponents and didn't think he should be the nominee.



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The Supreme Court is right on cryptocurrency

The government should allow it, under an effective regulatory regime

The Supreme Court has rightly ruled that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s effective ban on cryptocurrencies is disproportionate, and quashed it. Well-meaning as the central bank's decision may have been, and despite the defence that it merely sequestered the entire banking and finance system that it oversees from the whole uncertainty around cryptocurrency, its move in 2018 was a ban, and pretty much threw out the baby with the bathwater.

The baby in this case was Blockchain, the underlying technology behind

cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin (which was the bathwater). RBI's problem with Bitcoin is understandable, even if not legitimate — the inability to regulate currency which was not a sovereign one — but there's a lot to be said about the distributed ledger premise underlying Blockchain. Apart from making transactions more transparent and secure, Blockchain also has the ability to reduce the cost of cross-border transactions, including remittances. India is the highest recipient of remittances in the world, and much of this comes from expat Indian

workers. And the cost of remittances is high, 5-7% in some cases. One of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations is to reduce this to 3% by 2030. Technologies, such as Blockchain, may be able to make this possible. Cryptocurrencies also hold the promise of providing an alternative global currency to the dollar — something developing countries such as India would do well to explore. And there's nothing to stop RBI itself from issuing its own cryptocurrency (Mint once suggested that it could be called Bharatcoin) so as to

take advantage of the medium, albeit with adequate regulations and safeguards.

While cryptocurrency companies will cheer the verdict, they have legitimate cause for concern — the government has signalled on several occasions that it shares the central bank's views on cryptocurrencies. There has also been talk of a law banning them altogether. Before it enacts the legislation, the government would do well to understand the benefits of cryptocurrencies. It should allow their use, and work towards creating an effective regulatory regime for them.

To contain coronavirus, monitor and communicate

Science, a functioning public health system, and government support are critical in managing epidemics



The media is flooded with reports of an increasing number of coronavirus cases and deaths from various parts of the world. While China was the epicentre of the epidemic, it has now spread to Europe, the United States (US), West Asia, and India. In February, several Indian students from Wuhan (China) were evacuated and quarantined. This was the first political response by the Government of India on the growing epidemic. Subsequently, a few cases have been detected and confirmed in several states, but they are mostly from urban areas. So far, there have been no deaths in India, but the fear is palpable among the middle and upper-middle classes, thanks to the media coverage of the

coronavirus. All epidemics evoke fear and panic since they result in fatalities. However, in its management, three elements need to be addressed: Science, common sense of the public health system, and political support from the government. There is a better understanding today about the virus, and the nature of the disease it produces. The current evidence suggests that around 80% of the infected cases are mild, 18% are severe, and only 2% require intensive intervention. Since there is no medication available, the cases need close monitoring, and treatment of secondary complications if the need arises. Special attention is needed for the elderly and other vulnerable sections of the population. So moni-

toring is key to containing the epidemic.

The Chinese data on coronavirus fatalities shows that a large proportion of fatalities has been among the elderly. The number of deaths is higher among elders, as compared to the young. Those with pre-existing conditions are much more at risk than others. This understanding is essential for the layperson so that they are informed about the nature of the disease, along with a rational public health system that can respond to containing the spread through monitoring and surveillance strategies. We also need to learn from the strengths and failures of managing several viral influenza outbreaks in the recent past such as the avian and swine flu

(H1N1) that has and continues to spread across the country.

Data from the National Centre for Disease Control shows that there have been 884 cases of H1N1 virus this year, resulting in 14 deaths. Of that, 70% of the cases are from four states. Tamil Nadu accounts for 172 cases, followed by Delhi (152), Karnataka (151) and Telangana (148). The fatality due to H1N1 is highest in Uttar Pradesh (51 cases and seven deaths), followed by Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Health is a state subject and the response of the public health system needs political support. The contrast in response to a viral outbreak whether H1N1, nipah virus or coronavirus is seen in how UP and Kerala governments have responded to public health emergencies. In a recent speech, UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath dismissed the problem of the coronavirus and advocated yoga as a way of overcoming it. It maybe worthwhile here to highlight that the number of reported cases and deaths due to swine flu in the state: There have been 884 new cases and 14 deaths in the state this year. In contrast to UP, Kerala has managed to contain several outbreaks of the nipah virus effectively. The strategy to tackle the coronavirus in Kerala has involved isolation, quarantine and surveillance of positive cases in hospitals and the community. The Union government could

take cues from Kerala's strategy to control viral outbreaks. Clearly, there will be variations in effectiveness, since not all states have strong public health systems and the required political imagination and support to achieve what Kerala has been able to do.

The influenza season is back, but how prepared are we to handle the variety of cases? Experience of dengue, swine flu and other outbreaks shows that lack of preparedness and response from the public health system has resulted in panic, leading to a rush for testing and treatment in hospitals by people. While there are guidelines issued by the National Centre for Disease Control, its implementation and monitoring are poor in the public and private sector. Irrational use of drugs, testing and hospitalisation only add to the anxieties of patients. An important aspect of the public health strategy to deal with epidemics is communication. The government must communicate with the general public and health personnel on the latest virus outbreak. The government must have a nodal person who coordinates with the health ministry and can provide the relevant data and advice. This is lacking at present, and, as a result, the media often sensationalises the problem, making citizens anxious. In the absence of authentic information, social media becomes the main source of information and misinformation.



Delhi riots offer a warning

Hindu-Muslim relations are fragile. Be careful in other states

The Delhi riots have shown the fragility of inter-community ties in India at the moment. What happened in the north-eastern part of the city was sparked off by local events, but also against a backdrop of the overall political and social polarisation that has gripped the country in the wake of the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), the decision to embark on a revised National Population Register (NPR), and the speculation over a possible National Register of Citizens (NRC). But even as it is essential to get to the root of the Delhi vio-

lence, and hold the guilty to account, it is a warning that the current mood can translate into trouble elsewhere.

This is particularly true of three states which will witness assembly elections over the next year-and-a-half. Bihar goes to polls first at the end of 2020. While there has been no outbreak of violence in the state so far, it has had a history of inter-community tensions. There is intense opposition to the CAA-NPR-NRC package, reflected in the massive rallies held in Muslim-dominated areas of Seemanchal, in the response

to Communist Party of India's young leader, Kanhaiya Kumar's tour across the state, and in the Bihar assembly's resolution that calls for a return to the NPR under the old format. The more worrying situation is, however, in West Bengal, home to over 25% Muslims and the epicentre of a fierce political battle between the incumbent, Mamata Banerjee, and the challenger, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Indeed, many believe that the CAA was brought in primarily with an eye on state elections here. The state also has a history of political violence, with

weak rule of law. Both the BJP and Trinamool Congress have to walk the extra mile in calming tempers — though all signs are that as polls approach, the competition will get more shrill and possibly violent. The third state is Assam, which goes to polls next year too, and is where the entire issue actually emerged. The flawed NRC process in the state has already caused great disenchantment, with 1.9 million people staring at an uncertain future; the CAA has led to an upsurge in Assamese sub-nationalism; and relations between Assamese Hin-

mus and Bengali-speaking Muslims are tense. Delhi has shown the perils of inflammatory political rhetoric, especially from BJP leaders before polls; the partisan role and incompetence of the police; and the dangerous use of social media. Patna, Kolkata and Guwahati would be well advised to nip the brewing tensions before they escalate.

How India is failing its Muslims

The community has been left alone to defend their constitutional rights in a secular State

Late Sunday evening, I spoke with a Muslim acquaintance who lives in a JJ colony in south-east Delhi. In the aftermath of the Delhi riots, Sunday night was tense as rumours of imminent violence were doing the rounds on social media. He had heard rumours that mobs armed with knives and swords had entered the colony. To which I rather naively asked what could be done to protect him and his family. Nothing, he said. It is now left to "us" to protect ourselves as best as we can. Fortunately, the rumours were false and the night and days since have seen restraint.

However, there is no escaping the harsh truth that this conversation revealed. The Indian State, and dare I say, Indian society, has failed India's Muslims. It is now

left to them alone to defend their constitutional right to equal citizenship in this secular land. And regardless of the eventual outcome of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)/ National Population Register (NPR)/ National Register of Citizens (NRC) quagmire, the ideological project of "othering" the Indian Muslim has now dug its roots deeply in our everyday political and social life.

In the months since the passage of the CAA, the protests, especially in Delhi but also in other parts of north and north-east India, offered some respite from the relentless ideological project of remaking India being pursued by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Although led largely by Muslims,

the grammar of the protests, and the reclamation of the language of secularism, of the Constitution, of the Tricolour and other nationalist symbols, rekindled hope of developing a new counter-narrative to the current hegemony. Importantly, the protests in Delhi have emerged as a critical site for the expression of solidarity across communities, sharing in Muslim anxieties and fears. But amidst the hope and promise of these protests and what they symbolise, there is an equally depressing reality.

As was highlighted at a panel discussion on Indian politics at the recent Centre for Policy Research Dialogues 2020, these instances of cross-community solidarity remain



limited to Delhi and the student community. For the most part, and despite their commitment to constitutionalism, the protests against the CAA and the anxieties this has fuelled have been largely confined to Indian Muslims.

Moreover, these anxieties now coexist with a new idiom of violence that has visible State sanction. The fact that politicians and mobs can chant

slogans like "Goli maro...." with impunity in the Capital is evidence of how deeply this "othering" of protesters has penetrated our social life. And absent broad based support, it is India's Muslims who have to shoulder the burden of defending themselves from this new language of violence and from being pushed deeper into the margins.

(Contd on page 19)

Five Days Of Covering Death, Fear and Sorrow In Delhi

It was 7 am on the 25th of February. North-east Delhi was on the boil, much like the large saucepan of tea on the thela outside gate no.3 of Delhi's GTB hospital. I had arrived early to gather information on the dead and the injured, for a live report for the 8 am bulletin. 30 dead, 4 injured. That's where the tally stood.

As I reported live, from under the portico outside the main building, I had to fight to keep my voice above the ever-swelling sound of sirens. As the morning progressed, an increasing number of ambulances and police gypsies had begun ferrying the injured. Not everyone got official help: Several families and friends were bringing their wounded in cars, scooties and even e-rickshaws.

One such scooty screeched to a halt in front of the Emergency. A young man with a large tilak on his forehead jumped off the two-wheeler. Slumped on the pillion was a middle-aged man who had been shot. The young man with the tilak carried the older man into the ER. After a while, when he came out, I walked up to him to try and get a soundbite. After all, I was here to gather news. The man was speaking to someone, weeping into the phone. "I have somehow managed to get chacha (uncle) to the hospital", he said, "but he has very little chance of making it". And

then, the young man sat down on the ground and started crying uncontrollably. I decided to not disturb him in his moment of grief.

I saw him again, the very next day, outside the hospital mortuary. Today, the tilak was missing. "I had applied it yesterday, because I needed to get my injured uncle out of a Hindu area", he said. He glared at me, when I asked him whether he would say the same thing on camera. "I have to work with them," he told me, "and they are the ones who are helping me with money right now. I don't want to make an enemy of them by saying all this on TV." Life, I realised, was more complex than the truth.

Those were five long days that I spent among the dead and the living, amidst screams of grief and despair. At night, when I would reach home, I'd look at my mother's face and remember Ashfaq's mother, who had lost her son in the bloody riots. I would see my father's image in Babu Khan, whose two young sons had been killed by a murderous mob. My head would grow heavy, my heart restless.

Every morning, I would leave early, treading on weary feet, hoping that today would be a better day. That day, they said TV cameras were not going to be allowed. There were many more cops outside the

hospital. Suddenly, a siren announced the arrival of a police gypsy. Private guards shooed people away to make way. An injured policeman was taken out of the vehicle. I began filming with my mobile phone.

Just then, two policemen approached me - one in his uniform and the other in plainclothes. One of them snatched my phone and said "tujhe samajh nahin aata, samjhaon kya? (You don't understand orders? Should we make you?)" His face had turned red with anger. I glanced at his badge and could make out the name Pranay Dinesh. The other one, who was in plainclothes, dragged me towards the Emergency. I told him that I was trying to do my job. "Abhi sikhata hoon tujhe tera kaam (I'll teach you your job)," he shouted. I decided to avoid a confrontation, and he went away with my phone.

About half an hour later, a man came out and handed back my mobile phone, but not before he had given me a lecture on humanism. Here I was, a reporter from one of India's top channels, feeling powerless in front of those who could legally wield a stick. I could only imagine what the real victims of police excess felt in those days. Defeated and despondent, I began walking towards the post-mortem building. From a distance, I could hear someone

wail, "hai mera beta! (Oh my son)". A middle-aged man stood crying, his weight supported by two others. It was Hari Singh, father of Rahul Solanki, who had been killed in the riots. A girl from Rahul's marketing team stood by, weeping silently along with another friend, who refused to give his name. Later, I learnt from newspaper reports that this was Firoz, one of Rahul's best friends. Fear had forced him to grieve for his friend, namelessly, without any identity.

Close to Rahul's father was another figure grieving for yet another dead. It was Mehtab's sister-in-law. She kept recalling how Mehtab would tell her to get him married. Outside the mortuary, dozens of strangers had gathered to console and support the grieving families. I was there to get soundbites. As I did my job, tears would fill my eyes, my voice would break, my words would falter. In those times, I had to remind myself to be professional and not let emotions get the better of me. I achieved nothing extraordinary in those five days. Except that I learnt how cold death and loss is. I learnt how religion deserts you inside a mortuary and is replaced by the silence of sorrow. Mortuary, death, riots and mobs - these words will forever remind me of Parvez, Ashfaq, Rahul, Aasif and Nitin Kumar.

Modi And Shah Must Take Blame For Mob Takeover Of Delhi



India is on a civilisational slippery slope. We proudly count its ancestry in terms of millennia. Not less than 5,000 years, scholars say. For the longest period during its civilisational existence, indeed until as late as 1947 when India became a modern nation-state after freeing itself from the British colonial rule, there was no concept of citizenship. All who lived here belonged to this land, including those who came from far and were assimilated into the large and diverse Indian family.

Suddenly, the concept of legal citizenship has begun to break the soul and society of India. The Hindu-Muslim division has started to inflame hatred, and hatred is fueling violence. So much so that even the visit of American president Donald

Trump to India did not prevent communal passions from taking a violent turn in the national capital. Parts of Delhi were literally burning and rioters prowling the streets when he was being welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a well-orchestrated "Namaste Trump" ceremony at a cricket stadium in Ahmedabad, when he visited the ashram of a Mahatma who sacrificed his life for Hindu-Muslim unity, when he and his wife Melania experienced the splendor of a monument in Agra that is an architectural ode to love, and when he was having his various official engagements in Lutyen's Delhi. In short, just when the leaders of two great democracies in the world - India and USA are great for yet another reason, they are both home to matchless

religious diversity - were praising each other, the rest of the world was witnessing something macabre in India's capital.

American-Indians and others tracking the Trump visit from afar must have been aghast at watching, either on TV or online, acts of arson and mob rioting in Delhi. But they must have been shocked even more by the dereliction of duty by the police. If the most fundamental feature of a democracy, indeed of any civilised society, is the non-partisan character of the security forces and their duty to protect the life and property of every person, irrespective of their religious identity, then Indian democracy was failing this basic test abysmally. Never in independent India's history has our country welcomed a foreign dignitary only to show that its capital city itself has become a tinderbox of communal violence which, by the time Trump departed from India, had claimed the lives of 13 persons.

That all this did not happen by accident was well stated by the headline of the lead story in The Indian Express on 26th February - "Mob, courtesy Delhi police". The newspaper's reporters Dipankar Ghose and Sourav Roy Barman, and its intrepid editor Raj Kamal Jha, must be congratulated for telling the story without any fear or obfuscation. "Right under Delhi Police nose, men with rods, sticks assault, set homes ablaze, check ID cards, smash CCTVs," it said, adding, "In embattled neighbourhood after neighbourhood in

northeast Delhi, which has been in the grip of violence for three days, one story played through Tuesday from morning to midnight - groups of young men armed with sticks and rods looking for a fight, setting shops and homes owned by Muslims on fire. All right under the nose of the police who either stood as silent spectators, looked the other way or were plain missing when they were most needed."

Yes, Muslims were the targets and victims of the fury of the police-assisted and JSR-crying mobs, even though there were certainly some retaliatory attacks by Muslim mobs. And this is where we are witnessing India's latest civilisational descent. JSR - shorthand for "Jai Shri Ram" - has become a war-cry for Hindu supremacists. Ram, one of the proud symbols of Indian civilisation; an ideal king who stood for justice for all and is revered as "Maryada Purushottam" or the best among human beings and an upholder of Dharma, whose capital Ayodhya literally means a place where there is no war or violence, that Ram has been turned into a source of motivation to beat and kill fellow human beings and fellow citizens. It was none other than Mahatma Gandhi who said, "By Rama Rajya I do not mean Hindu Raj. I mean by Rama Rajya Divine Raj, the Kingdom of God. For me, Rama and Rahim are one and the same deity. I acknowledge no other God but the one God of truth and righteousness." **(Contd on page 19)**

At one corner of Shiv Vihar, the area which resembles a horror movie of devastation, stands the house of the head of the area BJP minority cell president, Ashraf. It must have once been an imposing building. Today it is black with the flames of arson, its windows smashed, the house empty. I could not meet him but I was told that like many residents in the area, he too had fled as the mobs descended to wreak destruction. Political affiliation was not enough to save his property. Nor was it enough to get police help. He apparently called the police several times but was told "you maybe a BJP leader, but now save yourself." The hatred burning in the



Delhi Violence An Attempt To Turn Poll Defeat Into Victory Of Hate

blood of the arsonists was expressed in an aggressive religious identity, which did not recognize the niceties of symbolic minority cells and their leaders. Two masjids in the area were specifically targeted; in fact, while many mosques suffered damage, temples in mixed population areas were safe. This was an identity which mocked the very Gods in whose name the violence was committed.

The seeds of hate sown so blatantly by top leaders of the BJP during the election campaign in Delhi have borne their poisonous fruit. The northeast of Delhi was engulfed by the worst Hindu-Muslim violence since the aftermath of partition. The aim of destroying the movement against the CAA-NRC-NPR, targeting and demonizing the protest sites, was clear enough during the election campaign. But the way in which a series of physical attacks were carried out in the areas where the protests were being held, following the incitement by the BJP's Kapil Mishra, makes it clear that there was nothing spontaneous about the violence. In a way, it is revenge on the people of Delhi for the election results. More dangerously, the strategy is to change a political scenario of electoral defeat into the victory of a hate and communalism-driven ideology. There is no doubt that in the span of a week, this agenda of communal polarization pushed by the Sangh Parivar is on the offensive and is dominant.

In the first phase of the violence unleashed by the Hindutva forces in the name of freeing the

so-called blockade of public roads by the anti-CAA protesters, there was retaliatory violence and clashes between the two communities. In this phase, even as the mobs unleashed by the hate speeches went on the rampage in minority-dominated neighborhoods, in some specific areas, Hindu-owned properties including schools, shops and homes were also attacked and burnt. In the list of deaths, there are several Hindus. A rickshaw-puller, the young son of a social worker, a student who was a topper in his academic career and waiting for the results of a public service exam, a young employee in the Intelligence Bureau and a police constable are some of the victims. Among the injured too there are Hindus.

Who is responsible?

In every area we visited, every affected family from the majority community and their neighbors spoke almost the same words: "We have always lived in harmony...how could this have happened?"

Sunita, the widow of a rickshaw-puller who spent three days desperately looking for her husband, said: "He had never faced any problems. He used to ferry Hindus and Muslims in his rickshaw. He was a hard worker. He never felt any differently about those who hired him." Grieving, she holds her three little girls close. She is eight months pregnant. She has no means of income.

For the forces of darkness, of division, of destruction, the loss of Hindu lives is collateral damage. Having been responsible for



inciting violence, they once again seek to further the communal divide by exploiting the tragedy of the affected families. Processions are being taken out in the other districts of Delhi with incendiary slogans taking the names of some of the Hindus killed, asking for revenge. Clearly, the BJP-RSS sets no limits in its reckless assault on constitutional values, on democracy, on human decency.

Instead of controlling the violence, the police became active participants in many areas. It became a one-sided all-out attack on minority communities. This was symbolised by the viral video in which uniformed men are seen beating five men, all of them injured, telling them to sing the national anthem and to say "Bharat Mata ki Jai". One of the men, Faizan, died of his injuries days later. His mother Kismatoon was widowed when he was just three. She worked from home for a gar-

ment factory, bringing up her children. At her age, Faizan was her only support. She narrates how Faizan was taken to the police station and locked up in an injured state. He was released only when his condition became critical. "If the police had allowed him treatment, he would have been alive today," she wept.

The communalisation of significant sections of the Delhi police, apparent in their utterly partisan role last week, is perhaps the most stark reminder that communalism goes far beyond electoral victories and defeats. The impunity enjoyed by the police is shown by the fact that even where there is unmistakable video evidence against the atrocities by the police as well as their open participation in stone-throwing against minorities, no action has been taken. Earlier, the police had refused to file FIRs against BJP leaders who had made hate

speeches. In the case I had filed asking for a court direction to the police to file FIRs against Anurag Thakur and Parvesh Mishra, the police in their response had said shouting slogans such as "Goli maaro ... ko" is not a cognizable offence, nor is it an offence to describe a community as "rapists". If this is not incitement to violence, what is? In such a situation, the judiciary has a special responsibility to ensure that the rule of law is enforced. Petitions with a similar plea to file FIRs were made before the Supreme Court as well as Delhi High Court. In a late night order, High Court Justice S Muralidhar, who had taken serious note of the Delhi police refusal to file an FIR, was transferred to another court. The subsequent indulgence shown by the courts to the Delhi Police in the same case led to widespread criticism. It also encouraged similar slogans in other parts of India, the latest example

is from Bengal where BJP supporters going to join Amit Shah's public meeting shouted the same slogans on the streets of Kolkata.

For three days the Prime Minister of India remained silent. The Home Minister was absent. Is this failure or is it patronage? On the positive side, Delhi has also seen significant mobilization somewhat reminiscent of the efforts after the 1984 anti-Sikh violence, of Left parties, movements, social movements, NGOs, professionals like doctors, lawyers and most particularly, hundreds of young volunteers who are in the field every day, bringing relief, solidarity and working for peace in the violence-affected areas.

Delhi wants peace.

Just as it did during the elections, so also in these times of tension, polarization, rumour mongering, it is the people of Delhi who will protect their city from the coronavirus of hate.

What India can do in Afghanistan

Seek to make Kabul's role in the negotiations more robust

(News Agencies) The new peace agreement is the beginning of the end, or a new beginning, of the United States' (US) war in Afghanistan. The US and the Taliban deal could see US troops ending their 20-year military presence in 14 months. What it is designed to do is symbolically fulfil President Donald Trump's electoral promise of ending Washington's most expensive overseas war ever. One can expect many a slip between the cup and the lip, given how little spadework has been done. Afghan President Ashraf

Ghani's block on the first step in the agreement, the release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners, is a reminder that many stakeholders are not party to the deal. India may be unhappy, but this the treaty has been in the offing for over a decade. President Barack Obama tried repeatedly to get the US to leave Afghanistan. The noise from the US presidential campaign indicates a strong and bipartisan desire for a troop withdrawal. The only difference is that Mr Trump seems less concerned about the regional consequences of such an action. In the past, this

would have puffed up the Pakistan military and their terrorist cohorts and spelt trouble for India. Today, New Delhi has far less to worry about given the economic weaknesses and international isolation of Islamabad. A trickier debate is whether the Taliban, and Afghanistan as a whole, have evolved to becoming more resistant to manipulation by Rawalpindi and its terrorist cohorts. A lot will depend on a set of variables that will play out over the next few years. One of these will be the Indian-backed Chhabahar port and its promise of



economic independence from Pakistan. New Delhi knew, for several months, that a US withdrawal was more than likely, only the timetable was uncertain. Talk of India attempting to fill the spaces that the US may leave is hubris. India lacks the financial and military capacity and geographical proximity to do so.

India can only seek to make the withdrawal process more drawn-out and Kabul's role in the negotiations more robust. A more useful goal would be to restore the democratic process in Kashmir as fast as possible before it becomes a chink in the country's external armour once again.

The Taliban has trumped the US in Afghanistan

(News Agencies) On February 29, a leap day, the United States (US) took a leap of faith by formalising an agreement with the Taliban in Qatar's capital Doha, agreeing to terms of withdrawal of America's 19-year-long war in the country, which cost the lives of over 2,000 US soldiers, and nearly \$900 billion. Perhaps not in their wildest dreams had the American leadership over the past two decades expected this photo-op, where US Special Representative for Afghanistan, ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, sat at the same table, in front of the world, and shook hands with the Taliban, agreeing to a gradual withdrawal of US troops and their allies.

The details of the agreement between the US and the Taliban are in public for all to see, and it was recognised for some time now that the Taliban went into these negotiations with an upper hand. The Afghan government, from the start, was not part of the negotiations, putting the Afghan people's representation incidental to their own future.

The Taliban had started to pave the way for their own resurrection sensing two main trends, that both the detractors and supporters of the anti-Taliban campaign had reached an exhaustion point. Both camps, while disagreeing with each other, agreed that this was an unwinnable war.

However, most discussions on this issue have ranged around what this means for the US, the Taliban and the Afghan people, and rightly so. Nonetheless, South Asia, and the larger West Asian region, will ultimately endure a large part of both the success and failure of this agree-

ment, and an imminent US withdrawal.

While a lot would ride on the intra-Afghan dialogue, slated to start on March 10, the agreement says that the Taliban will start these negotiations with "Afghan sides", not specifically mentioning the Afghan government. Two days after the deal, the Taliban already seems to be preparing for hostilities against the Afghan armed forces once again.

A larger question that now arises is how do other groups, the likes of al-Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), both of whom having strongholds in Afghanistan, view the said deal? The expected reactions will, in all likelihood, be in the form of packaging of this deal as a victory of the mujahedeen over the US, a narrative that may resonate as a song of a historic triumph for decades to come for Islamist groups and jihadist movements.

The Taliban, and its leaders, since its inception in 1994, have had a rich history of supporting al-Qaeda, giving bayats (pledge of allegiance) to its leadership under both Osama bin Laden, and his successor, and current leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri.

However, the deal signed by the US mentions al-Qaeda only in passing, and has stronger language dedicated to the US starting work towards removing Taliban members from the United Nations sanctions list. Moreover, the Taliban has provided next to no proof of any significant operations or manoeuvres over the past few months of specifically targeting al-Qaeda leaders or infrastructures to showcase its sincerity. The Taliban's word, without any quantifiable proof, leads the charge in

this deal.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, an on-and-off part of al-Qaeda in the Syrian civil war used lines from Osama bin Laden's 2002 "Letter to the American people" document to eulogies the vision of the late Taliban chief, Mullah Omar. "God has promised us victory, and Bush has promised us defeat. We'll see which promise is more truthful," Mullah Muhammad Omar Mujahid, may God have mercy on him" said an online release by the group in reaction to the deal, celebrating it as a victory of bin Laden's wisdom and vision.

Even through fractures among jihadist groups in Afghanistan and beyond, the reading of the deal and an impending total withdrawal of American forces would be seen

as a significant victory for Islamist jihad. Meanwhile, it is possible that dissenters within Taliban in numbers will switch sides to ISIS Khorasan. The effects of the same for the likes of India could be significant. While India attended the US -Taliban deal signing as an "observer", and foreign secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, made a sprint to Kabul to meet President Ashraf Ghani, the fact remains that India was a self-designed "observer" in almost the entire process, choosing to sit in the stands, and having little say in the actual game. On the other hand, Pakistan may come off as a big winner, despite suggestions that an end to the Afghan conflict may see Washington distance itself from Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

India may only be adding weight behind the Afghan government, but the Taliban's very being comes from within Pakistan, for which Afghanistan is a critical battleground against Indian influence. Much depends on the successful progression of the US-Taliban deal. However, in the short-term, it is the upcoming US presidential elections and President Donald Trump's bid for a second term that will benefit the most. However, as it stands today, it does not seem unfathomable that over the next few years the Taliban may be able to form a government, being back in control of Kabul, and sit in a parliament building built by India and inaugurated by an Indian prime minister.

Pak doesn't want any security role for India in Afghanistan: Report

The foreign minister told the Upper House that India had always played role of a spoiler, the report said.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said Pakistan does not want any security role for India in Afghanistan as he accused New Delhi of playing the role of a "spoiler" in the war-torn country, according to a media report. After months of negotiations, the US and Taliban signed a landmark peace deal in Qatari capital Doha on Saturday, effectively drawing curtains on the United States' 18-year war in Afghanistan since 2001. Speaking in the Senate on Wednesday, Qureshi said that Pakistan neither desires "any security role of India in Afghanistan" nor wants presence of militant organisations — Al-Qaeda and the ISIS — in the landlocked country, The Nation reported. The foreign minister told the Upper House that India had always played role of a spoiler, the report said. "There



were spoilers in the past and they are even today, within and outside Afghanistan, who want to get their own objectives," Qureshi said. India has been a key stakeholder in Afghanistan as it had already spent around USD 2 billion in reconstruction of the war-ravaged country. India has been maintaining that care should be taken to ensure that any peace

process does not lead to any "ungoverned spaces" where terrorists and their proxies can relocate. Ahead of the peace deal, India conveyed to the US that pressure on Pakistan to crack down on terror networks operating from its soil must be kept up though Islamabad's cooperation for peace in Afghanistan is crucial. Qureshi on Sunday also warned that "spoilers" could try to sabotage the peace process in Afghanistan.

'May never be excited about a crowd again after going to India'-Trump says at US rally

US President Donald Trump addressed 'Namaste Trump' event in Ahmedabad along with PM Modi last week when both leaders had hailed the growing ties between the two nations.



(News Agencies) South Carolina: Addressing a rally in South Carolina, US President Donald Trump on Saturday praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling him a 'great guy' who is loved by his countrymen.

the Prime Minister of India, Modi. Great guy, loved by the people of India. And we had an amazing thing. And I went in, and here's the problem. This is a big crowd. And normally I like talking about my crowds because I get the crowds like nobody, but I just got back from 140 or 50 or 60,000 people and now I'm coming here," Trump said.

"I may never be excited again about a crowd after going to India. Think of this, they have 1.5 billion people. We have 350, so we're doing pretty well, I'll tell you what, but I love this crowd, and I love that crowd too. Tell you they have a great love for ... They have a great love. They have a great leader, and they have a great love for the people of this country. That was really a

worthwhile trip," he added. Donald Trump, accompanied by wife Melania and a high-level delegation, visited India earlier this week. During their 36-hour visit, Trump and the first lady attended various events and visited two cities - Ahmedabad and Agra - besides the national capital of India.

Upon their arrival at Ahmedabad airport on Monday, the US first couple was accorded a warm welcome by Prime Minister Modi and thousands of people who had lined up on the streets of the city.

Later, the US President addressed the 'Namaste Trump' event at Ahmedabad's Motera Stadium along with Modi, where both the leaders

had hailed the growing ties between the two countries. From Ahmedabad, the couple had flown to Agra in Uttar Pradesh to visit the Taj Mahal where the two, holding hands, took a stroll on the lawns. They also posed for a picture at the famed Diana's bench.

In the last leg of their visit, Trump and Melania visited New Delhi. The US President received a ceremonial welcome at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Tuesday morning. Following this he sat down with Prime Minister Modi for delegation-level talks during which three agreements were finalised. The couple wrapped up their visit by attending a banquet hosted by President Ram Nath Kovind.

ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾਨ

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

Since April 2005 Editor: Sharnjit Singh Thind PUNJABI DUNIYA Weekly

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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

ਬੰਗਲੁਰੂ: ਖਰਚ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਸ ਸਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਖੋਜ ਲੱਭ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਰੁਪਏ ਲੱਭੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਸੈਨੀਟੀਜ਼ੇਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਖਰਚਾ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੂਚਨਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਾਲ 1.25 ਲੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ 25 ਕਰੋੜ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਰੁਪਏ ਲੱਭੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਸਾਲ 1.25 ਲੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ 25 ਕਰੋੜ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਰੁਪਏ ਲੱਭੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਸਾਲ 1.25 ਲੱਖ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ 25 ਕਰੋੜ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਧਿਕਾਰਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਰੁਪਏ ਲੱਭੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ।

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

ਨਵੀਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ: ਸਿੱਧਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਸਮੇਤੀ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨਿਰਾਪਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਖਾਣੇਗਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਜਣ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਸੇਲ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਧਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ 1984 ਵਿਚ ਹੋਏ ਸਿੱਧਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਸਮੇਤੀ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਜਣ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਸੇਲ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਨੂੰ ਸੇਲ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਸਮੇਤੀ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਜਣ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਸੇਲ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਨੂੰ ਸੇਲ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਸਮੇਤੀ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਜਣ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

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ਬੂੰਦ-ਬੂੰਦ ਕੀ ਰਸੇਗਾ ਪਾਕ

ਨਵੀਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ: ਮੋਦੀ ਦਾ ਏਲਾਨ-ਏ-ਜੰਗ ਬੂੰਦ-ਬੂੰਦ ਕੀ ਰਸੇਗਾ ਪਾਕ। ਮੋਦੀ ਦਾ ਏਲਾਨ-ਏ-ਜੰਗ ਬੂੰਦ-ਬੂੰਦ ਕੀ ਰਸੇਗਾ ਪਾਕ। ਮੋਦੀ ਦਾ ਏਲਾਨ-ਏ-ਜੰਗ ਬੂੰਦ-ਬੂੰਦ ਕੀ ਰਸੇਗਾ ਪਾਕ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ-ਅਮਰੀਕਨ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਖੋਜ ਲੱਭੇ ਗਏ

ਭਾਰਤੀ-ਅਮਰੀਕਨ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਖੋਜ ਲੱਭੇ ਗਏ। ਭਾਰਤੀ-ਅਮਰੀਕਨ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਖੋਜ ਲੱਭੇ ਗਏ।

Trump's maiden visit heralds a new dawn for India-US relations



**Trump pitches to widen scope of relations; Modi says this marks a new chapter for two nations
The visit comes against the backdrop of India seeking to bolster its strategic partnership with the US**

(Insider Bureau) Ahmedabad: Donald Trump played the statesman, politician and marketer to perfection at the packed Motera stadium on Monday.

With a growing US re-engagement with India, the visiting president offered a much bigger friendship umbrella to India—it ranged from pitching the US as the premier defence partner to collaborating with India on its ambitious space programme.

Extolling its democracy and exhorting India to occupy a larger space on the global stage, Trump also made a veiled reference to China and its strategy of coercion.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on his part, said Trump's maiden visit to India opened a new chapter in bilateral ties.

Modi spoke about the efforts of the Trump administration in bringing the two countries closer as he welcomed the president and First Lady Melania Trump before more than 100,000 people at what is billed the world's largest cricket stadium for the "Namaste Trump" event.

"India-US relations are no longer just another partnership. It is a far greater and closer relationship," Modi said. "In the new decade of this 21st century, the new India is also bringing many opportunities for the Resurgent America."

From helping bring India out of nuclear isolation to calling out Pakistan for its role in espousing global terror, US

policy towards the subcontinent has been consistent across Republican and Democratic administrations in recent years.

This visit comes against the backdrop of India seeking to strengthen its strategic partnership with the US, with discussions likely to span bilateral, regional and global issues such as trade, strategic topics, counterterrorism and the India-Pacific region. The 45th and current president of the US was effusive in his praise for the Indian prime minister just months after the "Howdy, Modi!" event held in Texas.

Taking the conversation forward ahead of his re-election bid in November, Trump called Modi a true friend and said, "America loves India, America respects India, and America will always be faithful and loyal friends to the Indian people."

The speech was well-crafted, said experts. "The US president struck the right chords with his fulsome praise for the event and for India," said former foreign secretary Kanwal Sibal. "On trade, the president did not elaborate, except that the discussions were at a preliminary stage for a fantastic trade deal. It means the US pressure on India will continue and the demands on India may continue," Sibal added.

Making his re-election pitch, Trump said, "In America, we have come to know the splendour of Indian

culture personally through the 4 million Indian Americans living in the United States as our wonderful friends, colleagues and neighbours."

"Indian Americans enrich every aspect of our national life. They are titans of

business; the biggest, the best pioneers of science; masters of the art; innovation of technology like few people have been able to see no matter where you go anywhere in this universe."

While Monday was

India's day to floor the Trump family with hospitality, Tuesday is expected to be a day of serious negotiations over a trade deal. "We will be making very, very major—among the biggest ever made—trade deals," Trump said.

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Among PM Modi's tips against coronavirus is a 'namaste'

PM Modi addresses Jan Aushadhi Yojana beneficiaries via video conference.



(Insider Bureau) Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday urged people to get into the habit of greeting each other with a "namaste" instead of a regular handshake as one of the

hands, it is also the right time to reintroduce this habit," the Prime Minister said. He made the comments during his interaction with people from various Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadi Pariyojana Kendras through video conferencing.

Before him, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had also encouraged his countrymen to adopt namaste instead of the handshake as a way to stop the spread of coronavirus. Netanyahu had said on Wednesday simple measures like avoiding the normal handshake while greeting people may possibly be

replaced with other forms of greetings like the Indian namaste. He also showed the way to do a namaste during the press conference.

Prime Minister Modi also asked people not to believe in rumours on things to do and avoid about coronavirus, which has infected 31 people in the country so far.

"During such times, rumours also spread quickly. Some people say you must not eat this and not do that. Some people come up with four new things, saying that coronavirus can be avoided by eating them. We have to avoid these rumours too," the Prime Minister said. "Whatever you do,

do it with the advice of your doctor," he added. The Prime Minister was interacting with store owners and beneficiaries at selected stores across the country, including Guwahati, Dehradun, Coimbatore. "The rest of the people in the family are also more prone to infection and in such a situation they should also undergo necessary tests. Such mates should also wear masks, wear gloves and stay away from others," he said. India's total number of confirmed cases has risen to 31 after a person from New Delhi with a history of travel from Thailand and Malaysia tested positive.

Govt lifts ban on 2 Malayalam news channels over Delhi riots coverage: Report

A 48-hour ban was imposed on Malayalam news channels Asianet News and Media One on Friday for as their coverage of the violence in north-east Delhi could "enhance communal disharmony," according to the ministry of information and broadcasting.

(News Agencies) The ministry of information and broadcasting on Saturday lifted the ban on two Kerala-based news channels over their coverage of the violence in Delhi over the amended citizenship law, news agency PTI quoted sources as saying.

The I&B ministry imposed a 48-hour ban on two Malayalam news channels Asianet News and Media One on Friday for their coverage of the violence in north-east Delhi, which it said could "enhance communal disharmony".

The ban on Asianet News was lifted at 1.30 am, while the ban on Media One was lifted at 9.30 am on Saturday, a source at the ministry of information and broadcasting told PTI. The two channels had reportedly written to the ministry seeking revocation of the bans, following which it was lifted.

The government on Friday said it had found the two channels in violation of the programme code prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act,

1995 following which the ministry ordered the prohibition of transmission or re-transmission of the channels for 48 hours with effect from 7.30pm on March 6.

The order on Asianet News TV said, "while reporting such critical incident, the channel (Asianet News) should have taken utmost care and should have reported it in a balanced way. Such reporting could enhance the communal disharmony across the country when the situation is



highly volatile". The news channel responded to the notice saying its reports were factual and never intended to attack a religion or a community. Earlier in the day former Union minister and Congress leader P Chidambaram had criticised Centre's decision to

suspend the transmission of two news channels. "The Ministry of I&B plays the roles of Prosecutor, Jury and Judge. This is a travesty of justice. All media entities should protest vehemently. The government must scrap the Shut down order forthwith," he tweeted.

Coronavirus: 2 test positive in preliminary test for coronavirus in Punjab's Amritsar

The hospital's civil surgeon Dr Prabhdeep Kaur Johal said the reports from National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune, where their samples had been sent, came back positive.

(News Agencies) Two men from Punjab, who returned from coronavirus-hit Italy on Wednesday, have tested positive for the disease in the preliminary test, doctors at Amritsar's Guru Nanak Dev Hospital (GNDH) said on Saturday.

The two were admitted to the isolation ward of the hospital after they showed symptoms of the disease on their arrival at Sri Guru Ram Das Jee International Airport in Amritsar, through Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi, from the European country, the city's civil surgeon Dr Prabhdeep Kaur Johal said while speaking to

Media. "Their samples have already been sent for the second confirmation examination, the results of which will be out by Saturday evening or Sunday morning. This is done to cross-check the preliminary findings," Dr Kaur said.

The number of reported cases of coronavirus in India is 31 so far even as the disease continued to spread in new regions of the world and crossing the 100,000 global infections mark in less than three months since it began spreading from central China late in December. The death toll from the outbreak of coronavirus in Italy rose by 49 to 197, authorities in the country

had said on Friday. It was the largest daily increase in fatalities since the contagion was uncovered two weeks ago in Italy. The country is currently reporting more deaths every day from the virus than any other country in the world and the government this week ordered the closure of schools, universities, cinemas and theatres around the country to try to stem the infections.

Both the patients are related and are residents of Hoshiarpur in Punjab. The two, along with another relative, had returned from Italy on Wednesday. They did not show any

symptom of the disease when they reached the Delhi airport but one of them was diagnosed with a fever after reaching the Amritsar airport, said local medical officers. After finding symptoms of novel coronavirus during the screening at the airport, the state health department team took the trio to the isolation ward at Guru Nanak Dev Hospital (GNDH)," Dr Raman Sharma, medical superintendent (MS) of the hospital, said. Their samples, Dr Sharma said, were sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune and the Viral Research & Diagnostic Laboratory (VRDL) in Delhi for testing.

Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor taken to ED office for questioning

(News Agencies) Rana Kapoor has been taken by the Enforcement Directorate officials for further questioning.

Crisis-hit Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor was taken to the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) to the Ballard Pier office in South Mumbai Saturday morning for questioning.

On Friday night, the ED had raided Kapoor's residence and carried out searches a day after the Reserve Bank of India put Yes Bank under a moratorium and capped withdrawals for its depositors at Rs 50,000 till April 3.

According to an official, the ED seized records and documents from his residence and office premises. The agency is investigating alleged kickbacks received to Rana's close relative over sanctioning of loans.

Kapoor was questioned in connection with the bank's exposure to troubled realty firm Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL) that is suspected to have contributed to the bank's ballooning non-performing assets (NPAs) and which led to the RBI's intervention on Thursday.

The ED is also probing a money

laundering case against DHFL which is accused of siphoning off around Rs 13,000 crore with the help of 79 fictitious companies and one lakh fictitious customers.

The RBI set aside Yes Bank's board late Thursday and appointed an administrator Prashant Kumar, ex-chief financial officer of the State Bank of India (SBI) to run its affairs for the next 30 days, during which a plan to revive the stressed bank will be put in action. Under the moratorium, the bank will not be able to grant or renew any loan or advance, make any

investment, incur any liability or agree to disburse any payment during the period. Yes Bank's stock crashed 56% on Friday to close at Rs 16.20 on BSE.

In another development on Saturday, State Bank of India's Chairman Rajnish Kumar said SBI has received the plan on Yes Bank restructuring and is conducting due diligence and will revert to the RBI by Monday. Under the government's rescue plan, SBI - the country's largest lender by assets - will pick up a 49 per cent stake in Yes Bank.

Conducting due diligence on Yes Bank restructuring, says SBI chief

On Thursday, the RBI had placed Yes Bank under a moratorium and said it would swiftly work on a revival plan. It also imposed a withdrawal limit of Rs 50,000 on its account holders till April 3.

(News Agencies) Yes Bank has the potential to come of the administration soon and resume normal banking function, State Bank of India's Chairman Rajnish Kumar said Saturday.

"Yes Bank can come out of administration soon," Kumar told reporters a day after the government unveiled a rescue plan for the crisis-hit Yes Bank under which SBI - the country's largest lender by assets - will pick up a 49 per cent stake in the private sector lender.

He said SBI has received the plan on Yes Bank restructuring

and is conducting due diligence and will revert to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) by Monday.

"Plan has been received by SBI and the legal team is working on the plan. We had informed through the stock exchange that SBI board has given in-principle approval of exploring possibility of picking up a stake of up to 49% in Yes Bank," he said. On Thursday, the RBI had placed Yes Bank under a moratorium and said it would swiftly work on a revival plan. It also imposed a withdrawal limit of Rs 50,000 on its account holders till April 3. Kumar said many potential investors in Yes

Bank have approached the SBI after the government's bailout plan. He said saving Yes Bank and restoring it to health was a priority. "Survival of a bank is a must.. the failure of a bank has huge consequences for the economy," Kumar said and cautioned that the failure of the kind that brought down the Lehman Brothers in the United States in 2008 should not be allowed to unravel in India. "SBI has size and credibility. We have role to play," he said. The total quantum of investment in Yes Bank is at Rs 2,450 crore. Depositors' money is not at risk, he said.

Hundreds of trees gutted as massive fire engulfs forest in Maharashtra's Thane

(News Agencies) Hundreds of trees were destroyed in a massive fire which engulfed a forested area in Malanggad of Maharashtra's Thane district on Thursday evening, officials said on Friday.

The patch on the Malanggad Hill in Kumbharli village under Ambarnath taluka, around 50 kilometres from Mumbai, caught fire at around 6.00pm and the blaze engulfed a major area. "The fire was reported on a major patch of land on Malanggad mountain on Thursday evening. It took over six hours to douse this fire which was finally doused around 12.50am," a forest department officer said requesting anonymity.

"Many trees have died in this fire. However, we have not still estimated the damage to the flora or the cause of the fire," the officer said. This is the second time a fire has been reported from the area in at least a year. Eighty acres of land, where several trees had been planted in a plantation drive, was destroyed in a fire in Mangrul village near Malanggad in February last year.

India will be united in fight against coronavirus outbreak: PM Modi

The Prime Minister also took jibes at his political adversaries even as sporadic protests have erupted in parts of India against the Citizenship Amended Act and the proposed National Register of Citizenship (NRC).



(News Agencies) Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to India's long tradition of "collaboration for creation" on Friday to say that the country will remain united in facing the challenge emerging out of the outbreak of novel coronavirus in large parts of the world. Delivering his speech at the Economic Times Global Business Summit, PM Modi described coronavirus as a "big challenge". "Coronavirus is a big challenge that has come and economic experts consider it to be a big challenge for the financial world. Today, we will get together to face this challenge," the PM said, adding that the idea of

collaboration for creation is very old, but extremely relevant. "Every year, new challenges come to test our spirit," he said. The Prime Minister also took jibes at his political adversaries even as sporadic protests have erupted in parts of India against the Citizenship Amended Act and the proposed National Register of Citizenship (NRC). Modi tried to draw attention to the contradictions within his opponents. "There are people who consider themselves as champions of gender justice. But the same people oppose our law to end triple talaq. People who give sermon to

the entire world on giving shelters to refugees, the same people oppose the CAA law which is made for giving shelter to refugees," Modi said. "People who talk day and night about constitution, the same people oppose the imposing of the Constitution in J&K and removal of a temporary law such as Article 370. People every day, talk about justice, they pose question on the intent of the SC if their judgments don't favour them," he said, adding that while others prefer status quo and consider inaction as a form of action, nation-building for the government is not a matter of convenience.



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Biden vs. Bernie clash

After months of crowded Democratic presidential debates featuring up to 12 people on stage at once, this month's showdown in Phoenix will almost certainly include just two candidates: Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders. In order to qualify for the March 15 debate on CNN and Univision,

candidates need to have earned at least 20 percent of the pledged delegates awarded as of that date, the Democratic National Committee announced Friday. That's a mark that both Biden and Sanders easily clear, according to the latest delegate tally after Super Tuesday. As of

Friday afternoon, Biden had earned 48 percent of delegates awarded thus far, while Sanders had 41 percent. (Some delegates have not yet been awarded from states that held primaries this week on Super Tuesday.) Tulsi Gabbard, the last remaining active candidate, does not

approach that number, having only earned 2 delegates so far, about 0.1 percent of delegates thus far. Gabbard has not participated in the last five debates, having not hit those thresholds to participate either. The Phoenix debate, the 11th debate this primary season, will be hosted by CNN and Univision in partnership with CHC BOLD, the political arm of the Congressional Hispanic

Caucus. CNN's Dana Bash and Jake Tapper, along with Univision's Jorge Ramos, will moderate the debate, and Univision's Ilija Calderón also will "facilitate audience questions," the networks announced. The debate is scheduled to run from 8 p.m. through 10 p.m. Eastern Time. The debate will come two days before Arizona's primary, which is on March 17. Florida, Illinois and Ohio will also vote that day.

Sanders may be willing to grant Biden the convention coronation he fought against in 2016

By June 2016, the Democratic presidential nominating contest was over. Hillary Clinton had won a majority of the pledged delegates at stake, those delegates tied to candidates based on the votes in state caucuses and primaries. In total, Clinton had won about 56 percent of the pledged delegates, a clear lead. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) had come up short.

What Clinton hadn't done, though, was win enough pledged delegates to clinch the nomination. That's because of the party's big pool of superdelegates, party officials who could vote for whichever candidate they chose. Clinton's tenure with the party and support from the establishment gave her an advantage with those voters. Hundreds indicated their intention to support her candidacy even before voting started.

Over the course of that campaign, Sanders's argument for how he would win evolved numerous times.

At first, his team outlined its strategy for building support, particularly with black voters, which would allow him to win enough pledged delegates to clinch the nomination. The campaign wanted to win the first three states to plant a flag but tied in Iowa and lost Nevada. It began arguing that it had critical momentum that Clinton lacked, something it said should be considered by superdelegates. It soon became apparent that this momentum was mostly a function of the calendar, putting a string of Sanders-friendly contests in a row.

By April, Clinton had already built an insurmountable delegate lead, but Sanders won a string of small states that allowed his team to insist that they had the energy of voters. With some big states still to vote, including California, Sanders's team insisted that they could still win

more pledged delegates. When they didn't, the argument evolved again: Superdelegates should support Sanders as a more viable candidate than Clinton.

None of that happened. Clinton clinched the required number of delegates and won the nomination.

When Sanders this year took the lead in pledged delegates and seemed to be well on his way to a plurality of the delegate total before the convention, he was asked whether his opinion on how the convention should be handled had changed. He and his team argued that any candidate with a similar delegate lead should earn the nomination at the convention, something that struck his opponents as ironic given his arguments in 2016.

Then Tuesday happened, and it became apparent that not only would Sanders probably not win a plurality of delegates but that former vice president Joe Biden might win a majority of them before the convention.

Sanders was asked by MSNBC's Rachel Maddow on Wednesday night whether he would therefore put up more of a fight than he'd suggested a week ago, when he had the most delegates.

"If at the end of the day it turns out that Vice President Biden is going to have more delegates than you do heading into the convention, will you drop out?" Maddow asked.

He wouldn't need to drop out, Sanders replied, because Biden would win.

"I suspect we will run through the process," he said. "I think people have a right to vote. But if Biden walks into the convention or at the end of the process has more votes than me, he is the winner."

"And that's true whether or not he has a majority or just a plurality?" Maddow asked.

"Absolutely," Sanders replied. "I

mean, that's what I've said."

He then made a good point about why his position had changed: so had the nominating process.

You'll notice in the graphic above that Clinton's ability to clinch the nomination before the convention depended on those superdelegates. For her to have clinched the nomination on pledged delegates alone, she'd have needed to win about 59 percent of all of the pledged delegates at stake. She won a majority of them, as noted above, but since superdelegates were part of the voting and couldn't be won through voting, clinching without superdelegates was a steep hurdle. (One, we'll note, that Sanders's team at some points insisted she should have to surmount to clinch.)

That the superdelegates lined up early for Clinton in 2016 was a source of frustration to his team and powered early arguments that the party was working for Clinton's candidacy. Over time, though, those superdelegates simply became voters who needed to be won, and

Sanders's team set out (unsuccessfully) to win them.

When the campaign was over, Sanders and his supporters pushed to eliminate their role, as he explained to Maddow.

"We fought very hard in the Democratic rules process to get rid of all superdelegates," he said. "That was my preference. I think it is — should be — the decision of the people, not Washington insiders. We lost, but what we did get is not getting rid of all superdelegates at the convention voting, but that on the first ballot there will be no superdelegates. In other words, we go into the first ballot: It is representatives, delegates who are represented by the people. And I think that that's right."

In other words, the 2020 Democratic convention will include a first vote in which superdelegates have no say. If no one has majority support after that vote, there will be a second ballot, in which superdelegates can vote. But, Sanders said, he would still support having those

superdelegates back the person who'd come in with the most delegates.

"What I have said is that I think it would be a real, real disaster for the Democratic Party if, you know, I'm running against you and you have more votes than me," he said. "And I say, 'Well, wait a second. I don't want Rachel. I want somebody else who didn't get as many votes as she did. Let's have the superdelegates vote on the second ballot.' You know what that would do to the Democratic electorate? People would say, 'The person who got the most [delegates] didn't get selected?' This simply wasn't how the nominating contest worked in 2016. One can certainly argue that Sanders's view of his race against Clinton might not have been significantly less contentious had the 2020 rules been in place then, but it is fair to say that Sanders's position now isn't entirely inconsistent with how he ran in 2016. It's a different game.

Of course, we'll have to see how things look in June.

New poll: Joe Biden opens up a 16% lead over Bernie Sanders



Joe Biden has a 16 percentage-point lead over Bernie Sanders in a new Morning Consult poll out

Friday, a sign that he's still gaining momentum following his surprise Super Tuesday victories

in 10 of the 14 state primaries that day. The poll of national Democratic primary voters showed that Biden captured 54 percent to 38 percent for Sanders, who won four states on Tuesday. And 51 percent of those surveyed said Biden had the best chance of beating President Trump — up 18 points since a post-South Carolina poll less than a week ago. The survey of 1,390 Democratic primary voters was conducted Thursday, after Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren ended her campaign, and has a 3-point margin of error.

Mini-Super Tuesday: Where Biden and Sanders stand in polls

Former Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) will face off in six primaries and caucuses on Tuesday, a week after the Democratic race was changed dramatically when Biden won 10 victories on this year's Super Tuesday. Biden is enjoying a surge of momentum after his victories, and Sanders is looking to turn the contest around once again by defeating the former vice president in Michigan and other states.

The two candidates also will battle it out in Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota and Washington, which combined will assign 352 pledged delegates on March 10.

Here are what polls show in each of the states holding their nominating contests this Tuesday:

Michigan

Michigan will be the top prize on Tuesday, with its primary handing out 125 pledged delegates. Biden and Sanders are on track for a fierce battle in the Wolverine State as they fight for the support of crucial white working-class voters that helped swing Michigan and other Rust Belt states for President Trump in 2016. The two have swapped leads in recent polls, with a University of Wisconsin/State Journal poll showing Sanders with a 9-point lead and a Detroit News/WDIV-TV poll showing Biden ahead by 6 points. However, the poll showing

Sanders ahead was conducted before the former vice president's resounding wins in South Carolina and on Super Tuesday. Biden has worked to rack up a number of endorsements of high-profile Michigan lawmakers, including Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, former Gov. Jennifer Granholm, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and several House members. Biden also appears to have an edge among key demographics in Michigan — the state has substantial amounts of African Americans and white suburbanites that helped power his Super Tuesday success. While Sanders has performed better among Hispanics and younger voters, Latinos make up a negligible amount of Michigan's population and turnout among voters aged 18-29 has not spiked as the Vermont lawmaker has predicted. Sanders narrowly won the Wolverine State's primary over Hillary Clinton in 2016.

Mississippi

No recent polls have been conducted for the Mississippi primary race, but Biden is the heavy favorite given his support among African American voters. Clinton routed Sanders by more than 65 points in 2016, and it wouldn't be unthinkable to see a similar result this Tuesday. Biden won the endorsement of Rep. Bennie Thompson, the state's only

Democratic member of Congress. Mississippi's primary will award 36 pledged delegates.

Missouri

Biden holds a narrow 4-point lead over Sanders in Missouri in a new Emerson College poll conducted this week. The survey shows Biden and Sanders tied among white voters, but the former vice president holds a 14-point edge among voters of color. Sixty-eight pledged delegates will be allocated in

the state's primary. Sanders narrowly lost the state to Clinton in 2016 by fewer than 2,000 votes.

Washington

While Sanders has put his focus on Michigan, a key swing state contest in the general election, his best chance for a big victory might be here. Sanders has leads in two recent polls in Washington state, though the state's primary appears set to be more competitive than the

surveys suggest. The Vermont senator had a 6-point lead in an Elway Poll and a 5-point advantage in a January KING-TV/SurveyUSA survey. However, both polls showed Sanders with a 6-point lead over former New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) with double-digit support and were conducted before the two dropped out of the White House race. Bloomberg has since endorsed Biden,

and Warren, who just dropped out Thursday, has said she has not decided if or who she will endorse. Another factor? Washington held a caucus in 2016, but has since shifted to a primary. Sanders won the caucuses in 2016 handily, but the primary could be more competitive. The contest will allocate 89 pledged delegates, making it the second biggest haul of the March 10 contests.

How India is failing its Muslims

The community has been left alone to defend their constitutional rights in a secular State

Muslims have chosen the Constitution as their means of protest, but the rest of India is yet to join them in solidarity and in defence of India.

What explains the silence from the rest of India? Part of the answer can be found in the failures of the political Opposition. While all non-BJP state governments have opposed the CAA/ NPR/NRC, passed resolutions and even taken the matter to the Supreme Court, but none have had the courage to craft an ideological counter-narrative to Hindutva, anchored in secularism and constitutionalism. In fact, the strategic choice has been made to avoid going against the "mood" of the nation and steer clear of "secularism", of "nationalism" and even the Constitution, for fear of the BJP appropriating these words to their own cause. This is precisely what the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) did in the Delhi elections. And while this may be tactically wise — after all it did win the election by consolidating the Muslim vote firmly in its favour — it

lacks courage, moral conviction, and most important, it fails in the long run.

This is exactly what has happened with the AAP in these last few days following the Delhi riots. Once you give up ideology in favour of strategy, you lose the moral authority with which to lead. Most important, you lose the ability to negotiate compromises across social bases and strategically created voter coalitions to mobilise and create a counter-narrative to divisiveness and violence. Despite Muslim consolidation, the AAP has to worry about isolating the "Hindu" voter. It is hardly surprising then that the AAP has been found wanting. It simply doesn't have the vocabulary, legitimacy or moral authority to provide an alternative to the language of Hindutva. Of course, as a government, it could and still can do a lot more in terms of relief camps and rehabilitation. But it cannot make Muslims feel less vulnerable. There is no escaping this fundamental tension in the AAP approach of poll strategy and tactics

versus articulating an ideological opposition.

It is, of course, unfair to focus only on the AAP. This choice of strategy and tactics over ideological conviction pervades all political parties, not least of all the Congress. Our politicians have convinced themselves that the BJP wins elections because of its tactics — money, mobilisation and communication. And these are the grounds on which they should be fought. They are wrong. As political scientists Rahul Verma and Pradeep Chibber have argued, there has been a shift in the ideological make-up of the median Indian voter toward the Centre-Right. This shift underlies the BJP's electoral success. It can only be challenged with a robust ideological narrative that confronts Hindutva, head on. And in the absence of this, India's Muslims will remain on their own in this war to save India's Constitution and preserve its social fabric. India will lose even if our politicians win.

Modi And Shah Must Take Blame For Mob Takeover Of Delhi

We really do not know what noble thoughts and emotions entered Trump's mind when he visited Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad or when he paid homage to him at Raj Ghat in New Delhi. But what we Indians must be primarily concerned with the question: Is our Prime Minister following the footsteps of two of the best representatives of India's ancient and contemporary civilization? Modi's party popularized the slogan 'Jai Shri Ram' and used it during its campaign first for the demolition of the Babri Masjid and then for the construction of a temple for Ram at his mythical birth place. Modi himself never

misses an opportunity to praise Gandhi. Be it Xi Jinping or Trump, he likes to take foreign dignitaries to Sabarmati Ashram for a mandatory photo-op with the Mahatma's charkha. But not once has Modi spoken about or endorsed Gandhi's advocacy of Hindu-Muslim harmony, which was one of the most important principles of his life and legacy. Indeed, beyond making Gandhi an icon of the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan', there is very little of Gandhian philosophy or practice that Modi has espoused with any degree of credibility. Amit Shah, his deputy and likely successor, and who as Home Minister directly controls the Delhi police,

has paid even less lip sympathy to Gandhian ideals.

Therefore, neither Modi nor Shah can shirk their responsibility for the mob takeover of parts of Delhi with the connivance of the cops right when India was hosting the president of a country they like to call "India's natural ally". They may not have liked it to happen during Trump's visit, but the rioting in Delhi did not happen accidentally or all of a sudden. The proximate factor that incited it was the communal poison that the BJP had injected into its campaign for the Delhi assembly elections with the party's top leadership allowing incendiary

slogans targeting Muslims. When the BJP lost the elections badly, the frustration of a section of its cadres needed to be expressed violently. The second factor that facilitated this was their confidence that the police under Shah's watch would do nothing to stop them. After all, the police have not arrested a single person so far in the mob attack on students of JNU, which took place nearly two months ago.

There is a third factor that directly implicates Modi and Shah. The arrogant and coercive manner in which they have pushed through their agenda of amending the citizenship law in a discriminatory and

unconstitutional manner, and their blatant lies on the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and "for-Muslims-only" detention camps, has created an atmosphere of extreme mistrust among a large section of Indian Muslims, besides causing a sense of alarm among secular Hindus and other non-Muslims. This is evident from the unprecedented spread of anti-CAA (mostly non-violent) protests all over the country. Modi and Shah have responded to these protests with extreme insensitivity, indifference, and refusal to engage the protesters in a meaningful dialogue.

They do not care to acknowledge that dialogue with dissenters is a fundamental necessity in a democracy. It is also an essential requirement for gaining "Sabka Vishwas" to cite a new motto of Modi that has begun to sound as meaningless as his other two mottos - "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas". Whatever Modi might have wanted to achieve from hosting Trump in a grand manner - "event management" is after all his forte - there is no denying that India's democracy and India's civilization have been shamed by the kind of dangerously polarizing politics that he and Shah have been playing.

Fever dreams: Did author Dean Koontz really predict coronavirus?



According to an online conspiracy theory, the American author Dean Koontz predicted the coronavirus outbreak in 1981. His novel *The Eyes of Darkness* made reference to a killer virus called "Wuhan-400" – eerily predicting the Chinese city where Covid-19 would emerge. But the similarities end there: Wuhan-400 is described as having a "kill rate" of 100%, developed in labs outside the city as the "perfect" biological weapon. An account with more similarities, also credited by some as predicting coronavirus, is found in the 2011 film *Contagion*, about a global pandemic that jumps from animals to humans and spreads arbitrarily around the globe.

But when it comes to our suffering, we want something more than arbitrariness. We want it to mean something. This is evident in our stories about illness and disease, from contemporary science fiction all the way back to Homer's *Iliad*. Even malign actors are more reassuring than blind happenstance. Angry gods are better than no gods at all.

In Homer's *Iliad*, the Greeks disrespect one of Apollo's priests. The god manifests his displeasure by firing his arrows of contagion into their camp. The plague lasts nine days, brief by modern epidemiological standards. When the Greeks make amends and sacrifice sheep and goats to Apollo, the plague is cured.

Seven centuries later a plague struck Periclean Athens, killing a quarter of the city's population and setting the city-state on a path to military defeat at the hands of Sparta. Thucydides, the Athenian historian, has a simple explanation for the epidemic: Apollo. The Spartans had cannily supplicated the god and he in return had promised victory.

Soon afterwards, Sparta's enemies started dying of the plague. Hindsight suggests that Athens, under siege – its population swollen with refugees, everyone living in unsanitary conditions – was at risk of contagion in a way the Spartan army, free to roam the countryside outside, clearly wasn't. But this thought doesn't occur to Thucydides. It can only be the god. Between then and now there have been prodigious advances in medical science. We understand contagious disease vastly better, and have a greater arsenal of medicine and hygiene to fight it. But in one respect we haven't advanced at all. We still tend to see agency in our pandemics.

Disease has no agency. Bacteria and viruses spread blindly where they can, their pathways facilitated by our globalised world. We, meanwhile, bring to the struggle our ever-improving drugs and hygiene. With Covid-19, experts insist, your two best bets are: wash your hands often, touch your face never. But people do not warn to the existential arbitrariness of this. Just as the Peloponnesian plague was seen as evidence that the gods were angry with Athens, so HIV was seen by a deluded minority as God's judgment on homosexuals. Of course, HIV spreads wherever it can and cares nothing for your morals or sexual orientation.

This attribution of agency is clearest in the many imaginary plagues science-fiction writers have inflicted on humanity. In place of gods we have aliens, like those in Alice Sheldon's chilling and brilliant short story "The Screwfly Solution" (1977). A new disease provokes men to begin murdering women en masse. At the story's end we discover an alien species had introduced a brain infection so that the human race will



destroy itself and the aliens can inherit the emptied planet. It's a story about what we now call "toxic masculinity" and it says: it's not gods we have angered, but goddesses. Sometimes the alien plague is less picky. In HP Lovecraft's *The Colour Out of Space* (1927; recently filmed, starring Nicolas Cage) an alien infection arrives via meteorite, wastes the land and drives people mad. In Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain* (1969) potentially world-ending contagion falls from outer space. This bug repeatedly mutates as Earth's scientists try to combat it. We're doomed – or would be, if it weren't for the tale's germus ex machina ending, in which the alien spontaneously mutates into a benign form.

If it's not aliens behind our world-threatening plague, then it is probably that other SF stalwart, the mad scientist. Dozens of zombie franchises start with a rogue scientist infecting the population with a genetically engineered bioweapon virus. In Frank Herbert's *The White Plague* (1982) a geneticist, pushed into insanity by the murder of his family, creates a pathogen that kills all humanity's females. A cure is eventually found, but not before the world's population balance has been shifted to leave thousands of men to every woman. In Joanna Russ's feminist masterpiece *The Female Man* (1975), "Whileaway", a gender-specific virus has wiped out all the men, creating an effective utopia for women left behind, procreating by parthenogenesis and living in harmony. By the novel's end it is hinted that the man-destroying plague was actually engineered by a female scientist. Never mind the antibacterial handwash: it is patriarchy that we need to scrub out.

So characteristic is

assigning agency to pandemics in today's culture that a video game such as *Plague Inc* (Ndemc Creations 2012) styles its players not as doctors attempting to stop the spread of a pandemic, but as the sickness itself. The player's mission is to help their plagues spread and exterminate the human race. In HG Wells's seminal *War of the Worlds* (1898) and in its various modern retellings, including *Independence Day* (1996), the virus is on our side, destroying alien invaders that lack our acquired immunity. One of the most striking twists on this conceit is Greg Bear's

novel *Blood Music* (1985). A scientist, angry at being sacked by his lab, smuggles a virus out into the world in his own body. It infects everybody, becomes self-aware, and assimilates everybody and everything to itself: human beings and their infrastructure melt down into a planetwide sea of hyperintelligent grey goo. It sounds unpleasant, but it's actually a liberation: the accumulation of concentrated consciousness, our own included, punches through a transcendent new realm. The plague becomes a kind of secular Rapture. If on some level we still think of contagion as the gods' anger, these stories become about how we have angered the god – about, in other words, our guilt. When Rick Jaffa and Amanda Silver planned their reboot of the *Planet of the Apes* franchise, they decided an agent, a neuroenhancer spliced into simian flu, would both raise the apes' level of intelligence and prove fatal to humans. The resulting movie trilogy (2011-17) was more than just a commercial hit; it proved an eloquent articulation of broader environmental concerns. The few surviving humans move through the film's lush rejuvenated forestscapes, compelled to confront avatars of humanity's generational contempt for the natural world. The plague that has destroyed us has uplifted these animals, given them wisdom, and they are angry with us – why wouldn't they be? It's a common genre trope. The scientist in Alistair MacLean's *The Satan Bug* (1965) is an environmental fundamentalist who hopes his germ will wipe out humanity. The mad scientists from Channel 4's TV drama *Utopia* (2013-14) and Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* trilogy are both driven by the same animus.

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Russia's Billionaires Try To Figure Out What To Do With Their Wealth

Kerimov and Leonid Fedun who got enormously rich in post-Soviet Russia now intensifying efforts to figure out what to do with their fortunes.

Their children, frequently entering adulthood, are among the first to gain power and money by inheritance after the communist regime's collapse. It's a process that will have profound ramifications for the country's economy and politics.

Some businesses employ hundreds of thousands of people, their leaders are frequently close allies of President Vladimir Putin and there's more than \$270 billion at stake for just 23 people on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

No Precedent

"Russia is practically the only country in the world where there have been no precedents for the transfer of large fortunes by inheritance for almost a hundred years," said Andrey Shpak, head of research at the Wealth Transformation Center at Skolkovo Moscow School of Management.

Mr Mordashov made his fortune through investments in steelmaker Severstal PJSC. He later diversified to gold, power

equipment and now has stakes in media assets, a mobile carrier, tourist companies and a supermarket chain.

Mr Mordashov said he is considering a fund "with a certain model of management, that will allow my children to participate," he said, without elaborating.

Last year, he started transferring holdings to his sons Kirill, 20, and Nikita, 19. They got a 65% stake in gold producer Nordgold valued at \$780 million and two-thirds of the stake in TUI AG worth about \$730 million.

Nepotism Issues

The brothers haven't started managing the assets as they are still students in Moscow, according to Mr Mordashov. He said they probably won't start their careers working within his companies. They need to experience real life working for others as nepotism creates business challenges, Mr Mordashov added.

There is no ideal form of wealth structure, said Andrey Shpak, whose center consults with wealthy families. How assets are transferred will depend partly on where they're held and relations within a family.

Interest in international trusts has declined, in part because of stricter regulatory requirements in foreign jurisdictions, he said. Some tycoons are taking a radically different approach. Vladimir Potanin, Russia's richest person and a father of five, signed Bill Gates and Warren Buffett's Giving Pledge initiative in 2013,

3 theories to explain Madhya Pradesh Congress crisis

Is BJP really working on Operation Rangpanchami to dislodge the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh or is there a Digvijaya Singh angle in the upcoming Rajya Sabha election behind the crisis in MP Congress?

Truth is one, but the wise men know it as many; God is one, but we can approach Him in many ways. This is an ancient wisdom from the world of spirituality. Politics may appear to be the antidote of contrast to spirituality. But Madhya Pradesh Congress's crisis hovering over the Kamal Nath government is the closest political narrative to the old wisdom.

There have been as many interpretations to the "disappearance", "recovery" and "emergence" at a different site of the MLAs from a group of legislators propping the Kamal Nath government of the Congress. There are many

sub-plots in the political drama playing out in Madhya Pradesh.

"This will just ruin their life." Billionaire Mikhail Fridman also plans to give his wealth to charity, he said in an interview. His

promising at least half of his wealth to philanthropic causes. "I do not think that to give such a huge fortune to children would be the right decision," Vladimir Potanin said in an interview near Moscow.

CHANGE OF POWER
That the BJP is trying to dislodge the Kamal Nath government is the most-repeated theory behind the Madhya Pradesh Congress crisis. Some have called it Operation Rangpanchami - unseating of the Congress by the BJP during Holi. Operation Kamal, however, is the common refrain to describe this attempted coup.

It began with Congress leader - and a political wizard of Madhya Pradesh - Digvijaya Singh claiming that Shivraj Singh Chouhan of the BJP is eyeing to come back to power through horse-trading in

son Alexander rents a two-room flat on the outskirts of Moscow for \$500 a month and started his own business after finishing studying in the UK last year. Regardless of what they do, Andrey Shpak urges the tycoons to make their decisions quickly. "The lack of a clear succession plan and targeted training of the

heirs increases the risk that a considerable part of Russian fortunes may be actually lost over time," he said. That may be because of hereditary disputes, corporate conflicts or a lack of capital management skills from heirs, he added. If they don't pay attention, Russia may see some "drama in the richest families."

the state.

Digvijaya Singh said, "I don't speak without evidence. Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Narottam Mishra [another BJP leader] are behind this." A total of 10 MLAs including those belonging to the Congress had "disappeared" from Madhya Pradesh and, as per claims, were "being kept" in a luxury hotel in Gurgaon near Delhi by the BJP. That Shivraj Singh Chouhan was in Delhi at the time appeared to be a corroboration to evidence that Digvijaya Singh claimed to have in his possession.

Digvijaya Singh - not Kamal Nath if insiders can be trusted with the information - sent his son Jaivardhan Singh and Jitu Patwari - both ministers in the Congress-led government - to rescue the MLAs. They claimed to have "rescued" four of the MLAs from the Gurgaon hotel. Two more returned to the fold, it was claimed.

To deny the charges leveled by Digvijaya Singh and late also by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Narottam Mishra said their hands were clean but both asserted the Congress government "will fall under its own weight". Mishra even claimed that due to "dissatisfaction" with the Kamal Nath government around 20 Congress MLAs were in his touch.

Later, four MLAs

supporting the Kamal Nath government travelled to Bengaluru and were reported to be staying at a resort. These are the "missing" MLAs for the ruling dispensation in Madhya Pradesh. It was the resort politics that ultimately brought the BJP back to power in Karnataka last year after having lost the race to the Congress-JDS fire-power in 2018, the year Shivraj Singh government was voted out of power in Madhya Pradesh.

Kamal Nath government is standing on the support of 113 Congress MLAs in 230-member Madhya Pradesh Assembly. It had - before the disappearance drama began - the backing of four Independent MLAs, two - including one suspended from the party and now rescued from the Gurgaon hotel - from the BSP and one SP legislator.

For a dislodging attempt, it would be the third time that the BJP has tried to oust the 15-month-old Kamal Nath government in eight months. The two previous attempts came out in public domain in July and November last year.

In July, the BJP attempted to fuel ambitions of seven Congress MLAs from Gwalior-Chambal region. The Congress outsmarted the BJP with the "ghar wapas" of two of the turncoats winning assembly election on Lotus symbol.

Trump moves forward with cutting off funds to sanctuary cities: 'Do not protect criminals!'

The decision conflicts with rulings from other appeals courts across the country concerning sanctuary policies, indicating a Supreme Court review is ultimately likely. New York City and liberal states, including New York, Washington, Massachusetts and Connecticut, sued the government, and the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York backed them - ordering the money be released and stopping the government from putting immigration-related conditions on grants. But the appeals court ruled that it "cannot agree that the federal government must be enjoined from imposing the challenged conditions on the federal grants here at issue." Sanctuaries limit local cooperation with immigration authorities and bar law enforcement from complying with

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainers - requests that ICE be alerted when an illegal immigrant is being released from local custody. Proponents of sanctuary cities have argued that it makes communities safer by encouraging illegal immigrant victims of crime or witnesses to cooperate with law enforcement. "The Trump administration's scare tactics destroy trust in law enforcement. The day our police ask for immigration status is the day people stop reporting crimes and sharing information. It's the day we stop being the safest big city in America. We won't let that happen," New York Mayor Bill de Blasio said in January. But administration officials have pointed to a host of cases when an illegal immigrant has been sprung

from custody after a detainer was ignored and gone on to re-offend. In a letter to de Blasio last month, ICE Acting Director Matt Albence noted that ICE's New York City Enforcement and Removals Office issued detainers on 7,526 subjects who had criminal histories, including 3,500 assaults, 1,500 DUIs, 1,000 sex crimes, 1,000 weapons offenses, 500 robberies and 200 homicides. The administration has deployed elite Border Patrol agents to sanctuary cities to help ICE track down and detain illegal immigrants. The Justice Department recently announced a slew of measures, and Trump has called on Congress to pass legislation that would allow victims of crimes committed by illegal immigrants to sue sanctuary cities and states.

Can coronavirus spread through your Amazon packages?



employee contracted the virus. The news comes after at least two Amazon employees in Italy – which has seen a surge of coronavirus cases in recent weeks – were confirmed to have the virus as well, according to Bloomberg.

"We heard [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director] Tony Fauci, the world's expert in this area, comment on this and there is no evidence right now that the coronavirus can be spread through mail, no other coronavirus has been spread through mail," Adams said on Thursday, responding to fears.

A statement from Amazon said, "We are recommending that employees in Seattle/ Bellevue

who are able to work from home do so through the end of the month."

"Here's what I want people to know, Seattle actually has a lot of cases because of the nursing home situation, there is community spread going on there, it is much more likely that the person who works at Amazon in Seattle got it in the community than that he got it through the mail," Adams said on Thursday.

Adams referenced the fact that the majority of cases in Washington involve patients who are residents of the Life Care Center in Kirkland, where there is currently an outbreak. A Kirkland nursing home resident with underlying medical conditions

died last week after the patient was confirmed to have the virus two days before, according to University of Washington Medicine.

He went on to explain the measures people can take to protect themselves, including washing hands with soap for 20 seconds, covering a cough and staying away from people who are sick. "Most people who get coronavirus are going to have a mild illness. It will be like a bad cold or the flu and most people are going to recover," Adams said. "I want people to remember, 18,000 people have died from the flu in the United States this year. We are just over 100 people who have gotten the coronavirus."

(News Agencies) Surgeon General Jerome Adams, a member of the Trump administration's coronavirus task force, reacted on Thursday to the fact that an Amazon employee in Seattle contracted the novel coronavirus, saying: "There is no evidence right now that the coronavirus can be spread through mail." Amazon said the employee is the first among its U.S. workforce to fall ill with COVID-19, which has infected thousands of people around the world. It was not immediately clear how the

Mars 2020 rover is officially named 'Perseverance'

(News Agencies) The new name has been assigned to NASA's Mars 2020 rover, launching this July and scheduled to land on the red planet in February 2021.

The winning name was entered during a nationwide contest by Alexander Mather, a seventh grade student in Virginia. He will be invited to watch the spacecraft launch from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida this summer.

When Mather was 11, his parents sent him to Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama. He saw the capsule of the Saturn V rocket

rising over the building in 2018 and lost his mind, Mather said Thursday.

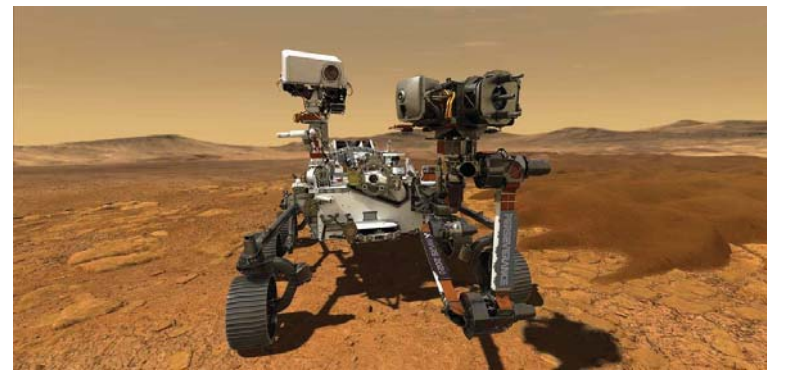
"I immediately knew space was something I was doing for the rest of my life," he said.

Mather wants to get a degree in engineering or science and hopes to work at NASA as an engineer.

In his essay, 13-year-old Mather wrote, "Curiosity. InSight. Spirit. Opportunity. If you think about it, all of these names of past Mars rovers are qualities we possess as humans. We are always curious, and seek opportunity. We have the spirit

and insight to explore the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

"But, if rovers are to be the qualities of us as a race, we missed the most important thing. Perseverance. We as humans evolved as creatures who could learn to adapt to any situation, no matter how harsh. We are a species of explorers, and we will meet many setbacks on the way to Mars. However, we can persevere. We, not as a nation but as humans, will not give up. Even faced with bitter losses such as Opportunity and Vikram 2, the human race will always persevere into the future."



The name was announced Thursday by Thomas Zurbuchen, NASA's Science Mission Directorate's associate administrator, at Lake Braddock Secondary School in Burke, Virginia.

"Alex's entry captured the spirit of exploration," said Zurbuchen. "Like every exploration mission before, our rover is going to face challenges, and it's going to make amazing discoveries. It's already surmounted many obstacles to get us to the point where we are today -- processing for launch.

"Alex and his classmates are the Artemis Generation, and they're going to be taking the next steps into space that lead to Mars. That inspiring work will always require perseverance. We can't wait to see that nameplate on Mars." Students have helped name Mars rovers since Sojourner in 1997, followed by Spirit, Opportunity and Curiosity. "This was a chance to help the agency that put humans on the Moon and will soon do it again," said Mather. "This Mars rover will help pave the way for human presence there, and I wanted to try and help in any way I could. Refusal of the challenge was not an option." Students across the US, ranging from kindergarten to high school, submitted more than

28,000 potential names for NASA's Mars 2020 rover. A panel of 4,700 volunteer judges whittled that list down to 155 semifinalists. Then, people from around the world shared their opinions on nine finalists, registering more than 770,000 votes in a public poll. Each contestant presented their name to a panel that included Director of NASA's Planetary Science Division Lori Glaze; NASA rover driver Nick Wiltsie; NASA astronaut Jessica Watkins; and Clara Ma, who named the Curiosity rover when she was a sixth-grade student in 2009. The submissions were judged based on the appropriateness and significance of the name, its originality, the quality and originality of the essay, presentation and interview, as well as bonus points for high public poll votes. When coming up with name ideas, students were advised to "keep it G-rated" and not use the names of current, past or proposed space missions, brands or people (at least those who are currently living). The efforts of the semifinalists were not in vain. "They came so far, and their expressive submissions helped make this naming contest the biggest and best in NASA history," said Glaze, who also attended the event Thursday.

New York Times joint endorsement of Warren, Klobuchar was double-barrel misfire

(News Agencies) The New York Times' bizarre double endorsement of 2020 Democratic presidential hopefuls Amy Klobuchar and Elizabeth Warren turned into a double-barrel kiss of death as both candidates dropped out of the race approximately 72 hours apart. The Times announced in January that its editorial board was breaking "from convention" by endorsing two candidates. The editorial board wrote that in choosing Warren and Klobuchar it recognized that both the "radical" and "realist" Democratic candidates, respectively, should be considered.

Klobuchar suspended her campaign on Monday and quickly endorsed former Vice President Joe Biden, while Warren dropped out on Thursday following a disappointing showing on Super Tuesday. The Times' endorsement has traditionally been one of the most coveted for a Democratic politician. However, the paper that endorsed Hillary Clinton in 2016 failed to help elect its preferred candidates in 2020, as well. Media Research

Center vice president Dan Gainor told Fox News that Warren and Klobuchar's unsuccessful presidential bids offered further proof that newspaper endorsements don't really matter. "Newspaper endorsements mattered a lot when

newspapers were influential in their local communities. They aren't any longer," Gainor said. "Journalism is dominated by major national players like The New York Times and Washington Post. Neither one of those is really a local newspaper, they both focus on national issues and their influence is little [and] in doubt." The Times said it spent more than 12 hours with the candidates before selecting Klobuchar and Warren. "The history of the editorial board would suggest that we would side squarely with the candidate with a more traditional approach to pushing the nation forward, within the realities of a constitutional framework and a multiparty country," the editorial board wrote. "But the events of the past few years have shaken the confidence of even the most committed institutionalists."



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Pelosi says 'element of misogyny' in race as Warren becomes latest female candidate to bow out

(News Agencies) House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she is "encouraged" by the ideological debates within the Democratic Party now represented by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and former Vice President Joe Biden, but lamented not having a female candidate in the general election. Pelosi said during a Thursday press conference that there were "great candidates," specifically

touting Sens. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., and Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., but hypothesized as to why they came up short.

"I do think that there's a certain element of misogyny that is there. And some of it isn't really mean-spirited, it just isn't their experience," Pelosi said. She claimed that some people have "their own insecurities" that prevent them from voting for a

woman. Warren also pointed to sexism as a possible factor in the Democratic base essentially boiling down to two men. Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard is still in the race as the sole female candidate, but she has secured just one delegate in the primaries thus far after failing to qualify for the most recent debates.

At the same time, Pelosi said she believes that "the American people are ready" for a female president, and said she was surprised that the U.S. has a female speaker of the House before having a female president. Pelosi said she expected the general public to have been more ready than members of

Congress to have a woman in charge. "Every time I get introduced as the most powerful woman," she said, "I almost cry because I'm thinking I wish that were not true. I so wish that we had a woman president of the United States and we came very close to doing that."

Looking to the remaining front-runners, Pelosi was quick to brush aside the notion that she is concerned about the polarization of the party now represented by the democratic socialist Sanders and the establishment candidate Biden. "I'm encouraged by the debate that is taking place, that I hope will take place now with clarity between two people,"

Pelosi said. "Here's the thing, I'm so proud to be a Democrat because to be a Democrat is to respect other opinions," she said, adding that "our diversity is our strength, but our unity is our power." Pelosi pointed out that differences within the party are small compared to the "chasm" between them and President Trump.

When Warren announced the suspension of her campaign Thursday, she said she entered the race believing that there could be a middle lane between the progressive and establishment wings of the party, and was disappointed that this was not the case.

Hope for the battle against coronavirus

A growing number of sufferers are recovering with more than half of worldwide sufferers and at least 15 Americans declared virus-free - even as US cases surge past 200



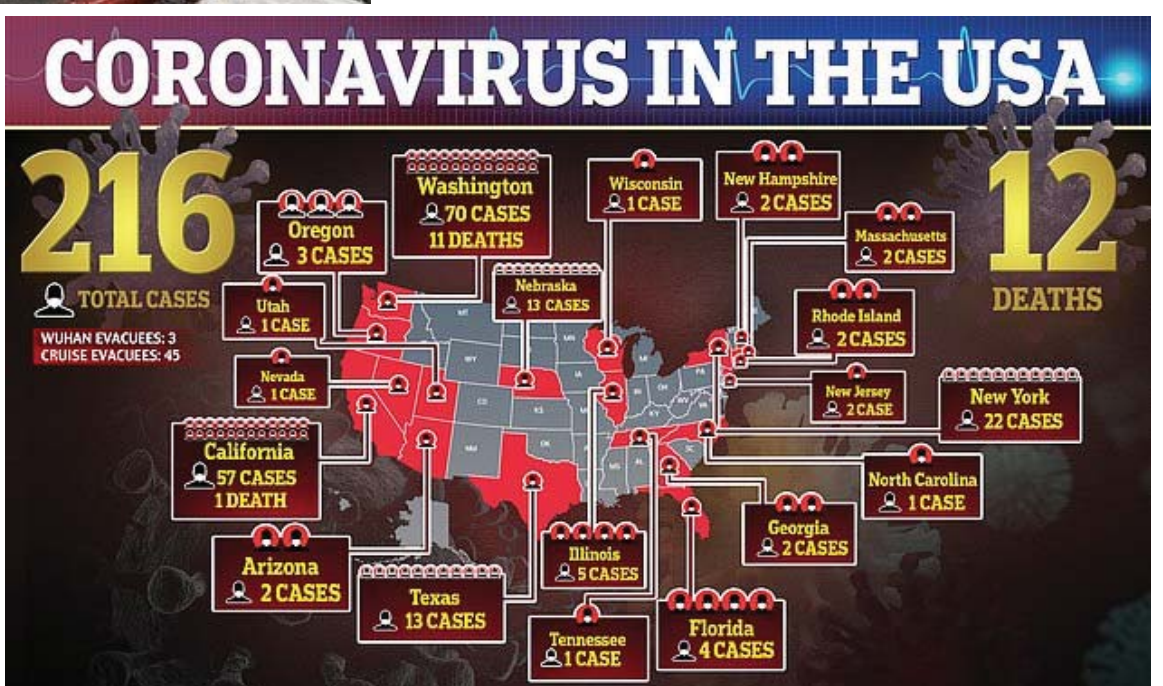
(News Agencies) As the number of coronavirus cases increases in the US, there is another number also on the rise: patients who have recovered.

There are currently more than 200 cases of the highly-contagious disease in at least 18 states, and 11 deaths.

But at least 15 people in six states are said to have made full recoveries including six in California, four in Nebraska, two in Illinois, Washington and Wisconsin. And it seems to be a trend across the globe. Of the 97,841 people to have fallen ill worldwide, 53,786 - more than half, or 55 percent - have recovered, according to the Johns

Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering. When a patient tests positive for COVID-19, the disease caused by coronavirus, they are either isolated at home or in the hospital until they test negative. This helps prevent the virus from being spread to others in the community. 'Recovery really depends on where in the spectrum they land,' Dr Nasia Safdar, the medical director of infection control and prevention at UW Health, who treated the Wisconsin patient, told DailyMail.com. 'If you're critical, you may be in ICU, you might be in rehab.; She says several swabs have to show that a patient is recovered, according to the Johns

from isolation. How long someone needs to remain in isolation before they test negative can vary. One patient in Humboldt County, California, was allowed to go home after nine days while the first patient in Illinois was released from isolation after about three weeks. In the case of the Wisconsin patient, he or she recovered from the fever and cough symptoms within a few days. Dr Safdar said that the patient felt well enough to go about daily activities, but need negative test before being allowed to be released. In fact, researchers have found that 80 percent of people who fall ill will develop mild symptoms, with some never showing symptoms. 'When people [contract coronavirus], they might feel better in a few days but they should be prepared and should not go about daily activities,' Dr Safdar said. And similar recoveries have been happening around the world. There are now more patients in China have recovered from the illness than there are people who are still infected there. According to China Global TV Network, as of Monday, at least 52,100 people, or 63 percent, have recovered from the virus. By comparison, there about 28,400 existing cases in the county where COVID-19 first appeared. And in South Korea, which has second highest number of cases, 47 people were discharged on Tuesday, the most for the country in one day. At least 88 people have fully recovered, according to Yonhap News.





Every New Yorker who has 'recently' returned from five coronavirus hot-spot countries is told to self-quarantine for two weeks

(News Agencies) Every New Yorker who has traveled and recently returned from China, Japan, Iran, Italy and South Korea have been told by the city's mayor to self-quarantine for 14 days as a coronavirus precaution.

Mayor Bill de Blasio made the recommendation at a press conference on Thursday where he struck a more concerned tone than in previous days and described the spread of the disease in New York City as 'unpredictable and worrisome'.

'Our level of concern is rising for sure... for all New Yorkers, if you have recently returned from one of the five countries, we're asking you to isolate yourself as a precaution for 14 days.'

'Obviously, if you have symptoms then you need to get to care and testing,' he said.

He did not specify what he meant by 'recently' but he later referenced a 'time-frame'.

In most cases with the virus so far, the window of concern is 14 days. Twenty-two people in New York State have now been diagnosed with the virus, including four in New York City.

A man in Long Island has been diagnosed with the virus.

Two men in New Jersey have also been diagnosed now, including one who has a significant 'nexus' to New York City. Tests are now being carried out by the hundreds to determine who the infected people came into contact with and if they too now have the disease.

However Mayor de Blasio said the city cannot get enough tests fast enough to keep up.

The city has 1,000 tests currently, but with fast-growing numbers, de Blasio said the city urgently needs more.

'Each day we may tell you something new about how this

disease. 'The community spread issue, we are seeking guidance from WHO and CDC, now that it's clearly established as a phenomenon here,' he said.

He went on to say that the 'big picture' is that 80 percent of people who have become infected have recovered. We need the ability to test and many people as possible as quickly as possible, we cannot do that without help from the federal government.

'We do not have the physical capacity we need. We need the FDA to speed up the approval of the test developed by private companies. We have to maximize our ability to do what we need to do,' he said.

'The last 48 hours are sobering.

'Community spread is an entirely different ball game.

'I don't want people to assume, I don't want people to overreact because this is going to be a day to day, hour by hour thing.

'Community spread is different. It makes it a lot harder

for us to control the situation. 'We're all very sober right now about what tomorrow could bring or the day after that, he said.

Of the 22 cases in the state of New York, 17 are in Westchester and they have all been tied to a Manhattan attorney who was the second person to be diagnosed in the state.

Four people in New York City have the virus; the lawyer, a healthcare worker, a woman in her eighties and a man in his forties who has underlying lung issues due to smoking and vaping.

There is also one person in Nassau County, Long Island who has the disease. He is a 42-year-old man and he has been hospitalized.

Cuomo emphasized on Thursday that only a handful of the people who have been infected have had to be hospitalized and that all are getting better.

He said he was 'worried' about nursing homes and senior care facilities, but that for most residents the virus is like having the flu.

'When you know the facts, it's

reassuring. On these facts, there is no reason for undue anxiety.'

De Blasio earlier pleaded with the CDC to send more test kits to New York City after confirming that a woman in her eighties and a man in his forties have tested positive.

'We are going to see more cases like this as community transmission becomes more common. We want New Yorkers to be prepared and vigilant, not alarmed,' he said.

Doctors in Westchester are reporting not having the test kits needed to diagnose people.

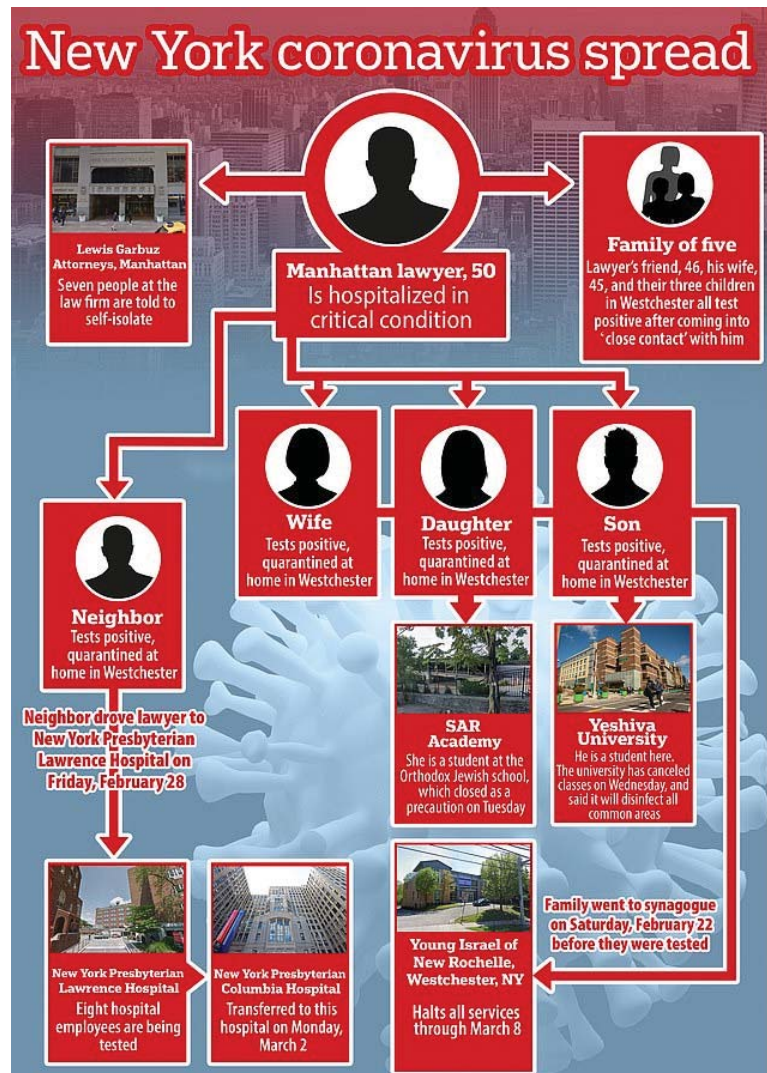
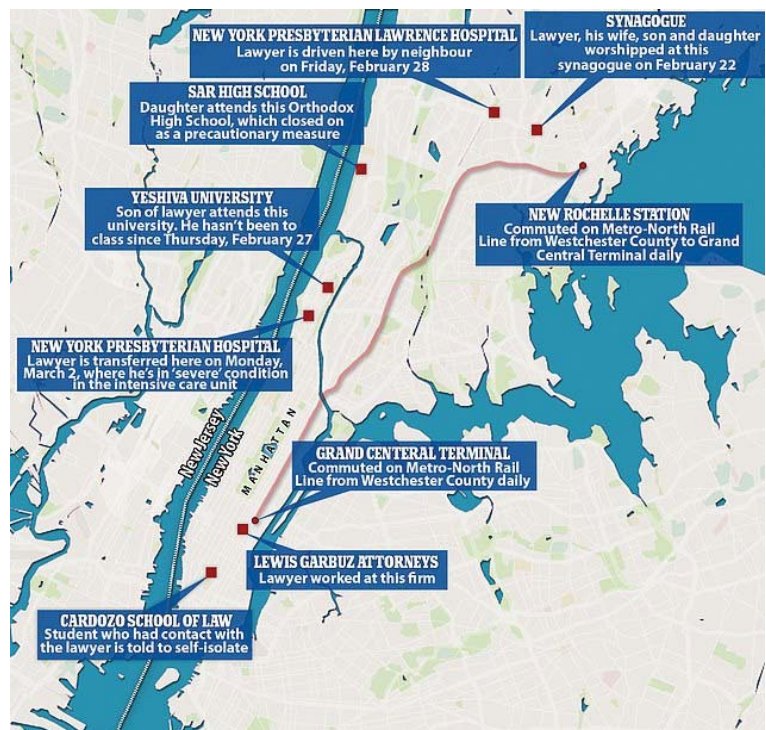
'At this time no physician offices have the ability to test for COVID-19. The test can only be done by New York State or the

Centers for Disease Control,' one school district, which has closed as a precaution, said in a statement. Twenty-five other tests have been returned as negative, he said.

In Westchester, one thousand people will be told to self-quarantine after potentially coming into contact with a Manhattan lawyer and his family who all have the virus.

The lawyer, 50, is in the hospital. He is in a stable condition. He gave the virus to his wife, 14-year-old daughter and 20-year-old son, and also gave it to the neighbor who drove him to the hospital.

He also spread it to a friend, who in turn passed it on to his wife, two sons and daughter.



'I did it to manage my anxieties

' Bill Clinton reveals in Hillary Hulu doc that he had oral sex with Monica Lewinsky to ease pressures of the job, feels 'terrible' scandal defined her life and confessing to Chelsea was the worst



(News Agencies) Bill Clinton claims that his affair with Monica Lewinsky was one of the 'things I did to manage my anxieties'.

The former President suggests, in an explosive documentary seen by DailyMailTV, that he had the fling with the ex-White House intern while he was in office because it helped with his own issues.

Bill reveals that at the time he met Lewinsky the pressure of the job made him feel like a boxer who had done 30 rounds and he looked at Lewinsky as 'something that will take your mind off it for a while'.

He makes the claims in an interview featured in the new documentary series that will air on Hulu about his wife Hillary Clinton, called 'Hillary', where the former First Lady and Secretary of State candidly reveals that in the aftermath of the scandal the couple underwent 'painful' marriage counseling. Bill offers an apology to Lewinsky in the documentary that will premiere on Friday, and says he felt 'terrible' that her life was defined by their affair.

But he said that at some point when

things don't return to normal 'you've got to decide how to define normal', suggesting the infamous former intern should just move on. The four-part series features extraordinary access to the Clintons' inner circle and examines Hillary's public life from her student days to losing the 2016 election to Donald Trump.

But the part about the Lewinsky affair - which the political couple rarely address in public - will likely be the most scrutinized.

The scandal led to Bill being impeached in 1998. But he survived the trial in the Senate and remained in office during his second term.

The last time Bill spoke about the scandal was in 2018 and it backfired spectacularly because he said that he did not owe Lewinsky a private apology.

This time he went through in great detail, at times appearing emotional as he talked about the moment he finally came clean to his wife.

His hand was forced in 1998 when it became apparent he had lied to a grand jury investigating his personal affairs by denying the affair.

Bill had also denied it to Hillary - and she believed him.

He said in the interview: 'I went and sat on the bed and talked to her. I told her exactly what happened, when it happened. I said I feel terrible about it. We've been through quite a bit in the last few years. I said I have no defense, it's inexcusable what I did'.

Hillary tells the cameras: 'I was just devastated. I could not believe it. I was so personally just hurt and I can't believe this, I can't believe you lied.' Hillary told Bill that he was the one who had to tell their daughter Chelsea, who was 18 at the time. He thought it was worse than telling his wife and he said that doing so was 'awful'.

Asked why he took such a risk with his family, his marriage and his country, Bill said he wasn't thinking about those things when he cheated.

Instead, the pressures of being in the White House led him to seek a distraction.

'You feel like you're staggering around, you've been in a 15 round prize fight that was extended to 30 rounds and here's something that will take your mind off it for a while, that's what happens.

'Because there, whatever life - not just me. Everybody's life has pressures and disappointments, terrors, fears of whatever.

'Things I did to manage my anxieties for years. I'm a different, totally different person than I was, a lot of that stuff 20 years ago,' he said.

Bill did not explain exactly what he was referring to, but Pulitzer-prize winning journalist Lucinda Franks has claimed that in 1999 Hillary told her Bill confessed that his mother abused him as a boy and caused him to become a sex addict.

In the Hulu documentary, Bill said: 'Maybe it's just getting older but I hope it was also going through a lot of this. But whatever, what I did was bad but it wasn't



like - how can I think about the most stupid thing I could and do it. 'It's not a defense, it's an explanation. I feel awful'.

The family went to Martha's Vineyard for a vacation and when they returned Hillary had decided to stand by her husband and fight his impeachment.

On the helicopter ride there Chelsea took them both by the hand. An emotional Hillary says in the film: 'When she did that, oh my gosh, I thought that's just so incredible, so strong and so wise'. Hillary described the marriage counseling sessions with Bill as 'painful, painful discussions'.

Bill said: 'Counseling was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do but it was necessary. She deserved it, Chelsea deserved it and I needed it. 'I feel terrible about the fact that Monica Lewinsky's life was defined by it, unfairly I think. 'Over the years I've watched her trying to get a normal life back again, but you've got to decide how to define normal'.

The documentary was directed by Nanette Burstein whose previous work includes a film about eccentric internet entrepreneur John McAfee. They interviewed Hillary for 35 hours as well as many members of her campaign staff from 2016. Neither Bernie Sanders, who nearly beat Hillary in the 2016 Democratic Presidential primary, nor Trump were invited to contribute.

McConnell slams Schumer on Senate floor for controversial remarks directed at Supreme Court justices



(News Agencies) Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., called out Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., on the Senate floor Thursday morning for his controversial warning a day earlier that Supreme Court Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett

Kavanaugh would "pay the price" for decisions in abortion cases.

"There is nothing to call this except a threat," McConnell said.

Schumer made the statement during an abortions rights rally hosted by the Center for Reproductive Rights as the court was hearing arguments in a case over an abortion-related Louisiana law. "I want to tell you, Gorsuch. I want to tell you, Kavanaugh. You have released the whirlwind and you will pay the price!" Schumer warned. "You won't know what hit you if you go forward with these awful decisions." After

McConnell's remarks, Schumer took to the floor and began by claiming that McConnell made a "glaring omission" by not mentioning that Schumer was speaking regarding a Supreme Court case that could impact women's ability to get an abortion. He then admitted that he chose the wrong words to convey his message. "Now I should not have used the words I used," Schumer said. "They didn't come out the way I intended to." Schumer insisted he in no way meant to threaten Gorsuch or Kavanaugh, and that McConnell knows this.

He claimed he was referring to the political consequences the case could have.

"I'm from Brooklyn. We speak in strong language," he said.

Schumer spokesman Justin Goodman previously insisted that Schumer was addressing Republican lawmakers when he said a "price" would be paid -- even though Schumer had explicitly named Kavanaugh and Gorsuch.

McConnell did not buy that, saying that Schumer was trying to "gaslight the entire country" by claiming he was not addressing the justices.

How India's top political leaders responded to the riots in 1947

They were courageous under fire and united under pressure. Today's leaders have much to learn from them

(News Agencies)The violence that broke out in north-east Delhi last week is an eerie echo of the past. India's freedom in 1947 came at a terrible price. From west Pakistan to east Punjab, the country burned with communal fires. From Narowal to Dera Baba Nanak, from Kasur to Ferozepur, from Bahawalpur to Bikaner, and from Mirpur Khas to Jodhpur, those trying to escape were on the move — by train, by bullock cart, and on foot. In Bahawalpur, a battalion of State troops watched impassively as Muslims in the main town began to rampage through the streets. In Delhi, reports of shootings, stabbings and arson began to filter into the home department.

VP Menon, then secretary, ministry of states, would remember the skies above independent India's Capital turning a dull red as fires began to burn in the Old City. Travelling to Bahawalpur — one of the bloodiest theatres of violence in Punjab — to assess the situation in October 1947, Menon found streets littered so thickly with bloodied and decaying dead bodies that he found it difficult to breathe, let alone walk. "I have seen 1947," former home secretary (and erstwhile private secretary to Jawaharlal Nehru), HVR Iengar recalled in 1968, "and if that was the first stage of any kind of revolution, then God help us all."

History repeated itself last week,

during United States President Donald Trump's visit to India. The Capital bore horrified witness to the worst communal violence it has seen in over four decades. With 53 killed, over 350 injured, and bodies still being fished out of the labyrinthine drains in the area, the riots have wounded the city in ways that many had hoped to forget. Most victims appear to be Muslims. The evidence of police brutality and apathy has been both glaring and painful. Yet, it is the absence of leadership that has betrayed Delhi's residents the most.

As the country moved towards its freedom, history remembers India's first leaders standing united for peace. In 1946, Mahatma Gandhi spent four fraught months at Noakhali in Bengal (modern Bangladesh) — the scene of terrible communal violence. He listened to harrowing tales of forcible conversions, of rape and bloodshed, but his message was simple: To shun violence and forgive.

Nehru was the epitome of courage in the face of threatening mobs. He was known to fling himself into the breach if he thought he could prevent violence from breaking out. From Roy Bucher to HVR Iengar to New York Times' correspondent George Jones, there was nobody who had not seen India's first prime minister charge headlong into a hostile crowd, or demand that the mobs

murder him first before he saw a drop of blood being spilt in the name of religion.

Politics did not matter in the face of bloodshed. As the killings spread into 1947, MA Jinnah demanded that Louis Mountbatten be ruthless in clamping down on disorder. "I don't care whether you shoot Muslims or not," Jinnah said, "It has got to be stopped." They might have been on opposite sides of the political divide, but Nehru and Jinnah instinctively recognised that blood could not be the first brushstroke on the canvases of their new countries.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the then home minister, gave immediate orders. Partisan officials within his government were to be punished and rioters were to be shot on sight. A Delhi emergency committee was formed, with a dedicated team of officials and volunteers undertaking three major tasks: Protecting Delhi's Muslims; organising camps for terrified Muslims leaving their homes in Delhi and neighbouring areas; and setting up camps for refugees arriving from west Pakistan. Patel personally went to the shrine of Nizamuddin Auliya, where he informed the police commissioner in charge that on pain of dismissal, nothing untoward was to happen to or within the shrine. The home minister toured disturbed areas as well, often standing his ground against swelling, angry crowds to ask

strongly for peace. Menon was instrumental in putting forth the rather creative idea of a Central Emergency Committee (CEC), responsible to the Cabinet, headed by Mountbatten. It was an idea welcomed by both Patel and Nehru who, given Mountbatten's undoubted wartime expertise, saw no shame in putting the interests of the country into hands more capable than theirs. The CEC worked on the crucial aspects of restoring law and order: Assisting in the flow of refugees, distributing food, preventing the spread of epidemics and disposing of corpses. This was the kind of united leadership, bravery and empathy that remained markedly absent in the aftermath of last week's violence in Delhi.

The Aam Aadmi Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party have been rightly criticised, for their supine attitude during and after the violence, their total lack of compassion, and non-existent relief efforts. The Congress has been condemned for its belated presence on the scene. It has been the citizens who have come together, regardless of caste or creed, to do what their elected representatives should have been doing. The leaders of yesteryear were swift to give comfort, and swifter to act in the interests of their country. They were courageous under fire and united under pressure. Today's leaders have much to learn from them.

The real opposite of Trump isn't Sanders

There's a theory that every new president balances out the previous occupant of the Oval Office.

(News Agencies) So Jimmy Carter's promise of honest and ethical government was a counterweight to Richard Nixon and Watergate. Confident California conservative Ronald Reagan ran as the anti-Carter. After Bill Clinton's scandals, George W. Bush said he'd "restore honor and decency" to the White House. Freshman Senator Barack Obama offered a stark departure from George W. Bush's dynastic presidency. And, of course, Donald Trump was the polar opposite of "No Drama" Obama -- a man he'd baselessly accused of not being

born in the United States.

By this logic, it's easy to understand why some folks see Bernie Sanders as the ultimate contrast to Donald Trump: a Democratic socialist and Sixties-style revolutionary who rails against millionaires and billionaires. But take a step outside the class-warfare paradigm and let's look at contrasts in character and experience -- qualities which typically drive a decision of who to hire for a big job.

Even his critics concede that Joe Biden is known for his decency and empathy

among longtime colleagues in the Senate. "As good a man as God ever created," attested a teary-eyed Senator Lindsay Graham back in 2015, before he went full Trump. Here's what John McCain said about him: "He is a good and decent man, God-fearing and kind, a devoted father and husband and a genuine patriot who puts our country before himself."

Every line in McCain's tribute offers a clear contrast to President Trump. Even his defenders would not offer up "good and decent" and "devoted husband" as the President's

prime attributes. In fact, according to an AP-NORC Center poll, among the first words that Republicans associate with President Trump are "bumbling" and "jerk."

And at a time when the key criteria for major government positions, like Director of National Intelligence, seems to be unquestioning loyalty to Trump, a candidate who embodies experience with a record of putting country above self-interest would be a huge relief to many Americans.

With Sanders and Biden the two candidates most likely to scoop up delegates on Super Tuesday, we'll get some insight into who is seen as the strongest alternative to Trump.

In the last 24 hours, we've seen the center-lane in the Democratic field clear up considerably with Pete Buttigieg and Amy Klobuchar, two proud Midwestern moderates, bowing out and endorsing Biden.

That's the downstream effect from Biden's blowout win in South Carolina that revived his campaign like Lazarus.

It's not just secondhand smoke that is dangerous. Thirdhand smoke can be, too

You can tell the dude sitting next to you in the movie theater is a smoker or vaper; you can smell it on his clothes. But since he's not lighting up and puffing smoke your way, it's OK, right?

Not at all.

A new study out of Yale University says thirdhand smoke — the tobacco contaminants that adhere to walls, bedding, carpet and other surfaces until a room smells like an ashtray — can actually cling to a smoker's body and clothes as well.

Those potentially toxic chemicals, including nicotine, can then be released into environments where smoking has never occurred, like your movie theater, according to the study.

Even more disturbing: The study found those chemical exposure levels could be the equivalent of between one and 10 cigarettes by the end of the movie.

"People are substantial carriers of thirdhand smoke contaminants to other environments," said study author Drew Gentner, an associate professor of chemical and environmental engineering at Yale.

The study, published Wednesday in the journal *Science Advances*, may be the first to show that people can transmit nicotine and other potentially toxic chemicals via their clothing after smoking, he said. "That was the unique part of this study," Gentner continued.

"We were surprised by the wide array of hazardous volatile organic compounds that were off-gassing from the audience — including some that are known to be known carcinogens in people, such as benzene and formaldehyde."

What is 'thirdhand smoke'?

Thirdhand "smoke" isn't actually smoke at all. It's the residue of nicotine and other chemicals in tobacco, some of which are toxic, that remain long after active smoking is over.

Some of these chemicals stick to surfaces, and others attach to dust particles. Still others often penetrate deep into wallboard, drapes and upholstery. As the compounds linger, they may react with oxidants or

other particles in the room's atmosphere. The chemical reactions can create potentially harmful byproducts that can become airborne.

Science has known about this type of environmental pollution for years, sparking the creation of smoking and non-smoking rooms at hotels, restaurants and the like.

But thirdhand smoke has also been found in environments which were not known to be contaminated by smokers, which led researchers to ask how that could happen.

To find out, Gentner and some of his PhD students set up an experiment in a movie theater that had not allowed smoking for more than 15 years. They



supplied fresh air into the theater, making sure that no smoking or other contaminants entered the space. Sophisticated equipment measured airborne particles before and after moviegoers arrived. Right away, they saw a huge spike in levels of hazardous chemicals. As people came into the theater, the concentrations went up, and then decreased over time, Gentner said.

"But they didn't completely disappear after the audience left," he added. "In many cases, the persistent contamination was observable the following day in the unoccupied theater." The testing continued over a four-day period across different movie genres. Perhaps not surprisingly, levels of nicotine and other chemicals were lower in the G-rated movies geared toward kids.

"Despite cases where we had audiences of over 200 people for some of the G-rated movies, the pollutants were much larger for R-rated films, even with smaller audiences," Gentner said. "Those movies would likely draw older audiences that might be more likely to smoke."

An egg a day may be fine for you after all, a new study says

It's health's longest ping pong game: Eggs are bad -- then good -- then bad for your heart.

According to a new study, the latest answer might have come from your mother or grandmother: all things in moderation.

"Moderate consumption - up to one egg per day - is not associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease," said study author Dr. Frank Hu, who chairs the department of nutrition at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The research team analyzed data from large, longitudinal studies that were following 215,000 women and men who had no major chronic disease at the start of the study. All were asked about their egg-eating habits -- most said they ate between one and five eggs a week -- and their health was followed over a 34-year period. Did eating eggs increase their risk for heart attacks, coronary heart disease or stroke?

Not for the vast majority. The only association between a higher intake of eggs and cardiovascular



risk was for people with type 2 diabetes, a link that has been duplicated in previous studies.

What if people ate more than one egg a day?

"On average, most people don't eat more than an egg a day," Hu said. "They might eat two eggs per breakfast, but only two or three times per week. So the average consumption is actually less than one egg per day."

To verify the results, the

team did a meta-analysis of studies from Europe, Asia and the United States. Combined, those studies looked at the egg-eating habits of 1.7 million people and also found that eating up to one egg a day had no negative impact on heart health.

There was more good news: Moderate egg consumption was associated with a slightly lower risk for heart

disease in Asian populations, possibly because of the way Asian food incorporates eggs into recipes rather than eating them separately, he added.

The study "was meticulously conducted," said Alice Lichtenstein, the director and senior scientist at the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at Tufts University, who was not

involved with the study. The results are consistent with the American Heart Association 2019 cholesterol advisory published last year, as well as previous guidance from the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, she said.

In fact, Lichtenstein added, dietary models that recommend replacing "full-fat milk,

unprocessed red meat or processed red meat with eggs showed a benefit in terms of cardiovascular disease risk."

The poultry industry has long touted the "incredible, edible egg." For a mere 75 calories, they say, an egg delivers 7 grams of high-quality protein, 5 grams of fat and 1.6 grams of saturated fat, along with iron, vitamins, minerals and disease-fighting nutrients like lutein and zeaxanthin. And eggs are affordable, making them a cheap nutritional powerhouse for families with limited food budgets.

The problem, of course, is the level of cholesterol in the yellow yolk of eggs: One large egg can deliver about 185 milligrams of cholesterol.

Nutritional guidelines used to recommend an upper limit of 300 milligrams of cholesterol a day. Today the guidelines suggest eating as little as possible by keeping saturated fats to less than 10% of daily calories.

Why hydrogen water is the new health fad



Hydrogen water is the latest wellness trend to hit the US and UK. After vitamin-fortified water, health buffs are now buying hydrogen-enriched water with much-touted benefits such as reducing inflammation, wrinkles, bone loss and helping metabolise fat and glucose faster. These benefits can be achieved by chugging just about 500 ml (two glasses) of hydrogen-rich water a day, much less than the recommended 8 to 10 glasses a day of regular water, say studies.

Regular water which has two molecules of hydrogen and one molecule of oxygen is neither alkaline nor acidic. But when it is infused with hydrogen — by either adding magnesium or through the process of electrolysis — it becomes rich in antioxidants. A 2013 review published in the journal *Medical Gas Research* found that when ingested hydrogen acts as an antioxidant, mopping up free radicals — inflammation-causing molecules linked to everything from accelerated skin ageing to cancer.

While the US and UK are new to this trend, the Japanese have long been advocating use of hydrogen-rich water, or the Shin'nooru solution, as they call it.

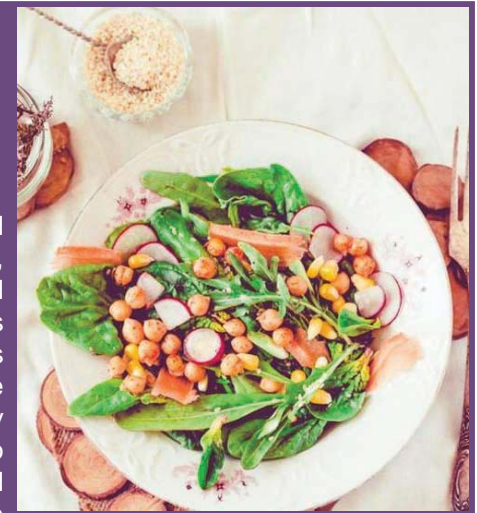
Do you eat healthy?

Beware, you may still develop deficiencies and fall sick

Nowadays, people are becoming obsessive for losing weight and switching to healthy eating. But most people don't know what they actually are eating and this has become a common problem. A study has found that an obsession with eating vegetarian food may be endangering lives, reports *The Independent*.

Nutritionist Patrick Denoux believes that a purely vegetarian diet can lead to B12 deficiency which can cause various health problems. B12 is not made by the body and most people get the required nutrient from animal products like eggs, dairy products, meat or fish. If untreated, a vitamin B12 deficiency can lead to

vision loss, weakness, tiredness and light-headedness, heart palpitation, nerve problems, depression and memory loss. Earlier studies suggested that children who lacked this vitamin perform poorly in cognitive tests. The other issue with healthy eating is that it could be leading to orthorexia nervosa — a term first coined by physician Steven Bratman in the year 1990. Someone suffering from orthorexia is imprisoned by a range of rules which they impose on themselves. Orthorexia is not part of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, set down by mental health professionals in the United States that is also widely used as a benchmark



elsewhere.

Experts believe that orthorexia sufferers could be treated with cognitive behavioural therapy, which may involve learning how to deal with situations that can cause anxiety about eating, relaxation techniques and discussing excessive beliefs.

Want that glowing, healthy skin this Diwali? Then stop stressing out

You don't want a dull face, especially during festive season. Here's how to save your skin from side-effects of tension.

You can buy designer clothes for Diwali and wear the best of gems and baubles, but if your skin isn't healthy and glowing, you won't be able to look your best for festivities. We often blame bad diet and genetics for our skin problems, but stress equally harms it. In fact, with our increasingly hectic lifestyles, it has become a major culprit. Dermatologists Rajat Kandhari and Lokesh Kumar tell us how stress impacts our skin, and how to fix the

problem.

Cortisol disturbs the hormonal balance in the body. So, stress becomes one of the major reasons for acne breakout, as it causes inflammation of the skin. It can also upset the balance of good and bad bacteria in the gut, causing acne and pigmentation on the neck.

Fix: Avoid anxiety food such as sugar. Drink loads of water and consume a high-fibre diet. Your skin specialist will prescribe topical and



oral medicines, depending on the severity of your acne.

2) Dryness: When you are stressed, you drink less water, and consume more tea and coffee. This causes dehydration, leading to dry skin. Stress also increases the level of hormone cortisol, which reduces the skin's ability to retain water, again causing dryness.

Fix: First and foremost, consciously drink more water when you are stressed. You can opt for warm water to calm you down, besides it also helps your skin. Go for foods and drinks rich in antioxidants. Prunes, blackberries, amla juice, pomegranate, and green tea are all good choices.

3) Fine lines: When feeling stressed, we tend to frown or purse our lips. Facial muscle tension can cause wrinkles and fine lines. Cortisol also causes an increase in blood sugar, which through glycation (the bonding of a sugar molecule to a protein or lipid molecule without enzymatic regulation) harms collagen. Fix: Take a deep breath, and relax your facial muscles, especially those around the eyebrows and cheeks. Chewing gum can also help.

Trying to lose weight ?

Here's how you can consume fewer calories in a day



While there are many local superfoods that help you get in shape, sometimes skipping a meal may also help you trim your waistline. A recent study discovered that skipping your breakfast and fasting until lunch may help you eat around 353 fewer calories every day. According to researchers, fasting until lunch causes people to eat around 353 fewer calories a day, a study found. Study author Dr Keith Tolfrey said, "There is a common belief that breakfast is the "most important meal of

the day". However, around one third of children and adolescents in many countries skip breakfast regularly. The findings from the Universities of Loughborough and Bedfordshire support a growing body of evidence that restricting calories, via fasting, boosts weight loss by reducing people's calorie intake and regulating hormones involved in fat storage. The team analysed 40 girls aged between 11 and 15 years old. The participants ate no breakfast or 6.3g of Weetabix with 188ml of semi-skimmed milk

If you wish to shed those extra kilos, then skipping your breakfast and fasting until lunch may help you eat around 353 fewer calories every day, a recent study has found.

and 375ml of orange juice, for three days. Their overall diets were assessed via food diaries, while their physical activity levels were determined by acceleration devices. The results revealed that skipping breakfast causes people to eat 353 fewer calories a day. Although people eat around 115 more calories a day when they have breakfast, that meal alone contains on average 468 calories. The researchers noted that they do not know why eating breakfast is associated with a lower likelihood of being overweight or obese, or whether eating breakfast can be used effectively as a weight-control strategy. The findings are published in the *Journal of Nutrition*.

Baaghi 3 movie review

As Tiger Shroff leaps and kicks, this film can barely crawl



Tiger Shroff does what he is best at – gravity-defying action. It is a pity the rest of this film can't keep pace with him.

Director: Ahmed Khan
Cast: Tiger Shroff, Shraddha Kapoor, Ritesh Deshmukh, Jackie Shroff
Indian fans don't like when their heroes are at the receiving end of kicks and punches. If you are India's foremost action star Tiger Shroff, getting beaten up can apparently make your film go from a hit to an also ran. The actor had explained the audience's middling response to his Student of The Year 2, saying he's seen as a one-man army and his fans couldn't digest him being beaten up by college toughies.

Baaghi 3 seems to be a direct reaction to that

thought. In the third iteration of the Baaghi franchise, Tiger is beating up anything and everything that can be broken or shredded—men, cars, tanks, helicopters, his shirts. He bounces off buildings, treads on air; delivers triple roundhouse kicks and does devastating stuff with his hands and feet. But somewhere between him decimating helicopters and blowing up tanks, my suspension of disbelief snapped; and trust me when I say that I have been trained well by Hindi cinema.

After bringing a few bad men to their knees in the Baaghi franchise, Tiger Shroff is up

against a nation, a fact the film never lets us forget. In fact, once Tiger lands up at his doorstep in Baaghi 3's climax, the kohli-eyed warlord wonders whether he is being pummeled by the US, Russia or the Mossad. If we purely go by the scale Baaghi 3 attempts, Baaghi 4 will at least need to have an army of three-eyed aliens being kicked back into space by Tiger: The Lone Avenger. In fact, Baaghi 3 would have made sense if Tiger's superhuman strength came from a scientist's test tube or because he is a 'genius, billionaire, playboy, philanthropist' in his spare time.

As it is, Tiger's wins come from the fact that director Ahmed Khan seems to have given all the thought to the action and absolutely none to other aspects of this film. The story itself is creaky with age – younger

brother Ronnie (Tiger Shroff) promises to always take care of his older but more timid sibling Vikram (Ritesh Deshmukh). The jumpy Vikram is compelled to become a police inspector in Agra by his brother on the promise that he will always be there to help him.

Ronnie does the heavy lifting while Vikram is there to accept the medals. However, as they clean up the city, they fall foul of a local criminal IPL (Jaideep Ahlawat) who has links with an ISIS-like organization from Syria, interestingly called Jaish-e-Lashkar. Vikram is sent to extradite IPL but is kidnapped, forcing Ronnie to cut a swath through the country. Before you jump to any conclusion, Baaghi 3 has absolutely nothing to do with geo-politics or, for that matter, common sense. There might be a nation and army pursuing Ronnie, but

they would rather be killed than shoot first. The reason why people are being kidnapped from south Asia and being sent to Syria is pulpy to the point of being hilarious. Vijay Verma's Pakistani character gets his accent from Hyderabad for some reason.

The film's jokes are as lame as its story. IPL stands for Inder Paheli Lamba and he likes to ask riddles; Satish Kaushik's police commissioner is called BMC aka Bhookelal Moohpe Chatore – you get the picture.

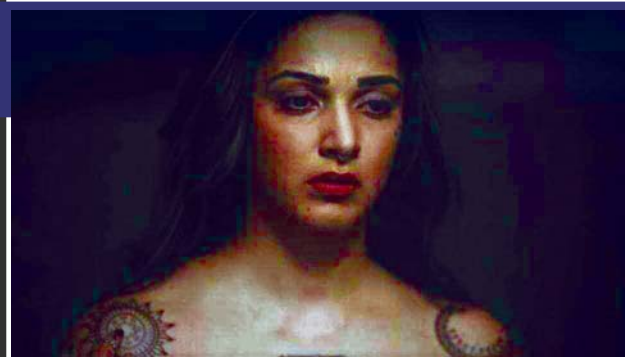
Even the dialogues on parivaar and pyaar are at least 30 years too old for today, as is the ham-fisted message on communal harmony. Also, it is strange how 'India Pakistan bhai bhai' message fits in the same film that shows extra-judicial killing and dishes out such sage one-liners –

"Agar bade gunde apne liye gunde rakh sakte hain to police wale gunde kyon nahi rakh sakte?" However, I am assuming the damage would be limited because Baaghi 3 is as incompetent at this as it is at everything else.

Perhaps realizing the limitations of their film, actors offer you extra — everybody seems to be happily hamming it up. Tiger is limited in emotional scenes, Shraddha Kapoor has little to do other than being perky before interval and tanned after it, Ritesh's namby-pamby act gets repetitive, and Vijay Varma and Jaideep Ahlawat are happy sleep-walking through their roles. There are a mind-numbing 140 minutes of this; thankfully Tiger is kicking and punching during most of it.

Guilty movie review

Karan Johar and Netflix atone for past sins, Kiara Advani is a revelation



Finally allowed to speak, Kiara Advani delivers a revelatory performance. Netflix India and Karan Johar atone for past sins

Guilty
Director - Ruchi Narain
Cast - Kiara Advani, Gurfateh Singh Pirzada, Akansha Ranjan Kapoor, Taher Shabbir
A MeToo joke is made five minutes into Guilty, the new Indian original on Netflix; a woman is slut-shamed within 10. Director Ruchi Narain's film, during its opening act, positively challenges you to stick around. It feels like an assault on woke culture, and in several scenes, pretends like it's an insensitive cousin to the terribly tone-

deaf and shamelessly smug Section 375.

But if you do stick around – and you should – you'll be treated to the culmination of a two-year experiment. Guilty is the sort of movie Netflix has been trying to perfect ever since it waded into Bollywood; a seamless blend of Western values and desi drama. Like Kapoor & Sons, it comes across as a retroactive attempt by producer Karan Johar to atone for some of his past sins – the most recent of which Netflix was, ahem, guilty of being complicit in. Johar's the only one, for

instance, who seems to have noticed Kiara Advani's talents as an actor. After being largely restricted to playing pushovers, Kiara delivers an absolutely electric performance as the unreliable Nanki, a fiery college student with a fondness for Faiz.

Nanki writes lyrics for a band in which her boyfriend is the lead singer. Together, Nanki and VJ inspire jealousy and admiration among the largely virginal clump of kids that swarms around them like bees. Among one of VJ's many devotees is a small-town girl named Tanu, played in an Achilles heel of a performance by newcomer Akansha Ranjan Kapoor. After a Valentine's Day party in which several students witness her coming onto VJ, Tanu

accuses him of raping her. The accusation sends shockwaves inside the college, and exposes systemic injustices and corruption. Fearing a media trial, the authorities try to silence Tanu; her peers wonder if her allegations are even credible. Judgment is passed on her scandalous sense of style; her pursuit of VJ is perceived as an indication of ulterior motives. Among the film's many problems – the most aggravating of which is the film's insistence on beating you over the head with the vast class-divide between VJ and Tanu – is Kapoor's performance as the young woman. In a film filled with impressively restrained acting, her generic small-town accent and tendency to break into hysterics does a disservice to Narain and

her writing partner Kanika Dhillon's surprisingly empathetic screenplay. For those keeping score at home, this is the second Netflix India original this year in which the same Shakespeare speech is butchered.

But brief dips in the quality of acting aside, Guilty feels genuinely authentic in its depiction of life inside Delhi University, an academic institution that I am a proud product of. When news of Tanu's accusation first breaks out, one character barges in and announces, in pitch perfect Delhi lingo, "Apne bhai ke saath scene hogaya bro."

Narain gives the film a Rashomon effect and a Riverdale tone. She plays with perspective and preceptions. A virtuous lawyer conducts interviews

with everyone who was present during the Valentine's Day party at which the incident is alleged to have taken place. His investigation brings to light multiple narratives and contrasting points-of-view, encouraging the viewer to draw their own conclusions and come up with their own theories as to whom to believe.

Narain secludes the lawyer, played by the very assured Taher Shabbir, inside cool and clinical office environments that mirror his personality. Kunal Vijaykar, meanwhile, in one scene is plonked firmly inside his own comfort zone, with a fork and knife in his hands and a plate of food on the table in front of him. But Kiara is the true revelation here.



Tapsee Pannu to start shooting for Akarsh Khurana's Rashmi Rocket from March 26

At the core of great sports is usually a great story and drama. It comes as no surprise that the arena of sports is frequently mined as a source of inspiration for great storytelling. Shinning bight, Tapsee Pannu is gearing up to set fire to the screens later this year and will start shooting for RSVP's "Rashmi Rocket" from March 26 in Mumbai.

Helmed by Akarsh Khurana, the project is in full preparation swing. Tapsee who started her initial preparations for the role two months ago has continued her momentum of training at the set of her upcoming romance thriller Haseen Dillruba directed by Vinil Mathew. This will mark her third sports genre film post-Soorma and Saandh Ki Aankh.

The actress will essay the role of Rashmi, a young girl from the marshes of Kutch who is blessed with a special gift of being able to run extremely fast. Talking about Tapsee's dedication, director Akarsh shares "The students were so inspired by Tapsee that the school named their gym after her. She trains for two hours every day for better

stamina and the body language of an athlete." He also shared the first half of the movie is set in Kutch and to get the Kutch dialect right, a diction expert has been hired to help Tapsee get into the skin of the character. Shooting for the same begins on April 1, Akarsh reveals "We'll be shooting in three chunks. After Kutch, we head to Delhi in May and Dehradun and Mussoorie in June. Rann of Kutch is also an important part of our schedule. In fact, the first schedule starts with a song, which is set in the Rann Utsav."

Unlike other conventional sports stories, the main crux of Rashmi Rocket is drama. He says, "The sport forms the backdrop of the film, while the story narrates an athlete's journey from anonymity to fame and how she gets caught up in the politics and corruption of the sports system along the way,"

Akarsh suggests that the story of the movie is a culmination of varied real-life incidents embracing female athletes from India and abroad. Rashmi Rocket also stars Aparshakti Khurana



and Bhavesh Joshi Superhero actor Priyanshu Panyuli. Tapsee will also be seen in Shabaash Mithu, which is based on cricketer Mithali Raj.

Directed by Akarsh Khurana, Rashmi Rocket is produced by Ronnie Screwvala, Neha Anand and Pranjal Khandhdiya.

Kareena Kapoor Khan shares first picture; captions it 'Hello Instagram'

Kareena Kapoor Khan fans can't keep calm as the actress has finally shared the very first picture on social media. Captioning, "The cat is out of the bag" along with the #HelloInstagram, Kareena is seen posing for the lens. Her black and golden tracksuit is truly an attention grabber! Check it out. Kareena Kapoor Khan shared, "I have always believed in 'Never say never'. The world of Instagram was daunting for me because I didn't want to get addicted to 'likes' on pictures or sharing details of my life. But I realised I have to move with the times. I am joining social media for my fans, who have supported me for 20 years. I want [to share details] of my life with my

fans," added the actress sharing the happiness in a mid-day interview.

Speaking about her display picture, we can see young Kareena Kapoor who is shying away from the camera. Isn't that simply adorable? In fact, the actress, who shared a teaser post a day ago, has already garnered more than 484k followers on Instagram.

We can't wait for the actress to upload cute pictures of her baby boy Taimur Ali Khan! On the work front, Kareena Kapoor Khan is currently working on Laal Singh Chaddha opposite Aamir Khan. The film is the official Hindi adaptation of the 1994 Hollywood classic, Forrest Gump, starring Tom Hanks.

Gauri Khan Designs celebrates 25 years of Maison & Objet

Gauri Khan Designs was buzzing with creativity, design and innovation for the 25th year celebrations of Maison & Objet, a leading international show for professionals in lifestyle, interior décor and design. The show featured installations by designers Ashiesh Shah, Amrish Patel and Darshan Soni, Little Shilpa, Rooshad Shroff, Shitij Dogra and Bandana Jain, and partners Vita Moderna, Jaipur Rugs and Nitco Tiles. Organised by Raj Anand, it was attended by leading architects, interior designers, and the

glamour quotient hit a high with the presence of Sussanne Khan, Maheep Kapoor, Chunky and Bhavna Panday, Ritesh and Dolly Sidhwani, Kajal Anand and French Consul General Sonia Barbry. Shah Rukh Khan charmed everyone with a detailed walkthrough of all displays led by Gauri, who looked beautiful in a black Monisha Jaising outfit. Raj



Anand said, "We are happy that the event was successful and wish to see many more architects and designers from India at the show!"





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'I did it to manage my anxieties'



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Fever dreams: Did author Dean Koontz really predict coronavirus?



From 'Wuhan-400', the deadly virus invented by Dean Koontz in 1981, to the plague unleashed in Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake, novelists have long been fascinated by pandemics

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Trump moves forward with cutting off funds to sanctuary cities: 'Do not protect criminals!'



(News Agencies) President Trump on Thursday said his administration is moving forward with withholding funding from sanctuary cities after an appeals court ruled that such a move was legal – part of a broad push by the administration to end the controversial policies that it says makes Americans less safe. "As per recent Federal Court ruling, the Federal Government will be withholding funds from Sanctuary Cities. They should change their status and go non-Sanctuary," he said. "Do not protect criminals!" The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals in New York last month overturned a lower court ruling that stopped the administration's 2017 move to withhold grant money from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program, which dispenses over \$250 million a year to state and local criminal justice efforts. (Contd on page 21)

3 theories to explain Madhya Pradesh Congress crisis

Is BJP really working on Operation Rangpanchami to dislodge the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh or is there a Digvijaya Singh angle in the upcoming Rajya Sabha election behind the crisis in MP Congress?



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Russia's Billionaires Try To Figure Out What To Do With Their Wealth

Russian tycoons including Vladimir Potanin, Suleiman Kerimov and Leonid Fedun who got enormously rich in post-Soviet Russia now intensifying efforts to figure out what to do with their fortunes.

(News Agencies) Alexey Mordashov has faced plenty of challenges building an empire spanning gold, power, steel and tourism. Now he has to work out how to pass a \$17 billion fortune to his children in a country with no precedent for wealth transfer on this scale, and without destabilizing the massive business. "As many as 140,000 people work for my companies, and I am responsible for

them. I need to think about how to make the system stable when inherited," Mr Mordashov, a father of six and Russia's fifth-richest person, said in an interview near Moscow. Mr Mordashov, 54, said he's developing a plan for the wealth transfer, while helping his children prepare for the responsibility. He's one of dozens of tycoons including Vladimir Potanin, Suleiman

(Contd on page 21)

