

India, Russia ink \$5 billion S-400 defence deal during Vladimir Putin's visit



Pakistan can't afford any further debt with China

China's CPEC and Pakistan's borrowing have created a dependency syndrome



(News Agencies) Pakistan's railway minister, Sheikh Rasheed, says he will reduce a Chinese-funded \$8.2 billion rail investment plan by \$2 billion. Upgrading Pakistan's trains is a pillar of the massive \$62 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

(Contd on page 18)

Indian airlines and the fear of flying

Along with launching airports, the State should put in place some meaningful instruments to protect the rights of consumers



(Agencies) Imagine this. Your plane is soaring thousands of feet above the ground when you suddenly feel suffocated. You look around anxiously and discover that the plight of your fellow passengers is no different. Some of them are coughing while others are feeling nauseous even as some others are gasping for breath. (Contd on page 18)

US counter-terrorism strategy identifies Lashkar-e-Taiba and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan as threat

In addition to ISIS and al-Qaeda, dozens of other Islamist groups are working to advance more locally focused campaigns, while still posing a threat to United States persons and interests overseas, said the National Strategy for Counter-terrorism, released by the White House.

(Agencies) The United States' new counterterrorism strategy has listed Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan among terrorist organisations that could potentially target the country, its interests and personnel.

Unveiling the new strategy on Thursday, National Security Adviser John Bolton expressed willingness to engage with the new government of Imran Khan on Pakistan's long-standing support for terrorism and move forward on repairing relations.

"We hope with the new government there, that we might be able to turn the page and move forward," (Contd on page 18)



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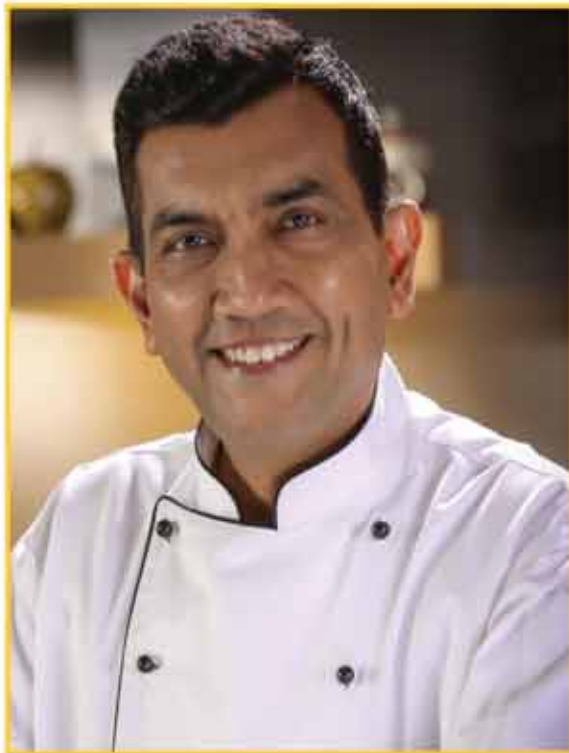
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At least 20 killed in New York car crash involving a limousine

Police said the accident occurred at Saturday when two cars collided in Schoharie County, near the state capital, Albany.

(Agencies) Twenty people have been killed in a limousine crash in New York state, police confirmed Sunday, with local media reporting that it slammed into a crowd of pedestrians at a country store. Police said the accident occurred Saturday afternoon, describing in a brief statement two cars colliding in Schoharie County, near the state capital, Albany. An SUV-style stretch limousine sped down a hill, crashing into pedestrians outside the Apple Barrel Country Store and Cafe, the Albany Times Union said, citing police. Pictures

posted on Twitter by Jesse McKinley, the Albany bureau chief for the New York Times, showed a hair brush and a fragment of tail light in the grass at the side of the road, near deep muddy tracks that disappeared into woodland beyond. Apple Barrel manager Jessica Kirby said customers in the parking lot were killed when they were hit by the limousine as it careened down the hill, the Times reported. "All fatal. That limo was coming down that hill probably over 60 mph... I don't want to describe the scene. It's not something I want to think

about," she was quoted as saying. The Columbus Day weekend is the busiest of the year for the store, Kirby told the paper, noting that it was full of customers from New York City, New Jersey and Albany at the time of the crash. "I heard some screaming" A witness named by local media as Bill Waterson said the limousine was carrying a party on their way to a wedding reception. "This is terrible, terrible, terrible," he told the Times Union. The National Transportation Safety Board confirmed on Twitter that a limo was involved and said it was



sending investigators to the scene. Witnesses told local NBC affiliate WNYT that the limousine was carrying "a group" of people, while other media reports described as many as 18 passengers in the vehicle. "I heard some screaming. It looked serious because people were running back and forth," a witness identified

as Bridey Finegan told the station. Road accidents are the fourth leading cause of injury related deaths in New York state, according to federal health statistics. In 2014, the latest year with available figures, crashes on the state's highways resulted in \$808.1 million in hospitalization and emergency department

charges, the Department of Health said on its website. The store, a popular stop for tourists viewing fall foliage in the area, posted a message on its Facebook page lamenting the "horrific accident." It said it would be open for business on Sunday and "hope you will come and share your smiles, love, friendship and hugs with us."

Interpol officer being probed on suspicion of violating law, says China

China's ruling Communist Party's watchdog for graft and political disloyalty said on its website that Meng Hongwei is "suspected of violating the law and is currently under the monitoring and investigation."



(Agencies) The disciplinary organ of China's ruling Communist Party says the head of Interpol, a senior Chinese official, is under investigation on suspicion of unspecified legal violations. The party's

watchdog for graft and political disloyalty said on its website late Sunday that Meng Hongwei, China's vice minister of public security, is "suspected of violating the law and is currently under the monitoring and investigation" of China's new anti-corruption body, the National Supervision Commission. Interpol, which is based in Lyon, said Saturday it made a formal request to China for information about Meng.

Kim Jong Un, Mike Pompeo agree to 2nd US-North Korea summit 'at earliest date'

US and North Korea agreed to "continue talks to decide on the specific time and location for the second summit", Pompeo told South Korean President Moon Jae-in, following his meeting with Kim in Pyongyang earlier Sunday.

(Agencies) North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has agreed to hold a second summit with US President Donald Trump as soon as possible, Seoul said Sunday.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said "he agreed with Chairman Kim to hold the second US-North Korea summit at the earliest date possible," South Korea's presidential office said in a statement.

The two sides agreed to "continue talks to decide on the specific time and location for the second summit", Pompeo told South Korean President Moon Jae-in, following his meeting with Kim in Pyongyang earlier Sunday.

Just 10 years to control 'unthinkable damage' to climate change, says UN report

The report said renewable energy would need to supply 70 to 85 percent of electricity by 2050 to stay within a 1.5C limit, compared with about 25 percent now.

(Agencies) Temperatures are likely to rise by 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2052 if global warming continues at its current pace and if the world fails to take rapid and unprecedented measures to stem the increase, a UN report said on Monday. The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) met last week in Incheon, South Korea to finalise the report, prepared at the request of governments in 2015 when a global pact to tackle climate change was agreed. The report is seen as the main scientific guide for government policymakers on how to implement the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The Paris pact aims to limit global average temperature rise to "well below" 2C above pre-industrial levels, while seeking to tighten the goal to 1.5C. There has already been a rise of 1C since the mid-1800s as industrialisation lifted



emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2), the main greenhouse gas blamed for climate change. A rise of 1.5C would still carry climate-related risks for nature and mankind but the risks would be lower than a rise of 2C, the report summary said. Meeting the 1.5C limit required "rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented" change in land and energy use, industry, buildings, transport and cities, it said, adding temperatures would be 1.5C higher between 2030 and 2052 at the current

pace. The targets agreed in Paris on cutting emissions would not be enough even if there were larger and more ambitious cuts after 2030, it said. To contain warming at 1.5C, manmade global net carbon dioxide emissions would need to fall by about 45 percent by 2030 from 2010 levels and reach "net zero" by mid-century. Any additional emissions would require removing CO2 from the air. "Limiting warming to 1.5C is possible within the laws of chemistry and physics but doing so would require

unprecedented changes," said Jim Skea, co-chair of the IPCC working group which assesses climate change mitigation.

Unprecedented change
The summary said renewable energy would need to supply 70 to 85 percent of electricity by 2050 to stay within a 1.5C limit, compared with about 25 percent now. Using carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology, the share of gas-fired power would need to be cut to 8 percent and coal to between 0 and 2 percent.

Last appeal of Pakistani Christian on death row for blasphemy

In 2009, Aasia Bibi went to get water for her and her fellow farmworkers. After she took a sip, some of the Muslim women reportedly became angry that a Christian had drunk from the same container. Five days later, a mob accused her of blasphemy. She was convicted and sentenced to death.

(Agencies) Pakistan's Supreme Court is set to hear the final appeal on Monday of a Christian on death row since 2010 accused of insulting the Prophet, a crime that incites mobs to kill and carries an automatic death penalty.

Her lawyer Saiful Malook is optimistic that Aasia Bibi will win her last legal appeal. But if not, he will seek a review, which could take years to complete. "I am 100 per cent sure she will be acquitted," Malook told The Associated Press in a telephone interview on the eve of the hearing. "She has a very good case."

On a hot day in 2009, Bibi went to get water for her and her fellow farmworkers. After she took a sip, some of the Muslim women became angry that a Christian had drunk from the same

container. They demanded that she convert, she refused. Five days later, a mob accused her of blasphemy. She was convicted and sentenced to death. Malook said he will argue that the many contradictions of the eyewitnesses taint their evidence. Malook said he will also argue that the witnesses were not judged in keeping with Islamic injunctions, which requires they be proven to be "pious, to never have lied, to be of good character".

Internationally, Bibi's case has generated outrage, but in Pakistan, it has rallied radical

Islamists and militant groups, who have embraced Pakistan's blasphemy law, using it to cultivate support and attack those who try to break their power. "I have lost my health. I am a

high blood pressure patient, my privacy is totally lost. You have to be in hiding," her lawyer said. Everyone on his tree-lined street knows his identity. "They look at this house and they know this is the home of a person who can be killed at any time by angry mullahs."

Outside Malook's home in the Punjab provincial capital of Lahore police provide around-the-clock security. In 2011, Salman Taseer, the governor of Punjab province was shot and killed by one of his elite guards for defending Bibi and criticising misuse of the blasphemy law.

Malook prosecuted his killer, Mumtaz Qadri, who was hanged for his crime. Qadri has since become a martyr to millions, who make a pilgrimage to a shrine erected in his name by

his family outside the federal capital. Last month, a member of Pakistan's newly elected government, which is led by Imran Khan, a former cricket star who has embraced religious conservatism, offered prayers at Qadri's shrine, generating an outcry from rights activists. Qadri's supporters have openly called for the immediate death of anyone even accused of blasphemy.

An unprecedented number of religious parties participated in the July elections that put Khan in power. But as in previous elections, they garnered less than 10 per cent of the popular vote. Still they have allies among all the major parties. Yet one party, Tehreek-e-Labbaik, won three provincial seats in Pakistan's southern Sindh province, by campaigning on a single



issue — the finality of the Prophet Muhammad. They are ardent supporters of the harsh blasphemy law that prescribes death for anyone found guilty of insulting Islam.

According to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, 71 countries have blasphemy laws — around a quarter of them are in the Middle East and North Africa and around a fifth are European countries,

though enforcement and punishment varies. Pakistan is one of the most ferocious enforcers. At least 1,472 people were charged under Pakistan's blasphemy laws between 1987 and 2016, according to statistics collected by the Center for Social Justice, a Lahore-based group. Of those, 730 were Muslims, 501 were Ahmedis — a sect reviled by mainstream Muslims as heretical — while 205 were Christians and 26

US Senate plans procedural vote on Kavanaugh in bitter confirmation fight

Most Democrats opposed Trump's nomination of Kavanaugh from the outset, but their objections sharpened when Christine Blasey Ford, now a college professor in California, and two other women accused Kavanaugh of sexual misconduct in the 1980s when he was in high school and college.



(Agencies) President Donald Trump's drive to cement the conservative grip on the top US court faces a major test on Friday as the Senate holds a key procedural vote on Brett Kavanaugh, whose Supreme Court nomination has set off a political brawl.

Senate Republicans were growing more confident they would win

the 10:30 am (local time) vote after two wavering Republican senators responded positively on Thursday to an FBI report on accusations of sexual misconduct against Kavanaugh. The Senate plans a final confirmation vote on Saturday.

Trump, himself accused by numerous women during the 2016 presidential race of

sexual misconduct, wrote on Twitter that the FBI report showed that the allegations against Kavanaugh were "totally uncorroborated."

The confirmation of Kavanaugh, a federal appeals court judge, would tip the balance on the Supreme Court to a 5-4 conservative majority. He was nominated by Trump to succeed retired justice Anthony Kennedy, who was seen as a swing vote on the court.

While she did not pledge support for Kavanaugh, moderate Republican Senator Susan Collins said the FBI probe appeared thorough.

Republican senator Jeff Flake, who voted for Kavanaugh at the committee level on the condition that the FBI look

more closely into the allegations against Kavanaugh, said he saw no additional information corroborating the accusations.

Most Democrats opposed Trump's nomination of Kavanaugh from the outset, but their objections sharpened when Christine Blasey Ford, now a college professor in California, and two other women accused Kavanaugh of sexual misconduct in the 1980s when he was in high school and college.

Ford and Kavanaugh testified at a dramatic senate judiciary committee hearing last week in which she described the alleged assault, and Kavanaugh denied all of the allegations against him, while accusing the

Democrats of a political "hit."

In a Wall Street Journal op-ed on Thursday, Kavanaugh said he "might have been too emotional at times" in his testimony, saying it "reflected my overwhelming frustration at being wrongly accused."

"I know that my tone was sharp," he wrote, "and I said a few things I should not have said."

Trump's fellow Republicans hold a 51-49 majority in the Senate, meaning that if all Senate Democrats oppose Kavanaugh, Trump cannot afford to lose more than one Republican vote for his nominee, with Vice President Mike Pence casting a tiebreaking vote. No Republicans have said they will vote

against him, but all eyes will be on Flake, Collins, Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski and Democrat Joe Manchin - all potential swing votes. The FBI report, sent by the White House to the Senate Judiciary Committee in the middle of the night on Thursday, was denounced by Democrats as a whitewash that was too narrow in scope and ignored critical witnesses.

Democratic senator Jeff Merkley said: "The (FBI) investigation doesn't come close to honoring and respecting the women who came forward to share their stories. It appears that the White House completely circumscribed the investigation to try to make it meaningless and they succeeded."

The State must help the aviation sector take off

The burden on the Indian traveller will be unbearable. Clearly, the country's airlines at the moment aren't in a position to absorb the import duty hike on fuel



American musician and activist Frank Zappa once said, "You can't be a real country unless you have a beer and an airline." India has six even though a beer airline shut down a few years ago. With Brent Crude oil touching \$82 in market trade, the Indian rupee breaching 73 and the inexplicable inclusion of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) as a dutiable item by the government, poor Frank must be rolling in his grave because should this phase continue, we might be left with only beer.

Indian aviation is possibly entering one of its toughest phases ever: more intense than what we saw in 2008 and nothing is being done to soften the blow. The inclusion of GST in the aviation and airline services raised the effective "access-to-aviation" cost earlier this year. Add to that the rise in fuel and currency and an unwanted import duty inclusion as the festive season approaches. The burden on the Indian traveller will be unbearable. Clearly, the country's airlines at the moment aren't in a position to absorb the import duty hike on fuel.

The government must understand that aviation, airlines and airline services are not luxuries accessible to a select few. With India being the world's third largest aviation market, air travel is now a

transportation medium that's driven by market dynamic, consumer needs and fragmented by regions to the point that each state has its unique aviation needs. On that note, the first causality as a result of the import duty inclusion and oil price hike within the next two weeks should be the BJP?government's Regional Connectivity Scheme, Ude Desh Ka

Aam Nagrik, or UDAN. The scheme, which was intended to help the common man access flying by means of a one-hour trip costing Rs 2,500 (limited to a select seat inventory), is now clearly not doable, unless the central government and the state are willing to shell out more subsidy. Our airline industry isn't in its best

shape either. The failure, or unlikely event of closure of Jet Airways, will have a catastrophic effect on air transport in India as we know it. The sudden vacuum of one airline dropping out from the market will lead to a dramatic air travel demand and a surge in ticket pricing leaving travellers stranded with fewer options to fly into tier 3 and tier 4 towns, more than 4,000 jobs being axed and collective revenue losses for airport operators and the Airports Authority of India. It is also likely to affect Air Navigation Service Revenue and the humble stockholder who put his precious life savings into the airline's stock. The loss to the exchequer will also be sizable in nature with the dip in import duty earnings, GST, tax collections and weaker demand for jet fuel.

The next six months are crucial for Indian aviation. The dramatic rise in operating costs from jet fuel and import of aircraft spare parts and consumables, since none of those continue to be made in India, will affect nearly all airlines and operations across the country. Differential aviation fuel pricing in each state owing to applicable VAT, levies and surcharges further stands to affect how India's narrowing middle class travels. In a worst case scenario, air travel might once again end up being looked upon as carrying out the purpose it served back in the 1980s, which was in an emergency or urgent travel medium with rail being the first port of call for the middle class Indian. In that decade, air travel was a luxury limited to the business and trader community. The

government needs to step in, and step in now, and lower GST on air travel, roll back on the import duty inclusion on jet fuel and eliminate some of the levies that are on aviation-related goods that dramatically affect operating costs. The timing of imposing import duties on jet fuel just when the price of oil is nearly at its peak is baffling. As for the industry, it's in wait and watch mode. For travellers, it may be a time to revisit expenses with the upcoming festive season. Aviation cannot afford any further casualties. We've already lost Kingfisher Airlines, Paramount Airways, Air Costa and Air Pegasus and certainly can't afford to lose Jet Airways — at the cost of operating expenses. Clearly, bad weather and turbulence lie ahead: it's time to fasten your seat belt.

Opposition to Rafale is against the national interest

It has marshalled its case a little too late to break the momentum of the Opposition's campaign that serves party interests but not those of the nation.

If India's foreign policy and defence interests, concerns about its image abroad, the maturity of political debate on a sensitive security issue, and plain common sense had been governing considerations, the debate over the Rafale deal would not have lost its moorings as it has.

Some facts are clear. With its depleting strength, the Indian Air Force has been clamouring for more combat aircraft for years. Dassault's Rafale won the tender for the acquisition of 126 combat aircraft, with 18 aircraft to be supplied in a flyaway condition and the rest manufactured in India by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) with technology transfer. The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government could



not finalise the contract because of various reasons widely reported then: life-cycle cost issues, Dassault's refusal to guarantee the HAL-produced aircraft with respect to quality standards, timelines and cost.

Faced with this impasse, the re-tendering option would have delayed acquisition inordinately, without certainty that any

foreign private company would guarantee and accept liabilities for HAL-manufactured aircraft. The other option was to avoid this vexatious issue and order a number of flyaway aircraft to meet the pressing need of the Indian Air Force. However, the second option without technology transfer would thwart the 'Make in India' goal. Raising the flyaway number from 18 to only 36

would have appeared a pragmatic compromise. In the past, too, we have ordered a limited number of aircraft to meet immediate requirements. However, for technology transfer and boosting domestic defence manufacturing, the offsets route has been used by involving the private sector and raising the offset requirement from 30% to 50%. Involving a private

company in the Rafale contract has not been a sudden initiative. The debate on involving the private sector in defence manufacturing has been current, with policies framed and fine tuned periodically. It is recognised that while HAL has capacities that no private sector company can match, it is saturated with work and is criticised for performance shortfalls. Additional capacity had to be in the form of a non-public sector unit. Most western defence industry is privately owned and as we buy defence equipment from them, procuring it from a private Indian company with a foreign partnership should not be a problem. France, India's defence partner since the 1950s,

(Contd on page 18)

The real bank crisis

RBI spotlight on private banks shines a light on the shortcomings of their boards.

Recent decisions by the Reserve Bank of India on the various cases relating to the management at private sector banks brings into focus the role of the boards of private sector banks in India. If the banking regulator has to put its foot down against the considered opinion of the board, it may be an indication that things have gone too far. As one of the key responsibilities of the board is to oversee the senior management, the recent decisions by the RBI beg the question: Are the boards of the private sector banks indeed acting as the custodians of the various stakeholders or are they acting as the handmaidens of the management?

Consider the recent instance, where the board of ICICI issued a statement of unconditional support for its incumbent CEO, despite the preponderance of evidence seeming to paint her in an unflattering light. Similarly, at Axis Bank and Yes Bank, RBI's asset quality reviews had thrown up significant concerns about the quality of the loan portfolios and their reporting. Yet, the boards of these banks recommended continuation of the CEOs, which did not find favour with the RBI. The boards of private sector banks need to deeply reflect whether they would like to be held in high esteem or not. I offer some suggestions below. First, boards must realise that real independence from the management is as important as the perception of independence as seen by outsiders. For example, though better sense eventually prevailed in the ICICI case after what one reckons was a push from the independent directors — who were worried about the damage their reputation would have to suffer — the damage to the credibility and independence of the ICICI board was already done. Second, boards of private sector banks need to realise that oversight over the quality of financial reporting remains an important responsibility of the board. Board oversight is needed on the quality of the loan asset portfolio, as under-reporting of NPAs and other stressed assets influences the integrity of financial reporting. Clearly, all banks need to be sensitive to this. However, senior management in private sector banks are incentivised based on bank profitability, and the compensation paid to senior management through stock options depends substantially on the bank's stock price.

The successive lines of defence against financial misreporting are the bank CEO, bank auditors, bank audit committee, bank board, and the RBI supervisors. As everyone knows, the lack of board oversight can provide strong incentives to senior management to indulge in ever-greening of assets and RBI supervisors represent the final line of defence against financial misreporting on asset quality. Evergreening identified by the regulator clearly suggests that the private-sector bank boards have failed in their oversight on asset quality and the reporting of the same.

Third, board members must realise that there is a significant information asymmetry between them and the senior management. The management has the best information about the company. In contrast, despite their best efforts at reading between the lines, board members must realise that they meet once in a few weeks and get informed about the bank through the agenda papers for the board and board committee meetings. As good news can often take the elevator while bad news slowly creeps in via the stairs, board members in banks have to be extremely vigilant, especially about asset quality. In asking the right questions of the management, board members must keep in mind that the worst outcome that can manifest is that they may not get reappointed. Not getting reappointed to the board cannot be worse than the significant reputational damage that a board member can suffer from being associated with negative events in the firm. Moreover, the board member has been appointed as a custodian of the shareholders of the firm. These perspectives can indeed provide the board member the necessary conviction to raise key questions to them management.

Fourth, when compared to the boards of firms led by professionals, boards of entrepreneur-led banks need to be particularly focused on ensuring credibility and independence. In an entrepreneur-led bank, a general, albeit incorrect, perception can prevail that the board members need to toe the line to remain in the management's good books. As a result, any instance of the board being perceived to have not acted independently can significantly damage its credibility. If the board commands little credibility then there is a serious issue of board independence and, therefore, of governance in the bank. In such cases, permitting the controlling shareholder to remain as the CEO risks misgovernance. However, in cases where the bank board is well-diversified and commands credibility, there need be no misgivings on the controlling shareholder remaining the CEO. Given recent events, boards of private sector banks need to retrieve lost ground. Independent and credible boards are unlikely to face the wrath of the regulator.

Rahul seems to have grown into the role of the Opposition leader

The missing element in Mr Gandhi's conversation at the HT Leadership Summit was the specifics. While he told the audience what the Congress party didn't stand for, he didn't spend as much time telling them what it stood for.

At the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit on Friday, Congress President Rahul Gandhi positioned his party as everything the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is not. He sought to present the Congress as a liberal, progressive, inclusive and tolerant party that did not believe it knew all the answers but was at least prepared to listen to all the questions. The BJP, Mr Gandhi was at pains to explain, didn't believe in listening. It was also a government that eroded the authority of institutions, he claimed, referring to, but not directly mentioning the judiciary and the media (although he did refer to the two in other contexts). Like one would expect an opposition leader to, Mr Gandhi rattled off the various issues he has with the government's performance in managing the economy, creating jobs, addressing the agrarian crisis and other such. And he also sought to distinguish the previous Congress-led United Progressive Alliance's idea of Aadhaar and the Goods and Services Tax from this government's.

In recent months, Mr Gandhi seems to have grown into the role of the principal Opposition leader — there are many claimants to the throne — even as he has reinvented his persona and sought to do the same to his party's. He has become approachable and accessible and doesn't shy away from

taking tough questions any longer, although one on whether there was someone special in his life stumped him. This may be smart politics. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, still immensely popular across the country, has the tendency to convert electoral contests into mano-e-mano ones and Mr Gandhi's aim seems to be to get people to compare them on his terms, and on parameters of his choosing. Ask me anything, Mr Gandhi said, and then pointed out that he didn't think the Prime Minister would do the same.

The missing element in Mr Gandhi's conversation was the specifics. While he told the audience what the Congress party didn't stand for, he didn't spend as much time telling them what it stood for. Nor did he have specific ideas to tackle issues related to growth, bad loans, a falling rupee, unemployment, and the problems in agriculture. He accused the BJP of blaming and attributing everything on the Congress but he can be accused of the same thing too — he blamed everything on the BJP, although the party's ideological parent, the RSS too came in for some flak. It's possible that Mr Gandhi has specific solutions to many problems but to truly present the Congress as an alternative to the BJP he will need to articulate them soon.



ISSN No. 1554 06X

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A Publication of Media Partners Capital, Inc.

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Aadhaar, the Indian innovation that could transform Africa

The biometric identification system has allowed hundreds of millions of citizens to receive government services, join the banking system and partake in the formal economy.



Over the last two decades, China has invested more than \$125 billion in Africa to build ports, highways, airports, railways and other infrastructure. Chinese President Xi Jinping says funds, to the tune of \$60 billion, will continue to flow because “inadequate infrastructure is believed to be the biggest bottleneck to Africa’s development.”

China’s largesse has certainly benefited the continent. An Indian innovation, however, could be what African countries really need: Aadhaar.

The biometric identification system has given hundreds of millions of citizens a portable digital ID, allowing them to receive government services, join the banking system and otherwise partake in the formal economy. The need for similar technology in Africa is acute: According to the World Bank, the continent is home to 502 million of the world’s identity-less individuals, half of the global total and roughly 40 percent of Africa’s population. The problem is worse for women, who in many African countries are critical to family finances. In low-income countries surveyed by the World Bank, over 45 percent of women lacked identification, compared to 30 percent of men.

These citizens face towering social and political challenges. Services such as education, health care and welfare are often targeted and delivered on the basis of identification, thereby bypassing those who need them most. In many African countries, individuals are required to show identity when registering a mobile phone or signing up for value-added services such as Africa’s

pervasive, feature phone-based mobile money systems. Getting a formal bank account is even harder, which helps explain why over half of Africa’s population remains unbanked. Those who can’t vote because of a lack of identification are politically excluded, which only reinforces their economic isolation.

The Aadhaar system creates a 12-digit unique identification number for each citizen, issued on the basis of biometric and demographic data. Data is stored centrally and enrollment is free, simple and document-light. From the start, particular efforts have been made to enroll women and ensure that births are recorded (and prenatal benefits received).

By most metrics, the system has been a success. Over 1.2 billion people have enrolled, including in rural locations disconnected from the modern digital economy, making Aadhaar the world’s largest biometric database. It’s improved access and delivery of government services, and promoted digital and financial inclusion. According to one recent survey, more than three-quarters of new bank accounts in three Indian states were opened using Aadhaar biometric data, while mobile-phone registrations have boomed.

Not all of these benefits will hold, of course. Privacy concerns and bureaucratic interference are beginning to curb the private sector’s ability to use Aadhaar. But there’s no turning back to a pre-identity India.

At a September roundtable at the United Nations, the World Bank estimated it will cost \$6 billion to meet Africa’s civil registration

and digital identification needs by 2030. Currently, at least 23 projects are underway. Some are country-specific, while others focus on regional solutions designed to ensure that the new IDs are interoperable across

Africa’s porous borders.

The potential benefits are immense. Registering women and births can play a crucial role in curbing threats from child marriage to sex trafficking. Africa is also home to the world’s highest rates of female entrepreneurship (more than a quarter of adult females in sub-Saharan Africa are engaged in early-stage entrepreneurial activity). Digital IDs would enable them to acquire bank accounts, save assets, register property and formalize their businesses.

A continent-wide system similar to Aadhaar could be even more beneficial. Africa is home to large volumes of intra-continental economic migration, and individuals who cross borders without identification are forced

to use irregular channels that promote smuggling. Migrants who might have been exploited in the past would be able to assert their citizenship rights, both at home and abroad. That could be especially valuable for Africa’s large population of forcibly displaced people.

Above all, an African Aadhaar would help to spur digital and mobile innovations in a region that’s been a pioneer in fintech and shown a capacity to leapfrog older technologies. More people with registered mobile phone accounts means more opportunities to leverage Africa’s emerging digital sector. At a time when Africa is building more physical highways than ever before, the digital ID could be the expressway it actually needs.

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Real, sustainable peace does not come about by chance

The UN Security Council has dispatched more than 70 operations to help maintain cease-fires between countries, end protracted civil wars, protect the vulnerable and save lives, strengthen the rule of law, establish new security institutions, and help new countries, such as Timor Leste, come into being.



Central African Republic, I saw for myself the important work the blue helmets do every day — not only keeping the peace but supporting the delivery of humanitarian aid and protecting civilians. I've also laid too many wreaths for fallen peacekeepers. We have enacted new measures to address the rise in fatalities, and I have commissioned independent strategic reviews of each peacekeeping operation. But it's clear to me that we don't have any chance of succeeding without the world's clear and unambiguous support.

Expectations of peacekeeping vastly outstrip both support and resources. Yes, we need more helicopters, we need mine-proof vehicles and night vision, and we need police and civilians with specialised skills to help us build sustainable peace. But we also need UN Member States to send us personnel equipped and trained properly and with the mindset to use these capabilities effectively. And, above all, we need their sustained political commitment,

a critical factor in the long-term success of our peacekeeping operations. That is the background to the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, launched in March. It aims to ask all UN Member States and other partners to revitalise their commitment to UN peacekeeping so that we can continue to improve it together. We've had in-depth and candid discussions to identify the areas where more effort is required and created a Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations.

The declaration represents a clear and urgent agenda for peacekeeping. By endorsing the declaration, governments show their commitment to advancing political solutions to conflicts, to strengthening protection for the vulnerable people under our charge, and to improving the safety and security of our peacekeepers. Now we need to translate these commitments into practical support in the field. The declaration calls for all of us to improve our operations, to increase the participation of

women in all areas of peacekeeping, to strengthen partnerships with governments, and to take measures to ensure our personnel live up to the highest standards of conduct and discipline.

Unacceptable cases of sexual exploitation and abuse have tarnished the reputation of UN peacekeeping, and I am determined to do everything in my power to prevent and end this scourge. We must hold ourselves accountable to the highest standards of performance and conduct. As of today, 141 countries [including India] and three international and regional organisations have made these commitments, signalling a consensus around renewed support for UN peacekeeping.

These countries include those that decide on peacekeeping mandates in the Security Council and those that contribute the women and men who serve as peacekeepers; those that pay for peacekeeping missions; and the governments of countries where peacekeeping missions are deployed.

Representatives from these countries and organisations met on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly last week to express their commitment to peacekeeping, celebrate its many achievements, discuss the challenges we face, and renew their support.

But the real test will come on the ground in our missions around the world. Real, sustainable peace does not come about by chance. It is hard and sometimes expensive work to support countries on their path from conflict to stability

It is hard and sometimes expensive work to support countries on their path from conflict to stability, but it is a lot cheaper than war in every sense.

For our part, we are determined that UN peacekeeping will live up to the expectations of the millions of people we serve and who depend on us. The cost of failure is unacceptable. We cannot let them down.

United Nations peacekeeping is a concrete example of multilateralism at work. It demonstrates how the global community can address some of today's most complex and dangerous issues with a mixture of creativity and pragmatism. Since the first blue helmets were deployed in 1948, peacekeeping has enabled the countries of the world to meet common threats to peace and security and share the burden under the UN flag. Over the past 70 years, more than one million peacekeepers — women and men, soldiers, police, and civilians from countries across the world — have responded to a vast range of conflicts, and peacekeeping has adapted constantly to meet

these demands.

The UN Security Council has dispatched more than 70 operations to help maintain ceasefires between countries, end protracted civil wars, protect the vulnerable and save lives, strengthen the rule of law, establish new security institutions, and help new countries, such as Timor Leste, come into being.

But peacekeeping is a dangerous business. Tens of thousands of peacekeepers today are deployed where there is little peace to keep. Last year, 61 peacekeepers were killed in hostile acts, and our peacekeepers were attacked more than 300 times — almost once a day. In Mali and in the

India should target China, not Pakistan, on terror

Imagine for a bit your reaction if Sushma Swaraj, the external affairs minister, had spoken for her usual 30 minutes during the UN general assembly debate and had not mentioned Pakistan at all?

Would it be disappointment? Annoyance? Or relief?

Swaraj had, as she herself has three times before and as have her predecessors in the MEA for years, ripped into Pakistan in her speech last Saturday. She accused it of "malevolence", "verbal duplicity", "deceit", "deception" and "lies". Diplomats picked up from where she left off to add "despicable" and "preposterous" to the list in their customary rejoinders on right-of-reply, an obscure UN rule. Pakistan, of course, hit back in the name of strategic balance with its own set of invectives and insults.

So, who won? What was gained?

India and Pakistan have turned the annual UN general assembly debate into a battlefield where they continue a war that started in 1948 and was waged through 1965, 1971, 1999 (Kargil), and every cricket and hockey game in between and after. This must be the longest war yet in modern world history, or of matching vintage as the one raging around Israel.

But yelling at each other every year from the granite eminence of the UN general assembly hall has probably not saved a

single life or rupee either side of the border. And no one is giving away prizes for the most vitriolic or insult-laden speech delivered on the floor of the assembly.

What if, bear with me for argument's sake, one of us backed down a bit tactically, to readjust our sights in the crosshairs? And what if Swaraj never uttered not a word about Pakistan? And picket a different target? A new Osama bin Laden? A new al Qaeda?

As a major victim of terrorism, India has an unquestionable right to be a leading campaigner for its eradication. It is the third worst affected nation by terrorism, according to a US State Department report. And it has been recognised as the loudest voice on it in any room or hall or arena. The 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attacks are now mentioned in the same breath as the 9/11 attacks that forced the United States join a war India had launched many years ago, unrecognised by the rest of the world. Why waste that equity on Pakistan? It is beyond repair, as it has demonstrably been for years. India and the United States have cynically held up hopes of its return to civil life through a system of bait and switch that has long been proven ineffective. Pakistan cannot change — the new government is a chip of the old block.

But it will continue to blackmail the world

holding a gun to its head, as was demonstrated by the disastrous first trip to the United States by its new foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who has naively sought to spin impossible arguments in plain sight of people who know better. He even tried to misrepresent a handshake with President Donald Trump as a meeting. It's time to call Pakistan's bluff, by targeting its benefactor. Imagine, once again, if Swaraj had yelled at China instead, using all those same words. And spent her 30 minutes, or most of it, portraying China as a leading sponsor of terrorism in the world and the one carrying the can for a client state, Pakistan. There is an easy narrative awaiting India, should it want to take that route. Don't name China, if that is a concern. But no Indian official can ever be faulted for raising the issue of Masood Azhar, the founder of Jaish-e-Mohammad, a Pakistan-based terrorist group that has carried out many attacks in India. Beijing has been blocking his naming as a UN-designated terrorist, citing transparently inane bureaucratic rules. Think of an Indian foreign minister railing for 30 minutes about a man who has masterminded the death of many innocent Indians and who is now under the protection of an entity that has pretensions of being a world power?

Pakistan asks India to share data on water flow at Kishanganga dam: Report

Dawn newspaper quoted Pakistan's Commissioner for Indus Waters Syed Muhammad Mehr Ali Shah asking for data concerning flows of water at the river and releases/discharges, in/outflows at the dam under the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty.

(News Agencies) Pakistan has asked India to immediately share the data showing inflow and discharge of water at the Kishanganga dam in Jammu and Kashmir and sought a date for its inspection, according to a media report. During the 115th meeting of the Permanent Commission for Indus Waters, India had agreed to allow Pakistan to inspect the projects built on the Jhelum basin, including Kishanganga hydroelectric project. Islamabad had also agreed

to allow New Delhi to carry out inspection of the Kotri barrage over the Indus River. "We recently asked Indian authorities for Indus waters in writing to give us dates for inspection of the Kishanganga dam as soon as possible. Through the letter, we have also pressed Indian authorities to immediately share the data concerning flows of water at the river and releases/discharges, in/outflows at the dam with us under the relevant provisions of the Indus Water Treaty," Dawn newspaper quoted

Pakistan's Commissioner for Indus Waters Syed Muhammad Mehr Ali Shah as saying.

"We are receiving water at Jhelum basin in our territory, but to ascertain our need or requirement we need data India is obligated to share with us time to time," he said. Besides

Kishanganga, India had also agreed to let Pakistani experts inspect sites of two hydro-power projects — 1,000MW Pakal Dul and 48MW Lower Kalnal at Chenab basin — by the

end of September. According to the report, Indian authorities had confirmed October 7 to 11 as dates for inspection of the projects by a three-member Pakistani team, headed by the Indus water commissioner. But finally it postponed the inspection on the pretext of local elections in held Kashmir.

Shah said that Pakistani authorities wanted to have a detailed tour of the Kishanganga project since Pakistan had already raised various objections on its design and



construction. Pakistan has already approached the World Bank, demanding constitution of a seven-member court of arbitration to address its concerns. On the other hand, India wants a neutral expert over the issue. However in June this year, the World Bank reportedly requested Pakistan to stand down from pursuing its stand of

referring to the Kishanganga dam dispute to the court of arbitration and instead accept India's offer of appointing a neutral expert, but Pakistan didn't do so and stuck to its stance to date. He said that Pakistan had also written a letter to Indian authorities to give dates for inspection of Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnal projects at Chenab basin.

After Mayawati says no to Congress, political scene hots up in UP



BSP leader Mayawati's ruling out any alliance with the Congress, has triggered many claims and counter-claims by smaller parties regarding electoral alliances

(News Agencies)A day after BSP chief Mayawati ruled out any truck with the Congress in poll-bound states, leaving a question mark on a larger coalition against the BJP, former Samajwadi Party leader Amar Singh on Thursday suggested Shivpal Yadav's Samajwadi Secular Morcha should consider allying with Mayawati.

"Mayawati is open to electoral ties with small players so Shivpal Singh Yadav should try," tweeted Amar, who had earlier said he wanted Shivpal to join the BJP. The Shivpal camp is silent on Amar's suggestion but the Samajwadi Party leaders say it was merely an attempt to derail the SP-BSP coalition.

The tweet by Amar, who has only recently become the national convener of the Rashtriya Yuva Hindu

Vahini, followed after UP deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya ruled out any pre-poll truck with Shivpal Yadav's Morcha, an outfit he floated after falling out with his nephew and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav.

Maurya had suggested that Shivpal should consider merging his morcha into the BJP instead.

The BJP isn't complaining as in Shivpal as well as Bhim Army leader Chandrashekhar they see an opportunity to cut into the OBC and Dalit votes. Shivpal supporters deny that he is planning to play the role of a spoil sport, weaning away a chunk of SP's OBC votes to harm the anti-BJP alliance.

"It is not worth taking notice what Amar Singh says. All that we can say is that the SP-BSP alliance is firmly on track and together we would defeat the BJP in 2019 LS polls," said SP's Abdul Hafeez Gandhi.

To counter BJP's OBC

outreach, the SP has launched its own OBC connect campaigns while the BSP has decided to strengthen its 'bhai chara' committees across the state, although the Bhim Army may pose some discomfort to the BSP.

The BJP, which has just finished holding OBC meets in the state capital, plans to organise district level OBC meets now. It has also decided to appoint at least two Dalits in all its booth level committees and would hold a massive Dalit meet. In a subtle shift of strategy, the party, which usually relied on non-Jatav Dalits

and non-Yadav OBCs, is aggressively wooing the Jatavs and the Yadavs too. While Jatavs are known to be loyalists of BSP chief Mayawati, who herself hails from the same Dalit sub caste, Yadavs are known to be staunch supporters of the SP, a party founded by Mulayam Singh Yadav. The Bhim Army has following among a section of young Dalits, especially in western UP. Though its leader Chandrashekhar has shown interest in joining the likely SP-BSP coalition against the BJP, Mayawati has spurned his

offer describing him a stooge of the BJP. BJP leaders are happy with the development as they feel Chandrashekhar in the end would end up confusing Dalit voters.

The BJP too has its worries. Days after Savitri Bai Phule, its Dalit MP from Bahraich, described BJP's cleanliness drive or 'swacchta abhiyaan' a sham, party MP from Allahabad Shyama Charan Gupta lashed out at his own party saying there was more corruption in the BJP regime than it was during the SP and BSP governments.

Punjab refuses to toe line of BJP-ruled states on fuel price cut

(News Agencies)Congress-ruled Punjab has refused to follow in the footsteps of the Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled states on cutting value-added tax (VAT) on fuel. After Union finance minister Arun Jaitley on Thursday announced a Rs 1.50 per litre cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel and a Re 1 per litre cut by oil marketing companies (OMCs), he had asked states to do their bit by slashing VAT by a similar amount. As many as 12 BJP-governed

states reduced their VAT by Rs 2.50 a litre the same day, bringing petrol prices down by Rs 5 a litre. But Punjab, which charges the highest VAT of 35% on petrol in north India, said states could not be asked to match the Centre's cut. State finance minister Manpreet Badal dubbed the Centre's move "too clever by half". "If I can calculate, both the cuts will hit the revenue of states too. After reaping a windfall and hiking excise duty

several times since it came to power, the Government of India has made a meagre cut in excise duty, not in special excise duty and in additional excise duty in which states have no share. All states will share the burden of excise cut and lose 63 paise per litre," he said. Manpreet said oil companies, too, booked heavy profits due to high fuel prices. "They will show lesser profit after absorbing the Re 1 per litre cut. Which means the income tax

paid by them will come down, so will our share (42%) in it. Effectively, the Government of India will take a hit of 1.5% due to the meagre cut. It cannot ask states to take a bigger hit," Manpreet said. Other Opposition-ruled states such as Kerala, Karnataka, Delhi, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, too, refused to heed Jaitley's request. But Punjab may have to walk at least halfway owing to regional exigency.



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Excise duty cut on petrol-diesel

Relief likely temporary as international crude prices expected to rise

The relief however is likely to be temporary, as crude prices are expected to rise in the future and probably cross the psychological barrier of \$100 per barrel, last seen in 2014. A falling rupee will mean that prices increase even more in rupee terms.

(News Agencies) Finance minister Arun Jaitley on Thursday announced a cut of Rs 2.5 per litre on the prices of petrol and diesel. According to data from Indian Oil, the existing levels of excise duty on petrol and diesel (as on 1 October 2018) are Rs 19.48 per litre and Rs 15.33 per litre. Jaitley also called upon state governments to undertake similar cuts in state Value Added Tax on petroleum. Twelve states have already announced a cut of Rs 2.5 per litre on these taxes. Some states had announced cuts of

varying magnitudes earlier. Thursday's cuts will lead to a reduction of Rs 5 per litre in petrol-diesel prices. Petrol and diesel prices have increased by 19.8% and 26% between 1 January and 3 October this year. The relief however is likely to be temporary, as crude prices are expected to rise in the future and probably cross the psychological barrier of \$100 per barrel, last seen in 2014. A falling rupee will mean that prices increase even more in rupee terms. On Thursday, crude was trading at more than \$85 a barrel, and the rupee

closed at 73.58 to the dollar. The chart given below shows the monthly average of petrol and diesel prices in Delhi and the price of India's crude oil basket till September 2018. Petrol and diesel prices have increased by Rs 7.2 and Rs 7 per litre in the month of September itself. If the crude and rupee continue their current trajectory, the relief from government's tax cuts will nullify itself in a very short period. The question is whether this will be a one-off cut in petroleum taxes or will more such moves follow as elections come closer.



Gir lion deaths: Lots of questions, but few answers

Instead of leaving the park and its animals open to challenges, it's best to look for new homes for the Asiatic Lions. Historically speaking, lions were found in what is modern day Haryana, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh. These areas could be ideal for another Gir-type park.

(News Agencies) The Wildlife Week celebrations began across the country on Monday. In the same week, it has emerged that within a month, 23 Asiatic lions (at the time of going to press) have died at Gujarat's Gir Forest National Park, which is home to all the world's remaining 525 Asiatic lions. When the first deaths were reported between September 10 and 21, forest officials said it was because of "infighting" (competition for territorial supremacy) between the prides. Since then, another 10 have perished. Now, there is speculation that there is

evidence of a "viral infection" in some blood and tissue samples. Some reports have even said canine distemper virus (CDV) has been found in four samples.

Experts say the Gir lions have always been susceptible to a variety of viruses because they share territory with the tribal herdsmen community called Maldharis, their cattle and other domestic animals such as dogs. These deaths, they say, could have been avoided if a long-term epidemiological communicable disease study had been put in place at least 10 years ago to understand the disease load of the

different prides. Moreover, animals don't die because of just a virus attack but because of low immunity. There is high chance that lions in Gir have low immunity because of inter-breeding that has been taking place for centuries. The deaths of lions have also reignited a debate that started in 1993 over the relocation of lions. At a workshop in Vadodara on the issue that year, it was decided that a few prides of lions would be shifted to other park(s) in the country that are geographically and historically suitable for the animals. This could take care of two requirements: ensure enough



territory and prey base for prides of lions; and expand their genetic pool. The first for food, and the second to avoid a "genetic bottleneck," which makes the immune systems of animals weak. The Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary was

chosen for relocation of prides. However, the other view is that the virus attack and the deaths of lions and relocation are two different things because all populations of lions have to be taken care of. Moreover, Kuno may be ready with its prey base but the lions of Gir are more used to large, easily available animals such as cattle than other fast-moving wild animals, and that unlike Maldharis, who are economically stronger (and so can absorb losses), the poor population around Kuno may not take to cattle killing very kindly. But before any final decision is taken, it is very important to make public the exact reasons behind the deaths. Only when there is enough scientific knowledge, the problems dogging Gir can be rectified.

BJP will come back with 300+ seats in 2019, says Union minister Piyush Goyal at HTLS 2018

(News Agencies) The NDA government is on top of the economic situation despite having inherited an economy in a shambles and in the face of a recently deteriorating external environment, Union minister Piyush Goyal today. He also asserted that his party, the BJP, will win big in next year's Lok Sabha elections. "The BJP will come back with 300+ seats and the NDA will get a two-thirds majority," the Union minister for

Union minister Piyush Goyal was speaking at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit 2018 in New Delhi.

railways and coal said at the Hindustan Times Leadership Summit. Rejecting criticism by Congress president Rahul Gandhi, who spoke at the summit earlier in the morning, Goyal said, "We have absolutely not lost the narrative on the economy...we inherited an economy in a shambles and PM Modi and Finance Minister

Arun Jaitley have successfully steered the economy to strength." The government, he said, had since coming to power in 2014 successfully steered the economy, built forex reserves, brought down double-digit inflation and started acting on the mess left behind in the banking sector. Goyal said the rupee had

depreciated by just five rupees, or 7 per cent, in the last five years. "This is the slowest depreciation... show me any period which had such a golden run as far as currency was concerned," the minister who is tasked with turning around India's largest public transporter and increasing output of the precious fuel.



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Muslims have not allowed radicalisation to spread in India: Rajnath Singh at HTLS 2018

The home minister said the situation in Kashmir will improve, but expressed dismay that Pakistan was still indulging in cross-border terror.

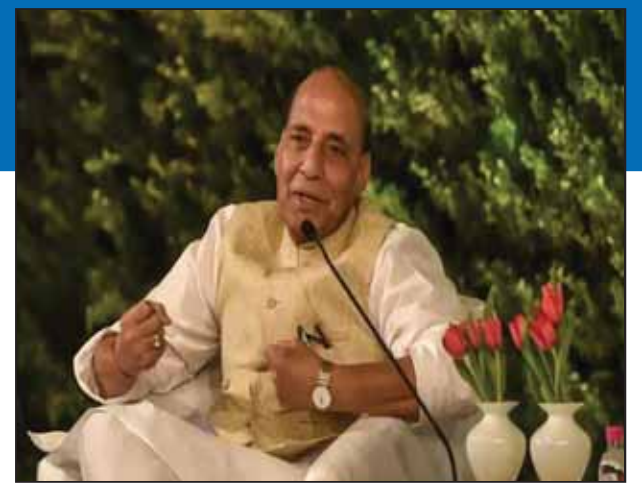
(News Agencies) Muslims in India should be complimented for not letting radicalisation spread in the country despite consistent efforts to brainwash them, Union home minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday while castigating Pakistan for not desisting from its "evil designs" in the context of Kashmir. Speaking at the 16th Hindustan Times Leadership Summit, Singh called terrorism a "crime against humanity" and said it was not linked to any religion or caste. "Even Islamic nations have condemned terrorism. Pakistan should take efforts to stop terrorism. I must compliment Muslims in India that they have not allowed radicalisation to spread in the country," Singh said. The home minister said the situation

in Kashmir will improve, but expressed dismay that Pakistan was still indulging in cross-border terror. "Not one, but every prime minister has tried to improve the relationship with Pakistan," Singh said. "But Pakistan is continuing to infiltrate terrorists into India. This is a reality." He said that the general situation in Kashmir is better than it was a year ago, and pointed out that terror-related incidents have come down from 6,000 in 1995 to 360-odd incidents in 2017. His comments come at a time when the Opposition has blamed the government for a spurt in violence in the region in recent months. The home minister said he has told security persons not to fire the first bullet, but if there was any provocation from Pakistan,

then the jawans should not count the number of bullets in retaliatory action. He said there is an "amazing" coordination between the army, central paramilitary forces and the J&K Police in the state and about 700 terrorists have been neutralised over the last four years. The government, he said, has launched a pilot project in Jammu & Kashmir and Assam to replicate an Israel-type border management system that will use the latest technology and resources to make India's coastline and borders breach-proof. "The Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System will be operated through a command centre and every activity on the borders can be monitored from one place," Singh said. "This is

a huge development." The former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president admitted that the alliance with Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of Mehbooba Mufti was "not successful", but maintained it was the need of the hour after the 2014 assembly elections returned a hung verdict. "The PDP emerged as the number one party and the BJP was the second-largest party. We thought we should respect the mandate," Singh said. "That experiment was not successful." The BJP pulled out of the government in June and the state is now under Governor's Rule.

Singh also said that there has been a 50% decline in Maoist-related activities in the last four years and the major activities of the Maoists have been restricted to 10-15 districts. "They are now trying to move into urban areas." He defended the



criticism of the government of the country, he said the after five activists were government was arrested in connection with committed to solving the the Bhima-Koregaon issues faced by farmers, violence in January, and and those who staged a protest at the Uttar Pradesh-Delhi border last week have returned following the promise that the government will look into their demands – which range from higher minimum support prices to overturning the ban on 10-year-old diesel vehicles. Singh said. "There is a crisis of credibility in politics today. We have taken it up as a challenge. We will not let this crisis of credibility to deepen," Singh said. "If we have promised something, then the protesters know we are honest in our commitment."

Offline verification modes of Aadhaar now available: UIDAI

(News Agencies)Service providers can use offline verification tools like eAadhaar and QR code that leverage the unique ID without authentication, any access to biometrics, or revealing the 12-digit number, the Aadhaar-issuing authority UIDAI said Friday. The statement comes against the backdrop of the Supreme Court judgement restricting the use of Aadhaar. Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) CEO Ajay Bhushan Pandey said as per legal understanding of the authority, offline options conform to the last week SC order.

"The UIDAI has come out with offline options which will be in line with the SC order. People can choose to get their Aadhaar ID verified without hitting the UIDAI server, by downloading electronic version of their Aadhaar card (eAadhaar)... they

have option of masking their Aadhaar number, and there is a QR (quick response) code which does not carry their Aadhaar number too, that can be used," Pandey said. Using any of these options will allow service providers to establish the identity of an individual, and security layers can be added to such verification including 'One Time Password', he said.

"... The most important thing is that the information which is given (through these options), contains only name, address and photo, which is anyway available in any other ID document. The Aadhaar number can be masked or redacted, and so it addresses concerns of privacy," he said. The UIDAI plans to organise a workshop in New Delhi next week to explain the nuances of offline verification for Aadhaar, to

the tech community, he added.

Last week, in a verdict with far-reaching consequences, the Supreme Court had upheld the constitutional validity of 'Aadhaar' but limited the scope of the controversial biometric identity project, ruling it is not mandatory for bank accounts, mobile connections or school admissions. The court struck down Section 57 of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 that permitted private entities like telecom companies or other corporates to avail of the biometric Aadhaar data and apex court imposing curbs on the use of the 12-digit identifier, UIDAI, on October 1, asked telecom companies to submit, within next fortnight, a plan to stop using Aadhaar biometric authentication.

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Rupee closes at fresh record low of 73.76 against dollar as RBI holds rate



(News Agencies)The rupee skidded by 18 paise to finish at a fresh lifetime low of 73.76 against the US dollar Friday after the RBI unexpectedly kept the policy rate unchanged. The domestic unit crashed below the 74-mark for the first time ever in intra-day trade on persistent capital outflows and high crude oil prices. Markets were caught off guard as the Reserve Bank maintained status quo on the benchmark interest rate. However, the central bank warned that rising oil prices and tightening of global financial conditions pose substantial risks to growth and inflation. It also changed its policy stance to 'calibrated tightening' from 'neutral'. Meanwhile, RBI Governor Urjit Patel Friday reiterated that the domestic currency is still better than its emerging market peers and that the apex bank does not have a target for it. "The rupee fall, in some respect, is moderate in comparison to several other emerging market peers," Patel said at the customary post-dollar Friday after the RBI policy press meet. "Our response to these unsettled conditions has been to ensure that foreign exchange market remains liquid with no undue volatility. There is no target or band around any particular level of exchange rate, which is determined by market forces demand and supply," the governor added. A majority of the analysts and bankers were expecting the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to raise interest rate by at least 0.25 per cent, while the developments over the last few days, especially the weakness in the rupee, had led to speculations that it could be even as high as 0.50 per cent. Equity markets racked up heavy losses for the third straight session. The BSE Sensex plunged 792.17 points to end at a near six-month low

of 34,376.99, while the broader NSE Nifty dropped 282.80 points to 10,316.45. At the Interbank Foreign Exchange (Forex) market, the local currency opened higher at 73.56 a dollar against its previous record closing low of 73.58. It recovered to a high of 73.42, but failed to sustain the momentum and plunged to 74.23 after RBI's policy announcement. It finally closed at 73.76, down by 18 paise or 0.24 per cent, marking its fourth straight

session of decline. On Thursday, the domestic unit plummeted by 24 paise to end at 73.58. "The rupee has extended losses as the RBI monetary policy meeting has clearly disappointed the street. Market was expecting at least 25 bps repo rate hike and measures to stabilise the rupee. "Given the sell-off in the domestic equities and higher crude oil prices, the rupee is now expected to move towards 75-76 levels in next couple of

sessions," said Rushabh Maru - Research Analyst, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers. Brent crude oil prices were trading at USD 84.36 per barrel, showing a dip of 0.26 per cent. India's benchmark 10-year sovereign yield fell to 8.04 per cent. Foreign institutional investors remained net sellers, offloading equities worth Rs 3,370.14 crore Friday, provisional data showed. "Rupee was caught off guard and weakened beyond 74, after RBI

surprised markets by keeping rates unchanged. Given the rising oil and trade tensions, traders will bet on exports going up, to curb further weakening in the currency," said Anand James, Chief Market Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. Meanwhile, the FBIL set the reference rate at 73.5809 for the US dollar and 84.6975 for the euro. The pound sterling also pegged higher at 95.8877 and 64.59 for 100 Japanese yen.

Congress is about 1.3 billion imaginations, BJP is about one: Rahul Gandhi at HTLS 2018

Congress president Rahul Gandhi launched a scathing attack on the government today, accusing it of imposing a "single, suffocating ideology on 1.3 billion people."

(News Agencies)Opposition parties have decided to first defeat the BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and then later decide on who will be Prime Minister, Congress president Rahul Gandhi said today when asked if he will take the top job next year if his party comes to power. But if the allies want him as the prime minister? "If they want me, sure," said Gandhi, 48. He was speaking at the 16th Hindustan Times Leadership Summit, where he delivered a keynote address and later answered questions. In his keynote address, Rahul Gandhi launched a scathing attack on the BJP-led government, accusing it of imposing



a "single, suffocating ideology on 1.3 billion people" and going "to war with the people." "Reimagining India for the BJP, RSS is to shut the imaginations

of Indians," he told a gathering of business leaders, diplomats, political leaders and commentators at the summit, the theme of which is 'Reimagining The Future'. Attacking the government over demonetisation and GST, Gandhi also accused it of not building any institutions in the last four and a half year that it has been in power. Underlining the difference between the Congress and the BJP, he said "India is a partnership between all its peoples" and the Congress "didn't believe in binaries". Gandhi is spearheading the opposition campaign against Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Centre ahead of key state elections later this year and the Lok Sabha elections next year.



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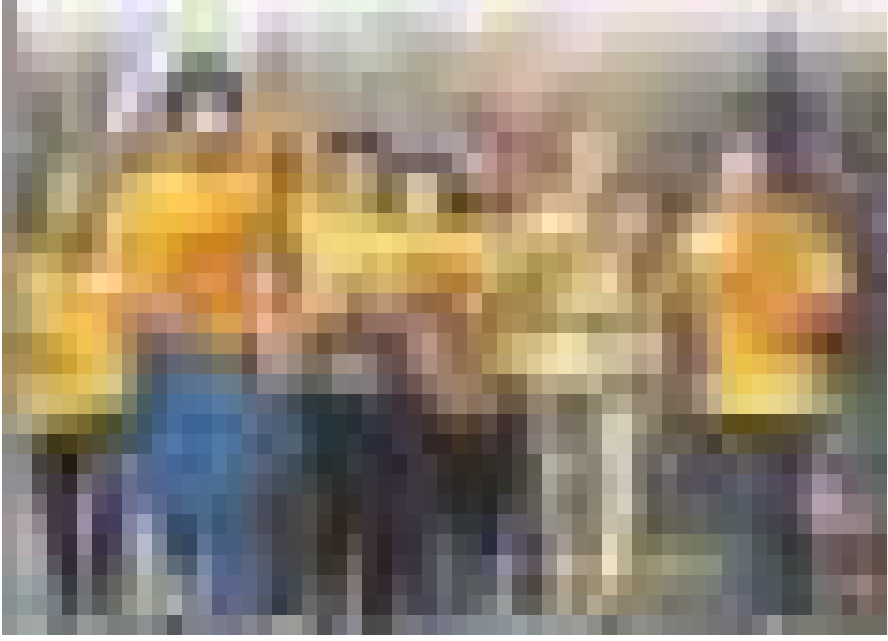
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Pakistan can't afford any further debt with China

He says he cannot afford the debt and has even talked of another cut of the same amount. Mr Rasheed reflects the Imran Khan government's sober view that Pakistan's economic future is endangered by the intersection of two dangerous practices. One is Beijing's use of debt-funded infrastructure to extend its geopolitical reach. The other is Pakistan's long-standing addiction to overseas borrowing. China's Belt Road Initiative, of which CPEC is the flagship project, today faces a backlash from

many of its supposed beneficiaries. Malaysia and Myanmar are among the other major partners who have suspended or asked to renegotiate the terms of these infrastructure projects. The hapless condition of Sri Lanka is already well-known. Mr Khan's government has said it wants to cure Pakistan of its chronic financial illnesses. Mr Rasheed's statement is a small sign it recognises this will not be possible if CPEC is allowed to continue in its present form. The other

side of the coin is to change Pakistan's macroeconomic path. Its political and military elites have developed a fondness for expensive capital projects designed to wow voters, generate bursts of growth and produce kickbacks. They have simply ignored the reforms needed to boost domestic productivity and ensure long-term growth. These showcase projects depend on imported inputs and foreign capital and leave a financial hangover of debts and deficits. This is why Pakistan goes to the

International Monetary Fund for help after every election. This election has been no different except that China has been added to the donor list. China's CPEC and Pakistan's borrowing have created a dependency syndrome. Mr Khan's government recognises this but has yet to go beyond words. Taking on both Islamabad's elite and Beijing will not be easy. However, it is a fight that has to be won as the results of this bond of debt are disastrous and will get worse.

Indian airlines and the fear of flying

The cabin pressure reduces to such an extent that oxygen masks drop. The passengers hold them with trembling hands. Beset with anxiety and nervousness, they manage to somehow put the masks on their faces. Their breathing improves a little, but the uncertainty persists. Is the plane facing some technical difficulty? Will it touch down safely or not? Where is the flight crew? Why are they silent and not doing anything? The plane finally manages to land. Many travellers breathe a sigh of relief but with their noses and ears bleeding, some of their co-passengers appear to be in a terrible shape. They are taken to hospital. The recent ordeal of passengers on the Jet Airways flight from Mumbai to Jaipur has shocked the world. Apologising for the incident, the embarrassed

airline said the crew members in question have been taken off the duty roster and that the airline is carrying out a probe. Both the airline and the government, which guarantees your safety, are silent about the findings of the investigation. Don't those who spent their hard-earned money on buying an air ticket have the right to know the reasons behind the mishap on September 20? And what is being done to ensure such accidents are not repeated? This is a dangerous silence.

Why single out just Jet, employees of other airlines, too, are known to behave rudely and for infringing upon the rights of their customers. You may recall how the employees of IndiGo turned violent with a senior citizen. Instead of reassuring the gentleman, they preferred to keep mum till a video

of the incident went viral. How can these companies claim to serve their customers on the basis of ageing aircraft fleets and rude employees? On top of it, they are bestowed with the power to ban air travellers who behave 'rudely' with airline crew.

Not surprisingly, when the International Civil Aviation Organization conducted a survey of five Indian airlines as a part of its universal safety programme, it discovered the performance of Indian aviation companies was below par on five of the eight parameters. Isn't it sad that even Bangladesh performed better than India on these parameters? Despite this, the number of people travelling by air is growing at a dizzy speed.

Last year, India's domestic air traffic stood at 117 million people.

This is almost twice the number in 2011. If their profits keep rising despite providing fewer services, it is natural for the aviation companies to become high-handed. So, they have been cutting back on passenger comforts without informing them. I learnt this on the flight from Delhi to Dehradun last week when the air hostess handed me a bottle of water and enquired whether I would like biscuits or cashew nuts to go with it? I said I'd be grateful if instead of water, she could offer me another beverage. She said the duration of the flight on this sector was very short and therefore the airline wouldn't be able to offer anything else. Displaying as much patience as was possible, I told her: "Earlier, on this very 'sector', your company used to offer tea or coffee to me, besides other options. Why is it any different now?" She turned away from me and said this was how it would happen now. If I so desired, I could send a feedback mail. Oblivious to the complaints of air travellers, she was in the habit of being impolite it appeared.

Believe me, at that moment, I felt cheated, ignored and humiliated at the same time.

It is our misfortune that on the lines of Europe and America, India, too, has embraced a free market economy. But we haven't put in place regulators that can rein in rampant commercialism. This is the moment when we expect something from government. Without doubt, the government has been launching new airports and air routes. But along with this, it should evolve meaningful instruments to protect the rights of consumers. Things shouldn't reach a point where the person going on a hawai yatra wearing a hawai chappal (travelling by air while wearing slippers) begins to feel deprived and despondent. If this happens, it will be the death of another dream in Independent India.

US counter-terrorism strategy identifies Lashkar-e-Taiba and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan as threat

Bolton said when asked if a security aid freeze came up during his meeting with Pakistani foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who met him earlier in the week. "We certainly talked about the suspension of security assistance and the importance that we placed on Pakistan renewing an effective campaign against terrorists," Bolton said, but stressed Washington hopes to work with the Khan government, and called his meeting with Qureshi "positive".

The National Strategy for Counter-terrorism said that besides ISIS and al-Qaeda, dozens of radical Islamist terrorist groups are working to advance more locally focused insurgent or terrorist campaigns, while still posing a threat to US persons and interests overseas. "These groups, including Boko Haram, Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, and Lashkar-e-Taiba, employ a range of political and terrorist tactics to

undermine local governments and conduct attacks," it said.

"Many of these groups are hostile to the United States, maintain networks of sympathisers around the world, and retain ties to ISIS or al-Qaeda, underscoring their potential threat to United States interests."

Both LeT and TTP are based in Pakistan. While LeT targets India, with known Pakistani acquiescence and encouragement, TTP has tended to focus on Pakistani targets at home.

The US strategy, which Bolton said was different from previous version for its emphasis on targeting the radical ideology behind the menace, counts Islamic State and al-Qaeda as the pre-eminent threats to America.

Six Americans were among the 166 victims of the terrorist attack carried out by LeT in Mumbai in 2008. David Headley, an American of Pakistani descent, had played a key role in

planning the attacks and had confessed to his crimes since, admitting to his LeT and al-Qaeda links.

The Trump administration punished Pakistan earlier this year by suspending nearly \$2 billion in security-related aid over its continued reluctance to act decisively against terrorists operating from its soil.

President Donald Trump had launched a tough new approach towards the one-time ally in 2017, announcing his new South Asia strategy, and had followed that up with a New Year tweet accusing Pakistan of "lies and deceit".

A reset of ties was first signalled during secretary of state Mike Pompeo's visit to Islamabad in September. Bolton made it clear that it was the new US strategy on Pakistan, but stressed the Washington will continue to expect Islamabad to act on combating terrorism.

Opposition to Rafale is against the national interest

stood by us in 1998. Instead of scrapping the Rafale contract entirely, salvaging a part of it to meet our own priority needs as well as preserving our equation with our first strategic partner among western countries would have seemed a sensible foreign policy course to the Narendra Modi government. The Opposition, too, should see the larger picture as whoever holds power in India will be dealing with France.

In a competitive international market, no supplier wants to reveal the true cost of equipment and components sold to another country, and hence the confidentiality clause. The government has broadly indicated the cost of the Rafale contract, but

divulging every detail to satisfy the expanding demands of the Opposition would compromise security as this would mean disclosing the overall capability of the aircraft such as the precise India-specific additions, the armaments fitted, the number of missiles and whether the Rafale is nuclear-capable.

The Opposition's unrelenting campaign sullies India's image, projecting it as a corruption-ridden country where no defence deal can be clean. Besides affecting future defence acquisitions, bureaucratic decision-making will become even more dilatory. The deepening controversy has forced the Air Chief, Vice-Chief and the Deputy Chief to

publicly intervene to protect the Rafale contract from collapsing and setting a bad precedent. The offsets issue is calculated to sully Modi's image rather than project facts. No company will be the sole beneficiary of offset contracts as almost 100 partners, including HAL and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), will benefit when Dassault officially communicates the list to the defence ministry. Not a single Rafale has arrived, yet several thousand crore of benefits through yet-to-be-fulfilled offset obligations have been supposedly pocketed by an individual. If earlier, the Opposition's use of a private conversation with a foreign

leader to settle domestic political scores was breaching diplomatic norms, former French president François Hollande's intrusion into domestic Indian politics through self-serving press comments has caused damage. Dassault's intention to offer the naval version of Rafale to the Indian navy could come under a shadow with the current controversy. And now Pakistan has tried to enter the political game in India against Modi. The government should not have allowed the controversy over Rafale to take the proportions it has. It has marshalled its case a little too late to break the momentum of the Opposition's campaign that serves party interests but not those of the nation.

India, Russia ink \$5 billion S-400 defence deal during Vladimir Putin's visit

In a huge boost to its defence forces on Friday, India signed a \$5 billion deal for the Russian S-400 Triumf missile shield systems in a key pact at the summit talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin, officials said. The agreement was signed in the presence of both the leaders at the 19th India-Russia annual bilateral summit.

The S-400 missile defence system deal could attract American sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) that seeks to punish countries buying weapons from Russia. Moscow has been India's biggest arms supplier.

However, after the landmark deal was

signed, the US embassy said that the sanctions were aimed at punishing Russia and not to damage military capabilities of their allies.

India and Russia also signed seven other deals including those in the fields of railways, space and nuclear power as Modi underlined New Delhi's special relationship with Moscow.

"Our special strategic partnership will achieve new heights...India gives priority to its relations with Russia. Russia has always been a part of India's growth story," Modi said in a joint press meet after the deals were signed.

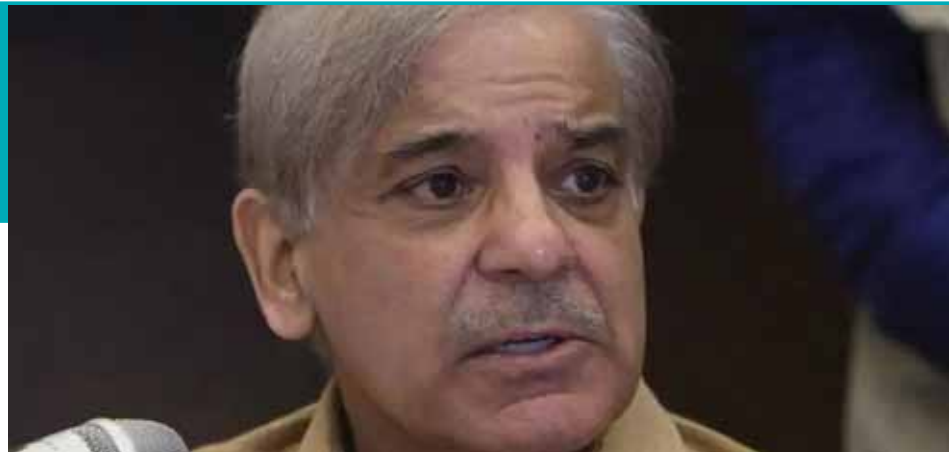
He also said Indo-Russian cooperation will continue in different fields and across different platforms.

Our countries have mutual benefits in supporting struggle against terrorism, Afghanistan and Indo-Pacific events, climate change; organisations like SCO, BRICS, G-20 and ASEAN. We have agreed to continue cooperation to these international organisations." Putin endorsed Modi saying, "India and Russia are committed to cooperating in fight against terrorism." And as the threat of American sanctions looms over India, Putin said, "I have informed the PM about the situation in Syria. We have also discussed the situation that came as a result of action of US to withdraw from Iran deal." The Russian president also underlined the strategic Indo-Russian ties by inviting Modi to the Eastern Economic Forum

at Vladivostok next year. "It is my great pleasure to once again invite Prime Minister to participate in the next Vladivostok Forum as the main guest." The expected missile deal was signed despite the threat of American sanctions. Last month, the United States imposed sanctions on the Chinese military for buying Russian weapons, including the S-400 missile system said other countries with similar shopping lists should "think twice" about their plans Friday's meeting was the third meeting between Modi and Putin this year after an informal meeting in the Russian resort city of Sochi in May and a bilateral on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in South Africa in July.

Pakistan's Opposition leader Shahbaz Sharif arrested in connection with corruption cases

Shahbaz Sharif is the younger brother of ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif who was recently released from jail.



Pakistan's Opposition leader Shahbaz Sharif was on Friday arrested by the country's anti-graft body for his alleged involvement in two corruption cases, a senior official said. Shahbaz, 67, is the younger brother of ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif. "Shahbaz Sharif on Friday appeared before an investigation team of the National Accountability Bureau Lahore. He was arrested after he failed to satisfy the investigator for his alleged role in awarding contracts to his favourite firm in violations of rules in the Ashiana Housing scheme and Punjab Saaf Pani Company," NAB spokesperson Nawazish Ali Asim told PTI. Shahbaz will be presented before an accountability court for a physical remand on Saturday, he said. Shahbaz was allegedly involved in the

corruption of Rs14 billion Ashiana Housing project and Rs 4 billion Punjab Saaf Pani Company scams. This Saaf Pani Company was established by Shahbaz's previous Punjab government to conceive, plan, design, execute and manage projects for the provision of safe drinking water in terms of both access and quality, to communities living in rural areas of the province. Shahbaz's son-in-law Ali Imran Yousuf is also facing corruption inquiries in this case. He has fled to the UK and the NAB has written to

the interior ministry to bring him back from abroad through Interpol. Shahbaz's son Hamza has also been probed by the NAB for presiding over the company's board of directors meetings many times to issue directions for award of contracts to favourite firms. Shahbaz's blue eyed officer Ahad Cheea and Sharif's principal secretary Fawad Hasan Fawad are already in the NAB's custody in the Ashiana housing scheme scam. The Sharif family's advocate Amjad Ppervaiz told

reporters that Shahbaz is an opposition leader in the National Assembly and he cannot be arrested without the permission of the Speaker. The PML-N has condemned the arrest of Shahbaz and termed it a "political victimisation". "We strongly condemn the arrest of the party president by the NAB. It appears to be a political victimisation which should be stopped," PML-N spokesperson Marrayum Auranzeb said. In July, Sharif, his daughter Maryam Nawaz and Capt (retd) Muhammad Safdar were sentenced to 11 years, eight years and one year, respectively, in prison in the Avenfield properties case related to the purchase of four luxury flats in London through corrupt practices. But, the Islamabad High Court freed the trio on bail last month and suspended their sentence after they challenged the Avenfield verdict. However, the 68-year-old Sharif is facing two more corruption cases filed by the NAB on the Supreme Court's order following the Panama Papers scandal.

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Bukit Tinggi – quaint castle in the hills



Colmar Tropicale Resort at Bukit Tinggi Highlands

One is writing this from the cool confines of one's cosy abode, overlooking the Bukit Tinggi Highlands on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, surrounded by 16000 acres of greenery. The view from one's perch is picturesque. Clouds kissing treetops from one end of the horizon to another, thick tropical rainforest trees line the hills in various shades of green. Colmar Tropicale, one's tree-house, stands at 2600 feet above sea level, inside 80 acres of tropical rainforests, in the state of Pahang in peninsular Malaysia. Pahang is an ideal place to experience the bounties of nature. The tropical rainforest teeming with a wealth of flora and fauna.

The walk through the forest is nothing short of enchanting. The fresh, pine scented breeze, the towering trees, the perennial mountain streams and the ancient rock formations coupled with the chirping birds, the whispering willows and the squeaks, squeals and barks of the

macaques, make every step of this nature walk an exciting adventure. One gets to enjoy the sounds and sights of nature, as one ventures deeper into the forest. As one inches uphill, one gets to view impressive panoramic views of lush green hills and misty mountain peaks. Trekking through the forests that surround Colmar tropical is like exploring nature's own botanical garden.

There is a small open air wildlife reserve inside the forest, where one can observe deer and rabbits at close quarters in a near natural ambience. Over 200 rabbits of 4 different species and several white spotted deer and Timorese deer can be seen lazily grazing under the shade of the giant trees. The rabbits feed on bamboo leaves while the deer prefer grass and graze away lazily, unmindful of human presence.

The pleasures of walking barefooted through the forest floor at noon, while it drizzles, is an unmatched experience. One can feel the primordial elements, fire

the dame time. One takes rest in some secluded caves near a quiet cove, quenching one's thirst at the rapid. Its darkness at noon here as a thick canopy of tress, filter the sunlight from creeping into the forest. This secret place is one's island of peace to communicate in solitude with nature. Meditating at this hidden cove is a calm, serene, quiet and tranquil experience. The trek back is equally eventful. One stops briefly at the Japanese Tea House inside the rainforest for a refreshing cup of Japanese green tea, before returning to the comfort of your hotel room. The traditional Japanese Zen tea ceremony which one attends at

water is one's music for meditation. The value of patience becomes apparent as the hostess moves almost in slow motion, to dip the bamboo container into the kettle and pour small helpings of green tea into one's cup. One seeks forgiveness from one's neighbour before proceeding to sip the tea in three sips. One wipes the cup after sipping and graciously thanks one's host before departing.

How to get there?

Colmar Tropicale is a two hour drive from Kuala Lumpur International Airport depending on the traffic. The other option is to take the Putra LRT from KL Central to Putra Station and drive down from Putra Station which

Lots of small restaurants serving Indian and Chinese cuisine dot Kuala Lumpur. You get good vegetarian South Indian food at Brickfields near Kuala Lumpur Central Station. A few Chinese vegetarian stalls at Petaling street serve delicious and nutritious vegetarian dishes. The food at the high profile hotels is only for the gastronomically adventurous who like greasy food. Fresh fruits including watermelons, papayas, tender coconuts, durians, mangosteens and pineapples are available at the local market. Colmar Tropicale serves a selection of fresh tropical fruits, freshly squeezed fruit juices, Vegans who don't consume dairy, bakery and who avoid all products of animal origin and who don't consume processed foods or alcohol can go for green tea, Chinese tea, rice porridge, mashed potatoes and leafy lettuce salad at the buffet breakfast served at Colemar Tropicale. Strict vegans should also keep away from toxic additives like monosodium glutamate present in generous amounts in soya sauce, chilly sauce tomato sauce. Refrain from consuming these poisons at all costs by sticking to fresh fruits raw vegetables throughout the day. Avoid solids after sunset and drink several cups of lukewarm ginger water before retiring to bed. Colemar Tropicale Resort in Bukit Tinggi Highlands in Malaysia

Murli Menon is the author of "ZeNLP-the power to succeed" and "ZeNLP-the power to relax" and conducts two-day stress management workshops based on ZeNLP (Neurolinguistic Programming with a touch of zen meditation). He is based at Ahmedabad and can be contacted by email at ceo@tips4ceos.com



A colourful Japanese tea-pot at the Japanese tea garden at the resort

the tea house is an extremely spiritual experience.

One sits on the floor on the *tatami* mat in the simple tea house, which transports one to Kyoto. One patiently watches ones hostess prepare a cup of tea. The silence pervading the ceremony is all encompassing. The sound of the kettle pervades the room. The gurgling, boiling

takes all of 45 minutes. Kuala Lumpur International Airport is connected by air to most international airports. It takes 28 minutes to get to Kuala Lumpur Central Station from Kuala Lumpur International Airport by KLIA Express. This journey costs 35 RM. (One RM is equivalent to Rs.12/- at current exchange rates)

Where to stay?

Colmar Tropicale at Bukit Tinggi Resort offers comfortable rooms at affordable tariffs by Indian standards.

Where to eat?



Pine trees as seen from one's hotel room



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The XE is sparkling new from the ground up and from end to end, and it is all-Jaguar in terms of looks, luxury and build quality.



COMPACT CAT

Though the XE will be Jaguar's smallest model, it figures big in the company's plans



(Agencies) WITH the recently revealed XE, a lightly down-priced and downsized sedan, Jaguar will attempt to make up for lost time and gain ground that it has been surrendering since the 1970s to BMW's spirited 3 Series and also, in more recent years, to Audi's elegant A4 and the stolid Mercedes-Benz C-Class. Though the XE will be Jaguar's

The XE will not arrive in US showrooms until 2016, so the marketing and production plans for this junior Jag remain fluid. One variant that should reach the US will be equipped with a 335 bhp supercharged V-6 that is similar to the engine powering Jaguar's mid-level XF sedan. Paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission, the engine is expected to enable a zero-to-100- kmph time of 4.9 seconds and an electronically limited top speed of 250 kmph. in the company's plans Pricing for the XE, says a Jaguar spokesperson, will start "in the high \$30,000s," which would be in line with the prices of the car's German competitors. There is talk of a coupé, a convertible, and an estate car, and there is the strong possibility that Jaguar will offer a high-performance variant with a 5-litre V-8. "The XE will attract new followers to the brand," says Nick Miller, Jaguar's vehicle programme director for the XE, "and it is one of the most important cars in the history of the company." Miller is referring to the XE's role in the grand plans by Jaguar and its corporate cousin, Land Rover, to become one of the world's largest builders of luxury vehicles. Jaguar is no newbie when it comes to building a midsize sedan. In 2000, while owned by Ford, it introduced the S-Type. About two years later, the X-Type arrived. Both were criticised heavily by purists. The S-Type was scorned for being a Jaguar shell built on a Lincoln LS platform, and the X-Type is doomed to be remembered as a rebadged Ford Mondeo. Happily and certainly wisely for Jaguar, which has been owned by India's Tata Motors since 2008, the XE is sparkling new from the ground up and from end to end, and it is all-Jaguar in terms of looks, luxury, and build quality.

FRONTRUNNERS

CONTINENTAL FLYER

WITH A zero-to-100-kmph time of 3.6 seconds, the Bentley Continental GT3-R (www.newdelhi.bentleymotors.com) is the brand's fastest-accelerating production car ever. Bentley says that the GT3-R is "inspired by" — not derived from — the company's Continental GT3 racecar, which took the chequered flag in May in the second round of the Blancpain Endurance Series at Silverstone. The victory set the stage for the Continental GT3-R's global debut at the Goodwood



Festival of Speed in June. The car is powered by a 4-litre, twin-turbo V-8 that develops nearly 580 bhp and 700 Nm of torque. It weighs 100 kilograms less than the GT V8 S model on which it is based. The GT3-R also has shorter gearing, torque vectoring, and all-wheel drive, all of which enhance its quickness. Bentley will produce only 300 examples of the GT3-R (99 of them for the US market), deliveries of which will begin in early 2015. The price is expected to be more than \$300,000.

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SPACE SHIP

FOSTER AND Partners is known best for its unconventional architectural projects, including the under-construction Apple headquarters, which, because of its circular shape and over a kilometre-long circumference, has been likened to a spaceship. The British firm has also dabbled in boat design, creating vessels that are as distinctive as its buildings. It worked on the interior of the Perini Navi sailing yacht Panthalassa. Foster and Partners' latest boating project is the Alen 68 by Alen Yacht (www.alenyacht.com), a collaboration with the Turkish shipyard. Not surprisingly — considering that the model line's prototype, christened Iguazu, was built for the owners of Panthalassa — the



Alen 68 also features a lack of clutter on the deck and below. The boat maker claims that the design, compared to those of comparably sized yachts, creates 20 per cent more space. The Alen 68 has a base price of about \$3.7 million and a top speed of 44 knots.

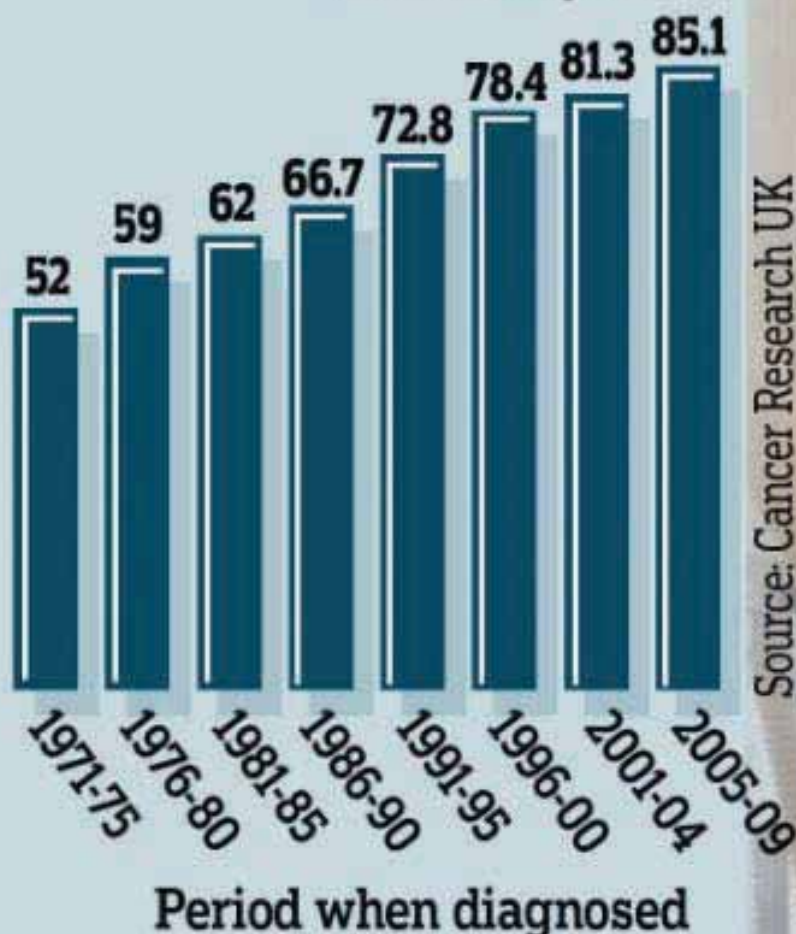
No woman need die from breast cancer by 2050

Experts predict development in treatments and changes to diet will mean 95% are cured

Nearly all women will survive breast cancer by 2050, researchers claim. They believe that within the next 40 years treatment will be so effective that more than 95 per cent of cases will be cured. Scientists also predict tens of thousands of cases will be prevented in the first place through improved diet, exercise and cutting back on drinking and smoking. In one of the largest pieces of work of its kind, academics from more than 30 universities across the UK have drawn up an action plan for how to tackle breast cancer over the next few decades. They have calculated if nothing is done to improve diagnosis and treatment, 185,000 women will die from the disease between now and 2030. But with certain medical advances – which they say are achievable – within 40 years it will be rare for women to die from the disease. This could happen without even developing a formal cure for cancer. Baroness Delyth Morgan, chief executive of Breast Cancer Campaign, which funded the research said: 'My hope is that we will see a future – by 2050 – where breast cancer can be overcome, it can be prevented, it can

ODDS OF BEATING BREAST CANCER

% women surviving for at least five years



be cured and so it can be outlived.' She added: 'Time is pressing. If we look at the impact of doing nothing, of not moving forward, then by 2030 we'll have more than 1.2million women living with breast cancer.'

Breast cancer is by far the most common form of the disease in women. There are nearly 50,000 new cases every year and 11,500 deaths. But the researchers calculate by 2025 the numbers of women developing the disease could fall by a fifth. They hope to be able to pinpoint exactly how diets, exercise and stopping drinking and smoking all prevent the illness.

And when women do get the illness, the researchers hope it will be diagnosed early enough so it can be cured. The academics, whose study is published today in the journal *Breast Cancer Research*, have drawn up a series of targets where prevention, diagnosis and treatment could be improved. These include improving tests for the disease so it can be detected before women have no-

ticed a lump or any changes to the breast. And by 2025 they hope to have developed a blood test capable of diagnosing breast cancer well before any symptoms have occurred. Researchers also say women should be offered personalised treatment so they are given certain combinations of drugs and treatment depending on the exact make-up of their tumour. In addition, they calculate that the number of women whose cancer spreads to other parts of the body could fall by a quarter by 2020 through improved diagnosis and medicines. They also hope that by 2025 they will be able to predict each woman's risk of getting the disease based on her family history, weight and other lifestyle habits.

At present 85 per cent of women diagnosed with breast cancer can expect to live for at least five years, compared with 52 per cent in the 1970s. However, Britain still lags behind other countries such as Canada and Australia where well over 90 per cent live at least five years.

Coffee before sex?

More than half of Americans prefer their morning caffeine fix to wake up sex, according to poll

(Agencies) Most people prefer waking up to coffee over morning sex, according to a recent survey.

The caffeine addicted masses beat out the randy risers in a study conducted by Le Meridien Hotels & Resorts. An eye opening 53 per cent of frequent travelers asked by the chain preferred their caffeine

fix to satisfying that other craving.

Even more amazing – over three quarters of respondents were willing to go without alcohol, switch off social media or endure a year of celibacy instead of having to kick the coffee habit over that same time frame.

The product of surveying



Le Meridien guests across Arab Emirates and the United States earlier this year, the survey

also showed that 51 per cent of people can hold out on sex longer than going without a cup of that heavenly coffee.

With 78 per cent of respondents willing to give up drinking, social media or a sex for year rather than go without coffee, and 16 per cent saying 'they are not able to talk to other people' without coffee in the morning, it should be no sur-

prise that 81 per cent need it to last through long meetings.

A further 28 per cent of people felt less creative without their favourite brew and another 22 per cent are physically unable to crawl out of bed without coffee, according to the survey. As far as travelers, it may not be too much of a surprise that 73 per cent of respondents would cede in-room internet access or televisions for a perfect cup of coffee while on the road. A further 36 per cent would rather kick back with a cup of joe before having alcohol while staying at a hotel, said the survey, which was spotted by News.com.au.

Of the 7,455 people who responded to the survey, 55 per cent were women.



How your parents can break your heart

Children starved of warmth and affection suffer lifelong health problems

(Agencies) The effects of childhood abuse and lack of parental affection can last a lifetime, taking a toll both emotionally and physically, reveals a new study.

A new UCLA-led study for the first time examines the effects of abuse and lack of parental affection across the body's entire regulatory system.

The study, published online by the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, found a strong biological link for how negative early life experiences affect physical health and can even lead to cardiovascular disease.

However, it's not all bad news. 'Our findings suggest that there may be a way to reduce the impact abuse has, at least in terms of physical health,' said Judith E. Carroll,

a research scientist at the Cousins Center for Psychoneuroimmunology at UCLA, and the study's lead author.

'If the child has love from parental figures they may be more protected from the impact of abuse on adult biological risk for health problems than those who don't have that loving adult in their life.'

The researchers studied 756 adults who had participated in a study called Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults (CARDIA).

They measured 18 biological markers of health risk, such as blood pressure, heart rate, stress hormone, cholesterol, waist circumference, inflammation, and blood sugar regulation, and analysed if they were at higher biological risk for disease.



To determine the study subjects' childhood stress the researchers used a self-report scale called the Risky Families Questionnaire.

They found a significant link between reports of childhood abuse and multisystem health risks, but those who reported higher amounts of parental

warmth and affection in their childhood had lower multisystem health risks. The researchers also found a significant interaction of abuse and warmth, so that individuals reporting low levels of love and affection and high levels of abuse in childhood had the highest multisystem risk in adulthood. 'Our findings highlight the extent to which these early child-

hood experiences are associated with evidence of increased biological risks across nearly all of the body's major regulatory systems,' said Teresa Seeman, professor of medicine in the division of geriatrics at the David Geffen School of Medicine and of epidemiology at the Fielding School of Public Health at UCLA, and the paper's senior author.

'If we only look at individual biological parameters such as blood pressure or cholesterol, we would miss the fact that the early childhood experiences are related to a much broader set of biological risk indicators - suggesting the range of health risks that may result from such adverse childhood exposures.'

The authors note that the findings used information provided by the participants, so there may be some recall bias.

Brett Kavanaugh closer to US Supreme Court confirmation after Senate vote

The Senate voted 51-49 Friday to cut off debate and move to final consideration following bitter debate over Brett Kavanaugh's suitability for the court due to the allegations and a partisan attack he made on Democratic senators.



(News Agencies) Brett Kavanaugh moved closer to confirmation to the US Supreme Court by clearing a Senate test vote as Republicans hope he'll win final approval Saturday, after allegations of sexual assault and misconduct from more than three decades ago nearly derailed his nomination. The Senate voted 51-49 Friday to cut off debate and move to final consideration following bitter debate over his suitability for the court due to the allegations and

a partisan attack he made on Democratic senators. President Donald Trump wrote on Twitter, 'Very proud of the US Senate for voting 'YES' to advance the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh!' The outcome on the final vote is uncertain, as GOP Senator Susan Collins of Maine voted to advance the nomination but said she'll announce later Friday whether she will vote for confirmation. GOP Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska voted against moving forward with the nomination. Democrat Joe Manchin of West Virginia voted to advance the nomination, but wouldn't say afterward if that meant he also would vote yes on Saturday. "There is simply no reason to deny Judge Kavanaugh a seat on the Supreme Court based on the evidence presented to us," Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley of Iowa said on the Senate floor before the vote. "I hope we can say no to mob rule by voting to confirm Judge Kavanaugh." Senator Dianne Feinstein, the top Judiciary Committee Democrat, said Kavanaugh could move the court to the right on abortion, gun rights and other issues. She also cited Kavanaugh's angry behavior and criticism of Democrats at last week's hearing on the allegations.

'Never before have we had a nominee display such flagrant partisanship and open hostility at a hearing,' said Feinstein of California. 'How could he? This behavior revealed a hostility and belligerence that is unbecoming of someone seeking to be elevated to the United States Supreme Court.'

FBI Investigation

The procedural vote came after senators reviewed supplemental FBI reports on interviews the bureau conducted into women's claims dating to high school and college. Kavanaugh strongly denied the allegations, and his supporters in the Senate said the FBI found no evidence corroborating them. Republicans are looking for Kavanaugh to cement a conservative majority on the court, while Democrats say they're

alarmed he could provide the fifth vote to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion. Putting Kavanaugh on the court would give Republicans a victory just weeks before the Nov. 6 election, in which Democrats have a chance to win control of the House and are making a longer shot bid for a Senate majority. Democrats also will campaign on the issue, accusing Republicans of rushing the confirmation without allowing the FBI to conduct a broader investigation. Democrats have sought to block Kavanaugh's confirmation since soon after Trump nominated him in July. They complained the Trump administration refused to release more than 100,000 pages of documents related to Kavanaugh's work in President George W.

Bush's White House, and said they found allegations of sexual misconduct to be credible.

Partisan Gulf

Kavanaugh's testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in response to allegations of sexual assault left a partisan gulf, with him on the Republican side. Kavanaugh and Democratic senators scowled and shouted at each other as he angrily, and sometimes tearfully, denied the claims. The American Bar Association said Friday it's re-examining its 'well qualified' rating of Kavanaugh because of 'new information of a material nature regarding temperament' during the hearing. In a letter to committee leaders, the association said it doesn't expect to complete the review before the Senate vote.

India should target China, not Pakistan, on terror

It's time to call Pakistan's bluff by targeting its benefactor



(News Agencies) Imagine for a bit your reaction if Sushma Swaraj, the external affairs minister, had spoken for her usual 30 minutes during the UN general assembly debate and had not mentioned Pakistan at all? Would it be disappointment? Annoyance? Or relief? Swaraj had, as she herself has three times before and as have her predecessors in the MEA for years, ripped into Pakistan in her speech last Saturday. She accused it of "malevolence", "verbal duplicity", "deceit", "deception" and "lies". Diplomats picked up from where she left off to add "despicable" and "preposterous" to the list in their customary rejoinders on right-of-reply, an obscure UN

rule. Pakistan, of course, hit back in the name of strategic balance with its own set of invectives and insults. So, who won? What was gained? India and Pakistan have turned the annual UN general assembly debate into a battlefield where they continue a war that started in 1948 and was waged through 1965, 1971, 1999 (Kargil), and every cricket and hockey game in between and after. This must be the longest war yet in modern world history, or of matching vintage as the one raging around Israel. But yelling at each other every year from the granite eminence of the UN general assembly hall has probably not saved a single life or rupee either side of the border. And no one is

giving away prizes for the most vitriolic or insult-laden speech delivered on the floor of the assembly. What if, bear with me for argument's sake, one of us backed down a bit tactically, to readjust our sights in the crosshairs? And what if Swaraj never uttered not a word about Pakistan? And picket a different target? A new Osama bin Laden? A new al Qaeda? As a major victim of terrorism, India has an unquestionable right to be a leading campaigner for its eradication. It is the third worst affected nation by terrorism, according to a US State Department report. And it has been recognised as the loudest voice on it in any room or hall or arena. The 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attacks are

now mentioned in the same breath as the 9/11 attacks that forced the United States join a war India had launched many years ago, unrecognised by the rest of the world. Why waste that equity on Pakistan? It is beyond repair, as it has demonstrably been for years. India and the United States have cynically held up hopes of its return to civil life through a system of bait and switch that has long been proven ineffective. Pakistan cannot change — the new government is a

chip of the old block. But it will continue to blackmail the world holding a gun to its head, as was demonstrated by the disastrous first trip to the United States by its new foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who has naively sought to spin impossible arguments in plain sight of people who know better. He even tried to misrepresent a handshake with President Donald Trump as a meeting. It's time to

call Pakistan's bluff, by targeting its benefactor. Imagine, once again, if Swaraj had yelled at China instead, using all those same words. And spent her 30 minutes, or most of it, portraying China as a leading sponsor of terrorism in the world and the one carrying the can for a client state, Pakistan. There is an easy narrative awaiting India, should it want to take that route. Don't name China, if that is a concern.

Pakistan's allegation of use of chemical weapons in Kashmir false, malicious: India

India Friday rejected as false Pakistan's allegations of reported use of chemical weapons by Indian security forces in Kashmir, saying "malicious attempts" to deflect international opinion away from terrorism emanating from the neighbouring country will not succeed. India also asserted that Pakistan was acting in a highly "irresponsible manner" with the sole purpose of repeating untruths in the vain hope that the

international community will start believing their falsehood. Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesperson Mohammad Faisal had Thursday alleged that Indian forces reportedly used chemical weapons against Kashmiris. In response to a question by the media regarding the allegations, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said, "We completely reject allegations made by

Pakistan about the reported use of chemical weapons by the Indian security forces against Indian citizens." Such allegations are not new and are totally unfounded, he said. India has repeatedly stated its complete opposition to the use of chemical weapons by anyone, at anytime, and anywhere in the world, Kumar said. "India is an original signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The importance of being Sonia

For the opposition parties to have a chance in 2019, they have to get together. And for them to get together, someone will have to play the mediator.

(News Agencies) change her mind regarding Mayawati's statement on Wednesday, attacking the Congress Party, specifically, its senior leader Digvijay Singh, and announcing her Bahujan Samaj Party's (BSP) decision to fight the assembly elections in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh alone, had an interesting sentence that pretty much absolved Congress president Rahul Gandhi and his mother and former party president Sonia Gandhi of any of the blame she was directing at the party.

It is unlikely that she will

these two states – the BSP is already fighting the elections in the third, Chhattisgarh, with Ajit Jogi's Janata Congress Chhattisgarh party – although stranger things have been known to happen. It is just as unlikely that Ms Mayawati's decision will have no bearing on the 2019 parliamentary elections; at the least, it indicates that forming a grand alliance to take on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will not be easy.

There are two possible outcomes. One, the

opposition parties agree to defer a decision on a grand alliance till after the elections, choosing, instead, to forge locally relevant partnerships that can help them. The alliance between the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the BSP, is one such. This, though, is a messy option, and a risky one too. In a first-past-the-post system such as our own, a simple mathematical analysis will make it clear that the only way opposition parties can compete with the BJP is by combining their vote shares. Then, there's also the issue that at one level,

a pre-poll alliance indicates commitment and a post-poll one, opportunism, which, in some ways, does subvert the democratic vote.

Two, the parties somehow manage to forge a grand alliance. For this to fructify, though, as is clear from the Congress and the BSP's experience in forging an alliance in three key states (Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan), and also from Ms Mayawati's statement, Sonia Gandhi will have to play a central role. Indeed, when she handed over the leadership of the party to



Rahul Gandhi, both Sonia Gandhi and the Congress made it clear that she would focus on the party's alliances. In an interview with this paper, Nationalist Congress Party leader Sharad Pawar said he, Sonia Gandhi, and Janata Dal (S) leader HD Deve Gowda, none of whom wanted to be Prime Minister, should serve as elder statespeople of the alliance in the making, ironing out differences between parties of various hues. Ms Mayawati, as she has already indicated, is

comfortable with Sonia Gandhi. As is Trinamool Congress chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. And Telugu Desam Party chief and Andhra CM N Chandrababu Naidu sees himself as a peer of Sonia Gandhi, and is likely to be more amenable to talking about seat sharing with her rather than with anyone else. For the opposition parties to have a chance in 2019, they have to get together. And for them to get together, someone will have to play the mediator.

India has not lost the AI race, it can still build a trillion-dollar industry

Software's real value lies in its implementation: what you do with it. Anyone can use openly available Artificial Intelligence codes to build advanced applications



(News Agencies) There is a deep-seated fear that India has been left behind in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) race. There are many questionable claims being made by people such as Chinese venture capitalist, Kai-Fu Lee, who says that China and the US are the two AI superpowers, and China has the edge. There is no doubt that AI has an incredible potential and will provide militaries with lethal advantages. But the technology is still in its infancy; there are no AI superpowers. The race to implement AI has hardly begun, particularly in business. As well, the most advanced AI tools

are available as open source, which means that everyone has access to them at the same time. Tech companies are generating hype with cool demonstrations of AI such as Google AlphaGo Zero, which learned the world's most difficult board game in three days and beat champions. Several companies are claiming breakthroughs with self-driving vehicles. But don't be fooled: the games are just special cases, and the self-driving cars are still on their training wheels. AlphaGo developed its intelligence through the use of generative adversarial networks, a technology that pits two AI systems

against each another to allow them to learn from each other. The trick was that before the networks battled each other, they received a lot of coaching. And, more importantly, their problems and outcomes were well defined.

Unlike board games and arcade games, business systems don't have defined outcomes and rules. They work with very limited data sets, often disjointed and messy. The computers also don't do critical business analysis; it's the job of humans to comprehend information that the systems gather and to decide what to do with it. Humans can

deal with uncertainty and doubt; AI cannot. Google's Waymo self-driving cars have collectively driven close to 10 million miles, yet are nowhere near ready for release. Tesla's autopilot, after gathering a billion miles' worth of data, won't even stop at traffic lights.

Today's AI systems do their best to reproduce the functioning of the human brain's neural networks, but their emulations are very limited. They use a technique called Deep Learning, which adjusts the relationships of computer instructions designed to behave like neurons. To put it simply, after you tell an AI exactly what you want it to learn and provide it with clearly labelled examples, it analyses the patterns in those data and stores them for future application. The accuracy of its patterns depends on completeness of data, so the more examples you give it, the more useful it becomes. Herein lies a problem, though. An AI is

only as good as the data it receives, and is able to interpret them only within the narrow confines of the supplied context. It doesn't "understand" what it has analysed, so it is unable to apply its analysis to scenarios in other contexts. And it can't distinguish causation from correlation.

The larger issue with this form of AI is that what it has learnt remains a mystery: a set of indefinable responses to data. Once a neural network has been trained, not even its designer knows exactly how it is doing what it does. They call this the black box of AI. Businesses can't afford to have their systems making unexplained decisions, as they have regulatory requirements and reputational concerns and must be able to understand, explain, and prove the logic behind every decision that they make. Then there is the issue of the reliability. Airlines are installing AI-based facial-recognition

systems, and China is basing its draconian national surveillance systems on such systems. AI is being used for marketing and credit analysis and to control cars, drones, and robots. It is being trained to perform medical-data analysis and assist or replace human doctors. The problem is that, in all such uses, they can be fooled. Google published a paper last December that showed that it could trick AI systems into recognising a banana as a toaster. Researchers Konda Reddy Mopuri, Aditya Ganeshan, and R Venkatesh Babu at the Indian Institute of Science have just demonstrated that they could confuse almost any AI system without even using, as Google did, knowledge of what the system has used as a basis for learning. With AI, security and privacy are afterthoughts, just as they were early in the development of computers and the Internet.

Is current valuation of stock market justifiable?

There is no denying the fact that speculation is an important element of stock market movements. However, what differentiates stock market speculation from an activity such as gambling is the fact that the former is pegged to economic performance of companies whose stocks are being traded.



The price-earnings multiple (P-E) is a useful indicator to measure this. The P-E is the multiple of earnings per share of a company that will add up to its share price. Earnings per share is a function of profits made by the company.

A comparison of P-E multiples with stock market movement shows that the recent bull-phase in Indian stock markets was based more on euphoria than economic performance, as the P-E multiple has increased continuously.

The same holds international comparisons as well. The current value of P-E multiples for the BSE S&P index is the highest among major stock indices in the world. India's other major stock index Nifty is ranked third in the list. The ratio of current P-

CHART 1 PE multiple has been rising



(News Agencies) The BSE S&P Index fell by 806.47 points to close at 35,169.16 on Thursday. The index has lost 9.6% of its value since 28 August 2018 when it reached an all-time high of 38,896.63. Part of the reason for the fall is adverse developments on the external front such as rising crude prices, fall in

the value of the rupee, and rise in interest rates in developed markets. However, it is also important to ask the question whether the current valuation of the Indian stock market is justifiable? There is no denying the fact that speculation is an important element of stock market movements. However, what

differentiates stock market speculation from an activity such as gambling is the fact that the former is pegged to economic performance of companies whose stocks are being traded. Even if speculation drives share prices up in the short term, a poor economic performance is bound to puncture the euphoria in the long term.

E multiple and average P-E multiple for the last five years for the BSE S&P index and Nifty are the second and third highest in the list. This suggests that India's stock markets have experienced more overheating than most international peers in the

recent period. If the investors took long-term P-E multiples as the benchmark for investing in stock markets, we might be headed for much bigger losses in the near future. To be sure, other factors might change investor behaviour as well.

IL&FS crisis: How the Modi government surprised everyone with takeover

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government also unveiled an investigation into IL&FS's management by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office.



(News Agencies) With the future stability of the Indian financial system on the line, executives running a giant infrastructure lender gathered at the company's glassy, modernist headquarters in Mumbai and hammered out an ambitious restructuring plan last Saturday to manage a \$12.6 billion debt burden after a string of defaults. Except that they weren't really calling the shots any more. The very next day, the government in New Delhi authorized a move to sweep in and seize control of Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Ltd. (IL&FS), a vast conglomerate that's raised billions of dollars in the corporate bond market and powered the nation's public project building boom. The stunning move, more typical of China's command-and-control economy than a

free-wheeling democracy like India, caught investors by surprise. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government also unveiled an investigation into IL&FS's management by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office.

The decision to oust the company's board was taken by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley after the government had quietly reached out, at least two days earlier, to former bureaucrats and current bankers to orchestrate a board coup, according to people familiar with the matter. The government had been monitoring the lender for two weeks, one of the people said.

Following a series of meetings last week, and months after the first defaults by the systemically important lender, the ministry was worried about the multiple shocks to the

financial markets that would follow from IL&FS's collapse.

"The restoration of confidence of the money, debt and capital markets, the banks and financial institutions in the credibility and financial solvency of the IL&FS Group is of utmost importance for the financial stability of capital and financial markets," the government said in a statement Monday.

Systemic Risk

In addition to handpicking a new board of directors, the government is expected to overhaul the management and monitor any future restructuring plan, a process that seems likely to extend well into 2019. The newly

constituted board led by Asia's richest banker, Uday Kotak is likely to meet Thursday. It must devise a plan for the group and file a response to the National Company Law Tribunal, which endorsed the government's move, by Oct. 15. The tribunal will next hear the matter on Oct. 31.

Modi's government concluded it had few options. The economy was already grappling with surging fuel prices and a plunging currency. The last thing the government needed was more turmoil in the debt market, with plans underway to raise a net 2.47 trillion rupees (\$34.7 billion) through March to bridge India's fiscal gap.

Another consideration, and a big one, is that Modi's

Bharatiya Janata Party faces a general election in early 2019. During his four years in power, Modi has tried to cultivate a pro-poor image. That will be tested as the opposition questions IL&FS's loan-fueled expansion. "The government was left with no choice but had to act quickly and decisively," said Mathew Antony, managing partner of Aditya Consulting, an advisory firm based in Mumbai. "The risk from IL&FS's default was spreading to all corners of the market and any indecisiveness would have eroded the political capital of the government further." The troubles at IL&FS had been intensifying since July, when company founder Ravi Parthasarathy stepped down, citing health reasons. Defaults from August within the group rattled India's money markets, added to pressure on corporate bond yields and sparked a sell-off in the stock market. The Reserve Bank of India has initiated a special audit, given the potential systemic

risk to other non-bank lenders. There were also worries about upcoming group debt payments.

Secret Memo

Over the past week, Jaitley had come under pressure to act after receiving formal letters, including one from opposition lawmaker K.V Thomas, raising concerns about operations at IL&FS, according to people familiar with the matter. Jaitley's team on Sunday sent a confidential note to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs recommending that the company court be approached for the "reconstitution" of the IL&FS board. In the secret memo, the finance ministry said it was concerned that just 28 billion rupees of IL&FS securities owned by mutual funds could set off a chain reaction of redemptions by investors. That, in turn, may send sovereign bond yields soaring to 8.5 percent, a level not seen since 2014, and possibly derail the government's borrowing plan, according to the note seen by Bloomberg.



Think your house is clean?

The air quality in your home tells a different story

University of Utah engineers from both the School of Computing and the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering built a series of portable air quality monitors with Wi-Fi and connected them to a university server.

What if you could see the microscopic air pollutants in your home? In a new study, engineers have discovered that visualising how bad air quality is in your home can help mitigate pollution. They conducted a study to determine if homeowners change the way they live if they could visualise the air quality in their house. It turns out, their behaviour changes a lot. Lead author Jason Wiese said, "The idea behind this study was to help people understand

something about this invisible air quality in their home." During the day, the air pollution inside your home can be worse than outside due to activities such as vacuuming, cooking, dusting or running the clothes dryer. The results can cause health problems, especially for the young and elderly with asthma. University of Utah engineers from both the School of Computing and the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering built a series of portable air quality

monitors with Wi-Fi and connected them to a university server.

To help identify when there might be spikes in the air pollution, homeowners were given a voice-activated Google Home speaker so they could tell the server to label a particular moment in time when the air quality was being measured, such as when a person was cooking or vacuuming. Participants also were sent an SMS text message warning

them whenever the indoor air quality changed rapidly. During the study, researchers discovered some interesting trends from their system of sensors, which they called MAAV (Measure Air quality, Annotate data streams, and Visualize real-time PM2.5 levels). Researchers also learned that circumstances that made the air pollution worse differed in each home. Vacuuming in the home, for example, would cause different reactions to the air

quality. They also learned that if homeowners could visualize the air quality in their home, they always stayed on top of labelling and looking at the data. The study involves engineering in collaboration with other University of Utah scientists, including biomedical informatics and clinical asthma researchers. The full findings are present in Proceedings of the ACM on Interactive, Mobile, Wearable and Ubiquitous Tech.

Pop an aspirin to lower risk of ovarian cancer

Taking a low-dose aspirin daily may help women lower their risk of developing ovarian cancer by 23%, suggests a new study.



Taking a low-dose of aspirin daily may help women lower their risk of developing ovarian cancer by 23%, suggests a new study. Ovarian cancer is the most fatal gynaecological cancer, largely due to lack of early detection strategies and is believed that the inflammation that occurs during ovulation plays a role in the development of this cancer. Aspirin is thought to lower cancer risk by reducing inflammation. The findings, led by researchers from H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Centre and Research Institute in the US, showed that low-dose aspirin use was associated with a lower risk of ovarian cancer while standard-dose aspirin use increased the risk, their findings revealed. Conversely, women who took non-aspirin anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen (Advil) or naproxen (Aleve)—

at least 10 tablets per week for many years, had an increased risk of developing the disease. "We're not quite at the stage where we could make the recommendation that daily aspirin use lowers ovarian cancer risk. We need to do more research. But it is definitely something women should discuss with their physician," said Shelley Tworoger, Associate

Centre Director from the varsity. For this study, published in the journal JAMA Oncology, the team analysed data on more than 2,00,000 women among which 1,054 developed ovarian cancer. In addition, researchers looked at the participants' use of aspirin (325 milligrams), low-dose aspirin (100 milligrams or less), non-aspirin NSAIDs and acetaminophen.

Sleep is good for brain health, helps your brain organise memories

Sleep is integral to good health. A new study shows that during your sleep, the brain reactivates memories.



Sleep helps to consolidate memories, as per a new study. Researchers from Ruhr-Universität Bochum and the University of Bonn have investigated the activity patterns that occur in the brain when people remember or forget things. They were interested in how the brain replays and stores during sleep what it had learned

before. The team recorded the brain activity of epilepsy patients who had electrodes implanted into their brain for the purpose of surgical planning. One result: During sleep, the brain even reactivates memory traces that it can no longer remember later on. For the experiment, the test participants were given a

series of pictures to memorise. They then took an afternoon nap. When looking at a picture, the activity in the brain shows a pattern that differs somewhat from picture to picture. The researchers were able to measure these differences in high-frequency activity fluctuations — called gamma band activity. They analysed brain activity not only during the learning task but also during sleep. They then tested which images the participants could remember after sleep and which they could not. The gamma band activity that was typical of certain motifs occurred not only when looking at the images, but also during sleep.

World Smile Day: 5 mood-boosting foods to make you smile

You may think a slice of pizza or a bowl of chips will cheer you up. But the truth is that if you're looking for more sustainable boosts to your emotional well-being, there are better ways to eat yourself happy. There are food items that have been clinically proven to fight depression, lift energy, ease anxiety and generally make you feel good. On World Smile Day, October 5, here are five mood-boosting foods that

can influence your brain in a consistent, positive way and help cheer you up: **Chocolate** There's a very good reason we feel a bit happier after indulging in a piece or two. Chocolate releases mood-elevating chemicals, like theobromine, tyrosine, and tryptophan (serotonin), according to a study in National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI). **Banana** Aside from their many

health benefits, bananas can be eaten to treat PMS (premenstrual syndrome) symptoms or depression. The yellow fruit is high in tryptophan, which converts to serotonin — the mood lifting neurotransmitter — according to a study by the University of Maryland Medical Center. And, can also stabilise blood sugar and help you to relax. **Yoghurt** The probiotics found in yoghurt, aren't just great

for the stomach and immune health. They can also affect your brain functioning, increasing the mood-boosting neurotransmitters, says a study by NCBI **Green tea** Taking a sip of green tea will instantly give you that "ahh" feeling. Its L-theanine (amino acids) properties will help to calm and relax you. It can also help to improve mental fog. So if you're feeling a little low today, it's time to unwind.

Alia Bhatt heads to Kargil with her beauty gang to shoot for Kalank

Alia Bhatt is in Kargil to shoot for a segment of her upcoming movie, Kalank. She shared a picture on

Bollywood actor Alia Bhatt, who recently shot for her Koffee with Karan episode with Deepika Padukone, is heading to Kargil in Ladakh for the next schedule of her upcoming drama Kalank. Taking to Instagram, the 'Shaandaar' star uploaded a snap in which she can be seen posing for a picture with her team in a bus while looking outside the window. She captioned the image, which was posted on her Instagram Story, as "Kargil Calling." Directed by Abhishek Varman, the forthcoming film will star an ensemble cast of Sanjay Dutt, Varun Dhawan, Alia Bhatt, Sonakshi Sinha, Aditya Roy Kapur, and Madhuri Dixit-Nene. The cast of the film had begun shooting for it almost two months back and the flick will hit the theatres on April 19, 2019. The film was actually conceptualised by Johar's late father, Yash, nearly 15 years ago.

If action is not taken on Tanushree Dutta's police complaint, we will approach HC, says her lawyer

Tanushree Dutta's lawyer has said that she had filed a complaint in 2008 as well but police didn't mention anyone's names in it.



Tanushree Dutta on Saturday filed a police complaint against veteran actor Nana Patekar for allegedly sexually harassing her on the sets of a film in 2008, police said. Dutta, in a recent interview alleged that Patekar had misbehaved with her while filming a song for the 2008 film, Horn Ok Pleasss.

She has filed the complaint at the Oshiwara police station against Patekar, choreographer Ganesh Acharya, producer Sameer Siddiqui and director Rakesh Sarang. According to Dutta's advocate Nitin Satpute, the actor will be giving a statement to the police on Sunday. Addressing the media, Satpute said, "We have all evidence of the incident and will move the High Court if proper action is not taken by the police." On being asked why did the actor file a complaint after 10 years,

he said, "Tanushree had tried to lodge an FIR against Nana Patekar, Ganesh Acharya, the director and producer of the movie in 2008 but police made a fool of her by registering a case only against the incident of attack on her vehicle and didn't mention anyone's name. Moreover, she was also in depression due to the harassment that she had undergone. Now that Tanushree has recovered she decided to take action and registered a case against them." In a letter, Dutta said that she lodged her complaint for the registration of FIR under Sections 354, 354 (A), Section 34 and Section 509 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). She further said before shooting the song, which was supposed to be a solo

song picturised only on her, she had clearly mentioned that she will not enact or perform any lewd, vulgar or uncomfortable steps. However, on the fourth day of the shoot, Patekar's behaviour was inappropriate as he was grabbing her by the arms and pushing her around on the pretext of teaching her some steps, the complaint said. "When he was touching me indecently and unnecessarily I felt very uncomfortable because of his behaviour, I felt he has outraged my modesty," the letter read. Dutta even complained to the choreographer, producer and director hoping some action would be taken and everything would be fine. But to her surprise, new steps were introduced by Acharya, which were intimate and included Patekar touching her inappropriately, she alleged. She then called her parents and manager, who questioned Patekar's actions. However, the producer refused to budge and Dutta had no choice but to leave the studio, the complaint said. On the way out, her car was attacked but with the help of the police she managed to escape from the spot, it added.

Kapil Sharma confirms return to TV with The Kapil Sharma Show

Kapil Sharma has tweeted that he will return with his eponymous show soon.

After months of will-he-won't-he, Kapil Sharma has announced his return to the TV screens with The Kapil Sharma Show on Sony TV. The comedian-actor has been missing from public life after a Twitter meltdown and allegations of unprofessional behaviour. Confirming that he has been on



mend, Kapil tweeted, "Jalad wapas aa raha hoon 'The Kapil Sharma Show' lekar aap ke liye sirf @SonyTV par. @TataSky subscribers Sony TV ka mazza without any additional cost lijiye, Abhi call kariye 18002086633 or

e m a i l contact@tatasky.com." It was earlier speculated that Kapil will return with his show in October Kapil, who was went on a Twitter sabbatical after an ugly meltdown in which he targeted media and his former colleagues, has been writing about Son of Manjeet, a Punjabi film that he is presenting. Photos of a fitter and healthier looking comedian have also been doing the rounds on social media.



Crazy Rich Asians movie review

The best Karan Johar movie Karan Johar never made

Henry Golding and Constance Wu star in a modern day fairytale that is a celebration of everything we love about Bollywood. Rating:



Crazy Rich Asians
Director - Jon M Chu
Cast - Constance Wu,
Henry Golding, Michelle
Yeoh, Awkwafina, Gemma
Chan, Ken Jeong
Rating - 3/5

It is said that Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon was an immensely annoying experience for Chinese audiences. Like most crossover hits, it took certain liberties that it hoped Western audiences

would be too stupid to notice. While the film was in Chinese – a generic term whose nuance is understandably lost on most of us – only one of its four leads could actually speak in the Mandarin dialect that director Ang Lee wanted. The rest of its central cast was made up of a Malaysian, a Hong Kong megastar and a Taiwanese up-and-comer. Imagine getting away with

that. In fact, here's an unbelievable bit of trivia for you — Michelle Yeoh, the aforementioned Malay of the lot, learnt all her lines phonetically. It's no wonder then that Lee later lamented, "On the first day I had to do 28 takes just because of the language. That's never happened before in my life." Of all the films that Crazy Rich Asians borrows from narratively - all the romantic

comedies and Disney movies - the one movie it reminded me the most of was Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon - not only because of Michelle Yeoh, but because of what it represents.

Like any film with more than two months of hype fuelling its engines, Crazy Rich Asians arrives in India as if on its last breath, like a travelling circus after an exhausting world tour.

And as I'd feared, it's a disappointingly empty movie, more fun to gawk at than anything else, like window-shopping at one of those high-end malls. Watching its characters flying in first class suites and driving cars more expensive than our homes, Steve Rogers' quip instantly came to mind: "Take away the money, what are you?" Unfortunately for Crazy Rich Asians, it has neither the wit nor the likability of Tony Stark. Instead, as if

channelling Bruce Wayne, it drawls, "I'm rich." And Nick Young, as played by Henry Golding - the Asian Jude Law, if you will - could very well be the Asian Bruce Wayne, too. His girlfriend, Rachel Chu, the film's protagonist, knew that Nick was rich, but she didn't know that he was, in fact, crazy rich.

When the couple is invited to Nick's friend's wedding in Singapore, Rachel is shocked to learn that he is basically a prince. Back home, Nick's a bit of a celebrity, and the entire nation, it seems, is curious to find out more about the girl he's brought along. It's a nifty switcheroo in terms of gender roles - normally in movies, it's guys like Aladdin who fall for the Jasmynes of the world.

Most of the film's conflict - and I use this term very loosely, considering the least privileged person on screen is an economics

professor in NYU - comes from Rachel feeling inadequate when confronted by all the wealth. Her insecurities are stoked by Nick's domineering mother (Michelle Yeoh), who at one point in the film decides that she is an Ekta Kapoor vamp and says to her, "I know this much, you will never be enough." But Crazy Rich Asians' brief foray into soap opera territory is just one of its many connections to India and Indian culture (including the colourful bombast of our films). There is always a strong undercurrent of class in Rachel's interactions with Nick's family. Sometimes this divide is played for laughs, like when she chugs water meant to clean ones hands, but on other occasions, Crazy Rich Asians reveals itself to be more mature than it had initially let on - like Shaandaar with aspirations to be Monsoon Wedding. It positively thrives on

Andhadhun movie review

A terrific game of blind man's bluff. 5 stars

Sriram Raghvan's new thriller pulls off great tricks in plain sight. It will surprise you when you least expect it to.



Andhadhun
Director: Sriram Raghvan
Cast: Ayushmann
Khurrana, Radhika Apte,
Tabu
Rating: 5/5

Everybody knows how a mystery should work. In Andhadhun, even a sweetly officious old lady prodding a policeman at a funeral, urging him to question the widow about a suspicion, has a clear idea of how he should conduct the enquiry. "Casual, casual," she entreats with a hissed

whisper, as if she has done this before and knows better. Or, at the very least, as if she has watched enough films to warn her against the contrary. It has become harder to make mystery movies because audiences have watched too many and, like spoilsport children around a birthday party magician, now make a game out of spotting sleight of hand and loudly predicting the next twist. This is why we need directors who refuse to be

obvious. This phenomenal new thriller from Sriram Raghavan pulls off its tricks in plain sight. Everybody knows how a mystery should work, but Raghavan knows how all the mysteries work. The film's leading man, Akash (Ayushmann Khurrana), wears an old-fashioned watch which allows him to elegantly pop open the glass face — like in a pocket compass — when he needs the time, so he can feel up the hour and minute hands. This is precisely how Sanjeev Kumar told time in the 1986 thriller, Qatl, about a blind man accused of murder. Akash, a piano player, was not born blind but tells us he lost his eyesight when struck by a cricket ball at the age of fourteen, which is, importantly, old enough for him to have been inspired by a rerun. hether Akash is

genuinely blind is not the question — or, at the very least, not the most important of questions. The film plays with the idea of sight, as some people find themselves blindfolded, while others wear masks to try and emulate the sightless 'focus' of which Akash boasts. Who is blinder: the one who can't see or the one who chooses not to? And how does one gesticulate in front of a blind pianist? Simi (Tabu), the woman standing in front of Akash, is annoyed. She is irked first at her husband, for trying to surprise her on their anniversary, and then at this young piano player, who is one of her presents, and finally at herself. She moves her hands first too much, as if overcompensating, then self-consciously too little, and sighs with exasperation as she stares hard at him. All this

while, Akash — like Raghavan — plays on. The tinkling of the grand piano frequently washes over the noiseless actions of this film but seems also to dictate its momentum, like in the classic Tom & Jerry cartoons where elaborate farce was set to orchestral music. This is what gives Raghavan's relentless, absurdly poetic thriller its wings, the fact that we are breathless because of anticipation but also because of having laughed too hard. Andhadhun is a rare treat, a film so compelling that it may universally be considered irresistible. The theatre howled in unison. This is as it should be. We must remember Alfred Hitchcock made funny films. This is a damnably hard film to write about without giving some games away. I can tell you the characters are phenomenal. A policeman,

played by a hilarious Manav Vij, eats sixteen eggs a day "for protein," fears his wife and, despite his beefy body, fibs about terrorist encounters to appear tough. A young girl (a very natural Radhika Apte) is intrigued by the blind hero but direct enough to shun the "invisible tension" of romantic gamesmanship because it gives her pimples. In a volatile role flashes the wondrous Ashwini Kalsekar, so electric in Raghavan's Johnny Gaddar, and Zakir Hussain is great as a doctor who has disconnected his cable TV connection before his son's exams. There is a fictitious actor from the 70s played, in a masterstroke, by 70s actor Anil Dhawan, glimpsed in vintage songs wearing a checkerboard blazer with a florid scarf. Now, he checks YouTube comments and marvels at having admirers as far away as Denmark.

Deepika Padukone on first impression of Ranveer Singh: He's not my type

Deepika Padukone left the audience in shock at the 16th Hindustan Times Leadership Summit when she said that her first impression of rumoured boyfriend Ranveer Singh was, "He's not my type."

Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh shared the story of their first meeting at the 16th Hindustan Times Leadership Summit in New Delhi. After getting the inevitable question about their rumoured wedding out of the way - they dodged the question and said all will be announced in good time - moderator Sonal Kalra asked Deepika about her first impression of Ranveer. Deepika said that she watched Ranveer's

debut film, Band Baja Baarat, and remembers having a conversation about him with her then agent. Deepika's agent was convinced that Ranveer was destined to become a huge star, to which she said, "I'm not so sure." "He's not my type," Deepika remembers saying, to which the audience gasped in shock. But she saved the situation when she spoke about her admiration for him as an actor. "I didn't realise he

was a Bombay boy, he was so flawless in that film. I thought he was from Delhi. It's one of my favourite films of his," she said. Ranveer broke onto the scene with the Yash Raj film, in which he played a young man from Delhi, opposite Anushka Sharma. Deepika remembers meeting Ranveer at a restaurant and asking him, "Oh, wow, you've moved to Bombay?" thinking that he was actually from Delhi. Ranveer chimed in with his

own version of that meeting. He said he was out for a private dinner with his parent when Deepika walked in. He said he excitedly whispered to his parents that she was sitting right behind them - "I was a huge fan of hers" - and told them that he'd introduce himself later. But little did he know that he'd have an allergic reactions to the prawns he'd just eaten. So when he finally got around to



meeting her, he was more preoccupied with hiding his face. "But my one takeaway from that meeting was 'how can anyone look like that'," to which the audience 'awwed'. Deepika and Ranveer have starred in three films directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali - Goliyon Ki Rasleela Ram-Leela, Bajirao Mastani and Padmaavat. Rumours of their November wedding are heating up, even though neither of them has publicly acknowledged their relationship.

"We Made A Big Mistake": AIB On Comic Accused Of Sex Harassment

The AIB accepted as senior members of the fraternity, they should have listened, investigated and taken necessary action

The AIB, comedy collective and former employer of stand-up comic Utsav Chakraborty, who is accused of sexual misconduct by several women, has conceded that the group continued to collaborate with him even after AIB co-founder Tanmay Bhat received "specific, detailed allegations" in a "personal conversation".

The AIB clarified that the private conversation happened after Chakraborty had stopped being their employee, but said they made a "big mistake" and should have cut all ties immediately.

Today, the AIB posted an apology on social media saying "we messed up". Titled "We're sorry", it explained how a confrontation between Tanmay and Utsav led to further harassment for the victim. "By harassment, we meant that Utsav called up the person, cried, apologised, putting her in an uncomfortable position," it said.

However, since the person didn't wish to pursue legal action at that time, "out of respect for the person's privacy, nobody else at AIB was informed". Chakraborty, who has featured in numerous videos of the AIB, has been accused of sexual harassment on social media by multiple women. The comedian allegedly sent unsolicited photographs of his genitals to women -- and girls. The allegations surfaced as part of a Twitter thread about the appalling behaviour of a large group of Indian men on a cruise in Australia last month. While responding to allegations, Chakraborty said "this whole thing needs patience" and "incredible amount of context".

Varun Dhawan from the sets of Salman Khan's Bharat, courtesy Atul Agnihotri

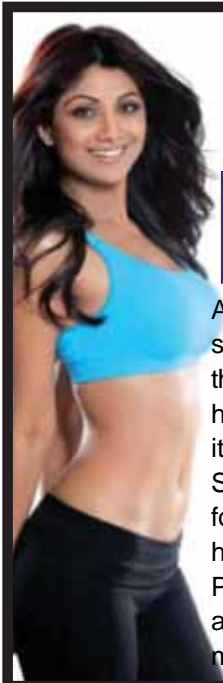
Varun Dhawan is reportedly doing a cameo in Salman Khan's Bharat and shot for the film in Abu Dhabi.

Co-producer of Salman Khan's upcoming film Bharat, Atul Agnihotri, thanked Mumbai actor Varun Dhawan for his cameo in the upcoming romantic thriller. Taking to Instagram, Agnihotri shared a photo of Varun and himself, and thanked the Judwaa 2 actor for his love and support, writing, "#Bharat thanks you for your love and support @varundvn @bharat_thefilm." The cast had recently wrapped up the

Abu Dhabi schedule of the film after shooting in Malta and Mumbai earlier. Bharat is Ali Abbas Zafar's third collaboration with Salman after the 2016 film Sultan and the recent, Tiger Zinda Hai. The Dabangg star will be seen sporting five different looks spanning over 60 years, including a crucial part which will showcase the actor in his late 20s, looking much leaner and younger. After Priyanka Chopra decided to walk out



of the film, Katrina Kaif was roped in to play the female lead opposite the 'Wanted' star. The film, which is slated to hit the big screens on June 5, next year, also stars Tabu and Disha Patani in pivotal roles.



Shilpa Shetty believes India needs a #YouToo for men as they are at fault

Shilpa Shetty, Malaika Arora and Pulkit Samrat have reacted to the wave of #MeToo movement finally hitting the Indian shores.

Actor Shilpa Shetty on Sunday said it is time women spoke about their harassment but not under the hashtag 'MeToo' but 'YouToo' as it is the men who are at fault. Shilpa applauded Tanushree Dutta for speaking up about the alleged harassment she faced from Nana Patekar on a film's set ten years ago and said it has kick-started a movement. "In any milieu, actors,

entrepreneurs, the working environment should feel safe. That should be a prerequisite. This entire movement which has been initiated by Tanushree Dutta, my heart goes out to her, as a woman and on a human level because something like this was brushed under the carpet," Shilpa told PTI. Shilpa said women should not feel weak or blame themselves and

should rather be strong today. "We don't know the nitty-gritties of the goings on but it has kick-started a movement. People have suffered. It's time women wake up and take charge. It shouldn't be hashtag MeToo, it should be YouToo, for the men. It's shouldn't be the women, cowering down and saying oh #MeToo," she added.

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