There is something disarming about Maria Sharapova, something at odds with her ready smile and glamorous attire. And that something in her lifted her on Monday, 22 August 2005 to the world number one position in women’s tennis. All this happened in almost no time. Poised beyond her years, the Siberian born teenager took just four years as a professional to reach the pinnacle. However, the rapid ascent in a fiercely competitive world began nine years before with a level of sacrifice few children would be prepared to endure. Little Maria had not yet celebrated her tenth birthday when she was packed off to train in the United States. That trip to Florida with her father Yuri launched her on the path to success and stardom. But it also required a heart-wrenching two-year separation from her mother Yelena. The latter was compelled to stay back in Siberia because of visa restrictions. The nine-year-old girl had already learnt an important lesson in life- that tennis excellence would only come at a price. “I used to be so lonely,” Maria Sharapova recalls. “I missed my mother terribly. My father was working as much as he could to keep my tennis-training going. So, he couldn’t see me either”. “Because I was so young, I used to go to bed at 8 p.m. The other tennis pupils would come in at 11 p.m. and wake me up and order me to tidy up the room and clean it.” “Instead of letting that depress me, I became more quietly determined and mentally tough. I learnt how to take care of myself. I never thought of quitting because I knew what I wanted. When you come from nothing and you have nothing, then it makes you very hungry and determined. I would have put up with much more humiliation and insults than that to steadfastly pursue my dream.”

Tf-idf stands for term frequency-inverse document frequency, and the tf-idf weight is a weight often used in information retrieval and text mining. This weight is a statistical measure used to evaluate how important a word is to a document in a collection or corpus. The importance increases proportionally to the number of times a word appears in the document but is offset by the frequency of the word in the corpus. Variations of the tf-idf weighting scheme are often used by search engines as a central tool in scoring and ranking a document's relevance given a user query. One of the simplest ranking functions is computed by summing the tf-idf for each query term; many more sophisticated ranking functions are variants of this simple model.Tf-idf can be successfully used for stop-words filtering in various subject fields including text summarization and classification.

The narrator comes upon a fork in the road while walking through a yellow wood. He considers both paths and concludes that each one is equally well-traveled and appealing. After choosing one of the roads, the narrator tells himself that he will come back to this fork one day in order to try the other road. However, he realizes that it is unlikely that he will ever have the opportunity to come back to this specific point in time because his choice of path will simply lead to other forks in the road (and other decisions). The narrator ends on a nostalgic note, wondering how different things would have been had he chosen the other path. Since its publication, many readers have analyzed the poem as a nostalgic commentary on life choices. The narrator decided to seize the day and express himself as an individual by choosing the road that was less traveled by. As a result of this decision, the narrator claims, his life was fundamentally different that it would have been had he chosen the more well-traveled path. This reading of the poem is extremely popular because every reader can empathize with the narrator’s decision: having to choose between two paths without having any knowledge of where each road will lead. Moreover, the narrator’s decision to choose the less traveled path demonstrates his courage. Rather than taking the safe path that others have traveled, the narrator prefers to make his own way in the world. However, when we look closer at the text of the poem, it becomes clear that such an idealistic analysis is largely inaccurate. The narrator only distinguishes the paths from one another after he has already selected one and traveled many years through life. When he first comes upon the fork in the road, the paths are described as being fundamentally identical. In terms of beauty, both paths are equally fair and the overall …passing there had worn them really about the same. It is only as an old man that the narrator looks back on his life and decides to place such importance on this particular decision in his life. During the first three stanzas, the narrator shows no sense of remorse for his decision nor any acknowledgement that such a decision might be important to his life. Yet, as an old man, the narrator attempts to give a sense of order to his past and perhaps explain why certain things happened to him. Of course, the excuse that he took the road less traveled by is false, but the narrator still clings to this decision as a defining moment of his life, not only because of the path that he chose but because he had to make a choice in the first place.

Do you remember your first day at school? Even though it was close to 20 years ago, I still remember the emotional wrench I felt when my Mum dropped me off, the smell of new books in the classroom, the weight of my new schoolbag and the jigsaw puzzle I played with before all the other children arrived. The reason I remember this experience so vividly, but can’t remember what I did at 3pm last Wednesday afternoon is because of the intense emotional and sensory nature of the experience, which scientists call episodic or biographical memory. So what does my first day at school have to do with learning? The brain retains information that it believes is vital for our survival and the richer and more intense an experience is, the more likely we are to remember it. This doesn’t just help us to retain information, it also helps us to draw links between ideas and deepen our understanding of them. This process of creating additional layers of meaning is defined by cognitive scientists as elaboration and creates mental cues for later recall and application. This method can be used in a variety of situations, from learning to play a piece of music to memorising lines for a play. For instance, when learning lines, it’s useful for an actor to feel the emotion of the words, to imagine what facial expression corresponds to a situation and to use his body to reflect what he’s saying. Similarly, a pianist might visualise the score of the piece she’s playing and imagine writing a note to her self in the margin to go up or down an octave. Elaboration can be broken down into two main components – visceralisation and the use of analogies. Visceralisation is the process of creating an intense sensory and emotional experience to retain new knowledge – attempting to recreate the conditions that made the first day of school so memorable. For example, to remember the principle of conduction in physics, imagine the way that your hands are warmed when holding a hot cup of coffee – imagine the liquid sloshing around in your favourite mug, and the smell of your favourite dark roast filling your nostrils. Using analogies is the process of linking one idea to another, in order to get a better grasp of it and increase our understanding. For instance in the The Lean Startup Eric Ries links the process of building a business to the process of driving a car, which allows the reader to create mental hooks and relate his ideas to something familiar. The effective use of analogies is one of the reasons I think this book has become so popular in the startup community and beyond.

"""The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill 2017, which is set to be tabled in Parliament today, is riddled with so many internal contradictions that one is left wondering what purpose it would serve. The stated intent of the Bill is “to protect the rights of married Muslim women and to prohibit divorce by pronouncing talaq by their husbands”. Talaq here is defined as “talaq-e-biddat or any other similar form of talaq having the effect of instantaneous and irrevocable divorce”. The draft law goes on to declare, in Sections 3, 4 and 7, that the “pronouncement” of talaq-e-biddat by a person upon his wife in any form whatsoever “shall be void and illegal”, and whoever “pronounces” such a talaq “shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and fine”, and the offence would be “cognizable and non-bailable”. This amounts to a gross misreading of the August 2017 Supreme Court judgment which neutralised the legal effect of instant talaq and rendered it bad in law. In other words, the pronouncement of talaq-e-biddat does not dissolve the marriage, and this is the law of the land under Article 141. But the proposed Bill presumes that the “pronouncement” of talaq-e-biddat can instantaneously and irrevocably dissolve the marriage, and proceeds to “void” it in Section 3. Nonetheless, this begs the question of how after rendering talaq-e-biddat inoperative in Section 3, its nugatory pronouncement can be considered a cognisable and non-bailable offence in Sections 4 and 7. Can a law criminalise an act after conceding that it does not result in a crime? However, the most glaring internal contradiction is found in Sections 5 and 6 which discuss post-divorce issues such as a “subsistence allowance” for the woman upon whom instant talaq “is pronounced” and the “custody of her minor children” as if her marriage is dissolved by the mere pronouncement of talaq-e-biddat. How could the authors of this Bill talk of post-divorce matters ignoring the fact that the pronouncement (instant talaq) has already been voided in Section 3 and cannot result in a divorce? With so many inconsistent provisions, the only option before the Centre is to withdraw the Bill immediately. Instead, in its place, it may consider something similar to Sections 7(1), (3), (4) and (5) of Pakistan’s Muslim Family LawsOrdinance, 1961 (http://bit.ly/2Cf7fz8). According to these clauses, ‘any man who wishes to divorce his wife shall, after the pronouncement of talaq in any form whatsoever, give the chairman of the state-appointed Union Council notice in writing of his having done so, with a copy submitted to the wife. Within 30 days of receipt of notice, the chairman should constitute an arbitration council that comprises himself and a representative of each of the parties, for the purpose of bringing about a reconciliation between the parties. And talaq shall not be effective until the expiration of 90 days from the day on which notice is delivered to the chairman. If the wife is pregnant at the time of the pronouncement, talaq shall not be effective until the termination of her pregnancy’. It may be noted here that the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance does prescribe, in Section 7(2), a simple imprisonment of one year. But this is not for the mere “pronouncement” of talaq, as envisaged in the Centre’s draft law. The husband will incur this punishment only when he pronounces talaq with an intention to divorce but fails to inform the chairman and the wife (in writing) about his pronouncement. As is obvious even in Pakistan, the mere pronouncement of talaq-e-biddat neither dissolves the marriage nor is it a cognisable offence. This was proved beyond doubt in the interesting case of Tahira Naseer, a Pakistani citizen, decided by the ‘Court of Appeals of Virginia’, in August 2012 (http://bit.ly/2Dlympk). According to court records, Tahira was divorced by her husband, Nasir Mehmood Khan, through talaq-e-biddat, without any written intimation to the chairman of the Union Council. The background to this case is as follows. In August 2000, Tahira married Nasir in Pakistan. Within a year, he told her three times that ‘he had divorced her pursuant to Islamic law’. Believing that she was divorced, she returned to her parental home and broke off all contact with Nasir, considering him to be her former husband. Then, in 2003, she married Hamid Mughal, who was a U.S. resident, in Pakistan, with another marriage ceremony, being held the next year in Fairfax County, Virginia, U.S. But this marriage too did not last long, and in November 2009, ended in them getting separated. While waiting to seek a legal divorce in Virginia, Hamid discovered that Tahira had been married earlier and not obtained a legal divorce in Pakistan. He sought annulment of the marriage on grounds of bigamy which was granted by a U.S. trial court on the testimony of Ellahi, a Pakistani lawyer brought in by Hamid as an expert witness. Tahira appealed against the verdict. But the Court of Appeals of Virginia rejected her arguments saying that the trial court was right in accepting Ellahi’s testimony to arrive at its decision and to treat her first marriage as legally intact because, as a Pakistani lawyer, Ellahi was a “better qualified expert” to interpret the Pakistani law than Tahira’s own witness who was not a lawyer. Ellahi had testified that ‘in order to be divorced in Pakistan, a person had to obtain a legal divorce, not just a religious one’. These facts and arguments make it clear that the Centre has no legal basis to justify the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill 2017. It negates the recent Supreme Court ruling by unwittingly favouring the All India Muslim Personal Law Board’s medieval view that the pronouncement of talaq-e-biddat breaks the marriage, and, therefore, needs to criminalised."""

Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan said last week that petroleum products should be included under the goods and services tax (GST). That should help consumers pay a rational price at a time when diesel and petrol prices are touching multi-year highs. This makes sense. Even if petrol and diesel are taxed at the highest GST slab of 28%, it would be lower than taxes already being paid and result in lower retail prices, helping consumers. Also, those industries which might be using them as inputs could claim input tax credit if these are bought under GST. Cast your eyes on Chart 1 below. CARE Ratings assumes that instead of an effective tax rate of 100% on petrol and 66% on diesel, GST of 90% and 80% are applied on petrol and 60% and 53% on diesel. That’s a 10 and 20 percentage points reduction in the current effective tax rates for both products. It is also assumed to be equally distributed between the centre and states. “Assuming the price charged to the dealers, the exchange rate and dealer commission to be constant, there would be a decline in the retail prices by approximately 5-10% in petrol and 4-8% in diesel based on these two scenarios,” said CARE Ratings in a note on 4 April. But the road ahead may not be so easy. Problem is, state governments derive a lion’s share of revenues from sale of these fuels and bringing them under the GST ambit would mean a sharp decline in revenue, which then will have to be compensated. In an ideal situation, petrol and diesel should be brought under the GST net, says Upasna Bhardwaj, senior economist at Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd, adding, “Getting the states’ consensus on this would be a key challenge given the amount of revenues they will have to forego.” Chart 2 shows the government’s tax revenue earned on crude oil and petroleum products in the last four years. CARE Ratings says that during fiscal year 2017, 89% of the total came from excise duties and the balance from crude oil cess and customs. Similarly, for the states, 88% of the total came from state VAT (value-added tax) levied on petroleum, and oil and lubricants products, and the balance from royalties, crude oil cess, octroi and duties. In the developed countries, largely in addition to excise taxes/federal duties, GST is also levied on gasoline (petrol/diesel), pointed out Anita Rastogi, partner (indirect taxes) at PwC India. “So India could also explore the possibility where the VAT continues (being a state levy) and instead of central excise, GST is charged,” she said. This will help because, according to Rastogi, states will continue to get their VAT revenue and a GST levy (instead of excise duty) will enable the businesses to get input tax credit. The current high petrol and diesel prices come at a time when overall revenue collections from GST have been erratic. Taking an excise duty cut now will add further pressure on government revenues. A Rs2 a litre excise cut in petrol and diesel in October meant revenue loss of about Rs26,000 crore in a full year to the government. When crude oil prices started falling in 2014, the current government retained a large part of those benefits by raising excise duties, thereby improving its own finances. Increasing fuel product taxes is an easy way for the government to raise money to meet its expenditure. Some tax experts and economists reckon that since an impact on revenues is inevitable if there’s an excise duty cut, the government should seriously contemplate including petrol and diesel under the ambit of GST. But as mentioned earlier, this is no easy road to tread. It’s worth noting that crude oil prices are on a firm footing and that should reflect in local prices. “With crude oil price increasing, the choice is between lowering the tax rate or increasing subsidy,” says CARE Ratings. Lastly, the government will also have to keep the forthcoming elections in mind and understand that lower fuel prices do fetch brownie points.