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The Rise of Kamala Harris

Kamala Harris Is Joe Biden's Pick For US Vice Presidential Candidate. Why & How Kamala Harris won the VP contest.



Ram Janmabhoomi celebrations at Times Square New York

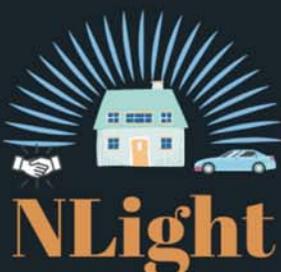


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FIA Hosts Community Reception to Welcome New Consul General of India in New York



(By our staff Reporter) New Jersey: The Federation of Indian Association of NY, NJ, CT (FIA Tristate) hosted a welcome reception on Aug. 7, 2020 for Randhir Kumar Jaiswal, the newly-appointed Consul General of India in New York, at the Royal Albert's Palace in Fords, New Jersey.

It was an intimate affair due to New Jersey state and local restrictions and regulations on gatherings. Guests were checked in by FIA volunteers, led by Smita Miki Patel, after which their temperature was checked, prior to entering the reception venue. Each guest was handed a complementary face covering as well. FIA leadership, prominent members of the Indian American community and members of the press attended the event. Guests networked and mingled with each other, observing social distancing guidelines.

Andy Bhatia, member of the FIA Board of Trustees, compared the evening. FIA leaders including President Anil Bansal, Chairman Ankur Vaidya, senior advisors Padmashri Dr. Sudhir S. Parikh and Padmashri Dr. H. R. Shah, among others, welcomed Consul General Jaiswal and Deputy Consul General Shatrughan Sinha. Dr. V. K. Raju, founder and president of the Eye Foundation of America, spoke eloquently about the importance of vision and



plays in restoring vision for the underprivileged community in India and around the world.

Mahesh Bhagia, chairman of the Edison Democratic Party, delivered a Proclamation from the State Assembly to Consul General Jaiswal.

Dipak Patel, FIA Board of Trustees, introduced the Consul General. Prior to being appointed the Consul General of India in New York, Jaiswal was the Joint Secretary cum Social Secretary to the President of India Ramnath Kovind. A 1998 Indian Foreign Service officer, Jaiswal headed the foreign affairs office of the Rashtrapati Bhavan and advised the President on India's foreign policy. Prior to that he served as the Consul General of India in Johannesburg in South Africa.

In his address, Consul General Jaiswal thanked the FIA for a warm welcome, and acknowledged the

the role his organization contributions made by the world." Consul General Jaiswal noted that the Indian American story is that of "peace and progress," as well as a story of "sharing and caring for others." And that, he said, is what defines the community and has also become its identity. He urged the community to keep playing a pivotal role in "strengthening the friendship between the U.S. and India, which is

community in various fields. "The Indian story all over the world is very engrossing, very deep" he said. "I is a story that carries a message of peace and harmony." Consul General Jaiswal lauded the FIA for putting a stamp on New York City with its flagship India Day Parade "which has become iconic, not just in New York and in this country, but all over the

going to be a defining energy." He said the pathway of the century." Consul General of India in New York is "looking forward to the Indian American community "will have a stronger imprint of our strength, of our hard work, of our identity, culture, color, and vibrancy, in this country and everywhere else.

He said he seemed the community's support and wishes, as he "carries out his responsibilities as a representative of the Government of India." The Consulate will "have an engaging relationship with the FIA," he said, and added that during this time of the pandemic "we have to see how to hold each other's hands and see how best we can help each other." He said he looks forward to interacting with the Indian American community which is full of "great ideas and great

energy." He said the pathway of the century." Consul General of India in New York is "looking forward to the Indian American community "will have a stronger imprint of our strength, of our hard work, of our identity, culture, color, and vibrancy, in this country and everywhere else.

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Happy Independence Day

15TH AUGUST

What has set America and Americans apart and on a pedestal – President Ronald Reagan called us “ (t)hat Shining City on the Hill” – is not that humanity is anymore “perfect” on our soil than on another nation’s, but our founding documents- created by our exceptional Founders all, be they Thomas Jefferson or James Madison or Ben Franklin to name a few- knew of humanity’s destroyed “control” by any one. Thus, our Declaration of Independence was born July 4, 1776, and American Exceptionalism was cemented in our cherished Constitution. As Ben Franklin answered gingerly in 1787; “(W)e are a Republic Madam, if you can keep it.” And, we

have! And, I am happy to note that India – after borrowing from our Declaration and Constitution – also has! America is the oldest democracy and a nation of laws, and

India is the largest democracy and also a nation of laws – be it Art. 370, CAA or NRC. The every Indian in secular India – at a DNA-level – believes in the rule of law, freedom or religion, human rights in the core bond between our nations. Just as Law & Order is demanded now, thanks to criminal-looters on our American streets, it is even more in demand in India as she is buffeted by cross-border terror. Indian in India paid the bill for the American Revolution: Indian Tea starred in the birthing of the American Revolution in 1773 Boston Harbor; and painfully, when Lord Cornwallis lost to General George Washington, King George send him to India as Viceroy – where upon arrival he ordered the killing of 5000 Indian men, Women and Children – General Reginald Dyer’s infamous massacre at Jallianwala Bagh cemented the thirst for Freedom in India. Enjoy the Freedom - defend the freedom as freedom in never freely given just behold the martyrs of Indian Indepence...who gave their lives so their progeny may breathe freely

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Ram Janmabhoomi celebrations at Times Square New York

(By our staff reporter) Times Square, New York:

On the occasion of the foundation laying ceremony of Ram Temple in Ayodhya, a large number of jubilant Indian Americans celebrated the occasion at Times Square of New York. The event, was organized and led by Jagdish Sewhani of Indian American Public Affairs Committee. Mr Sewhani in his speech said, " My Dear Ram Bhaktas, Present here at this iconic Times Square despite coronavirus pandemic, and to all those who are watching it LIVE on Facebook, television sets and other

social media platforms across the world, particularly in Bharat. JAI SHRI RAM. Today is the day of celebration and not speeches, As you all know, we have all gathered here to celebrate the foundation laying ceremony of Ram Temple in Ayodhya by our popular Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. About him, I will only say this "Modi hai to Mumkin Hai." " Ram Temple in Ayodhya was something that has been a dream for we Indians and Hindus for centuries. We, at least I, never thought that we would be able to realize this dream in our life time.

Today this has become a reality. Friends, The Ram Mandir "Bhoomi Poojan samaroh" in Ayodhya is not simply the foundation of a brick and mortar building. I believe It is the foundation stone of a "Sarva ShaktiMan Baharat", It is the foundations of Ram Rajya Bharat, It is the foundation store to make Bharat the "Vishwa Guru", which believes in "Vashudhaib Kutumbkam" and treats entire world as one family. And as such, as hundreds of "karigars" and workers begin constructing this magnificent temple brick by brick, Let's PLEDGE today

that we will work tirelessly to make Bharat a country of our dreams, which I mentioned just now. JAI SHRI RAM. BHARAT MATA KI JAI." Others who spoke at the event were H R Shah of TV Asia, Saumitraj Gokhale, Kamal Gupta, Jaswinder Singh Multani, Satvinder Singh, Kulbir Singh, Amba Sharma, Dr Dipak Nandi, Sanjiv Chand. Times Square was for those moments seems to have turned a scene from Ayodhya, atmosphere was filled with Chanting of Ram, Ram Bhaktas were Dancing and Singing Devotional Song. Overall it was a unique historic event at iconic Times Square.



“Net King’s Call” Kickstarter launching today

The Turn-Based Strategy/Real-Time Action game’s Kickstarter is live.

(By our staff reporter) New York: Greystone Games is pleased to announce the launch of the Kickstarter for its flagship game “Net King’s Call”: The Turn-Based Strategy/Real-Time Battle hybrid game is scheduled for a PC Steam Early Access release in the fourth quarter of 2020.



Set in a future where the internet is its own separate world from our own, Net King’s Call has players on a quest to become the rightful ruler of this digital world. Net King’s Call is the anticipated game that will break the norms of the strategy genre. In a sea of the same old strategy games, Net King’s Call will be a breath of fresh air the armchair generals desperately need. Beginning development at the start of 2019, Net King’s Call was created to test how a strategy game could be adapted for a more active audience.

Key Features:

Unique Blend of Gameplay: Players will build an empire and take control over all aspects of it, from management, to army movement, down to individual combat! This blend of classic turn-based strategy and real-time battle will definitely keep players on their toes. **Endless Fun:** Procedurally generated maps &

rivals ensure that no two battles are the same. Players will need to come prepared for a wide variety of encounters on numerous battlefields. Rich Character Driven Narrative: Focused on a group of young individuals looking to re-establish peace in a broken digital age. Each coming into conflict with one another on how it should be done. “Strategy games have always had a special place in my game library, and I have to say it’s quite rewarding to develop one with such a unique spin and premise. Hopefully with our kickstarter success, we can invest more resources, and really create something memorable for the genre.” - says Anthony Woo, Director of Digital Development - Greystone Games. Greystone Games was originally founded by

two college students in Long Island, New York. Over the years the team has expanded to over ten college grads, all with a single minded focus of

launching our own in-house titles. “We started with a dream, to challenge the current game industry, just a rag-tag team of friends working

towards that same goal, now we have potential investors clamoring for us to let them in.” - says Max Thind, Co-Founder - Greystone Games.

Wishing Happy Indian Independence Day 15th August to all.

Indian Independence Day is celebrated annually on 15 August as a national holiday in India commemorating the nation’s independence from the United Kingdom on 15 August 1947, the day when the provisions of the Indian Independence Act 1947, which transferred legislative sovereignty to the Indian Constituent Assembly, came into effect. India retained King George VI as head of state until its transition to a full republic, when the nation adopted the Constitution of India on 26 January 1950 (celebrated as Indian Republic Day) and replaced the dominion prefix, Dominion of India, with the enactment of the sovereign law Constitution of India. India attained independence following the Independence Movement noted for largely non-violent resistance and civil disobedience. Independence Day is observed throughout India with flag-hoisting ceremonies, parades and cultural events.

INSIDER
Voice of South Asian Community SINCE MARCH 2007

FIA to Make History by Hoisting the Indian Tricolor to Celebrate India’s 74th Independence Day at Times Square

SALUTING OUR HEROES
THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING
INDIAN TRICOLORS LAMP LIGHTING CEREMONY
FRI. AUG. 14TH, 2020. EVENING

DAY-1 DAY-2
FLAG HOISTING AT TIMES SQUARE
SAT. AUG. 15TH, 2020
TIME: 9:30 AM

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The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) of the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut (FIA Tristate), will be creating history on August 15, 2020 by hosting the first ever flag hoisting ceremony at Times Square in New York City, to commemorate India’s 74th Independence Day. It will be the first time ever that India’s tricolor will be unfurled at the iconic venue in all its glory. Consul General of India

in New York, Randhir Jaiswal, will be the Guest of Honor at the prestigious event. This year’s Independence Day will mark a new chapter in FIA’s history, as two iconic venues in Manhattan will come alive to celebrate India’s Independence Day. Along with the first ever celebrations on Times Square, the FIA, in continuing with its annual tradition, will be illuminating the Empire State Building in tricolors - orange, white and green - to mark India’s Independence Day. This year’s lighting ceremony will be held on August 14. The Times Square flag hoisting ceremony is a testament to the Indian American community’s growing patriotism and is a fitting tribute to the FIA which is celebrating its golden jubilee year. Established in 1970, FIA of the largest esteemed umbrella organizations in the Indian community.

IDP USA INDIA DAY PARADE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 2020 AT 4PM
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STARTS FROM PATEL BROTHERS HICKSVILLE & ENDS AT BADSHAH FARMERS MARKET HICKSVILLE
PRESIDENT MUKESH MODI & TEAM INVITES ALL
TO BRING CULTURE AND COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE INDIA’S INDEPENDENCE DAY

DR. RAJ BHAYANI
GRAND MARSHALL

HON. SHATRUGHNA SINHA
DEPUTY CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA
GUEST OF HONOR

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COVID-19

WEAR MASK SOCIAL DISTANCE

IDP PARADE ROUTE AUG. 15, 2020

STARTS FROM PATEL BROTHERS THEN PASS ALPHA BAZAR PASS ASHRAFI HINDU TEMPLE END AT BADSHAH FARMERS MARKET

Our Parade Can Be Seen Live On Youtube Please Visit > www.idpusa.org

SC reserves verdict in Rhea Chakraborty's transfer plea

The arguments and counter arguments were made before a single-judge bench of justice Hrishikesh Roy, who is hearing the transfer petition filed by Chakraborty seeking transfer from Patna to Mumbai of the case registered against her in connection with Rajput's death.

(News Agencies)- Mumbai Police is not investigating the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput and no FIR has been registered by them, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Bihar government told the Supreme Court on Friday, even as Maharashtra government and actor Rhea Chakraborty maintained that Bihar has "absolutely no jurisdiction" to interfere with the case which, they said, was being used by Bihar government to garner political mileage.

The arguments and counter arguments were made before a single-judge bench of justice Hrishikesh Roy, who is hearing the transfer petition filed by Chakraborty seeking transfer from Patna to Mumbai of the case registered against her in connection with Rajput's death.

"FIR was registered by Bihar Police based on an incident which has no

connection with Patna. I have apprehension of bias and fear that state interference led to Bihar police registering case. Patna police has absolutely no jurisdiction to register a case. This case is being used for political gains," senior counsel Shyam Divan submitted on behalf of Chakraborty.

Divan also took exception to the media sensationalising the case, stating: "Parallel media trial is happening which is highly undesirable. Having regard to the political impact, case should be transferred to Maharashtra." Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for CBI, submitted that the exercise being undertaken by the Mumbai Police cannot be termed as "investigation" under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

"Mumbai police has registered an accidental death report under Section

174 of CrPC. Investigation as per CrPC was going on in Bihar and there is no such Investigation in Mumbai," he said.

Section 174 of CrPC confers powers on police to enquire into suicide deaths and submit a report of the same to the District Magistrate. Mehta contended that it will not amount to an "investigation", which can happen only under Section 156 of CrPC, which empowers police to probe into offences. "Investigation cannot be done under Section 174 CrPC. It can happen under Section 156 of CrPC, an FIR has to be registered under section 154 of CrPC," Mehta said, advocating a CBI probe into the death. The Bihar government, through senior counsel Maninder Singh, echoed the same view, stating that only Bihar has registered an FIR in the case. "There is a complete

lapse of investigation on part of Mumbai police. Bihar's FIR is the only FIR in the matter. Allegation is against political class in Maharashtra which has stopped even registering of FIR," Singh submitted.

Senior counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing the Maharashtra government, opposed this. Allowing Bihar Police to probe an incident which happened in Mumbai will be against the principles of federalism since law-and-order falls within the domain of a state where the cause of action arose, he said.

"Murder of the CrPc is being attempted in this case where jurisdiction is a casualty. If this is allowed, it will be a fundamental assault on federalism. I have not seen so much sensationalism attached to a transfer petition. And in that, truth and law have become casualties," Singhvi argued. The court



reserved its verdict after a hearing which lasted for nearly two-and-a-half hours. Rajput was found dead in his apartment in Mumbai's Bandra on June 14. The Mumbai Police found the cause of death as "asphyxia due to hanging", and filed an accidental death report (ADR) but is yet to register an FIR in relation to the incident. Chakraborty, who lived with Rajput for a year till she shifted to her house on June 8, was also questioned by Mumbai Police. The investigation by Mumbai Police was ongoing

when Rajput's father, KK Singh, filed a police complaint at Rajeev Nagar police station in Patna on July 25 against Chakraborty, accusing her of abetting his son's alleged suicide. His father also alleged that Chakraborty illegally transferred Rs 15 crore from Rajput's bank account and mentally harassed him. Patna police registered an FIR on July 25 based on Singh's complaint for offences relating to abetment of suicide, cheating and criminal intimidation.

Is economy recovering with easing of lockdown or sinking?



There is also the question of whether the recovery is merely sequential - current month over previous month - or strong enough to prevent an annual contraction from the second quarter onwards. We will (hopefully) have GDP statistics for the April-June quarter by the end of this month. There is complete unanimity that the June quarter will see an economic contraction vis-a-vis last year. India was

under a strict lockdown for most of this period (two of the three months, with lockdowns continuing for longer in some parts of the country). The real question is what has happened to economic activity from July onwards. Is it recovering with the easing of lockdown restrictions? Has it plateaued with cases still rising and the imposition of intermittent lockdowns? Or has it become worse? There is also the question of

whether the recovery is merely sequential - current month over previous month - or strong enough to prevent an annual contraction from the second quarter onwards.

Most high frequency indicators suggest a sequential recovery until June, with a flattening in July. The latest Consumer Confidence Survey (CCS) of the Reserve Bank of India - it was conducted in the first half of July - paints a poor picture.

It shows that people believe that the economic situation was much worse in July than in May when compared to year-ago levels. This suggests that India's GDP might remain in contraction mode in the September quarter, something RBI's Monetary Policy Committee has

hinted at and which, a recent Reuters poll of economists seconded. The CCS also suggests that some key high frequency indicators might not be capturing the actual magnitude of distress.

The net current perception - difference between share of respondents who believe the situation has improved and deteriorated -- on general economic situation, compared to a year ago, reached its lowest level in the July CCS. To give an idea about the extent of fall, these numbers were -60 and -65.9 in the May and July rounds of the CCS. The previous low was -36.9 in September 2013.

A comparison of current perception on general economic situation in the CCS along with quarterly GDP figures shows that

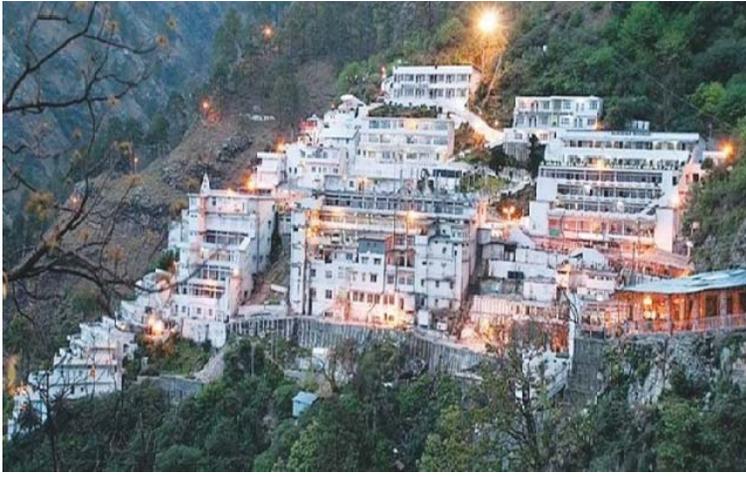
they have pretty much moved in tandem. This suggests that there is a high probability that the unprecedented collapse in May and July CCS might reflect in GDP numbers as well.

The CCS also records response on the employment situation. Here also, the current perception compared to a year ago has collapsed. Interestingly, the CCS response on employment does not seem to be in sync with the only monthly indicator of unemployment rates available in India, which are collected by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). While CMIE's unemployment rate data showed a spike in May 2020, when the country was under an almost complete lockdown, it has

come back to pre-lockdown levels in July. Because the CCS is conducted in 13 cities in India, we have compared urban unemployment from the CMIE. To be sure, CMIE's employment indicators are far from sacrosanct and show divergence with the figures published by the Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS), which are India's official source of employment data. The differences between CMIE and PLFS employment indicators were discussed in detail in a Mint story by Sriharsha Devulapalli and Pramit Bhattacharya.

Also, the divergence between CMIE unemployment rates and CCS perception on employment existed even before the pandemic.

Vaishno Devi: 5000 devotees including 500 from outside J-K to be allowed daily



The pilgrimage was stopped on March 18 earlier this year.

overcrowding, considered conducive to the spread of Covid-19 infection. The administration had earlier said that it may not allow outsiders to visit the popular shrine initially due to the fear that the move may cause further spread of the contagion in the region. However, the SOPs mandate that all visitors have Aarogya Setu App mandatorily installed on their smartphones. The operating procedures mentioned by the authorities also bars touching of statues, idols or holy books during the visits. The reopening of Vaishno Devi Shrine comes more than two months after the Centre gave the

nod to re-open places of worship/religious places from June 8. The Jammu and Kashmir administration had decided to put the reopening on hold due to the rising number of Covid cases in the territory. The pilgrimage was suspended on March 18. The decision to reopen religious places of worship was taken earlier this month on August 4. The administration, however, made it clear that religious processions and large religious gatherings will remain strictly prohibited. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, which manages the holy shrine and the pilgrimage, however, has done all

the spade work for the reopening with sanitisation drives on the twin tracks, sanctum sanctorum and in the Katra town. Circles have also been marked outside the token counter, at the Bhawan and two helipads at Katra and Sanji Chhat to ensure social distancing, officials had said. Apart from helicopter service, the shrine board also provides battery car and ropeway services to the pilgrims.

Vaishno Devi cave shrine at an altitude of 5,200 ft in Trikuta Hills of Reasi district, a pilgrimage tourist destination that generally attracts close to a million devotees every year.

(News Agencies)-A maximum of 5000 pilgrims will be allowed per day to visit Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra, Jammu till September 30 after the reopening of religious places in the Union Territory on August 16, according to officials.

Devotees from outside the state will also be allowed to visit the shrine, however, in much lesser numbers-- a maximum of 500 pilgrims per day-- within the overall limit of 5,000 pilgrims, in a graded manner to prevent

Amid heavy monsoon, UN to provide humanitarian support to most vulnerable, affected communities in India

"In neighbouring India, the monsoon there has reportedly claimed more than 770 lives. According to authorities, more than 500,000 people have been evacuated. The UN stands ready to provide humanitarian support to the most vulnerable and affected communities in India," Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General António Guterres said.



(News Agencies)- The United Nations stands ready to provide humanitarian support to the most vulnerable and affected communities in India, a spokesperson for the UN Secretary General has said amid heavy monsoon in the region. "In neighbouring India, the monsoon there has reportedly claimed more than 770 lives. According to authorities, more than 500,000 people have been evacuated. The UN stands ready

to provide humanitarian support to the most vulnerable and affected communities in India," Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General António Guterres said. Giving an update from UN humanitarian colleagues on flooding in Asia, Dujarric said in Bangladesh, people are experiencing the worst and longest monsoon flooding in years, with a quarter of the country being inundated. At least 5.4 million people have

been affected by severe flooding, with 11,000 households displaced and 135 people killed, he added.

Humanitarian partners are working with the Government of Bangladesh to provide food, shelter, clean water, hygiene supplies and other supplies. A USD 40 million response plan has been launched to help the more than one million of the people most in need in the country.

'Need to assess if Russia's Covid-19 vaccine is safe and effective': AIIMS Director

The vaccine, which will be called "Sputnik V" in homage to the world's first satellite launched by the Soviet Union, has however not yet completed its final trials.

(News Agencies)-Russia stunned the world when it announced on Tuesday that it has given statutory approval for the public use of coronavirus vaccine. Experts have been startled since the announcement by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi Director Dr Randeep Guleria on Tuesday said that there was a need to assess the safety and effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccine developed by Russia if it is successful.

"If Russia's vaccine is successful, then we will have to see critically whether it is safe

and effective. There should not be any side effects of the vaccine and it should provide good immunity and protection. India has the capacity for mass production of vaccine," Dr Guleria said.

Putin said yesterday that the vaccine offers "sustainable immunity" against Covid-19, the disease caused by the virus. He also said that one of his own daughters had received the inoculation and felt good afterwards.

The vaccine, which will be called "Sputnik V" in homage to the world's first satellite launched by the Soviet Union, has however not yet completed its final trials.

Some scientists fear Moscow may be putting national prestige before safety.

"Normally you need a large number of people to be tested before you approve a vaccine," said Peter Kremsner from the University Hospital in Tuebingen, Germany, currently testing CureVac's Covid-19 vaccine in clinical trials.

"In that respect, I think it's reckless to do that (approve it) if lots of people haven't already been tested."

Top US infectious disease official Dr Anthony Fauci said he had not heard any evidence that the vaccine was ready for widespread use.



"I hope that the Russians have actually definitively proven that the vaccine is safe and effective. I seriously doubt that they've done that," Fauci said.

The Russian business conglomerate Sistema has said it expects to put the vaccine, developed by Moscow's Gamaleya Institute, into mass production by the end of the year. Government officials have said it will be administered to medical

personnel, and then to teachers, on a voluntary basis at the end of this month or in early September. Mass roll-out in Russia is expected to start in October.

The vaccine is administered in two doses and consists of two serotypes of a human adenovirus, each carrying an S-antigen of the new coronavirus, which enter human cells and produce an immune response.

Hindu daughter has equal right in property, says SC

A three-judge bench headed by justice Arun Mishra ruled that the 2005 law, which amended the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, to say a daughter would have the same rights as the son, would also apply irrespective of whether she was born before or after the amendment.

(News Agencies)- The Supreme Court, on Tuesday, gave Hindu daughters their rightful due of their father's property by extending the scope of a beneficial legislation introduced in 2005 to cases where the father was not alive on the date when the law was introduced.

A three-judge bench headed by justice Arun Mishra ruled that the 2005 law, which amended the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, to say a daughter would have the same rights as the son, would also apply irrespective of whether she was born before or after the amendment. Further, it ruled that she could not be denied her share on the ground that her father died before the law came into effect. Tuesday's ruling makes the 2005 amendment retrospective.

"The provisions contained in substituted section 6 of the Hindu Succession Act confer status of coparcener (equal shareholders while inheriting properties) on the daughter born before or after

amendment in the same manner as son with same rights and liabilities. Since the right in coparcenary is by birth, it is not necessary that father coparcener should be living as on September 9, 2005 (the date when the law came into force)," the bench, which also comprised justices S Abdul Nazeer and MR Shah, ruled.

To ensure that this decision does not lead to reopening of earlier family settlements or partition suits already decided on, the three-judge bench held that a registered settlement or partition suit decreed prior to December 20, 2004 (the date when the amendment Bill was tabled in Rajya Sabha), will not be reopened.

The bench said: "Daughters cannot be deprived of their right of equality conferred upon them by Section 6 of the Amendment Act." The court fixed six months as an outer limit for courts where related suits are pending to

pronounce the final decree.

The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act of 2005 made daughters coparceners in Hindu undivided family by birth, giving them the same right as sons.

Section 6(1)(a) in the Act said that coparcenary benefit will apply "on and from the commencement of the Amendment Act of 2005 with effect from September 9, 2005."

Many daughters approached high courts claiming benefit under this law but were denied on the ground that their fathers were not alive as on September 9, 2005.

This interpretation became the law of the land in 2016 when the Supreme Court held in the Prakash v Phulwati case that father must be alive for daughters to claim succession rights.

Overruling this decision, a three-judge bench of the apex court on Tuesday said, "Since the right in coparcenary is by birth, it is not necessary that father coparcener should be living as on September



9, 2005." It further made the law applicable to even daughters born prior to the commencement of the Act. By stating so, the Court upheld a 2018 ruling of the apex court in Danamma v Amar which extended benefit to a daughter whose father expired prior to 2005.

Speaking to HT, senior advocate R Venkatramani, who assisted the court as amicus curiae in this matter, said, "This judgment has put the law on a proper footing. But what happens in those cases where the son of the coparcener father has alienated or sold or transferred the rights in the property long time ago. He cannot be asked to pay to his sister the share in that property. To avoid chaos, there cannot be reopening of an old partition deed

or settlement."

The central government opposed the idea of giving retrospective operation to the 2005 law since a coparcener in Hindu family law has a right to seek partition. For this reason, the law fixed a cut-off date of December 20, 2004, to avoid reopening of any settlement or partition decree prior to this date. The court accepted the December 20, 2004, date as cut-off but emphasised that if a daughter seeks partition or a share, the same cannot be denied on the basis of an oral family settlement but on a final decree of a court or a registered family settlement. If oral settlement is to be presented, the bench held, it has to be supported "by public documents."

Govt's power boost for Andaman to make islands key hub of Indo Pacific

The proposed 50 MW gas-based power project is aimed at reducing the dependence of Andaman and Nicobar Islands on diesel, the predominant source of the islands' electricity mix.

(News Agencies)-Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who launched India's first undersea optical fibre project this week, has stepped up his government's efforts to give Andaman and Nicobar Islands its first big power project as part of a continuing massive effort to upgrade infrastructure in the archipelago of over 572 Islands in the Bay of Bengal.

PM Modi had laid the foundation stone for the 50 megawatt gas-based power plant at Hope Town in South Andaman during his visit to the island in December 2018. One tender to establish the plant has been issued and the bids will be opened on 28 August; bids to set up

the gas infrastructure and supply of gas will be opened on 18 August.

Senior officials said the different projects are part of the government's overarching vision for the islands and use them as a springboard to open up new opportunities for India in South-East Asia. It was in this context, one official said, that PM Modi on Monday unveiled plans to build a transshipment port at Great Nicobar Island.

Officials said New Delhi wants to pitch the proposed Rs 10,000 crore port to be built at Great Nicobar Island as an alternative to other ports in the neighbourhood including those in Sri Lanka and Indonesia's Banda Aceh.

"The idea is to turn Andaman into a major transportation hub that is at the heart of India's Look East policy," a second government official said. Already, plans are afoot to expand the runway at the Campbell bay airport.

The proposed port lies at the mouth of the Strait of Malacca, the main shipping channel between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. This is one of the most important sea routes. More than 90 percent of crude oil volumes flowing through the South China Sea transits the Malacca Strait.

The port is also located strategically near the proposed Kra Isthmus Canal, also known as the



Thai Canal, that would connect the Gulf of Thailand with the Andaman Sea and shorten transit for oil shipments to Japan and China by 1,200 km.

Against this background, officials said the need for a steady and clean power source is crucial for expansion of infrastructure. So far, diesel is the predominant source of the electricity

mix of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The 50 MW plant will supplement the 20 MW solar power project commissioned by the Neyveli Lignite Corporation. This plant has been integrated with an 8 MWh battery energy storage system. A 5 MW solar plant set up by NTPC is already in operation. A power ministry official said the power distribution

in the islands is already being privatized under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiative.

The transaction advisor has already completed discussions with the union territory's power department and the ministry of power in Delhi and are expected to complete the transaction documents by September 2020.

In Israel-UAE Deal, India Stands To Gain But Pakistan's Terror Factory Will Be Dented

If the planet were a kingdom, US President Donald Trump would be its king right now! He has pulled off what several world leaders in the past failed to achieve. He has ensured that the Muslims will be allowed to pray at the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, the third holiest site in Islam. Trump has convinced the Israeli PM that there will be no more annexation of West Bank, or Palestinian territories. He has created a path of peace and stability for the region to follow.

Israel and UAE Thursday signed a peace treaty which, as per the latest reports will be signed in person in White House, under the watchful gaze of the man who brokered the deal. Peace has a fair chance to return to the region, though the treaty itself has angered a lot of sections on both sides. Palestinians recalled their Ambassador from UAE, citing reasons that by agreeing to the terms, the UAE has abandoned the Palestinian cause. This is exceptionally immature and myopic, given the fact that the UAE has been supporting Palestinians' cause for decades now. The Hamas-led leadership, which isn't happy with the decision, may actually resort to increasing attacks into Israeli territory. In Israel, the far right is not happy at all. The PM has to pacify the sections back home and he clearly stated there will be no more annexation without US approval. However, some think that by doing this, he has taken the pressure of annexation off the table and betrayed them. Beit El settlement council feels that they have been sold out. Naftali Bennet, presently serving as MK (Member of Knesset) for New Right said, "Netanyahu wasted a once in a century opportunity when he failed to annex territories in the West Bank, as part of a normalisation deal with the UAE." Israeli communication Minister Yoaz Hendel said, "Congratulations on the deal, but I am not giving up on the settlement and our Eastern border." The hardliners on either side are not happy with the peace deal as they take it as a compromise on status quo. However, the far-sighted leaders of the world, like Prince Mohammed Bin Zayed, have realised that not only can Israel be not wished away, the continuous conflict is not good for anyone. Why not give peace a chance? The response across the world has been very welcoming. Netanyahu had worked with Trump for a long time to work on the US Peace plan in the region, and annexation of the West Bank and other territories was part of the plan. However, in an excellent diplomatic move, Trump turned this annexation plan around as a bargaining chip and worked not with Palestinians and Hamas, but the power behind, the UAE, to create a peace deal.

The Israelis can now actually work on a two-nation theory and achieve more security in the region and Palestinians can work on consolidating their state and identity. Oman and Bahrain also showed their appreciation and willingness to join this peace treaty. Israel may have been spared the criticism in the international arena but Netanyahu's rival and Likud Party leader, Gideon Sa'ar conveyed clearly that he will only be moved when there is application of Israeli laws in Jewish settlements in Judea, Samaria and Jordan valley. The fight for control is not something that they are keen to give up.

India too stands to gain from this. Israel has always been a great ally and a friend, and the Modi government has been able to foster healthy relationships with the UAE too. Both coming together means a better diplomatic environment for India. Also, with Oman and Bahrain coming in support of the UAE, India will be on the right side when it comes to dealing with nations where Indians constitute a large part of the population. I personally feel Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud, will too join the alliance. He has no reason to stay aloof and not take the opportunity of improving relations with the US and West. This would bring a certifiable stability in the region.

The deal puts Pakistan in a difficult situation. It couldn't have ruined its relations with the Saudis at a worst time. Peace accord means all the funds that Pakistan has been taking for running the so-called Kashmir war will be gone. Already struggling to repay USD 3 billion to Saudi, Pakistan's donor list is drying up fast. The peace treaty is also a direct signal by the UAE and others that they are done with Palestine and Kashmir issues. The UAE is on a very progressive path and signing multiple deals across the world for renewable energy, space programme, Med Tech etc. It would not want to be associated with the stereotypical and regressive mindset that has now turned Pakistan into a terror factory. Though the Prince is facing tremendous criticism for falling from Ummah and giving up on Palestinian struggle, but it is the step in the right direction.

Ahead of the US presidential elections, Trump has silenced everyone with this master stroke. He is virtually untouchable now on matters of international diplomacy. Credit should be given where it's due. One can just hope that the peace is here to stay and the region and successively rest of the world can start to heal from the decades of aggression.

Kamala Harris and her rise

The tale of the incredible Indian living the American dream continues with Kamala Harris' selection as the Democratic Party's vice-presidential candidate. If Joe Biden wins the November elections, as the polls currently predict, Ms Harris, half-Indian, half-Jamaican, and all-American, will be a heartbeat away from being the world's most powerful person. Her prospects are even better in the future: Mr Biden has repeatedly hinted he will be a single-term president making Ms Harris a shoo-in for the Democratic candidacy in 2024. Ms Harris represents the political pinnacle of the Indian-American community's meteoric rise in the United States (US). Numbering barely 4.5 million and mostly first-generation, Indian-Americans have emerged as the US' most highly educated and most wealthy ethnic group. However, what has been even more remarkable is the speed with which they have entered domestic politics. Winning elected office is the most difficult barrier of acceptance for an immigrant community to cross. Despite the relatively young provenance of the Indian-American community, it can already boast of two state governors, 10 national legislators, and, now, a vice-presidential candidate.

Mr Biden's choice of Ms Harris fulfils his public promise to choose a female running mate. Since she is identified as a black American politician with the larger US public, he also paid off a debt to the community which saved his campaign. Through her identity,

she is a symbol of racial, ethnic and gender equality at a moment when social justice movements have rocked the country. Among these, the fact that she is an Indian-American was arguably the least important element of her profile when it came to the reasons Mr Biden chose her. That should not be a concern. Being an Indian-American means you are from a community that is too small, too liberal and too well-off to be a political consideration. Nonetheless, it is striking that Latinos, a community that can claim to have been part of US history for over four centuries, have yet to have one of their number chosen to share a presidential ticket.

The success of the Indian-American community in becoming part of the US mainstream also means that no one should expect Ms Harris to see India in any special light. She will be more familiar with India than the average American. She will not be necessarily more sympathetic. Her voting record shows her to be more liberal than Mr Biden and, therefore, less than aligned with the Narendra Modi government. Ms Harris has been chosen as a flag bearer of inclusivity, a living antidote to four years of President Donald Trump. She will, unless given reasons otherwise, tend to have a sceptical view of India's rightward political turn, whatever her sentiments about her mother's homeland.



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Governor's Powers Need To Be Redefined, Else Raj Bhawan Will Continue To Facilitate Coups

The changing political realities, coupled with the lure of clinging on to power even among those who hold constitutional office, demand today that the powers of a Governor be redefined, writes Jaiveer Shergill.

Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes wrote, "The good governor should have a broken leg and keep at home" which means the Governor of a state has to be above the game of politics and in discharge of his constitutional responsibilities, he must be seen impartial and fair. Had the Governor of Rajasthan, Kalraj Mishra, played by the rules, in the first instance, the state would have been saved an unsavory spectacle. The Governor, by rejecting thrice the Ashok Gehlot cabinet's decision to convene a session of the Rajasthan Assembly, committed a cardinal mistake and acted in contravention of constitutional provisions.

The Governor, under the Constitution, has the power to summon and prorogue the House of the Legislature. Constitution (Article 174 read with Article 163) mandates that Governor acts, regarding summoning and proroguing the House, on the advice of the Council of Ministers. The Sarkaria Commission also recommended that so long as the Council of Ministers enjoys the confidence of the Legislative Assembly, the advice of the Council of Ministers in regard to

summoning and proroguing a House of the Legislature, if such advice is not patently unconstitutional, should be deemed as binding on the Governor.

In 2016, the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in Nabam Rebia and Bamang Felix vs. Deputy Speaker, of the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly case, expressly said that the power to summon the House is not solely vested in the Governor and he/she is precluded to take an individual call on the issue at his/her own will, or in his/her own discretion. This simply means the Governor is bound to go by the recommendation of the Chief Minister. There was no reason for Kalraj Mishra to reject the request of the Chief Minister to summon the House and demand, instead, a 21 days' notice period. It is also to be noted that the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly (Chapter II, Rule 3) provides for summoning of the Legislature at a short notice.

Further, by insisting that the Chief Minister provide to him the agenda for the session even before the House is convened,

the Governor exceeded his mandate. Governor cannot decide the business of the House. It is the Chief Minister alone, who can provide the Assembly with business to transact.

The Governor erred in exercising his 'discretion' rather than performing his normal constitutional executive responsibility. It is my belief that political considerations rather than constitutional provisions guided him on the path of discretion. The Committee of the Governors appointed by the President on 26 November, 1970 had recommended that where the Governor has reason to believe that the Ministry no longer enjoys the majority, he may ask the Chief Minister to face the Assembly. If the Chief Minister neglects or refuses to summon the Assembly for holding a "Floor Test", the Governor should summon the Assembly for the purpose only in order to ensure that the system of responsible government in the state works in accordance with the norms envisaged in the Constitution. There was no such issue in the case of Rajasthan's Congress-led government, which enjoyed a



comfortable majority in the House even in the face of the now dissipated crisis. Instead, it was the Governor who prevented the elected Government with a majority in the House from exercising its duties to the legislature and to the eight crore people of Rajasthan. By doing so, the Governor failed in his duty as the conscience keeper of the Constitution, thereby violating the oath he took under Article 159 "to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and submit himself to the service and wellbeing people of the State". Democracy in Rajasthan has been saved for the time being and the Assembly will meet on 14 August, 2020. Those who were hoping to repeat their power grab machinations previously witnessed in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa and other states, have been handed out a

befitting reply. The Congress has emerged stronger after the deft handling of what was essentially an internal matter of the party that was resolved by the mature and pragmatic handling of the situation under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in consultation with other stakeholders.

However, it is predictable that neither will the BJP scotch its dirty tricks to somehow come to power in states where it has been democratically voted out nor will the Jaipur Raj Bhawan be the last slaughterhouse for democratically elected Governments. As a shark cannot stay away from blood, the BJP cannot stay away from power. Therefore, instead of depending on the judiciary every time a Governor attempts a constitutional sin, it would be appropriate to set the record straight for all time.

Like Obama in 2016, Trump uses 'birther conspiracy' to target Kamala Harris



President Donald Trump on Thursday gave credence to a false and racist conspiracy about Kamala Harris' eligibility to be vice president, fueling an online misinformation campaign that parallels the one he used to power his rise into politics.

Asked about the matter at the White House, Trump told reporters he had "heard" rumors that Harris, a Black woman and US-born citizen whose parents were immigrants, does not meet

the requirement to serve in the White House. The president said he considered the rumors "very serious."

The conspiracy is false. Harris, who was tapped this week by Joe Biden to serve as his running mate on the Democratic ticket, was born in Oakland, California, and is eligible to be president under the constitutional requirements. The question is not even considered complex, according to constitution

Asked about the matter at the White House, Trump told reporters he had "heard" rumors that Harris, a Black woman and US-born citizen whose parents were immigrants, does not meet the requirement to serve in the White House.

lawyers. "Full stop, end of story, period, exclamation point," said Jessica Levinson, a professor at Loyola Law School. Trump built his political career on questioning a political opponent's legitimacy. He was a high-profile force behind the so-called "birther movement" - the lie that questioned whether President Barack Obama, the nation's first Black president, was eligible to serve. Only after mounting pressure during his 2016 campaign did Trump disavow the claims.

Trump comments about Harris on Thursday landed in a blizzard of other untrue, racist or sexist claims unleashed across social media and conservative websites after Biden picked Harris, the first Black woman and the first Asian American woman on a major

party ticket. The misinformation campaign is built on falsehoods that have circulating less noticeably for months, propelled by Trump supporters, and now the president himself.

"I have no idea if that's right," said Trump, who said he had read a column on the subject earlier Thursday. "I would have thought, I would have assumed, that the Democrats would have checked that out before she gets chosen to run for vice president." Trump made the comments in answer to a reporter's question and appeared to be referencing an op-ed written by John Eastman, a conservative attorney who argues that the US Constitution doesn't grant citizenship to all people born in the US. The president's reelection campaign's senior

lawyer, Jenna Ellis, shared the controversial column on Thursday morning, hours before Trump was asked about it at a White House news conference.

Trump noted that the column was written by a "very highly qualified and very talented lawyer." Harris' mother was born in India and her father was born in Jamaica. But question of her parents' birthplace is irrelevant, said Christopher Kelley, a political science professor at Miami University in Ohio. "No, there's no question about it," he said. "It's been recognized since the people drafted it back in the 39th Congress that (the 14th) amendment that would cover people not just born to American citizens but born on American soil."

Who's undermining the global order?

There is no neat answer. Both the US and China are embracing parts of it, and undermining parts

BY Manjari Chatterjee Miller

In 2018, in a speech at the Raisina Dialogue, the conference held by the ministry of external affairs and the Observer Research Foundation, the late foreign minister Sushma Swaraj, declared that the world was in transition- there was now a "departure from longstanding practices," "a shift away from multilateralism and alliances," and a retreat from globalisation. While Swaraj was circumspect, many others have since been more candid. A few days ago, for example, former Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd argued that the global order was being reshaped by China. These statements articulate the prevalent anxiety behind a question that many have been grappling with - is the current international order in decline? In particular, is the United States (US)-led order under threat of revisionism by China and other actors? The answer to this question often relates to where one stands on the political spectrum, and consequently tends to fall into black-and-white categories of either singular affirmation or denial. In reality,

however, the answer is complex because international order is complex. Disagreements between China and the US are not the same as disagreements between China and international order. To understand this, it is important to understand what international order is and what it implies. Princeton professor G John Ikenberry has called international order "the organising rules and institutions of world politics...through which [countries] do business". His work and that of many others imply four facts about the international order. First, order is not a passive outcome but an active creation by powerful countries. Second, it rests on shared ideas. Third, these ideas are shared across not one but many issues. Finally, participating countries need to be willing to buy into order. So if we argue that a country is revisionist of the international order, what we mean is that it is deliberately trying to reorganise these rules and institutions, trying to change the shared ideas that underpin order, that it is doing so across issues, and that it has the help of countries willing to buy into

its proposed changes.

Which brings us to the current international order and how these implications play out. The international order today was created and led by the US and its allies after World War II, and its byword was multilateralism. The principles of the 1941 Atlantic Charter in which Franklin D Roosevelt and Winston Churchill declared a shared commitment to free trade and collective security were more formally enshrined during the Bretton Woods Conference of 1944 - a new economic and security order with international institutions for multilateral cooperation emerged and thrived. But today, who is revising and who is accommodating these institutions that are the bedrock of the post-World War II international order does not play out along neat lines.

For example, Donald Trump's assertion of America First has led to a decline in long-standing collective security arrangements - last month, he withdrew 9,500 US troops from German soil undermining the US-German solidarity that was the foundation of the trans-Atlantic security



cooperation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato). Trump has also criticised multilateral agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) that could restrain China - for example, by setting or preserving information and communication technology (ICT) standards that would impede China trying to set Chinese technology as the standard for the hard infrastructure of Internet connectivity. China too has rejected or violated the shared ideas of some of the international institutions it has joined - it has not, for example, ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (although neither has the US) and argues that it is compliant with international human rights norms.

But as Columbia University professor, Andrew Nathan, points out, it has also partially or wholly complied with many other shared ideas, particularly because in many cases it has served its interests to do so. Its embrace of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), for example, has been highly selective and biased towards its own interests - in accordance with the norms of UNCLOS, it expects to dispatch spy ships into other countries' exclusive economic zones to monitor both their economic (which is legal) and military activities (subject to interpretation) without incident but objects to and occasionally harasses other countries for allegedly violating its own space in the South China Sea.

Mission Kashmir will be Manoj Sinha's biggest test



By Shashi Shekhar

Manoj Sinha has taken over as Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). His appointment is seen by many as being in keeping with the element of surprise that marks decisions taken by the current government. Has Prime Minister (PM)? Narendra Modi taken a huge risk by delegating this responsibility to Sinha? Is Sinha up to the task of dealing with this very challenging responsibility? The future can often be

deciphered by looking into the past. Sinha is known as a person who has learnt the art of surviving in politics. In 1980, he contested and lost the Banaras Hindu University Students' Union election. He tried again over the next two years and succeeded in 1982. Similarly, even though he lost a few Lok Sabha elections, he is a three-time former Member of Parliament (MP). The PM made him minister of state for railways in 2014 and later gave him

A non-controversial-but-effective politician, Sinha faces political, bureaucratic, security and economic challenges

independent charge of the ministry of communications. He did reasonably well in both portfolios. Modi was satisfied with his hard work, honesty and dedication. When Modi spoke at a public meeting in Ghazipur (Uttar Pradesh) during the 2019 elections, in a somewhat unexpected gesture, he asked the audience to first applaud Sinha.

Despite this, he lost the Lok Sabha elections in 2019. There were indications that the Ghazipur parliamentary constituency was no longer a safe seat for him, thanks to changing social equations. The BJP leadership offered him another seat, but he wanted to fight from Ghazipur which he did and lost.

For some time now, there has been some talk in the corridors

of power in Delhi that Sinha would be given a suitable berth somewhere. But what he got last Thursday must certainly have exceeded all his expectations. In his trademark manner, despite being pushed into the background for a while, he has made a somewhat spectacular comeback. How effective will he be in his new post?

To arrive at an answer, one has to look at the unexpected departure of GC Murmu, the outgoing L-G of J&K. As the first L-G, he did a commendable job on the law and order front in the Valley. But his manner of functioning did not go down well with the bureaucracy in the Union Territory (UT). This is the reason he had to return to Delhi in 10 months. He will now take up the new constitutional responsibility as the Comptroller and Auditor

General (CAG). In a way, it can also be called a promotion. But there is a difference between Raj Bhavan in Srinagar and just another government bungalow in Delhi. Murmu, a bureaucrat, was given a number of tasks to execute in J&K. But given the nature of the political and social initiatives he was required to undertake, it was clear that only a politician could have carried them out successfully. The situation in Kashmir is complex. Many people, including political leaders such as former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, are still under house arrest or behind bars. Another former chief minister Omar Abdullah has announced that he will not contest the assembly elections until statehood is restored to J&K. These two families have so far dominated politics in Kashmir.

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Develop a vaccine plan

From supplies to distribution, there will be real challenges



After nearly 20 million infections, 730,000 deaths and half-a-year of living with Covid-19, it is clear that vaccines are the strongest bet for the world to emerge out of the pandemic. The scientific community has given us six promising candidates. They are tearing

through a process of trials, involving tens of thousands of people, generating reams of data, to prove they are a safe and effective bet - so much so that some of the biggest economies have put billions of dollars worth of wagers on them. India is yet to count as one of these

nations. India's seeming reluctance with pledging money at this point to any of the candidates is backed by some economic and scientific wisdom: Vaccines take years to develop, and seven months is too short a time to commit millions of dollars for a country

with stretched coffers. Officials have hinted that the country was looking at multilateral mechanisms such as the World Health Organization-led Covax facility to help secure supplies. But such a mechanism - designed as it is to ensure distribution is equitable across the world - will be able to supply only a fraction of India's requirement in the immediate term.

Last week, the government appeared to recognise the need to step up focus on its vaccine plan, forming an expert committee to identify viable candidates, put in place a financing and purchase strategy, and lay down a road map of administering it to the Indian public. The first step of this will involve opening bilateral discussions with developers such as AstraZeneca, Moderna, Pfizer and others which have the most promising candidates yet. These are also companies on which the United States (US),

United Kingdom and some European nations have bet millions of dollars (the US alone has pledged nearly \$4 billion). The deals won't be easy; India will need to negotiate the lowest of the rates and secure supply commitment for the largest of volumes.

Once that is taken care of, the authorities will face the challenge of identifying those who will get the shots at the soonest. Health workers are an obvious first choice, but beyond that lie complicated equations determined by factors such as age, profession, geography and economic class. It will also involve mobilisation of its formidable grassroots staff, but they are already the most prepared, working tirelessly to carry out the process of testing and contact tracing. It is important, then, that India begins taking the first step, of securing supplies, at the soonest.

A blueprint to counter CCP and Xi

It is time to plant the fear of India in China. Use military, diplomatic, economic options vigorously

By Abhishek Singhvi

This is ideology, group and politics neutral - its non-neutral only on the India-China equation. What follows is a comprehensive wish list, intended to recalibrate, re-imagine and reinvent that equation. If two swords - India and China - are to coexist in the Asian scabbard, reluctant respect and forced likability are required and these are the consequences of fear. While China has engendered that fear in India, it is time to reciprocally implant India's fear in China. This alone will reset the equilibrium.

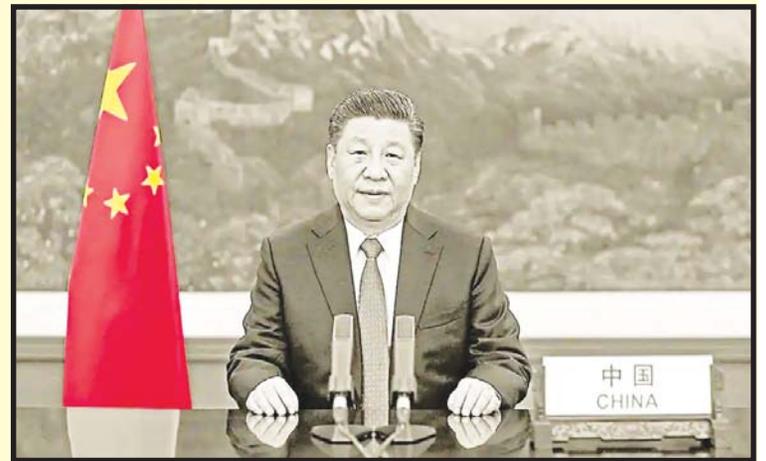
For this we need less talk, more action; consistency of application over years; taking care of the small things so that the big things take care of themselves; and a holistic, multipronged and preventive, not merely curative, approach. It requires a fundamental attitudinal change. Finally, it requires teamwork, a broad consensus, bridging the trust deficit,

transparency and participatory approaches.

The military option is of least importance, in view of China's size and might, but still vital to outstare the enemy. The appearance (not actual use) of India's military might is vital to eventually restore status quo ante, since the so-called buffer zones are on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The Mountain Strike Corps, inexplicably downgraded, must be exponentially enhanced. The defence budget, below 1.5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), must be pulled above 2%, preferably 3%, despite Covid-19 and economic woes. Open interoperability military exercises with the United States (US) and other big powers must accompany the accelerated completion of the Darbuk-Shyok-DBO road and building others on our northern and Arunachal Pradesh flanks. China has effectively deployed a mammoth drone armoury and we must

significantly enlarge that arsenal.

The diplomatic option is highly underestimated. A blitzkrieg of naming and shaming China for its ruthless expansionism must accompany regular meetings and exercises of groupings such as an expanded Asean, Quad, Malabar, G10 and Democracy 10. The Inter-Parliamentary Alliance of the European Parliament, with more than 100 members, is against expansionist China and India should seek consultative status on it. Consistent China-critics such as Japan, the United States, the Philippines, Vietnam, Mongolia, Indonesia and Australia have to be continuously leveraged. The current unprecedented global anti-China sentiment has to be exploited. The Philippines won significant maritime arbitral awards against China, and Vietnam fought China over the Spratly islands. India's place at the high table of G10 cannot be delayed. These multilateral groupings have another unnoticed benefit: They



turn India's focus seawards, where Chinese military asymmetry qua India is much less than on land. The two Ts - Tibet and Taiwan - old Chinese bugbears, need to be exploited much more. The Dalai Lama and persons like Richard Gere qua Tibet and Dolkun Isa qua Xingjiang must be allowed to travel and speak on Indian soil without restriction (subject to no violence and no official Indian government participation). India and Taiwan must have full diplomatic relations and

Taiwanese companies must be wooed qua import substitution. Parliamentary alliances such as Friends of Tibet or of Uighurs must be allowed free play. We need to oppose the Belt Road Initiative and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) much more vocally at all forums. Buddhist diplomacy has great resonance across Asia. Both Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh occupy pole positions in this regard, but they remain underused by India internationally.

Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

FOLLOW THE STEPS BELOW: If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you might have it, follow the steps below to help protect other people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care

- **Stay home:** People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 are able to recover at home. Do not leave, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas.
- **Stay in touch with your doctor.** Call before you get medical care. Be sure to get care if you feel worse or you think it is an emergency.
- **Avoid public transportation:** Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.



Separate yourself from other people in your home, this is known as home isolation

- **Stay away from others:** As much as possible, you should stay in a specific “sick room” and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- **Limit contact with pets & animals:** You should restrict contact with pets and other animals, just like you would around other people.
 - Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people with the virus limit contact with animals until more information is known.
 - When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick with COVID-19. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with them. See COVID-19 and Animals for more information.



Call ahead before visiting your doctor

- **Call ahead:** If you have a medical appointment, call your doctor’s office or emergency department, and tell them you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the office protect themselves and other patients.



Wear a facemask if you are sick

- **If you are sick:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider’s office.
- **If you are caring for others:** If the person who is sick is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live in the home should stay in a different room. When caregivers enter the room of the sick person, they should wear a facemask. Visitors, other than caregivers, are not recommended.



Cover your coughs and sneezes

- **Cover:** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- **Dispose:** Throw used tissues in a lined trash can.
- **Wash hands:** Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Clean your hands often

- **Wash hands:** Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- **Hand sanitizer:** If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- **Soap and water:** Soap and water are the best option, especially if hands are visibly dirty.
- **Avoid touching:** Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



Avoid sharing personal household items

- **Do not share:** Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home.



In poll-bound Bihar, it is advantage Nitish Kumar

Despite anti-incumbency, the ruling alliance has a strong CM face, and a formidable social coalition

By Shaibal Gupta

In 1960, history was created when a little-known senator from Massachusetts, John F Kennedy overshadowed Richard Nixon, then president D D Eisenhower's vice-president, in the first televised debate in the United States (US). Television, since then, emerged as a powerful medium in election campaigns worldwide.

In the Bihar assembly elections, if they are held as scheduled towards the end of the year, a new form of campaigning, the virtual campaign, will take centre stage. If successful, it will change the course of elections in India. Home minister Amit Shah addressed a virtual rally on June 7. He, according to reports, spoke to half-a-million people in Bihar. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi too, has held virtual interactions with his party's leaders, albeit on a limited scale. While the Janata Dal (United), led by chief minister Nitish Kumar, too had planned a virtual rally on August 7, it was postponed. Such virtual campaigns are possible because a huge constituency of digital users has been created. Over 500 million people in India are estimated to be connected, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently suggesting that a majority of them are in rural areas. The fact that Bihar is predominantly rural adds to its uniqueness. Further, Internet use is more gender-balanced in India, with a substantial segment of women users. This represents a rupture. In the Lalu Prasad era, when Sharad Pawar visited Patna, he was shocked to know that there were only 100 Internet connections in Patna, whereas in his parliamentary constituency, Baramati, there were 12,000 connections. But now, digital platforms have emerged as vehicles for the democratisation of information dissemination. Bihar will be the epicentre of how this will manifest itself in electoral politics in a post-Covid-19 India.

But what about the substance of the electoral competition? It

appears that Kumar has a tough challenge ahead. His third term, unlike the first two, have not been covered in glory. The administration's weaknesses have got exposed in handling the Covid-19 situation. There is a degree of public anger. However, he also has clear advantages. Kumar is still a major political brand in the state, equated with the improvements of his earlier terms. Even though his partnership with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has not brought about benefits demanded by JD(U) such as a special category status for Bihar or central university status for Patna University, the alliance is beneficial for both parties. It has ensured a successful "coalition of extremes" from upper castes to Dalits. If Jitan Ram Manjhi joins the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the social coalition will become even more formidable. Kumar has also cultivated the women constituency by providing them 35% reservation in panchayati

raj institutions and extending

reservations for them in police and government jobs. He has cultivated the more extreme segments of backward communities over the last 15 years and is seen as their leader. The inward migration in the wake of Covid-19 was mishandled initially, but the scheme of providing Rs 4,000 per migrant and economically marginal persons could work out well. If the present "coalition of extremes" holds strong, the election outcome a foregone conclusion. The BJP's campaign, notes of dissent by Lok Janshakti Party's Chirag Paswan or the challenge by the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)'s Tejaswi Yadav are designed to fill the vacuum after the Kumar era in Bihar politics, ie, once his next, and by all assessments, final stint ends in 2025.

Bihar is the only state in the Hindi heartland where the BJP has not reached its plateau. It has preferred an alliance despite Modi's popularity. After successful social engineering at the grassroots, it is now evoking regional sub-nationalism. Modi praised the



valour of the Biharis and Bihar Regiment, and their sacrifice during the Indo-China clashes. While extending the time limit of PM?Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna , Modi specifically mentioned on June 30 that it will continue up to the Chhath festival in November. Chhath is the only sub-national festival in Bihar, where all castes and classes participate without any social divide. The BJP is also trying to woo young people - all its district presidents in Bihar are in the age group of 40 to 45. But it is not as much the strengths of the ruling alliance as the weaknesses of the Opposition that explain the current moment. Even though there is substantial anti-incumbency, perhaps natural after 15 years of rule, the

Opposition is in disarray. Tejaswi Yadav is yet to fill Lalu Prasad's shoes. Hegemony over any caste - Yadavs in the case of the RJD - doesn't last without formal political power. RJD has been out of power now for 15 years. And a social movement to sustain the support of the entire caste group is absent. The Congress and communist parties are in a state of drift. Upendra Kushwaha or Mukesh Sahni's social strength does not match the political attention they draw. Chirag Paswan is appealing to a broader provincial identity with the slogan of "Bihar First and Bihari First" to project himself as a pan-Bihar leader but it is unlikely to yield immediate returns.

The importance of flood forecasting

Both structural and non-structural measures need to be improved



On Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting with chief ministers and ministers of Kerala, Karnataka, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra to review the flood situation in these states. During the meeting, PM emphasised the need for better coordination between central and state agencies to have a permanent

system for forecasting floods and the extensive use of innovative technologies to improve the forecast and warning system. Mr Modi's recommendations are significant because every year floods upend lives and livelihoods and destroy critical infrastructure and biodiversity. They also put enormous stress on finances.

While the government's Central Water Commission (CWC) has modernised its flood management system over the years, there are still massive gaps that need to be filled to make it a much more responsive system. Two types of measures are taken for flood protection: Structural (embankments, dams, reservoirs, and natural detention basins), and non-

structural (flood forecasting and warning, floodplain zoning).

There are several problems with both. On the structural side, the management of reservoirs and dams, maintenance of embankments and data collection on a river's silt-bearing capacity have to be improved. On the non-structural side, data on river flow and discharge must be enhanced; the installation and maintenance of technical equipment such as gauges have to be expedited. Also critical is how the information on floods is given to the public; it has to be timely, useful (location) and in a non-technical language. Finally, an independent evaluation of the flood forecasting system must be put in place to identify the gaps in the system, and ensure that CWC performs its role better than it is doing now.

The Rajasthan resolution

The Congress can smile, but it must introspect too

The month-long crisis in the Congress in Rajasthan has finally come to an end, for now. The crisis was triggered by Sachin Pilot and a set of rebel legislators seeking the removal of chief minister Ashok Gehlot; camping outside the state; defying the party; and exploring alternative political options to bring down their own party's government. In response, Mr Gehlot consolidated the remaining legislators and smaller allies - who constitute a majority - in his favour, and won the backing of the party high command, ensuring that his government would remain stable. Eventually, Mr Pilot's loyalists began to get restless; Mr Pilot himself began to run

out of options; and the Bharatiya Janata Party's own Rajasthan equations meant that the party was happy encouraging the rebellion, but could do so only from a distance. The fact that Mr Pilot kept channels open with Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi helped in finally enabling a face-saver for him, with the party setting up a high-powered committee to examine his grievances. The rebels have returned home to the Congress. The crisis has reinforced the trend of strong regional leaders in the Congress now running their independent operations, often successfully. This was a party that has been over-centralised, but as the central leadership has got weaker, the

locus of power has shifted to the states. This was visible in Punjab in 2017, when Captain Amarinder Singh won the elections. And it has most clearly been visible in Rajasthan, where Mr Gehlot - a rooted leader, with a substantial mass base and following within the party organisation - held his own, fought the rebels, the Opposition and the governor and came out victorious. But while the Congress can breathe a sigh of relief at having saved its government and prevented a split, the crisis has shown, once again, the structural weaknesses of the party. It has factional feuds in almost



every state. The ability of the central leadership in reconciling conflicts is limited. The leadership crisis at the top, and the sense of hopelessness about future prospects, is causing the disillusionment among younger leaders - who then are willing to switch ranks. The optics of an internal party battle at a time when the pandemic is raging was not good. While the Rajasthan crisis is resolved for now - thanks to Mr Gehlot's strength - the party would do well to introspect about what caused it in the first place.

Tucker Carlson calls Biden-Harris the 'first entirely hollow presidential ticket in American history'

'There are timeshare salesmen you would trust more than Kamala Harris.'

By Sam Dorman

The Democratic ticket of former Vice President Joe Biden and Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., is "entirely hollow," Tucker Carlson argued on Tuesday. The "Tucker Carlson Tonight" host believed that he thought Biden would pick former National Security Advisor Susan Rice for the No. 2 spot. "Rice has sincere beliefs whether you like them or not ...," Carlson said. "But Kamala Harris is the opposite of that.

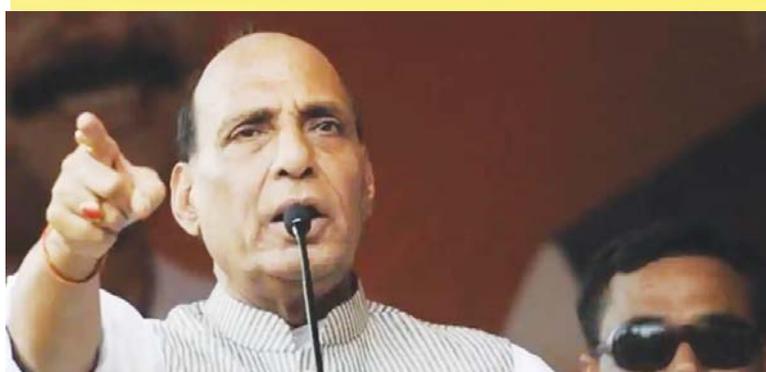
"Harris may be the single most transactional human being in America," he went on. "There are timeshare salesmen you would trust more than Kamala Harris. You could find payday lenders who are more sincere. "So, it seemed inconceivable that given his current state, Joe Biden would choose someone so transparently one-dimensional as Kamala Harris, someone as empty as he is. It would be the first entirely hollow presidential ticket in American history and

we thought it could never happen. But it is. They're doing it anyway." Carlson added that the choice of Harris shed light on the Democratic Party and its purported interest in finding a candidate they could manipulate rather than someone with a solid constituency like Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. "What they wanted instead was someone they could control and Joe Biden fit that description perfectly," he



said. "Biden was eager, malleable, and totally blank. He was willing to be whatever his handlers wanted him to be. Kamala Harris will be every bit as eager, and that's the point. If Biden and Harris still doesn't make sense to you as a ticket, it's only because you are not cynical enough."

The quest for self-reliance in defence



C Uday Bhaskar

In the run-up to August 15, the challenge to India's territorial integrity and sovereignty has been foregrounded in a startling, but perhaps unsurprising, manner by

the June 15 Galwan setback. Chinese troops intruded into areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Ladakh region where the Indian presence was thin and there is an October 1962 sense of déjà

The intent is noble. But India's techno-industrial complex has not shown the required competence. In a puzzling development, the ministry of defence (MoD) uploaded some details of the transgression by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops in the Ladakh region on its website on August 4. Within two days, this was removed without ascribing any reason. This lack of consistency on a grave national security matter was avoidable. But as per media reports, the gravity of the challenge posed by PLA and its transgression in Ladakh was formally conveyed to a committee of lawmakers by the Chief of Defence Staff General, Bipin Rawat, on August 10. Currently, there is a stalemate in the de-escalation process which has compelled the Indian Army to deploy heavily along LAC and the committee was informed that this may be a "long-drawn process". The Indian military will have to prepare for a long haul in manning LAC so that there are no more "surprises" in other sectors. The Pakistan factor remains a perennial operational concern. Thus, the robustness of the inventory and logistics-maintenance depth of the three armed forces will be a critical factor in the short-term, as India prepares to manage a post-Galwan bilateral relationship with China. In this context, defence minister Rajnath Singh put out a series of tweets on August 9 that underlined the resolve of the Narendra Modi government to redress long-festering structural issues pertaining to defence imports.

The Opposition enables Hindutva

It lacks ideological conviction on secularism, and the political imagination to defend it

Roshan Kishore

On August 5, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi set the process of the construction of a Ram temple at Ayodhya in motion. This is a moment of political triumph for Hindutva politics. And the euphoria in the Hindutva camp, especially the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and its political affiliate, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is not surprising. What is disappointing, however, is the reaction of the secular camp. Its response can be described as empty assertions against the victory of political Hindutva, wishful thinking about a closure of such politics, or, just opportunistic celebration. Rahul Gandhi's tweet trying to seek some sort of self-righteous, even metaphysical, solace by portraying Ram as opposed to the politics of hate and injustice fits the first category. The Communist Party of India (Marxist)'s statement lamenting that the bhoomi puja should not have been made into a political event fits the second category. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's

statement, and the response of most other political leaders, which celebrated the act in the hope that it will be used as an occasion to promote harmony and cultural affinity, fits the third category.

None of these positions will worry the BJP. It will celebrate, and rightly so, the construction of the temple as the biggest political success of its larger ideological project. It is also naive to expect that the BJP will not use the Ram temple issue for future political gains. The BJP is not concerned about whether its opponents think of its actions as justifiable or not. What matters for the BJP is the view of the majority, which as of now, appears firmly with the party. The fate of secular politics in India, today more than ever, depends on whether or not its practitioners can explain its *raison d'être* to the Hindus. None of the mainstream political players are even trying to do that. To be sure, there has been a fourth kind of reaction as well; largely from civil society voices. It paints August 5 as an apocalyptic event of sorts, when constitutional ideas have been destroyed forever. Irrespective of

whether one agrees or disagrees with this assessment, such a position necessarily entails an abdication of politics per se. If there is nothing left to save, what's the point of doing anything? The collective despondency, captured by all the positions described above, is an alibi for the lack of political imagination and will of those who claim to champion the politics of secularism.

The Ram temple movement was the beginning of a political experiment to achieve a majoritarian political consolidation, which, in turn, was aimed at capturing power. It brought immense dividends initially. But it does not explain the current dominance of the BJP. Nor will it guarantee that its fortunes remain intact. Political Hindutva, like all political ideologies, will need to keep renewing its ideological hegemony. It has so far managed this: The Ram temple movement in the 1990s, politicisation of the surgical strikes and Balakot attacks against Pakistan before the



2019 polls, the politics around the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, and annulment of Article 370 under the second Modi government are examples of continuous efforts to ensure this. This macro-politics is accompanied with a continuous simmering of religious polarisation, something Sajjan Kumar and Sudha Pai have described in detail in their book, *Everyday Communalism: Riots in Contemporary Uttar Pradesh*. The BJP has been shrewd in utilising each of these issues to impart dynamism to political Hindutva, and prevent it from becoming an ossified project. The so-called love jihad and cow

vigilantism are good tools in rural and semi-urban centres. The party believed that they need not be unleashed in more posh urban settings, lest the middle classes get alienated. Even on the contentious issue of beef-eating, the BJP has shown remarkable tactical flexibility in states such as Kerala, where a large number of Hindus are beef-eaters. The Opposition, meanwhile, has singularly failed to counter this politics because its methods are confused and half-hearted. For example, the secular camp could have resorted to an intelligent-yet-peaceful symbolism to organise a protest on August 5.

Rahul-Priyanka Deliver A Big Win; What They Must Do Next



Sudheendra Kulkarni

'Operation Mal' by the BJP has flopped in Rajasthan. Democracy has won a small victory in India's largest state, giving a boost to the Congress party's hopes of a nationwide revival. For this, the credit should go mainly to the decisive action by the two leaders who now command the highest degree of support within the party - the brother-sister duo of Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. They were ably assisted by party

colleagues, both old and young, in their reconciliatory efforts to convince Sachin Pilot into a 'ghar wapasi'.

Pilot was a rising young star in the Congress before he thoughtlessly raised the banner of revolt against the Chief Minister to whom he was Deputy. Whether the revolt was at the bidding of the top national leadership of the BJP, or the BJP exploited his revolt to mount yet another "Operation Mal" to topple the government led by Ashok Gehlot, is not fully known. It

probably was a combination of the two. Whatever it was, it failed.

I owe an explanation here for using the term 'Operation Mal', instead of 'Operation Kamal' to describe the BJP's despicable designs to steal the people's mandates in states where it lost assembly elections, Madhya Pradesh being the latest example. In Hindi and in many other Indian languages, 'mal' means muck. In the context of our discussion, it connotes how the BJP, whose party symbol is 'Kamal' (lotus), has used the muck of money muscle and misused the power of democratic institutions, including that of pliant state governors, to dislodge non-BJP governments and install its own. The BJP's top leaders in the bygone era, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani, used to take pride in saying they chose the lotus as their party symbol for a deliberate reason. During my years

with the BJP, I was inspired whenever I heard them exhort party workers - "Kamal grows in keechad (dirty water), and yet remains clean. Similarly, our political life must remain clean even though we are working in an environment that is highly corrupt and dirty." Furthermore, Vajpayee and Advani, along with other opposition leaders, often slammed the then ruling party, the Congress, for misusing the governor's office for partisan gains. For obvious reasons, Narendra Modi and Amit Shah have never repeated this principled exhortation. How can they, when their stated goal is to make India "Congress-mukt"? And to be fair to them, when have they ever claimed they are committed to doing politics in ethical ways? Pilot's homecoming has ended yet another sordid episode in India's malfunctioning democracy in which the

purchasing of MLAs with offers of obscene amounts of dirty money and quarantining them in five-star resorts has become the new normal. However, the Congress leadership cannot become complacent after its success in this internal conflict-resolution. "Where is leadership in the Congress? It has simply evaporated." This was the public perception when the Modi-Shah skullduggery toppled the Congress-led governments in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh and installed BJP governments in Goa and some other states even though it lacked popular mandate. There was growing unease even within the rank and file of the Congress because of two consecutive debacles in parliamentary elections, followed by a prolonged and debilitating uncertainty over who will succeed the ailing Sonia Gandhi as party president.

In Xi Vs World, Sharpest Swing In Policy Toward China From India

Gerry Shih

Taiwan - Hours before midnight on New Year's Eve, Chinese leader Xi Jinping predicted his nation could not only attain new heights of domestic prosperity in 2020 but also claim victories in diplomacy.

"We have friends in every corner of the world," Xi told his nation in a televised speech.

Now, after six tumultuous months for Chinese foreign policy and one devastating pandemic, China's most crucial relationship - with Washington - has reached its lowest ebb in half a century after the Trump administration shuttered a Chinese consulate in Houston, imposed sanctions on China's TikTok and WeChat apps, and coaxed Britain to ban Huawei telecommunications equipment.

In a series of four speeches this summer capped by a July 23 call by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for an "alliance of democracies" against authoritarian China, senior U.S. officials declared the United States in deeply ideological, even existential, conflict with

the Chinese Communist Party. And as Xi surveys the geopolitical landscape closer to home, he is encountering not a circle of friends but the emerging outlines of an adversarial bloc.

Xi's push to quell Hong Kong with a national security law this summer drew joint condemnation from Western countries, including several that suspended extradition treaties or trading privileges with the city. His repression of ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang region continues to draw global censure. A deadly border skirmish in June prompted India to boot scores of Chinese apps out of its technology market and dispatch 30,000 additional troops to the Himalayan region, where they remain at an impasse with Chinese forces.

Increased Chinese incursions into maritime territory also claimed by Southeast Asian countries, Taiwan and Japan have prompted warnings from regional officials about the potential for a serious military clash. Since July, Chinese territorial disputes have even broken out with tiny Bhutan and Tajikistan.

This week Scott Morrison, the prime minister of Australia - a country that, like India, sought a

neutral tack toward China until recently - said establishing an alliance with like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific was a "critical priority" and conceded the "previously inconceivable" possibility of war in Asia. Later this year, Australia is expected to join India, Japan and the United States in joint naval exercises aimed at countering China, an idea India previously ruled out as too provocative.

All told, China's diplomatic horizons have darkened dramatically since January, when Xi was nearing a "phase one" trade truce with President Donald Trump and planning to woo Japan and the European Union - two counterweights to Washington - in separate state visits this year. Both trips have been quietly shelved.

"Given China's expanding security sphere, its strategy for economic and technology leadership, a trend toward conflict with its neighbors and the U.S. was inevitable," said Wang Ting-yu, a lawmaker who sits on Taiwan's foreign affairs and national defense committee. "But nobody saw these conflicts coming together so abruptly in 2020. China is now facing what



I would call a 'latent alliance.' " The question now is whether this loose grouping of countries with similar attitudes toward China will cement into something more. The answer will probably be shaped by domestic politics, especially in the United States, Wang said.

"China and everyone else is waiting to see what happens in November" in the U.S. presidential election, he said. "Would a Biden victory change things? If Trump is reelected, could he hold together this alliance? Would he want to?"

- - - In Asian capitals and Washington, officials and analysts say China's conflicts do not necessarily represent a grand, calculated scheme to

seize territory or geopolitical advantage under the cover of the coronavirus pandemic - as some senior U.S. officials, including Pompeo, have repeatedly argued.

Rather, they say, China's refusal to back down on external disputes large and small stems from a sense of political insecurity and economic pressure at home, and the need to display strength in line with the image Xi has crafted for China and for himself - a mirror image, in some ways, of an American president who has railed against China on the campaign trail while struggling to contain the coronavirus and unemployment at home.

Lord Ram And The India-China Face-Off - by Rajmohan Gandhi



Rajmohan Gandhi

Until recent years, it seemed that any clear edge that India possessed over China was in ideology. Economically, China was much stronger. Militarily, although India's capabilities along the Himalayas had greatly improved during the post-1962 decades, China seemed to possess a much larger array of resources. However, as against an evidently totalitarian China, India was democratic. Whereas China was stifled by one-party rule, India was being constantly

refreshed by free debate, competition among political parties, and new governments. Nationally and globally, democracy gave India immense advantages. Benefits that accrue when journalists, writers, poets, professors and film-makers are unfettered, when independent civil servants direct investigative agencies, and when judges can punish the powerful.

The actualization of these democratic ideals was limited. In particular, our political democracy was slow to translate into social democracy. Hierarchies and

oppressions continued. Even so, the world seemed far more comfortable with a loud, oft-chaotic, democratic India than with a more productive yet uniform China where dissenters could not speak, and where governments could not be voted out. Not only was the world more at ease with a democratic India, there were indications that the people of China were curious about India's freedoms. At least to a few in China, India's modern experiment in democracy seemed to recall an ancient period when ideas travelled from India to China. In the world, India's appeal was particularly strong for nations containing diverse populations. Often run by dictators who play on the strength or numbers of a single tribe, sect or ethnic group, such nations were interested in spectacularly varied India. If India could be governed democratically and without one community bossing over the rest, there was hope for other heterogenous lands.

Far more important, however, than Indian democracy's appeal to the world, or to the people of China, was the strength that a pluralist democracy brought to India. Hierarchies and oppressions notwithstanding, Adivasis, castes "low" and "high", and Dalits could feel that India was theirs. And all in India - Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jews, atheists, whatever - could imagine that India belonged as much to them as to the Hindu majority.

Now, almost precisely when India's equation with China has reached its most testing point in decades, we witness profoundly disturbing signals that threaten Indian solidarity. By involving himself as Prime Minister with the formal commencement of the construction of a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, Narendra Modi has declared the Hindu-ness of the Indian state and struck at Indian society's cohesion. The question goes beyond the constitutional principles of secularism and

pluralism. Mr. Modi seems to dismiss the realities that scream off India's map. Muslim-majority Kashmir, bordering both China and Pakistan, occupies the north of India. Sikh-majority Punjab sits on India's western boundary. Christians constitute either a majority or a strong minority in the eastern border states of Mizoram, Nagaland and Meghalaya, in equally crucial Kerala on India's southern extremity, and in Goa, small in size but known well to the whole world. And Tamil Nadu's sharp opposition to religious majoritarianism has a long and powerful history.

Taking India as a whole, a policy of humiliating 200 million Muslims, disregarding Sikhs, frightening Christians and unsettling large numbers of Hindus who prize equality is hardly the way to unite a people for any long-drawn contest with China. For all its strategic value, a distant Quad cannot be a substitute for Indian cohesion.

India, Nepal to discuss projects amid tensions

The joint oversight mechanism, which was launched in 2016 and reviews progress in bilateral projects, is scheduled to hold a meeting on August 17, people familiar with developments said on condition of anonymity.



(News Agencies)- An India-Nepal body overseeing the implementation of development projects funded by New Delhi is set to meet in Kathmandu next week, the first high-level contact between the two sides since ties were hit by a border row that erupted last year. The joint oversight mechanism, which was launched in 2016 and reviews progress in bilateral projects, is scheduled to hold a meeting on August 17, people familiar with developments said on

condition of anonymity. The meeting between Indian envoy Vinay Mohan Kwatra and Nepal's foreign secretary, Shanker Das Bairagi, who jointly chair the mechanism, is being seen by some quarters in Kathmandu as a positive development after the border row took relations to a new low. "The mechanism will only focus on the implementation of India-funded projects in Nepal. However, it could help break the logjam in relations," said a

person. A second person described the scheduled meeting of the mechanism as "part of regular interaction between India and Nepal". He added, "This oversight mechanism was set up in 2016 to review ongoing bilateral economic and development projects and meets on a periodic basis." During its seventh meeting in July last year, the mechanism reviewed the implementation of projects such as cross-border rail links, petroleum pipelines, roads,

bridges, integrated border check posts, energy, irrigation, and post-earthquake reconstruction. The border row erupted late last year after Nepal objected to the inclusion of the Kalapani region, which is claimed by Kathmandu, in a new map showing the union territory of Ladakh that was issued by India. The row was exacerbated in May, when India opened a new road to the Lipulekh region on the border with Tibet, as this area, too, is claimed by Nepal. Nepal responded by issuing a new map that showed Kalapani, Lipulekh, and Limpiyadhura, which are all controlled by India, as part of Nepalese territory. Kathmandu also said New Delhi has not responded to several requests for talks on the border issue, though India said a meeting couldn't be arranged because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Nepal's foreign minister Pradeep Gyawali told The Kathmandu Post on Tuesday: "We don't have alternatives to talks...We can't hold our entire ties hostage to the differences over the boundary issue." Gyawali said Nepal is confident its partnership with India will move in a positive direction. "For the time being, the boundary issues can be isolated...Differences over one

issue should not overshadow our entire bilateral relations...We believe in constructive engagement, and the upcoming meeting is just one positive step towards that end," he added. In recent weeks, the two countries have also engaged in a war of words over the origins of historic figures such as Lord Ram and Gautam Buddha. Nepal on Sunday responded to external affairs minister S Jaishankar's remarks that Gautam Buddha was one of the two greatest Indians for people around the world by saying historical and archaeological evidence shows the founder of Buddhism was born in Nepalese territory. India clarified that Jaishankar had referred to the shared heritage of the two countries. Last month, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli sparked a controversy with his remarks that the "real" Ayodhya is in Nepal and that Lord Ram was Nepalese. He also said Nepal had "become a victim of cultural encroachment" and its history was manipulated. Following protests in India, the Nepal government clarified Oli's remarks were "not linked to any political subject" and there was "no intention...to hurt the feeling and sentiment of anyone".

The Rajapaksas cement power in Sri Lanka

Their win was inevitable, but the impact is worrying



(News Agencies)- New Delhi on Thursday rejected Islamabad's condemnation of the construction of the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, with the ministry of external affairs (MEA) saying Pakistan should not interfere in India's internal affairs and refrain from "communal incitement". Pakistan's foreign ministry had on Wednesday condemned the building of the

temple and described the judgement by India's Supreme Court (SC) that paved the way for the construction as "flawed". Responding to these remarks, MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said: "We have seen the press statement by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on a matter internal to India. It should desist from interfering in India's affairs and

refrain from communal incitement." He added, "While this is not a surprising stance from a nation that practices cross-border terrorism and denies its own minorities their religious rights, such comments are nevertheless deeply regrettable." The development came against the backdrop of Pakistan mounting a campaign on the Kashmir issue on the first anniversary (August 5) of India's move to scrap the special status of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and to split the erstwhile state into two union territories (UTs). India-Pakistan ties have been at an all-time low since last year's stand-off over Pulwama terror attack on February 14 blamed on the Pakistan-based Jaish-

e-Mohammed (JeM), an outlawed outfit. In a statement issued on Wednesday, Pakistan's Foreign Office had said: "The flawed judgement of the Indian Supreme Court paving the way for construction of the temple not only reflected the preponderance of faith over justice but also the growing majoritarianism in today's India, where minorities, particularly Muslims and their places of worship, are increasingly under attack." The statement said the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) had passed resolutions condemning the demolition of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya and the ruling

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was constructing the Ram temple as part of an agenda "of converting India into a 'Hindu Rashtra' ". It criticised the haste in starting construction of the temple amid the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic and the controversy over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), as well as measures that "demonised, dispossessed, marginalised and subjected" Muslims to targeted violence. It also criticised what it described as India's "systematic human rights violations" in J&K and a "design to change the demography" of the region.



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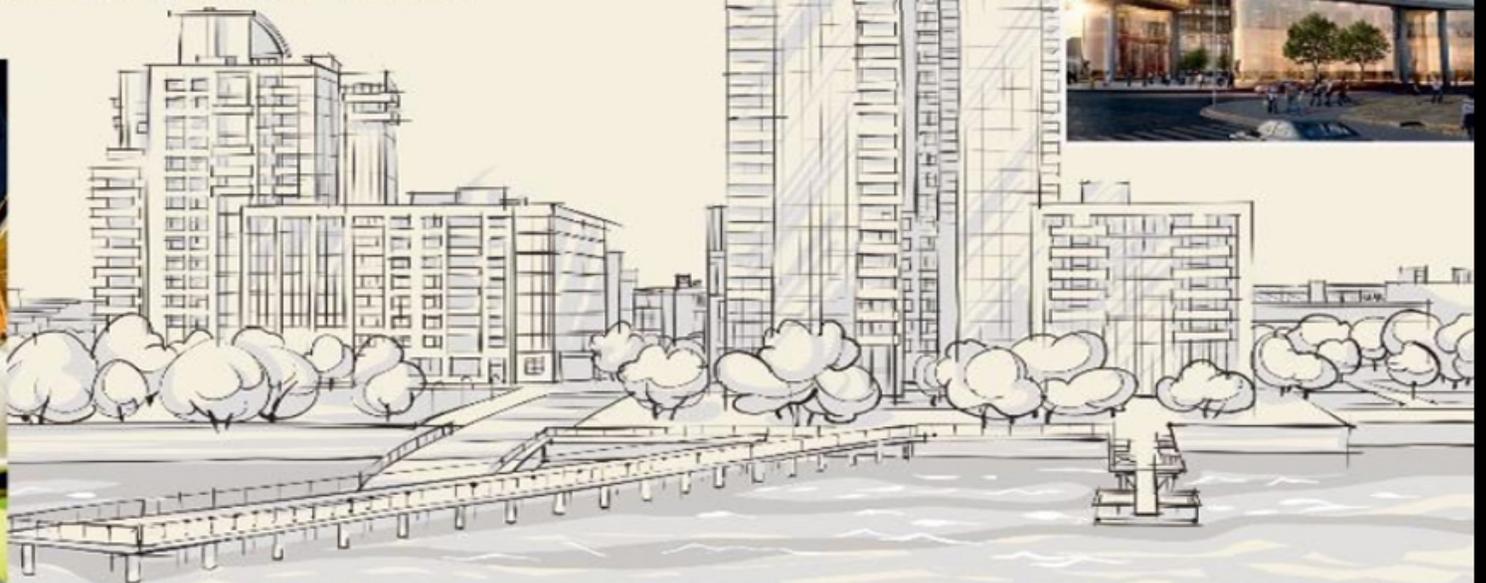
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Ilhan Omar beats primary challenger in Minnesota



She once suggested that pro-Israel lawmakers had dual allegiance to both the U.S. and Israel, and that Israel had "hypnotized the world."

Throughout the campaign, Melton-Meaux presented himself as a unifier who could build consensus in Congress. He cast Omar as an out-of-touch politician more interested in social media spats than delivering for her constituents.

(News Agencies)-Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) on Tuesday fought off a well-funded primary challenger who accused her of pursuing a national profile at the expense of her Minneapolis district.

Omar defeated local lawyer Antone Melton-Meaux, who was backed by pro-Israel interests angered by the freshman lawmaker's rhetoric and foreign policy stances. Omar led by about 17 points when The Associated Press called the primary for the safe Democratic seat.

One of four minority congresswomen elected in 2018 known as the "Squad," Omar gained national attention for her Twitter clashes with President Donald Trump. She became a prominent voice in the progressive movement, but drew criticism over her comments on Israel that some deemed anti-Semitic.

Pro-Israel interests funneled money toward Melton-Meaux, who raised a staggering \$3.2 million in the second quarter. He used the windfall to outspend Omar on the air by a 2 to 1 margin. A top spending super PAC, with ties to a pro-Israel group, kicked in \$1.5 million on TV ads to boost Omar.

The congresswoman's win is all the more impressive considering she was left largely unprotected by progressive groups who fixed on helping fellow "Squad" member, Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.), in her primary last week.

"Ilhan Omar has fought for her constituents with courage and a positive progressive vision," Justice Democrats Executive Director Alex Rojas said in a statement. "Despite all the manufactured hype and money spent attacking them, the Squad is winning, it's growing, and is here to stay."

Jamie Dimon: The stock market doesn't reflect Americans' pain

(News Agencies)-The stock market's huge run-up in recent months doesn't capture everyday Americans' pain. That's why the government and Big Business should act to help ease the burden on the least fortunate, said JPMorgan Chase (JPM) CEO Jamie Dimon, in an interview with CNN Business.

"When you have 13 million people out of work, and you've got people suffering and small business suffering, that's far more important than the vicissitudes of Wall Street," Dimon told CNN's Christine Romans. "That's what we should worry about." Dimon said businesses must do more to help low-income and minority Americans. That's why he joined a new initiative to work with educational institutions and nonprofits in the New York area to provide more job opportunities for Black, Latinx and Asian workers. He said that government alone cannot solve society's biggest problems.

"The pace is quick, the world has become more complex, and these problems of education, and jobs, infrastructure, immigration, if you fixed

these things we will have a far more just society," Dimon told Romans.

Dimon, along with City University of New York Chancellor Félix Matos Rodriguez, spoke with Romans last week about the launch of the New York Jobs CEO Council, a coalition of 27 business leaders that is pledging to hire 100,000 New Yorkers by 2030 and provide apprenticeships for 25,000 CUNY students.

Dimon is one of the council's co-chairs, along with EY global chairman and CEO Carmine Di Sibio, IBM (IBM) CEO Arvind Krishna, McKinsey and Company global managing partner Kevin Sneader and Accenture (ACN) CEO Julie Sweet. The goal of the council, according to Matos Rodriguez, is to build new connections for his school's students - many of whom are the first in the family to go to college. "The idea is to build new networks," Matos Rodriguez said. "That internship is going to be the beginning of those building of networks. And then everybody's going to see what kind of talent there is."

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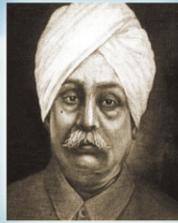
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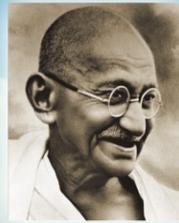
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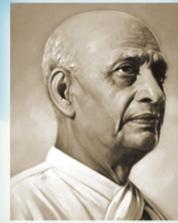
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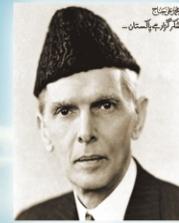
Lala Lajpat Rai
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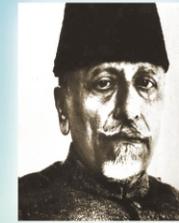
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
(1875-1950)



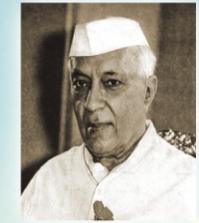
Mohammed Ali Jinnah
(1876-1948)



Vir Savarkar
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Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
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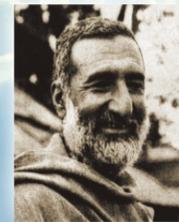
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Chandra Shekhar Azad
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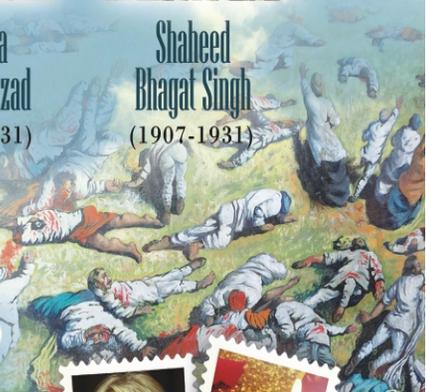
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Court orders Uber, Lyft to reclassify drivers as employees in California

(News Agencies)-Uber and Lyft were ordered by a California court on Monday to reclassify their drivers in the state as employees, marking the latest escalation in an ongoing legal battle over a new law impacting much of the on-demand economy. The companies will have 10 days before the order takes effect to allow for an appeal, according to a copy of the ruling from San Francisco Superior Court judge Ethan Schulman. Uber and Lyft currently treat their drivers as independent contractors. The mounting legal pressure to reclassify their workers in the state comes at an uncertain time for both companies. Uber (UBER) and Lyft (LYFT) continue to grapple with the pandemic, which significantly cut demand for their core ride-hailing businesses. Both companies have undergone layoffs and have long histories of steep losses. According to the court ruling, "now, when Defendant's ridership is at an all-time low, may be the best time (or the least worst time) for Defendants to change their

business practices to conform to California law without causing widespread adverse effects on their drivers." In response to the order, Lyft spokesperson Julie Wood said, "drivers do not want to be employees, full stop." "We'll immediately appeal this ruling and continue to fight for their independence. Ultimately, we believe this issue will be decided by California voters and that they will side with drivers," Wood said in a statement provided to CNN Business. Representatives for Uber did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Monday's order comes after California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and a coalition of city attorneys filed for a preliminary injunction in late June to force the two ride-hailing companies to comply with the California law known as AB-5. The injunction was part of a lawsuit filed in May that alleges the companies are misclassifying their workers in violation of the law. Under the law, which went into

effect on January 1, companies must prove workers are free from company control and perform work outside the usual course of the company's business in order to classify workers as independent contractors rather than employees. The lawsuit accuses Uber and Lyft of depriving workers of protections, including a minimum wage, overtime, paid sick leave, and unemployment insurance, that they would be entitled to as employees. Uber, Lyft and DoorDash have each put \$30 million behind a ballot initiative, with additional support from Instacart and Postmates, which Uber recently agreed to acquire. If passed, it would exempt them from the AB-5 law, but offer drivers some benefits. On Monday, The New York Times published an op-ed from Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi asking states to pass new laws requiring gig economy companies to establish benefits funds that would give workers



cash for benefits such as health insurance or paid time off. "Uber is ready, right now, to pay more to give drivers new benefits and protections," he wrote. "But America needs to change the status quo to protect all workers, not just one type of work." The AB-5 law has long been viewed as a potential existential threat to many gig economy companies like Uber and Lyft, which built up their businesses in large part by treating workers as independent contractors rather than employees. In addition to not receiving certain employee protections, drivers also pay their own expenses, including gas and vehicle

maintenance. Last week, the California's Labor Commissioner's Office filed lawsuits against Uber and Lyft for allegedly committing wage theft by misclassifying their on-demand workers as independent contractors instead of employees. "The vast majority of drivers want to work independently, and we've already made significant changes to our app to ensure that remains the case under California law," said an Uber spokesperson in a statement last week. "When over 3 million Californians are without a job, our elected leaders should be focused on creating work, not trying to shut down an entire industry."

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Breaking down the executive actions Trump signed on coronavirus relief



the as much as \$400 additional benefit each person may be able to receive weekly in additional aid. On top of that, a state must agree to enter into this financial agreement with the federal government for any unemployed person living there to get any of the additional benefits.

On Sunday night, Trump said he was open to allowing people to get the enhanced benefit without states picking up some of the cost. He said it was possible that the federal government could pick up the entire cost if governors make a request.

"We have a system where we can do 100% or we can do 75%, they pay 25, and it will depend on the state," he said to reporters before returning to the White House from his resort in New Jersey. "And they will make a application. We will look at it, and we'll make a decision."

States are in dire financial straits. Many states have already asked the federal government for major financial help. Several experts told CNN there are major questions about how many states may be able to afford the

extra cost.

If a state says that it does not have the funds or does not want to enter into the agreement with the federal government, the unemployed person in that state receives zero dollars in extra federal benefits (they would still receive the normal state unemployment insurance).

In fact, states have asked Congress to provide them with an additional \$500 billion to help shore up their budgets, which have been crushed by the loss of tax revenue amid the pandemic. This has been one of the main points of contention between Democrats, who want to allocate additional aid, and Republicans, who don't want to bail out what they say are badly managed states.

The millions of Americans who've filed for jobless benefits also have drained several states' unemployment benefits trust funds. Already, 10 states have borrowed nearly \$20 billion from the Treasury Department to cover their share of payments, which typically last 26 weeks.

Requires a new system.

Because Congress has not authorized an extension of extra federal unemployment assistance, the state will have to set up an entirely new system to deliver the additional aid.

"The state has to enter an agreement saying not only can they pay the benefit, but that they have some ability to administer the benefit," said Michelle Evermore, an unemployment expert at the National Employment Law Project.

Building a brand new program could take states months to accomplish, Evermore said. She added Trump needed to do it this way because "in order for states to administer a benefit it has to be authorized by Congress, so they can't use their administrative systems to pay a benefit that hasn't been authorized by Congress."

Few will be helped. Evermore, one of the nation's leading experts on unemployment, told CNN she considered the chances of this effort helping many of the newly unemployed due to Covid-19 "low."

(News Agencies)-With stimulus talks stalled, President Donald Trump announced he would go around Congress to deliver aid to Americans affected by the pandemic.

But a close read of the actual text of executive actions he signed Saturday suggests that even if they are deemed constitutional, they will not quickly deliver the aid Trump promised. They may not deliver much at all.

Here's a breakdown of the actions, the many strings attached and questions about what they actually accomplish. Unemployment benefits Trump described the memorandum signed Saturday

as an action providing "an additional or extra \$400 a week and expanded benefits."

But in reality, the additional unemployment aid is more complicated than the White House acknowledged and experts say it may not help a lot of the unemployed.

Under the previous unemployment benefit passed by Congress, millions of Americans received an additional blanket \$600 a week from the federal government on top of their state unemployment benefits.

States have to chip in. Now, under Trump's measure, the federal government is requiring states to pick up the tab for 25% (\$100) of

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COVID-19 is extremely contagious, meaning that it is easily transmitted from one person to another. If you tested positive for COVID-19 or think you might have it because of your symptoms, it is very important that you do not come in close contact with others, including people you may live with. This is called "self-isolation." You may qualify to self-isolate in a hotel, free of charge, for up to 14 days if you do not have a safe place to self-isolate. This can mean:

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Picking Kamala Harris makes history, but will it make a difference in November?

Commentators weigh in on Joe Biden's selection of Sen. Kamala Harris for his running mate. The views expressed in this commentary are their own. Kamala Harris is a veteran campaigner who has made history, over and over: First woman district attorney of San Francisco, first woman attorney general of California, first Indian-American elected to the US Senate and only the second Black woman senator. After a convention vote that is really a formality, she'll be the first woman of color named to a major-party national ticket.

Harris brings Biden a direct link to the party's African-American base, reflecting his team's strategy of generating excitement and high turnout in Black communities. Four years ago, the Democratic ticket lost Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania -- and with them, the White House -- by a scant 80,000 votes.

As operatives pointed out at the time, slightly higher Black voter turnout in Detroit, Milwaukee and Philadelphia would have brought victory to the Democrats. The party is taking no chances this time: Biden's headquarters is in Philadelphia and the Democratic convention, pre-coronavirus, was supposed to take place in Milwaukee.

Harris also brings a connection to a politically potent, largely overlooked Indian-American community that has produced successful candidates throughout the nation. Bobby Jindal and Nikki Haley were both elected Republican governors of Louisiana and South Carolina, respectively, and the current mayors of Hoboken, New Jersey, Anaheim, California, San Antonio, Texas are all of Indian descent. If elected, Harris would be the most prominent and powerful representative of this community.

At a time when demands for racial justice and inclusion are surging, Harris can speak with experience and authority about balancing the need for change with the core requirement of maintaining public safety. Attacks from leftist activists on her record as a tough prosecutor will likely fall flat. Harris comes across in public as pleasant,

earnest and fair: Trying to accuse her of being pro-incarceration will sound like nonsense to most voters.

She is fearsome in debate and comfortable on television, two skills that will come in handy in a race that will largely be fought on small screens rather than at huge outdoor rallies.

Errol Louis is the host of "Inside City Hall," a nightly political show on NY1, a New York all-news channel.

Frida Ghitis: A running mate to inspire even Republicans Joe Biden made precisely the right choice with Sen. Kamala Harris, a passionate, eloquent, inspiring figure with the potential to do everything a presidential candidate needs from his running mate.

To make his decision Biden, the former vice president and soon-to-be Democratic nominee, had to contend with competing demands. Pick someone who could help him win the election through campaigning prowess, or someone who can help him govern and is ready to take over if needed? Someone who would energize progressive Democrats, or someone who could appeal to the party's centrists? Someone who would boost turnout among Democrats, or someone who can lure disaffected Republicans?

The choice was obvious. As if by magic, Harris manages to meet all those seemingly-conflicting qualifications.

She is a centrist, like Biden. They share an overall philosophy, which is the most important criterion for choosing a potential successor. But most left-of-center progressives, despite some inevitable complaints, will find her an irresistible choice. She is a woman of color, with roots in Africa, India, the Caribbean. Her mother was born in India, her father in Jamaica. That means she is an American through and through; like pretty much all of us the product of immigration.

She would become the first woman vice president and she also has a very good shot at becoming president, not only because of Biden's age, but because she is now the automatic choice for his successor.

Some will object to her track

record as a tough public prosecutor. But that prosecutorial background deals a devastating blow to President Donald Trump's efforts to claim the Democrats are soft on crime.

Ignore the sexists. They already accused her of being "too ambitious." Feel free to laugh at that charge: What politician is not ambitious? What Senator is not ambitious? Name one person who has run for high office who did aspire to have an impact, even to change the world. How many in Congress have dreamed of the presidency?

Some thought Biden would rule her out because she hit him too hard during the presidential debates. But Biden was probably impressed. Kamala is a brilliant debater, a fighter. She can spar with the best of them. She delicately shredded Justice Brett Kavanaugh with her questioning during his confirmation hearings. The debate with Vice President Mike Pence will be must-see TV. Democrats, as if they needed more motivation than getting rid of Trump, will rally behind her. And those Republicans questioning their party's choice -- except for the most sexist and racist among them -- will find it tempting to back Team Biden-Harris 2020.

Frida Ghitis, a former CNN producer and correspondent, is a world affairs columnist. She is a frequent opinion contributor to CNN, a contributing columnist to The Washington Post and a columnist for World Politics Review. Follow her on Twitter @fridaghitis.

Scott Jennings: The problem with choosing Kamala Harris When I think of Kamala Harris, a comment about her by an African American voter in Michigan sticks with me: "She's fake. She's phony. She's not one of us. She built a political career by over-prosecuting Black kids," Brandi Neal, an employee at Detroit City Hall, told Politico.

That sentiment may explain why Senator Harris' presidential campaign was a short ride.

In my view, several primary rivals like Bernie Sanders outlasted her because their authenticity was perceived to be far greater. But winning the vote of one person - Joe Biden, in this case - was easier than winning the millions

of votes necessary to be the nominee herself.

Harris was the safe choice for a campaign that is playing it safe. The Biden camp thinks it is sitting on a lead so it took the safest route - a basically vetted person who will neither help nor hurt the Democratic campaign. Most research shows that VP choices rarely make a difference. Harris probably won't, either. Her home state is safely Democratic. Her primary campaign shows she's not a great fundraiser. Her politics - liberal with more than a hint of authoritarianism (think of her attempts to get Donald Trump banned from Twitter) sprinkled in for good measure - fit well on a national ticket trending hard towards both.

Scott Jennings, a CNN contributor, is a former special assistant to President George W. Bush and a former campaign adviser to Sen. Mitch McConnell. He is a partner at RunSwitch Public Relations in Louisville, Kentucky. Follow him on Twitter @ScottJenningsKY.

Tara Setmayer: Biden-Harris is the best choice for disaffected conservatives From the beginning of his campaign, Joe Biden has made it clear that we are in a fight for the soul of America. He needed to find a partner in that fight -- now he has California Sen. Kamala Harris.

Throughout his career, Biden's most trusted advisers have been smart, strong women, from his wife Dr. Jill Biden to his sister Valerie Biden Owens, who has played a central role in every campaign throughout her brother's political career.

It shouldn't come as much of a surprise that Biden would choose a woman who exhibits those same characteristics as his running mate. Harris's prowess as a formidable questioner and debater should send chills down Vice President Mike Pence's spine. The vice presidential debate in the fall is going to be must-see television.

Although Harris' prosecutorial skills have served her well in the political arena, her record as a prosecutor could also become a liability. Within minutes of Biden's historic announcement, the Trump campaign and their surrogates telegraphed their attack strategy against the newly

minted campaign duo as out of step with the Black community's current calls for police and criminal justice reform.

It's clear the Trump campaign will use Harris's prosecutorial record and Biden's sponsorship of the infamous 1994 crime bill as wedge issues to depress the black vote in crucial swing states. Harris and Biden must be fully prepared to assuage any voter concerns those issues may cause. They can't afford to make the same mistakes Hillary Clinton's campaign made in 2016.

As the country continues to reel from the tragic impact of a deadly pandemic, economic distress and racial division, the American people now have a clear choice in this 2020 presidential election. Unlike Trump, Biden is competent, compassionate and battle tested through tragedy. With Harris at his side as a happy warrior with a powerful personal story of her own, the contrast couldn't be any starker. Biden-Harris is everything Trump-Pence is not.

Despite the policy differences many of us disaffected conservatives may have, the Biden-Harris ticket presents the best prescription to defeat the existential threat Trump poses to our democratic norms, institutions and ideals come Nov. 3.

Tara Setmayer is a former GOP communications director, host of the "Honestly Speaking with Tara" podcast, a Harvard Institute of Politics 2020 Resident Fellow and a CNN political contributor. She is a senior adviser to the Lincoln Project. Follow her on Twitter @tarasetmayer.

David Gergen: Picking Harris shows Biden's good judgment In selecting the first woman of color to serve on a national ticket, Joe Biden has not only made an historic choice, but also made an important and wise choice for the future of the presidency.

Biden found several qualities in Kamala Harris that made her an appealing selection. He made clear from the start, for example, that he wanted a running mate who would be a trustworthy partner in the West Wing - a veep whose working relationship would resemble the one he had with President Barack Obama.

How China gamed the multilateral trading system

It is also worth noting that Taiwan has been a full member of the WTO from 2002 onwards with the appellation: Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu or quite simply "Chinese Taipei".

But it is mainland China's journey in the GATT and subsequently the WTO that should interest all of us. Every country that desires membership of the WTO has to conduct what is known as "accession" negotiations. Essentially, it means that the applicant country has to painstakingly negotiate with each and every WTO member on its trade concessions with regard to Goods, Services and Intellectual Property Rights. The decision to admit a country to the WTO is not just based on trade issues alone; it is also enormously political. The period of accession negotiations for countries usually ranges from 4 to 5 years. In China's case, the period of accession lasted nearly 15 years. China, having been an observer in the GATT from 1986, became a full member of WTO at the Doha Ministerial Conference in 2001.

Normally, when a country joins the WTO, it must ensure the conformity of its laws, regulations and administrative procedures with its WTO obligations. In the case

of China, such an undertaking alone was not considered enough for two reasons: one, there was lack of trust between the major players of WTO led by the US on the one hand and China on the other; two, the "



hybrid state capitalist" model followed by China was not something the WTO Rules were framed for. The decision to admit China was based on the following assumptions:

- o It was better to have a country like China within the system rather than without;
- o Membership of the WTO would enable China to shed the "hybrid state capitalist" model and become an open free market economy; and
- o The political reasoning of

countries led by the US was also that economic liberalisation in China will inevitably, over time, lead to democratic change.

Keeping the above in mind, a special Protocol of Accession was signed between the WTO

Membership and China in 2001. The main obligations for China in this Agreement were:

- o In the case of domestic laws, regulations and administrative procedures, the Agreement enjoins transparency, uniform application of law and judicial review;
- o China to be treated as a non-market economy for fifteen years;
- o China to fully liberalise trade in services in due course;
- o Full compliance with TRIPS

(Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement of the WTO; and

o Reduce and/or eliminate subsidies to State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and a pledge by China that SOEs will run on a commercial basis.

On the all-important aspect of transparency and uniform application of law, it is well known that the Chinese trade policy regime is characterised by remarkable opacity. For instance, China has not provided a full and complete list of subsidies provided by the Federal government let alone those provided by its provincial governments. On trade in services, it is well known that China does not allow foreign payment companies such as Mastercard and Visa and instead favours China Union Pay which dominates the domestic market. Chinese banking sector is pretty much closed to foreign players too. Again, in the case of the digital and data economy, the Chinese strategy is the same: disallow foreign companies such as Google, Amazon, Twitter, Facebook etc and allow Alibaba and Tencent to dominate the market. With Telecom

services, it is the same story: the domestic company Huawei is ubiquitous.

The two areas of real concern are IPRs and SOEs. In both these crucial areas, US and some other key WTO players are furious about Chinese non-compliance with the Protocol of Accession. In the case of IPRs, the Americans have long complained about forced technology transfer and IP theft by China. These are well detailed in the US Section 301 report on China. Perhaps the most disturbing thing from a free market perspective is the role of state-owned enterprises in China's trade policy. There is evidence that between 2001 and 2003 there was some effort by China to reduce the role of SOEs in the economy. But there is incontrovertible evidence that over the last five years, the role of SOEs has increased significantly in the Chinese economy.

The above outlines the classic saga of how China has gamed the multilateral trading system for its own benefit. It is now safe to conclude that the original assumptions about China's entry into the WTO were fundamentally flawed.

Pence tells Harris he looks forwards to VP debate: 'I'll see you in Salt Lake City'

BIDEN VP FINALISTS PRAISE KAMALA HARRIS

Critics and supporters believe she will be a tough opponent on the debate stage in October.

"She will give Vice President Pence a very, very, very bad evening on that debate because she's a great debater. She knows what she's about," Rev. Al Sharpton said on MSNBC Tuesday. "I think Joe Biden could have chosen someone else, but he couldn't have chose anyone better."

"She's tough, she's thorough, and she's ready," Sharpton added.

Harris, who has developed a reputation for her "tenacity" and "fighting tooth and nail," was selected by Biden Tuesday - citing her tough qualities as his reasoning behind his decision.

"Her record of accomplishment - fighting tooth and nail for what's

right - is why I'm choosing her. There is no door Kamala won't knock on, no stone she'll leave unturned, if it means making life better -- for the people," Biden said in his announcement regarding his pick for VP.

"If I were Donald Trump and Mr. Pence, I would be ready for a real battle now," Sharpton said Tuesday.

President Trump has already ramped up his aggressive rhetoric and honed in on Harris' hard prosecutorial style from the debate stage to the Senate floor, referring to her as "nasty" - a word he used to criticize Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential race. "I've been watching her for a long time. I was a little surprised," Trump said in a Tuesday briefing, his first public appearance after

Biden's VP candidate was announced. "She was extraordinarily nasty to Judge Kavanaugh."

"She was nasty to a level that was just a horrible thing, the way she treated now-Justice Kavanaugh, and I won't forget that soon," Trump said.

"She was very, very nasty. She was probably nastier than even Pocahontas to Joe Biden," Trump added, referring to Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., who has endorsed Biden and voiced her support for Harris as vice president.

But not everyone is convinced that Trump's notoriously "nasty" behavior will affect Harris' ability to debate Pence or drive attention on the campaign trail.

"I don't think that you could have a tougher opponent," Sharpton added Tuesday. "I know the

Trump people are preparing all they can to throw at her, but you cannot have a better person to throw it at - that it will bounce off her like it didn't mean anything because she's been in tough fights before." Sharpton's words come after his severe criticism

of the candidates throughout the race, saying that "he didn't see anybody" including Biden or Sen. Bernie Sanders, D-Vt., that could beat Trump after a debate in January. The vice presidential debate is expected to be held on Oct. 7 in Salt Lake City.

Independence Day ceremony to be low-key affair at Wagah Border

security purpose. No sweets have been exchanged between India and Pakistan since the 2019 Pulwama terror attack. However, there is no final word if Indian soldiers will exchange sweets with their Pakistani counterparts on August 15. Speaking about this, a BSF officer said the ball is in Pakistan's court. "Since they celebrate their Independence Day ahead of India (on August 14), it will largely depend on Pakistan's gesture. BSF will take a call following it." The Home Ministry advisory for Independence Day celebrations emphasises on avoiding crowds.

For the Mahatma, the meaning of Independence, nation and religion



Independence - his goal of decades - was round the corner. As was Partition, an anathema. But the mayhem and murder, presaging those two events, were all around him when, late in the night of November 6, 1946, Mahatma Gandhi reached Chandpur by ferry. He was to stay a full four months in the stream-washed wetlands of Noakhali, East Bengal, heeding to calls from brutalised Hindus.

No sooner did he reach that first stop in the tour came news of Muslims in Bihar having been counter-attacked, mercilessly. Grieved and ashamed, Gandhi said, "The Independence of India is today at stake in Bengal and

Bihar. Biharis have behaved as cowards. If the Biharis wanted to retaliate they could have gone to Noakhali and died to a man".

Two deputations met him the next day - the first, Muslim, maintaining that no disturbances had taken place at Chandpur and the second, Hindu, seeking police and military protection. Addressing a gathering of some 15,000, mainly Muslims, at Chandpur that evening, he said, "I have heard of forcible conversions, forcible feeding of beef, abductions and forcible marriages, not to talk about murders, arson and loot. People have broken idols. Muslims do not worship idols. Neither do I.

But why should they interfere with those who wish to worship them? These incidents are a blot on the name of Islam."

The fires having been doused, if not extinguished, in East Bengal, he left on March 3, 1947 to the "opposite theatre" - Bihar. In the village of Bir, he learnt of the brutalities visited on innocent Muslims. Speaking to a gathering in that village, he could barely control his fury. "I wish to ask you, how could you live to see an old woman of 110 butchered before your eyes? I will not rest nor let others rest. I will wander all over on foot and ask the skeletons what happened. There is such a fire raging in me that I will know no peace till I have found a solution for all this."

As steps towards the transfer of power to the two dominions began taking final shape, Gandhi remained firmly away from all of that. His feet took him where his heart said he should be - among the victims of the trauma surrounding the change. And, in early August, he went back to Bengal from Bihar. His specific intention was to return to the still-smarting Noakhali.

In Calcutta, a big Muslim delegation urged him to stay on in the city to help quell the riot-like situation there. He agreed on two conditions: One, those Muslims in Calcutta urging him to work for peace in the city must do what they can to ensure the safety of Hindus in Noakhali. Two, he would live in a Muslim locality in the city where Hindus must ensure the safety of its Muslim residents. Hydari Manzil in the Beliaghata suburb of Calcutta was identified.

"It was a very shabby house," Manu Gandhi records, "without any sort of facility...open on all sides...only one latrine...every inch of the place covered with dust and muddied by rain...Only one available room where everybody and everything had to be accommodated including Bapu himself..."

An officer of the information department met him on August 9 and asked him for a message to the nation on August 15. Gandhi declined to give one. The officer persisted, "It will look kharab if you do not". Gandhi replied, "Hai nahin koyi

message, hone do kharab (There is no message, let it be kharab)."

On August 14, there was a change in atmosphere - for the better, it seemed. This day being his last in office, premier HS Suhrawardy sought and got the privilege of driving Gandhi around parts of the city to see the eager anticipation of Independence, the departure of the last British governor, the induction of the first Indian governor and the Congress government headed by PC Ghosh.

And then a message did come. It was in the shape of a reflection. "Tomorrow we will be free from bondage to the British, but from midnight tonight Hindustan will be broken into two pieces. So tomorrow will be both a day of rejoicing and mourning".

For him, August 15 1947 was a day to fast. Too much was gnawing at his heart. And he recalled his son-like secretary Mahadev Desai who had died on that day, in 1942. Thousands flocked to his Beliaghata room. These included the new ministers to whom he said: "Do not fall prey to lure of wealth".

Envisioning a self-reliant and science-driven India

While behaviour, drugs and vaccine will give an exit from the disease, strive for a new route to recovery, prosperity



It was 1918, three years after he returned to India from South Africa. Mahatma Gandhi thought he had a mild case of dysentery while in Ahmedabad. Tempted by an offer of kheer made by Kasturba, he went on to be severely affected. "This was sufficient invitation to the angel of death," he later wrote in Experiments with Truth. What Gandhi had was a gastric version of the infamous Spanish flu, a pandemic that devastated the world towards the end of the World War I, a gripping story told in Laura Spinney's The Pale Rider. The state of the world

seemed immutable only a year ago. The global braid of politics, economics, dominance and relationships were all knotted together in a way that seemed impossible to redo.

In December 2019, all this changed. A spillover occurred. A virus, normally resident in bats infected a human, in Wuhan, China. Often, the story would have ended there. The human would recover and all would be well. This time, the virus had the ability to infect another human from its first human host and then others. If the 1918 flu pandemic spread like ripples in a pond, the

SARS-Coronavirus-2 has spread Covid-19 like a stone-hopping across the pond of earth. Not only has the disease wreaked havoc on the health and livelihood of the most vulnerable, the consequential damage to the world's economy and morale has been immense. Lives and families are in disarray. The stress and the effect on mental health are not to be underestimated.

On Independence day, as we look back from January 30, when the first case was reported in India, to the present, we need to grasp three strings - acknowledge citizens with pride, grasp the way out of this pandemic, and take a new path - to create a new braid that will hold India and the world together in a more just way.

To anyone unfamiliar with India, it would seem extraordinary how all of India observed lockdowns from the first one onwards. Next, our doctors, nurses and hospitals worked relentlessly. Our administrators from the smallest towns to the big metros have also not rested. Our scientists and

engineers, our industry, our farmers, all came together to make extraordinary products for our people and the medical system, defying broken global supply chains.

From within government at every level, and at every level in the bureaucracy, there was and is an unflinching commitment to deal with each aspect of this pandemic. These are extraordinary times where decisions, based on complex and multifarious inputs, have to be taken each day, accepted by all each day, and then implemented. All of this under the relentless, eagle-eyed, and critical watch of the media, of intellectuals, and of disease-analysts; all necessary and natural feedback in a democracy. Now, as we go two-thirds of the way through this nightmare year, it is more necessary than ever to wake up, take charge and wrest our lives

and livelihood back, and not be numbed into inaction, waiting for a miracle to lead us out. In truth, that miracle is here and it is all of us. We have learnt much about the virus and we need to learn a lot more. But, some conclusions from science are very persuasive. Following them, we can crush the virus and get our lives back. Mask up properly when in company. Observe hygiene. Keep a distance from others, and as much as feasible, stay in ventilated spaces. These are simple to say but often hard to do. Yet, we must keep at it. These acts effectively decrease the spread of the virus. External help is also at hand. Through the efforts of scientists, we are getting better and faster diagnostics tests. In the near future, we will have access to inexpensive and frequent tests, allowing us to carry on with our activities more efficiently than we could in the early stages of the pandemic.

'India Can Give Befitting Response To Any Attempt Of Aggression': President Kovind On I-Day Eve

President Ram Nath Kovind paid tributes to the 'martyrs of Galwan Valley' in his speech on Independence Day eve. He also lauded the construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya as 'a moment of pride for all'.

In a veiled message to China amid the border standoff, President Ram Nath Kovind on Friday asserted that while India believes in peace it is also capable of giving a befitting response to any attempt of aggression as he said "some in our neighbourhood" tried to carry out "misadventure of expansion".

In his address to the nation on the eve of the 74th Independence Day, Kovind also spoke about the 'Aatmanirbhar' initiative launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and allayed fears of foreign investors saying India's self-reliance means being self-sufficient without alienating or creating distance from the world, with which it would continue to engage.

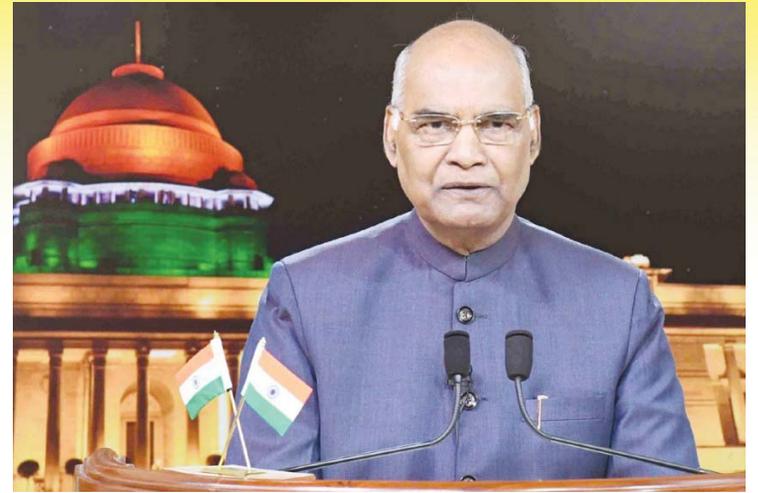
Touching upon the COVID-19 pandemic, Kovind said the nation is indebted to doctors, nurses and other health workers who have been continuously on the forefront of the fight against the disease which has disrupted all activities world over and taken a huge toll.

He also complimented the Modi government, noting it is very reassuring to note that the Centre while anticipating the tremendous challenge responded effectively and well in time. "For a country so vast and diverse with high population density, meeting this challenge requires super-human efforts."

Without taking China's name, the President said "while the world community needs to fight

together against the greatest challenge (COVID-19) before humanity, some in our neighbourhood tried to carry out their misadventure of expansion." He saluted the brave soldiers who laid down their lives defending the country's borders. "Those worthy sons of 'Bharat Mata' lived and died for national pride.

The entire nation salutes the martyrs of Galwan Valley. Every Indian feels grateful to their family members," he said. Twenty personnel of the Indian army were killed during clashes with the Chinese PLA in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh on June 15. "Their bravery in combat has demonstrated that while we believe in peace, we are also capable of giving a befitting



response to any attempt of aggression. We are proud of the members of our Armed Forces, paramilitary forces and police personnel who protect the borders, and ensure our internal security."

The President also said construction of the temple at Shri Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya "was indeed a moment of pride for all". Prime Minister Modi performed the 'Bhoomi Pujan' for the Ram temple on August

5. "People of the country maintained restraint and patience for a long time and reposed unflinching trust in the judicial system. The issue of Ram Janmabhoomi was resolved through judicial process." All concerned parties and the people respectfully accepted the verdict of the Supreme Court and displayed before the world, Indian ethos of peace, non-violence, love and harmony, he said.

From Ayodhya to Mumbai and back

In 2020, go back to the riots and violence of 1992-93. There has been no closure, no justice



In television newsrooms, the Ram mandir bhoomi puja on August 5 was a grand spectacle where a religious epic met a modern-day political superno. As multiple cameras tracked every move of Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi with breathless excitement, I must confess to switching off from the frenzy. My mind instead was rewinding to another big news day. For long before August 5, 2020, there was December 6, 1992.

It was a Sunday and I was playing a cricket match in the genteel environs of the Bombay Gymkhana when the news trickled in around noon that the Babri masjid had been demolished in Ayodhya. Abandoning the game mid-way, I rushed to work. This was a pre-24x7 breaking news television era and our

somnolent newspaper office in Mumbai seemed another universe away from the happenings in the temple town. It was only late evening as the images of the demolition were telecast on BBC that there was a marked shift in mood. That night, we got the first reports of stone-throwing near Minara masjid in the congested by-lanes of Bhandi Bazaar. A police wireless van had been attacked by a mob: The men in khaki were seen as a symbol of government authority which had failed to protect the mosque. By midnight, there was visible tension in the air. Policemen were patrolling the streets even as the stone-throwing continued in some parts. The next day, the local Muslim League called a bandh, and a curfew was declared in central Mumbai even as the

violence spread to the suburbs. For the next three months, Mumbai would be shaken out of its cosmopolitan illusions. A riot that began in December between the police and angry Muslim groups would transform in January into aggressive street mobilisation by militant Hindu outfits and culminate in March 1993 in serial blasts triggered by the Dawood Ibrahim-led underworld.

For an archetypal south Mumbai child of relative privilege, the riots and terror attack were a wake-up call. Under the city of gold lurked an underbelly of grime, an overcrowded metropolis that was sitting on a combustible tinderbox. The Babri demolition had exposed Mumbai's fault-lines and left the city at the mercy of resentful Muslim groups, Shiv Sena storm troopers, underworld gangs and a partisan police force. Outside my south Mumbai comfort zone, I was exposed to another Mumbai. We met dozens of families who were caught in the crossfire, forced to abandon their homes and flee, others whose shops and

offices had been burnt down. More than 1,000 people died in Mumbai's twin riots and blasts, a majority of them faceless, innocent citizens targeted for their religious identity.

In late 1993, as an eyewitness to the carnage, I deposed before the Justice Srikrishna Commission that was appointed to inquire into the Mumbai violence. The cross-examination went on for three days. A tough Shiv Sena lawyer and Member of Parliament (MP), Adhik Shirodkar, was unbending in his interrogation. At the Mumbai reporting team of The Times of India, we even compiled a book, When Bombay Burned, detailing the chain of bloody events that had traumatised the city. Publishing was still in infancy and only around 1,000 copies of the book were printed. It was easily the most harrowing, gut-wrenching year in my professional life - a city that I loved dearly had been scarred, perhaps forever. Mumbai was sharply divided on communal lines. A Hindu-Muslim physical and psychological fracture

occurred in those months that has never quite healed. Twenty-eight years later, the wheel has come full circle. Here we are in a new, distinctly polarised India, where majoritarian politics is now mainstream, where the lines between secular and communal, law and illegality have been conveniently erased. The Shiv Sena, whose leader Bal Thackeray claimed in 1992 to be "proud of his boys" for their role in the demolition, is now the party in power in Maharashtra with the Congress as a junior ally. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), for which the Ayodhya movement was the passport to political influence, is now the country's dominant political formation. Narendra Modi who earned his spurs while organising the 1990 Ram Janmabhoomi rath yatra that gained momentum and eventually led to the masjid's demolition is now the country's all-powerful leader. The Indian Muslim is a fearful, marginal voice, ghettoised and demonised as the permanent other.

What is the significance of Independence day in India

The republic of India gained its independence from the rule of the British on 15 August 1947. Since then every year, 15th August is celebrated as the Independence Day in India to commemorate its freedom from the 200-year-old British government. For India, 15th August is a day of her re-birth, a new start. At the midnight of 15 August 1947, the British rulers handed the country back to its Indian leaders, ending a remarkable struggle that lasted years. It was 15 August 1947, the historic date, on which sovereign India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru unfolded the tricolour flag of the nation on the glorious Red Fort. The day is significant in the history of India as bringing an end to the British colonial rule in India.

History of 15th August

In 1757, after the British victory in the Battle of Plassey, the rule of East India Company started in India. By 1858, the British Crown had assumed control over India. The situation after World War I was marked with suppressive and exploitative laws by the British. This led to revolutionary calls for independence, and sparked the phase of non-violent and non-cooperation movements followed by the civil disobedience movement.

The enduring leader and a national symbol for all these movements was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi- the Father of the Nation. The next decades were marked with constant struggles between the Indians and the British for freedom. Many movements and acts were carried out by the Indian National Congress, freedom fighters and the people of India.

In the year 1946, the Labour government, the exchequer of Britain thought of ending their rule over India because of their exhaustion of capital post the

World War II. The British government announced, during the early 1947, that they intend to transfer power to the Indians by the month of June 1948. This approaching independence could not decrease the Hindu-Muslim violence in Bengal and Punjab. This led to Louis Mountbatten, the then Viceroy of India to propose the power hand-over date, owing to the fact that the unprepared British army could not cope with the increased violence in the country. In the month of June in 1947, the prominent Indian leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Abul Kalam Azad, Master Tara Singh and B. R. Ambedkar agreed for a partition of India along religious outline.

Millions of people belonging to different religious groups tramped across the newly drawn border to find places to reside. This took away around 250,000 to 500,000 lives. Finally, at midnight of 15 August 1947, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru proclaimed India's independence by reading out his famous speech known as "Tryst with destiny". During this speech, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we will redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes, but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. We

end today a period of ill fortune, and India discovers herself again."

Independence day Celebrations in India

Every year, India's Independence Day is celebrated on this day by all the proud Indians. 15th August is observed as a national holiday throughout



the country. Though, local governments conduct the ceremony of flag hoisting all over India, the venue of main celebration is the Red Fort in the capital city New Delhi in India. The celebration starts every year with the unfurling of the tricoloured national flag by the Prime Minister of the nation, followed by a televised speech. The speech generally reflects the present condition of the nation along with the achievements in the previous year and the future development plans. A tribute is even paid by the Prime Minister to freedom fighters of India by declaring the day as a national holiday. Post the flag-hoisting ceremony, patriotic programs by children from schools based in different states is one of the main attractions. In northern and

central cities

of India, kite flying is celebrated as an event associated with the Independence Day. People symbolise their patriotism towards the country with the use of national flags of different sizes. They decorate their cloths, cars, household, etc. with the tricolour flag. The Indians in various parts of the world also celebrate the Independence Day with parades and pageants. Several cities in the United States have declared 15 August as 'India Day'.

Almost every school, college, university and government organization hoist the national flag on 15 August. Nowadays, many housing complexes, clubs, societies, group of friends, etc. even observe the flag-hoisting ceremony within their premises with ease, joy and honesty. This just shows the togetherness of Indians, who never forget to pay a tribute to their ancestors who sacrificed their life for the betterment of the country.

Nehru's Speech on Independence Day

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, was a man, who could influence the masses with his oration. He was an immensely learned man and could feel the pulse of the masses. Nehru's Message to the Nation on the Independence Day was delivered on the brink of midnight of the 14th of August, 1947 Independence Day Speech by Jawahar Lal Nehru. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, was a man, who could influence the masses with his oration. He was an immensely learned man and could feel the pulse of the

masses. Nehru's message to the nation on the Independence Day was delivered on the brink of midnight of the 14 August 1947. The speech focussed on various topics related to India and the freedom that she had achieved from the shackles of British colonial rule. The speech also encouraged and inspired the countrymen to wake from the long slumber and take steps for the upliftment and development of India.

Jawaharlal Nehru's independence speech aimed at motivating the general masses at building a new India. The speech aimed at boosting the people for working harder and with real zeal and enthusiasm to make India the numero uno nation in the world. There were certain social evils that were dominant in the Indian society in the form of illiteracy, poverty, ignorance, poor health conditions and many more in pre-independent India. The message propagated for the eradication of these social evils and to make India a prospering nation. The message of the first Prime Minister of independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru, also requested the people of the country to actively participate in the process of nation-building. He also urged the people to have and show confidence in the national leaders of the country, who were bestowed with the duty of carrying the nation forward. The concept of equality was also emphasized in the independence speech made by Jawaharlal Nehru. The Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, also finds reference in the speech made by Nehru.

He also pays homage to the various freedom fighters, who had sacrificed their lives for the

The Rise of Kamala Harris

Kamala Harris is a sitting U.S. senator who was vetted during the primaries, the daughter of immigrants and the first black woman and Indian-American on a major-party ticket. She thus satisfies the basic requirements of a vice-presidential choice: First do no harm, and second pick up what you can.

Three salient points:

She rose far fast. She was sworn into the Senate in January 2017. She went national early and quickly, like Barack Obama, who'd also been in the Senate less than two years when he began running for president. (Her pre-Senate background includes more-impressive offices, notably California attorney general.)

She is a woman of the left who entered the law not as a defense attorney but as a prosecutor. This hurt her in the Democratic primaries, where she was called a cop, but will help her in the general election with centrists and moderates. She is an excellent performer of politics. Like Bill Clinton she enjoys and has a talent for the necessary artifice. She takes obvious pleasure in campaigning—making speeches, waving, laughing, pressing the flesh. In committee hearings she cocks her brow in the closeup to show skepticism. Her glamour, and her consciousness of it, were vivid enough to be spoofed by Maya Rudolph on “Saturday Night Live.”

Reading her 2019 autobiography, “The Truths We Hold: An American Journey,” it occurs to you that what she's really bringing Joe Biden is the things she doesn't say and the stories she doesn't tell on the trail.

She was born and raised in a climate of liberal activism in Oakland and Berkeley, Calif., in the 1960s and '70s. Her father, Donald Harris, born in Jamaica in 1938, was a student there and went on to be an economics professor at Stanford. Her mother, Shyamala, was born in southern India, graduated from the University of Delhi at 19, and earned a doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley. Shyamala, who died in 2009, was expected to return home for an arranged marriage;



instead she met Donald. They married, had two children and divorced.

When Kamala Harris was a toddler, her parents brought her to civil-rights marches. “I have young memories of a sea of legs moving about,” she writes. Her mother liked to tell a story. Once Kamala was fussing in her stroller, and Mrs. Harris leaned down and asked, “What do you want?” “ ‘Freedom!’ I yelled back.”

The general atmosphere was '60s Berkeley—diverse, full of passion, consumed by identity politics and debates about liberation.

They took periodic trips to India. “My mother, grandparents, aunts, and uncle instilled us with pride in our South Asian roots. . . . We were raised with a strong awareness of and appreciation for Indian culture.” (India looks to be an increasingly important ally as America's relationship with China deteriorates. If Biden-Harris wins and her background is helpful, good.)

She went to ballet class, sang in the choir in the 23rd Avenue Church of God, went to a black cultural center called Rainbow Sign on Thursdays. She saw Rep. Shirley Chisholm speak and was electrified.

By the time Ms. Harris graduated high school she wanted to become a lawyer like her heroes Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley. Also like her Uncle Sherman

and a family friend named Henry. “Any time someone had a problem . . . the first thing you'd hear was, ‘Call Henry, call Sherman. They'll know what to do.’ . . . I wanted to be the one people called.”

For college she chose Justice Marshall's alma mater, historically black Howard University in Washington, founded just after the Civil War and rich with legacy.

Her first day on campus she thought, “This is heaven.” She'd hang out with other students in the campus's central lawn: “On any given day, you could stand in the middle of the Yard and see, on your right, young dancers practicing their steps or musicians playing instruments. Look to your left and there were briefcase-toting students strolling out of the business school, and medical students in their white coats, heading back to the lab. . . . That was the beauty of Howard. Every signal told students that we could do anything.”

She ran for student office, joined the debate team, pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha, the powerhouse sorority founded in 1908. Expect to see its colors, pink and green, at campaign events this year.

She was a tour guide at the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Once she bumped into the great actors Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis waiting for a VIP tour. “They projected an aura . . . they made a special point of

engaging me in conversation and telling me that it made them proud to see me as a young black woman working in public service.” She never got over how they made her feel.

Then on to San Francisco's UC Hastings law school. She was mortified at failing the bar exam—you get the impression it was her first failure; she always aced the test. She passed on the second try, joined the local prosecutor's office. She had to defend her choice to family and friends. She is tough and seems sincere in her writing on her early days up against sexual predators and other violent criminals.

She is extremely interesting when writing about real things. She talks about how hard it was to put grade-school victims on the stand to testify to their sexual abuse, and teenagers who'd been virtually abandoned into an inadequate foster-care system. She didn't see prosecutors as oppressors: “I had found my calling.” There are plenty of cases in which prosecutors have used their office as “an instrument of injustice.” But “I knew the history of brave prosecutors who went after the Ku Klux Klan in the South” and “corrupt politicians and corporate polluters.” It was the attorney general who sent officials to protect the Freedom Riders in 1961. “I was going to be a prosecutor in my own image.”

“You can want the police to stop crime in your neighborhood and also want them to stop using excessive force,” she writes. “You can want them to hunt down a killer on your streets and also want them to stop using racial profiling. You can believe in . . . accountability, especially for serious criminals, and also oppose unjust incarceration.”

In the primaries we saw that when she changes her stands it tends to be politically convenient, slowly acknowledged and poorly explained. There are signals of seeing policy as an external thing, not an outgrowth of one's own belief structure, and things can change.

In the book we get a sense of gusto. She admires toughness. She is a natural pol. She was bred to achieve in an aspirational immigrant environment. She loves to compete.

She is warm, humorous. Like most of the men around her in politics, she enjoys being important. She isn't embarrassed by attention.

Again, she has risen far fast. She ran nationally for the first time this year, in the Democratic primary. It didn't end well; she dropped out before the first vote.

She is running for the second time now. The tough learn a lot from defeat, but most politicians find it hard to change their moves.

This is going to be interesting.



Trump slammed for not rejecting conspiracy theory Kamala Harris is ineligible for vice presidency

Biden campaign calls Trump comments 'abhorrent'

President Trump would not reject a conspiracy theory Thursday that Kamala Harris is ineligible to serve as vice president because her parents were born outside the United States.

Asked about the unfounded and widely refuted claims during a press briefing at the White House, Trump responded, "I heard it today that she doesn't meet the requirements" before adding, "I have no idea if that's right." Harris is a United States citizen born in California in 1964, making her eligible to serve as president or vice president under the Constitution.

However, a professor of law at Chapman University, John C. Eastman, wrote a piece for Newsweek this week after she was named to the Democratic ticket questioning whether Harris is a "natural born citizen" because her mother was born in India and her father was born in Jamaica. During the Thursday press briefing, Trump appeared to fuel the argument by touting the author's credentials, saying, "And by the way, the lawyer that wrote that piece is a very highly qualified, very talented lawyer."

"I have no idea if that's right," Trump said. "I would have assumed the Democrats would have checked that out before she gets chosen to run as vice president."

The president then said: "You're saying that she doesn't qualify because she wasn't born in this country?" The reporter corrected the president to say Harris was born in the United States, but the issue involves the birthplace of her parents.

"I don't know about it," Trump said. "I just heard about it. I'll take a look."

Joe Biden's presidential campaign condemned the president over the remarks, referencing Trump's past involvement elevating false claims that former President Barack Obama may not have been born in the United States.

"Donald Trump was the national leader of the grotesque, racist birther movement with respect to President Obama and has sought to fuel racism and tear our nation apart on every single day of his presidency," Biden rapid response director Andrew Bates told Fox News in a statement. "So it's unsurprising, but no less

abhorrent, that as Trump makes a fool of himself straining to distract the American people from the horrific toll of his failed coronavirus response that his campaign and their allies would resort to wretched, demonstrably false lies in their pathetic desperation."

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., on Friday also tweeted while he disagrees with Harris on "plenty of issues," there is "no issue as to whether or not she is an American citizen. She was born in the United States in 1964 to parents who were legally present. Under the Constitution and Supreme Court precedent, she is unequivocally an American citizen." Questions were also raised, and largely resolved, over the eligibility in past presidential races of Sen. Ted Cruz, born in Canada, and the late Sen. John McCain, born in the Panama Canal Zone when it was under U.S. control.

Others involved in the president's administration and campaign also have either spread the claim or declined to reject it.

The president's reelection campaign's senior lawyer, Jenna Ellis, shared the controversial column on

Thursday morning, hours before Trump was asked about it at the White House. And in an interview Wednesday on Fox News' "Special Report," Trump adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner declined to comment on it.

"I haven't seen that. I haven't seen the op-ed. So I'll reserve judgment on that until I know more about it," he said.

On Friday, Kushner told "CBS This Morning" he has no reason to believe she's not eligible, while disputing the notion Trump was promoting the theory.

Eastman, in the column, cited 14th Amendment language that citizens are those born or naturalized in the U.S. "and subject to the jurisdiction thereof," before calling into question Harris' parents' status at the time of her birth.

Other academics rejected Eastman's argument. The question of her parents' birthplace is irrelevant, said Christopher Kelley, a political science professor at Miami University in Ohio.

"No, there's no question about it," he said. "It's been recognized since the people drafted it back in the 39th

Congress that (the 14th) amendment that would cover people not just born to American citizens but born on American soil."

The question is not even considered complex, according to constitution lawyers.

"Full stop, end of story, period, exclamation point," said Jessica Levinson, a professor at Loyola Law School.

A Congressional Research Service report from 2011 drew a similar conclusion on the matter, noting that while legal issues have been raised for those born outside the country to U.S. citizens, "eligibility of native born U.S. citizens has been settled law for more than a century."

The report stated: "The weight of legal and historical authority indicates that the term 'natural born' citizen would mean a person who is entitled to U.S. citizenship 'by birth' or 'at birth,' either by being born 'in' the United States and under its jurisdiction, even those born to alien parents; by being born abroad to U.S. citizen-parents; or by being born in other situations meeting legal requirements for U.S. citizenship 'at birth.'"

DNC on Joe Biden's VP Selection of Kamala Harris

DNC Chair Tom Perez released the following statement after Joe Biden announced his selection of Kamala Harris as his vice presidential running mate:

"Kamala Harris is an extraordinary leader. And she's going to make an extraordinary vice president. Throughout her career, Senator Harris has championed working families and helped us build a better nation for all – no matter what you look like, where you come from, who you love, or how you pray. Through her service on the Senate Intelligence and Judiciary Committees, she has amassed the necessary experience to confront the biggest threats facing our nation at home and abroad. From fighting big oil, to taking on the gun lobby, to going after big banks, Kamala Harris is afraid of no one. Her leadership as California's attorney general and in the U.S. Senate has made our country stronger. She shares the values of Joe Biden and Democrats across the country who want to rebuild our

economy and restore the soul of our nation. And she will make history as the first woman, first African American, and first Indian American to serve as our nation's vice president. "Joe Biden approached this decision with the same care and sound judgement he'll show as president. He knows Kamala Harris is ready for this job on day one, and he knows she has the empathy, experience, and character to lead. Just

as importantly, Senator Harris will continue to show generations of young women, particularly young women of color, that there is no height to which they cannot aspire. Together, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris are Donald Trump and Mike Pence's worst nightmare. They are going to win this election, end this pandemic, and build a brighter future for all Americans."



Why Kamala Harris won the VP contest

It is a measure of these extraordinary times that Joe Biden's historic choice for vice president was also the most conventional.

In choosing Kamala Harris, Biden selected the candidate who had been the frontrunner among political handicappers and betting markets for months. The senator from California fulfills Biden's pledge to name a woman and responds to the expectation that he would pick the first woman of color ever to serve on a national ticket.

Pressure to make such a choice has been building since the killing of George Floyd under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer triggered nationwide protests over racial inequity. And beyond the historic nature of Harris' selection, many supporters argued that the presence of a person of color on the ticket was necessary to motivate Black voters. Tepid turnout by Black voters in

2016 helped doom Hillary Clinton in her race against Donald Trump.

Harris is a charismatic and telegenic politician. And as a US senator and recent presidential candidate, Harris also meets another important test for Biden. People familiar with research the campaign undertook to inform its decision told me voters viewed her as among the most qualified to be president

on Day One -- a key positive, given Biden's status as potentially the oldest politician to ever serve as president. She is also familiar with the maelstrom of a national campaign, having spent a year running for president, albeit unsuccessfully. Though she was at times less than sure-footed in dealing



with incoming criticism from the media and opponents, she understands the pace and nature of it, which will only intensify in a fall race against Trump.

One of the principal tasks of a running mate is to play a lead role in bringing the case against the other ticket, particularly in the vice-presidential debate. A former prosecutor, Harris is known as a fierce interrogator on Capitol Hill and proved

herself, at times, to be a sharp-edged debater during the campaign. Biden knows this well. He famously was her target in the first primary debate 14 months ago, when she theatrically confronted him over his position on mandatory school busing in the 1970s. That exchange, in which

Harris played up her own experience as a child who benefited from busing, briefly vaulted her to the top echelon of candidates in polling. It also was a source of friction with Biden and his family that could have upended his choice. In the end, Biden seriously considered others but returned to Harris as the "do no harm" candidate, unlikely to thrill or outrage many. She may not seem the most comfortable fit as a governing partner, a quality Biden said he was seeking, but Harris was viewed as the safest pick to win in November. By naming her, Biden likely also has set the dynamics for the 2024 election, not just the current one. The former Vice President has not said he would stand down after one term, though given the fact that he would be 81 by the next election, it is widely assumed he would not run.

Indians must remember that Harris is not Indian

Kamala Harris is partly of Indian descent, not wholly. But most of us in India would do well to remember that she is running for an election in the United States (US), not in India. This is a crucial difference to keep in mind when commentaries will begin to be written that she is not owning her Indian-ness enough. I know, because I wrote once that Harris needed to embrace her Indian heritage more. I still stand by that. But I am not the one running for vice-president. Harris will run as a Black woman. That's the key reason why the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, Joe Biden, picked her, apart from her other obviously stellar qualifications such as being a US senator, former attorney-general of the largest American state, relatively younger age — 55 to Biden's 77 — and, for a vice-presidential nominee, an ability to throw

a punch. "I think he came to the conclusion that he should pick a Black woman," Harry Reid, a former top US Senate Democrat, told the New York Times. "They are our most loyal voters and I think that the Black women of America deserved a Black vice-presidential candidate." It's an electoral compulsion, plainly. And Indians — and Indian Americans, specifically — should set aside for now their expectations of seeing Harris be more Indian. It will not be easy because as electioneering gets underway, Harris will be all Black. The Biden campaign will deploy her as their chief conduit to African American voters, the country's second-largest voting bloc. They will be critical in the key swing states of Florida, Arizona, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, Virginia and vulnerable Republican-ruled

states. Through all that, Harris will find the time and opportunity to signal her Indian-ness, insist people who have known her for years. And that will invariably be a reference to her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, a breast cancer researcher, who passed away in 2009. Harris often tweets pictures of her mother to mark special occasions and milestones in her life. Never her father, Donald Jasper Harris, a Stanford professor. Appearing with Biden for the first time after being named his running mate, Harris spoke of her mixed heritage. She dwelt most expansively and feelingly, however, on her mother, for inspiring her to a life in public service, which would land her a place in history books, as the first Black woman on a presidential ticket.

On November 3, or whenever the results are declared in what is likely to be the



most unpredictable election yet, she might become the first woman vice-president, of whichever party, colour or ethnic origin. Gopalan, a diminutive woman from Chennai, who studied at Lady Irwin College in Delhi before heading out to the US, will remain Harris's abiding link to India, though Harris still can't make a dosa, as she confessed to Mindy Kaling in a video they shot months before. But she deserves a break, from some of us.

Kamala Harris Is Joe Biden's Pick For US Vice Presidential Candidate

Biden's announcement, made in a text and tweet, aligns him with a former presidential rival whose most electric campaign performance came when she criticized his record on school integration during a debate.



Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden on Tuesday picked Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., as his running mate, a historic decision that elevates the first Black woman and first Asian American woman to run for vice president at a moment when the country is grappling with its racial past and future.

Biden's announcement, made in a text and tweet, aligns him with a former presidential rival whose most electric campaign performance came when she criticized his record on school integration during a debate.

The decision is the most consequential of Biden's presidential campaign and has major implications not only for the November election but for the future of the Democratic Party. Biden, 78 years old by Inauguration Day, would be the oldest president ever and has said he considers himself "a transition candidate." The choice places Harris, who was a more vibrant and energetic presence on the campaign trail but was also at times unsteady, at the forefront of the party's future as, potentially, the first woman vice president.

Harris will now become a vessel for Democratic hopes for a diverse party empowered by women, as well as for Republican attempts to funnel a barrage of attacks that have so

far been largely unsuccessful when waged against Biden alone. Harris, 55, is the daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants. The first-term senator previously served as San Francisco district attorney and California attorney general. She developed a close friendship with Biden's late son Beau, a relationship that Biden said he reflected upon in making his decision.

The move puts Biden, who served as vice president to the nation's first Black president, in a history-making role in naming Harris as the first woman of color nominated for the position. He also has pledged, if elected, to name a Black woman to the Supreme Court.

While Harris, who dropped out of the Democratic presidential primary in December, was an early front-runner in the vice-presidential sweepstakes, there were still lingering concerns about the sting of the debate moment on her chances - until Tuesday afternoon. "Joe Biden here. Big news: I've chosen Kamala Harris as my running mate," Biden wrote in an email to supporters. "Together, with you, we're going to beat Trump."

The pick followed a final public push from Black activists, athletes and actors who urged Biden to pick a Black woman - and threatened that his candidacy would be doomed if

he didn't.

"My advice was sought," said Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C., a top Biden ally who had urged him to pick a Black woman and said that Biden called him Tuesday morning to inform him of the decision.

"I talked to him [Biden] over the past several days more than I talked to him all year," he said. The months-long process before the decision included vetting nearly a dozen women as potential nominees. Biden on Tuesday informed some of the others that they were not chosen. Former Obama national security adviser Susan Rice, who was among the finalists, quickly put out a statement congratulating Harris. "Senator Harris is a tenacious and trailblazing leader who will make a great partner on the campaign trail," Rice wrote.

"I am confident that Biden-Harris will prove to be a winning ticket." Rep. Val Demings, D-Fla., who was also under serious consideration, reflected on the historic nature of the pick. "To see a Black woman nominated for the first time reaffirms my faith that in America, there is a place for every person to succeed no matter who they are or where they come from," she said. Top party leaders, including the 2016 nominee Hillary Clinton and former president Barack Obama, publicly rallied around the new Biden-Harris ticket - Obama with

a seeming dig at President Donald Trump.

"Joe Biden nailed this decision," Obama said in a statement. "By choosing Senator Kamala Harris as America's next vice president, he's underscored his own judgment and character. Reality shows us that these attributes are not optional in a president."

Harris's prosecutorial record has drawn attacks from party liberals, who have criticized her past stances as too harsh and contend that her record does not meet a moment when police misconduct has rocketed into the national conversation.

But Harris also has built a reputation in Washington as a sharp questioner in Senate hearings, particularly of Trump administration nominees. She has been a forceful advocate for Black families during the novel coronavirus pandemic, and she helped draft a bill ending qualified immunity for police. Some of those who were skeptical of her during her campaign have softened their views of her in recent months. Harris kicked off her presidential campaign little more than two years after joining the Senate, with an electrifying Oakland, Calif., rally that drew more than 22,000 supporters. But she struggled to define herself to voters, shifting from one message to the next. She failed to take off in the polls and

dropped out in early December, citing financial problems.

Harris and Biden have known each other for several years, and as the former vice president noted in his announcement, Harris worked closely with Beau Biden when both served as attorneys general.

That made it all the more shocking to Biden and his team when, at the first Democratic primary debate last year, Harris went after Biden for his nostalgic talk about working with two segregationist senators.

"It was hurtful to hear you talk about the reputations of two United States senators who built their reputations and career on the segregation of race in this country," Harris said during the debate. She also took Biden to task for his opposition to mandatory busing. On the debate stage, she described a little girl who had benefited from her city's busing program. "And that little girl was me," she said. Within hours, her campaign was selling shirts emblazoned with the words and a childhood picture of Harris. Biden's wife, Jill, has described that moment as being "like a punch to the gut." But Biden prides himself on not carrying a grudge and since then, the two have publicly made up, with Harris acting as a surrogate for Biden and appearing with him and his wife in campaign events.

Kamala Harris checks the boxes for Biden, but does she help the ticket?



When push came to shove, Joe Biden went with the obvious choice, even though she spent their first debate beating up on him.

For all the last-minute media speculation, the breathless reports about whose stock was rising or falling, Kamala Harris was the finalist with the fewest negatives.

It's true that the senator's presidential campaign was a colossal bust, a mismanaged mess, but it made her a national name, one who had been through at least an intensive round of media scrutiny. That wasn't true of Karen Bass, whose chances faded when the press reported on

her warm views of Fidel Castro. Susan Rice was nationally known, but she had never run for dogcatcher, and Biden didn't need a foreign policy specialist. As for others like Gretchen Whitmer, I never thought the Michigan governor, whose handling of the coronavirus has been controversial, had a chance. And the main reason is that she is white. As the countdown neared, many prominent African-Americans made clear that Biden would play a heavy price if he picked a woman who was not a woman of color. That felt like a racial demand, but in the wake of the nationwide protests and violence sparked by the killing of

George Floyd, perhaps he was bowing to Democratic realpolitik. The Trump campaign, of course, has already started unloading on Harris, and her record as California attorney general, and district attorney before that, will provide opponents with plenty of ammunition. But while she may be portrayed as too passive about police brutality, she can't be painted as soft on crime.

The Kamala brand is an interesting one, since she is the daughter of Jamaican and Indian parents, along with, as of this afternoon, the first black woman on a major-party ticket.

With her prosecutorial bent, Harris is well suited to the running mate's traditional role of attack dog. And she'll be attacked back. RNC Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel quickly put out a statement that Biden has chosen "the person who would actually be in charge the next four years." That dovetails with the president's argument that the 77-year-old nominee is out of it and a captive of his party's uber-liberal wing.

And a Trump campaign ad says Harris had attacked Biden for

"racist policies," which isn't precisely true. What is true, as McDaniel mentioned, that Harris favored abolishing private health insurance (through Medicare for All), but as with all No. 2 picks, her platform will now be that of the person at the top of the ticket. It's a reminder as well that Harris will now be proclaimed by the press to be the front-runner for the 2024 Democratic nomination, as well as a possible president if Biden doesn't finish his term.

Watching a parade of guests on MSNBC deliver gushing praise of Harris, with no mention of a single liability, makes clear that Biden's choice is a popular one on the left.

Some Fox conservatives, by contrast, suggested that Biden really didn't pick her, but bowed to the party's consensus, and joked that least Harris can complete a sentence.

If Harris's aggressive style, often on display in Senate hearings, will now be employed against Trump, it was only last year that she used it against

Biden. She didn't just whack him with a one-liner; she hammered him for pushing limits on busing in the 1970s-busing that she benefited from as a little girl. She also slammed him for defending segregationist senators. It was a body blow.

How did Biden pick her when he placed such a high premium on compatibility, given his experience with Barack Obama? Biden says he doesn't hold grudges, and Kamala was close to his late son Beau.

In cold political terms, what does she bring to the ticket beyond being a telegenic presence? Biden was already going to win California. Certainly, there will be more excitement in the black community. She will be more tightly scripted than she was as a White House contender. Perhaps, since Biden is leading in the polls, he was looking for someone who was steady enough that she simply wouldn't hurt his chances.

Biden's choice may or may not matter much in the long run, but one thing no one can deny: the pick was historic.

Biden picks Kamala Harris as VP nominee

Harris, the daughter of immigrants from Jamaica and India, was the wire-to-wire frontrunner for Biden's No. 2 job.

Joe Biden has selected Kamala Harris to be his running mate, elevating a charismatic blue-state senator, former prosecutor and onetime 2020 primary rival who has built a reputation as an unyielding antagonist of the Trump administration.

Harris, the daughter of immigrants from Jamaica and India, was the wire-to-wire frontrunner for Biden's No. 2 job. Her experience as a battle-tested presidential candidate, her efforts leading major law enforcement offices and her political track record of three election wins in California helped her overcome a crowded list of contenders.

"I have the great honor to announce that I've picked @KamalaHarris - a fearless fighter for the little guy, and one of the country's finest public servants - as my running mate," Biden wrote in a tweet Tuesday. In her own tweet, Harris called joining Biden's ticket an honor. Biden, she wrote, "can unify the American people because he's

spent his life fighting for us. And as president, he'll build an America that lives up to our ideals. I'm honored to join him as our party's nominee for Vice President, and do what it takes to make him our Commander-in-Chief." Harris will be the first woman, the first Asian American and the first Black vice president if elected. And Biden's barrier-breaking pick comes at a time of racial reckoning in the country, plunging one of the best-known women of color in politics into a contest against President Donald Trump, who has stoked racial divisions from the White House and on the campaign trail. Biden prioritized choosing a running mate with whom he was "simpatico," as he frequently said, and his months-long search narrowed the list to a handful of women the campaign believed could help energize Democrats in the homestretch of the campaign. In Harris, Biden is hoping to combine both of his priorities, finding a thrilling campaigner as well as a long-

term governing partner.

Harris, 55, has also built a personal rapport with Biden, and she was close with his late son Beau, a fellow former state attorney general. But Harris had to survive concerns inside the Biden campaign about whether she could be a trusted partner in the job, after a bitter primary clash and a searing debate broadside by Harris strained relationships between their allies.

Biden nodded at Harris' relationship with his son in announcing his selection Tuesday. "I watched as they took on the big banks, lifted up working people, and protected women and kids from abuse," he said of the pair. "I was proud then, and I'm proud now to have her as my partner in this campaign."

Biden "nailed the decision" for running mate in picking Harris, former President Barack Obama said in a statement, calling the selection of a vice presidential nominee "the first important decision a president makes."

By choosing Senator Kamala

Harris as America's next vice president," Obama added, Biden "has underscored his own judgment and character. Reality shows us that these attributes are not optional in a president." Harris has faced persistent criticism for her prosecutorial record, including concerns she was too cautious to lead on sweeping changes. Her embrace in recent years of far-reaching changes has won over some skeptics, and she helped steer Democratic efforts to pass police reform this summer. A child of the Civil Rights Movement, whose parents were active in 1960s marches, Harris joined Black Lives Matter demonstrations this summer.

In the Senate, Harris' must-see cross-examinations of Republican witnesses in hearings helped elevate her national profile. She was considered a top-tier presidential contender when she launched her campaign last year before more than 22,000

people in her hometown of Oakland, Calif. But even as she displayed flashes of brilliance as a candidate - including the clash with Biden in the Miami debate, which temporarily boosted her in polls and helped her raise millions of dollars - Harris struggled with consistency and see-sawed between health care policies. Harris' campaign unraveled under the weight of a confusing message and an unclear chain of command atop her staff, ending in mutiny amid late-fall layoffs. She flatlined into the low-single digits before dropping out before the Iowa caucuses. The Trump campaign wasted no time knocking her as "phony Kamala" and casting Harris as a liberal Trojan horse taking advantage of an aging candidate in a statement and digital ad released on the president's Twitter feed shortly after the news became public. Harris, the ad says, attacked Biden "for racist policies" during her White House bid while "rushing to the radical left."



Kamala Harris' balancing act

No one said that being the vice president would be easy. But as Joe Biden's lieutenant, California Sen. Kamala Harris would be faced with a uniquely challenging balancing act: pioneering the Democratic Party into the future -- while navigating the party leadership's retrograde mores.

"If I'm elected president, my Cabinet, my administration will look like the country, and I commit that I will, in fact, pick a woman to be vice president." When Biden said these words during the CNN-Univision debate in March, many people took notice.

Before Biden announced Harris as his running mate on Tuesday, only two women had ever been vice presidential nominees for a major American party: then-Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin in 2008 and New York Rep. Geraldine Ferraro in 1984.

Biden's statement in March, then, evoked what had become something of an inescapable buzzword during the 2020 Democratic race: representation. And indeed, Biden's right-hand woman would have important representational value.

Following a primary season that began with the most diverse slate of candidates in American history but then predictably contracted toward straightness and whiteness and maleness, a Black and South Asian woman as vice president would signal that, at least in some ways, times are changing. She may gin up enthusiasm for a party whose top brass rarely meaningfully

reflects its base, and even transform what power looks like. (Biden himself has said that he'd be a "bridge" to a new "generation of leaders.")

In particular, the message that a Vice President Harris would send to Black women, long the most reliable and committed Democratic voters, is nothing to sneeze at.

"Black women are sick and tired of being considered the backbone of the Democratic Party," Karen Finney, a Democratic strategist, recently told Errin Haines of The 19th, a new nonprofit newsroom that focuses on the junctures of gender and politics. "We want to be recognized as leaders. We want all the things. We're due."

Notably, it's very likely that Harris' power would be more than just representational. If Biden wins in November, he'll inherit a country beleaguered by several crucial issues: a pandemic that President Donald Trump has actively made worse, a recession that's the deepest on record since the Great Depression and systemic racism in policing and beyond.

Which means that Harris, too, would likely assume a lot of responsibility in the White House.

"History tells us that consequential presidents and vice presidents come out at times where they're tested and tried, and I can't imagine a period of time where the president and vice president are going to be tested more than in January 2021," Michael Feldman, who was a senior adviser to Vice

President Al Gore, told The Atlantic's Christian Paz in July.

"There's just no chance that the person who he picks is not a consequential vice president or consequential historical figure. They just will be," Feldman added.

For all that potential, though, Harris, in all likelihood, would have to grapple with age-old, gendered thinking, including within her party. Already, there have been previews of the shape that this thinking could take.

"She laughed and said, 'That's politics.' She had no remorse," former Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd, who was part of Biden's vice presidential search committee, told a Biden

supporter and donor, according to Politico. Harris was responding to a question about how she had shellacked the former vice president during the June 2019 Democratic debate, and Dodd wasn't a fan of Harris' answer, shorn of shame.

In the other direction, Dodd advocated for California Rep. Karen Bass, who also was among the contenders for vice president, because he viewed her as "a loyal No. 2."

The vice presidency is an inherently deferential office. But the aforementioned comments, and the tut-tutting over 2018 Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams' swaggering, have had the queasy, if

unintended, effect of suggesting that only modest, self-effacing women are fit for the role -- a notion that afflicts Black women, especially.

Elsewhere in the Politico story, a Harris ally pointed out that the senator is "often more comfortable talking up others rather than herself." In its own way, the remark was a quiet "corrective" for Harris' straight talk and general refusal to shrink her ambitions.

Such warping of ambition and nitpicking are virtually nonexistent when men vie for political office.

Harris, then, will have to do two things under the microscope if she becomes vice president. She'll have to serve as representation for those voters who seldom see themselves reflected in the upper echelons of power, and do work that will be much more than representational -- and that will surely test whether her party can leave certain prejudices in the past.

None of this is to minimize the undeniable thrill of Biden's historic announcement.

After all, as Harris tweeted on Tuesday: "Black women and women of color have long been underrepresented in elected office and in November we have an opportunity to change that." Rather, it's to acknowledge that if Biden and Harris win in November, the latter will be in a far more treacherous position. But then, Black women always are.

Kamala Harris is Named Joe Biden's Running Mate, First Black Woman, Indian-American to Run for VP

Joe Biden named California Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate on Tuesday, making history by selecting the first Black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket and acknowledging the vital role Black voters will play in his bid to defeat President Donald Trump. "I have the great honor to announce that I've picked @KamalaHarris - a fearless fighter for the little guy, and one of the country's finest public servants - as my running mate," Biden tweeted. In a text message to supporters, Biden said, "Together, with you, we're going to beat Trump." Harris and Biden plan to deliver remarks Wednesday in Wilmington.

In choosing Harris, Biden is embracing a former rival from the

Democratic primary who is familiar with the unique rigor of a national campaign. Harris, a 55-year-old first-term senator, is also one of the party's most prominent figures and quickly became a top contender for the No. 2 spot after her own White House campaign ended.

Harris, who is also Indian American, joins Biden in the 2020 race at a moment of unprecedented national crisis. The coronavirus pandemic has claimed the lives of more than 150,000 people in the U.S., far more than the toll experienced in other countries. Business closures and disruptions resulting from the pandemic have caused an economic collapse. Unrest, meanwhile, has emerged across the country as

Americans protest racism and police brutality.

Trump's uneven handling of the crises has given Biden an opening, and he enters the fall campaign in strong position against the president. In adding Harris to the ticket, he can point to her relatively centrist record on issues such as health care and her background in law enforcement in the nation's largest state. Harris' record as California attorney general and district attorney in San Francisco was heavily scrutinized during the Democratic primary and turned off some liberals and younger Black voters who saw her as out of step on issues of systemic racism in the legal system and police brutality.

'India is the Oldest Democracy...That's Part of My Background': Kamala Harris Says Roots Shaped Her

Kamala Harris is a lot of firsts. Besides being the first Black woman on a major party's presidential ticket, she's also the first Indian American. Her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, was born in Chennai and immigrated to the US to attend a doctoral program at UC Berkeley. Like Barack Obama, a mixed-race heritage has allowed Harris to connect across identities and reach multiple audiences and voting blocs.

To understand what today's announcement means to this community, I turned to the best source I know on Indian Americans and politics: Aziz Haniffa.

Haniffa was executive editor and a chief correspondent of *India Abroad*, an ethnic newspaper for our community that shuttered just a few months ago, due to advertising and Covid-19 strains.

He sent me an August 26, 2009, interview he did with Harris and gave me permission to excerpt portions. It's headlined, "Kamala Devi Harris: The 'female Obama' and it discusses her campaign for California attorney general."

The piece highlights the role of her Indian identity, sure to

surface again in the coming months. Harris' rise as the daughter of immigrants -- one from Jamaica, one from India -- serves a powerful counter-narrative to President Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies.

Q) Aziz Haniffa: What did your mom instill in you, in terms of culture and heritage?

Kamala Harris: My mother was very proud of her Indian heritage and taught us, me and my sister Maya, to share in the

post in India that was like the



pride about our culture. We used to go back to India every couple of years. One of the most influential people in my life, in addition to my mother, was my grandfather P V Gopalan, who actually held a

secretary of state position in this country. My grandfather was one of the original Independence fighters in India, and some of my fondest memories from childhood were walking along the beach with him after he

retired and lived in Besant Nagar, in what was then called Madras.

He would take walks every morning along the beach with his buddies who were all retired government officials and they would talk about politics, about how corruption must be fought and about justice. They would laugh and voice opinions and argue, and those conversations, even more than their actions, had such a strong influence on me in terms of learning to be responsible, to be honest, and to have integrity. When we think about it, India is the oldest democracy in the world -- so that is part of my background, and without question has had a great deal

of influence on what I do today and who I am.

Indian Roots: Kamala Harris, back row, left. From left: her grandmother Rajam Gopalan, grandfather P.V. Gopalan and sister, Maya Harris. Front row: Maya's daughter, Meena, left, and Harris' cousin Sharada Balachandran Orihuela.

AH: Would it be true to say then that the roots of your civil rights activism began with those walks on the beach with your grandfather, as much as in your parents' involvement in the civil rights movement in the US during their student days at the University of California?

KH: It is important to not say one thing to the exclusion of the other, because I don't feel the need to do that.

Running mates don't usually matter. Kamala Harris might.

For months, Joe Biden had little imperative to do anything other than watch Donald Trump self-immolate. But with his selection of a running mate on Tuesday, Biden now has a ticket. And Republicans have a new line of attack. Suddenly, it's not just Biden and Trump. The selection of Kamala Harris, said Jeff Roe, the prominent Republican strategist who was Sen. Ted Cruz's chief strategist in 2018, "puts their campaign and direction of the party in play." Vice presidential contenders do not have a rich history of altering the course of an election. But Republican and Democratic political professionals alike believe Harris' selection may carry more weight this year. That is because Biden, despite

decades of government work, remains less sharply defined to voters than previous presidential nominees. And the rush to test the theory that Harris might matter is opening a critical new stage in the campaign. "Look back four years ago, people had a pretty clear view of Hillary Clinton - it wasn't always positive," said Jeff Link, a veteran Democratic strategist who has studied voters who flipped from Barack Obama to Trump in 2016. "So, Tim Kaine's attributes never rose to the level of their information about Hillary." But Biden is another story. Whole swaths of voters know little more about him than that he was Obama's vice president, according to Link and other Democrats who have conducted focus groups in

recent months. And Biden, who will turn 78 on Nov. 20, has referred to himself as a "transition candidate," putting more weight on Harris, who ran for president last year and is widely expected to run again. For voters, said Link, the vice presidential selection "will help define Biden in many ways." In picking Harris, Biden went with the vice presidential prospect widely regarded as his safest choice. The animus toward Trump on the left enabled Biden to bring progressive Democrats into his campaign largely on his own terms - it did not require a more liberal running mate, such as Sen. Elizabeth Warren or Rep. Karen Bass. Protests surrounding the death of George Floyd heightened the imperative to select a Black woman.

The upsides of Harris were obvious. An experienced, center-left politician, her presence on the ticket will serve to reinforce Biden's own moderate credentials - and, after she lacerated him in a debate last year, add dimension to his reputation for empathy and consensus-seeking. At 55, the California senator balances the ticket with youth. A historic selection who would become the first Black vice president if elected, she is a capable debater who Democrats expect will excoriate Trump in her debate Oct. 7 with Vice President Mike Pence. And she will raise money. But any change in the direction of the campaign is a source of uneasiness for Democrats. The phase of the election that saw

very little of Biden - mostly from his house, where he has been secluded because of the coronavirus - was going well for him. Nothing that Trump threw at Biden appeared to stick, and Biden has been running ahead consistently in national and most swing state polls. Now, with Trump's window for turning his campaign around rapidly closing, Republicans at least see an opening, hopeful that "Biden-Harris" may prove weaker than Biden alone. Within minutes of the selection, the Trump campaign released a statement depicting Harris as "phony Kamala" - a striver who would overlook her past criticism of Biden and her own record as a prosecutor "to appease the anti-police extremists" on the left.

Derailment of small business rescue clouds U.S. recovery

The collapse of pandemic relief negotiations has brought complications for the massive emergency lending program.

(News Agencies)-The Paycheck Protection Program, which has kept millions of small businesses afloat during the pandemic, is in limbo, creating a new source of uncertainty for the country's economic recovery.

The collapse of pandemic relief negotiations has brought complications for the massive emergency lending program, which shut down on Saturday to new loans after doling out more than \$520 billion in funds, leaving banks and borrowers unsure of how to proceed with a key phase of the rescue.

Before talks between congressional Democrats and the White House fell apart, there was clear bipartisan support emerging for revamping the program, which offers government-backed small business loans that can be forgiven if employers maintain their payroll. One major revision would make it easier to convert the smallest loans - those for \$150,000 or less, which account for most of the program's volume - into outright grants, making life easier for both borrowers and lenders.

But the negotiations stalled just as the Small Business Administration this week began accepting applications for

businesses to have the loans forgiven. Now many lenders are waiting to see whether a deal can be salvaged before they start the process. The stalemate is creating more doubts for small business owners as they try to navigate the program and avoid being stuck paying back loans they expected to be forgiven.

"It is frustrating, knowing the benefit this could have for many small business owners who are waiting to apply for forgiveness," said Holly Wade, director of research and policy analysis at the National Federation of Independent Business, which advocates for small businesses in Washington.

The confusion is the latest example of lenders and borrowers being left in the dark about how to proceed with the Paycheck Protection Program, after suffering through a chaotic launch dogged by incomplete guidance from the Trump administration and SBA technology glitches.

"While some of our members are currently taking forgiveness applications, many are awaiting congressional action to simplify the forgiveness process," said Consumer Bankers Association spokesperson Allison Heimberg.

The delay is all the more dismaying for small businesses because overhauling the Paycheck Protection Program is one of the least controversial components of economic relief legislation that lawmakers are considering.

While congressional leaders and Trump administration officials have been at odds over unemployment insurance and aid to states, Democrats have signaled support for a plan offered by Senate Small Business Chair Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) that would restart the PPP, allow businesses to apply for second loans and reduce paperwork requirements for loan forgiveness applications. Simplifying the forgiveness process is a top priority for banking industry lobbyists in economic relief negotiations.

Now, banks are trying to decide how quickly to begin accepting loan forgiveness applications from millions of borrowers. Some banks are discouraging clients from rushing to file their applications even though the SBA began accepting them from lenders Monday.

"We are encouraging our customers to wait for any possible congressional action



that might streamline the forgiveness process," Bank of the West Vice Chairman Cynthia Blankenship said.

The ability to apply for loan forgiveness is critical for businesses that are trying to plan and operate through the pandemic. Because the loans were intended to avert layoffs, employers are bound by rules requiring them to maintain their payroll in exchange for not having to pay back the funds.

Scratch, a loan-servicing firm, said when it recently made applications available to an initial pool of borrowers that close to one-third of them completed the forms within the first week.

"If they want to be free and clear of how they might need to

adjust their business operations, it would be better to apply for forgiveness when it's available," said Wade with the small business association.

The banks taking more time include some of the nation's largest - JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, U.S. Bank and PNC.

U.S. Bank spokesperson Greg Vadala said the lender expects that many small businesses will wait to apply, "allowing time for additional SBA guidance and potential moves by Congress to streamline the forgiveness process." The bank is testing its systems and processes with a small number of customers.

Sebi pulls up Kirloskar's promoters for fraud



(News Agencies)-The markets regulator has charged some of the promoters of Kirloskar Brothers Ltd (KBL) with fraud in a decade-old case of the promoter group selling a 13.5% stake in the then ailing company to Kirloskar Industries Ltd, harming the interests of minority investors.

In a showcause notice to the six promoters of KBL and two others, the Securities Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said that the promoter group

was aware of the precarious financial condition of KBL when these shares were sold, committing a fraud on minority shareholders of Kirloskar Industries. The notice, reviewed by Mint, was sent in December 2019.

"Sebi's assessment is that the ill-gotten gains in the transaction could be in excess of Rs 350 crore, which includes the value of the sale transaction and profit," said a person with direct knowledge of the matter.

In a showcause notice to the six promoters of KBL and two others, Sebi alleged that the promoter group was aware of the precarious financial condition of KBL when these shares were sold, committing a fraud on minority shareholders of Kirloskar Industries.

The promoter group on 6 October 2010 sold 10.72 million shares of KBL worth Rs 275 crore in the company to Kirloskar Industries.

The markets regulator has charged the individual promoters of KBL and two others under Sebi (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices relating to Securities Market) regulations, 2003. The regulator alleged that Gautam Kulkarni, Rahul Kirloskar, Atul Kirloskar, Alpana Kirloskar, Jyotsna Kulkarni and Arti Kirloskar were the direct beneficiaries of the sale.

Sebi observed in the notice that four out of the five directors of Kirloskar Industries were aware of the deteriorating financial position of KBL and,

thus, were duty-bound to check if the decision to buy those shares were in the interest of the firm and its stakeholders. Further, these directors, by inducing Kirloskar Industries to buy shares of KBL, allowed the six individual promoters to dump their shares of KBL into Kirloskar Industries.

According to the showcause notice, Sebi during the course of investigation had sought information from Kirloskar Industries whether it was aware of KBL's financial position in 2009 and 2010 before it arrived at a decision to buy its shares. Kirloskar Industries replied that it had only considered the growth and profitability of KBL.

The financial position of KBL as of September 2010 had

deteriorated on all aspects. It had also written off a loan amount of Rs 300 crore due from its wholly owned subsidiary, Kirloskar Construction and Engineers Ltd, Sebi observed.

A spokesperson for promoters of Kirloskar Industries said: "We reject any suggestion of wrongdoing and refute these allegations. The sale of shares (in 2010) was completed in line with the applicable laws, appropriate stock exchange disclosures and necessary regulatory pre-clearances. We continue to cooperate fully with Sebi in relation to its ongoing enquiries and remain confident of our position." A spokesperson for KBL declined to comment.

Insurer ICICI Lombard in talks to buy Bharti AXA

ICICI Lombard, which has an 8.4% market share and is owned 51.89% by ICICI Bank Ltd, underwrote a gross premium of Rs 3,302.19 crore in the June quarter, 5.3% less than the same period last year.

(News Agencies)-ICICI Lombard General Insurance Co. Ltd, India's largest private non-life insurer, is in advanced discussions to acquire Bharti AXA General Insurance Co. Ltd and merge the insurance assets of the two companies, said two people aware of the talks.

Both companies are negotiating the valuation of Bharti AXA, the people said, requesting anonymity.

ICICI Lombard, which has an 8.4% market share and is owned 51.89% by ICICI Bank Ltd, underwrote a gross premium of Rs 3,302.19 crore in the June quarter, 5.3% less than the same period last year. This was, however, in line with

a weakness in the overall industry. Bharti AXA General, in comparison, recorded a 12% year-on-year drop in gross premium to Rs 508.93 crore during the quarter.

The acquisition plans come at a time when the general insurance industry is reeling due to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic slowdown.

The existing 25 general insurers (excluding standalone health insurers) saw a 6% drop in premium in the June quarter due to a steep slowdown in sales of non-life policies in the wake of a prolonged lockdown that led to a temporary halt in most commercial activities.

"The two companies are still in discussion and the plan is that ICICI Lombard will acquire the entire stake of both Bharti Enterprises and AXA. Bharti AXA has a much smaller business, but the two companies are willing for the merger. The pricing has not been finalised yet," said the first person.

Bharti Enterprises currently owns 51% in Bharti AXA General, while its France-based JV partner AXA has 49%. To be sure, Bharti Enterprises has been trying to exit its financial services business since long. In 2016, Bharti's talks with Reliance Industries Ltd to sell its 74% stake at the



time in Bharti AXA Life person.

Insurance and Bharti AXA According to industry estimates, Bharti AXA has a market value of about ₹2,800 crore. ICICI Lombard is valued at ₹2,827 crore.

"There are two more general insurance companies with whom ICICI Lombard is in talks with for similar acquisitions," said the first person. Emails sent to ICICI Lombard and Bharti Axa General remained unanswered.

I-T dept raids Chinese firms for money laundering, hawala

Around half a dozen more of his associates, who were helping him in money laundering and hawala transactions, were also identified.

(News Agencies)-The Income Tax department on Tuesday raided certain Chinese individuals and Indian professionals allegedly involved in money laundering and hawala transactions, officials said.

The I-T department said it found that more than 40 bank accounts were created in India, which were linked to several shell companies, in which transactions worth Rs 1,000 crore were done over a period of time.

Officials familiar with the probe said the main suspect was

identified as an individual identified as Charlie Peng, a Chinese national living on a fake Indian passport in Manipur for the past six years.

Around half a dozen more of his associates, who were helping him in money laundering and hawala transactions, were also identified. People in the IT department and finance ministry, familiar with the raids, said Peng was taking the help of some Indian chartered accountants and bank officials for alleged illegal financial transactions through shell companies and was also

using the hawala route. A subsidiary of a Chinese company was identified and its role is being investigated, the officials added.

Peng's Chinese name was identified as Luo Sang. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is likely to be roped in for money laundering investigations and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) may be asked to probe if a larger nexus is suspected.

"Based on credible information that few Chinese individuals and their Indian associates were



involved in money laundering and hawala transactions through series of shell entities, a search action was mounted at various premises of these Chinese entities, their close confederates and couple of bank employees," a Central Board of Direct Taxes

(CBDT) statement said. "A subsidiary of Chinese company and its related concerns have taken over ~100 crore bogus advances from shell entities for opening businesses of retail showrooms in India," the statement said.

Aramco still aims for \$15 billion deal with India's Reliance



(News Agencies)-Saudi Aramco said it's still working on a deal to buy a \$15 billion stake in Reliance Industries Ltd's refining and chemicals business, even as lower oil prices force it to slash other investments.

Reliance's shares fell in mid-July after Chairman Mukesh Ambani said a transaction had been delayed "due to unforeseen circumstances in the energy market and the Covid-19 situation."

A deal with India's Reliance would help the world's biggest crude exporter join the ranks of the top oil refiners and chemical makers. State-owned Aramco, which bought chemical firm Saudi Basic Industries Corp. for \$70 billion this year, is already a major supplier of crude to India, while Reliance sells petroleum products such as gasoline to the kingdom.

"We are still in discussion with Reliance," Aramco Chief Executive Officer Amin Nasser said on a call with reporters on Sunday. "The work is still on. We will

update our shareholders in due course."

A deal could be finalized around the first quarter of next year, according to Deven Choksey, managing director at KR Choksey Investment Managers Pvt. in Mumbai. Aramco will win twice over, he said.

"It will get an assured consumer for its hydrocarbon resources, while becoming a 20% partner in a ready-made business of developing a value-added chain in specialty chemicals," Choksey said.

Reliance's stock fell 1.3% in

Mumbai on Monday, paring its gain this year to 41%. Aramco rose 0.2% to 33.10 riyals in Riyadh.

Aramco reported on Sunday that second-quarter net income was down almost 75% from a year earlier. The coronavirus pandemic halted travel and business, slashing demand for crude and fuel. After the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries cut production, Brent prices rebounded from a low of about \$16 a barrel in April to nearly \$45, though they're still down 32% this year.

How nutritious is your diet?

Maintaining a good diet and keeping a check on your nutritional intake is easy now with cool apps and gadgets



One of the key factors of staying healthy is maintaining a good diet and keeping a check on your nutritional intake.

Most people just focus on their workout routines or opt for self-

researched crash diet programs, but thankfully, like with most things these days, there are smarter and seamless ways to go about it now.

If you use a Fitbit or Apple Watch

or similar wearables, you can keep a tab on your calorie count by logging your food intake on their companion apps. But that's that.

If you are in the market for a new

one, you might want to consider GOQii, a fitness tracker that is backed by an ecosystem of nutritionists, personal trainers, and wellness experts. GOQii aims to tap the otherwise meaningless stream of data that fitness wearables throw at you and make it useful for you via intervention of qualified experts remotely.

An easy way to get started with diet management is via smartphone apps that help you with logging your food intake and keeping a tab on your diet, with additional features like customized diet plans, nutrition charts, weight tracking, et al. Calorie Counter by FatSecret is a basic, and completely free, dietary diary to keep a record of the food that you eat and the calories that you burn. It also features a diet calendar and a reference guide to check nutritional value of a variety of foods. Then there's Fooducate that goes beyond diet and weight loss management by not just counting your calories but also helping you analyze the value of the calories consumed to improve your diet.

If you use other fitness apps already to track your runs or workouts, you should look at apps like Lose It!, Lifesum, MyFitnessPal, or MyNetDiary which sync with RunKeeper, Endomondo, Strava, et al as well as Apple HealthKit, Google Fit, and Samsung Health.

LifeSum is actually very good and includes meal plans for several popular diets like keto, low carb, and others. You can also try MyNetDiary if you want to keep a track of things like your blood glucose, heart rate, cholesterol, and more. MyFitnessPal is one of the more popular and older ones in this segment and is easily one of the most well-rounded fitness and nutrition app.

There's also HealthifyMe which is quite popular in India since as a homegrown service, it has the broadest catalogue of Indian food items.

These apps also connect to your Fitbit, Misfit, and Garmin wearables so that your workouts and everything else are also integrated for comprehensive health management.

New drug to treat deadliest TB approved by US drug regulator

Pretamonid, a novel compound developed by the non-profit organization TB Alliance, was approved by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) on August 14.

The US drug regulator has approved a new tuberculosis (TB) drug for treating hard-to-treat drug-resistant TB that makes the treatment regimen shorter and simpler.

Pretamonid, a novel compound developed by the non-profit organization TB Alliance, was approved by the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) on August 14.

TB is the leading infectious cause of death worldwide, killing at least 1.6 million people annually. There are more than half a million cases of multi drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) annually, with about 6% of those cases being extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) cases. India accounts for nearly a quarter of the global TB cases.

The new drug was approved under the Limited Population Pathway for Antibacterial and

Antifungal Drugs (LPAD pathway) as part of a three-drug, six-month, all-oral regimen for the treatment of people with XDR-TB or MDR-TB, who are treatment-intolerant or non-responsive.

The LPAD pathway was established by FDA as a tool to encourage further development of antibacterial and antifungal drugs to treat serious, life-threatening infections that affect a limited population of patients with unmet needs.

"FDA approval of this treatment represents a victory for the people suffering from these highly drug-resistant forms of the world's deadliest infectious disease," said Mel Spigelman, MD, president and CEO of TB Alliance. "The associated novel regimen will hopefully provide a shorter, more easily manageable and highly efficacious treatment for those in need."

The three-drug regimen consisting of bedaquiline, pretomanid and linezolid - collectively referred to as the BPaL regimen - was studied in the pivotal Nix-TB trial across three sites in South Africa. The trial enrolled 109 people with XDR-TB and also MDR-TB.

Nix-TB data demonstrated a successful outcome in 95 of the first 107 patients after six months of treatment with BPaL and six months of post-treatment follow-up. For two patients, treatment was extended to nine months. TB, in all forms, is treated with a combination of drugs; the most drug-sensitive forms of TB require six months of treatment using four anti-TB drugs. Treatment of XDR-TB or MDR-TB takes longer and is more expensive, with patients currently taking a combination of as many as eight antibiotics,



some involving daily injections, for 18 months or longer.

"Until very recently, people infected with highly drug-resistant TB had poor treatment options and a poor prognosis," said Dr. Francesca Conradie, principal investigator of the Nix-TB trial. "This new regimen provides hope with 9 out of 10 patients achieving culture negative status at 6 months post-treatment with this short, all-oral regimen."

The drug is likely to be available in the US markets by the end of 2019.

TB activists want the drug to be made affordable so that poor

patients could also access it. "As the third new drug developed for TB in over half a century, and the first to be developed as part of a ready-to-use treatment regimen, pretomanid's approval represents another potent tool for tackling difficult-to-treat drug-resistant forms of TB," said Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), in a statement.

"However, it must be made affordable to everyone who needs it, especially considering the substantial taxpayer and philanthropic contributions that went into its development," it added.

Gunjan Saxena The Kargil Girl movie review:**Janhvi Kapoor busts boys locker room in new Netflix film**

Gunjan Saxena The Kargil Girl movie review: Janhvi Kapoor and Pankaj Tripathi's film is a refreshing change of pace for war films in India, which have forever been defined by whatever JP Dutta does.

Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl Director - Sharan Sharma
Cast - Janhvi Kapoor, Pankaj Tripathi, Angad Bedi, Vineet Kumar Singh, Manav Vij
Janhvi Kapoor plays the ultimate outsider in Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl, a biopic of the Indian Air Force's first female combat pilot, out on Netflix on Wednesday. It isn't as slickly made as Uri: The Surgical Strike, but refreshingly, neither are its politics as problematic. Gunjan Saxena doesn't subscribe to the hyper-nationalism that recent Indian war films have so proudly worn on their chest. Instead, director Sharan Sharma has chosen to explore a wholly different, but equally thorny topic: feminism. In our country, the idea of equal opportunity is seen as a threat by those in positions of power. Which is why there is a systemic effort to maintain the status quo. Gunjan Saxena, solely on the strength of her convictions, chose to break it. "Pinjra tod,"

her father, played by the great Pankaj Tripathi, tells her in an excellent scene in the film's final act, when Gunjan, having nearly given up on her dreams of becoming a pilot, returns home. Tripathi, playing perhaps the most tender character of his career - Gunjan's dad reminded me of Kumud Mishra's equally virtuous character in Thappad - is the heart and soul of the film. From an early age, Gunjan's father, an army officer, was the only one who supported her dream of becoming a pilot. Despite topping her class in school, she frets about telling her parents that her future lies not in some man's kitchen, but in the skies. The moment when she breaks the news to her folks could almost be mistaken for her coming out as gay - there is gossip among the relatives, her brother adopts the 'log kya kahenge' attitude, and Gunjan's mother even proposes visiting an astrologer for advice on how to 'cure' her.

These early scenes unfold at a clip, providing just enough context for us to care about Gunjan and her difficult journey. But every time she overcomes an obstacle - Gunjan in the film is gifted to a fault - she is faced with a new one. Her joy at being admitted into the air force academy is short-lived, because it is here that she truly experiences sexism. She misses training because the base doesn't have a place for her to change into overalls. She is forced to relieve herself in a men's washroom because there isn't one for women. Nearly all of her fellow cadets refuse to participate in sorties with her, for fear of being outclassed. And her superior (an irredeemable man played by Vineet Kumar Singh) subjects her to further indignity by ordering her to arm-wrestle another cadet, displaying the sort of narrow-minded male mentality that the film repeatedly calls out. She loses, of course, but has the spirit to confront him



in a later scene. "Main yahan helicopter udaane aayi hoon ya helicopter uthaane?" she says. But Janhvi, most certainly, is expected to do the heavy lifting. Like Gunjan, it seems as if the young actor is aware that she must work harder than others to prove herself. She brings a sense of discomfort to her performance in the air force scenes, which I'd like to believe is deliberate. In any case, it works. It's not easy playing a person who's massively proficient at her job, and still so doubtful of her own potential. Gunjan in the film is what many might describe as a Mary Sue -- a slightly outdated term used to describe a character who is implausibly

skilled, even within the realms of fiction. There is no obstacle Gunjan can't cross by simply tapping into her reserve of strength. And there is no narrative problem that Sharma, who is making his directorial debut here, can't solve with a montage, or with the help of an overbearing background score. He structures the film almost like a superhero origin story. Gunjan suffers hardships despite her obvious talents, but she develops her skills patiently, until she is called upon to unleash her powers in battle. By writing Gunjan as someone whose first love isn't serving their country, but flying, Sharma offers a new perspective on uber-patriotic war movies.

Raat Akeli Hai movie review:**Nawazuddin Siddiqui's knives are out in Netflix's nail-biting murder mystery**

Director - Honey Trehan
Cast - Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Radhika Apte, Tigmanshu Dhulia, Shweta Tripathi, Shivani Raghuvanshi, Nishant Dahiya, Ila Arun, Swanand Kirkire, Aditya Srivastava
The 'chhuris' are out in Raat Akeli Hai, a homegrown murder mystery on Netflix that doubles as an impressive directorial debut for Bollywood casting director Honey Trehan. It's the rare mainstream Indian film that doesn't seem to be in a

rush to tell its story, and earns its daunting two-and-a-half hour runtime - deviating from the primary plot when it wants to, and fleshing out its archetypal characters with care. Nawazuddin Siddiqui, as Inspector Jatil Yadav, would be glad to ditch the gangster garb for a cop's khaki, if only to reprimand journalists who keep asking him if he's been typecast. When Raghuveer Singh, the rich patriarch of a landowning Uttar

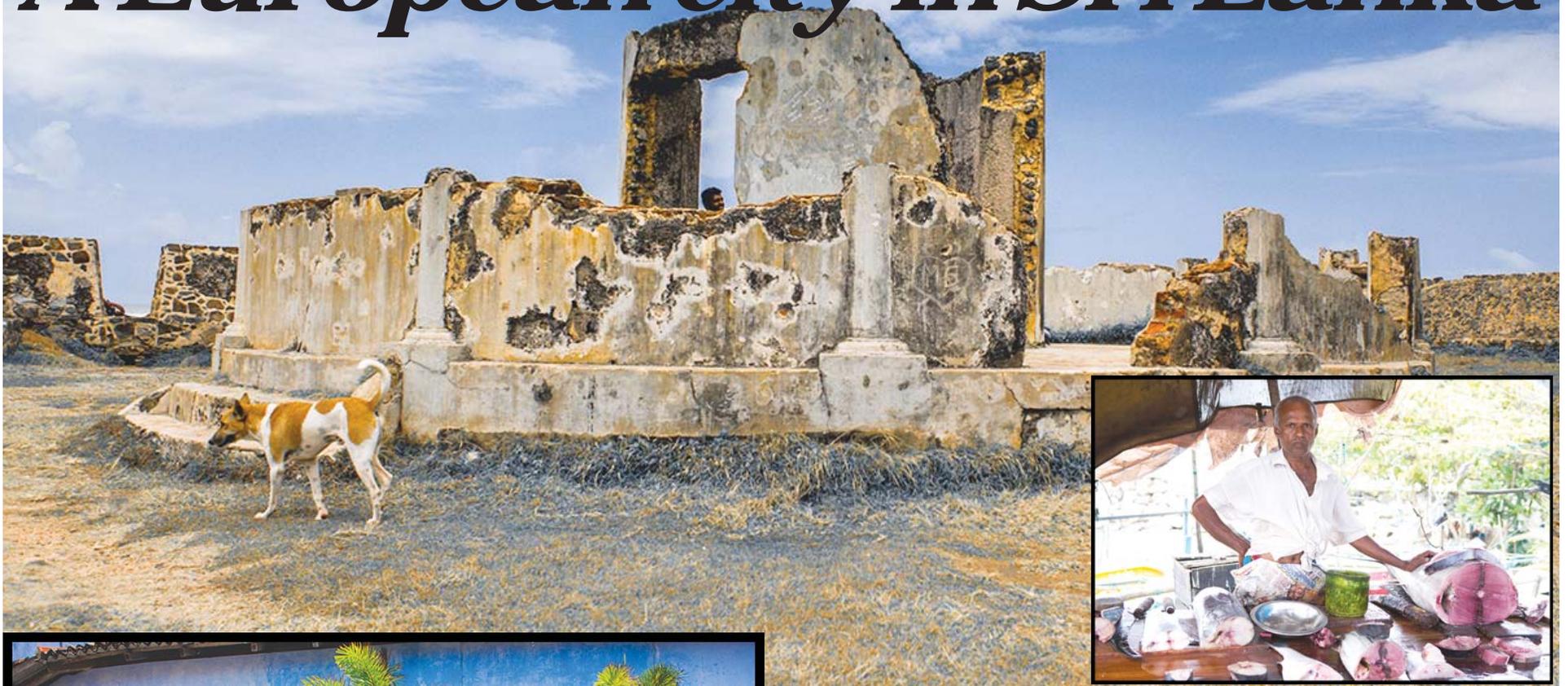
Pradesh family is found dead in his bedroom, Jatil is sent to investigate. Affecting the dignified manner of Hercule Poirot and Benoit Blanc, he paces about the house, observing the crime scene with clinical passivity and sizing up each member of the family. It is soon clear to Jatil (and us) that they are all hiding something; they all have reasons to kill the old man. Having understood this, Jatil gathers the family in the courtyard and says, almost as a threat, "Aap sabko hum ek baat bata rahe hain. Yahan jo kaand hue hai na, hum karenge uski jaanch." And once again, Nawazuddin rises above his diminutive physical stature to deliver a performance that positively demands attention. Jatil is an interesting character, given a chip on his shoulder by Nawaz. In the tradition of fine fictional detectives, he is quite the

blank canvas. His sincerity is unquestionable, even in the face of corruption and red-tape. At every turn, he is met with hurdles, sometimes in the form of his uncooperative superior, and on other occasions a local politician known as Munna Raja. Like the recent series Paatal Lok, Raat Akeli Hai also subscribes to the age-old cinematic trope that for a crime to be solved, the detective must first be suspended from duty. Trehan does the intelligent thing and surrounds himself with impeccably talented artists on his first film. Everyone, from Nawaz and the ensemble - Shweta Tripathi and Tigmanshu Dhulia are standouts - to the cinematographer Pankaj Kumar (Talvar, Tumbbad) and writer Smita Singh (Sacred Games), appear to be working in comfortable collaboration to serve a shared vision. Perhaps because of his experience in

casting, Trehan is aware that he must not fall into the same trap that has consumed earlier murder mysteries: telegraphing the identity of the killer by hiring an actor who sticks out like a South Delhi boy in a Gurugram bar. Even Knives Out, a film with which Raat Akeli Hai shares its DNA, couldn't avoid this. The moment Chris Evans stepped up in the second half, you knew something was up. But by casting actors of equal skill and popularity to play the members of Raghuveer Singh's family, as a viewer, you're constantly guessing, and mostly guessing wrong. Unfortunately for Raat Akeli Hai, it arrives mere months after director Rian Johnson's Oscar nominated film, which raised the bar considerably for locked room murder mysteries, and will, at least for the time being, be considered the benchmark for this sort of story.

Exploring Galle

A European city in Sri Lanka



A step into Sri Lanka's past

Step back into Sri Lanka's exotic past when visiting the ancient coastal town of Galle. This European walled enclave along the South Coast of Sri Lanka will evoke within you a frozen in time nostalgia.

Artists, writers, photographers and designers alike have been seduced by Galle's ambience for centuries. Its Portuguese, Dutch and British colonial past, offers everything a historical European city will offer, amidst its genuine Sri Lankan charm.

As a matter of fact, it is a perfect example of European architectural styles mixed in with South Asian traditions. A true atmosphere of the past.

It's a world within a world. Its quaint streets are representative of a living museum, still bustling with life millennia later, thus receiving World Heritage Status by UNESCO. Ancient mosques, churches, grand mansions, meditative temples and museums are hidden away within the coral and granite walls of the 16th-century Dutch fort. Stylish cafes, quirky boutiques and impeccably restored hotels dot its narrow cobble stone streets still bearing their original names.

The Fort is the slow beating heart of Galle's history.

The Fort Galle's core is the 300 year old Fort built in 1663 by the

Architecturally, it is genius. A storm water drainage system was introduced 200 years ago to prevent flooding in the fort.

The fort itself even withstood the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, whereas a few other buildings sadly suffered losses.

Flag Rock, once the Portuguese bastion is the ultimate sunset point. It can be found at the southernmost end of the Fort. Its not uncommon to find locals here, leaping into the water off the rocks. To commemorate the Portuguese, a coat-of-arms emblem can be found on in the entrance with a rooster standing upon a rocky perch.

What to see Like any European

Dutch. Its wall enclave brims with attractions and surrounds three sides of the ocean. Here you can take in beautiful panoramic views of the peninsula and the sandy beaches.

Essentially it is a 90-hectare town that falls within a larger new city.

or Asian city, Galle has no shortage of things to do and see. Here are a few of the highlights. Galle Fort Hotel

Pop past the 18th century Galle Fort Hotel. You won't be disappointed. Originally, a Dutch mansion and warehouse, today it is a sought-after hotel boasting the finest examples of Dutch Architecture of its kind. The grand Palladian colonnade and the ceremonial arch at the entrance will take your breath away. What's more, UNESCO

has referred to this as a masterpiece of Cultural Heritage and conservation. By the same token, they have awarded the hotel the Asia Pacific Heritage Award of Distinction for its authenticity and historical value. Dutch Reformed Church & The Governor's House

The Dutch Reformed Church built in 1754 houses houses many antiquities that when visiting will merit an hour and a half of your time. Within, you will find a hexagonal shaped orthodox pulpit, a first of its kind in Sri Lanka. Engraved tombstones line the floors, and large tablets dedicated to British settlers can be found on the walls. The organ loft once held a cumbersome Dutch organ.

If you are feeling up for a treasure hunt, explore the underground tunnels running from here to the Governor's House.

The 18-metre high Galle Lighthouse stands tall on the eastern end of the Fort. It was built in 1939 by the British. If you would like to see some spectacular views of both the ocean and the land, climb to the top. It is also the very first lighthouse ever built in Sri Lanka.

Once you have explored the town's inner fortified walls, head to the fish market that can be found just outside the fort's main entrance. Rows of fishermen will be pulling in with their fresh produce from the day. The area is a delight for fish lovers. Museums and mansions Galle has a few notable museums. The Galle National Museum, found in the oldest Dutch building in the fort, displays a few interesting archaeological and anthropological objects that give insight into cultures and rituals of the Southern Region.

What's more, you can even see some of the equipment the Dutch used to build their vessels back in the day, as well as the Dutch soldiers weapons and uniforms.

Kick 2: Jacqueline Fernandez to star opposite Salman Khan

Producer Warda Nadiadwala announced on Tuesday that Jacqueline Fernandez will play the female lead opposite Salman Khan in his next film, Kick 2.

Jacqueline Fernandez got another reason to celebrate on her birthday on Tuesday (August 11) as producer Warda Nadiadwala announced that the Mrs Serial Killer actress will play the female lead opposite Salman Khan in his next film, Kick 2. The producer took to social media to make the announcement. Jacqueline turned 35 yesterday.

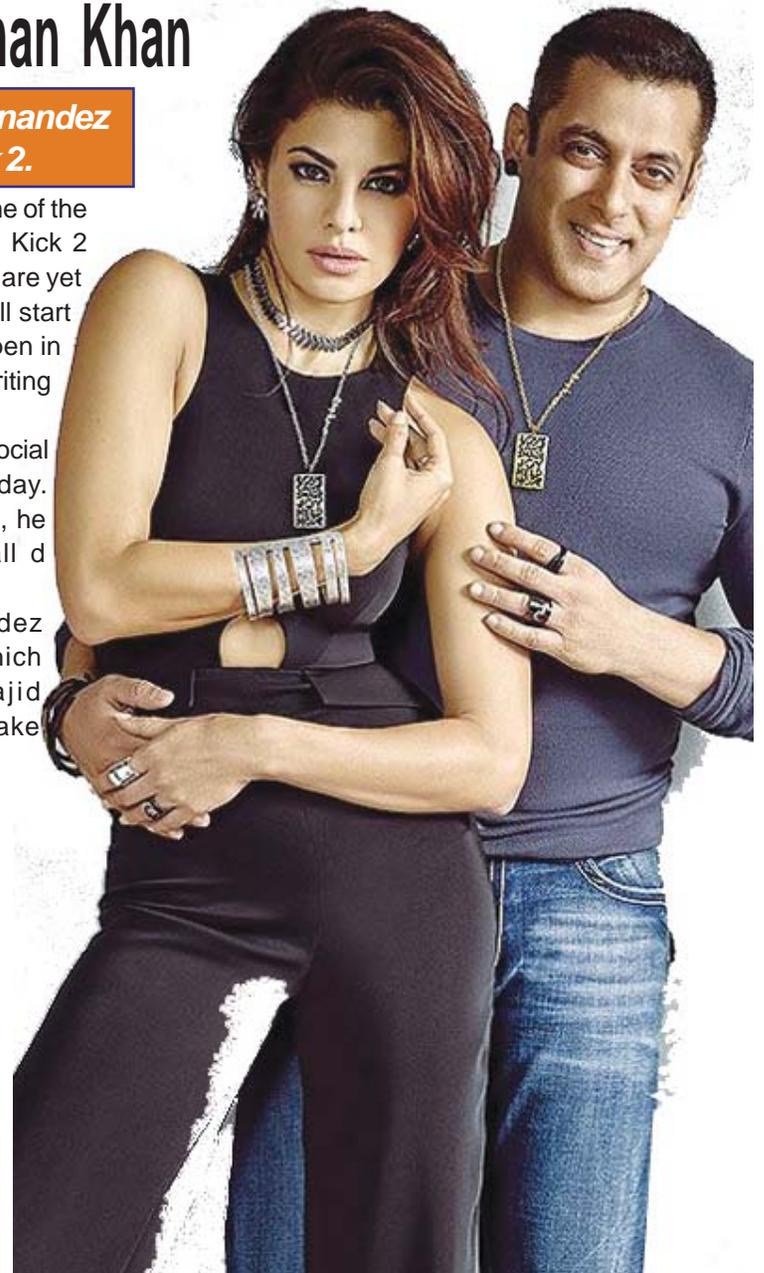
Sharing a montage video featuring Jacqueline Fernandez, Salman Khan and Sajid Nadiadwala, Warda Nadiadwala wrote, "Here is your BIRTHDAY GIFT that will be remembered Forever! @Asli_Jacqueline overjoyed to FORMALLY announce that #SajidNadiadwala locked the script at 4 am this morning & has written an exceptional role for you! @BeingSalmanKhan's #Kick2 rolling soon Welcome Back! @NGEMovies (sic)."

While it was earlier announced that Salman Khan

will be playing the lead role in Kick 2, the name of the female lead was not revealed. In January, Kick 2 director Sajid Nadiadwala had told PTI, "We are yet to lock the female co-star, post which we will start working on the shoot dates. Kick 2 will happen in December 2021. I am in a process to finish writing the script."

Earlier in the day, Salman Khan also took to social media to wish Jacqueline a happy birthday. Sharing a photo of himself with the actress, he wrote, "Happy bday Jacky . . Wish u all d happiness @jacquelinef143 (sic)."

Salman Khan and Jacqueline Fernandez earlier shared screen space in Kick, which released in 2014. Directed by Sajid Nadiadwala, it was the official Hindi remake of Telugu film of the same name.



Actor Antonio Banderas announces being Covid-19 positive on his 60th birthday

Spanish actor Antonio Banderas, star of The Mask of Zorro and dozens of other films, announced on Monday, his 60th birthday, that he had tested positive for COVID-19 and was in quarantine.

"I'd like to add that I'm feeling relatively well, just a bit more tired than usual, and confident that I will recover as soon as



possible," he said in a birthday message on Twitter, adding that

he had reached 60 "full of desire and aspirations".

Quiero contaros lo siguiente... pic.twitter.com/u579iBVLMO - Antonio Banderas (@antoniobanderas) August 10, 2020

Banderas said he would use his time in quarantine to read, write, rest and make plans for the future.

On Chris Hemsworth's birthday, the emotional reason behind why he named his daughter India



Chris Hemsworth's relationship with India goes back well beyond the time he visited the country to shoot his film Extraction. India is the name of the Australian actor's daughter, and there's a story behind it.

Hemsworth, who turns 37 on August 11, is married to model and actor Elsa Pataky, who spent a lot of time in India. While promoting his film Men in Black: International in 2019, the actor told IANS, "My wife spent lot of time in India and that was where the name originally came from." Besides India Rose, Hemsworth and Pataky have two more children - Sasha and Tristan.

The actor has since spoken about the country on several occasions, especially after he shot Extraction in Ahmedabad and Mumbai. "I love the place and the people," he said at a press event, "Shooting there... There were thousands of people on the streets every day and I have never experienced that on set. It was sort of intimidating as it was exciting because there were so many people." He added, "I have such pleasant memories of people and interactions there, and a lot of enthusiasm and positivity. There was real excitement for us shooting there. We had never shot there before."

Sanjay Dutt diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer

Sanjay Dutt has been diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. The actor had announced a short break from work earlier on Tuesday for a 'medical treatment'.

Actor Sanjay Dutt has been detected with stage four lung cancer, said sources at Lilavati hospital who are not authorised to talk to the media. The actor, who was rushed to the hospital on Saturday after he complained of breathlessness, was discharged on Monday.

The actor's oxygen level was fluctuating between 90-92% when he was admitted. He was immediately tested for Covid-19 through rapid antigen kit. But as per the sources, the test result didn't show any presence of the pathogen of the virus. Later, it was reported that he has developed fluid in his chest.

His diagnosis revealed that he was suffering from stage four lung cancer. "When he was taken to the hospital, he was low on oxygen saturation. But when his Covid-19 report came negative, he run cancer analysis and it came positive," said a source from the hospital. When contacted his treating doctor, Dr Jalil Parker, refused to make any comment on it citing patient



confidentiality.

On Tuesday, Sanjay had announced that he was taking a 'short break' from work for 'some medical treatment'. "Hi friends, I am taking a short break from work for some medical treatment." The Khalnaayak actor further said "My family and friends are with me and I urge my well-wishers not to worry or unnecessarily speculate. With your love and good wishes, I will be back soon!"

Sanju sir diagnosed with lung cancer :(#sanjaydutt get well soon sir ?? this year why u doing

this ?

- adhyayan suman (@AdhyayanSsuman) August 11, 2020

Among those who tweeted about Sanjay was actor Adhyayan Suman who tweeted, "Sanju sir diagnosed with lung cancer :(#sanjaydutt get well soon sir Folded hands this year why u doing this?"

On August 8, the Munnabhai MBBS actor issued a statement on Twitter assuring his followers that he is "doing well" and his reports for Covid-19 were negative.



Picking Kamala Harris makes history But will it make a difference in November?



(Story on
Page 30)

How China gamed the multilateral trading system



(News Agencies)- China, which was a founding member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1948, pulled out of it in 1950 for political reasons. By the time the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations was launched in 1986, China became an "observer" of GATT with the express purpose of re-joining the multilateral trading system. Interestingly, Hong Kong acquired membership of GATT as a separate customs territory in 1986 and to this day enjoys full membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) as "Hong Kong, China".

(Contd on page 31)

Pence tells Harris he looks forwards to VP debate: 'I'll see you in Salt Lake City'



(News Agencies)-Vice President Mike Pence received word that Sen. Kamala Harris had been selected as Joe Biden's running mate as he headed to an event in Arizona Tuesday -- and said he's looking forward to debating her this October in Utah.

"On the way here I learned that Joe Biden named his running mate," Pence said to a rally in Mesa, Ariz., followed by boos from the crowd.

"As you all know, Joe Biden and the Democratic Party have been overtaken by the radical left. So given their promises of higher taxes, open borders, socialized medicine, and abortion on demand, it's no surprise that he chose Senator Harris," Pence said. "So my message to the Democratic nominee for vice president: Congratulations. I'll see you in Salt Lake City," Pence told the crowd of Trump supporters.

(Contd on page 31)

Independence Day ceremony to be low-key affair at Wagah Border

(News Agencies)- The Independence Day ceremony at the Wagah-Attari Border will be a low-key affair this time due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Border Security Force (BSF) has held a series of meetings with the Amritsar district administration to char out modalities. In the meetings, the BSF and local administration decided that visitors will not be allowed to witness the parade on August 15 this year.

Speaking to India Today TV, an officer privy to the meeting said the decision was taken since social congregations are not allowed at present due to the pandemic. "We will only have men in uniform wearing masks and gloves," the officer said. The Wagah Border

has been closed for visitors since March this year just before the nationwide lockdown was announced



to contain the spread of the viral infection. Deputy Commissioner Amritsar, Gurpreet Singh Khaira, said, "As per government's advisory on Covid-19, congregations are to be avoided. Hence, visitors and spectators will not be entertained at

during the ceremony on Independence Day." Khaira added that Amritsar had been a red zone and the district administration wants to avoid public gatherings so that Covid-19 does not spread further. "Not just the Wagah-Atari Border, Independence day ceremony in the district will also be a low-key affair with no guard of honour or elaborate ceremony," he said. On August 15, the Border Security Force (BSF) will organise a 19-minute

ceremony seeing participation of 16 BSF personnel. This will be followed by a closing ceremony and lowering the national flag. Apart from this, a BSF company has been deployed at border outposts and surrounding areas for

(Contd on page 31)

