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Tributes paid to Tejinder Singh of India America Today
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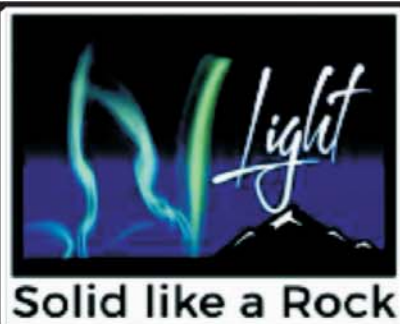
“Nomophobia”

You might just be addicted. “No Mobile Phone Phobia” is a 21st-century term for the fear of not being able to use your cell phone or other smart device.

Smartphone use physically affects your brain, study says



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Indian National Jailed For Breaching COVID-19 Restrictions In Singapore

(Insider Bureau)-Balachandran Parthiban's test came positive for COVID-19 after he was picked up by the police at Changi Airport and escorted back to Singapore General Hospital (SGH). A 26-year-old Indian national was sentenced to nine months' jail on Monday for trying to leave Singapore during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when he had been asked to wait in a hospital for the results of his swab test. Balachandran Parthiban's test came positive for COVID-19 after he was picked up by the police at Changi Airport and escorted back to Singapore General Hospital (SGH). He had taken public transport there, tried unsuccessfully to buy a ticket to India, and loitered at Terminal 1 of the Changi Airport for about four hours, reported TODAY newspaper. The foreign worker later breached an isolation order and went to the airport again in another bid to fly back home. After he pleaded guilty in May to one charge each of exposing others to the risk of COVID-19 and leaving an isolation area without permission, his pro bono lawyer Cory Wong asked for him to be remanded in the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) for



psychiatric evaluation. Following a nearly four-week stay in IMH, Balachandran was diagnosed with "adjustment disorder with mixed disturbance of emotions and conduct" around the time of his offences in May last year. Dr Stephen Phang found that the "minor" mental disorder did not cause him to abdicate his capacity to assume mental responsibility for his actions. He still retained the mental capacity to differentiate right from wrong and was not of unsound mind, the psychiatrist added. Nevertheless, his subsequent psychiatric history showed that he later developed full-blown "schizophreniform psychosis, which was likely to have been reactive to, and precipitated by the ongoing stress of being held under conditions of security, together with his ongoing concerns about his family situation back in India", Dr Phang's medical report stated. When in IMH, Balachandran reported hearing voices instructing him to commit suicide and which made it difficult for him to control his actions.

S Jaishankar Unveils Mahatma Gandhi's Statue In Georgia



(News Agencies)- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Georgian counterpart David Zalkaliani unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Tbilisi Park on Saturday. In a tweet, Mr Jaishankar said, "A fitting conclusion to a memorable visit. Joined by VPM/FM @DZalkaliani in unveiling the Mahatma Gandhi statue in a prominent Tbilisi Park." Mr Jaishankar arrived in Tbilisi on Friday on a two-day official visit and was received by his Georgian counterpart David Zalkaliani. A fitting conclusion to a memorable visit. Joined by VPM/FM @DZalkaliani in unveiling the Mahatma Gandhi statue in a prominent Tbilisi Park." Mr Jaishankar arrived in Tbilisi on Friday on a two-day official visit and was received by his Georgian counterpart David Zalkaliani. A fitting conclusion to a memorable visit. Earlier in the day, both the ministers held a bilateral meeting and discussed economic cooperation, tourism, trade and connectivity between the two countries. "It was a very good discussion. We discussed economic cooperation, tourism, trade and connectivity. Our relationship is doing well."

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US Lawmakers, Indian-Americans Welcome Biden's Nomination Of Eric Garcetti As Envoy

Top American lawmakers and eminent members of the Indian-American community described it as an excellent choice.

(Insider Bureau)-Powerful US lawmakers and eminent members of the Indian-American community have welcomed the nomination of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti as the country's next envoy to India.

US President Joe Biden on Friday announced the nomination of Garcetti, 50, as the US Ambassador to India.

"I am honoured to accept his nomination to serve in this role," Mr Garcetti said in a statement soon after he was nominated for the role.

Top American lawmakers and

eminent members of the Indian-American community described it as an excellent choice.

"Mayor Garcetti is an excellent choice to serve as US ambassador to India. The importance of India to the global economy and national security will only continue to grow over the coming years - and having a steady hand to guide our relationship with that nation is vital," Senator Dianne Feinstein said. Garcetti, as the grandson and great-grandson of immigrants, is committed to economic opportunity and justice for all, two

bedrock American values that he will effectively champion in India, she said. Biden's nomination of Garcetti to serve as next ambassador to India is an important step forward in the US-India partnership as the two countries work together to end the pandemic, increase economic cooperation, and ensure regional security, Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi said. "Mayor Garcetti's experience in leading Los Angeles while championing international cooperation between the world's leading cities will



undoubtedly serve him well as he helps strengthen the relationship between the world's largest democracy and its oldest," he said. The choice of Eric Garcetti to be the US ambassador to India is a mark of how the Biden administration is on establishing strong ties with India, said MR

Rangaswami, a Silicon Valley-based entrepreneur and investor, about his nomination. Mr Rangaswami said Mr Garcetti has a strong track record as the mayor of America's second largest city and a personal connection with Biden.

Indian-American Health Policy Expert Appointed To Key Medicare Position



Dr Meena Seshamani most recently served as Vice President of Clinical Care Transformation at MedStar Health. She also served on the senior leadership of the 10 hospital, 300+ outpatient care site health system, a media release said.

(Insider Bureau)-Indian-American health policy expert Dr. Meena Seshamani, who served on the leadership of the Biden-Harris transition Health and Human Services (HHS) agency review team, has been appointed as the Director of the US Centre for Medicare.

Dr. Seshamani, 43, will lead the Centre's efforts in serving the

people 65 or older, people with disabilities and people with End-Stage Renal Disease that rely on Medicare coverage.

Meena Seshamani's position as Deputy Administrator and Director of Centre for Medicare started on July 6.

"Dr. Meena Seshamani brings her diverse background as a health care executive, health

economist, physician and health policy expert to CMS," said CMS (Centres for Medicare & Medicaid Services) Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure.

"Providing quality health care to the people who rely on Medicare and advancing health equity as we do it is a priority for CMS. I am delighted to say Dr. Seshamani will bring her unique perspective on how health policy impacts the real lives of patients to her leadership role as Deputy Administrator and Director of the Centre for Medicare," she said. Dr Seshamani most recently served as Vice President of Clinical Care Transformation at

MedStar Health, where she conceptualised, designed, and implemented population health and value-based care initiatives and served on the senior leadership of the 10 hospital, 300+ outpatient care site health system, a media release said. The care models and service lines under her leadership, including

community health, geriatrics, and palliative care, have been nationally recognised by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and others. She also cared for patients as an Assistant Professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the Georgetown University School of Medicine, it said.

Regional Countries Want Outcome In Afghanistan To Be Good: S Jaishankar

(Insider Bureau)-India said on Thursday the countries near and little bit beyond Afghanistan have a very strong interest in ensuring that the outcome in Afghanistan is both good for the war-torn nation as well as the region.

The Taliban militants have seized dozens of districts in recent weeks and are now thought to control about a third of the country, ahead of the withdrawal of US and Western troops from Afghanistan by September 11. Under a deal with the Taliban, the US and its NATO allies agreed to withdraw all troops in return for a commitment by the militants that they would prevent extremist groups from operating in areas they control. "If one looks at the issue of terrorism, both India and Russia are against fundamentalist thinking, violence, radicalisation and violent extremism. We are

against terrorism," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Thursday. Mr Jaishankar, who is in Russia on a three-day visit, made the comments in response to a question on Afghanistan at the Primakov Institute of World Economy & International Relations in Moscow. "We are pluralistic societies. We have been targeted... I don't think we have changed our position on terrorism, on fundamentalism, on violence and on defending pluralistic societies," he said replying to the question.

"On Afghanistan, we have both supported a united Afghanistan, a sovereign Afghanistan, an Afghanistan where minorities have a fair share of representation. We were for an Afghanistan which was at peace with itself and at peace with its neighbours," he added.

Indian-Origin Man Arrested In Canada For Smuggling 112.5 Kg Cocaine

(Insider Bureau)-A 24-year-old Indian-origin man has been arrested in Canada for allegedly smuggling about 112.5 kg of cocaine estimated at USD 14 million (Rs 1,04,46,17,000) into the country from the US.

The seizure occurred last month when a commercial truck driven by Pardeep Singh, a Quebec resident, entered Canada at the Peace Bridge in Fort Erie in Ontario and was pulled aside for a secondary examination, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) said Thursday.

Border agents searched the vehicle and discovered 112.5 kg of suspected cocaine inside five duffel bags, the agency said in a statement.

The value of this seizure is estimated at USD 14 million.

The RCMP have charged Singh with the importation of a controlled substance.

Singh is set to make a court appearance in St Catharines on Friday.

In a statement, CBSA District Director Kim Upper hailed the seizure as an example of the "integral role" her agency plays in keeping illegal drugs off the streets. "Our officers have interrupted the smuggling attempt of a massive amount of narcotics, and have put a full stop to the ripple effect these narcotics would have in neighbourhoods across our country," Upper said.

High alert in Agra after Al Qaeda terrorists arrested in Lucknow

As per information received, the security agencies speculate that terrorists could plant bombs in trains running through Agra. So, a high alert has been sounded in the city.

(News Agencies)-As in most of Uttar Pradesh, a high alert has been sounded in Agra, after two Al Qaeda terrorists were arrested in Lucknow last week. Security arrangements have been tightened in the city of Taj Mahal.

After Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh seems to be the centre of attention for Pakistani terrorists as the ones arrested in Lucknow recently have given the Intelligence Bureau (IB) information about their activities in several districts of the state. Strict vigilance by the government

and intelligence agencies, though, seems to have thwarted terrorists and their plans so far. However, with the state going into elections soon, any threat of terrorism could create panic among the citizens.

As per information received, the security agencies fear that there could be a terrorist attack in Agra. A search was conducted on several trains on Wednesday, including the Shatabdi Express and the Intercity Express.

Railway Protection Force (RPF) Commandant PK Panda told India Today that not just the

railway station, but the outer circulating area has also been secured and this tight security shall continue till August 15.

Following the high alert announcement, only people with confirmed tickets are allowed at the railway station. Platform tickets have also been suspended. 100 CCTV cameras are functional at the Agra Cantonment Railway Station, while the other two stations, Agra Fort and Raja Ki Mandi, are also being centrally monitored by the RPF.

Meanwhile, social activist Vijay



Upadhyay expressed concern at the terrorist threat to trains passing through Agra and said that any incident of terrorism in Agra could tarnish the city's reputation. "With the tourism industry already suffering so much, a terrorist attack could further affect the tourist traffic to Agra and as a result, the people of Agra will suffer," Upadhyay

said. Hindustani Biradari Vice-Chairman Vishal Sharma said that in view of the upcoming festive season and the elections next year, not just the security agencies, but the common people too, should keep an eye on any suspicious individuals that may have come to live in their area recently, and report it to the police.

Donations to Baba Ramdev's Patanjali research trust get tax exemption for five years

The Income Tax Department has extended tax deductions on donations made to Patanjali Research Foundation Trust for five years.



(News Agencies)-The Income Tax Department has extended tax deductions on donations to yoga guru Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Research Foundation Trust for five years. The Patanjali Group, which is among the fastest growing

consumer goods companies in the country, sells products ranging from herbal products like immunity boosters and toothpaste to instant noodles, detergent and toilet cleaner.

Following the notification, Baba Ramdev took to microblogging

site Twitter to declare that Patanjali will be bigger than multinational Unilever in the FMCG space by 2025. He also said Patanjali will be the biggest in natural and evidence-based medicine.

WHAT DID THE TAX DEPARTMENT SAY?

A Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) notification on July 12 said, "The Central Government hereby approves M/s Patanjali Research Foundation Trust, Haridwar under the category "Research Association" for Scientific Research for the purposes of clauses (ii) of sub-

section (1) of Section 35 of the Income Tax Act, 1961 read with rules 5C and 5D of the Income Tax Rules, 1962."

The notification further said "it shall apply with effect from the date of publication in the Official Gazette (previous year 2021-2022) and accordingly applicable for assessment years 2022-23 to 2027-28."

WHAT EXEMPTION RULES SAY?

The exemption for Patanjali has been provided under Section 35 of the Income Tax Act that permits deduction of expenditure "an amount equal to one-and-

one-half times of any sum paid to a research association which has as its object the undertaking of scientific research or to a university, college or other institution to be used for scientific research."

Rule 5C of the Income Tax Rules 1962 prescribes form and manner for deduction and Rule 5D prescribes conditions for the approval. To be eligible for the exemption, the sole object of the beneficiary entity would be "undertaking scientific research or research in social science or statistical research".

Akali leaders detained while trying to 'gherao' residence of Punjab minister

(News Agencies)-Several Akali leaders and workers, who were staging a protest here demanding the arrest of Lok Insaaf Party MLA Simarjit Singh Bains in a rape case, were detained on Wednesday when they tried to 'gherao' the residence of Punjab Minister Bharat Bhushan Ashu, police said.

The protesters said despite being booked in a rape case on Monday, Bains has not been arrested yet. Senior Akali leader Harish Rai Dhanda accused the minister of shielding Bains. The protesters, including women, raised slogans against the Atam Nagar MLA and demanded his arrest.

The minister was in Chandigarh at the



time of the protest.

Police personnel were deployed in

strength and barricades were put up on roads to prevent protesters from going towards the minister's residence at Model Gram here.

The police detained some of the protesters as they tried to 'gherao' the residence of the minister. Those who were detained included former minister and MLA

Sharanjit Singh Dhillon, senior Akali leaders Maheshinder Singh Grewal, former MLA Darshan Singh Shiwalik, former mayor Harcharan Singh Golwaria and ex-minister Hira Singh Gabria.

An FIR was registered against Bains and six others on the directions of a court here. According to a complaint lodged by a 44-year-old woman here, Bains allegedly raped her on several occasions in his office on the pretext of helping her financially. However, Bains had earlier denied the allegations levelled against him by the woman

Mamata vs Suvendu case: Preserve Nandigram poll documents and videos, Calcutta HC tells EC

While hearing the Nandigram election case, the Calcutta High Court has ordered the Election Commission to preserve all documents, election papers and video recordings connected to the West Bengal Assembly election.

(News Agencies)-The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday directed the Election Commission to preserve all documents, election papers, devices and video recordings connected to the West Bengal Assembly election that took place earlier this year. The high court issued directions while hearing a petition filed by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee challenging Suvendu Adhikari's victory from Nandigram during the assembly

election held this year. "All documents, election papers, devices, video recordings connected with election under challenge in the court shall be preserved" by the Election Commission which is the custodian of the case, the high court said.

While issuing the orders, the high court also said notices will be served to the respondent (Suvendu Adhikari), returning officer and the Election Commission. "The election

petition does not suffer from any defect as provided in 86(1) of the People Act 1951," it said.

The matter has now been posted for hearing on August 12, 2021.

Suvendu Adhikari had defeated Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram by 1,956 votes, according to the Election Commission. Following the election results, Mamata Banerjee challenged Adhikari's win in the Calcutta High Court. The case was reassigned to the bench of Justice Shampa Sarkar by Acting Chief Justice Rajesh



Bindal after Justice Kausik Chanda recused from hearing the Trinamool Congress supremo's election petition.

Mamata Banerjee had objected to her petition being heard by Justice Chanda alleging the bench could be biased against her. She

sought Justice Chanda's recusal on the ground of possible bias. Justice Chanda later recused from the case but imposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh on Mamata Banerjee for the manner in which she levelled charge against the Calcutta High Court judge.

Kerala Governor fasts in protest against dowry, atrocities against women

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan joined a fasting protest on Wednesday to raise awareness on the injustice of the practice of dowry and atrocities against women.



(News Agencies)- Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Wednesday morning began a day-long fast at his official residence Raj Bhavan to raise awareness on the injustice

of the practice of dowry and atrocities against women.

The fast was scheduled from 8 am to 6 pm on Wednesday, as per Raj Bhavan sources. This may be the first time in Kerala's

history that a Governor is fasting for such a social cause.

The fasting protest campaign was initiated by various Gandhian organizations such as Gandhi Smaraka Nidhi with the aim to create awareness against the practice of giving and taking dowry as part of marriage unions. At Gandhi Bhavan, several Gandhians are also observing the dawn-to-dusk fast.

The Gandhian organizations said their programme aims to end atrocities against women and to address the need to make Kerala a safer place. Khan will also attend a prayer meeting at the Gandhi Bhavan later in the evening before ending his fast.

GOVERNOR'S VIDEO MESSAGE- In a video message issued on Tuesday evening, Khan said that dowry is a "grave injustice and ignominy to the dignity of

women". "Our beloved state of Kerala was in the news recently for a tragic death due to dowry. It is sad that this spectre of dowry continues to raise its ugly head in our state which has been globally acclaimed for its social indicators including literacy and life expectancy," he said. "Mahatma Gandhi said that any young man who makes dowry a condition for marriage discredits his education and country and dishonors womanhood.

Return of Taliban is not a headache for India only. Here's why.

India is not the only country to be left worried over the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Several Asian countries consider the return of Taliban as a security headache.

(News Agencies)-Last week, Pakistan taunted India over its decision to temporarily close consulates in Afghanistan with fighting intensifying and the Taliban gaining control of much of the country. Pakistan Army spokesperson indirectly addressed India as "spoilers" in Afghanistan saying that India's investment was "sinking" in the country with the return of the Taliban.

India last week decided to close its Kandahar consulate after the Taliban reached the doors of the

city, and evacuated about 50 officials and security personnel from there. The decision appeared sudden after having denied such plans and just days after the US hastily vacated the Bagram air base in the dead of the night.

INDIA'S WORRY

This was the third consulate to be temporarily closed since April 2020, when the return of Taliban was in the initial phase and Covid-19 had emerged as a threat. Back then India shut down its consulates in Herat and

Jalalabad. India is obviously worried over the security of around 3,000 nationals and diplomats currently staying in Afghanistan.

For the record, India has backed Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani like the rest of the world which opposes terrorism. India has been a partner in Afghanistan's reconstruction after the country was ravaged during the previous phase of civil war between the Taliban and the government-backed forces. India has invested an estimated over



\$3 billion in reconstruction since 2001 when American forces drove out the Taliban from Kabul.

And, India does not have an official channel of communication with the Taliban. It had proven costly in the first Taliban regime in Afghanistan during the 1990s. However, a Washington Post article claimed that India may be in talks with Taliban at some level. But India is not the only

country to be left worried over the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan. The development is said to be the dominating theme of discussion at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) at its foreign ministers' two-day meet in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, to which about 1,000 Afghan soldiers recently fled for the safety of their lives after they were surrounded by the Taliban.

Just a courtesy meeting: Prashant Kishor on visit to Rahul Gandhi's residence



between Prashant Kishor and Gandhi was primarily to work out a strategy to accommodate both CM Amarinder Singh and MP Navjot Singh Sidhu. However, sources later said that Prashant Kishor could be acting as an emissary of various Opposition parties in a bid to stitch together an alliance

against the BJP in 2024. Interestingly, Prashant Kishor held three informal meetings with NCP chief Sharad Pawar after the recent West Bengal Assembly polls, where TMC returned to power after defeating BJP. Kishor and Pawar had ruled out discussing a potential third front to challenge BJP in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

(News Agencies)- Poll strategist Prashant Kishor on Wednesday said that his visit to former Congress president Rahul Gandhi's residence was just a "courtesy meeting" and nothing more should be read into it. Speaking to India Today TV, Prashant Kishor said, "My meeting with Rahul Gandhi was just a courtesy meeting." The meeting on Tuesday was

attended by Congress national general secretaries Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, KC Venugopal, and Harish Rawat. Former chief minister of Uttarakhand, Rawat, is the party's in-charge for Punjab while Prashant Kishor is Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's political advisor. Congress sources had earlier told India Today TV that the meeting

Rakesh Tikait: 200 farmers to protest outside Parliament during monsoon session



(News Agencies)-The Bharatiya Kisan Union has said that 200 farmers would protest outside Parliament during the monsoon session demanding repeal of the three contentious farm laws. Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait said the farmers would hold demonstrations from July 22 and a meeting to finalise the strategy would be held on Wednesday. Thousands of farmers have been camping near Delhi's borders since

November 26 last year. "We will sit outside Parliament while proceedings (Monsoon Session) will continue in the House. Around 200 people will go there (towards Parliament) by bus. We will pay the fare. It will be a peaceful protest. Today, we will have a meeting and we will plan a strategy," Rakesh Tikait said. On Tuesday, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said preparations for their planned protests outside Parliament were in full swing.

Sharad Pawar right candidate to take on PM Modi in 2024 elections, says Sanjay Raut



(News Agencies)- Asserting that the Opposition has a slim chance of winning the 2024 General elections until it has a face, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Wednesday said Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar is the right candidate against PM Modi in the Lok Sabha poll. "Without a strong face of the Opposition, it will be difficult to defeat Modi in 2024. The Opposition currently has no face to battle against PM Modi. All opposition parties should try and find a face to fight the election," Sanjay Raut said. The Sena MP added that Sharad

Pawar could be the face of the Opposition in 2024 since he is a senior leader. This is not the first time that Sanjay Raut has nominated Sharad Pawar as the face of a united Opposition. "A leader like Sharad Pawar should be made the chief of the UPA if you want to strengthen the opposition in the country. His leadership is acceptable to all," Sanjay Raut said. Notably, the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra, which was formed after the 2019 Assembly poll, is led by the Shiv Sena, in which the NCP and the Congress are alliance partners.

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What the US really needs to do about Cuba and Haiti

"The United States should intervene militarily." In less than one week, this kind of call to action was made relative to not one, but two, unfolding crises in the Western Hemisphere. In the immediate wake of the assassination of Haiti's President Jovenel Moise, one of the country's interim prime ministers, Claude Joseph, called on the United States to deploy troops to the western third of Hispaniola to secure critical infrastructure and enhance stability. Days later, as unprecedented crowds of valiant Cubans rose up across the island to protest the country's decrepit, authoritarian regime and the lack of food and medicine amid an ongoing economic crisis aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic, some South Florida politicians formed a chorus calling on the United States to intervene militarily in Cuba. Although they undoubtedly thought they were acting boldly, those who made these calls were instead engaged in the ultimate tell that they had no idea what the US should do. Or that they were political grandstanding. Or both. There would have been no shame in silence on what the US should do. The situations in Haiti and Cuba are complex and immune to the kind of bold action people so desperately want when long-suffering populations, like Haitians and Cubans, are in such acute need of assistance. The desire among certain politicians in the US and Haiti for the US government to somehow sweep in and rescue people from economic and political depredation is undeniable, especially when the events in question are unfolding in the "US' near abroad," in countries

where it has historically not hesitated to intervene. The hard, simple truth is the United States is not going to be the primary engine of political change in either Haiti or Cuba. Meaningful, durable political change in both lies in the hands of the populations themselves. That also requires time as the ability of those populations to set their respective paths forward is hampered, in the case of Haiti, by the legacy of a predatory state followed by an absent one and, in Cuba's case, by the repression of a long dictatorship. There is no big-bang action from the United States that will remove either of those impediments. Instead, and although it feels profoundly frustrating in such urgent times, the path for US action is far more deliberate and patient. In the case of Haiti, the United States needs to send an unmistakable message to all who are looking to Washington to play kingmaker that those days are behind us. The burden of navigating an exceedingly complex political moment in which the country has only 10 legitimately elected officials is on Haitians. The United States -- and other members of the international core group -- can and should play a role in bringing the country's political, civic, and private sector leaders together to chart a path to and through free, fair, and transparent elections. It should not seek to impose decisions on those actors. The US, together with key international partners, including Canada and the European Union, can and should also help alleviate the humanitarian situation in Haiti, especially as it relates to the vastly undercounted spread of Covid-19, according to experts.

The final frontier: Democratisation of space

Space, as Star Trek continues to inform us, is indeed the final frontier. Back when the show first aired (and for several seasons and versions after), the idea of space colonies, a recurring theme, was completely in the realm of science fiction. Now, it is more a question of when, rather than if, although the when is at least several decades in the future. Time doesn't just work differently in space, it works differently when it comes to anything concerning space. On Sunday, nearly two decades after a trio of moneyed entrepreneurs (independently and separately) promised the democratisation of space, the first of them delivered it. From the rather aptly named Truth or Consequences, a city in New Mexico, Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic launched a plane carrying its VSS Unity spacecraft, which was then launched for a 15-minute flight to the edge of space. There were two pilots, Mr Branson, and three other passengers. As the Wall Street Journal pointed out, this meant that for some time, space was the most crowded it has

been, counting those aboard the International Space Station, and the Chinese Taikonauts in orbit in that country's own Tianhe space station - and it will get even more so. Sure, the Virgin spaceflight was just to the edge of space, just as those later this year by Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin and Elon Musk's Space X will be, but by next year, there are expectations that commercial space tourism will be a reality, with people paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for a few minutes of weightlessness and a glimpse of the blue orb from out there.

The space tourism industry is expected to be worth \$3 billion by 2030, according to a 2019 UBS report, but the larger ramifications of the democratisation of space, the fact that just about anyone with the resources can take a trip to space, and the entry of the private sector into an area hitherto dominated by governments will become clear over time. 2021 may mark an important milestone in humankind's effort to explore space, and then colonise it.

Deutsche depicts dark days to come with inflation predictions

By Susmita Ghosh

The world economy is going to face a turbulent time in the future - this is what the prediction coming from the fringe economists. The most prominent voice among them comes from Deutsche Bank economists. With the recent policy changes, they predict a future with lingering inflation that will plague the world with a deep impact. There have been several recent developments which is the reason behind this prediction from the leading bank. They place the blame on the Federal Reserve and their new framework for inflation management. Compared to the past, the new guidelines will opt to follow higher inflation for a complete recovery. However, the firm believes that this approach will have a negative impact in the long run. In simple words, inflation is known as a constant rise of our daily livelihood. It may start from the basic goods and services like food, fuel sources, clothes and other commodities. Then it has a larger impact on the transportation cost, which affects every sector of our life. At a regular interval, it has to happen with the changes in resource status and management. Nonetheless, it is foreseeable but a necessary evil. Proper management of inflation is a much-needed step for both global and national level economies, else a long-term negative impact can cripple a country or a continent. One of the unintended side-effects of inflation can be the recession. Generally known as the degradation of economic activity in a region, we can call the economic decline a recession when it happens in two or more consecutive quarters. One of the dire instances can be 'Stagflation' or recession-inflation, where the economic growth rate slows along with

the high inflation rate. With a low employment and trade rate, it is quite tough to get out of this pickle. This is what Deutsche dreads will happen across the globe with the poor economic management when the inflation finally arrives this time. Even though it is a valid thought for concern, this sentiment is not unanimous on Wall Street. Here, most of the economists and the Fed, take inflation as a temporary problem. They plan to focus on stimulus while not putting too much importance on a larger impact. However, Deutsche thinks that this approach will be a major mistake from 2023 and beyond. Their concern is resonated with eminent economist, Roger Bootle. According to him, the poor monetary and fiscal policy will only instigate the danger of inflation along with the changes in demographics. With the environmental changes and global political impact like the US-China relationship escalation, inflation can prove to be a major thorn on the side of uninterrupted economic growth. Besides, the recent pandemic is already causing the development to stagger a bit. The impact in the countries on the lower-income, high-population spectrum, like the South Asian countries are facing the most of it, with the lockdown and economic slowdown. At this time, a poor approach from the Feds regarding inflation management can have a grim global impact. As they see this coming inflation as a transitory phase, they take a lacklustre approach to manage it. Hence, they do not want to increase the interest rates or cut back on the asset purchase, even though the indicators are above the inflation goal. If the worst comes to pass, the Deutsche predictions may prove to be true to the fullest. It will be a misery to the global economy for a long time, which we can say for sure.



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The judiciary rescues Nepali democracy

Nepal promulgated a new Constitution in 2015. Despite its flaws, especially the inadequate inclusion of marginalised social groups and entrenchment of powerful political elites in the power structure, the Constitution laid out a robust framework for parliamentary democracy. KP Oli, as the leader of a mega communist alliance, won a two-thirds majority in 2017. But in three years, Mr Oli had concentrated power, subverted institutions, alienated a large section of his party, and facing the prospect of losing power, recommended the dissolution of the Parliament - which the Constitution does not allow - in December. A close political aide turned Nepal's President, Bidya Devi Bhandari, played along. The Supreme Court (SC) revoked the decision and restored the House. But in May, as the process to appoint a new PM was underway, Mr Oli and Ms Bhandari once again collaborated. The opposition leader, Nepali Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba,

India was on the wrong side of its own democratic values, of public perception in Nepal, and even the power structure, by supporting KP Oli's domestic, undemocratic, political manoeuvrings. Now, Nepal's Supreme Court has upheld constitutionalism. India must change course



had the signed support of a majority of parliamentarians. Yet, the president did not accept his claim, and on the prodding of Mr Oli, whose constitutional status as PM was deeply suspect for he had acknowledged just days earlier he did not have the

numbers, once again dissolved the house and called for elections. The SC, on Monday, in a historic judgment, restored the House yet again; subjected the President's decision to a judicial review and termed it unconstitutional; and declared that Mr Deuba be

appointed PM on Tuesday itself. With its verdict, the SC has rescued Nepali democracy from an authoritarian figure who was keen to remove all institutional checks in his bid to stay on in power. Mr Deuba, who should have been appointed back in May

itself, will now have to prove his majority, and if he fails, will lead the country to elections. Mr Oli's exit should have been read as good news in India, for he had stoked ultra-nationalism, allowed China unprecedented space in Nepali politics, changed Nepal's map to include territory India considers its own, and mocked India's national symbols. But, unfortunately, since August 2020, in return for Mr Oli's concessions on the bilateral and strategic front, India supported his domestic, undemocratic, political manoeuvrings and even encouraged its political friends in Nepal to follow suit. By doing so, India was on the wrong side of its own democratic values, of public perception in Nepal, and even the power structure, for Mr Oli's decline was imminent. New Delhi must be rueing its misjudgment, but it must course correct immediately, engage closely with Mr Deuba and other parties, distance itself from Mr Oli, and send a signal that India will stand with Nepali democracy.

Don't let religion prevail over science

Both Uttarakhand and UP are governed by the Bharatiya Janata Party, and are scheduled to go to the polls early next year. The party sees these yatras as important to its political base. But in the light of the devastating Kumbh experience, limited State capacity to conduct a mega pilgrimage and ensure that everyone follows Covid-19 protocols, vaccination status, and the impact that any surge will have on the under-equipped health care sector, both states must realise that going ahead with the yatras is fraught with danger.



On July 7, the Uttar Pradesh (UP) government allowed the annual Kanwar Yatra from July 25. Reviewing its preparations, chief minister Yogi Adityanath warned officials that there should be no slackness regarding the safety and

successful organisation of the yatra, and that Covid-19 protocols must be strictly followed. The yatra is an annual pilgrimage of Shiv devotees who collect water from the river Ganga (usually at Haridwar in Uttarakhand) and offer it at Shiv temples in their home states. While Uttarakhand is yet to take a final call, the administration seems keen to allow it. On July 6, it said pilgrims won't be allowed to enter the state. But, two days later, it promised to review the decision. There are ample reasons to be worried. While the second wave of Covid-19 has abated, the pandemic is far from over. The last Kanwar Yatra was held in 2019 and roughly 30 million pilgrims congregated in Haridwar.

Experts warn that the Kanwar Yatra will be even more dangerous than the Kumbh Mela, since 30 to 40 million pilgrims may visit Haridwar in a fortnight compared to the seven million who came during the 30-day Kumbh. There are also reports that tourists are flocking to Uttarakhand and many are not following Covid-19 protocols, putting a question mark on the ability of the local administration to enforce norms. In addition, the Uttarakhand government also seems to be adamant about holding the Char Dham Yatra. Despite a stay by the Uttarakhand High Court till July 28, the state has moved Supreme Court against the order. Both Uttarakhand and UP are governed

by the Bharatiya Janata Party, and are scheduled to go to the polls early next year. The party sees these yatras as important to its political base. But in the light of the devastating Kumbh experience, limited State capacity to conduct a mega pilgrimage and ensure that everyone follows Covid-19 protocols, vaccination status, and the impact that any surge will have on the under-equipped health care sector, both states must realise that going ahead with the yatras is fraught with danger. They should draw a lesson from the Amarnath Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir which has been cancelled. To protect their devotees, the gods would not want it any other way.



The Racism Of The Euro Final - Bo Jo is Guilty

One question about English football has been comprehensively answered. Why does the English team take the knee to insist Black Lives Matter? Because racist English fans and dog-whistling English politicians pick on black football players. It's not complicated.

Boris Johnson has shown that there are votes in being winningly racist. Jibes about 'letter-boxed' Muslim women and black faces split in 'watermelon smiles' have won him and his party anti-woke brownie points. Priti Patel, Johnson's avowedly nationalistic Home Secretary, refused to discourage spectators from booing the English team in England when they took the knee on the ground that as citizens, these racist hecklers had a right to express their political views on 'gesture politics'. Famously charmless, with no recourse to blokish whiteness, Patel's dog-whistling comes from a different place. In a deft piece of white-substitution, Patel has repurposed the vicious majoritarianism of her ancestral country to Tory ends.

The fans seen rioting in video clips after England lost, randomly attacking scared and bewildered bystanders, did what they did because they were drunk, inadequate, aggrieved Little Englanders who couldn't recognize their unlovely selves in the multi-racial team that represents England. They rampaged because this is what drunken English fans traditionally do

at international tournaments. They did what they did partly because political leaders like Johnson and Patel had, with their equivocation, given them reason to believe they were on their side. Tyrone Mings, a member of the current English team who played in this tournament, made the connection between ministerial dog-whistling and the tsunami of racist abuse and violence that followed England's loss. "You don't get to stoke the fire at the beginning of the tournament by labelling our anti-racism message as 'Gesture Politics' and then pretend to be disgusted when the very thing we're campaigning against, happens." He was referring to Patel's ostentatious denunciation of the racism directed at the three young black players who missed scoring from their penalties in the climactic shootout.

At moments like these, some student of English football will pop up as if on cue to sagely observe that things were worse in the Eighties or the Nineties. Ergo, things are better now and that should be factored into public lamentation about racist yobs. And this is true. In the early Eighties, you had to bring your dustbins and milk bottles indoors if league football came to town because the travelling hordes would use the (then) metal bins to drum on and smash the bottles. If you were an Indian student in 1981, bent over a slipped bicycle chain and found yourself surrounded by skinhead stragglers from the second division game just played in your town,

chanting 'Paki bastard', you might have been pleased to know that 40 years later, this was less likely to happen. But in the here and now of last Sunday, this historical decline in hooliganism was probably cold comfort to the men and women beaten up and abused by English lumpen in the aftermath of the Wembley final.

Some online critics of English excess, Indians amongst them, were keen to declare that they had rooted for Italy, because it was both the better team and the more evolved football culture. Roberto Mancini's men were the better team and it was reasonable for a neutral to root for them. But not because Italian football is less racist or violent than English football.

Italian fans who travel to support the national team are less violent and destructive than their English counterparts. There are two main reasons for this. One, they aren't as affluent as the English and don't travel as much as English fans do and consequently don't have English football's global reputation for collective mayhem. Two, they are less invested in national team football. English middle class fans who only watch football when the national team plays because they are in it for the braying adrenalin rush rather than the game itself (which is played at a much higher level in league competition) are more numerous, boorish, violent and entitled than their Italian counterparts. That's why they have a terrible reputation.

But at the level of domestic league

football, Italian football fans are notoriously enmeshed with both criminal mafias and far-right fascist groups. Their racism and their capacity for violence in league football is of a different order from their English counterparts. Club fans in England now rarely riot, whereas Italian fans still have vicious travelling contingents because they are often funded by fan groups called ultras or tifosi. These ultras often have financial links with the mafia. Clubs are so beholden to these groups that they subcontract ticket sales to ultras who then sell them with a cut reserved for organised crime.

Ultras can be, and often are, coordinators of racist chanting. Mario Balotelli who was born in Sicily to Ghanaian parents has had his career stifled by virulent racism in Serie A. When he played for Inter against Juventus, he was tormented by monkey chants and fans shouting "There are no black Italians" in chorus. Worse still, administrators and officials routinely refuse to see that Italian club football has a racism problem. This is in very real contrast to the willingness of English football clubs in recent times (at every level) to at least formally recognize and denounce racism in football. It's not surprising that Boris Johnson and Priti Patel responded to the English team's anti-racist stance in the way that they did. Neither has any real interest in club football. Before the Euros began, they saw a culture war opportunity in the players' decision to take a knee.



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Zomato's Pricy IPO Has Arrived Hot, Beating Other Unicorns

At the top of the indicated price range, the app will have a market value of almost \$8 billion, or 45% more than Jubilant Foodworks.

India's current rate of spawning unicorns, or startups with at least a billion dollars in valuation, is almost three per month. But all that action is in private markets; practically nothing of the digital economy trades publicly. Which explains the nervous excitement over this week's initial public offering by one of the country's two dominant online food-delivery services.

As China cracks down on data-heavy businesses from finance to ride-hailing, Zomato Ltd., backed by Jack Ma's Ant Group Co., is beefing up its IPO in the Indian market to ₹ 9,375 crore (\$1.3 billion) because of high demand. At the top of the indicated price range, the app will have a market

value of almost \$8 billion, or 45% more than Jubilant Foodworks Ltd., which owns the South Asia franchise of Domino's Pizza Inc. While Jubilant packs roughly a quarter of its revenue into earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization, Zomato's operations regularly bleed cash. Naysayers may worry about paying so much for an unprofitable business. To the optimists, though, the losses at Zomato are reminiscent of Meituan's decade-long journey to dominance.



China's third-largest publicly traded tech firm had started out as a Groupon clone, offering deals and discounts. It later added layers of Uber Eats-type online food delivery and Yelp-style restaurant reviews to become an all-purpose platform for services: a super-app. Zomato, which acquired Uber Eats' India business before the pandemic - giving the U.S. ride-hailing firm a near-10% stake in return - is obviously looking to borrow from Meituan's playbook.

But is it too late for that? Enterprises like Ant, Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. and Didi Global Inc., built around large-scale processing of consumer data, are suddenly under a regulatory cloud in Beijing. Meituan is also facing a monopoly probe. What's the risk that New Delhi, too, will go the same way, upsetting calculations that India's smartphone revolution would offer investors a refuge from the U.S.-China tech cold war? Worrying signs are already evident. From Amazon.com Inc. to

Facebook Inc.'s WhatsApp and Twitter Inc., Western tech firms are finding it hard to keep the market of 1.4 billion consumers open and attractive. New Delhi has weaponized its information technology and consumer protection legislation to target them. A law on personal data protection, and another on use of non-personal information, may be up next. That could be important for Zomato.

Compliance costs for handling online data are bound to rise. Even

offline business practices could come under greater scrutiny. A restaurant association has asked India's competition regulator to probe Zomato and rival Swiggy for allegedly charging exorbitant commissions and coaxing dining venues to offer discounts to maintain listings on their apps. Earlier this year, a restaurateur took to Twitter to complain about Zomato's policy to punish food joints for cancellation of orders. Amid high unemployment, it's possible that the government will want to push the cost of gig-economy workers' social security to platforms that don't directly employ them. (Zomato had nearly 170,000 delivery partners in March.)

The final shape of the country's emerging digital economy is still unclear. Odds are that two or three large super-app contenders will emerge. One may be powered by Mukesh Ambani, India's richest man, in partnership with Facebook and Alphabet Inc.'s Google. The other hopeful may be the Tata Group, a conglomerate that sells everything from Tetley tea to Jaguar Land Rover cars. For Zomato to place itself in the third place, it has to find partners to expand beyond food and health supplements into other services, such as payments and finance. Indonesia's GoTo, the recently announced combination of e-commerce website PT Tokopedia with ride-hailing and delivery firm Gojek, offers a convincing model. The timing for the share sale is opportunistic. After an initial wobble, Zomato proved its utility during the pandemic, when diners were stuck at home. At the same time, extraordinary liquidity support from the central bank has the equity market awash in cash. Info Edge India Ltd., the largest investor, will get a handsome partial exit as a reward for writing the fledgling firm a \$1 million check in 2010. What matters now is a path to profitability. At \$137 million, the operational cash burn last financial year was less than half the annual rate just before Covid-19, and more than covered by private investors. From here on, though, the heavy lifting will have to be done by public shareholders.

India will miss its vaccination target

With a dip in daily Covid-19 vaccinations, supply constraints and vaccine hesitancy remain key challenges

India's coronavirus vaccination drive is hobbling once again. In the seven days till Sunday, the number of doses delivered daily on average was 3.5 million - a long way from the peak of 5.8 million a day in the week after June 21. The country's vaccination rate surged to record levels when the Union government brought the programme back under its control, taking over a chaotic purchase mechanism, offering free doses to all adults, and allocating 75% of supplies to states. Several other factors too helped boost the drive - the second wave of infections relented, allowing more people to come forward, and supply



bottlenecks were eased, helping states open up more vaccination centres. The pace, it appeared then, was on a steady trajectory that, if built up to eight to 10 million jabs a day, could have potentially met the government's goal of vaccinating all adults by

the end of 2021. Instead, there has been a dip and meeting the target appears almost impossible. Vaccination trends as well as remarks from some states suggest two of the persistent problems continue to exist - unreliable supply and high levels

of hesitancy. Over the last week, reports from Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Delhi have suggested that vaccination centres were closed due to lack of doses. At the same time, wide variations remain in how different groups of people have taken up vaccines - people in India's urban centres are close to twice as more likely to be vaccinated, but fewer women still have got jabs than men. Health care workers on the front lines, especially in smaller towns and villages, have also found widespread misinformation around the safety and efficacy of vaccines as being significant hurdles to people coming forward.

Re-Imagining The Workplace Environment In Covid Times

After the arduous series of lockdowns, corporate India is now looking at bringing its employees back to work.

After the arduous series of lockdowns, corporate India is now looking at bringing its employees back to work. But with the fickle nature of the virus, top bosses are setting realistic expectations and anticipating more disruptions in the months to come. It is therefore important for technology to rise to the aspirations of the new age workplace that allows operations, reducing the impact of the pandemic on businesses.

Global Business Impact

Clearly, the pandemic has impacted businesses of every size in the country. According to KPMG, 94 per cent of the Fortune 1000 have experienced Covid 19 disruptions. Dun and Bradstreet states that about 82 per cent of small businesses have been impacted as well. While there is an eerie consensus about the uncertainties of the future, this very unrest and volatility will usher in a new era for innovation, not only for businesses but at various levels of government, D2C functions and communities.

workinsync.io' hybrid workplace model is one such innovation that may mitigate the risks to put business operations back in action. We have all been working from home and we have done well. Most of that credit goes to the young, nimble corporate India that we can be very proud of. However, it does not end there. Businesses are now looking to optimize performance and focus on productivity, work-life balance and bring in a structure to the ad hoc operations to bring in business optimisation. This is the critical need of the hour.

Innovation for optimisation

D2C brands are adopting various web-based platforms, livestreams like Firework to adopt an immersive and engaging ecommerce strategy to continue to engage with consumers in the absence of the brick-and-mortar retail operations.

The Government is also devising innovative ways to assist the needs of its citizens by building hyperlocal Covid management stations, like they have done in Bengaluru.

workinsync.io, similarly, is assisting enterprises in creating the critical transformation that will allow businesses to operate



irrespective of the pandemic risks. With a SaaS based application, WorkInSync can incorporate the sensitivities of pandemic and empower businesses to operate, taking into consideration real time Government regulations.

While remote work is in full swing and have been found to be effective to counter the pandemic impact, it is not without its challenges. Employees and enterprises need to be able to sustain.

Childcare responsibilities, lack of space for work at home are barriers to the concept of entirely working from

home. Mental health, fatigue, loneliness are real problems that needs to be addressed immediately. While healthcare is an obvious solution, significant part of the responsibility lies with the enterprise as well and an effective hybrid workplace strategy can build an ecosystem that is far more sustainable over a long period of time.

A BCG study suggests 60 per cent of employees have no outside assistance in caring for children or household work at a time where parents are spending an additional 27 hours addressing these household needs. Now

with schools beginning the 21-22 session, a parent's responsibility will only multiply.

The hybrid workplace builds a bridge between working in isolation and working with teams, managing some of the symptoms that working in absolute isolation causes.

Change Agents

The pandemic may have thrown multiple curve balls at us, but we have also realised that we not only need to take them on, but really hit them out of the park as well. Technology needs to empower the Indian Economy and its flag bearers to progress

with caution rather than crumble. A McKinsey report suggests "Organizations must also use this moment to break from the inertia of the past by dispensing with suboptimal old habits and systems"

A well thought out return to office coupled with organizational reinvention of age-old policies and protocols can create generations of more productive employees through better experience that encourage collaborative work thus reducing costs. In an environment that is conducive to change, innovation and nimble to transform, the ecosystem will benefit greatly in bringing about a shift that counters the risks of pandemic

Ultimately, the aim of this reinvention will be what leading companies have always wanted: a safe environment where people can enjoy their work, collaborate with their colleagues, and achieve the objectives of their organizations. A prime example is the Tata Son's Chairman Mr. Natarajan Chandrasekaran's comment on hybrid workplace in the Qatar Economic Forum. Very rightly, he is seeing the pandemic challenges as an opportunity to make changes that will be ultimately good for sustained growth.

Counting deaths in India is difficult

The current data architecture leaves gaps. Conduct large-scale household-level demographic surveys to ascertain excess deaths Covid-19 has wrecked lives, devastated families, and destroyed livelihoods. An inquiry into the excess deaths due to the pandemic is, therefore, an important issue that needs redressal. The commonly used methodology of quantifying excess deaths based on India's civil registry system (CRS), however, is not suited to address this. Any analysis based on it is likely to be misleading. The stark reality of India's data system is that all deaths are still not accounted for; they are estimated based on demographic surveys. Two critical issues merit consideration. First, historically, CRS is not the source of

estimates of deaths at the national, state, or city level for three important reasons. One, not all deaths in India are registered (primarily of women and those residing in rural areas); two, registered deaths are not necessarily domiciliary, that is, place of death could be different from where a person typically resides; and three, deaths, if registered at all, are not reported promptly, a large number of registrations happen after the stipulated 21-day period, and, in some cases, beyond a year.

The primary source of annual estimates of deaths at the national and state level is the sample registration system (SRS). This is a large-scale demographic survey conducted annually by the Office of the Registrar General in India. The sample consists of 8,847 units

(4,961 rural and 3,886 urban). A rural unit is a village or a segment of it if the village population exceeds 2,000. An urban sample unit is a census enumeration block with a population ranging from 750 to 1,000. Overall, the sample covers approximately 8.1 million people across all states and Union Territories.

SRS and CRS differ significantly in their estimates of the national- and state-level deaths and their estimates of excess deaths. This is best illustrated by looking at the data. In 2019, the registered number of deaths in India (under CRS) was 7,641,076.

However, the average registered deaths for the last four years (2015-18) was 6,507,832. Based on this, one would have concluded that there were more than 1.1 million excess deaths in India in 2019. (Incidentally, this

is almost three times larger than the official Covid-19-related deaths in India). This conclusion would be erroneous because SRS data for the same time period reveals that estimated deaths declined marginally from 8,317,732 to 8,293,368.

What is true at the national level looks even starker at the state level. For example, in Madhya Pradesh (a state with more than 80 million people), the registered number of deaths based on CRS in 2019 was 493,328; however, the average registered deaths in the previous four years (2015-18) was 361,198. Once again, the commonly drawn but erroneous implication from this would be that there were approximately 130,000 excess deaths in MP in 2019. (This is 12 times more than the official Covid deaths reported by MP).

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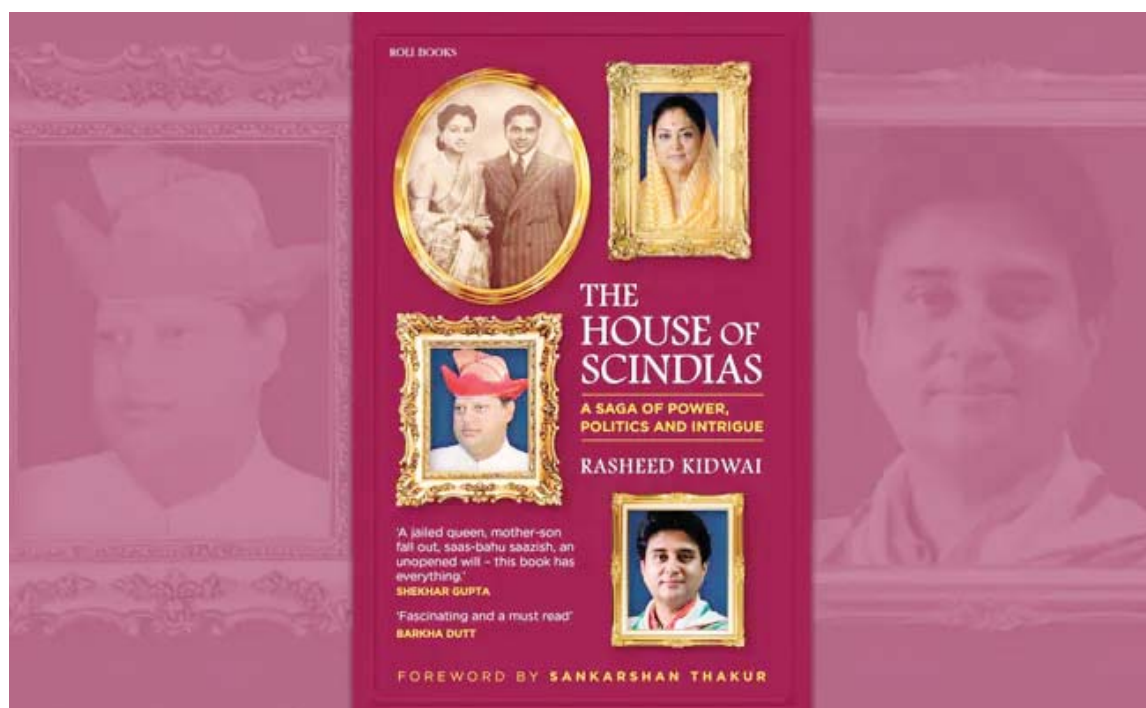
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Excerpt: Jyotiraditya Scindia Played Key Role In This Major Congress Debacle



Prior to Jyotiraditya's exit from the grand old party, the period between 2013 and 2019 saw many Congress leaders leaving the party. In one particularly high-profile case, Jyotiraditya was himself responsible for the exit of Priyanka Chaturvedi, who was a young and suave Congress spokesperson and is currently a Rajya Sabha member from the Shiv Sena.

Jyotiraditya's 'inapt' handling of the Chaturvedi issue and his own subsequent move to leave the Congress made some senior party leaders bitter on grounds of

depriving the party from a 'talented' Chaturvedi.

On 20 April 2019, Chaturvedi had stunned Congress leaders and virtually everyone in political circles when Sena supremo Uddhav Thackeray announced her induction as the Sena 'getting a new sister'.

Chaturvedi, who is from Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, and lives in Mumbai, had a rather meteoric rise in the grand old party. She had become visible in 2010 when she attended the Indian School of Business's 10,000 Women Entrepreneurs Certificate

programme, a global initiative supported by the Goldman Sachs Foundation for women entrepreneurs. By 2012, the 1979-born Chaturvedi was the general secretary of the Mumbai north-west wing of the Indian Youth Congress.

Gurudas Kamat, a veteran and respectable Congress leader who was himself the Indian Youth Congress chief during the Rajiv Gandhi era, was said to have spotted her talent and remained her mentor till he was alive. The period between 2012 and 2014 was the most challenging for the

Congress when Chaturvedi took a stand in television news debates and on social media, defending Sonia, Rahul and the party in the most spirited manner.

From May 2014 to April 2019, Chaturvedi became one of the most visible faces of the party on TV and social media.

At a time when Priyanka appeared as formidable and dependable as Rahul Dravid in Team India, her defection eight days before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls in Mumbai shocked everyone, including Jyotiraditya who was AICC general secretary in charge of Uttar Pradesh West.

A closer scrutiny showed that Jyotiraditya was the prime cause why Chaturvedi left the party. She was already unhappy over the party's refusal to give her a ticket from Mumbai North, where actress Urmila Matondkar was fielded. Chaturvedi was in Mathura in September 2018 to hold a media briefing on Rafale, as per Rahul's directive to hold press conferences across the nation on the deal. During her media interaction in Mathura, some local Congress leaders had misbehaved with her, allegedly at the behest of a local party leader who viewed her as some kind of a threat as Chaturvedi had deep roots in Mathura.

In fact, before the 2019 parliamentary polls were announced, there was a buzz that Chaturvedi might be fielded to take on BJP MP and actress Hema Malini. The alleged misbehaviour, a mix of physical and verbal abuse, was so ugly that Chaturvedi left the scheduled press conference in a huff but her tormentors followed her to a room where she had sought refuge.

The matter was taken up with the higher-ups in the party. Jyotiraditya, as AICC general secretary in charge of western Uttar Pradesh, was directly responsible for protecting the dignity of a woman leader of the party. It was said that when Chaturvedi sought Rahul's intervention, Rahul was both sympathetic and in a mood to take action against the culprits. He reportedly did talk to Jyotiraditya, urging him to act swiftly.

According to newspaper reports then, the people allegedly involved in the Mathura incident were Ashok Chakleshwar, Umesh Pandit, Pratap Singh, Abdul Jabbar, Girdhari Lal Pathak, Bhuri Singh Jayas, Pravin Thakur and Yatindra Mukadam. Jyotiraditya did act against them, suspending and serving show-cause notices to all eight. But within days, a volte-face followed.

Widespread rain over NW India likely till July 19

Here are today's top news, analysis and opinion at 9am. Know all about the latest news and other news updates from Hindustan Times.

Widespread rain over NW India likely till July 19

Widespread rains will continue over northwest India with an increase in rainfall activity between July 17 and 19, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Elon Musk congratulates ISRO on 3rd test on Vikas Engine for Gaganyaan

SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has congratulated the Indian Space Research Organisation for successfully conducting the third long-duration hot test of the Vikas Engine, as part of the Gaganyaan programme. His one-word tweet also has an Indian flag.

PM Modi to visit Varanasi today, inaugurate public projects worth ₹1,500 crore

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting his Lok Sabha constituency of Varanasi on Thursday to inaugurate development works worth over ₹1,500 crore there, his office announced a day ago. The projects include, according to news agency ANI -- a 100-bed model maternal and child health (MCH) wing at the Institute of Medical Sciences of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU), multi-level parking facilities, highway development projects, and tourism projects as well.

The past and present of two-child policies in India

A draft bill on population control prepared by the Uttar Pradesh (UP) State Law Commission to

promote the two-child policy has invoked strong reactions from several quarters.

One soldier dead, 7 injured in Army vehicle accident in Arunachal

An army jawan died and seven others were injured in an accident in Arunachal Pradesh. The mishap took place near Pango village in the upper Siang district. India slams Pak anarchism at SCO meet on Afghanistan, proposes 3-point plan

In a veiled jibe at Pakistan, India's external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said that countries in the region must work 'seriously' and 'sincerely' towards peace in Afghanistan, since there are 'forces at work with a different agenda'.

Centre warns states against rising 'R' factor of Covid-19. What

is this factor?

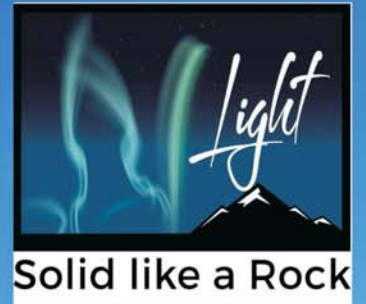
The Centre, in its recent communications to states, has been pointing out to an increase in R factor of Covid-19, urging the states to practice caution. R factor refers to the reproduction rate which denotes the number of people getting infected by one infected person.

'We're having Pluto party, we didn't even planet': Nasa's post intrigues people

If you're someone who follows the various social media handles managed by Nasa, there is a possibility that you may be aware of the various intriguing posts they share about the various celestial bodies. Case in point, their recent post about Pluto. Besides sharing interesting facts, they also shared two incredible pictures. The post may

leave you stunned. 'Ponting and Gilchrist actually came up and asked me to bowl wrong ones to him': Hogg reveals battle against Tendulkar Brad Hogg only dismissed Sachin Tendulkar once in international cricket but there was no lack of excitement every time the two came face to face. Hogg had Tendulkar out during an ODI between India and Australia in Hyderabad in 2007. After the match, Hogg revealed how he went up to Tendulkar asking him to sing the ball and the former batsman wrote 'Never again, mate' on the ball. Shahid Kapoor turns 'DJ+videographer' as Ishaan Khatter aces kettlebell pull-ups If you are looking for some workout motivation this Thursday, let Ishaan Khatter inspire you to get up and hit the gym with his latest viral video.

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Women work more, earn less, and face greater health risks

There is a multi-generational impact of poor nutrition, lack of access to contraceptives, and debt. Making the right investments in women's issues now could prove transformational in the long-term recovery



Women tend to be the backbone of society during crises, even as they are also more likely to face the disproportionate impacts of such events. The Covid-19 pandemic is no different. It has severely exacerbated existing gendered barriers, widened India's gender gap in the workforce, and affected (overwhelmingly female) caregivers and frontline workers. In October-November 2020, Dalberg conducted one of the largest studies of the socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 on women in low-income households, analysing data from 17,000+ respondents, across 10 Indian states. The study was primarily based on telephonic interviews and triangulated findings, where relevant, with other surveys. The goal was to achieve a holistic understanding of the effects the pandemic had on women's livelihoods, access to essentials and sanitation, assets and debt, food and nutrition, and time use. We also assessed the role of government social protection programmes and self-help

groups (SHGs) in supporting women in low-income households through the pandemic and discovered that some initiatives worked out better than one would have expected.

Women were more affected than men by employment issues. Women made up just 24% of those working before the pandemic, yet accounted for 28% of all those who lost their jobs. They also constitute 43% of those who are yet to recover their paid work. This had knock-on effects on other aspects of their lives.

One consequence of the loss in incomes for women as well as their households was reduced food supply; women absorbed more of this shock than men did. More than one in ten (an estimated 32 million if extrapolated to the population) women limited their food intake or ran out of food in the week they were surveyed, and a further 10% reported being worried about future food supply.

Women's health indicators also deteriorated because they could no longer afford contraception and menstrual products. About 16% of women (an estimated 17 million if extrapolated) had to stop using menstrual pads, and more than

one in three married women were unable to access contraceptives. Indian women already do almost three times more unpaid work than Indian men (nearly 6.5 hours a day), and our survey showed a 47% increase in unpaid labour for women, and a 41% increase in unpaid care work for women. At the same time (and perhaps, in part, because of the increase in unpaid work), far fewer women than men reported an increase in rest during the pandemic.

Women from historically marginalised groups (Muslims, migrants, single/separated/divorced), were more affected than the average woman. The variance is across the board, with 20 percentage points (pp) more single, separated/divorced women having limited food or running out of food; three to six pp more women from households with monthly incomes less than ₹10,000 facing nutritional challenges; and Muslim women losing 13 pp more of their income.

Concerning as these figures are, conditions on the ground are likely to worsen for those women (such as transgender individuals and women unreachable via telephones) who fell outside of the

restrictions of our data-gathering. However, one in three women said that government welfare schemes and SHGs had played an important role in helping them navigate the pandemic, comparable to the commonly cited family support. Specifically, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, and the public distribution system (PDS) supported 12 million, 100 million, and 180 million women respectively during the crisis. The SHG network served as a reliable borrowing channel for both its members and women in the community. While the government's role in entitlements has been invaluable to women in low-income families that were able to access them, there is a need for broader conversations around universalising, deepening, and extending their support. Here are three proposals. One, deepen

PDS to be more focused on nutrition and bring back pulses to the initiative as was the case last year. Think about expanding PDS beyond food as it's a far-reaching delivery channel. For instance, women's access to menstrual pads could be revolutionised in this fashion for the short term, improving reach considerably. Bundling free menstrual hygiene products with PDS would relax women's dependence on income for these essentials. Optimally, this would go hand-in-hand with national-, state- and district-level awareness drives around menstrual health and hygiene. The government can also build upon and accelerate its existing efforts through Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers, Mission Parivar Vikas, and other schemes to strategically focus on contraceptive usage.

Borders: From zones of security to commerce via ICPs



Despite its challenges, the Integrated Check Posts along India's land borders show the capacity of the Government of India to deliver on infrastructure projects

India has operationalised nine ICPs with its neighbouring countries, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Myanmar, of which seven have been inaugurated. Forty per cent of India's land-based trade with these countries takes place via ICPs.

Compared to seaports and airports, ICPs are relatively smaller, built at the cost of up to ₹200 crore. The Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) is the nodal agency responsible for constructing and managing ICPs. India aims to have 24 ICPs by 2025.

The idea of establishing ICPs along India's land borders was mooted after the Kargil war to

improve India's border management infrastructure. This led to the institutionalisation of border management through the establishment of the department of border management (ministry of home affairs) in 2004 and LPAI under the department in 2010. During this period, a security-oriented approach to border management was dominant as discussions were held on the need to check illegal activities. However, in the past decade, global and regional factors have led to modernisation of the land border management infrastructure through ICPs. In a recent working paper, I examine three key factors that explain the

growing role of ICPs in South Asia.

First, the rising trade between India and its neighbouring countries and the focus among South Asian countries on using the territories as transit corridors have increased the need for better infrastructure. Trade between India and its neighbours has risen from 2.7% in 2008 to 3.5% in 2019. India is also the market for about 70% and 90% of Nepal and Bhutan's exports. India's trade with Nepal has increased from \$0.3 million in 2000-2001 to \$7.9 billion in 2019-20. Today, Bangladesh is India's fifth-largest export market.

Despite the pandemic-induced slowdown and border closures over the past year, India has pushed through with its regional connectivity strategy. It announced a sixth Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Sabroom in Tripura along the India-Bangladesh border and began construction of the third ICP with Nepal at Rupaidiha and Nepalgunj. These moves reflect

India's priority to increasing trade facilitation infrastructure at the borders as part of the "neighbourhood first" policy. Each ICP serves as an entry and exit point along India's land borders and facilitates the seamless movement of goods and people. It houses agencies such as customs, immigration, quarantine, border security forces, among others.

The graveyard of empires



After the British and Soviets, the US ends its war in Afghanistan - in defeat. According to a Brown University study, by April 2021, 241,000 people, including 71,000 civilians, had died as a direct result of the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan. These numbers have only increased

Exactly two decades after the United States (US) invaded Afghanistan, it will end its military presence in the country by August 31. After 9/11, a wounded US decided that it was time to teach the Taliban-ruled Islamic Emirate - the base of al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden - a lesson. As the US ends the war, it has lost over 2,500 of its own citizens and left

a much greater trail of destruction all around. According to a Brown University study, by April 2021, 241,000 people, including 71,000 civilians, had died as a direct result of the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan. These numbers have only increased. The US vacillated between two objectives during the war. The first was to weaken and destroy al Qaeda and kill bin Laden. The second

was to reorganise Afghan society, address root causes of extremism, and create a liberal democratic polity. By the end of the 2000s, al Qaeda had become a weaker, more diffuse and decentralised network finding other theatres to advance its objectives through terror. The US located and killed bin Laden in 2011, unsurprisingly in Pakistan. The war, however, did not end because the second objective, of nation-building, persisted. Eventually, war fatigue in the US; the desire to concentrate on domestic challenges (Covid-19, economy) and new external strategic threats (China); the belated recognition that

Rawalpindi had played Washington all along by pretending to support the war while covertly encouraging and arming Taliban; and a desire to wash its hands of domestic complexities of the Islamic Republic, led an overwhelming consensus in the US in favour of withdrawal. Donald Trump initiated the process, Joe Biden (always skeptical of the war's more ambitious objectives) is concluding it. All the US has effectively got in return is a commitment by Taliban that Afghan soil won't be used against the US. And so here is the scorecard. The Taliban is back, already in control of much of

Afghan territory and within striking distance of power in Kabul. Afghanistan's democratic governance structure, armed forces, and civil society are too weak to resist. The Republic is headed to becoming an Emirate again. Gains of the last two decades, particularly in terms of women and minority rights, are about to be lost. Pakistan, the actor most responsible for the violence in Afghanistan, has returned as the victor. Others, including India, stare at a new security threat. And just like the British in the mid-19th century and the Soviets in the late-20th century, the US has gone back home, after its longest war ever, in defeat.

Listen to Cuba's protesters - it's not about COVID, it's about freedom and repression

Across the island of Cuba, we are witnessing an unprecedented and organic moment. Sixty-two years of misery, censorship, repression and socialist lies have boiled over into grassroots protests by the Cuban people across the nation. In provinces ranging from Havana to Pinar del Río, Holguín, Matanzas, Cienfuegos, Camagüey, Santiago de Cuba and other municipalities, Cubans are peacefully protesting the brutal communist dictatorship of Raúl Castro and his puppet president Miguel Díaz-Canel.

In the United States, however, many have so far failed to understand what has truly driven the Cuban people to stand up to decades of oppression. President Biden remained silent over the weekend while one senior State Department official laughably attributed the protests to "concern about rising COVID cases/deaths & medicine shortages."

Manipulative Twitter trends are following their lead and many U.S. news outlets, to the extent that they've covered the protests at all, have largely undermined the historic nature of what is occurring in Cuba.

Let's be clear: food, medicine and gas shortages are sadly nothing new in Cuba. The

regime's disastrous COVID response is the predictable result of a corrupt government. Instead of listening to America's legacy media, we should take the protesters at their word. Cubans across the country are waving the American flag as a beacon of hope and chanting, "Freedom!" and "Down with the dictatorship!" This is not just a response to the COVID outbreak, but an unambiguous rejection of six decades of suffering under totalitarian socialism and communism. After waiting nearly 24 hours, President Biden finally voiced his support for the Cuban people on Monday. But that is not enough. Now, his administration must develop an action plan that makes clear the U.S. stands with the people of Cuba in this pivotal moment. So far, they've missed the mark. The administration can right this wrong first by unequivocally conveying that a mass migration, like the 1980 Mariel boatlift, will not be allowed to occur and that any such action will be treated as hostile.

The Biden administration should also convene a United Nations Security Council meeting, as well as engage with allies in the European Union and the Organization of American States to provide support to the

Cuban people.

The communist regime in Havana has already shut down internet access on the island. It has done so in order to silence the voices of the Cuban people and prevent news and developments on the island from reaching the rest of the world. The Biden administration has options to override this shutdown and provide uninterrupted internet access to the Cuban people. It must act to do so immediately. The American government must also take action to strengthen Radio and TV Martí signals into Cuba. Given the lack of a free press in Cuba, it is on us to amplify the Cuban people's calls for freedom and ensure that their message isn't ignored.

The United States should also offer to send food and COVID-19 vaccines to the island, but the Biden administration must not simply deliver vaccines and cash into the hands of an evil dictatorship. To send aid without ensuring accountability would empower the oppressors and fail to address the concerns of the Cuban people.

Food and vaccine distribution must be administered by an independent, trustworthy, non-governmental organization or by a mission led by the Organization of American



States. This is a safeguard to ensure assistance is not stolen by the regime and exploited as leverage against civilians. Finally, the Biden administration's State Department must work to identify those carrying out acts of violent repression inside of Cuba. We must then ban these individuals from entering our nation.

President Biden must also clearly demonstrate that current U.S. policies to this end, and specifically important policies I worked on and that were implemented by the Trump administration, will remain solidly in place.

If Cuban Americans, as previously mentioned by the president's press secretary, make the best ambassadors for the island's freedom, then the

White House must hear the clamor of Cubans residing in Miami's Calle Ocho, Orlando, Jacksonville, Cape Coral and Tampa.

What the Cuban people really want is the freedom to live a normal life in the country they call home. They wonder, if Cubans like my own parents, can move abroad and achieve their dreams, why aren't they able to on their own home island? The protesters are offering a clear answer to that question: the tyrannical, communist regime under which they have suffered for six decades makes it impossible.

Now, it's time for America and the rest of the world to stand with the Cuban people as they make their voice heard and demand their God-given rights.



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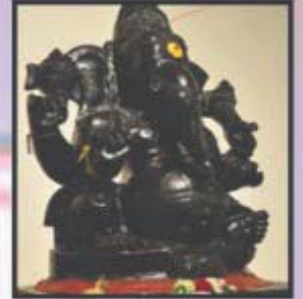
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India, Covid-19 And The Dangers Lurking In Monsoon



Malaria, dengue and now Covid-19 have emphasised the need for robust reporting systems to quickly identify new outbreaks and of the importance of strengthening health systems at the national, state and district levels

The start of monsoons signals the end of the mango season in large parts of India. It also marks the beginning of a season of tropical diseases like malaria and dengue caused by mosquitos that breed in puddles and other pools of water left behind. Both pose a great threat to scores of Indians across the country. India has made impressive gains in the fight against malaria. With a 60% drop in malaria cases between 2017 and 2019, India was commended in WHO's 2020 Global Malaria Report, as one of the few countries to have shown a consistent decline in malaria at a time when global progress against malaria has plateaued. The incidence of dengue however

has grown dramatically around the world in recent decades. The largest number of dengue cases ever reported globally was in 2019, according to the WHO. India alone recorded 157,315 cases in 2019, compared to 101,192 in 2018.

As the second wave of Covid-19 infections began to ease in mid-May, India's healthcare system got a respite after weeks of battling the relentless onslaught of Covid-19. Hospital beds are freeing up again and vaccinations are rolling out. But the country is bracing for a potential third wave.

Other public health priorities, such as the battle against malaria, have been affected by the pandemic. A recent survey by

Geneva-based The Global Fund on the impact of Covid-19 on malaria programs in seven Asian countries found that malaria diagnoses fell 56%, while malaria treatments dropped 59%. In India, the pandemic has disrupted even basic programs to control malaria and dengue such as insecticide fogging and the distribution of bed nets. This has increased the risk of malaria and dengue in the current monsoon season. If India suffers the third wave of Covid, its healthcare infrastructure will struggle to handle the combined surge in cases of Covid, dengue and malaria.

To compound matters, fever is a common symptom of malaria, dengue and Covid. These blind spots and challenges expose communities to significant risk, as well as coming at a devastating cost to individuals and families. Early access to healthcare, diagnosis and treatment helps limit the risk of complications requiring hospitalisation. Patients with fever need to be tested to rule out

Covid-19 and then determine whether they have malaria or dengue. And laboratory tests-not rapid testing in the field-are the best way to correctly identify infection. Investments to strengthen surveillance, real-time data and diagnostic capacity are therefore crucial.

Managing mosquito populations at the onset of the monsoon season is also vital. Local bodies like panchayats and municipalities can quickly identify new hotspots of malaria and dengue and target insecticide fogging. In many parts of the country, ASHAs - India's first line of defence female health workers, and a critical link between the community and public health system- have been deployed to provide prevention education for several health issues, including dengue, malaria, and now Covid-19. But households should also take it upon themselves to ensure that stagnant water does not collect in empty containers where mosquitoes can breed.

Since malaria, dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases are highly influenced by weather and weather events, a new initiative recently launched in India has brought together experts and researchers from health, climate and technology fields to define and operationalise climate-based malaria prediction tools that will be tailored to further progress toward malaria elimination. Initiatives, like these, may shed light and learnings for diseases like dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases.

Malaria, dengue and now Covid-19 have emphasised the need for robust reporting systems to quickly identify new outbreaks and of the importance of strengthening health systems at the national, state and district levels. Investments in strengthening the overall health infrastructure- including testing, reporting and utilising the resulting data for decision making-have a powerful impact against infections on not just one disease, but several.

Kamala Harris is having a rough time, and her party won't throw her a life preserver

So glad you're tuning into tonight. I am aware however that some of you aren't watching. But it's not by choice.

Yep, according to Kamala Harris - if you don't live in the city, where the politicians live, you're living in 500 BC. It's because you live in rural areas, where there's probably no TV. No cable. There's probably not even a faucet for running water.

If you're in the south right now, chances are you have no idea what I'm talking about because the language of English hasn't reached you yet. Yep, you don't even have Xerox machines. If you want to make a copy of something, you're going to have to break out the silly putty. Right Kam?

Kamala Harris, July 9: "I don't think that we should underestimate what that [compromise on voter id laws] could mean." "Because in some people's mind, that means you're going to have to Xerox or photocopy your id to send it in to

prove who you are. Well, there are a whole lot of people, especially people who live in rural communities, who don't - there's no Kinkos, there's no OfficeMax near them."

What a dumb lady. Hell, don't she know we keep our Xeroxes down by the crick! Under the bridge by the shopping cart!

Yep, rural communities are like the barren wastelands of Jupiter. No wonder it took so long for her to reach the Mexican border. It's 92 days by covered wagon. It's true - if you listen to this administration when they talk about voter ID - this is a country of redneck rubes and black dullards.

We're all so incapable without government. And rather than help us, they just call us stupid. Fact is - if you don't live in the city - the White House thinks you're some three-fingered yokel who can only write your name after drinking twelve Miller Lites and aiming at the snow.

But even if it's a little bit true that

people can't get government ID's, isn't that the government's fault? And they act like elections are these big surprises. You actually do have months to make a copy of an ID in between digging outhouses and killing bears.

But God help you if you're not near an OfficeMax! How on earth can you survive without a 10 ream case of x-9 copy paper! Or a 24 ounce tub of peanut butter-filled pretzel nuggets!

As for Kinkos, dear lady - have you gone outside since 2008? Last time I saw a Kinko's was between a Pontiac dealership and Blockbuster Video. By the way, Kinkos sounds like the name of a clown you hire for Hunter Biden's birthday.

FedEx took them over years ago - mainly cuz the people who worked there made the people who work at the DMV look happy to see you. FedEx bought Kinkos sixteen years ago for 2.4 billion, then spent another 900 million to drop the name from its storefronts. So - they're gone



now.

Has anyone broken the news to Kamala - about this? Wait till she hears about Crystal Pepsi.

Talk about being behind the times. Does Kamala realize you can take a picture of your ID with your phone, and send to someone who can print it for you? True - smartphones have these things called cameras.

If you don't believe me Kamala, go back and look at some footage of the riots you helped create last summer. You'll see many people in the mobs holding this weird phone/camera device.

But, maybe she thinks we'll never figure out that voter ID requirements doesn't make it harder to vote, it makes it harder to cheat.

But this is their way of moving away from the "blacks aren't capable of having an ID To "also, poor whites too." now they insult any place where the phrase "whole foods" still means donut. But if you can't get an ID in rural areas, then how do they drive Ford F-150's to the militia meetings? But maybe if she did less work, she'd know this. Because as you know - she can't say no.

In Sri Lanka, a dangerous climb for online school

In the village of Lunugala, about 60 kilometers away, adults escort schoolchildren to a mountaintop treehouse in a forest reserve. It's about 30 feet high and has internet access. They take turns uploading their homework and downloading lesson plans.

(News Agencies)-Getting online school lessons for residents of a remote Sri Lankan village requires a trek through dense bushes sometimes visited by leopards and elephants. The teachers and about 45 schoolchildren in Bohitiwaya then climb more than 3 kilometers (2 miles) to the top of a rock to find an internet



signal. Information technology teacher Nimali Anuruddhika uses the signal to upload lessons for her students who haven't been able to go to school because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The students who also live in the village make the same climb to download online lessons sent to them by their teachers.

Not all have mobile devices or laptops, with four or five children sharing one device. Their parents, most of whom are farmers, often

accompany their children. H.M. Pathmini Kumari, who accompanies his sixth-grade son, said the children climb the rock twice a day and their safety is a big concern for parents. The village in the central-eastern part of the island country lacks basic amenities, and its children had been studying in a government school, now closed, that is about 16 kilometers (10 miles) away. In the village of Lunugala, about 60 kilometers (37 miles) away, adults escort schoolchildren to a mountaintop treehouse in a forest reserve. It's about 10 meters (30 feet) high and has internet access. They take turns uploading their homework and downloading lesson plans. Schools in Sri Lanka have been closed for the most part since March 2020.

Authorities say they make every effort to provide all children access to education, but Joseph Stalin, who heads the Ceylon Teachers' Union, says at most 40% of the country's 4.3 million students can participate in online classes. The majority lack access to devices or connectivity. Sri Lanka's government on Monday began a campaign to vaccinate all teachers with a view to reopening schools soon.

Massive blast on Pakistan bus kills 12, several Chinese engineers among dead



(News Agencies)-A massive blast in northern Pakistan targeted a bus carrying Chinese engineers and Pakistani soldiers. As many as nine Chinese nationals and three Pakistani nationals died in the powerful explosion on Wednesday morning, the Chinese embassy confirmed. An IED blast targeted the bus, which has led to at least 10 deaths so far, including that of 6 Chinese engineers and 2 Pakistani soldiers. Several others have suffered injuries and are in critical condition, reported Reuters from Pakistan. The bus was carrying

Chinese engineers who are working on the Dasu Dam. There were at least 30 engineers and workers travelling on the bus. There is a fear of the toll rising further as several injured are critical. Meanwhile, China has asked Pakistan to thoroughly investigate the bus blast that killed at least 10 people, including Chinese nationals. "There is a huge explosion in the bus carrying the Chinese engineers... in Upper Kohistan. Eight people lost their lives," a senior administrative officer of the Hazara region told Reuters.

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The first signs of global warming are now clearly visible. We urgently need to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Nothing and no-one will be spared from climate change. This warning is therefore to all people, all countries and, in particular, to the Belgian Council of Ministers who, on the weekend of March 20 and 21, will have to decide what action to take regarding essential measures linked to the Kyoto Protocol.



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Sher Bahadur Deuba becomes Nepal's PM for 5th time

(News Agencies)-Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba on Tuesday became the country's Prime Minister for the fifth time, media reports said. President Bidya Devi Bhandari appointed him in accordance with Article 76(5) of the Constitution, The Himalayan Times reported.



This is the fifth time that 74-year-old Deuba is returning to power as the Prime Minister of Nepal. His appointment is in line with the ruling issued by the Supreme Court on Monday to make way for his claim to premiership, replacing incumbent K P Sharma Oli.

The Office of the President has apprised Deuba of his appointment, the report said.

It was not immediately known when the swearing-in ceremony would take place as efforts were on for its preparation.

Previously, Deuba served as Nepal's Prime Minister four times from June 2017-February 2018, June 2004-February 2005, July 2001-October 2002 and September 1995-March 1997.

Deuba is required to seek a vote of confidence from the House within 30 days of his appointment as the Prime Minister, as per the constitutional provisions.

The Supreme Court on Monday overturned Prime Minister Oli's May 21 decision to dissolve the House of Representatives and ordered the appointment of Deuba as prime minister.

The five-member Constitutional Bench led by Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana said that Oli's claim to the post of prime minister was unconstitutional.

Reinstating the House yet again -- the court had restored the House earlier on February 23 after Oli dissolved it on December 20 -- the bench has ordered to make arrangements for holding the House meeting by 5 PM on July 18.

In its order, the constitutional bench said President Bhandari's decision to reject Deuba's claim to form a new government was unconstitutional.

8 killed as hotel collapses in eastern China, five rescued from rubble

(News Agencies)-At least eight people have died and nine missing in a hotel collapse in Suzhou city in eastern China. The hotel building collapsed Monday afternoon, the Suzhou government said.

Rescuers used cranes, ladders, metal cutters and search dogs to look for survivors. Twenty-

rubble. Suzhou, a city of over 12 million roughly 100 kilometres (60 miles) west of Shanghai, is a popular destination for tourists drawn to its canals and centuries-old gardens.

Building collapses or accidents are not uncommon in China, often due to lax construction standards or corruption.

The collapse of a quarantine hotel in southern China's Quanzhou city last March killed 29 people, with authorities later



three people were trapped. Five have been rescued.

No cause for the disaster has yet been given.

The hotel opened in 2018 and had 54 guest rooms, according to its listing on a travel site.

Images from the scene showed orange-clad rescue workers swarming over large piles of

finding that three floors had been added illegally to the building's original four-storey structure.

And authorities in May evacuated one of China's tallest skyscrapers, the SEG Plaza in the southern city of Shenzhen, after it shook months over several days.

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ਮੋਦੀ ਕਾ ਏਲਾਨ-ਏ-ਜੰਗ

ਬੂੰਦ-ਬੂੰਦ ਕੀ ਟਰਸੇਗਾ ਪਾਕ

ਜਦੀ ਬਾਜ਼ ਆ ਵਲ ਪਠਿਣਾਗ, ਟੀਵਰੇ ਟਿਗੀ ਕੀ ਗੋਪੀਕਰੀ, ਗਟਰ ਨੇ ਟਿਕਾ ਟਕਾਟਾ ਗਵਾਬ

ਜਸੂਰ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੀ

ਸੰਗੇਠੀ ਸਿਰਾਜ਼ਾਬਾਦ ਡਿਵੀਜ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਦੂਜਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਡਿਵੀਜ਼ਨ ਡਿਪਾਰਟਮੈਂਟ ਦਾ ਡਿਵੀਜ਼ਨ ਕਮਾਂਡਰ ਜਨਰਲ ਅਹਿਮਦ ਨਵੀਜ਼ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲਕਦਮੀ ਨਾਲ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਡਿਵੀਜ਼ਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਘੋਸ਼ਣਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਘੋਸ਼ਣਾ ਨਾਲ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਡਾ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਘੋਸ਼ਣਾ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਘੋਸ਼ਣਾ ਨਾਲ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਡਾ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

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Bangladesh to lift COVID curbs for Eid despite record infections

(News Agencies)-Bangladesh will lift its nationwide coronavirus lockdown for the country's second-biggest religious festival, the government said on Tuesday, even as new infections soared to record levels.

The cabinet said all restrictions would be eased in the country of 169 million people from Thursday, ahead of the Eid al-Adha festival which will be celebrated from July 20 to 22 this year.

The removal of the curbs would "normalise economic activities" ahead of the celebrations, it added.

Tens of millions of people usually head back to their villages to mark Eid al-Adha with their families.

Bangladesh imposed its strictest-ever lockdown at the start of the month as new COVID-19 cases and deaths climbed to record highs.

Under the lockdown, people were only allowed to leave home for

emergencies and to buy essentials, with public transport, shops and offices shut.

Infections continue to climb But infections have continued to climb, with nearly 14,000 people testing positive on Monday - a new daily record - to take the total number of cases to just more than one million.

The death toll has risen above 16,600. But experts say the real figures could be much higher amid fears of underreporting. Mohammad Shahidullah, who heads a health committee that advises the government on how to manage the pandemic, said his group of experts opposed the easing of the lockdown.

"The committee opines that this strict lockdown should be continued till there is a declining trend in infections," Shahidullah told AFP. "Amid the lockdown, there is an increasing trend of infections and fatalities. The infection level is still very high."

There are also fears that crowding at markets to buy animals for slaughter and big gatherings during the festival could become super-spreader events.

Revived vaccination drives The announcement came as authorities restarted the country's COVID-19 vaccination drive, which virtually ground to a halt in late April after imports of shots from neighbouring India were suspended to meet local demand amid a huge virus surge. The revived inoculation programme kicked off on a large scale on Tuesday with two million shots of Sinopharm from China and 2.5 million Moderna doses from the United States via the COVAX programme. So far, 4.2 million people in Bangladesh have been fully vaccinated with two doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine bought or donated from India. A further 1.6 million have received one shot.

Pak Army captain, 11 soldiers killed in terror attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



(News Agencies)- A captain and 11 soldiers of the Pakistan Army have been killed in a major terror attack on security forces in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of the country.

Reports suggest some civilians working in the region have taken hostage by the terrorists. The deceased officer has been identified as Captain Abdul Basit. Nearly 15 soldiers have reportedly been injured in the attack. The Pakistan Army has mounted a retaliatory operation in Khurram region. According to local media reports, Capt Basit was leading

a Pakistan Army rescue mission. Besides this, six telecom workers have been abducted by the terrorists are being held hostage by Hafiz Daulat Khan. Quoting the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Pakistani news channel Geo TV reported that three terrorists were killed in the "intense exchange of fire" and a cordon-and-search operation is on. ISPR is the Pakistan military's media wing. The operation was conducted after security forces had received reports of terrorists' presence in the area. ISPR reportedly said in a statement.

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Afghan gov't delegation, Taliban to talk peace in Qatar: Official

Doha talks will be led by Abdullah Abdullah, with ex-President Hamid Karzai among delegates, says an Afghan official.

(News Agencies)-A high-powered Afghanistan government delegation, which will include the head of the country's reconciliation council, is to meet the Taliban in Qatar to jumpstart a long-stalled peace process, says an Afghan official, according to a report by The Associated Press news agency. The Taliban is expected to bring its senior leaders to the table when the two sides meet, possibly on Friday, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to brief reporters, on Tuesday. The Taliban maintains a political office in the Qatari capital of Doha. The renewed push to reach a peace deal comes as the United States winds down its military presence in Afghanistan. Outgoing US commander General Scott Miller recently warned that increasing violence seriously hurts Afghanistan's chances of finding a peaceful end to decades of war. At the same time, Taliban fighters have taken control of large swathes of the country. Although the exact number of districts now under Taliban control is not known, it is believed they now rule in more than a third of Afghanistan's 421 districts and district centres. Several of the districts are strategic, bordering Iran, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The surge has also exposed weaknesses in the Afghan

National Security and Defence Forces. Many districts fell without a fight, and more than 1,000 soldiers fled to Tajikistan. There have been repeated reports of troops not being resupplied or being left without reinforcements. They are often outgunned and outnumbered by their Taliban adversaries. The Doha talks will be led by senior government official Abdullah Abdullah, who heads Afghanistan's reconciliation council. Former President Hamid Karzai is also expected to be among the delegates. The negotiations are aimed at ending the violence that has steadily increased since the US signed a deal with the Taliban in



February last year. Karzai called on the government not to miss the opportunity and press ahead towards peace. He also expressed hope that one day Afghanistan would have a woman as president, and urged women to stay in their jobs and continue their education. "This country has everything, youths, educated people," he said. "I call on the young generation to not leave your country, stay here ... You must trust in your country, peace will come." Thousands of Afghans are trying to leave the country amid growing anxiety about the future. In a new sign of concern about what lies ahead, France urged its citizens to leave Afghanistan and announced it was arranging a special flight on Saturday to evacuate them from Kabul.

Nepal PM Oli resigns, questions Supreme Court's verdict



(News Agencies)-Addressing the nation on the last day of his tenure, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Tuesday

expressed confidence on having people's mandate and questioned the Supreme Court's verdict. "I have not been ousted because of people's mandate but because of the court. I have people's mandate, trust. The Supreme Court's decision has pushed away the democracy. It has challenged the multi-party system of the country," Oli said in his address to the nation. Oli said the Supreme Court has "crossed its jurisdiction and interfered in political matter". The apex court in its verdict ordered President Bhandari to appoint Sher Bahadur Deuba as

the successor of now caretaker Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli. The court on Monday reinstated the dissolved House and issued a mandamus to appoint Deuba as Prime Minister. "The court has no right to appoint Prime Minister. I have people's mandate. With people's trust I served the nation for 3.5 years," he added. He expressed his doubts over the next government. "People are calling the decision as historic. Of course, it is historic because it will have a long-term impact and people of Nepal will witness it. It is doubtful

that the next government will move forward safely," Oli said. Oli further highlighted the development work done by his government and said all Nepalese will be vaccinated soon and majority of them by the end of the year. Senior CPN-UML leader Pradeep Gyawali had earlier said the decision is a blow to the multi-party system of the country. Deuba is scheduled to be sworn-in as the new Prime Minister of the country today. The oath ceremony will be administered by the president which is likely to take place at 6 PM today.

Blinken calls on Southeast Asian nations to take action on Myanmar

(News Agencies)-The United States has "deep concerns" about the military coup in Myanmar and called on Southeast Asian nations to take action to end violence and restore democracy in the country, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday.

The Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) has been leading the main diplomatic effort on member country Myanmar since a February 1 coup plunged it into turmoil.

During a video conference with ASEAN foreign ministers on Wednesday, Blinken urged ASEAN to take "immediate action" on a five-point consensus, agreed upon in April, to appoint a special envoy to



Myanmar, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement.

Myanmar has descended into chaos after the coup, with hundreds of protesters killed by security forces and thousands jailed amid paralysing strikes and spreading conflict in border regions.

Blinken asked for the release of all those "unjustly detained" in the country, and the restoration of Myanmar's democratic transition, Price said.

Blinken also emphasised the US rejection of China's "unlawful maritime claims" in the South China Sea and said Washington "stands with Southeast Asian claimants in the face of (Chinese) coercion", Price said.

Biden sends warning to Xi Jinping amid tensions in the South China Sea by saying he wants a 'free and open Indo-Pacific' during APEC meeting with Chinese leader and Putin

(News Agencies)- (S A I Bureau)- The headlines will be about global cooperation between world leaders on tackling the global coronavirus pandemic. But on Friday, President Joe Biden used a meeting of the Asia Pacific trade group APEC to issue a warning to China's Xi Jinping to rein in his South China Sea ambitions with a clear declaration of U.S. commitment to a 'free and open Indo-Pacific.'

After the meeting, the leaders issued a statement committed to accelerating access to COVID-19 vaccines.

But any sense that tensions with Beijing had evaporated were overtaken when Washington announced fresh sanctions on China over its Hong Kong crackdown. It illustrates the difficulty of bringing together disparate leaders, including Russia's Vladimir Putin, to tackle the global pandemic.

So although a White House readout of the meeting said Biden welcomed the chance to talk with the other leaders, it made clear that the U.S. would remain engaged in the Indo-Pacific for generations to come.

'President Biden emphasized the importance of multilateral cooperation and reiterated his commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific,' it said.

'He put forward a vision for the region that is affirmative, values-based, and

transparent.'

The barbed remark comes amid friction between China and the West on multiple fronts.

This week China claimed it drove a U.S. Navy warship out of its territorial water. The claim was disputed by the U.S. which said the U.S.S. was conducting a 'freedom of navigation' operation in international waters around the disputed Paracel Islands in the South China Sea.

A day earlier, Secretary of State Antony Blinken had described freedom of the seas as an 'enduring' interest of all nations as he marked the fifth anniversary of an international ruling that found in favor of the Philippines, against China's maritime claims.

'Nowhere is the rules-based maritime order under greater threat than in the South China Sea,' he said.

'The People's Republic of China continues to coerce and intimidate Southeast Asian coastal states, threatening freedom of navigation in this critical global thoroughway.'

At the same time there remain lasting questions about the origins of the coronavirus and whether China has done enough to help the international response.

And Friday offered a reminder of another source of tension between China and the U.S., as the State Department announced

sanctions on seven Chinese individuals connected with Hong Kong.

Blinken said the U.S. would continue to stand up for the rights and freedoms of people in Hong Kong which were guaranteed in the deal that returned the British colony to China in 1997.

'Over the past year, People's Republic of China (PRC) and Hong Kong officials have systematically undermined Hong Kong's democratic institutions, delayed elections, disqualified elected lawmakers from office, and forced officials to take loyalty oaths to keep their jobs,' he said.

'Since protests began in 2019, local authorities have arrested thousands for speaking out against government policies with which they disagreed, including for their social media posts and for attending vigils.'

Coronavirus is another source of tension. Biden has asked the intelligence community to redouble their efforts to find out whether it might have escaped from a Chinese lab.

And last month he made clear he was unimpressed by the level of co-operation shown by Beijing to World Health Organization investigators.

'China is trying very hard to project itself as a responsible and very, very forthcoming nation, and they are trying very hard to talk about how they're helping the world in

terms of COVID-19 and vaccines,' Biden said during a news conference in Geneva after a summit with Putin.

'Look, certain things you don't have to explain to the people of the world, they see the results. Is China really actually trying to get to the bottom of this?'

For its part, the WHO is proposing a second phase of investigations, including audits of laboratories in Wuhan, and demanding greater transparency from Chinese authorities.

Director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus presented the plan to members states on Friday.

'Finding the origins of this virus is a scientific exercise that must be kept free from politics,' he said,' according to Reuters.

'For that to happen, we expect China to support this next phase of the scientific process by sharing all relevant data in a spirit of transparency.'

APEC leaders issued a statement after a virtual meeting chaired by New Zealand.

With the world struggling with fresh waves of COVID-19 infections, exacerbated by the spread of the Delta variant, they said they would encourage the voluntary transfer of vaccine production. 'The pandemic continues to have a devastating impact on our region's people and economies,' they said.

Third Covid-19 wave likely in August, India to see 1 lakh cases daily: Top ICMR scientist

Professor Panda is head of the division of epidemiology and communicable diseases at the ICMR.

On being asked about the plausibility of such an assessment, he said mathematical modelling done by the ICMR and the Imperial College London has indicated that low vaccination rates and easing restrictions will lead to a possible surge in Covid-19 case. However, this may not be as severe as the second wave.

"Without vaccinations getting ramped up and when restrictions are eased, there will be a chance of the third wave," Prof Panda said.

Professor Panda is also a co-researcher of a study done by the ICMR called 'Plausibility of a third wave of Covid-19 in India: A mathematical modelling-based analysis'. The study has been carried out by the ICMR along with the School of Public Health, Imperial College, London. Published in the peer-reviewed Indian Journal of Medical Research, the study

demonstrated plausible mechanisms by which a substantial third wave could occur, while also illustrating that it is unlikely for any such resurgence to be as large as the second wave.

"Looking at the present situation, one can assume that there will



be a third wave," Prof Panda told India Today TV.

He said that non-pharmacological interventions, like avoiding mass gatherings and wearing masks will help contain the spread of the infection.

Asked how much of an impact would India's low vaccination rate have on the severity of the third wave, Prof Panda said he agrees that the current vaccination rate is low and "there should be a smart vaccination plan".

"Test positivity ratio should be

guiding us when it comes to easing restrictions," he said, adding that tourists moving from one place to another would lead to changes in population density. "Such travel should be avoided." He also said states reporting an increase in RO rate or reproductive rate gives him reason to believe that the second wave is inevitable.

Professor Panda also pointed towards another study done by the ICMR to assess breakthrough infections to underscore that vaccinations will help in reducing the severity of the infection and make the third wave less lethal. On Friday, a study released by the ICMR indicated that over 86 per cent breakthrough infections in India were because of the Delta variant. It added that despite the infections, lesser people had to be hospitalised. The first nationwide study of post-vaccination infections, found that only 9.8 per cent cases required hospitalisation and fatality was observed in only 0.4 per cent cases.

Old cars with more than 100,000 miles are worth real money now

mark haven't budged as much. But that's definitely not the case this year.

Last summer, the average used vehicle with between 100,000 and 110,000 miles on its odometer was worth about \$12,700, according to Edmunds.com. That was just a few dollars more than it had been worth the year before. This year, that same sort of vehicle would be worth about \$16,500, a roughly 30% increase in value. These days, cars and SUVs can routinely survive for at least 200,000 miles. So a well-maintained vehicle with just over 100,000 miles should have plenty of usable life remaining. It may show some wear and, given its age, it won't have the latest tech and safety features, but it's still got plenty of time left to take someone around town.

"Back in the day, it was like 'A hundred thousand miles? You're stranded,' whereas today it might be 'My phone doesn't hook up because it's too old,'" said Ivan Drury, a data analyst with the auto pricing website Edmunds.com.

Trucks are showing the biggest increases, something that's true among used vehicles of all ages and mileages. Average values for Chevrolet Silverado 1500 pickups with over 100,000 miles on them increased almost 50% to \$27,000 while Ford F-150s of similar age are now worth roughly \$26,000, a 43% increase. (These are retail used vehicle values - in other words, what a dealer could sell these trucks for. An owner selling the vehicle directly to another person or to a dealer should not expect to get quite that much.)

That sort of increase isn't confined to just these high-mileage vehicles. Trucks, cars and SUVs of all ages are going up in value, according to Edmunds.com's data. Partly this is because prices were just slightly depressed, or at least kept flat, a year ago during the depths of coronavirus lockdowns. Mostly, though, it has to do with increased demand for cars now. Average prices for used vehicles, overall, have risen about 27% since last year.

Single dose of Sputnik V vaccine enough for recovered Covid-19 patients: Study

The study published in the journal Science Direct states that 21 days after receiving the first dose of vaccine, 94 per cent of participants developed spike-specific antibodies. The study was conducted among healthcare workers in Argentina.

"A single Sputnik V dose elicits higher antibody levels and virus neutralising capacity in previously infected individuals than in new ones receiving the full two-doses," researchers said.

Earlier, a study by Hyderabad's AIG Hospitals had also claimed that a single dose of vaccine is sufficient for Covid-recovered



patients on account of their robust antibody response. The study was conducted on 260 healthcare workers who got the

Covishield vaccine between January 16 and February 5. Developers of Sputnik V had in June claimed that the vaccine is around 90 per cent effective against the highly contagious Delta variant. Denis Logunov, deputy director of Moscow's Gamaleya Institute, which developed Sputnik V, said the Delta variant efficacy figure was calculated based on digital medical and vaccine records, the RIA news agency reported. Sputnik V is the third vaccine to be used in India's massive vaccination drive after homegrown Covishield by the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin. While Sputnik Light was approved for emergency use in Russia in May, with an

efficacy rate of 79.4 per cent, discussions on granting it emergency use approval in India are currently on.

CHECK THESE OUT
The vaccine uses the SARS-CoV-2's genetic instructions to build the spike protein and stores the information in the double-stranded DNA. The vaccine has been developed from adenoviruses, a kind of virus that causes colds. Researchers added the gene for Covid spike protein to two adenoviruses, engineering them to invade affected cells. The Sputnik-V derives inspiration from the adenovirus used to create a vaccine for Ebola by Johnson & Johnson.

Massive solar storm set to hit Earth: GPS, phone signals likely to be damaged, power grids vulnerable

storm, a solar wind has to sustain high speeds for a long period of time, which transfers the energy of the wind into Earth's magnetic field.

The largest storms that result from these conditions are associated with solar Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs) where billions of tons of plasma from the Sun are hurtled towards planets that also reach Earth. While coronal mass ejections take days to arrive at Earth, some have been observed to arrive within 15-18 hours of being ejected from the Sun.

WHAT IS A SOLAR FLARE?

The Sun had recently ejected one of the biggest solar flares observed in over four years that



caused a radio blackout over the Atlantic. The X-class solar

flare ionized the top of Earth's atmosphere, causing a shortwave radio blackout over the Atlantic Ocean.

A solar flare is a sudden, rapid, and intense explosion on the surface of the Sun that happens when massive amounts of energy stored in magnetic fields are suddenly released. The explosion emits radiation across the length and breadth of the universe, hurtling them towards planets in the solar system. These radiations contain radio waves, x-rays and gamma rays. While studies to understand and predict such ejections have been ongoing, Isro had recently observed around 100 microflares, providing new insights about coronal mass heating on the Sun.

Ashton Kutcher was set to fly into space. Mila Kunis talked him out of it

encouraged that it was not a smart family decision to be heading into space when we have young children, so I ended up selling my ticket back to Virgin Galactic," Kutcher said. This week, Virgin Galactic founder Branson, along with team members Sirisha Bandla, Beth Moses and Colin Bennett and pilots Dave Mackay and Michael Masucci, traveled to the edge of space on the SpaceShipTwo, a winged plane



the company has spent nearly two decades developing

with a single rocket motor that Virgin Galactic plans to conduct just one more test flight before it begins flying p a y i n g customers. So far, more than 600 people have reserved tickets priced at \$200,000 to \$250,000. The company is expected to reopen ticket sales

soon, though at a higher price point. "I was supposed to be on the next flight, but I will not be on the next flight," Kutcher said. Although he had a change of heart about the Virgin Galactic flight due to his wife's concerns, Kutcher insisted that his dream of seeing the galaxy is still very much alive. "At some point, I'm going to space," Kutcher told presenter Kristen Scholer.

Branson's historic lift-off marked only the fourth test flight of the vehicle that reached the edge of space. As the British entrepreneur floated around in microgravity, he shared a message using cameras onboard the space plane: "To all you kids out there - I was once a child with a dream, looking up to the stars. Now I'm an adult in a spaceship... If we can do this, just imagine what you can do," he said.

Smartphone addiction could be changing your brain



You may be one of the growing number of Americans (or global citizens) who has a bit of nomophobia.

"Nomophobia?" you mutter as you read this on your ever-present smartphone. "Of course not."

"NO MOBILE PHOne phoBIA" is a 21st-century term for the fear of not being able to use your cell phone or other smart device. Cell phone addiction is on the rise, surveys show, and a new study released Thursday adds to a growing body of evidence that smartphone and internet addiction is harming our minds -- literally. How do you know if you're addicted? There's an online (of course) quiz to find out, which has been translated into Spanish, Italian and Turkish.

Rate your responses on a scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) and add your score. According to Caglar Yildirim, an assistant professor of human computer interaction who created the scale for use in his research at State University of New York at Oswego, a score of 20 or below means you're not an addict; a score of 21 to 60 means you're mildly nomophobic; and a score of 61 to 99 means you probably can't go long without checking your phone.

"It might be a good idea to be conscious of that," Yildirim said, "but we are only concerned if it starts to interfere with your daily life."

Did you score between 100 and 200? You're probably struggling with severe anxiety when you can't access your cell phone, he said.

"This might negatively affect your social life and relationships with friends and family," Yildirim said. "There are studies that show those who score high on the test tend to avoid face-to-face interactions, have high levels of social anxiety and maybe even depression.

"It might affect your ability to work or study, because you want to be connected to your smartphone all the time," he added. "So if any of this applies to you,

then it's time to start looking at your behavior and level of anxiety."

SecurEnvoy, a two-factor authentication company, conducted research using a polling panel (which is not as scientific as a randomized poll) and found that 66% of people in the United Kingdom have some form of nomophobia. Notably, 41% of the participants said they had two or more phones to make sure they stayed connected.

Surveys by the Pew Research Center this year showed that 77% of Americans own smartphones, up from 35% in 2011. Ninety-five percent own a cell phone of some kind.

What's wrong with being a cell phone junkie?

Obviously, there are some serious ramifications to having a cell phone habit. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, mobile phone use is partially to blame for the distracted driving that kills an estimated nine people each day and injures more than 1,000.

The prevalence of texting while driving has reached epidemic proportions. A 2010 study by the Pew Research Center said nearly half of US adults admit reading or sending a text message while driving. The news is worse for teens: Nearly one in three 16- or 17-year-olds said they have texted while driving.

Millennials are the worst offenders, according to Pew. Fifty-nine percent of people between the ages of 18 and 33 reported texting while driving, compared with 50% of Gen Xers (age 34 to 45) and only 29% of baby boomers.

It's not just driving. A study of pedestrians in midtown Manhattan found that 42% of those who entered traffic during a "Don't Walk" signal were talking on a cell phone, wearing headphones or looking down at an electronic device. A 2013 study found a tenfold increase in injuries related to pedestrians using cell phones from 2005 to 2010.

Other health ramifications include text

neck -- that cramping, stabbing pain that comes after looking down at your phone too long -- and poor posture, which can affect your spine, respiratory functions and even emotions. Researchers have also found that the blue light emitted from our cell phones and other internet devices can disrupt melatonin production and therefore our sleep.

A connection to executive functioning The latest evidence comes from a small study presented Thursday at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America in Chicago. The study, which has not been peer-reviewed, indicates that cell phone addiction may affect brain functioning.

Researchers from Korea University in Seoul used brain imaging to study the brains of 19 teenage boys who were diagnosed with internet or smartphone addiction. Compared with 19 teenagers who were not addicted, the brains of the addicted boys had significantly higher levels of GABA, a neurotransmitter in the cortex that inhibits neurons, than levels of glutamate-glutamine, a neurotransmitter that energizes brain signals.

"GABA slows down the neurons," explained Yildirim, who was not involved in the Korean study. "That results in poorer attention and control, which you don't want to have, because you want to stay focused. So that means you are more vulnerable to distractions."

"It's a very small study, so you have to take it with a grain of salt," said Stanford neuroradiologist Dr. Max Wintermark, an expert in neuroimaging who was also not connected with the research. "It's the first study that I read about internet addiction, but there are many studies that link alcohol, drug and other types of addiction to imbalances in various neurotransmitters in the brain."

Yildirim agreed that the preliminary findings were consistent with prior research.

"We know that medium to heavy multitaskers, who engage in multiple forms of media simultaneously, tend to demonstrate smaller gray matter area in the anterior cingulate cortex, which is the area of the brain responsible for top-down attention control," he said. "Altogether, this means that if you are too dependent on your smartphone, you are basically damaging your ability to be attentive."

Addicted teenagers in the study also had significantly higher scores in anxiety, depression and levels of insomnia and impulsivity, said Dr. Hyung Suk Seo, professor of neuroradiology at Korea University, who led the study.

The good news is that when 12 of the addicted teens were given nine weeks of cognitive behavioral therapy, the levels of GABA to glutamate-glutamine normalized.

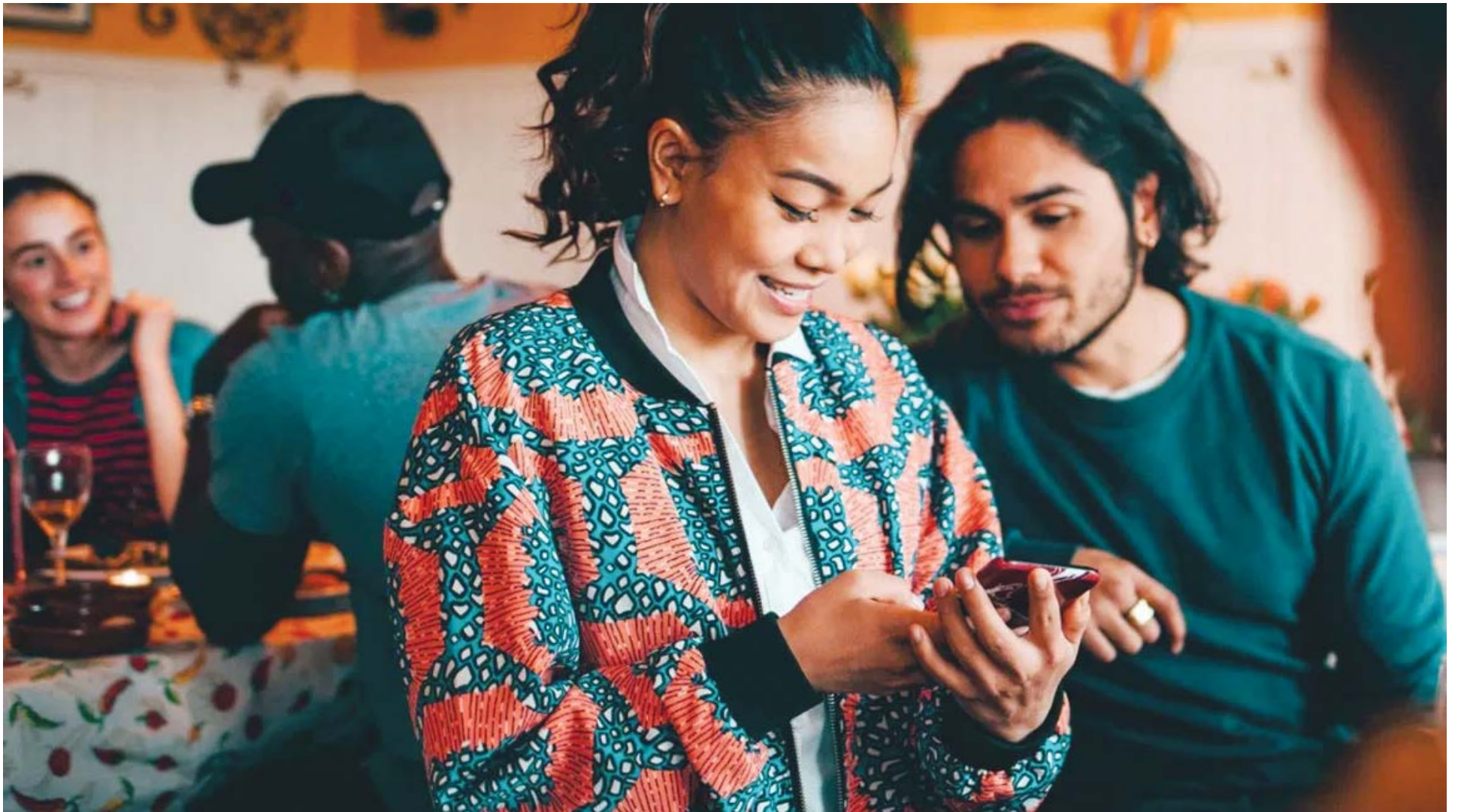
"This is a common finding in the literature," Yildirim said. "There are studies that have looked at how cognitive behavioral therapy can improve attention control and executive functioning."

One study of mindfulness training showed increased cognitive performance, and another showed neuroplastic changes in the anterior cingulate cortex, the same area of the brain damaged by smartphone addiction.

"To me, the most interesting aspect of the study is that they were able to see a correction of the imbalance after cognitive behavior therapy intervention," Wintermark said. "What I would like to see is more research on whether the symptoms of addiction are also corrected."

Fighting back against smartphone addiction

If you, or a loved one, seems to have the symptoms of smart device or internet addiction, experts have some suggestions in addition to mindfulness training. First, turn off your phone at certain times of the day, such as in meetings, having dinner, playing with your kids, and of course, driving.



How to Tell If You Could Be Addicted to Your Phone

Cell phones have become such powerful and versatile tools that, for many people, they feel literally indispensable.

In fact, it's easy to feel like you're the one who's lost when you can't find your phone. So, how do you know whether your attachment to your phone is just a 21st century cultural phenomenon or a genuine, life-altering addiction?

To figure out the answer, let's take a look at what current research has to say. Also, we'll take a closer look at the symptoms of phone overuse, the side effects, and how to break the hold your phone may have on your daily life.

Is cell phone addiction really a thing?

Pew Research Center reports that 81 percent of Americans now own smartphones - up from just 35 percent in 2011. And, over the past 5 years, Google Trends indicates that searches for "cell phone addiction" have likewise been rising.

And pathological phone use has given rise to a raft of new terminology, such as:

"nomophobia: the fear of going without your phone"

"textaphrenia: the fear that you can't send or receive

texts

"phantom vibrations" - the feeling that your phone is alerting you when it really isn't

There's little doubt that excessive cell phone use is a problem for lots of people.

But there's some debate among medical and mental health professionals about whether problematic cell phone use is truly an addiction or the result of an impulse control issue.

Many medical experts are reluctant to assign the word "addiction" to anything other than habitual substance misuse. However, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (the handbook used in the medical community to diagnose mental disorders) does recognize one behavioral addiction: compulsive gambling. It's worth noting that there are some important similarities between cell phone overuse and behavioral addictions like compulsive gambling. The similarities include:

"loss of control over the behavior"

"persistence, or having real difficulty limiting the behavior"

"tolerance, the need to engage in the behavior more

often to get the same feeling"

severe negative consequences stemming from the behavior

"withdrawal, or feelings of irritability and anxiety when the behavior isn't practiced"

"relapse, or picking up the habit again after periods of avoidance"

The dopamine connection

And there's another similarity between behavioral addiction and cell phone overuse: the triggering of a chemical in the brain that reinforces the compulsive behavior.

Your brain contains several pathways that transmit a feel-good chemical called dopamine when you're in rewarding situations. For many people, social interaction stimulates the release of dopamine.

Because so many people use their phones as tools of social interaction, they become accustomed to constantly checking them for that hit of dopamine that's released when they connect with others on social media or some other app.

App programmers are counting on that drive to keep you checking your phone. Some apps even withhold and release social reinforcements, such as "likes" and "comments," so we

receive them in an unpredictable pattern. When we can't predict the pattern, we check our phones more often.

That cycle can lead to a tipping point: when your phone ceases to be something you enjoy and becomes something you're virtually compelled to use.

SUMMARY
Your brain releases a chemical called dopamine when it feels rewarded.

Some phone apps are designed in a way to keep you coming back again and again for positive social reinforcements that can trigger the release of dopamine in your brain.

Who is at greatest risk?

What researchers do agree on is the fact that adolescents are more likely to demonstrate addiction-like symptoms with their cell phone use than other age groups.

StudiesTrusted Source show that cell phone use peaks during the teen years and gradually declines thereafter.

Excessive cell phone use among teens is so common that 33 percent of 13-year-olds never turn off their phone, day or night.

And the younger a teen acquires a phone, the more likely they are to develop problematic use patterns.

For girls, dependent use patterns may develop because phones become important tools of social interaction, whereas boys demonstrate a greater tendency to use phones in risky

SUMMARY

Teenagers tend to overuse their phones more than other age groups. Studies show the earlier a teen starts using a phone, the higher the risk of problematic use patterns.

Who else is at risk?

A reviewTrusted Source of the available research revealed that several personality traits and conditions have been associated with problematic cell phone use.

These personality traits include:

- "low self-esteem
- "low impulse control
- "anxiety
- "depression
- "being highly extroverted

Researchers point out it's not always clear whether the problems with cell phone overuse are causing these conditions, or whether the conditions themselves make people more vulnerable to overuse.

Symptoms of phone addiction

So, how can you tell if you have an overuse problem with your phone?

(Contd on page 32)



Step away from the smartphone:

Answering emails out of hours increases your risk of stress, emotional exhaustion, headaches and back pain, experts warn

Answering your emails outside work hours increases the risk of stress, emotional exhaustion, headaches and back pain, new research shows.

Experts also warn that constantly waiting for work notifications at home can affect metabolism and immunity, making a person more vulnerable to serious health problems such as infection, high blood pressure and depression.

It also reduces the time for recovery activities like social interaction, exercise and spending time in natural settings, they said.

The study led by the University of South Australia surveyed more than 2,200 academic and professional employees across 40 universities from June to November 2020.

Researchers said they chose universities because of the advancing technological changes in the sector and their importance to economic, social and cultural prosperity.

They found that 21 per cent of those surveyed had supervisors who expected them to reply to work-related texts, calls and emails after work.

A further 55 per cent admitted to sending digital communications about work to colleagues in the evening, while 30 per cent did so at weekends and expected a same-day response.

Employees who had supervisors expecting them to reply to messages after work reported higher levels of stress (70.4 per cent) compared to those who did not (45.2 per cent).

They were also more emotionally exhausted (63.5 per cent compared to 35.2 per cent) and reported health problems such as headaches and back pain (22.1 per cent compared to 11.5 per cent).

It wasn't just managers who were a

problem, however. Respondents also complained about being bothered by their colleagues outside of work hours.

Those who were contacted had higher levels of psychological stress (75.9 per cent compared to 39.3 per cent), emotional exhaustion (65.9 per cent compared to 35.7 per cent) and more health issues (22.1 per cent compared to 12.5 per cent).

Researchers said that although only university employees had been surveyed, the results likely reflected a society-wide problem of digital communication out of work hours.

One of the study's authors, Amy Zadow, wrote in the Conversation: 'The personal and social implications of blurred boundaries between home and work are serious.'

'When employees are answering calls or responding to emails at home, this affects their recovery from work - both mentally and physically.'

She added that recent research by the World Health Organisation and International Labour Organisation suggest that long work hours may even increase the risk of a stroke and heart disease.

'We can focus on the immediate problem and reduce the extent of digital connectivity out of work hours,' Zadow said.

'[But] ultimately our problem with out-of-hours emails and messaging reflects broader societal issues relating to the pressures of productivity, job insecurity and diminishing work resources.'

The study is published on the University of South Australia's website.

HOW CAN YOU SPOT SMARTPHONE ADDICTION?

Most of us check our smartphones 80 times a day - about once every 12 minutes, according to a study by

technology insurance provider Asurion. While some will be able to continue at this rate without developing a problem, others will become addicted to their handset.

Stanford University psychiatrist Dr Anna Lembke has outlined some of the warning signs of smartphone addiction. When identifying addiction, clinicians look at three different components: control, compulsion, and continued use despite consequences.

Dr Lembke emphasised that addiction is a spectrum and severity is based on a combination of each of the 'three C's'. 'There are absolutely mild, moderate and extreme forms,' she said.

1. Using the phone longer than you planned to

In the case of smartphone addiction, Dr Lembke says, the element of control comes into play when a person puts a limit to the amount of time they'll be on their phone and consistently exceeds it.

Examples of this include pressing snooze on your alarm in the morning because you've got one more social network to check or running late for a meeting because you got caught up checking emails.

2. Using it in inappropriate settings, like while driving or going to the bathroom 'We've all seen people using phones while driving or in other situations that are just obviously unreasonable,' she said.

'Before there were physical barriers to where you used technology, but now these mobile devices are 24/7 in my bed, in my car, always just right there,' she said.

Dr Lembke suggests that portability is a main reason that smartphones are more addictive than other technology. Just because you can bring your phone

with you everywhere doesn't mean that you should.

3. Giving up other activities because you're on your phone

Ditching the gym because you have to catch up with your Twitter timeline?

Dr Lembke says when phone use begins to take over time allotted for other activities, it's considered a red flag for addiction.

'Our "work hard play hard" culture can make people feel as if they can't possibly be unplugged because they'll miss something important, and that's how they justify excessive use,' she said.

4. Feeling anxious when not on your phone

A key component of the compulsion factor of addiction is feeling uncomfortable or anxious when not on one's phone.

'Some people get so they're worried they're missing something that they'll pull out the phone while in a meeting or even while having an emotional one-on-one conversation,' Dr Lembke said.

5. Negatively impacting your relationships Ever tried to have a conversation with someone who won't look up from their phone and make eye contact with you?

Excessive phone usage can negatively impact personal relationships because it can make others feel as if they aren't as important as whatever is going on in their device.

'An example would be if your partner asks you to put down the phone and spend more time with them or with the kids but you ignore that request,' Dr Lembke said.

6. You use your phone as a security blanket in uncomfortable situations When in an awkward or tense social situation, it can often be enticing to turn to your phone as an escape from the discomfort.

However, this kind of behaviour is a common indicator that you may be a little too attached.



Tech companies self-regulating for the common good? Don't get your hopes up.

SmartPhone Addiction Is a Problem Apple Won't Solve

Two big shareholders of Apple Inc. are right to add their influential voices to those concerned with smartphone addiction. If they are serious about finding a solution, however, they'll start looking elsewhere for progress on the issue. Like tobacco companies before them, tech companies are incapable of studying their products dispassionately and then regulating themselves for the common good.

The letter from Jana Partners and the California State Teachers Retirement System cites existing research, primarily by the best-known smartphone addiction alarmist, San Diego State University psychologist Jean Twenge, to urge Apple to take action. According to Twenge, excessive screen time increases the probability of teenage depression and suicide. Though "some may argue that the research is not definitive" (and indeed, it has been challenged for confusing correlation with causation and cherry-picking data), the investors point out that where there's so much smoke, there has to be some form of fire: The average American teenager who uses a smart phone receives her first phone at age 10 and spends over 4.5 hours a day on it (excluding texting and talking). 78% of teens check their phones at least hourly and 50% report feeling "addicted" to their phones. It would defy common sense to argue that this level of usage, by

children whose brains are still developing, is not having at least some impact, or that the maker of such a powerful product has no role to play in helping parents to ensure it is being used optimally. Noting that Apple's existing parental controls are limited and third-party software is confusing, Jana and CalSTRS want the company to design better, intuitive ways for parents to protect children. To get there, the investors recommend that the company form an expert committee, preferably including the popular Twenge, and partner with academics "to assist additional research efforts."

The backlash against intrusive tech is in a very early stage, as these proposals make painfully clear. Since 2013, BMJ (formerly the British Medical Journal, one of the world's most respected academic publications in the health realm) and affiliated journals won't even consider for publication any research funded by the tobacco industry. The funding doesn't necessarily mean that the research is tainted, but the journal cites the World Health Organization on Tobacco Control, which mentions "a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict between the tobacco industry's interests and public health policy interests."

A similar conflict prevents a reasonable reader from taking at face value the recent assertion by Facebook Director of Research David Greenberg -- based on

research, of course -- that while using social media passively can make users feel bad, interacting a lot with their content, just the kind of behavior Facebook sells to advertisers, is great for them. Big tobacco companies have been caught suppressing research damaging to their interests and observed funding research that was positive for them. There's nothing in the history of the tech industry (think Uber's lawless behavior or the relentless fight by Apple and Google to avoid being taxed where they do business) to suggest it would behave differently. On the other hand, tech addiction alarmism can be a business, too. Twenge leverages her fame as a speaker and consultant, and she's written a bestselling book. Tech companies also have plenty of enemies in industries they disrupt. Last year, a study asserting that Airbnb was turning into a platform for professional landlords made quite a splash in the media. It was funded by U.S. hotel lobbyists. In tobacco's case, it took decades of research -- much of it government-funded and painstakingly peer-reviewed -- to establish that prohibitive and even punitive regulation was needed. With tech products and tech companies' business models, it shouldn't take nearly as long. Within a year of Donald Trump's election victory, dozens of authoritative papers have emerged on the spread and effect

of fake news. But, as with tobacco, government agencies must commission and analyze the research until they're reasonably satisfied that it provides a complete picture -- especially since governments appear overeager to take action that may amount to censorship (following Germany last year, France is preparing to adopt an anti-fake news law). The starting point is rather unimpressive. "The diversity of criteria and methodological approaches that have been used is notable, as is a certain lack of conceptual delimitation that has resulted in a broad spread of prevalent data," says a 2016 review of available research on smartphone addiction states. "There is a consensus about the existence of cell-phone addiction, but the delimitation and criteria used by various researchers vary." A 2017 review of studies dealing with the effect of gadget use on cognition also calls the extant literature "inconclusive." This calls for coordinated, interdisciplinary study programs to obtain conclusive evidence on tech's effects on the individual and on society. Only governments or blocs like the European Union are capable of creating such programs and -- one hopes -- keeping them free of commercial bias. I have a lot of intuitive sympathy for Twenge's argument: I'm fighting a bad case of smartphone addiction, and I've stopped my younger daughter from playing iPad games since it

demotivated her from doing anything else. I also believe that better research is necessary to figure out what's going on. I have some specific questions for researchers to ask, too, as long as they can put together large, age-differentiated samples and observe subjects' behavior rather than rely on self-assessment questionnaires, as they mostly do today.

I'd like to know which smartphone applications, if any, cause withdrawal symptoms characteristic of substance addiction -- irritability, lack of sleep, productivity declines. There's no such thing as smartphone addiction per se -- it's specific software that keeps people checking their gadgets. I would also test heavy users of different apps for symptoms of social dislocation, depression and stress -- and for factors that can mitigate these symptoms. I'd try to find out whether user reactions differ by demographic group and from country to country. I'd do more research using modern diagnostic equipment, like the recent South Korean study that found heavy smartphone users expose their brain chemistry to dangerous imbalances. I'd also specifically focus on the subject of distractions and productivity. At this point, it's anybody's guess whether the contribution of smartphones and social networks to our working and school-related lives is net negative or net positive.

Smartphones increase your risk of CANCER

Spending just 17 minutes a day on your device over a ten year period increases the risk of tumours by 60%, controversial study claims



Using a mobile phone for as little as 17 minutes per day over 10 years increases the risk of developing cancerous tumours by up to 60 per cent, a surprising study found. The controversial research involved statistical analysis of 46 different studies into mobile phone use and health around the world, by experts from UC Berkeley. They found that using a mobile for 1,000 hours, or roughly 17 minutes per day over a ten year period, increased the risk of developing cancerous tumours by 60 per cent. Researchers say that radiation from mobile signals 'interfere with cellular mechanisms' and can result in the creation of stress proteins that cause DNA damage, tumours and even cell death in extreme cases. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) denies any link, saying there is 'no consistent or credible scientific evidence of health problems caused by the exposure to radio frequency energy emitted by cell phones.'

Berkeley experts examined earlier studies carried out in the US, Sweden, UK, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand to get a broad picture of mobile use and health. The rate of mobile phone ownership is increasing, with studies showing a rise from 87 per cent of homes having at least one device in 2011, to over 95 per cent in 2020. Study author Joel Moskowitz said people should minimise time on mobile phones, keep them away from their body and use a landline for calls where possible. Studies examining a link between mobile phone usage and cancer are controversial, said Moskowitz, who said it is a 'highly sensitive political topic'. He said there are significant economic ramifications for the powerful mobile phone industry, which also funds a number of studies into the subject. The

Berkeley team conducted the research with the South Korea National Cancer Center and Seoul National University. 'Cell phone use highlights a host of public health issues and it has received little attention in the scientific community, unfortunately,' said Moskowitz. However, the Food and Drug Administration in the US says on its website there is 'no consistent or credible scientific evidence of health problems caused by the exposure to radio frequency energy emitted by cell phones.' Michelle Mitchell, Cancer Research UK's chief executive said that the review looks at findings of previous research into the health impact of mobile phones.

She said the results were mixed, adding that 'there are some important limitations with some of the studies used.'

'For example some were done in animals, while others compared people who already had cancer and asked them to remember past mobile phone use rather than tracking people over time.'

'Research is still on-going into the longer-term effects, but overall, the best scientific evidence shows that using mobile phones does not increase the risk of cancer.'

A Public Health England spokesperson reiterated that sentiment. Adding: 'There is no convincing evidence that exposure to electromagnetic fields has adverse health effects provided exposures are below recommended guideline levels.'

Moskowitz says many of the studies showing no link have been fully or part funded by the mobile phone industry, adding there is obvious evidence of a link if you look at the wider picture, and compare multiple studies to look for a trend.

He said many experts who support

a link say the modulation of wireless devices makes the radiation energy more 'biologically active'.

'This then interferes with our cellular mechanisms, opening up calcium channels, for example, and allowing calcium to flow into the cell and into the mitochondria within the cell, interfering with our natural cellular processes and leading to the creation of stress proteins and free radicals and, possibly, DNA damage.'

'And, in other cases, it may lead to cell death,' he added.

A big reason there isn't more research about the health risks of radiofrequency radiation exposure is because the US government stopped funding this research in the 1990s,' he said.

One exception was a \$30 million rodent study published in 2018 by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences' National Toxicology Program, which found 'clear evidence' of carcinogenicity from cellphone radiation. However, the FDA dismissed the findings of that study, saying the findings don't apply to humans, calling them 'over-hyped'.

Moskowitz says the FDA is 'controlled by the telecom industry,' with a revolving door between membership of the FCC and people working in telecom.

'The industry spends about \$100 million a year lobbying Congress,' he said.

Over 250 scientists who have researched health effects of non-ionising electromagnetic fields from mobile devices, have signed the International EMF Scientist Appeal, which calls for health warnings and stronger exposure limits. 'So, there are many scientists who agree that this radiation is harmful to our health,' explained Moskowitz.

A number of studies have tried to settle the debate over cell radiation.

Rates of a particular kind of heart cancer do seem to be linked to greater cell phone usage, but the number of people with the rare disease is small. The UC Berkeley team worked to apply statistical analysis to 46 different studies conducted in multiple countries to see if there was a consistent outcome.

They found a mixed set of results, but when focusing on those with 'high quality methodology' they found a 'clear link' between mobile phone radiation and increased risk of developing tumours.

Specifically, spending 17 minutes per day on average using your mobile phone over a decade increased the risk of cancerous tumours by 60 per cent. 'Most recently, on March 1, 2021, a report was released by the former director of the National Center for Environmental Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which concluded that there is a "high probability" that radiofrequency radiation emitted by cellphones causes gliomas and acoustic neuromas, two types of brain tumors,' Moskowitz said.

He recommends people minimise their use of mobile and cordless phones in order to reduce their radiation exposure time. He said you should 'use a landline whenever possible' and if you do use a mobile 'turn off the WiFi and Bluetooth if you're not going to use them'.

'Distance is your friend,' the study author added, saying that keeping the phone 10 inches from your body results in a 10,000-fold reduction in exposure - so make a call using the speaker rather than hold it to your ear. 'Further studies using the exact data on the time spent on cellular phones are warranted to confirm our findings,' the authors wrote. The findings have been published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.

Contd from page 28

Some of the telltale signs include the following:

" You reach for your phone the moment you're alone or bored.

" You wake up multiple times at night to check your phone.

" You feel anxious, upset, or short-tempered when you can't get to your phone.

" Your phone use has caused you to have an accident or injury.

" You're spending more and more time using your phone.

" Phone use interferes with your job performance, schoolwork, or relationships.

" People in your life are concerned about your phone use patterns.

" When you try to limit your use, you relapse quickly. What are the side effects of phone addiction?

One of the hallmarks of any addiction is keeping up the compulsive behavior, even when it can cause severe negative consequences.

Take, for example, the risks associated with texting while driving. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Trusted Source report that texting while driving is a triple threat, because it causes you to take:

" your eyes off the road

" your hands off the wheel
" your mind off driving

That kind of distraction kills nine people every single day. It also injures many more.

The dangers of using a cell phone while driving are widely known, yet people ignore the risk in pursuit of the small jolt of connectedness a phone provides.

Other consequences Research Trusted Source has shown that people who overuse cell phones may experience:

" anxiety

" depression

" sleep deficits and insomnia

" relationship conflicts
" poor academic or work performance

That list doesn't take into account the many ways cell phone compulsions subtly affect your life.

One study Trusted Source showed, for example, that your ability to concentrate on important job-related tasks is "significantly disrupted" by phone notifications, even if you don't interact with your phone.

How to break the addiction If your phone habits are interfering with your health, relationships, and responsibilities, it might be time to make some changes.

The good news is that there are

steps you can take to change the way you interact with your phone to help limit the negative impacts on your life.

First, find out if there are underlying worries

Researchers Trusted Source believe that people who compulsively use cell phones may be trying to avoid issues in their lives that feel too difficult or complicated to resolve.

So, one of the first things to consider is whether there's something deeper bothering you. Resolving the underlying issue could be the key to reducing your anxiety.

Knowing what's truly bothering you could help reduce your need to compulsively text, buy, pin, tweet, swipe, or post.

Consider cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)

This therapeutic approach helps illuminate the links between your thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. It can be a very effective type of therapy to help you change certain behavior patterns.

At least one small study suggests that CBT may be effective in balancing changes in brain chemistry associated with cell phone addiction.

If you think this type of therapy may help you, talk with your primary care doctor about where or how you can find a therapist.

Try these other practical steps
" Remove time-consuming apps from your phone and access them through a device you don't carry with you all day.

" Change your settings to eliminate push notifications and other disruptive alerts.

" Set your screen to gray scale to keep it from waking you at night.

" Place some barriers around your phone use that force you to think about what you're doing. For example, you could create lock screen questions, like "Why now?" and "What for?"

" Keep your phone out of sight. Charge your phone somewhere besides your bedroom.

" Develop hobbies that feed your soul. Replace the games and social media apps with hands-on, real-world activities, like meeting up with friends, creating music or art, or doing volunteer work.

" Adopt a growth mindset. Brief relapses, adjustments, and withdrawal symptoms are part of a journey toward healthier phone use. Don't expect to get it right immediately. Expect some setbacks, and learn from each experience.

When to seek help

It's always OK to reach out for help when you're dealing with any issue that concerns you, or that you feel you don't have control over.

If you're noticing symptoms of addiction or dependence, or if the people in your life are talking to you about the amount of time you spend on your phone, it may be a good idea to ask for help.

Consider reaching out to a therapist or your doctor, checking out a self-help guide, or following a digital detox program. The bottom line Problematic cell phone use shares a lot of characteristics with behavioral addictions like compulsive gambling. People who develop a dependent pattern of phone use typically experience a loss of control.

They often find that their cell phone habits are causing real damage in their lives. If your phone use has become problematic, or if it feels like it's become an addiction, there are steps you can take to retrain yourself to use your phone in healthier ways. Cognitive behavioral therapy and digital detox programs can both be very effective at reclaiming a sense of control over your phone use. Feel that phantom ringing? It's a productive, restful life calling. It's OK to answer it.

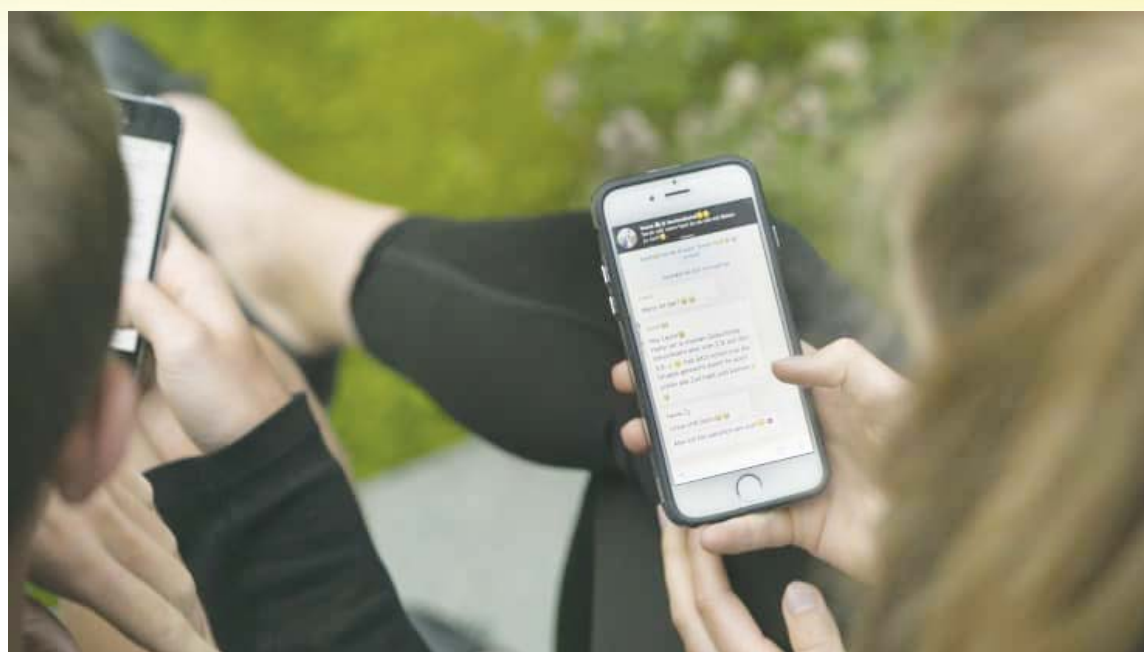
40% of college students are 'addicted' to their smartphones, and it could be affecting their sleep: study

A peer-reviewed study published Tuesday in *Frontiers in Psychiatry* found that 40% of college students are addicted to their smartphones - and have poorer sleep quality.

In 2019, researchers at King's College London polled 1,043 students there aged 18 to 30 about their smartphone use, including average amount of use per day and timing. They then compared it with the average number of hours the respondents reported sleeping on weeknights as well as the overall quality of their sleep.

The study found that 38.9% of the students were addicted to their smartphones. Of those with an addiction, 68.7% had poor sleep quality, compared to 57.1% of those who did not have an addiction.

Researchers found students who used their phone several hours during activities with family or



friends and after midnight were most likely to be at high risk of becoming addicted.

What's more, the study found that of those who stopped using their device an hour before bed were less likely to be addicted compared to those who stopped

less than 30 minutes prior to bedtime.

However, according to the study, "smartphone addiction was associated with poor sleep, independent of duration of usage, indicating that length of time should not be used as a proxy

for harmful usage."

Students who used a smartphone for more than five hours a day, who could not control how long they spent on their phone, who felt distressed when they could not access their phone and who missed life

activities as a result were considered addicted.

Another study published in the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine* in June reported similar findings with the relationship between smartphone overuse and sleep in younger children. The study concluded that excessive smartphone use was related to shorter total sleep time and quality of sleep.

But some experts take issue with the term "smartphone addiction." Smartphone addiction is not a condition recognized by any global health body and there is no formal clinical diagnosis, according to Bob Patton, lecturer in Clinical Psychology at the University of Surrey, who studies addictive behaviors.

Additionally, it's important to note the results of the study can't be applied to the general population because the study only included students and young adults.

EU holding back approval for Indian-made AstraZeneca vaccine 'discriminatory', say experts

Experts say the decision of European Union regulators to hold back approval for Covishield, AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine made in India, is discriminatory and unscientific.

After Dr. Ifeanyi Nsofor and his wife received two doses of AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine in Nigeria, they assumed they would be free to travel this summer to a European destination of their choice. They were wrong.

The couple - and millions of other people vaccinated through a U.N.-backed effort - could find themselves barred from entering many European and other countries because those nations don't recognize the Indian-made version of the vaccine for travel. Although AstraZeneca vaccine produced in Europe has been authorized by the continent's drug regulatory agency, the same shot manufactured in India hasn't been given the green light. EU regulators said AstraZeneca hasn't completed the necessary paperwork on the Indian factory, including details on its production practices and quality control standards.

But some experts describe the EU move as discriminatory and unscientific, pointing out that the World Health Organization has

inspected and approved the factory. Health officials say the situation will not only complicate travel and frustrate fragile economies but also undermine vaccine confidence by appearing to label some shots substandard. As vaccination coverage rises across Europe and other rich countries, authorities anxious to salvage the summer tourism season are increasingly relaxing coronavirus border restrictions. Earlier this month, the European Union introduced its digital COVID-19 certificate, which allows EU residents to move freely in the 27-nation bloc as long as they have been vaccinated with one of the four shots authorized by the European Medicines Agency, have a fresh negative test, or have proof they recently recovered from the virus. While the U.S. and Britain remain largely closed to outside visitors, the EU certificate is seen as a potential model for travel in the COVID-19 era and a way to boost economies.

The officially EU-endorsed vaccines also include those

made by Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. They don't include the AstraZeneca shot made in India or many other vaccines used in developing countries, including those manufactured in China and Russia.

Individual EU countries are free to apply their own rules for travelers from inside and outside the bloc, and their rules vary widely, creating further confusion for tourists. Several EU countries, including Belgium, Germany and Switzerland, allow people to enter if they have had non-EU-endorsed vaccines; several others, including France and Italy, don't.

For Nsofor, the realization he could be barred was "a rude awakening." After a tough year of working during the pandemic in Abuja, Nsofor and his wife were looking forward to a European vacation with their two young daughters, perhaps admiring the Eiffel Tower in Paris or touring Salzburg in Austria.

Nsofor noted that the Indian-made vaccine he received had



been authorized by WHO for emergency use and had been supplied through COVAX, the U.N.-backed program to provide shots to poor corners of the world. WHO's approval included a visit to the Serum Institute of India factory to ensure that it had good manufacturing practices and that quality control standards were met.

"We're grateful to the EU that they funded COVAX, but now they are essentially discriminating against a vaccine that they actively funded and promoted," Nsofor said. "This will just give room to all kinds of conspiracy theories that the vaccines we're getting in Africa are not as good as the ones they have for themselves in the West." Ivo Vlaev, a professor at Britain's University of Warwick who

advises the government on behavioral science during COVID-19, agreed that Western countries' refusal to recognize vaccines used in poor countries could fuel mistrust.

"People who were already suspicious of vaccines will become even more suspicious," Vlaev said. "They could also lose trust in public health messages from governments and be less willing to comply with COVID rules." Dr. Mesfin Teklu Tessema, director of health for the International Rescue Committee, said countries that have declined to recognize vaccines cleared by WHO are acting against the scientific evidence. "Vaccines that have met WHO's threshold should be accepted. Otherwise it looks like there's an element of racism here," he said.

WHO urged countries to recognize all of the vaccines it has authorized, including two Chinese-made ones.

Countries that decline to do so are "undermining confidence in lifesaving vaccines that have already been shown to be safe and effective, affecting uptake of vaccines and potentially putting billions of people at risk," the U.N. health agency said in a statement this month.

In June, the Serum Institute of India's CEO, Adar Poonawalla, tweeted that he was concerned about vaccinated Indians facing problems traveling to the EU and said he was raising the problem at the highest levels with regulators and countries. Stefan De Keersmaecker, a spokesman for the EU's executive arm, said last week that regulators were obligated to check the production process at the Indian factory. "We are not trying to create any doubts about this vaccine," he said. AstraZeneca said it only recently submitted the paperwork on the Indian factory to the EU drug regulatory agency.

Scientists use gene-editing technology to block COVID-19 transmission in human cells

Researchers have used CRISPR genome editing technology to successfully block the transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in infected human cells.

The study, published in the journal Nature Communications, could pave the way for coronavirus treatments.

The technology, with the CRISPR/Cas9 'genetic scissors' as its most

prominent tool, also holds the promise of curing diseases such as HIV or sickle-cell disease and boosting fundamental medical knowledge.

CRISPR, which allows scientists to alter DNA sequences and modify gene function, has already shown



promise in eliminating the genetic coding that drives the development of children's cancer. Scientists used an enzyme, CRISPR-Cas13b, that binds to relevant RNA sequences on the novel coronavirus and degrades the genome it needs to replicate inside human cells. Lead author

Sharon Lewin from Australia's Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity said that the team had designed the CRISPR tool to recognise SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19. "Once the virus is recognised, the CRISPR enzyme is activated and chops up the virus," she said.

Although there are several Covid-19 vaccines already on the market, available treatment options are still relatively scarce and only partially effective. WHO had established a panel of gene editing experts was established in late 2018 after a Chinese scientist said he had edited the genes of twin babies to make them resistant to HIV infection.

"We targeted several parts of the virus, parts that are very stable and don't change and parts that are highly changeable, and all worked very well in chopping up the virus." The technique also succeeded in stopping viral replication in samples of so-called "variants of concern" such as Alpha.

Indian-American surgeon Atul Gawande gets Biden's nomination for senior USAID position

A surgeon and a New York Times best-selling author, Atul Gawande has been nominated for the post of Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Global Health, USAID.

US President Joe Biden intends to nominate Indian-American surgeon and popular author Atul Gawande to a senior leadership position in the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

According to the White House, Biden intends to nominate Gawande for Assistant Administrator of the Bureau for Global Health, USAID.

Gawande has four New York Times best-selling books to his credit -- *Complications*, *Better*, *The Checklist Manifesto*, and *Being Mortal*.

"I'm honoured to be nominated to lead global health development at USAID, including for Covid. With more Covid deaths worldwide in the first half of 2021 than in all of 2020, I'm grateful for the chance to help end this crisis and to re-strengthen public health systems worldwide," Gawande said in a tweet.

Gawande is the Cyndy and John Fish Distinguished Professor of Surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Samuel O. Thier Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School, and Professor

of Health Policy and Management at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He is also founder and chair of Ariadne Labs, a joint centre for health systems innovation at Brigham and Women's Hospital and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and of Lifebox, a nonprofit organisation making surgery safer globally. During the coronavirus pandemic, he co-founded CIC Health, which operates Covid-19 testing and vaccination nationally, and served as a member of the Biden transition



Covid-19 Advisory Board.

From 2018 to 2020, he was CEO of Haven, the Amazon, Berkshire Hathaway, and JPMorgan Chase health care venture. He previously served as a senior advisor in the Department of Health and Human Services in the Clinton Administration.

In addition, Gawande has been a staff writer for *The New Yorker* magazine since 1998.

He is the winner of two National Magazine Awards, Academy Health's Impact Award for highest research impact on health care, a MacArthur Fellowship, and the Lewis Thomas Award for writing about science.

Miami's historic Black Overtown gets makeover



Dr. Nelson Adams III remembers when his grandparents' home in Miami's historic Black neighborhood of Overtown was razed to make way for a highway in the 1960s, forcing thousands to relocate from the area, known then as the "Harlem of the South" for its vibrant music and theater scene.

Miami was one of numerous Black cities across the country where interstate highways were built, disrupting communities. Adams is hopeful the new Signature Bridge now being built over the area, along with a planned park underneath called the Underdeck, will help to transform and reconnect the

The \$818 million Florida Department of Transportation project with higher, thinner columns will replace the original bridge crossing Overtown, opening up dark, underutilized space to both a park and a Heritage Trail.

neighborhood.

The \$818 million Florida Department of Transportation project with higher, thinner columns will replace the original bridge crossing Overtown, opening up dark, underutilized space to both a park and a Heritage Trail, and connecting the neighborhood to Biscayne Bay. Referring to the original bridge as a disaster that destroyed a thriving community, Adams, chairman emeritus of the St. John Community Development Corporation, said: "Righting a wrong is something that is

aspirational, but we can try to do right today. "The Signature Bridge project coincides with a revitalization of the neighborhood that is underway. Community leaders are working to ensure that Overtown's Black history and culture are preserved in the process. The Southeast Overtown/Park West Community Redevelopment Association is active in spearheading development, and at the same time working to preserve affordable housing and increase Black home ownership. Derek Fleming,

managing partner of the new Red Rooster Overtown restaurant with celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson, sees the history of Overtown as "one of the most forgotten and one of the most important histories of Miami." The Red Rooster was once the Clyde Killens Pool Hall, frequented by musicians such as Count Basie, Sam Cooke and Aretha Franklin. Fleming's hope is to unify the neighborhood, adding: "There needs to be a replenishment of the existing culture, not a replacement."

US: 1 dead, 5 wounded in shooting outside Detroit banquet hall

The shooting incident took place when over 100 people were gathered for an event at the banquet hall. The incident, as per reports, left the outside of the building riddled with bullet holes.

Drive-by shooting left a man dead and five other people wounded outside a banquet hall in Detroit early Tuesday, police said. The shooting happened about 2 am outside the Chalmers Banquet Hall on the city's

East Side. A man died, while two other male victims and three female victims were expected to recover, police said on Twitter.

More than 100 people were gathered for an event at the banquet hall, WXYZ-TV

reported from the scene. The shooting left the outside of the building riddled with bullet holes.

No arrests were immediately reported and no information was released about a possible suspect or suspects.



Synthetic SARS-CoV-2 virus could be used as antiviral therapy for Covid-19: Study

Researchers have designed a synthetic defective SARS-CoV-2 that can interfere with the growth of the real virus, potentially leading to the extinction of both the Covid-19-causing pathogen and the artificial one.

In the study published in the journal PeerJ, the researchers explained that when a virus attacks a cell, it attaches to the cell's surface and injects its genetic material into it.

The cell is then tricked into reproducing the virus's genetic material and packaging it into virions, particles which burst from the cell and go off to infect other cells.

"In our experiments, we show that the wild-type (disease-causing) SARS-CoV-2 virus actually enables the replication and

spread of our synthetic virus, thereby effectively promoting its own decline," said Marco Archetti, associate professor at Pennsylvania State University in the US.

"A version of this synthetic construct could be used as a self-promoting antiviral therapy for Covid-19," Archetti said. The researchers noted that defective interfering (DI) viruses, which are common in nature, contain large deletions in their genomes that often affect their ability to reproduce their genetic material and package it into virions.

However, DI genomes can perform these functions if the cell they have infected also harbours genetic material from a wild-type virus, they said.

In this case, the researchers

said, a DI genome can hijack a wild-type genome's replication and packaging machinery.

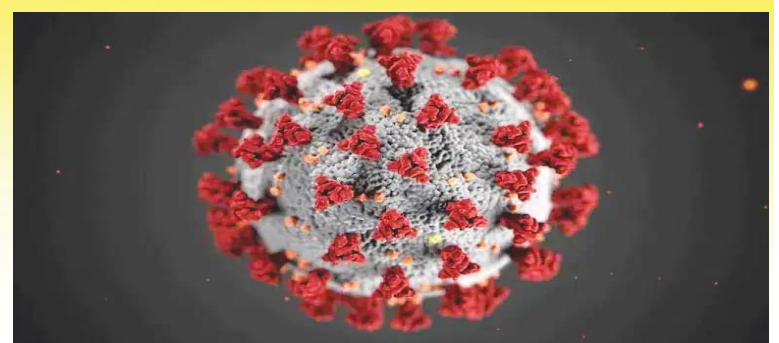
"These defective genomes are like parasites of the wild-type virus," said Archetti.

He explained that when a DI genome utilises a wild-type genome's machinery, it also can impair the growth of the wild-type genome.

"Given the shorter length of their genomes as a result of the deletions, DI genomes can replicate faster than wild-type genomes in coinfecting cells and quickly outcompete the wild-type," Archetti said.

HOW THE SYNTHETIC GENOME WAS CREATED

The team found that synthetic DI genome can replicate three times faster than the wild-type



genome, resulting in a reduction of the wild-type viral load by half in 24 hours.

The researchers engineered short synthetic DI genomes from parts of the wild-type SARS-CoV-2 genome and introduced them into African green monkey cells that were already infected with the wild-type SARS-CoV-2 virus.

They then quantified the relative amounts of the DI and wild type

genomes in the cells over time points, which gave an indication of the amount of interference of the DI genome with the wild-type.

THE DI GENOME'S EFFECT

The study found that within 24 hours of infection, the DI genome reduced the amount of SARS-CoV-2 by approximately half compared to the amount of wild-type virus in control experiments.

Explained: What are solar winds that will likely create geomagnetic storms on Earth

The Sun has hurtled massive flares travelling at over a million miles per hour, which are likely to hit Earth's magnetic field today.

Earth is set to experience geomagnetic storms on Tuesday as the planet comes in the way of a fast-moving stream of solar winds. The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said that the gaseous material is flowing from an equatorial hole in the sun's atmosphere.

The massive solar storm is expected to cause disruptions in satellites in Earth's atmosphere as well as television broadcasts and mobile phone signals. Power

grids could also be vulnerable to the event. NOAA said that if the storm occurs, midsummer auroras could appear at high latitudes, on the poles. With the solar minimum (a period marked by the least amount of solar activity) ending, the Sun is 'waking up' again and solar magnetic fields are strengthening, providing a stiffer barrier to cosmic rays trying to enter the Solar System. Spaceweather.com observed changes above the surface of Earth, stating that

Solar Cycle 25 is gaining strength.

What are solar winds?

Solar winds are powerful storms that travel throughout the Solar System at a speed of over one million miles per hour. These winds are visible in the halo around the Sun during an eclipse and sometimes when the particles hit the Earth's atmosphere - they are seen as the aurora borealis or northern lights.

According to the University of Chicago, as the Sun spins on its axis, it creates complex swirls



and eddies of particles comprising of protons and electrons that flow towards the Earth and other planets of the Solar System. These flowing particles are called solar winds, which has the power of affecting telecommunications.

The solar winds were first observed by physicist Eugene

Parker, who in 1957 started research around the question "Are particles coming off of the sun?" Parker calculated the Sun's corona was a million degrees hot and particles had to be flowing outwards expanding away from its surface, reaching speeds faster than that of sound.

Hubble telescope remains blind for a month: Nasa struggles to find fix to the worst glitch in a decade

A month after the Hubble Space Telescope shut down due to a faulty computer, engineers at Nasa are yet to find a permanent fix to the problem. The teams are now planning to switch to backup hardware later this week in a bid to resume the flying observatory. "Nasa completed a review to assess all factors and minimise risks related to Hubble's possible switch to backup hardware, which may occur later this week," Nasa said, adding that investigations into the cause of the payload computer issue is ongoing. The team had reviewed the backup option last week after

several attempts at rebooting the system did not yield any result. WHAT'S NEXT FOR HUBBLE? Nzinga Tull, Hubble Systems Anomaly Response Manager, in a conversation with Nasa associate administrator Thomas Zurbuchen said that they have been doing a lot of troubleshooting since the computer stopped functioning on June 13 to understand the root cause and operational option to resume functioning. "Because initial investigations were not fruitful we are preparing to do a switch to the backup science data formatted," Tull added. However,

the switch to the backup computer will not be an easy task as there are components on the spacecraft that are not related to the glitched payload computer that also have to be switched to their backup elements. Nasa has been assessing all possible options and testing to validate the procedures to switch to backup hardware. Meanwhile,

"investigations into the root cause of the problem have been going on. We want to make sure that we make this change that supports continual operations," Tull said. ONCE IN A DECADE GLITCH -The faulty payload

computer controls and coordinates the science instruments onboard the spacecraft. Following the sudden halt in the module, the computer stopped receiving a "keep-alive" signal, which indicates that all is well. As soon as the fault occurred, the main computer placed all science instruments in a safe-mode configuration.

While the shutdown has now continued for a month, this is the first time that the telescope has remained blind for so long. "We are accustomed to being able to recover from orbital problems quickly within a day or two. So

it's been a bit anxiety-producing and a little frustrating that this particular challenge is more extensive, but the more we do these reviews and analyses the more confident we are becoming of finding a solution," Tull said. The Hubble has faced several problems in the past as well when it was last repaired in 2009. The telescope earlier encountered problems related to its Imaging Spectrograph that suffered a power failure in 2004, followed by an electrical short in 2007 that affected its Advanced Camera for Surveys (ACS) - the primary camera for the telescope.

Decoded: Why so many companies are going public in 2021

India is all set to witness a record number of initial public offerings in 2021 with major companies like Zomato and Paytm lining up to go public. Here's why so many companies are going public this year.

Several companies, ranging from tech start-ups to chemical manufacturing firms and restaurant chains, have gone public in 2021. And, more firms are expected to take the initial public offering (IPO) route to get listed on domestic stock markets later this year.

Investment bankers tracking IPOs suggest that it will be a record year for fundraising. Thirty companies have already filed IPO papers to raise Rs 55,000 crore and at least 10-15 more are lined up to initiate the process to go public and raise another Rs 25,000 crore. More companies are expected to go public later this year.

So far this year, companies have already raised the highest amount through the IPO route in over a decade. Despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, it seems the country will witness a record number of IPOs this year. But why are so many companies going public in 2021? Let's try to make sense of the IPO craze.

WHAT IS AN IPO?

An initial public offering or IPO is a process under which a private company offers its shares to the public in order to raise money from investors. The process marks the transition of a private company to a publicly listed firm. Some IPOs also comprise an Offer For Sale (OFS), which allows existing promoters to reduce their shareholding in listed companies. However, the money raised through the OFS route goes to private investors offering their equity for sale.

Firms that have attained unicorn status - surpassed a valuation of \$1 billion - usually go for IPOs, but there are no fixed rules. Private companies with strong fundamentals and proven profitability also usually apply for an IPO to get publicly listed. An IPO is a major step for a company as this is the first time it raises a large amount of money from the public. Before a company goes public, it is solely owned by a small group of investors - founders, professional investors and angel investors.

Firms use funds raised through public offerings for a wide range of activities - clearing debt, funding corporate expenses, expansion etc.

Key facts about IPOs

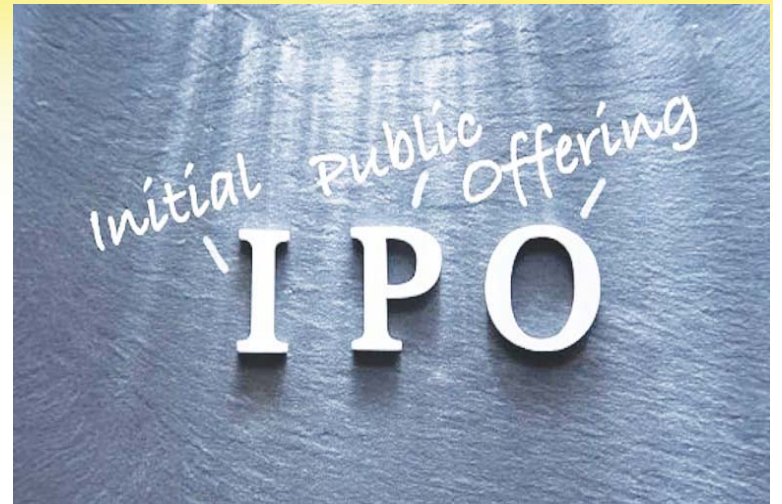
* An IPO allows a private company to offer its shares to the public as part of a free issuance of equity shares

* Before going public, companies have to meet a set of regulatory requirements outlined by the country's market regulator, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

* Companies need to submit a Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP), considered the preliminary registration document prepared by merchant bankers in charge of the IPO sale process.

* The DRHP includes key details about the IPO including the company's business, operations, promoters, financials, industry position and shareholding pattern.

* The document also outlines why the company wants to raise



funds from the public and how it plans to use the money raised.

* Once Sebi reviews the offer document (DRHP), it either clears it or seeks changes from the merchant bankers handling the IPO on behalf of a particular company.

* A company can proceed with fixing the price of the IPO, lot size and launch date after the IPO is cleared by the market regulator

HOW IPOs WORK?

Once a company gets approval from the market regulator to go public, it releases key details about the IPO.

The details include the price band for the IPO, lot size,

launch date and portioning of share sale for different kinds

of investors - non-institutional investors, institutional investors, existing employees, Qualified Institutional Investors and anchor investors. Once the IPO process has been initiated, a company's

shares first start trading on the grey market - the unofficial market for unlisted shares - till they are listed on the bourses.

Activity on this market can be used to determine the demand

for the shares of a company before the public listing. It may be noted that grey market stocks are traded over-the-counter (OTC) and are not offered by the stock exchange; only traders are allowed to deal in them.

Cryptocurrency price update: Bitcoin struggles to stay above \$33,000, Ether down over 7%



The cryptocurrency market was under pressure on Tuesday after rebounding marginally during the weekend. At the moment, virtual coins are witnessing wild swings in valuation due to a number of developments. Bitcoin (BTC), the world's most popular cryptocurrency, was trading at \$33,124, down nearly 4 per cent lower at 12:30 pm. Ether (ETH) fell nearly 7 per cent and is struggling to stay above \$2,000. The entire cryptocurrency market is witnessing a broad-based slump at the moment and

popular altcoins such as XRP, Cardano, Dogecoin, Stellar, Uniswap, Polkadot and Litecoin have fallen sharply.

Cryptocurrency Highlights | Check yesterday's prices

The fresh weakness in the cryptocurrency market is primarily the result of a seizure of virtual coins worth \$408 million by British police as part of an investigation into money laundering by organised crime groups.

This could be a big blow to cryptocurrency trade in the UK, where major virtual coin

Bitcoin (BTC), the world's most popular cryptocurrency, was trading at \$33,124, down nearly 4 per cent lower at 12:30 pm. Ether (ETH) fell nearly 7 per cent and is struggling to stay above \$2,000.

exchange platform Binance is already facing a regulatory probe.

London police said on Tuesday that 180 million pounds of an undisclosed cryptocurrency has been seized less than three weeks after a 114-million pound haul on June 24 as part of the investigation.

"While cash still remains king in the criminal world, as digital platforms develop we're increasingly seeing organised criminals using cryptocurrency to launder their dirty money," said Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Graham McNulty.

The development is expected to trigger short-term volatility in the cryptocurrency market. Meanwhile, trading volumes at

major cryptocurrency exchanges fell by more than 40 per cent in June, according to data furnished by London-based researcher CryptoCompare.

It said that spot trading volumes fell 42.7 per cent to \$2.7 trillion, with derivative volumes down 40.7 per cent to \$32 trillion.

"Headwinds continued as China persisted with its crackdown on bitcoin mining," CryptoCompare said. "As a result of both lower prices and volatility, spot volumes decreased."

It may be noted that the Bitcoin fell more than 6 per cent last month, touching its lowest since January. In May, Bitcoin had tumbled 35 per cent as it suffered due to China's crackdown on the fast-growing sector. Commenting on the fresh weakness, Edul Patel, CEO and

Co-founder of Mudrex, a global algorithm based crypto trading platform, said, "The cryptocurrency markets are moving out of the consolidation. However, we are witnessing a profit booking session so far."

"There hasn't been any major selling activity as the traded volumes are not huge. Moreover, there hasn't been any macro-economic factor to provide fodder for the bears," he added. Patel said most of the major cryptocurrencies are down by approximately 5 per cent. "BTC has been above the \$33,000 mark. Most of the altcoins such as Ether, Polkadot, Solana etc. are under selling pressure. We can expect the markets to remain volatile for the next 24 hours," he added.

Let's go to explore a magical place

*Come into the lap of
Nature, Explore Hiking,
Day Camping, *fishing &
*Hunting on 100 Acres of
Unexplored & Beautiful
land backing to
thousands of
acres of state land.*

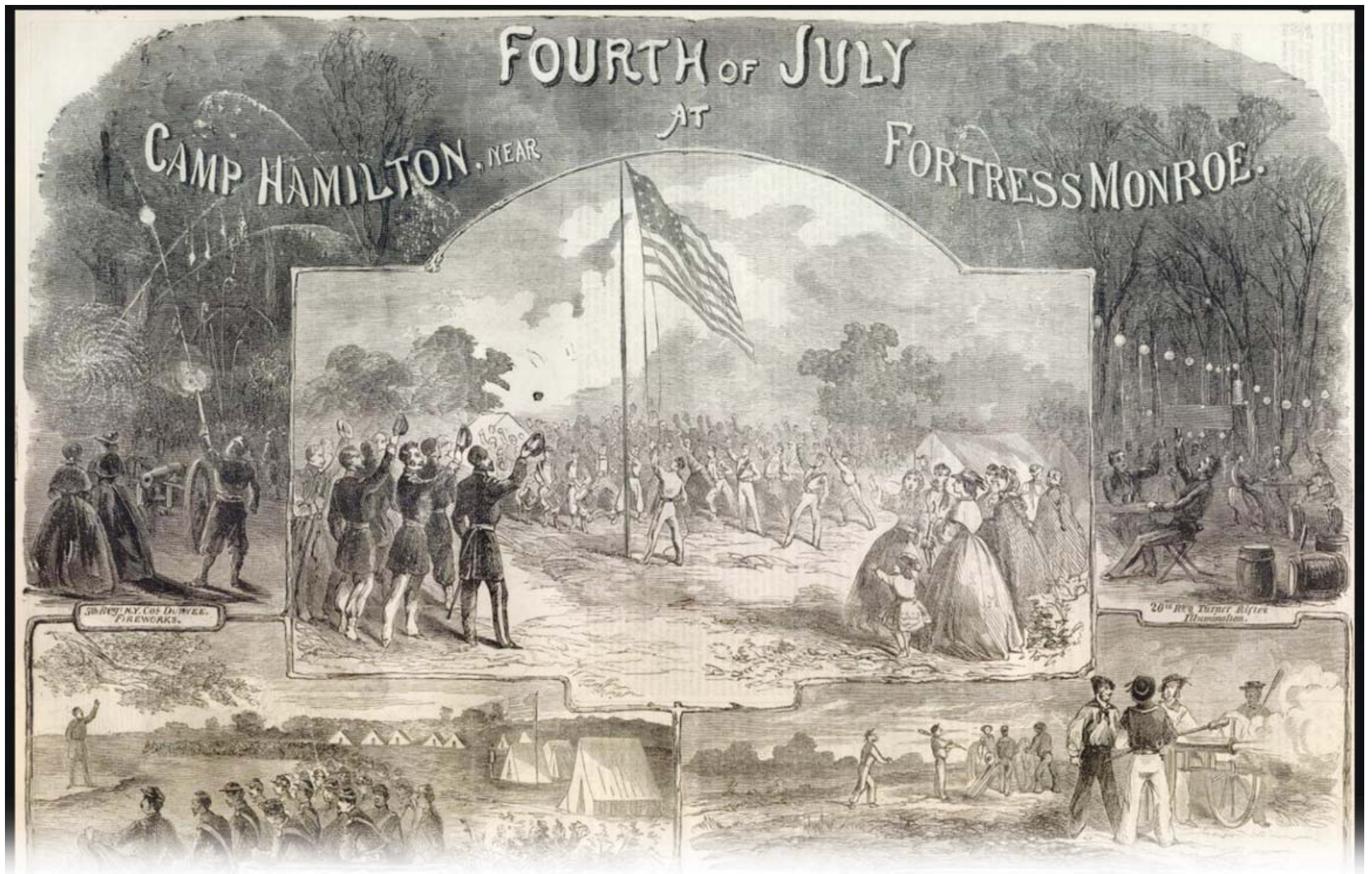


Email: whitestone1979@gmail.com

Catskill, New York

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The Fourth of July that Could Have Wrecked the Country

The nation was already a tinderbox-and then the firecrackers started going off.

The Fourth of July began with so much noise in 1861 that a Washington newspaper reported that it "aroused old fogysm from its sleep." Even at daybreak, there were firecrackers, small arms fire, cannonades and home-made torpedoes, in addition to the tolling of bells from every church in the city. Then, as now, many Americans measured the success of Independence Day by how much noise they could make, a tradition that had grown robust in the nation's capital. Still, the sound of so many explosions was disturbing in a city that was still jumpy, afraid that it might be invaded any moment by violent militias, furious that a presidential election had not gone their way. Only a few months earlier, the Capitol had been threatened by angry mobs who tried to prevent the counting of the electoral votes that would certify Abraham Lincoln as the 16th president. As July Fourth approached, there were still many malcontents living in Washington, and

Confederate troops were perilously close, roaming the Virginia countryside near what is now Dulles Airport. Many feared another assault on the Capitol by anti-Lincoln vigilantes.

The Civil War had begun at Fort Sumter three months earlier, when South Carolinians fired on the U.S. flag on behalf of a Southern Confederacy that had formed before Lincoln even arrived. The skirmishes had been small since then, but emotions were running high, as Americans argued over race, slavery, and the right of states to withdraw from the Union.

So began the strangest Independence Day in our history, a day that mixed celebration, self-reflection and a palpable tension that any spark would be enough to ignite a hot war between the armies stationed around Washington.

Yet each of these armies felt the same sentimental attachment to the rituals of July Fourth. Could it be that the holiday would bring them closer together, and reduce the chance of bloodletting? Or

would over-eager celebration actually increase it, as firecrackers mingled with artillery fire? Either result was possible as the day began.

The way Washington celebrated that day went a long way to determine the republic we became. In a fraught moment, with two versions of America competing against each other, one version - of a country rooted in calm democratic protocols - prevailed over the other. Despite his lack of experience in elective office, and his meager education, Lincoln clearly won this often-overlooked skirmish. He had a better Fourth of July than Jefferson Davis. As a result, we live in a single country, instead of a Balkanized set of mini-Americas separated by military checkpoints.

As divided Americans limped toward that July 4, the cause of democracy was in deep trouble. Seven Southern states had seceded from the Union before Lincoln even arrived; four more quit after he asked for volunteers to defend what was left. To the

south and west of Washington lay Virginia, the most powerful state in the Confederacy. To the north and east was Maryland, deeply divided in its loyalties. With danger on all sides, it was not clear that Washington could be defended.

But Lincoln understood two important ideas, and he brilliantly joined them together. If he called Congress into a special session, he could use democracy to save democracy, by raising spending and public support for the cause of saving the Union. By asking that session to meet on July 4, he could link his efforts to the Declaration of Independence, and to the memory of a country that began in a most idealistic way. Lincoln had never achieved the kind of glittering career in Washington that Jefferson Davis had. His only elective office was a single term in the House, not very successful, 12 years earlier. But he had a lifelong relationship with the Declaration of Independence, which he had carefully read and re-read since encountering it, as a youth,

inside a book of Indiana statutes. He seemed to grow taller while talking about it, as he did throughout his debates with Stephen Douglas. He particularly loved the second paragraph, with its promise of the fundamental rights that belong to all humans. Especially "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Together, those human rights constituted a powerful argument against human bondage.

There was also a Southern way of reading the Declaration, as a free pass for any disgruntled voters who wanted to start a new country after a disagreeable election result. Davis had floated this idea in his farewell speech to the Senate, inside the Capitol, six months earlier. He had also gone out of his way to say that Black Americans had no rights of any kind.

But Davis never spoke to the nation - either nation - on July 4, 1861. He had never shown much interest in history. And he may have found the Declaration uncomfortable for other reasons.

Biden Is Already Fumbling the Afghanistan Withdrawal

President Joe Biden's decision to withdraw a residual U.S. force could look like an amateurish, unforced error if an expected Taliban resurgence materializes.



problematic. Vladimir Putin won't look kindly on our using the former Soviet republics. Conducting operations from bases in the Persian Gulf eight hours away clearly isn't the same as doing it from Bagram. In congressional testimony, Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, the head of Central Command, said the long-distance missions would be "extremely difficult to do," but "not impossible." This isn't a ringing endorsement. The U.S. withdrawal has had

maintaining their own Black Hawks until the mid-2030s. The administration has been considering various kludgy alternatives for the contractor issue, including having them help maintain aircraft remotely. The fate of the Afghans who have assisted U.S. forces—and of their families—is uncertain, although under political pressure here at home, Biden has committed to getting them out. Biden wants to provide \$3 billion in security assistance to the

to the country.

As the bad news in Afghanistan has piled up in recent weeks—the website The Long War Journal tracks the drumbeat of Taliban gains—the Biden administration has tried to provide reassuring signals. One expedient is keeping our top commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Austin Miller, in the country a few more weeks. But are the Afghans, and the Taliban, not supposed to notice that nearly all his forces have already withdrawn?

When Miller leaves, The New York Times reports, General Kenneth McKenzie will assume the authority to carry out airstrikes against al-Qaeda and the Islamic State from Tampa, Florida, "at least through August," and have the authority to move an additional 300 troops into Afghanistan in case of emergency "at least through September."

How's that for the long view?

One justification for leaving Afghanistan is that it will free up resources for us to concentrate on the growing threat from China. It's not as though the 3,000 ground troops are going to relocate to East Asia, though, and make a difference in the balance of power there. To the contrary, to the extent that striking al-Qaeda targets going forward has to be done from the Persian Gulf, involving longer, more taxing flights for U.S. aircraft, or requires keeping an aircraft carrier in the vicinity of Afghanistan, it will draw on the kind of resources we need to check China.

Barely a day passes without additional news of Taliban gains in Afghanistan.

Perhaps the Afghan government and its forces will prove more resilient than many expect, but if the country continues its slide toward chaos or, worse, the Taliban rapidly take Kabul, President Joe Biden's decision to withdraw a residual U.S. force will look like an amateurish, unforced error by a man who prides himself on his foreign policy experience and acumen. With his top military leadership opposed and credible warnings that Kabul could fall within months after a withdrawal, Biden went ahead with it anyway on the basis of what an aide has called "his gut."

So far, indications are that the president would have been better off heeding his military advisers than his viscera.

The Afghan war has, of course, stretched on for two decades and become a holding action satisfying to no one. But the cost to the U.S. of sustaining 3,500 troops in the country without losing anyone in combat for more than a year hasn't been high compared with the entirely plausible downside of Islamist extremists allied with al-Qaeda sweeping to power again in Afghanistan.

The desire to pull out of Afghanistan has been an area of rare Biden-Trump agreement. Then-President Donald Trump's foolhardy cease-fire deal with the Taliban in February 2020 set the predicate for Biden's withdrawal. It would have taken some determination for Biden to reverse the U.S. promise in that deal to withdraw its forces by May 2021, although the Taliban's transparent bad faith provided plenty of occasion for it.

Biden says not to worry. The U.S. will continue to provide "over the

horizon" support, i.e., from a distance, for the Afghan government.

This is likely a pipe dream, and nothing about Biden's poorly thought-out drawdown lends any



more credibility to it. The U.S. withdrawal has gone quickly, and thankfully, been carried out without casualties. Otherwise, it has the hallmarks of a fiasco.

The CIA has been struggling to figure out what to do to try to maintain intelligence-gathering capabilities in Afghanistan. The agency has been very active in the country over the years, hitting terrorist targets in Afghanistan and Pakistan. There is no doubt that its operations will now be significantly curtailed.

There will be no targets to strike from "over the horizon" if we don't have the assets on the ground to find them.

Ideally, the U.S. would locate some other base next door to Afghanistan, but there are no good options in the neighborhood. Pakistan, which can't be trusted and supports the Taliban, is inherently

other troubling loose ends.

The contractors who have worked with the Afghan Air Force to maintain its planes are leaving, too, potentially stripping Afghan forces of air support. One official told The New York Times that Afghans wouldn't be capable of

Afghans, but who will do the training with that money?

The allies are leaving, with the administration anxious to get the Turks to stay to secure Kabul International Airport, crucial to the U.S. maintaining its embassy and aid groups gaining access



Tributes paid to Tejinder Singh of India America Today

He was a Veteran Journalist of Indian origin from Washington DC, who recently passed away.



(Photo Courtesy: Curtis Jordan India America Today)

Tributes paid to Tejinder Singh of India America Today

He was a Veteran Journalist of Indian origin from Washington DC, who recently passed away.

Remarks by Ranju Batra

Thank you Poonam.

And thank you for making this memorial possible.

We are all here to give tribute to a dear friend and a great journalist. I'm glad we could all come together to celebrate his life. I want to share with you how Tejinder Singh supported me as editor-in-chief of India America Today.

Today, nearly 5 years after successfully completing my 7-years long personal journey to get United States Postal Service to issue a Diwali Stamp in 2016, its easy to forget that the dream to get

one was nearly impossible. As many before me had tried for over 20 years and given up.

During those long years full of hope and despair, when there was "no light at the end of the tunnel," the media supported me in a big way, as it was a cause dear to everyone's heart in the US, and over a billion people across the world. Tejinder Singh - a Greek Orthodox - encouraged me as a brother, and was constantly caring, kind and supportive when my Dream seemed impossible - even with support from Congress-members Carolyn Maloney, along with Grace Meng,

Eliot Engel and Greg Meeks to name a few.

When the USPS finally agreed to issue the Diwali Stamp, Tejinder was so excited and he came up to New York for the Dedication of the immortal Forever Diwali Stamp on October 5th, 2016. When he came up he had an additional reason for pride, I had personally sold 170,000 stamps for Day One making Diwali stamp the best seller ever in the USPS's 200+ years history. Two months later, when 24 nations at the UN honored my journey, Tejinder Singh was there. When out of that UN event, based upon remarks made by a Deputy

Foreign Minister, the Diwali Foundation USA was formed in 2017 and it bestows the "Power of One" Awards for exceptional world class diplomats that honor the ideals of the U.N. Charter enhancing peace & security. And Tejinder Singh was there. Today, we are in Washington D.C., home of Tejinder Singh's India America Today in the National Press Club, to pay tribute to him, and his life as a journalist, for he helped make dreams come true. He supported and contributed to causes, with joy and passion. With deep sadness I say We will all miss him.



Remarks by Ravi Batra

Thank you Poonam, and you have our deepest condolences on the loss of Tejinder Singh.

Ranju and I were shocked to our core to learn that dear Tejinder was no more. That he was a firebrand of a journalist is visible from his long public record of service as Editor-in-Chief of India America Today. He was a John Wayne kind of reporter, with true grit. He was a proud and active member of the National Press Club.

That we are here today paying tribute to Tejinder Singh in the National Press Club, the Cathedral for Free Press, with President Lisa Matthews participating, along with Mesfin Mekonen, Paris Huang, Lalit Jha, my "better half" - a term Tejinder enjoyed using often - Ranju, the ever graceful Marie Harf, A/S Nisha Biswal, the gentlemanly John Kirby, and each of you, including, as a matter of personal privilege, our miracle daughter Angela - a bond Tejinder rejoiced and celebrated - speaks volumes both of how vital Press Freedoms are to Lincoln's Gettysburg recipe for democracy, and Tejinder Singh's dedication to journalism and to help form a more perfect nation, and world.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton said, "The pen is mightier than the sword." Tejinder was a throwback to a mold of journalist-giants whose personal sense of righteousness was their North Star - superbly stated by Gene Kelly, as E. K. Hornbeck, in the legendary movie "Inherit the Wind" that the role of a journalist is: "to comfort the afflicted, and afflict

the comfortable."

We join in John Kirby's observation that Tejinder was a gentleman. Tejinder saw the First Amendment as Holy as I do. We talked often. He wanted more, much more of me and Ranju in his professional life, and with the National Press Club. I'm sad I didn't accept his multi-year desire, as we would have rocked and rolled - from issues national and geopolitical - driven to do right, or to paraphrase my late great friend and supporter, the legendary District Attorney Bob Morgenthau: Fly straight, without fear or favor. I would often say to Tejinder, that both the Press and the Law seek the truth and abhor a lie - let alone, Big Lies. And that makes us relatives. Just like Spencer Tracy and Gene Kelly were inseparable in "Inherit the wind." As my friend, the late great NY investigative journalist Wayne Barrett would say to me, the battle between good and evil is perpetual. Our nation is convulsing from within, as exhibited by the Insurrection on January 6th and promoters of Lies for self-gain and self-importance, none more tragic than the resulting fall of America's mayor Rudy Giuliani for his "trial by combat." January 6th troubled Tejinder greatly, and which I view as more injurious to our Republic than 9/11.

Our exceptional Founders, less imperfect given our commonplace arrogance today, bequeathed to us the First Amendment as a robust check on power - and Tejinder used it, and in so doing, heeded Ben Franklin's warning: "It's a republic madam, if you can keep it." Tejinder's life was well spent in keeping our Republic robust and vibrant, willing to look at ourselves honestly and



always with the desire to help "form a more perfect union." I can cite many examples when things might trouble Tejinder and he would call me - and I would act to remedy the problem. Perhaps, just two examples of last year when I and my family were suffering from Covid19 and I was at death's door. Two events around that time bothered Tejinder: worshippers in a Gurudwara in Kabul being slaughtered by ISIS, and soon thereafter, the killers of Daniel Pearl were released in Pakistan. As for Kabul, aware of the global heartburn after Christchurch slaughter of innocents worshippers at two Mosques and the resulting billionaire's family becoming suicide bombers in Sri Lanka to blow up Holy Easter, I felt there needed to be a tempered response - as this was an attack by a terror organization rather than a demented individual facebooking his New Zealand slaughter for celebrity. So, I wrote an open letter to then-President Trump asking for a response worthy of terror-eradication. Innocent

Sikhs are as valuable as innocent Muslims. But as to Daniel Pearl, I knew that the State Department had tried, and still the killers who had video-taped the ghastly killing - as Daniel was Jewish - were released. I then reached out to my friend in London, who is the number one supporter of Pakistan's P.M. Imran Khan, a nation founded by a lawyer-gentleman Mohammed Ali Jinnah. I argued that Pakistan as a civilized nation cannot tolerate this, and after the Holocaust, we are all Jewish. I'm delighted to say that Imran Khan filed an appeal and the Killers were re-arrested. The subsequent incomprehensible acquittal by Pakistan's Supreme Court left us only with an extradition option - and since this was now an inter-governmental decision, I told Tejinder I will only re-engage if Secretary Blinken asked me to. I share this as a tribute to Tejinder - for it was his being upset by these two events that real justice was sought and in fact enhanced.

Two of my defining heroes are Thomas Becket, who chose God over King, and Sir Edmund Burke, who provides a moral imperative in our lives: "all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for some men to do nothing." My final tribute to Tejinder Singh is that he honored in full measure Sir Edmund Burke's call to moral righteousness. Tejinder was a good man, who stood tall and fought evil. May his memory be forever Blessed.

So, yes, Tejinder comforted the afflicted, and afflicted the comfortable. I will miss my friend, and his random calls. We will miss Tejinder's good deeds, his sharing in friendship of human trials and tribulations, and his always reaching for social and political justice, using journalism's sunshine disinfectant as the pull and push for justice.

Rest In Peace my friend.

The Lord bless you and keep you; The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace

An Election Blueprint For Uttar Pradesh's Opposition

The only party that has the cadre, presence, and organisation to fight BJP in Uttar Pradesh is Samajwadi Party.



The only leader who had been consistent in hitting the ground and getting arrested on almost every issue in Uttar Pradesh is Congress state chief and the two-term MLA from Tamkuhi, Raj Ajay Kumar Lallu, but is his hard work and effort sufficient to revive an almost defunct Congress in the state? Well, it seems highly unlikely. What Congress needs in the state is a mix of charm, aggression, organisation, hard work, smart work, and a lot of luck. The first and foremost thing that the grand old party should do is to overcome its fear of failure and project Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as the chief ministerial candidate. If not much, it will at least give another life to Congress. The party couldn't have asked for a better timing, with so many issues in the state to capitalise on; besides the inactive Samajwadi Party and BSP fighting just to keep its 19-20% vote bank intact. Though reports of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra shifting base to Lucknow surfaced multiple times but it never happened. Recently, Asaduddin Owaisi

also added to the troubles of the state opposition by announcing that his party, AIMIM, will contest the polls on 100 seats. Further division of Muslim votes will definitely ensure a thumping victory for the incumbent Yogi Adityanath-led BJP. If not much, Owaisi can hamper the chances of Samajwadi Party on a handful of seats. In the 2017 assembly elections too, in Tanda assembly constituency, Sanju Devi (BJP) defeated sitting MLA Azeemul Haque Pahalwan by a thin margin of 1725 votes and AIMIM candidate Irfan Pathan managed to get 2070 votes, just a little over the difference between the winning candidate and the runner up. The party wouldn't want it to happen again. The Samajwadi Party should first target to make it a bipolar contest by forging alliances with as many parties as possible. If it fails to come to an agreement with any party, the door for a tacit agreement is always open. Though it is highly unlikely that the BSP will join hands with any of the opposition parties, the SP would need to figure

out a way to woo the BSP voters. There aren't enough reasons to believe that people will vote much differently from the 2019 Lok Sabha elections where 82% Brahmin, 89% Rajput, 70% Vaishya, 91% Jat and 84% other upper caste voted in favour of BJP. At this level of upper caste vote consolidation, a lot needs to be done with very little time in hand. The Samajwadi Party needs to come up with some really lucrative schemes for the state, followed by an outreach campaign that ensures that every single scheme of the party reaches the last person in the state. The party's presence must be felt both on the ground as well as in media. Its top leadership needs to step out of their comfort rooms and fill the cadre with zeal. The party needs leaders like Shivpal Singh Yadav, known for his aggressive and fearless style of politics. Uttar Pradesh has a rich history of parties getting diminished gradually, starting from Congress, then BSP, and the SP would definitely not want to join the list.

The road ahead for the opposition in Uttar Pradesh seems to be an uneven macadamised road on a profusely hot summer day, and the only way forward is to walk barefoot. The only party that has the cadre, presence, and organisation to fight BJP in Uttar Pradesh is Samajwadi Party. But the party and its top leadership somehow don't look ready to leave the politics of comfort and convenience and start its campaign on the ground. Social media presence and dominance might be an icing on the cake but the cake itself is "hitting the road", as they say.

The recently-concluded Zila Panchayat elections might not be the correct parameter to prejudge the 2022 contest but it somewhere revealed that missing enthusiasm in the party. Although, leaders of many opposition parties alleged misuse of power and money by the incumbent government to win these elections but the question still remains the same-How long are they going to wait for cooperation from the authorities and an even playing field? If the party wants to win, it needs to show its strength, aggression, and hunger to win before it's too late.

Too soon to say if Americans may need vaccine booster, says Dr Fauci after Pfizer's claims



Moderna vaccines or the one-shot Johnson & Johnson regimen.

"Right now, given the data and the information we have, we do not need to give people a third shot," he said.

"That doesn't mean we stop there. ... There are studies being done now ongoing as we speak about looking at the feasibility about if and when we should be boosting people."

He said it was quite possible in the coming months "as data evolves" that the government may urge a booster based on such factors as age and underlying medical conditions. "Certainly it is entirely conceivable, maybe likely at some time, we will need a boost," Fauci said.

Currently only about 48 per cent of the US population is fully vaccinated. Some parts of the country have far lower immunization rates, and in those places the delta variant is

surging. Last week, Dr Rochelle Walensky, the CDC director, said that's leading to "two truths" - highly immunized swaths of America are getting back to normal while hospitalizations are rising in other places.

VACCINE HESITANCY IN THE US

On Sunday, Fauci said it was inexplicable that some Americans are so resistant to getting a vaccine when scientific data show how effective it is in staving off Covid-19 infections and hospitalizations, and he was dismayed by efforts to block making vaccinations more accessible, such as Biden's suggestion of door-to-door outreach.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson, R-Ark., agreed Sunday that there is a vaccine resistance in Southern and rural states like his because "you have that more conservative approach, scepticism about government."

Describing his efforts to boost

vaccinations in his state, which is seeing rising infections, Hutchinson said "no one wants an agent knocking on a door," but "we do want those that do not have access otherwise to make sure they know about it." The grassroots component of the federal vaccination campaign has been in operation since April, when supplies of shots began outpacing demand. It was outlined and funded by Congress in the \$1.9 trillion Covid-19 relief bill passed in March and overwhelmingly is carried out by local officials and private sector workers and volunteers. Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., blasted opposition to vaccination efforts from some GOP lawmakers as "absolute insanity." He said House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy of California and others in the party need to speak out against "these absolute clown politicians playing on your vaccine fears for their own selfish gain."

The US government's top infectious diseases expert said Sunday "it is entirely conceivable, maybe likely" that Americans will need a booster dose of the Covid-19 vaccine in the coming months, but it is too soon for the government to recommend another shot.

Dr Anthony Fauci, who is President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser, said the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration did

the right thing last week by pushing back against drugmaker Pfizer's assertion about a booster within 12 months.

Hours after Pfizer's statement Thursday that it would seek authorization for a third dose, the two agencies said they did not view the booster shots as necessary "at this time."

Fauci said clinical studies and laboratory data have yet to fully bear out the need for a booster to the current two-shot Pfizer and

Defending Stan Swamy's Death: Abuses And Absurd Arguments



The responses to an editorial I wrote earlier highlighted how divided the country has become, and possibly how devoid of compassion many of our citizens are.

Ever since I wrote an editorial condemning and condoling the death of Stan Swamy in State custody last week, I have been flooded with feedback. While some agreed that the death of the ailing 84-year-old tribal activist amounted to institutional murder, a sizeable section disagreed. They were vociferously and intemperately critical of what I wrote, dismissing me derisively from being a closet Communist to a Maoist conspirator—a kind of Urban Naxal. The response highlighted how divided the country has become, and possibly how devoid of compassion many of our citizens are blinded by their political ideologies. The arrest of

an octogenarian suffering from Parkinson's disease under normal circumstances ought to have moved our conscience. What followed Swamy's arrest—his long incarceration and inability to get even medical bail despite knocking on the doors of the judiciary repeatedly even as his health deteriorated alarmingly—should have touched a chord with any conscientious human being. The injustices heaped on Swamy was simply astounding. Arrested in connection with the Bhima Koregaon case, the NIA did not interrogate him once. But that did not deter them from pressing for his imprisonment. And while he rotted behind bars, the court case made little progress. He was left to die.

Naturally, we were outraged. Even many of the newspapers that are normally muted in criticism of those in power were moved. They denounced Swamy's death. One said it was murder most foul. Others said the death diminished our judiciary that failed to come to his rescue despite his desperate pleas for help. But going by the vitriolic response that I drew, I cannot say everyone agreed with what otherwise would be considered a civilised response. Like several politicians and supporters of the ruling dispensation who rejoiced at Swamy's passing—such as Kapil Mishra who regretted on Twitter that the activist had died in hospital and not in jail—they mostly condoned his death. It did not matter that the charges against Swamy were unproven and that he was not a convict. For most of them, Swamy was guilty, and he was a Marxist sympathiser. In feedback that I received, they argued that he endorsed the terrorist attacks on our security forces and, therefore,

had blood on his hands. They were unequivocally unanimous in Swamy's denunciation and saw the soft-spoken tribal welfare crusader as an enemy combatant. In their eyes, he was a legitimate target and his death in custody was totally legal.

The arguments being so warped, it was pointless to debate them, and I did not. Those defending the death were not ready to contemplate even basics such as those charged in the Bhima Koregaon case have been languishing behind bars for years without a proper trial. The case has dragged on with none of the charges proven yet. Furthermore, the charges brought against them now look suspect with suggestions of evidence tampering. There is, in fact, a body of evidence that suggests that computers of some of them were tampered with and incriminating documents planted. That our investigating agencies have a poor track record of successfully prosecuting people they charge with heinous crimes, including sedition, have also not

been a deterrent for those noisily defending Swamy's death. Assamese activist Akhil Gogoi was freed from jail recently after the courts threw out the UAPA case against him. Gogoi had already spent more than a year in jail by then. Swamy unfortunately did not have time on his side to clear his name. Infirm and ailing, he struggled to survive in jail and had to fight for such small mercies such as a straw and sipper to drink with his trembling hands. He then contracted Covid and died of resultant complications. Sadly, the grisly circumstances of his death didn't silence those who support the heavy-handed measures of the State. Bereft of any contrition, they continue to rationalise it by taking recourse to whataboutery. One among the many who wrote to me an angry response asked why Swamy didn't condemn the killings of CRPF jawans by Maoists in Chhattisgarh.

Politics Of Turning Ancestral Lands Of Indigenous Tribes Into Forest Reserved In Manipur

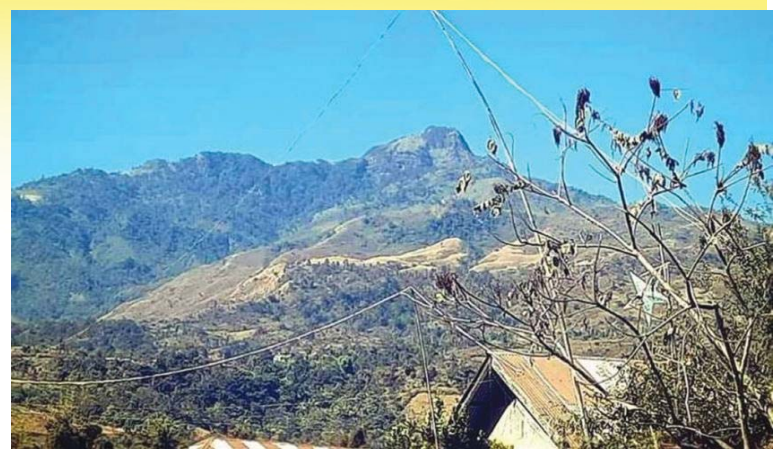
Amidst the calamitous onslaught of the second wave of Covid-19 in the state, where hundreds have died, thousands have been affected by the disease and tens of thousands are struggling to make ends meet due to loss of livelihood, the Manipur state government has considered planting trees and landmarking in the so-called "Kanglatongbi to Kangpokpi Forest reserved" as an urgency above all things. Earlier, in 2020, the state government had released an order to declare the Koubru range as a reserved area. In May 2021, Manipur Forest, Environment, and Climate Change Minister, Awangbou Newmai asserted that Mount Koubru falls under the Kanglatongbi-Kangpokpi Reserved Forest which was declared as Reserved Forest in 1968 under the Indian Forest Act, 1927. Interestingly, the tribes inhabiting the forest do not know the said statute which was formulated

before Manipur attained its statehood and before the Hill Area Committee came into existence. Does all land belong to the state? While attending the first mass tree plantation at Mangjol village, Kangpokpi District, the Manipur CM N Biren Sing has been quoted as saying, 'all lands belong to the state government.' The remark was made to justify the boundary pillar installation of Kanglatongbi to Kangpokpi forest reserved. Going by the simple logic that the Government belongs to the people, his remarks only strengthen the view that land belongs to people. What the Manipur Government failed to acknowledge is the land ownership rights of the Kuki tribes. It is worthwhile to ask, 'Who own the lands before Manipur was formed before India gained independence and before the British came?'

Whose land is it anyway?

The Kukis have a clear history of them living freely in their ancestral

lands. That they have fought the British in the Anglo-Kuki war 1917-1919 in defense of their ancestral land and freedom is well documented and acknowledged worldwide. Ironically, the state government had declared a restricted state holiday in acknowledgment of the centennial commemoration of the Anglo Kuki war, also known as the Kuki Rising/ Kuki Rebellion. Till today, there is no formal agreement between the Kukis and the government after the British left India, with regards to their ancestral land. It is however understandable that since the ancestral lands of the Kukis politically fall under India and Myanmar, they will be subjected to the laws of the respective countries. But to disregard their interests and proclaim their ancestral lands without any consideration and consultations whatsoever is highly authoritarian and does not augur well for a state



government in a democratic country that should adopt the people-centric approach of governance.

The hidden agenda

The Government had earlier stated environmental concerns as the reason for the need to declare Reserved forests in Koubru and Thangjing ranges. Local CSOs have more than once solicited the kind attention of the government to discuss and chalk out an amicable solution to the highly delicate issue. It is not understood as to

how the government refused an opportunity such as the co-operation of the local people if its real intention is to resolve environmental issues. Notably, the state government had earlier in November 2020, through its Art and Culture Department attempted to declare Mt. Koubru and Mt. Thangjing as sacred sites of the Hindus, ignoring the sentiments of other religions, especially the local populace who practiced different religions.

Nepal PM-designate Sher Bahadur Deuba to form small Cabinet: Report

Nepal's Opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba is likely to form a small Cabinet, with around seven members.

Nepal's Opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba is likely to form a small Cabinet on Tuesday, a day after the Supreme Court directed President Bidya Devi Bhandari to appoint the Nepali Congress chief as the country's new prime minister. At least two senior Nepali Congress (NC) leaders told The Kathmandu Post newspaper that a small Cabinet, with around seven members, is likely to be formed when Deuba, 74, takes the oath of office on Tuesday. "We have decided to form a small Cabinet initially," Bal Krishna Khand, chief whip of the NC said. "We want to form a coalition

government and have asked other partners of the alliance to join the government led by Deuba," he said.

According to an NC leader, two from the Congress and as many, or even just one, from the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) are likely to be appointed ministers.

With the Madhav Kumar Nepal faction of the CPN-UML deciding to sever ties with the Opposition alliance, Deuba may face a tough time winning the vote of confidence, the report said.

The Supreme Court on Monday overturned Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli's May 21 decision to

dissolve the House of Representatives and ordered the appointment of Deuba as prime minister. The five-member Constitutional Bench led by Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana said that Oli's claim to the post of prime minister was unconstitutional. Reinstating the House yet again

-- the court had restored the House earlier on February 23 after Oli dissolved it on December 20 -- the bench has ordered to make arrangements for holding the House meeting by 5 PM on July 18.

In its order, the constitutional bench said President Bhandari's



decision to reject Deuba's claim to form a new government was unconstitutional.

Although the apex court's order has paved the way for Deuba to become a new prime minister, for now, Deuba will have to secure majority votes in Parliament to survive as the prime minister for

the remaining term of the 275-member House. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Oli called on President Bhandari at her official residence Sheetal Niwas on Monday after the apex court rendered their move to dissolve the House of Representatives, unconstitutional.

25 cities account for over half of global greenhouse emissions, most in China: Study

Average global temperatures have already risen by more than 1 degree Celsius compared to the pre-industrial baseline and are still on track to exceed the 1.5-2 degree limit set by the Paris Agreement.

Just 25 big cities almost all of them in China accounted for more than half of the climate-warming gases pumped out by a sample of 167 urban hubs around the world, an analysis of emissions trends showed on Monday.

In per capita terms, however, emissions from cities in the richest parts of the world are still generally higher than those from urban centres in developing countries, researchers found in the study published in the *Frontiers* journal.

The study compared greenhouse gas emissions reported by 167 cities in 53 countries, and found that 23 Chinese cities - among them Shanghai, Beijing and Handan - along with Moscow and Tokyo accounted for 52% of the total. It included more cities from China, India, the United States and the European Union because of their larger contribution to global emissions and significance to the climate debate.

The findings highlighted the significant role cities play in reducing emissions, said study co-author Shaoqing Chen, an environmental scientist at Sun Yat-sen University in the



southern Chinese city of Guangzhou. "It is simple, logical," he said. "If you don't act, eventually you will suffer from (climate change)," he said. Average global temperatures have already risen by more than 1 degree Celsius compared to the pre-industrial baseline and are still on track to exceed the 1.5-2 degree limit set by the Paris Agreement. Chen and other scientists cautioned, however, that some of the data available for use in their study

was patchy, with some cities reporting numbers from as far back as 2005.

A lack of consistency in how cities report emissions also makes comparisons tricky, they added. 'LAST BIG PUSH' Research published in 2018 in the *Environmental Research Letters* journal analysed a much larger sample of 13,000 cities, big and small, finding 100 cities containing 11% of the world's population drove 18% of its carbon footprint.

Still, the new analysis "contributes to the growing literature and our understanding of urban emissions", said Yale University Geography and Urban Science professor Karen Seto, who co-authored the 2018 paper.

"It's really difficult to compare apples to apples on city greenhouse gas emissions but you have to try, and the paper makes a pretty good effort," added Dan Hoornweg, a professor at Ontario Tech

University and former adviser to the World Bank on sustainable cities and climate change.

Chen said the new analysis was the first to look at megacity emissions reduction targets and progress in cutting back. Sixty-eight of the cities mostly in developed nations had set absolute emissions reduction targets. But only 30 of the 42 cities where progress was tracked in the study had shown a reduction. Most of them were in the United States and Europe.

The analysis confirms scientists' expectations that whereas in China, cities with high per capita emissions are generally major manufacturing hubs, those in developed nations with the highest per capita rates tend to have strong levels of consumption. While more developed economies in Europe and elsewhere can now grow without increasing emissions, the world is moving at different speeds, Hoornweg said. "They generated a tonne of emissions on the way to get there and China is in that stage now. We know India is getting there at some point and the last big push in all of this will be Africa," he said.

Catastrophizing About Rheumatoid Arthritis Pain Can Make It Worse

There's no denying that for many people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA), pain is a part of life. This can be true even when joints aren't flaring or there are no objective signs that the disease is worsening.

Yet how much pain people experience and how they view it is an individual thing. For some, thinking the worst becomes the default. The problem is that this can actually make your rheumatoid condition worse.

In a study presented in early June at the annual congress of the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology (EULAR), a forum to present the latest in advancements in rheumatology care, this extreme negative thinking was shown to impact a person's course of the disease.

What Is Pain Catastrophizing? The study focused on the concept of pain catastrophizing, defined as the "tendency to report pain experience in exaggerated terms, to ruminate about it more, or to feel helpless about it," study coauthor Mateusz Wilk, MD, a physician in the division of rheumatology and immunology at University Hospital in Krakow, Poland, told conference attendees.

This is not about experiencing actual pain but rather the cognitive and emotional processes of thinking your pain is worse than it is, he says.

In some ways, catastrophizing is the opposite of coping or having resilience in the face of a painful disease.

Catastrophizing About Pain Makes Many Conditions Worse Prior research on catastrophizing about pain has shown how problematic this can be. For one, it increases the risk of experiencing additional pain, according to a report on people with various pain conditions

published in November 2017 in *The Journal of Pain*.

And in a study in *Arthritis Care & Research* published in December 2017, which evaluated 200 people with RA who were beginning biological therapy, catastrophizing over the course of the year correlated with the person's own assessment of higher levels of disease activity, even though objective measurements of inflammation and disease activity did not concur.

RELATED: How to Relieve Rheumatoid Arthritis Foot Pain Assessing Pain and Rheumatoid



Arthritis Symptoms

The EULAR study followed 1,200 people in Norway with either RA (nearly half of the sample), psoriatic arthritis, or axial spondyloarthritis. Those

with RA who participated were primarily women who had their disease for more than a decade and were taking disease-modifying medication.

Obese Men May Have Better Survival With Advanced Prostate Cancer

When men have advanced prostate cancer, obesity might offer something of a survival advantage, a preliminary study suggests. Researchers in Italy found that among men with prostate cancer that had spread throughout the body, those who were obese were less likely to die over the next few years. Roughly 30% were still alive after three years, versus 20% of normal-weight and overweight men, the study found. The researchers stressed that no one is advising men to pack on

pounds as a defense against prostate cancer: Obesity is associated with a higher risk of developing and dying from various chronic ills, including a number of cancers. But over the years, some studies have found that cancer patients with a higher body mass index (BMI) tend to survive longer -- a phenomenon sometimes called the "obesity paradox." The new findings hint that the paradox might also apply to advanced prostate cancer.

However, one expert not involved in the study urged caution in

drawing conclusions. Critically, the reasons for the study patients' obesity, or thinness, are not clear, explained Dr. Vinayak Wagaskar, a urologist at Mount Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine in New York City. He noted that BMI was measured only after the men had developed advanced cancer that was no longer responding to hormonal therapy -- and not right after their prostate cancer diagnosis. That's important, in part, because certain treatments for prostate cancer -- including

hormonal therapy and steroid medications -- can cause weight gain. Plus, Wagaskar said, patients' weight could have been affected by additional medical conditions they had. He said the study brings up an "interesting concept," but he stressed the need for more research -- with men's BMI measured at the time of diagnosis. For the study, Dr. Nicola Fossati and colleagues at San Raffaele University in Milan looked at data on almost 1,600 men who'd been involved in previous clinical trials.

Ayurvedic practitioner shares effective tips for prediabetics

Dr Shyam VL also shares foods that must be avoided along with herbal dietary supplements to manage the condition

Prediabetes is a condition in which your blood sugar level is higher than normal, but not high enough to be classified as type 2 diabetes.

Causes

As per Ayurveda, 'eating at will' is considered the main cause of diabetes.

"Sitting in front of the TV for long hours, no physical activities, and sleeping during day time should be avoided by pre-diabetics," Dr Shyam mentioned.

According to him, just like all other ailments, pre-diabetes can also be managed with lifestyle changes. "With healthy lifestyle changes, such as eating healthy foods, physical activity in your daily routine and maintaining a healthy weight - you may be able

to bring your blood sugar level back to normal," he advised.

What can be done?

One should cut down on excessive sweets, junk foods, and oily foods. "Sweets, ice-creams, fruit sugar, cakes, pastries, sweet biscuits, chocolates, soft drinks, condensed milk, cream, jaggery, yogurt should be avoided," shared Dr Shyam.

Boost your intake of vegetables and fruit with a low glycemic index and low glycemic load. "Try low-fat dairy products and beans. Choose whole grains more often. Choose poultry, and lean meat instead of fatty red meat or processed meat," mentioned Dr Shyam.

Ayurvedic herbs that help manage pre-diabetes

Turmeric and amla - While turmeric helps in preventing insulin resistance among cells and acts as a channel opener for glucose, amla helps prevent cataracts.

Take ¼ cup fresh amla juice with half a teaspoon of turmeric powder every day or a teaspoon of amla powder with half teaspoon of turmeric powder mixed with warm water.

Fenugreek seeds

Fenugreek seeds are also known to help control blood sugar and decrease insulin resistance in mild type 2 diabetic patients.

Take 2-3 grams of soaked fenugreek seeds with your meals, a couple of times a day.



A chronic condition, diabetes is caused when the body either does not produce enough insulin, or when it is unable to effectively use the insulin produced by the pancreas. According to the World Health Organisation, diabetes is a growing challenge in India with "estimated 8.7% diabetic population in the age group of 20 and 70 years."

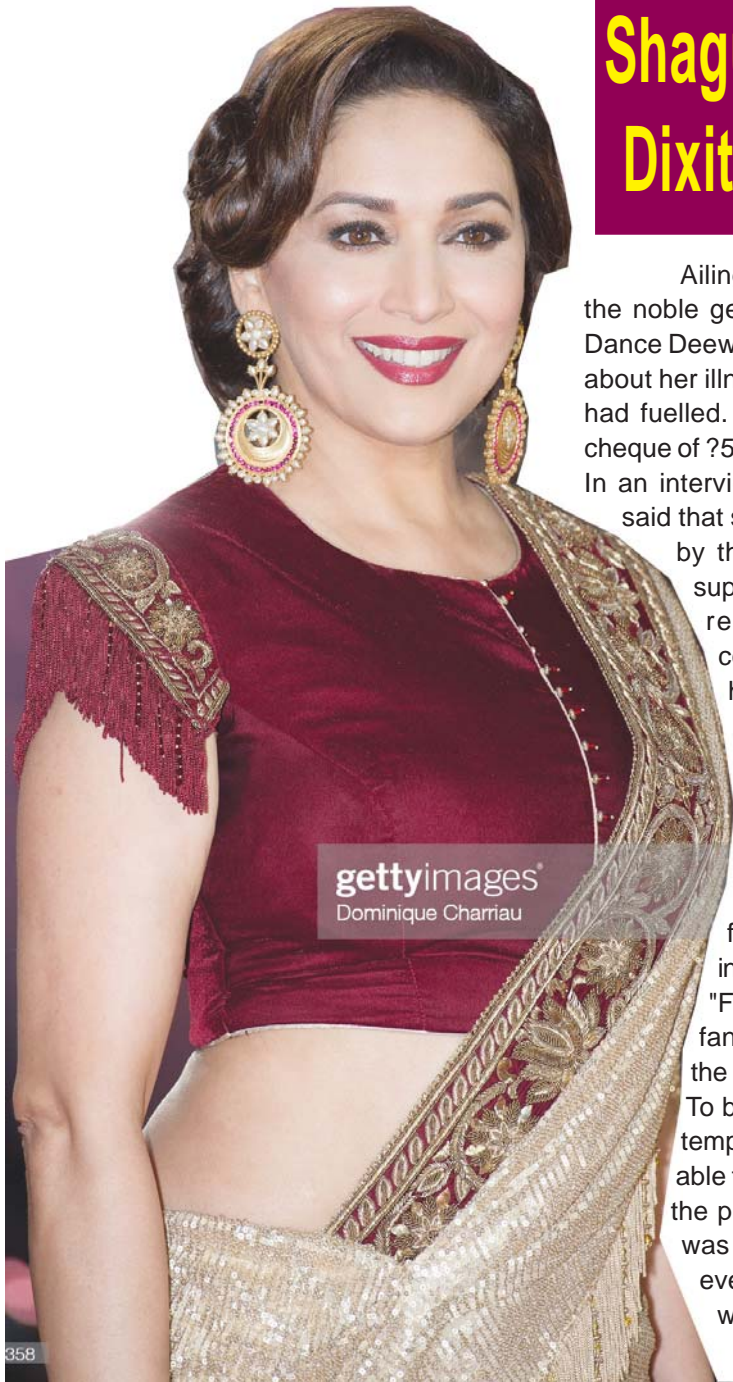
But in addition to the those already having diabetes, many

young Indians are also on the verge of having diabetes. As such, doctors suggest that the best way to manage the condition is by making lifestyle tweaks that include changes to ones diet and fitness routine.

"Prediabetes is a menace of modern-day sedentary lifestyle. If left unattended, the person might become diabetic," said ayurvedic practitioner Dr Shyam VL.

What is pre-diabetes?

Shagufta Ali reflects on receiving 5 lakh from Madhuri Dixit on Dance Deewane: 'It was shocking, touching'



Ailing actor Shagufta Ali has opened up about the noble gesture that Madhuri Dixit and the team of Dance Deewane extended towards her, after she spoke about her illness and the subsequent financial turmoil it had fuelled. Madhuri Dixit presented Shagufta with a cheque of ₹5 lakh in a recent episode of the reality show. In an interview, Shagufta Ali said that she was touched by the outpouring of support that she has received since coming out about her troubles.

"I was invited by Colors to come on the stage and talk about my life and issues I was facing," she told indianexpress.com. "Firstly, I am a huge fan of the talent on the show and was so excited to meet all of them. To be back in front of the camera was another temptation, and then I thought maybe I would be able to reach more people if I share my ordeal on the platform. It was so shocking for me when I was given the cheque. I couldn't find words to even react." She continued, "It was so touching when Madhuri Dixit remembered details of her project together, years back. I went on the

show on a whim, little did I know that they would honour me and give me so much love. Everyone was so sweet to me that I was overwhelmed." Last week, Shagufta said in an interview with a leading daily that she had to sell off her valuables to make ends meet. She is best known for having appeared in the TV show Saans. "I started facing



issues in the last 4 years as work reduced. There was less work, so somehow I tried to manage things on my own by selling off my car and jewellery. I somehow managed to handle things in the first 2/3 years but now in the last 1 year things have been very difficult as I have exhausted all my savings," she had said. It has since been revealed that her Saans co-star Neena Gupta, filmmaker Rohit Shetty, and actor Johny Lever have provided her with financial aid.

Kareena Kapoor shares a glimpse of a vigorous workout session with cousin Armaan Jain: 'Love it'

Kareena Kapoor joined her cousin Armaan Jain and sister-in-law Anissa Malhotra for a workout session. She also shared a video from the session.

Kareena Kapoor Khan has shared a glimpse of her workout session on Tuesday. The actor joined her cousin Armaan Jain and his wife Anissa Malhotra to exercise with their personal trainer. In the video posted on her Instagram Stories, Kareena Kapoor was seen in an open space of her house, performing a set of sit-ups. Armaan Jain and Anissa Malhotra were also seen following Kareena's lead in another frame while their trainer recorded the session. Sharing the video, Kareena said, "At it... love it!!" Kareena Kapoor shares a glimpse of her workout session. The Veere Di Wedding star, who welcomed her son Jeh with Saif Ali Khan earlier

this year, has been working out at home in the past few months. A few weeks ago, she had shared a picture featuring her Armaan, Anissa, and their trainer post a workout session. Kareena was seen flaunting a post-workout glow. Last month, Kareena also revealed she has been finding her way back to yoga. Sharing a post on Instagram, on the occasion of International Yoga Day, Kareena said, "For me, my yoga journey began in 2006 when I signed Tashan and Jab We Met... an incredible one... which kept me fit and strong. Now after two babies and four months postpartum... this time I was just exhausted and in too much pain to get back but today

I'm slowly and steadily getting back at it." Kareena recently announced her 'third baby' -- her new book titled Kareena Kapoor Khan's Pregnancy Bible. Sharing a picture of the book recently on social media, Kareena said, "This has been quite the journey... both my pregnancies and writing my Pregnancy Bible. There were good days and bad days; some days I was raring to go to work and others where I struggled to get out of bed. This book is a very personal account of what I experienced both physically and emotionally through both my pregnancies. In many ways, this book is like my third child... from conception to its birth today."



Ranveer Singh, Jatin Sarna, 83 team remember Yashpal Sharma: 'History will never forget you'

The cast of the upcoming sports drama '83, actors Ranveer Singh, Saqib Saleem and Jatin Sarna, on Tuesday, mourned the loss of veteran cricketer Yashpal Sharma and said it was impossible to believe that India's 1983 World Cup hero was no more. Yashpal died on Tuesday after suffering a massive cardiac arrest in New Delhi. He was 66.

Jatin, who essays the role of Yashpal in '83, took to Instagram and shared pictures with the veteran during his preparation for the film, which chronicles the Indian cricket team's first World Cup win.

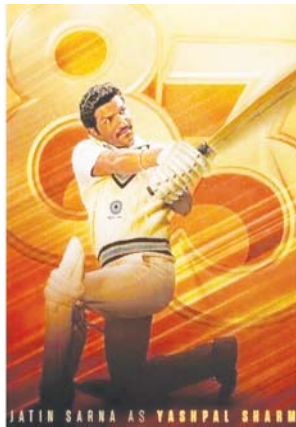
The actor wrote he was devastated with the cricketer's passing away and shared that he wanted to watch the upcoming Kabir Khan-directorial with him.

"This is not done sir, no not fair and God you too not fair. Yashpal sir can't believe, you can not leave so soon. The innings was still left, I was supposed to visit you at your home, had to watch the film together, observe your expressions," Jatin captioned the

photographs.

In his international career, Yashpal played 37 Tests, scoring 1,606 runs, and 42 ODIs in which he scored 883 runs.

Yashpal's stroke-filled half century in



the semifinal against England during the 1983 World Cup continues to be remembered.

The actor, best known for the Netflix series Sacred Games, wrote that it was unfortunate that the cricketer won't be able to relive the joy of winning the world cup with '83, when the audience would get to watch the film.

"We all had to scream your name, the world would've gotten to know who this tiger is... You will be remembered.

History will never forget you," Jatin wrote.

Ranveer, who features in '83 as the then cricket captain Kapil Dev, shared a picture of Yashpal with heartbreak emoticon.

The official Instagram handle of '83 the film also paid tributes to the cricketer. "Yashpal ji, your contribution towards making the entire nation proud will always be remembered. Our deepest condolences to family and friends. Rest in

peace paaji," the post read. Saqib, who features in the film as all-rounder Mohinder Amarnath, wrote, "Rest in peace sir. Sending love and strength to the family."

'83 was supposed to release theatrically last month but was pushed due to the second wave of Covid-19.



Ranveer Singh

'Ranveer Singh was considered as lead actor for Soorma. He wasn't my first choice': Sandeep Singh



Actor Ranveer Singh was 'definitely considered' as the lead actor for Soorma, instead of singer-actor Diljit Dosanjh, revealed former Indian hockey captain Sandeep Singh. The Haryana minister of sports and youth affairs also said that Ranveer was not his first choice as he wanted the person who would play his role in his biopic 'to look like a real Sikh'. Directed by Shaad Ali, Soorma hit the screens on July 13, 2018. The film also featured Taapsee Pannu

and Angad Bedi in lead roles. However, Soorma couldn't do well on its opening day at the box office and made only ₹3.25 crore. In an interview with India Today, Sandeep Singh said, "Ranveer Singh was definitely considered as the lead actor instead of Diljit Dosanjh. However, he was not my first choice. His look as a Sikh appealed to everyone, and they thought that he would be a good fit for Soorma...I always wanted the person who'd play my role in the film to look like a real Sikh. It

should not become a joke because my life has been full of struggles, and it should be justified on screen. Diljit Dosanjh did exactly that."

"It was really easy training Diljit Dosanjh because his nature is as such that he picks up things really quick. It took me hardly three-four months to train Diljit because his learning power is quick. People loved my journey in the film. To show my life story in 2 hours 20 minutes on the screen wasn't an easy job...the Soorma team did it so wonderfully. I really thank them for it, especially Diljit Dosanjh who did justice to my role. On three years of Soorma, I also want to thank Taapsee Pannu, director Shaad Ali and the producers (Chitragada Singh and Deepak Singh)," he added. Last year, Sandeep, also known as Flicker Singh, had confirmed a sequel to Soorma.

Navya Naveli Nanda gets a 'stomach ache' while watching Shanaya Kapoor perform belly dance

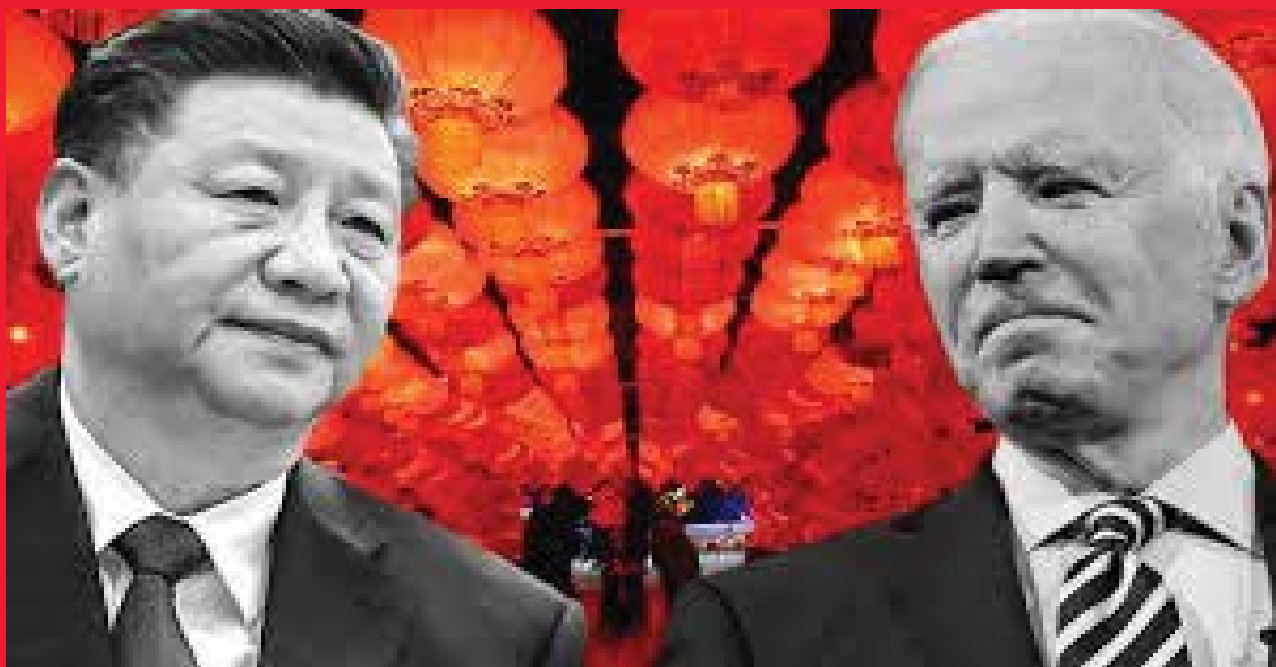


Shanaya Kapoor's latest belly dance video has left Navya Naveli Nanda with an aching tummy. On Tuesday, Shanaya took to her Instagram account and shared a video from her belly dance class. The soon-to-debut actor was seen practising choreography with the help of her dance instructor. Shanaya Kapoor shared the video with the caption, "How we learn a choreography." Navya Naveli Nanda, the granddaughter of actor Amitabh Bachchan, took to the comments section and wrote, "I got a stomach ache watching this." Shanaya replied, "hahahahaha little (bird emojis) along with a heart emoji. Shanaya's father, actor Sanjay Kapoor dropped a heart emoji and showed her some love. The Fabulous Lives of Bollywood Wives star Seema Khan was also seen cheering for Shanaya. "Yeah baby (dancing and heart emoji)," she wrote in the comments section. Fans were also impressed with Shanaya's video. "Wow !!! Talented shanzhi!!! All he best for your debut!!! You are going to rock it!!!!" a fan said.




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Biden sends warning to Xi Jinping amid tensions in the South China



(Contd on page 25)

Third Covid-19 wave likely in August, India to see 1 lakh cases daily: Top ICMR scientist



(SAI Bureau)-It is likely that India will see almost 1 lakh cases every single day with the onset of the third wave of the viral infection in August, "sometime towards the end", a senior scientist at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has said. "In the current situation, if the virus doesn't mutate to lead to more transmissibility, the situation will be similar to the first wave," Professor Samiran Panda told India Today TV. He however added that if the virus mutates further, then the situation could be worse.

(Contd on page 25)

Old cars with more than 100,000 miles are worth real money now



(SAI Bureau)- A lot of people still think that, once a car has been driven more than 100,000 miles, there's not much value left in it. That hasn't really been true for decades, but it's especially wrong now. Used car prices have been driven to extremes recently thanks to a combination of demand from consumers wary of taking public transportation and a major shortage in the computer chips needed to make new cars. That superheated market is pushing prices higher, even for cars and trucks with six-digit mileage.

Historically, even when used car prices have risen overall, the prices on cars past the 100,000- mile

(Contd on page 25)

Single dose of Sputnik V vaccine enough for recovered Covid-19 patients: Study

(SAI Bureau)- A day after scientists announced that mRNA vaccines are effective against the Delta variant of Covid-19, a single dose variant of Russia's Sputnik-V vaccine has shown 94 per cent efficacy among those recovered



Covid-19 patients. Scientists said that there is no evident benefit of using a second dose in previously infected individuals. However, they added, "the second dose further increases antibody and neutralising capacity."

(Contd on page 25)

Ashton Kutcher was set to fly into space. Mila Kunis talked him out of it

(SAI Bureau)- Ashton Kutcher says he sold his ticket on a Virgin Galactic flight into space because his wife, Mila Kunis, persuaded him that it wasn't a "smart family decision." In a recent interview with website



Cheddar News, the "Two and a Half Men" actor revealed he had been due to join a flight with billionaire Richard Branson's space travel company -- until his other half made him reevaluate the risk.

When I got married and had kids, my wife basically

(Contd on page 26)

Josh
India WebTV



ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਅਤ ਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾਨ

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

PUNJABI DUNIYA