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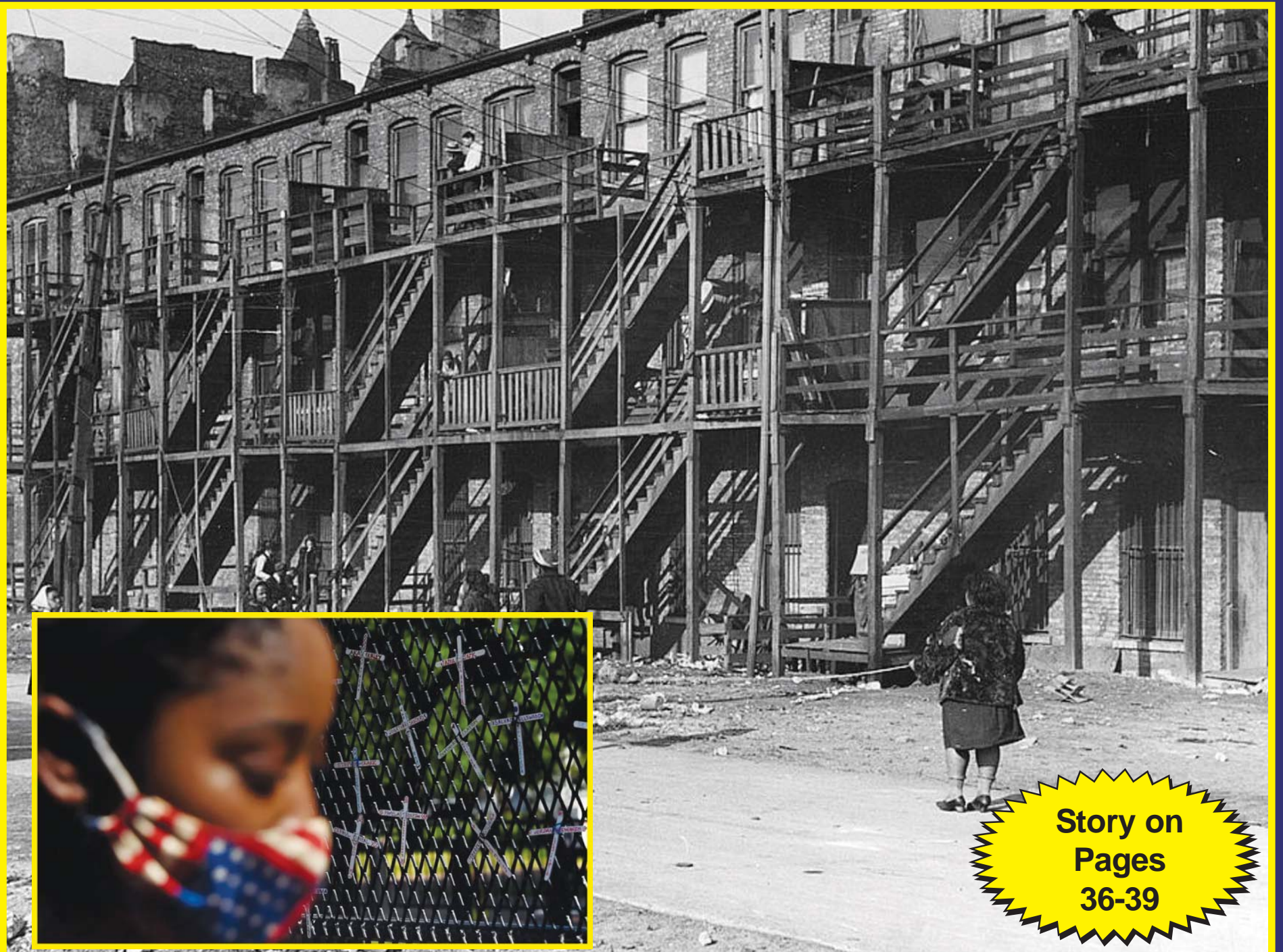
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Rishi Sunak, Priti Patel Retain Top Jobs As UK PM Shuffles Cabinet

Rishi Sunak will remain next door to UK PM Boris Johnson at Downing Street as his Chancellor of the Exchequer and Patel, who had been at the centre of some speculation of being moved, remains in her post as Home Secretary.

new Justice Secretary, alongside his other roles of Lord Chancellor and Deputy Prime Minister.

Raab, who came under fire in recent weeks over his handling of the aftermath of the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban and the evacuation efforts from Kabul, had been at the centre of speculation about his future as the head of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) - one of the top-most Cabinet posts in the British government. He has been replaced by Liz Truss, promoted from her role of International Trade Secretary. Earlier this week, she concluded the latest round of trade talks with Commerce and Industry Minister

Piyush Goyal. Raab, meanwhile, will instead step into the post previously held by Robert Buckland, who was among three major sackings from the Cabinet, including Education Secretary Gavin Williamson and Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick. Earlier, Downing Street said Prime Minister Johnson would be reshuffling his top team to "put in place a strong and united team to build back better from the pandemic". The process was launched soon after the weekly Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) session in the House of Commons, with news of the sackings coming in first followed by fresh appointments of shuffled ministers. Johnson is

expected to complete the reshuffle of his Cabinet on Wednesday, with changes to lower ministerial ranks to be finalised on Thursday.

Gavin Williamson was widely expected to be sacked after intense criticism over his handling of disruption to schools and exams during the pandemic.

He confirmed that he had left the role in a tweet, saying: "It has been a privilege to serve as education secretary since 2019.

"Despite the challenges of the global pandemic, I'm particularly proud of the transformational reforms I've led in Post 16 education: in further education colleges, our Skills agenda, apprenticeships and more."

(Insider Bureau)-British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday undertook a reshuffle of his top team, keeping two of his senior Indian-origin Cabinet ministers Rishi Sunak and Priti Patel in their posts. Mr Sunak will remain next door to Johnson at Downing Street as his Chancellor of the Exchequer and Patel, who had been at the centre of some speculation of being moved, remains in her post as Home Secretary. Mr Sunak, the son-in-

law of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, has been in his post since February last year and has led the UK's financial response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms Patel, whose parents are of Gujarati-Ugandan descent, has been the Home Secretary since July 2019. However, among the senior ministers being shuffled around include Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who accepted a demotion to take charge as the

Green Card For A Fee, Proposes US Bill; Indians May Benefit

If passed, the bill is expected to help thousands of Indian IT professionals who are currently stuck in an agonising Green Card backlog.

(Insider Bureau)-Millions of people stuck for years in the employment-based Green Card backlog in the US, including a sizable number of Indians, can hope for a lawful permanent residency in America by paying a supplemental fee if a new House bill is passed into law. The move, if included in the reconciliation package and passed into law, is expected to help thousands of Indian IT professionals who are currently stuck in an agonising Green Card backlog. A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently in the US.

According to the committee print released by the US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over immigration, an employment-based immigrant applicant with a "priority date that is more than 2 years before" can



adjust to permanent residence without numerical limits by paying a "supplemental fee of \$5,000."

The fee is \$50,000 for the EB-5 category (immigrant investors). The provisions expire in 2031, the Forbes magazine reported.

For a family-based immigrant who

is sponsored by a US citizen and with a "priority date that is more than 2 years before", the fee for getting a Green Card would be USD 2,500.

The supplement fee would be \$1,500 if an applicant's priority date is not within two years but they are required to be present

in the country, according to the committee print. This fee would be in addition to any administrative processing fee paid by the applicant.

However, the bill does not contain permanent structural changes to the legal immigration system, including eliminating

country caps for green cards or increasing the annual quotas of H-1B visas.

Before becoming law, the provisions would have to pass the Judiciary Committee, the House of Representatives and the Senate and be signed by the president, the report said.

According to a report in CBSNews, if successful, the legalisation plan would allow undocumented immigrants who came to the US as children, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries, farmworkers and other pandemic-era essential workers to apply for permanent US residency, or green cards.

Reacting to the bill, David J Bier, Immigration policy analyst at Cato Institute, said, "employment-based applicants can adjust if they have waited 2 years from their priority date... this is almost like abolishing the EB caps for adjustment applicants who can pay \$5K. Awesome!"

US Lawmakers Remember Sikh-American, First Victim Of Hate Crime Post 9/11

Senator Sherrod Brown said 20 years ago today, Balbir, a Sikh American, was murdered for his appearance.

(Insider Bureau)-I Washington: Top American lawmakers paid rich tributes as they remembered Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh American, who was the first victim of hate crime following the 9/11 terror attacks in which nearly 3,000 people from over 90 countries were killed. Four days after 9/11, Balbir was killed outside the Arizona gas station he owned. He was the first person in the US to be killed in a supposed act of retaliation for the attacks in 2001. "Today marks 20 Years Since Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh man, was killed in a hate crime in retribution for the 9/11 attacks. We honor his memory and the memories of all those lost to hate in the two decades since," Senator Robert Menendez said in a tweet. "Twenty years ago, Sikh American

Balbir Singh Sodhi was murdered in the first post 9/11 hate crime. He was shot to death while planting flowers outside his gas station in Mesa, Arizona, by a man who said he wanted to "go out and shoot some towel-heads," said Senator Dick Durbin. Congresswomen Lois Frankel said days after 9/11, Balbir, a Sikh man, was killed in 'retribution' for the attacks. "Today, we honor Balbir's memory--and celebrate 20 years of solidarity and advocacy among the communities that continue to persevere against hate and discrimination," she said. Senator



Sherrod Brown said 20 years ago today, Balbir, a Sikh American, was murdered for his appearance. "His death marked the first deadly post-9/11 hate crime. Today and every day, let's stand united with our Sikh community in Ohio and reject hate and discrimination," he tweeted. Days after 9/11, Sikh American Balbir Singh Sodhi was killed in the apparent first 'retribution' hate crime following the attacks. Today, we honor his memory & remain united in our efforts

to fend off all forms of hate & discrimination," tweeted Senator Richard Blumenthal. "Balbir Singh Sodhi, a turbaned Sikh man, was killed in a hate crime in retribution for the 9/11 attacks 20 years ago today. I stand in solidarity with New Jersey's Sikh community as we honor his memory & the memories of all those lost to hate in the two decades since," said Congressman Donald Norcross. Balbir's killer Frank Roque is serving life in prison. As the world marked the 20th anniversary of the September 11 terror attacks recently, Balbir's brother Rana Singh Sodhi said: "We all humans are equal - colour, creed and gender. To honour my brother, if you love your neighbours, if you respect people with different colour, creed and gender, it will be a big honour to my brother".

After Dosa, British High Commissioner Gets His Hands On Mumbai's Vada Pav



(Insider Bureau)-Indian cuisine has a large fan base all over the world. Foreigners, as well as Indians residing abroad, enjoy the delectable cuisine of the subcontinent. Many people come to India to explore the food and get the authentic flavours that our country offers. Recently, the British High Commissioner to India, Alex Ellis, took over social media when he tried out some of India's local flavours, and it was none other than a delicious vada pav! Sharing a photo on his Twitter, the diplomat wrote, "There's always time to have a vadapav in Mumbai." Ever since it was posted, the Tweet has garnered 21.3K likes and several comments. Take a look: Ellis was seen exploring Maharashtra while meeting with important state leaders, including the chief minister. He tried Mumbai's iconic street food after getting in the festive mood by visiting a Ganapati workshop ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi. And this is not all, earlier Ellis was

also seen indulging in a delicious plate of dosa and sambhar while he was visiting Bangalore. As he shared the photo on Twitter, he wrote, "Delicious #MysuruMasalaDosa!! A great way to begin my first visit to #Bengaluru" After his post, many Twitter users pointed out that he should devour the dosa with his hands, instead of a knife and fork, which led to Alex putting out an opinion poll on whether he should have his next dosa with hands or fork! The poll had 2.5K votes, out of which 92% of people asked him to have dosa with his hands. Take a look: In addition to enjoying street food and getting in the mood for celebration, Ellis also met Mumbai's famous Dabbawallas. He said he was delighted to receive the classic tiffin box as a gift and shared a photo with the city's famous delivery staff. As Alex Ellis continues his trip, what do you think would be his next indulgence? Let us know in the comments below!

Prime Time

Daily Hindi News Bulletin

Geeta Saxena



PM Modi pays homage to Kalyan Singh, Raja Mahendra in Aligarh

All you need to know

(News Agencies)- Addressing the BJP supporters and local dignitaries, PM Modi started his speech by paying homage to Kalyan Singh and said he is deeply feeling Kalyan Singh's absence at this time. As the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election is closing in, political activities in the state are also gaining momentum. The laying of the foundation stones of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh State University and the Defense Corridor at Lodha, Aligarh, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the presence of Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, is also being seen as part of this exercise. Political analysts say it was clear in PM Modi's address that the BJP is trying to create a new symbol of nationalism in Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh and wants to fully capitalise on the legacy of the late former Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, associated with Aligarh. Addressing the BJP supporters and local dignitaries, PM Modi started his speech by paying homage to Kalyan Singh and said he is deeply feeling Kalyan Singh's absence at this time. Modi said Kalyan Singh would have been very happy to see Aligarh's new identity being created by the university and the defence sector. Aligarh, known as the city of locks, is also known for Aligarh Muslim University, but few people know about the contributions of local Jat chieftain Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, who donated the land for the establishment of the university. Laying the foundation stone of the state university being built in Aligarh in the name of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, PM Modi said India's history is full of patriots like Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, who guided India through their tenacity and sacrifice. He said it was the country's misfortune that after Independence, people were not introduced to the sacrifices of such national heroes, depriving many generations of their stories. He said 21st century India is correcting those mistakes of the 20th century. Be it Maharaja Suheldev, Chaudhary Chhoturam, or Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, sincere efforts are being made today to acquaint the new generation with their contribution to nation-building. The Prime Minister said that when the country celebrates the Amrit Mahotsav on 75 years of its Independence, it is the right occasion to salute Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh's contributions to India's Independence. He said today's youth must know and read about Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh to gain inspiration from his life. He said Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh did not just stay in India and inspire its people for Independence, but he went to every corner of the world for India's Independence. Be it Afghanistan, Poland, Japan, South Africa, taking every risk to his life, he worked hard to free Mother India from the chains of slavery. Referring to the contribution of Gujarat in the freedom struggle fought by Raja Mahendra Pratap, PM Modi said that during the First World War, Raja Mahendra Pratap especially went to Europe to meet the great sons of Gujarat, Shyamji Krishna Varma and Lala Hardayal.

GST Council may discuss proposal to include diesel, petrol on Friday



(News Agencies)-For the first time since the one tax for all India, GST, came into play in 2017, the supreme decision-making entity, GST Council, may consider a proposal to bring petrol and diesel under the GST regime. The agenda for the GST Council scheduled to meet on September 17 in Lucknow includes

considering taxing petrol, diesel and other petroleum products under the single national GST regime. This comes when fuel prices are at the highest levels and consumers are taking a hit. There has been a clamour to include fuels under the GST regime as that is expected to drastically bring down prices. When a national GST subsumed central taxes such as excise duty and state levies like VAT on July 1, 2017, five petroleum goods - petrol, diesel, ATF, natural gas and crude oil - were kept out of its purview till the time states

acquired a revenue-neutral situation (when GST revenue matches the revenue generated in pre-GST era). Currently, the five fuels are subjected to central excise, cess and state Value Added Tax which brings in huge revenues for the Centre and the states. Several states have also been opposed to subsuming fuels in GST as it is a consumption-based tax and bringing petro products under the regime would mean states, where these products are sold, get the revenue and not ones that currently derive the most benefit

out of them because they are the production centre. Despite the clamour, states have been staunchly opposing the move, fearing huge revenue losses. That's why the GST Council has never taken up a proposal to subsume fuels in the GST regime. This time, the council didn't take up a proposal for consideration suo motu. Instead, it was forced to do so as in June, the Kerala High Court, based on a writ petition, asked the GST Council to take a decision on bringing petrol and diesel within the goods and services tax (GST) ambit.

Special CBI court convicts 5 persons in 2003 coal scam case



(News Agencies)-ACBI special court here on Tuesday convicted five persons in connection with a coal scam case related to the Lalgarh (North) coal block allocated during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 2003, officials said.

The court convicted Binay Prakash, then Managing Director of Domco Private Limited, Ranchi, Vasant Diwakar Manjrekar and Paramananda Mondal, both then Directors of Domco Private Limited, Sanjay Khandewal, a chartered accountant in Kolkata and the company Domco Pvt. Ltd. in the coal scam case.

The CBI had registered a case against Ranchi-based Domco Private Limited, its promoters and other unknown persons.

The case was registered on the basis of a preliminary enquiry initiated by the CBI on the directions received from the Chief Vigilance Commission related to coal blocks allocated during the period from 1993 to 2005.

"During the enquiry, it was revealed that the Lalgarh (North) Coal block was identified in favour of the company by the 19th Screening Committee and accordingly, the company was intimated vide MoC letter dated November 24, 2003. It was further alleged that Binay Prakash, Promoter Director of Domco Pvt. Ltd. entered into conspiracy with unknown persons and submitted false information to the concerned authorities while applying for a captive coal block and secured allocation of Lalgarh (North) Coal Block," said the CBI in a statement.

The accused, according to investigators, allegedly gained benefits of Rs 7 crore by selling shares of the company on premium, after the allocation of the coal block.

After investigation, a chargesheet was filed by the CBI on December 22, 2015 against the accused. The Rouse Avenue Court found the five accused guilty and convicted them.

On September 15, the court will decide on the quantum of punishment.

Punjab polls

Akali Dal says AAP misusing donations taken in name of farmer protests



Ahead of the Punjab polls, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) has alleged that Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders were misusing donations collected in the name of farmer protests.

(News Agencies)-The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) has alleged that Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders were misusing donations collected in the name of farmer protests and demanded that details of the collections be made public.

This was a day after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) issued notice to AAP in connection with an allegedly shady \$100,000 donation.

"I want to question AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal. When you addressed the Bagha Purana rally, you had to appeal to the people to put donations in donation boxes to support agitating farmers. They collected huge funds, but those were never made public," Gurinder Singh Ghughi, SAD president, Roopnagar, told India Today on Tuesday.

"You should tell the people how much money was collected and

who handed over the funds to farmers. These donations were misused. Kejriwal never even made a single rupee of public donation," he said.

The ED has issued a notice to AAP general secretary Pankaj Gupta in connection with foreign donations. The ED wants to question Gupta over a donation worth \$100,000 raised in the US by former party MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira, who also faces drug trafficking and fake passport cases.

Akali Dal leader Dr Daljit Cheema told India Today that the replies given by AAP leaders were ridiculous and cannot be trusted.

"The word transparency has no meaning for AAP. Many greedy leaders of this party got votes but later switched their loyalty to Congress. 50 per cent of AAP is sitting in the Congress," Cheema

said.

He further said, "AAP leadership was not concerned about the allegations, which means an understanding between the Congress and AAP. Everybody in AAP was sharing the booty. When they can fool the people, they will also embezzle the donations," Dr Cheema said.

BJP ALSO UPS THE ANTE BJP leader Vineet Joshi also demanded that AAP should make the donations public.

"What is happening in AAP is not hidden. If the donations are transparent, they should be made public," Joshi said.

AAP's DEFENCE

Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition and AAP MLA Harpal Singh Cheema denied the allegations, terming the ED notice an attempt to tarnish his party's image by the BJP.

Bihar: ED arrests railways officer of Jamalpur in money laundering case

(News Agencies)-The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Chandeshwar Prasad Yadav, Senior Section Engineer and Custodian of the condemned wagons of Eastern Railway's Jamalpur Workshop, Bihar, on charges of money laundering, officials said.

Yadav is allegedly involved in misappropriation of the

condemned wagons, wheel sets and other excluded fittings worth Rs 34 crore, of Eastern Railway's Jamalpur workshop.

The financial probe agency initiated a money laundering investigation on the basis of an FIR (first information report) filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation in February 2018, which was registered after a complaint

received from the Eastern Railway against Shree Maharani Steels, Patna, unknown railway officials and unknown private persons.

In the complaint, it was alleged that misappropriation and irregularities were noticed in the disposal of condemned wagons and other excluded fittings from Dhobi Ghat Siding of Eastern Railway, Jamalpur.

During a preventive check, conducted by the Vigilance Department of the Eastern Railway, it was found that 100 condemned wagons and 3220 wheel sets along with other excluded fittings having a net value of Rs 34 crore (approximately) had been misappropriated by an outside private agency in connivance with unknown railway

officials of Eastern Railway, Jamalpur and other unknown private persons. "Throughout the investigation, Chandeshwar Prasad Yadav has resorted to non-cooperation with the investigation and has not divulged any truth or information. He has been arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)," said the ED in a statement.

Peace Mission-2021

India takes part in SCO joint military exercise in Russia

(News Agencies)-India participated in the sixth edition of multinational military exercise organised by the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Russia's Orenburg, the Army said in a statement on Wednesday. "The Indian military contingent comprising an all arms combined force of 200 personnel including

38 personnel from the Indian Air Force is participating in the Exercise Peaceful mission -2021. The Indian contingent was inducted to the exercise area by two IL-76 aircraft," the Army said in a press statement.

"Prior to their departure, the contingent underwent training and preparation under the aegis of South Western Command," the

Army said.

The aim of the exercise is to foster close relations between SCO member states and to enhance abilities of the military leaders to command multi-national military contingents, the Army said.

The sixth edition of the military exercise 'Peaceful Mission-2021' is being hosted by Russia in the Orenburg region. The exercise

began on September 13 and will end on September 25.

"The joint counter-terrorism exercise 'Peaceful Mission' is a multilateral exercise, which is conducted biennially as part of military diplomacy between Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states," the Army said.

"The exercise will enable sharing

of best practices between the Armed Forces of SCO nations. The exercise will also provide an opportunity to the Armed Forces of SCO Nations to train in Counter-Terrorism Operations in an urban scenario in a multinational and joint environment," the Army said.

"The scope of the exercise includes professional interaction, mutual understanding of drills and procedures, establishment of joint command, control structures and elimination of terrorist threats. Exercise Peaceful Mission 2021 is a landmark event in military interactions and global cooperation to counter-terrorism," the Army said in the statement.

In the past, Pakistan, China and India have taken part in multinational military exercises. However, last year, India did not send troops for the SCO military exercise where both China and Pakistan were present.

The SCO is an economic and security bloc in which India and Pakistan were admitted as full members in 2017. Its founding members included China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.



Geeta Sexena
Bureau Chief (Punjab))

Gagandeep Singh
Deputy News Editor

Sharanjit Singh Thind
Editor in Chief

Susmita Ghosh
Deputy Managing Editor

Josh Josh
India WebTV India WebTV

The South Asian INSIDER
Published Weekly from New York

Josh India WebTV

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Advised both parties to go to police: Chirag Paswan on rape case against cousin Prince Raj



(News Agencies)- Responding to a rape case filed against his cousin and Lok Sabha MP from Samastipur Prince Raj Paswan, Jamui MP Chirag Paswan said he was aware of the incident and he had never denied it. He said he had suggested both the complainant woman and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader Prince Raj seeking help from police.

Chirag Paswan said strict action should be against "anyone found guilty" in the matter.

Chirag Paswan, whose name also figured in the FIR (first information report) against Prince Raj, said he came to know about the matter in January this year. He said he had advised both parties to seek police help and register a complaint.

"My name also figures in the FIR where allegations have been levelled that I was aware of the incident. I have myself admitted that I was aware of the case. I told both the parties that it was a criminal matter and that both should approach the police and register their complaint," Chirag Paswan said.

Uttar Pradesh election



Congress comes up with new strategy for selecting candidates

Congress has started taking applications from candidates seeking tickets for the upcoming crucial state assembly election.

(News Agencies)-The Uttar Pradesh Congress has started taking applications from candidates seeking tickets for the upcoming crucial state assembly election. The applications will be cross-checked by nyaya panchayat and gram sabha presidents who have been appointed for this process.

Thus, Congress will not directly select the candidates based on this application form. The nyaya panchayat and gram sabha presidents have been authorised to collect information of the candidates from their respective constituencies.

A candidate's local popularity and clean image will be prioritised in ticket distribution rather than his or her political

experience.

Nasimuddin Siddiqui, chairman of the Congress election committee, said a maximum of 10 and a minimum of three applications were received from each constituency of Uttar Pradesh.

Siddiqui said the applications would be checked and discussed by nyaya panchayat and gram sabha presidents before being tabled before Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

Siddiqui said the party had appointed 50,000 nyaya panchayat and gram sabha presidents to provide information on the ticket aspirants.

Aim to vaccinate entire adult population against Covid by November : Karnataka CM

(News Agencies)-Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday said the government will organise a special Covid-19 vaccination drive on September 17 across the state, with a target to administer 25 to 30 lakh doses that day.

"We are organising a special vaccination drive on September 17 in all districts including Bengaluru. I have held a video conference with Deputy

Commissioners of districts regarding this. Our aim is to administer maximum vaccines this month, so it has been decided to conduct such special drives," he said.

September 17 is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will run a special campaign on September 17 to help maximum people get inoculated against Covid, aiming to break all previous

records. The Karnataka health department plans to administer 15 lakh Covid-19 vaccine doses every Thursday and 5 lakh doses on other days of the week.

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai also said the target is to vaccinate the adult population against Covid-19 by end of November. Earlier, the state government had set a deadline of December 31 to ensure vaccinations of all adults.



Nagaland trade body calls state-wide strike tomorrow against illegal taxation



The Confederation of Nagaland Chamber of Commerce & Industry has called for a state-wide closure of all shops on September 16.

(News Agencies)-The Confederation of Nagaland Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CNCCI) has called for a state-wide closure of all shops and business establishments on September 16 to protest against multiple illegal taxation by several militant groups and government agencies.

Dr Khekugha Muru, chairman of CNCCI, and Dr Seyievilie, general secretary of CNCCI, said they would extend their support to the strike called by Dimapur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI).

The CNCCI had recently submitted a memorandum to the Chief Secretary of Nagaland, demanding that the issue of multiple taxation by Naga Political Groups (NPGs) be immediately resolved. It also demanded removal of all forms of tax/fees collected by civic bodies on items that come under GST and reserve nominee

representation to municipal, town and ad-hoc town council from business and trade bodies. The Nagaland government has appealed to the Confederation of Nagaland Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CNCCI) to reconsider its strike call on September 16. In a meeting held by the deputy Chief Minister, it was decided that the government would develop a comprehensive strategy for dealing with complaints regarding illegal taxation and extortion.

It was decided that the collection of any kind of tax/fees on items/goods that comes under the GST regime would be immediately stopped by all the municipals and town councils across the state.

The Commissioner of Police, Dimapur, in consultation with the Police Head Quarters (PHQ) will immediately put in place a security grid, including stationing sufficient security personnel at various locations to

check extortion.

Not only the business bodies, but civil society groups in the state have also strongly protested against illegal taxation and extortion.

Recently, United Sangtam Likhum Pumji of Kiphire district adopted a resolution that if any militant group was found being involved in illegal tax collection, then action would be taken.

"In view of the random taxation/entry tax being collected by various groups/factions from commercial trucks/vehicles plying between Dimapur-Kiphire, the house unanimously resolved not to entertain any type of entry tax with immediate effect," said in the resolution adopted by USLP during the joint consultative meeting held on September 8.

The United Sangtam Likhum Pumji, Kiphire had also sent its resolution copy to NSCN (IM), 7 NNPGs.

AIADMK's ally PMK to go solo in rural civic polls in Tamil Nadu



(News Agencies)-All is not well with the AIADMK-led opposition alliance in Tamil Nadu. Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), one of the alliance partners, announced on Tuesday to contest the rural civic polls to nine districts on October 6 and 9 all alone.

The decision to contest alone was taken unanimously following a virtual meeting of party functionaries, including party founder-leader S Ramadoss and the party's youth wing chief Anbumani Ramadoss, on Tuesday.

In the meeting, PMK leaders expressed the view that the party should go alone considering growth prospects, said PMK president GK Mani.

"Based on this, a decision was taken unanimously to contest polls all alone for rural local bodies in nine districts," PTI quoted Mani as saying.

The nine districts undergoing polls are Kanchipuram, Chengalpattu, Villupuram, Kallakurichi, Vellore, Ranipet, Tirupathur, Tirunelveli and Tenkasi.

PMK, which has a strong base among the Vanniyar community, holds considerable influence in northern Tamil Nadu.

The AIADMK-BJP-PMK alliance contested together in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and in the state assembly election this year. The PMK had fielded candidates in 23 constituencies in the assembly election but managed to win only five seats.

The former AIADMK government had even announced a 10.5 per cent reservation for the Vanniyar community to appease the PMK.

Assam: Over 1,400 cartons of liquor bottles worth Rs 46 lakh destroyed on court's order

(News Agencies)-Over 1,400 cartons of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) bottles worth Rs 46 lakh were destroyed by the Assam government on court's order in Guwahati.

The IMFL bottles were seized by Bureau of Investigation (BIEO) Assam during a 2017 raid in Guwahati. The liquor bottles were kept in a bonded warehouse at Lalmati area in the capital city of Assam.

The excise department and BIEO on Tuesday destroyed the seized IMFL bottles in



presence of a Magistrate.

A top official of BIEO said the agency raided godown premises of a liquor baron

located near Sarusajai stadium in Guwahati in 2017 and recovered 1,405 cartons of different brands of IMFL.

"We had registered a case (no 17/2017) in connection with it and filed chargesheet before the court. The court had directed us to destroy the seized liquor bottles on September 14 this year. Following directive of the court, we have destroyed the seized liquor bottles. The market value of the seized liquor is estimated at around Rs 46.21 lakh," the BIEO official said.

Earlier, the Assam government had destroyed a huge quantity of seized drugs worth Rs 163 crore.

Another NEET aspirant hangs self in Tamil Nadu's Vellore over fear of failing exam

A 17-year-old girl died by suicide in the Vellore district of Tamil Nadu over fears of failing the NEET examination. This is the third suicide reported in Tamil Nadu in connection with the NEET in September this year.

(News Agencies)-A 17-year-old girl, who had dreamt of becoming a doctor, died by suicide in Senur town in Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, fearing that she didn't perform well in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) that was held on Sunday.

The girl's father said she was depressed over not performing well in the NEET exams. She feared that she wouldn't be able to get the score required to clear the exam, her father said.

Her parents said they tried to console her but she hung herself using a screen when no one was at home.

This is the third suicide reported in connection with the

NEET exams in Tamil Nadu in September this year.

Earlier on Sunday, a 19-year-old medical aspirant in Tamil Nadu's Salem was found hanging from the ceiling of his room, hours before he was to appear in the NEET examination. The teenager had appeared twice in the NEET before but could not attain the required marks.

Later, a 17-year old girl died by suicide in a village near Jayankondam in the Ariyalur district after she appeared for the NEET. She took the NEET on Sunday but was worried about not performing well. Her relatives said she was depressed over the exam as she feared she couldn't become a doctor even after scoring very well in the Class 12

examination.

This was on the same day the Tamil Nadu Assembly adopted a Bill to dispense with the NEET for medical courses.

TAMIL NADU GOVT INITIATES HELPLINE FOR NEET ASPIRANTS

Taking note of such suicide cases among teens appearing for the NEET examination, the Tamil Nadu government has initiated a 24/7 helpline to support students who require counselling.

The state government has also urged students suffering from depression to call 104 toll-free line to speak to a psychiatrist for help.

Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian said 330



professionals have been appointed to either calls students preemptively or attend in-coming calls and assist them.

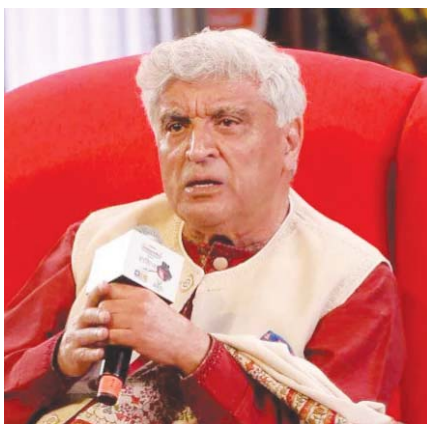
"In total, 1.12 lakh students have attended NEET exam this year. We will receive the contact details from the National Testing Agency which will then be shared with each district war room where professionals would communicate with each student. We will provide any assistance if required," said Ma

Subramanian.

In Chennai alone, 40 psychiatrists and psychologists have been appointed. Students can call 104 toll-free number and get assistance.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, Opposition leader Edapadi K Palanisamy and several other leaders have requested students not to take any hasty decisions and take assistance from professionals.

I have always opposed hardliners from all religions: Javed Akhtar post RSS-Taliban comparison row



editorial targeted Javed Akhtar for his statement and cautioned him against speaking ill of the RSS.

In his latest statement in Saamana, Javed Akhtar wrote that he has taken a stand against Muslim hardliners on issues such as triple talaq as well. "I have been given security twice for attacking hardliner Muslims even when no one

(News Agencies)-After his statement comparing the Taliban and the RSS triggered controversy, famous Bollywood lyricist Javed Akhtar has written a statement in Shiv Sena mouthpiece Saamana. He wrote, "I have always opposed right-wing hardliners from all religions. I have always said that all hardliners from all religions are the same."

Earlier this month, in an interview to a news portal, Javed Akhtar had said that the Taliban are barbaric and their actions are reprehensible but those supporting the RSS, VHP and Bajrang Dal are similar.

In response, BJP's youth wing took out a protest march and BJP leader Ram Kadam said the party would not allow his movies to be screened in the country till he apologised. Even a Saamana

else was talking about these issues," he wrote.

He continued, "I don't want to allow Hindu right-wing supporters to hide behind the false propaganda that I don't counter hardliners among Muslims and their regressive thought processes."

'HINDUS ARE WORLD'S MOST INCLUSIVE MAJORITY'

In response to those who accused him of insulting the Hindu religion and Hindus, Javed Akhtar wrote, "That's untrue. In one of my interviews, I said that the Hindu community is the world's most decent and inclusive majority and I want to reiterate that Hindustan can never become Afghanistan as Hindustanis are not hardliners by nature.



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Uttarakhand Assembly elections 2022

AAP chief SS Kaler resigns, will fight from Khatima seat



(News Agencies)-Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) president for Uttarakhand, SS Kaler, tendered his resignation from the post on Tuesday. SS Kaler submitted his resignation after getting the responsibility of fighting from the Khatima seat. He had been serving as the Uttarakhand chief for the Aam Aadmi Party for the last three years. Addressing a press conference in Dehradun, SS Kaler said, "I would like to inform you that the party high command Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia have given me a big responsibility of fighting against the Uttarakhand CM, in view of the same, today, I am resigning from my post." LIVE <https://t.co/sYyXM8BQjP>

The Aam Aadmi Party president for Uttarakhand unit, SS Kaler, has resigned from his post ahead of the state assembly elections.

- Aam Aadmi Party Uttarakhand (@AAPUttarakhand) September 14, 2021

AAP UTTARAKHAND CHIEF RESIGNS

The party reportedly designated three chiefs immediately after SS Kaler's resignation. Bhupesh Upadhyay has been appointed Kumaun chief, Anant Ram Chauhan appointed as Garhwal chief, and Prem Singh Rathore will be the chief for the Tarai region.

, ... election campaign pic.twitter.com/IQh2jEmbTw

- Col Ajay Kothiyal, KC, SC, VSM (R.) (@ColAjayKothiyal) September 14, 2021

The AAP announced former Colonel Ajay Kothiyal as its chief ministerial candidate in Uttarakhand.

Meanwhile, AAP National Convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will visit Uttarakhand's Kumaun region on Sunday. The party took to Twitter to announce that Arvind Kejriwal will reach Haldwani on September 19.

"AAP National Convenor & Delhi CM, Shri @ArvindKejriwal to visit Uttarakhand's Kumaon region. CM Arvind Kejriwal will reach Haldwani on 19 September, 2021. Important tour

in view of the upcoming Uttarakhand Assembly elections!," the AAP said in a tweet.

BIG ANNOUNCEMENT
AAP National Convenor & Delhi CM, Shri @ArvindKejriwal to visit Uttarakhand's Kumaon region CM Arvind Kejriwal will reach Haldwani on 19 September, 2021

Important tour in view of the upcoming Uttarakhand assembly elections!

- AAP (@AamAadmiParty) September 14, 2021
Assembly elections are scheduled to be held in Uttarakhand next year.

Bombay High Court division bench to hear Anil Deshmukh's plea against ED summons in money laundering case

(News Agencies)-The Bombay High Court on Tuesday said its division bench (comprising two judges), instead of a single-judge bench, would hear the petition filed by Maharashtra's former home minister Anil Deshmukh against the summons issued to him by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case. Directorate (ED). Last week, when the plea came up for hearing before Justice Shinde, Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta, appearing for the ED, brought to the High Court's attention a note addressed by the registry department saying the plea has to be heard by a division bench.

A single bench of Justice SK Shinde said the objection raised by the High Court registry department that the issues raised in the plea ought to be heard by a division bench is "correct".

Justice Shinde directed the registry department to place Deshmukh's petition for hearing before the appropriate division bench.

ANIL DESHMUKH FILED PLEA TO QUASH ED SUMMONS
Anil Deshmukh filed the petition earlier this month, seeking to quash the five summons issued to him by the Enforcement



Senior counsel Vikram Chaudhri and advocate Aniket Nikam, appearing for Anil Deshmukh, said the single bench had the jurisdiction to

hear the plea.

The ED had initiated a probe against Anil Deshmukh and his associates after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed its FIR against the NCP leader on April 21 on charges of corruption and misuse of official positions. Anil Deshmukh in his plea claimed the ED's action was a result of a political vendetta.

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The FBI has a responsibility to Simone Biles -- and all women and girls

Olympic gymnasts Simone Biles, McKayla Maroney and Aly Raisman and former college champion Maggie Nichols on Wednesday offered devastating testimony, sometimes through their tears, to the Senate Judiciary Committee about how USA Gymnastics, their sport's governing body, and the FBI, America's principal federal law enforcement agency, mishandled investigations into convicted sexual abuser Larry Nassar. The former USA Gymnastics team doctor was accused of violating more than 200 victims and is now serving a prison sentence of 40 to 175 years. The gymnasts' words were gut-wrenching to hear, both because of the deep suffering they described and because it was clear throughout that these young women, these strong athletes, should never have had to be there in the first place. They were in the public eye, before the nation's highest legislative body, recounting their trauma for the world -- and they were doing it because, at every turn, the people tasked with keeping them safe failed. As Biles said Wednesday, "I blame Larry Nassar and I also blame the entire system that enabled and perpetrated his abuse."

In July, the Justice Department's inspector general released a shocking report that found that allegations against Nassar were first reported to the FBI in Indianapolis in July 2015, but the agency didn't investigate until September 2016. In the interim, according to the report, Nassar abused at least 70 more young people.

Maggie Nichols, known as "Athlete A" in the Nassar case because she was the first elite gymnast to report her abuse to USA Gymnastics, recounted, "While my complaints [were] with the FBI, Larry Nassar continued to abuse women and girls." She reported in July 2015; the Lansing office of the FBI opened its official investigation into Nassar in October 2016.

Maroney told senators that FBI agents "committed an obvious crime" and made "entirely false claims about what I said." She said they should be indicted. Raisman testified, "I felt pressured by the FBI to consent to Nassar's plea deal." Senators concurred with the gymnasts. "The FBI's handling of the Nassar case is a stain on the bureau," Senate Judiciary Chairman Dick Durbin said. Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal described the FBI investigation as a "systematic" failure.

FBI Director Christopher Wray said he was "deeply and profoundly sorry" to the victims. He described the actions of the highest-ranking FBI official in Indianapolis as "violations of the FBI." US law

enforcement officials told CNN that, in recent weeks, the FBI fired an agent accused in the inspector general's report of failing to launch a proper investigation in the case; a supervisor also named in the report for false statements and violating protocol retired in 2018.

Wray told the committee, "I don't have a good explanation" for what went wrong. He also pledged to "make damn sure that everybody at the FBI remembers what happened here in heartbreaking detail." But, sadly, these athletes -- the ones who testified and the scores more who were also victimized by Nassar -- are far from the only women the FBI has failed. It's long past time for the agency to do far more to prioritize investigations into violence against women and girls.

In 2015 -- around the same time the FBI was failing to investigate the allegations against Nassar while he victimized more and more girls -- women in the gaming industry were being viciously attacked online. They were getting violent threats, being doxed and more -- as part of coordinated attacks now known as Gamergate. One female developer, Brianna Wu, told an interviewer then that she spent a day every week trying to get help from law enforcement after receiving death threats that left her with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Congresswoman Katherine Clark (D-Mass.) told Sue Scheff, author of the 2017 book "Shame Nation: The Global Epidemic of Online Hate," that when she tried to get the FBI to help Wu, "frankly, the FBI told us cases of online abuse were not a priority." FBI files released as the result of a Freedom of Information Act request (and eventually, a redacted report posted by the FBI itself) later revealed that the agency identified four alleged perpetrators -- two of whom actually confessed -- yet no charges were ever brought. "All this report does for me is show how little the FBI cared about the investigation," Wu later said in a media interview. "I'm fairly livid."

Today, women and girls continue to be victimized online at alarming rates. In the United States, according to Pew, 11% of women have been physically threatened online. The threat is far higher for women of color. Researchers and advocates have said that the problem of gender-based violence online has only grown during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Like Wu, women who are abused on the Internet rarely see justice. The journalist Anna Merlan has pointed out that women who report online rape threats and death threats to law enforcement rarely get help -- but when people make online threats against law enforcement officers, they're often promptly identified and charged.

Kisan Mahapanchayat in UP heralds revived farmer movement across the nation

By Susmita Ghosh

The farmer agitation in India took a new turn against the proposed Farm Laws. In the recent Kisan Mahapanchayat, millions of farmers gathered over the days in Uttar Pradesh to protest and decided for a nationwide strike or 'Bharat Bandh' on September 27.

The historical convention took place in Government Inter College Ground at Muzaffarnagar. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of the present farmer organizations claimed that it marked the beginning of the 'Mission UP and Uttarakhand' from the stage. The farmers from over 16 states attending the meet is going to have a long term major impact on the political scenario of India for sure.

The farmers took part in one of the biggest rallies in the recent post-Covid time, as it did not dampen their spirit. While the local administration claims that the rally was attended by 5 lakh farmers, the Kisan Mahapanchayat asserts that the number exceeded a million over the day.

There were several major political personalities as well as farmer leaders present on the stage, which added importance to the Kisan Mahapanchayat. Rakesh Tikait, the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) national spokesperson and President Naresh Tikait shared the stage with social activist Medha Patkar and farmer leader Ghulam Mohammad Jola.

The consolidated voice of the speakers from the dais claimed that they will continue the movement until the government offers a legal guarantee of

Minimum Support Price (MSP). The other demand of the Mahapanchayat included factors like loan waivers for farmers and crop insurances. Besides, they stated that the next farmers' meet is going to take place in Lucknow if the government does not take prompt action.

Even though the farmer body is apolitical in nature, the stage is being used by political parties for gaining traction. There are calls against the ruling Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh from the stage. Moreover, the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) was seen with an active presence on the stage, as they are trying to reclaim lost ground from their previous disastrous performance in the recent two Lok Sabha elections. They will try to change their performance in the upcoming UP election, in which the farmers' support will play a vital role.

The primary concern against the proposed farm bill is that it will do away with the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The Indian government is yet to change its stance on repelling the Farm Laws even though they are sympathetic to the farmer's cause. According to them, it is a must-needed change that can be used to secure the future of the farmers themselves and the economy of the country. The administration is open to discuss over the pros and cons and amend the laws for the betterment, but repealing the laws is not an option.

The same sentiment is echoed in the words of Virendra Singh Mast, the MP from Ballia and the national president

(Contd on page 35)



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Aruna Singh

Susmita Ghosh (Dy Managing Editor India)

Anusha Syed (Legal Columnist)

Special Correspondents:

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Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah

Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind

Web Coordinator : Harpreet Singh

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Phone: 917 612 3158

editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

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To recognise Taliban or not?

This question shows poor understanding of international law



Much has been made of the tortuous hurdles faced by the Taliban in obtaining international recognition as the government of Afghanistan. It has been asserted that India should wield its recognition powers punitively, refraining from conferring governmental status on the Taliban to rebuke it for previous acts of terrorism. Equally, arguments have been proffered that the Taliban's violent takeover of Afghanistan and its protracted history of human rights abuses are sufficient grounds to repudiate its governmental status. There appears to be a belief that international recognition of the Taliban ought to be withheld until sufficient guarantees are obtained from them that they will be willing to comply with international law. Some have even suggested that a de facto recognition may be extended to the outfit, to enable minimal diplomatic engagement, but that de jure recognition (i.e. legal recognition) should be withheld as leverage to avoid any 'adverse consequences' at the hands of this regime.

To anyone working in the field of public international law, such conversations are perplexing. They seem to misunderstand the nature and purpose of recognition.

The recognition of governments is not a legitimacy-conferring exercise whereby the entity granted recognition is absolved of all past wrongs and welcomed into the international community with open arms. To the contrary, recognition simply acknowledges a political reality: that a particular entity possesses effective control of the territory of a State. Nothing more and nothing less.

Putin is knocking.

Is there more to revive India-Russia ties than Afghanistan?

NSA Patrushev was in Delhi and Putin has called Modi. It will be in India's interest to overhaul its relations with Russia - for Central Asia.

Why did Russia's intelligence czar Nikolay Patrushev come to Delhi last week to meet National Security Advisor Ajit Doval? Indeed, why was CIA head William Burns in the capital at about the same time, as was UK spy chief Richard Moore. The easy one-word answer is, Afghanistan, but look a bit closely and there's a bit more than meets the eye. All three men, plus Doval, are obviously looking at the "what now" question in Afghanistan. But what is fascinating this week is that the more things change, old relationships tend to reincarnate in interesting ways. There's a caveat here, though: Old friends must actively rekindle their old passion, not just allow third-party events to influence it.

That's why in the weeks to come, the Patrushev visit - as well as by Burns and Moore - to New Delhi will go down as the week in which India saw the light, not just on Afghanistan, but in the revamp of its own foreign policy. Playing all sides

Let me explain. First, Patrushev sought the meeting with Ajit Doval. It is important to remember that Patrushev hails from St Petersburg, like his close friend Vladimir Putin. It's a bit like saying, in today's New Delhi, that so-and-so is from Gujarat - meaning, he/she is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charmed inner circle. Both Putin and Patrushev were part of the Soviet spy agency KGB, which became the FSB

when the Soviet Union disintegrated - Putin preceded Patrushev as head of the FSB. It is increasingly clear that although Patrushev also met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during his Delhi trip last week, it was his meetings with Doval and PM Modi that will henceforth set the tone of the India-Russia relationship.

Second, to those who believe that the Russians are crowing about being on the right side of the Afghan gamble, it might be time to clarify the air. Let us remember that big powers don't crow when they are able to successfully transform a weak hand into a strong suit - like Russia's special envoy on Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov did by wooing Pakistan, and therefore, the Taliban - but use the ground reality to magnify their sense of power.

So if Russia is back in the Afghan game - and the Americans are out, at least temporarily - it will definitely add a feather in the cap of the Russian leadership that constantly seeks to reinvent its old superpower status. But the Russians also realise that the ouster of the Americans from Afghanistan, as Carnegie Moscow Center director Dmitri Trenin said in an interview with ThePrint, "that the problem now lands on our door, via Central Asia. We are not all happy that the Americans have lost."

Could Patrushev and Nicholas Burns seek a modus vivendi in the coming days that is shaped by the events in Afghanistan?

Third, it is clear by now that the

new Taliban government has the Pakistan ISI's stamp all over it - meaning, Pakistan has won this round in the battle for Afghanistan, and India has lost. One of the reasons why the bottom has fallen out of New Delhi's Afghan policy is because it aligned itself too closely to US thinking - which, for example, believed that only Ashraf Ghani must be supported in power, and other power centres ignored.

Can India take a leaf out of Russia's obsession with a return to international influence and learn to play all sides - like it once did, during the bad old days of the Cold War?

India not just part of Quad The lesson from Afghanistan is that big powers don't rest on their laurels - and that they have long memories. So even if Kabulov delivered the Taliban - and Pakistan - to the Russians, the Putin-Patrushev duo is unlikely to forget that Pakistani fighters killed Soviet army officers on the Afghan battlefield from 1979-1989, and that that Afghan war was instrumental in the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Nor are the Russians likely to forget that the Taliban, in its first incarnation in power from 1996-2001 - when it was recognised only by Pakistan, the UAE and Saudi Arabia - actually recognised Chechnya, an integral part of Russia, as an independent republic.

Fourth, the Patrushev-Doval talks that figured around "what now", would have spent considerable time discussing the weak political

systems of most Central Asian countries, especially those bordering Afghanistan. Could these "stans" crumble under sustained extremist Islamist pressure? Could the narcotics-plus-Islamist terrorist combination make the worst-ever Russian nightmare come true?

Moreover, the Taliban, which certainly continue to have al-Qaeda links, are believed to have placed insurgents that originally belong to that country along Afghanistan's border - for example, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) insurgents are along the Uzbek-Afghan border, while Islamist groups who fought a civil war inside Tajikistan well after the Soviet Union broke up and into the 1990s are camped along the Tajik-Afghan border.

Fifth, as things change, as they are bound to in the coming weeks and months, Central Asia will increasingly come into play. The Russians are already holding the border with Tajikistan with an armoured division. Tajikistan is the home of the Farkhor and Ayni air bases, which the Indian Air Force helped refurbish in the mid-1990s, when India was one leg of the Iran-Russia triangle that helped the Northern Alliance's Ahmad Shah Massoud stand up to the Taliban. Don't forget that Iran's foreign minister is coming to Delhi later this month.

Shouldn't it be in India's interest to overhaul its relations with Russia, also so that ties with Central Asia are revamped?



AAP's 'Tiranga Yatra' in Ayodhya is desperate.



The 'Tiranga Yatra' move shows the AAP's inability to imagine a conversation that would help it take Modi on and establish its footprint beyond Delhi.

It lacks the imagination to move beyond Delhi

The Aam Aadmi Party's 'Tiranga Yatra' in Ayodhya highlights two facts - Arvind Kejriwal's desperation to expand beyond New Delhi, and in equal measure, his lack of imagination on how to do it. Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, along with Sanjay Singh, Rajya Sabha MP and AAP Uttar Pradesh in-charge, took out the 'Tiranga Yatra' on Tuesday, with Sisodia declaring that "Ram Rajya was the best form of governance". "We will form a government that will govern on ideals given by Lord Ram," the deputy CM said. "We take the blessings of Shri Ramchandra-ji, will raise the tricolour (and) will teach real nationalism," he added. With less than three years to go until the next Lok Sabha election and several Opposition parties seeking to lead the brigade against Narendra Modi and team, Kejriwal knows time is fast running out to expand his presence and establish himself as a leader who is not just confined to one state, especially one that is more symbolic than influential in national politics at that. The

high-voltage nationalism plus Hindutva-laden pitch, therefore, is a step in that direction. What it also shows is the AAP's inability to imagine a conversation that can help it take Modi on and establish its footprint beyond Delhi. Resorting to BJP's favourite trope - the potent religion-nationalism cocktail - and trying to counter the party with exactly its modus operandi, can hardly be prudent, creative or beneficial. For a party that captured the imagination of voters and stormed to power in the national capital by developing its unique selling point, the Aam Aadmi Party is showing a disappointing lack of imagination in its forays outside its turf. AAP's expansion compulsion I've argued before how Arvind Kejriwal and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee are the most vocal Opposition leaders, taking the Modi government head-on at every step. As Lok Sabha polls draw closer, every ambitious regional leader is hoping to be at the forefront of leading the Opposition's charge against the Modi-Shah duo.

The disadvantage for Kejriwal, however, is his limited political presence. While leaders like Mamata Banerjee, Andhra Pradesh CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav and Rashtriya Janata Dal's Tejashwi Yadav are all one-state wonders, the difference is that their respective states hold far more heft than Delhi with its mere seven Lok Sabha seats. Arvind Kejriwal's earlier attempts to expand - in Haryana and Goa - bore no fruit, while his party's Punjab foray didn't bring as much national political attention as he would have hoped. The next few years are crucial. AAP fancies itself as a player in several poll-bound states - Goa, Punjab, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. Arvind Kejriwal is sharp enough to know he needn't be overambitious in terms of winning sizable seats in all states. The idea is to put up a credible performance - enough to be taken seriously as a party that has spread its wings beyond just Delhi. The road much-travelled Unfortunately, however, the Aam Aadmi Party is choosing

the path that has now become jaded and a go-to favourite for most Opposition parties who want to beat Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party. Modi and Shah have successfully changed the conversation of Indian politics so definitively towards religion and nationalism that Opposition parties have felt compelled to speak the same language instead of finding an alternative. From Rahul Gandhi's declared status as 'janeudhari Brahmin' to Mamata Banerjee chanting shlokas - the Opposition has ranged from flirting with soft-Hindutva to brandishing an overt version of it. The BJP, however, has mastered the Hindutva-nationalism recipe, and anybody else trying the trope is merely playing catch-up. Arvind Kejriwal's AAP, however, can do much better. Even in Delhi, the 'Deshbhakti curriculum' and earmarking an impressive budget to install flags across the city reeked of the chief minister's attempts to blindly ape the BJP, as did his declaration last year of being a

"devout Hindu".

Kejriwal's beginnings

Recall how the party burst onto the scene to top the charts in Delhi and hasn't allowed Modi's popularity or Amit Shah's might to dislodge it ever since. Kejriwal clung to a voter sentiment that was wide but untapped, and made anti-corruption, clean governance and people's movement his hallmark, becoming arguably the biggest success story in Indian politics in the last decade.

Voters love Arvind Kejriwal not because he is a 'good Hindu', but because he has brought something new and different to the table, the idea of an 'aam aadmi' fed-up of the system, taking up brooms, and ushering in a new era. There has been a freshness to his style of politics, even if AAP's governance remains amateurish. Masses outside Delhi have a better chance of lapping Kejriwal up for a unique idea he espouses, or for spreading the message of an 'aam aadmi' government, than of buying his 'main-bhi-Hindu-hoon' approach.

For a party that has displayed such courageous political innovation in the past, it's a pity that a predictable twin path of nationalism and Hindutva is what it needs to resort to. BJP may have changed the grammar of politics, but Kejriwal surely has it in him to counter that in his own style. It is his uniqueness that will make a real difference, and give the Aam Aadmi Party a much-needed fillip to truly catapult it into the national scene.



There is a role for Congress in the battle for minds and hearts of Indians: Salman Khurshid

Is this no longer an age of reason? Have we once again forsaken our commitment to humanity and selfishly reduced ourselves to nuclear transactional existence? The modernisation of any society comes only with the acceptance that the entire past cannot be sustained and much of it requires revisiting and change. One cannot be modern in using technology and gadgets but intellectually Jurassic. Whatever happened to dreams and hope? Do we not ever feel the pain and loss of another person because we think they are somehow less than what we are? Do we really believe justice and fairness are only about what we desire and aspire to acquire?

The time has come to do some frank talking. Sensible people have repeatedly advised moderation in response to provocative statements against persons who do not agree with the prevailing majoritarian arrogance or those who do not fit into the warped worldview of the ruling mobs. Whilst it ensures obviating further hostility, there is inevitably a sense of inflicting defeat. That is followed by a parody of 'good cop-bad cop' theatre even as

the sitcoms suffer in silence.

Humanity will vanquish oppressors. It is tragic that ordinary good people end up taking or not taking positions based on their perception of political consequences of their choice. Even police encounters and public lynching are relegated to routine statistics. If an act is evil, we should be willing to speak of its venality without fear or favour. What someone suffers today will certainly come to haunt us tomorrow. If for no other reason, at least for that we must raise our voice. In doing so, we may just save ourselves as indeed thousands of others.

Even as we speak truth to power, we must understand that all people cannot be fooled all the time. To believe that good and rational citizens are fewer than those who support the government responsible for the woes of the country is in itself a defeatist position and unsupported by data. Besides, the ability to polarise on irrational grounds is limited in time and space. The heroes of yesterday might well be discarded villains of tomorrow. Their short-lived glory might be hitched to faith (and its misuse) but the campaign to restore democratic

Expectations of both majority and minority have been drawn by Indian Constitution. Those who pretend not to understand them are betrayers of constitutional morality.

values must put the faith in what this nation was born to cherish and celebrate. Oppressors of the world have inevitably been vanquished by humanity and so will those who undermine freedom today. Yet, words alone, no matter how elegant, will not serve to deliver us. It has to be an unshakeable commitment to freedom and of course willingness to sacrifice.

It is surprising that people speak of secularism as a jaded, ineffective slogan that means little to the new generation or has been defiled beyond recognition. A minority in a democracy has a right to retain its identity and get equal concern and respect. At

the same time, it has to show respect and deference to the majority. The lines of legitimate expectation are drawn by the Constitution and those who attempt to fudge them or pretend that they do not understand them are pure, simple betrayers of constitutional morality.

Secularism and justice for all. But even as we hear discordant notes, largely for advancing party political agenda, we must not forget that our civilisation holds out some unique examples of shared living and wholesome participation in inter-community events. Secularism was not discovered at the stroke of midnight on 15 August 1947; it has been an intrinsic part of our heritage. Denial of our secular identity will not succeed. Attempts to redefine it to fit pre-conceived notions too will not distort truth indefinitely. The vision of M.K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru will prevail over contrived notions of nationalism. Somewhere in the national conversation that we desperately need to prepare for battle for the minds and hearts of our compatriots, there is a role for the Congress. History and contemporary ground reality on this cannot be denied. But the contours of the emancipation

armies, as indeed the profiles of courage to be exhibited by the generals, still need to be worked upon. And the conversation must begin in earnest now. The success of the challenge to the Narendra Modi government may indeed have a lot to do with arithmetics of electoral patterns, but it will be ultimately ensured by the conviction that we need an alternative national vision that may borrow substantially from the past and is fortified by creative innovation and promise to bring lasting change for the people.

If the BJP government has sought to restrict freedom in all its dimensions, manipulate and undermine unity and harmony, turn members of a peace-loving nation born in the cradle of ahimsa and satyagraha into self-obsessed jingoists in the guise of patriots, the best examples of commitment to equality and human dignity into mobs of envy and hatred, convert the celebration of pluralism in culture and faith into forced uniformity, then we must make a resounding declaration of freedom and justice for all. Only that will reach into the hearts of all citizens as the dawn of new India.

The "Thank You" Postcard Campaign For PM Modi

Modi-ji, On your birthday, your party is organising a "Thank you, Modi" campaign. 5 crore "thank you" postcards are going to be sent to you for all that you have ostensibly done for the poor. In addition, many other programmes are being organized. It reminds me of a day many decades ago when Jyoti Basu, then Chief Minister of Bengal, was asked whether

he would agree to some organisations celebrating his birthday with public functions. His answer was that he was an elected leader, not a monarch whose subjects had to show their loyalty to the king by celebrating his birthday.

But leave aside cultures of sycophancy promoted by such celebrations. Your party has also announced that ration bags will be distributed with your photograph

printed on them. An official scheme of provision of foodgrains mandated by law is thus sought to be hijacked by your party. Also, who has produced the foodgrains that will be in those ration bags? Would it not have been more appropriate to have photographs of the country's annadatas? We understand that acknowledging the contribution of kisans would draw attention to many realities unpleasant for you to be reminded of on your birthday. The fact that kisans have been protesting for more than nine months against three farm laws passed by you without even asking their opinion; that 700 kisans have died in the struggle; that adding insult to the injury caused by uncontrolled increased prices of inputs for agriculture, you have raised the MSP for wheat by only 2 per cent, the

lowest raise in 12 years; that even three years after the announcement of PM Kisan Nidhi, the coverage is of 10 crore farmers whereas the official assessment is of more than 14 crore eligible farmers, so one third farmers are still denied benefits. The list is long enough for your party to not highlight the kisan on your birthday, leave alone put a kisan's photograph on a ration bag.

What about the worker, Modi-ji? How does your party intend to mobilise workers for your birthday celebrations? 12 crore workers who lost their jobs between your last birthday and this one; lakhs of migrant workers who were deserted and stranded by your government when you announced a sudden lockdown without warning or notice; crores of workers who have been left to the arbitrary

actions of employers through the dismantling by your government of a legal framework won through decades of struggle and sacrifice; the imposition of four labour codes which are a euphemism for a code to protect employers; the drastic alteration of the labour market through the contractorisation of the workforce led by central government departments and concerns. No, it is not likely that the worker who produces this country's wealth will be a willing signatory to a postcard thanking you.

The woman in the home and in the field was the biggest loser being pushed out of the labour market during this pandemic; her's was the face reflected in the unprecedented fall in household consumption expenditure evidencing the suffering of households.

How Modi restored the credibility of Indian capitalism

The 2008 financial crisis inflicted enormous damage on the United States (US) economy. According to some analysts, the losses are persistent and permanent. In addition to the economic damage and its ill-effects on society, the crisis and its aftermath dealt a far more grievous blow to the US by undermining the credibility of market-based capitalism. There were multiple causes for the 2008 crisis, but none of the principal actors in the financial services industry or regulatory authorities were held accountable for the

colossal damage. Regulatory failure and predatory misconduct were given a free pass, with a tacit bipartisan consensus protecting the elites responsible for the gravest economic downturn since the Great Depression.

This was different from the major financial crises of the preceding two decades - the savings and loan scams of the 1980s led to hundreds of prosecutions, while the 2001 dot-com crash exposed accounting scandals for which several star CEOs and executives went to jail.

This lack of accountability has

ultimately undermined the credibility of market-based capitalism in the eyes of the American public, with pro-socialist economic ideas gaining ground, especially with the younger population, which is most scarred by the fallout of the 2008 crisis.

In parallel, India has been seeing a different churning over the last decade. Where the credibility of capitalism has been undermined in the US, its credibility has been burnished in India due to measures such as the insolvency and



bankruptcy code (IBC). As India enters the fourth decade since the 1991 economic liberalisation, it is important to underscore how

important these measures have been to change the practices - and public perception - of private business in India.



Behind-The-Scenes Of Vijay Rupani's Exit

Barely 15 months before Gujarat is meant to choose its next government, Vijay Rupani resigned today as Chief Minister; so did his cabinet. They got the memo from the BJP high command.

"Operation Gandhinagar" as it is being called in Gujarat was handled by B L Santosh, the powerful BJP General Secretary (Organization) and union minister Bhupender Yadav; both are presently meeting MLAs in Gujarat. Santosh met Rupani last night in Gandhinagar and asked him to quit. Home Minister Amit Shah also met Rupani on his recent trip to Gandhinagar. According to sources, Shah conveyed to Rupani that he was unable to back him anymore.

Authoritative sources in the BJP told me that the prime reason for the removal of Rupani, 65, was the Prime Minister's anger at his mishandling of the second vicious wave of the pandemic. Rupani, a protege of Amit Shah, was catapulted to the top job in 2016; his serial Covid missteps in the PM's home state reportedly had the PM seriously upset.

The Gujarat High Court had in May, 2020 castigated the Rupani administration for the "alarming number of deaths in Ahmedabad hospitals". A senior BJP leader now in contention for the Chief Minister's position says, "Rupani showed a complete lack of focus in handling the pandemic, even in containment zones. Shah repeatedly reached out to him



asking him to act better and faster, but Rupani seemed overwhelmed by the crisis.

The background to the Rupani exit is also the fact that he seemed to be unable to come to grips with handling the Gujarat administration even after five years in office. Senior officials and MLAs compared him unfavourably to the PM, who, as the state's three-time Chief Minister, had an iron grip on the administration; even his successor, Anandiben Patel, who is currently the Governor of Uttar Pradesh was seen as more in control.

Significantly, Amit Shah had forced her removal as Chief Minister; Rupani took over from her. Amit Shah had a long rivalry with Anandiben Patel, dating back to when they were both in the

Modi cabinet in Gujarat. Rupani was his choice and now is the fall guy for the Covid chaos. MLAs and officials also claim that Rupani's family, especially his wife Anjali Rupani, were seen as interfering in the administration including through calling up officials directly. These "Super CM" stories did not go down well with the PM. Those privy to the prepping for today's whole-scale culling of the Rupani government believe the action will allow the BJP to deflect anti-incumbency and shore up governance in its citadel of Gujarat before the election, which the party reportedly wants to approach with a "fresh young face" and a new team.

Gandhinagar BJP circles believe

that that Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Health Minister and a firm Modi favourite, will replace Rupani. But ahead of a possible Third Wave, a change in the Health portfolio could be seen as detrimental. That, and the fact

that Mandaviya is a Rajya Sabha MP and will have to be elected to the assembly may keep him tethered to Delhi.

Significantly, Modi with this hard reset in Gujarat seems to have firmly taken back the political and electoral reins in Gujarat. The PM may spring a total political surprise as the new Gujarat Chief Minister as he likes to keep opponents and the media guessing. In 2017, the BJP formed the government in Gujarat for the sixth straight time with 99 seats. The Congress gave it a scare as they won 77 seats. That election had been billed as a thanksgiving for Modi by Shah but Modi's own appraisal of the state saw him increasing his campaign visits to his home state, where he made emotional appeals to voters. Since then, as is so often the case with the Congress, it has lost the momentum it had gained and is now in complete disarray in Gujarat.



For climate finance, create a level playing field

John Kerry must back enhanced access to financial markets for developing countries, stepped-up grants, and multilateral financing

United States (US) climate envoy John Kerry visited India for a second time in six months, continuing the hardsell to get India to commit to net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. The US also sees huge business opportunities in India's climate actions, particularly 450 GW of renewables by 2030. An India-US Climate Action and Finance Mobilising Dialogue was jointly launched by Kerry and India's environment minister Bhupendra Yadav. It rightly underlines the importance of financing. Globally, financing is the bait held out to developing countries to come on board net-zero by 2050, but it has remained in limbo since the Copenhagen Conference of Parties (COP) of 2009 where then President Barack Obama and the leaders of Brazil, South Africa, India, and China (BASIC) hammered out the Copenhagen Accord.

However, the agreed figure of \$100 billion a year is still a distant proposition. As things stand, larger developing countries in the G20, including India, may even find themselves effectively excluded from concessional financing and, instead, will have to pitch for market funding.

In this context, an essential step for these large developing countries is clarity on which activities and investments would be deemed green. The harmonisation of taxonomies (comprehensive classification systems) with relatively precise and consistent definitions, therefore, would be useful, if not imperative. Moreover, agreed data disclosures regulations (mandatory versus voluntary) and standardised green ratings would create sufficient granularity needed in the project description, and positively impact the private sector's borrowing abilities in global markets.

In parallel, to protect the financial stability of developing countries, it is important to ensure that central bank regulatory systems are in place for green investments. Growing allegations of

greenwashing need to be tackled by regulation, as the alternative would be the misallocation of global capital based upon false data between economies competing for funds.

Further, developing countries face fundamental financing barriers for investing in new green technologies and scaling up their climate actions.

First, green technologies have higher capital costs in comparison to conventional technologies, primarily due to their unproven status on the impact of the operational efficiency of production, often making it prohibitive to invest in these.

Second, developing countries lack capacities even towards the development of bankable projects beyond the renewables sector. But, perhaps, the most critical is that the cost of capital is significantly higher, making green investments more costly. This is projected to further increase due to the impact of climate vulnerability on a country's sovereign credit rating, worsening the financial burden and economic challenges.

Moreover, the cost of hedging, ranging from around 3% to 6% for Indian companies, negates the cost advantage of raising climate finance from international markets.

A de-risking mechanism, particularly on lowering the currency risk, is, therefore, another imperative, more so as developing countries fear the costs of bearing the risk of currency movements which can have a severe impact on their fiscal deficits. Such an effort - coupled with the harmonisation of taxonomy at a global level - would also encourage the floatation of green bonds, decidedly better for long-term infrastructure projects than commercial finance from banks. Additionally, equal attention needs to be paid to adaptation given that the warming effects of most

GHGs occur with a lag of 20-50 years. This means that even if annual emissions fall to zero now, temperatures will keep rising. Indeed, as extreme weather events propel large-scale loss of physical assets and the loss of agricultural productivity, their handling is likely to be beyond the abilities of insurance companies and, maybe, even governments. The need of the hour is, therefore, not just the \$100 billion a year pledged more than a decade ago, but even more. Anchoring such funding in multilateral development banks (MDBs) may allow their higher ratings to potentially play a pivotal role in reducing the risk perception in projects. It could at least provide seed finance to help accrete low-cost funds from other sources, including long-term bonds.

Such facilities could be both in the form of fund-based products and non-fund based products such as first-loss guarantees and assist in the exit from fossil fuels, while meeting the need for development with equity in developing countries.

In recent years, India has seen the raising of a fair amount of green finance, but this has been primarily from domestic sources and aimed at mitigation, mainly towards renewables.

The need for finance now extends beyond low-hanging fruit such as efficiency enhancement and into other activities such as the large-scale deployment of green hydrogen in industries and adaptation. This will need longer-term and lower-cost finance, and better access to global capital markets in addition to grants and multilateral financing.

Given the scale of climate finance requirements, the collaboration of the developed world would have to go beyond somehow totalling up all its development cooperation and ensure a clear segue for better access to its capital markets for developing countries.

"The Future of Farming"

By Max Thind

We often take for granted today just how far & wide the agricultural industry has to travel to fully stock our local grocery stores, all year-round. With climate change becoming an undeniable part of life, we have to ask



ourselves. How will our food be sourced in the upcoming years? With the population rise, the use of more land for housing & non-food producing businesses. How are we going to keep all of this in check? The short answer is we won't. You may sometimes notice specific products gone from your grocery store, as micro-climates decrease in scale & more land becomes unusable for production, certain items we take for granted may become more scarce. That doesn't mean we'll lose out on those products, it just means it'll become more expensive to source. Today we have the added benefit of using fillers & alternatives, so we may not see disruption at a huge scale. But what we do know is part of the future is indoor farming.

We're referencing huge farms that resemble the server farms of today. Utilizing aeroponics will not only be beneficial in the near-future, it will become a necessity. There are plenty of good reasons to switch to aeroponics, we'll use less water, fertilizer & land, for starters. Other entire industries may end up switching to this model of an indoor, controlled environment for production. A small reference to this was made in the recent dystopian/semi-futuristic game "Cyberpunk 2077", where they mentioned a facility resembling a fish farm. This minor detail in the game could be foreshadowing for what we're going to see coming up in the hit series called "Reality" (Real life). Why would we abandon conventional farming? Well we wouldn't abandon it, conventional farming would abandon us. With the increase in inclement weather, soil erosion, crop failures among many other issues, it may just not be in the cards for us in the future.

This isn't necessarily a bad thing. The more we build out automated-farming infrastructure, the easier it will become to source a variety of produce from relatively nearby. We won't have to rely on the weather as much for general food production. Even better, the more land we save, the more land opens up for other opportunities. There are some downsides to this part of the future. Where will all the farm jobs go? How do we create a sustainable system for meat production on a large scale? What will be the solution for fruit trees & bushes? What foods will we no longer be able to enjoy because of climate change?

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AOC and Kim Kardashian seize an opportunity



No one should be surprised that a Met Gala with a theme centering on America itself resulted in one of the more contradictory, controversial red carpets the event has ever seen. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute Gala's "In America: A Lexicon of Fashion" hosted some attendees Monday night, who seemed delighted to play along but played it relatively safe. The frequently outrageous Megan Thee Stallion smoldered, with hair in soft waves, wearing an old-Hollywood-inspired dress by Coach, a solidly US-based designer. Lil Nas X served up a triumvirate of brilliant golden looks; the second, a ripped suit of armor, coming with strong (but welcome) C-3PO vibes. Lorde wafted about in an ethereal Statue of Liberty-shaped headdress. But one Met Gala newbie, New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and one old-timer, Kim Kardashian, were especially determined to make profound, if conflicting, statements. Ocasio-Cortez made her Met Gala debut in a long white off-shoulder mermaid gown, with "Tax The Rich" scribed across the back in massive, flag-red letters. It was explicit, as close as you could come to having a placard at the gala without literally bringing one, and -- though likely a clap-back to Joy Villa's "Build The Wall" dress from the 2019 Grammys -- exactly what you'd expect from someone who spends far more of her time campaigning than sitting in the front row at fashion week. She looked beautiful, but not stylish. Her outfit made a political statement that couldn't afford the scope for misunderstanding that a more artistic, interpretive piece might allow. The dress immediately stirred up a fuss in predictable quarters. Donald Trump Jr. led the charge, and Newsmax's Benny Johnson and actor and comedian Michael Rapaport joined in to complain about the apparent hypocrisy of a politician who's targeting the rich showing up to a \$35,000-per-ticket event almost exclusively populated by the extremely wealthy and/or famous. They appeared unaware of the fact that, as Ocasio-Cortez pointed out on Instagram, New York City's elected officials are regularly invited to the Met Gala for free.

The Trump brand of politics is spreading around the world



Maybe this is a source of pride for former President Donald Trump. But for the rest of the world, seeing America's recent political turmoil emulated in nations from east to west is something else entirely. The example set by Trump -- disparaging, assaulting and undercutting a country's democracy -- has now become the template for political players with authoritarian leanings around the globe. In the same way that Trump's cry of "fake news!" -- which he used with some success to discredit professional journalists -- has been wielded by dictators to crush a free press in their countries, the claim of "rigged" elections is also being deployed by those who cannot win the support of voters as they try to acquire power. With security officials in Washington bracing for the possibility of more violence ahead of the September 18 rally in support of insurrectionists charged in the Capitol riots, and as Trump strongly hints that he will run for reelection in 2024, his brand of politics continues to spread like a hard-to-contain infection that ignores national boundaries. In Myanmar, also known as Burma, the military-backed party lost in a landslide last November, around the same time Trump lost his reelection by millions of votes. Perhaps the generals were watching Trump's reaction. They immediately protested, claiming widespread fraud, adamantly refusing to accept the results despite confirmation that the election was generally clean and the outcome valid.

On February 1, the military arrested Aung San Suu Kyi and other leaders of the winning National League for Democracy party and then seized power. Since then, resistance to the coup has only intensified, as has the number of lives taken by the ruthless regime. The Tatmadaw, as the army is known, has killed more than a thousand civilians. The government in exile is calling for a nationwide uprising against the tyrannical junta. Civil war is a distinct possibility. Again, the election results were correct. The losers rejected the outcome. Many of the winning candidates remain detained. In Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro, an admirer and imitator of Trump, is following Trump's preelection moves step by step. His handling of the pandemic was so catastrophic -- and the alleged corruption in his government and among his politically active sons so egregious -- that Bolsonaro is lagging badly in the polls ahead of next year's presidential election. (His sons deny any wrongdoing.) Bolsonaro is claiming that electronic voting, which has a long, strong, and very credible track record in Brazil, will rig the elections against him. He has threatened to cancel the election and is stoking the anger of his supporters, calling them out to the streets. His assaults on the credibility of the election have already triggered formal investigations as potentially criminal behavior, and Brazil's Congress has already rejected his push to cancel electronic voting. No matter. Bolsonaro

is already crafting his Big Lie: By undercutting faith in the electoral system, he's laying the groundwork for rejecting the outcome of the election (assuming it happens) and hoping his supporters will bolster his standing when he claims he did not lose. Sound familiar?

In Peru, the country just endured an excruciatingly close presidential election, pitting a far-left candidate against one from the far-right. As the razor-thin vote count trended toward leftist rival Pedro Castillo, the rightist candidate, Keiko Fujimori, pulled the phony fraud card, claiming Castillo's party was carrying out a "strategy" of "distortion."

She could produce no credible evidence, and Castillo ultimately assumed the presidency by 44,263 votes. With tensions high, accusations that an election has been stolen have the potential to unleash violence, not to mention the possibility that they will ultimately succeed in actually stealing the election. With neither of those events taking place, the country has dodged a bullet.

Not surprisingly, the bogus claims of fraud are taking root in the United States, where it looks possible that some version of Trump's mantra, if I don't win, then there was fraud -- a demagogue's riddle if there ever was one -- will become ever more common in some GOP circles.

In this week's California recall election, Republican front-runner Larry Elder, a far-right radio personality, has already proclaimed that "there might well be shenanigans" if Gov.



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Afghanistan and Pakistan are in a strategic embrace that cannot have a happy ending

Although Pakistan is now keen to provide the Taliban-led Afghan government political and strategic support, it could soon become too much to handle.

Atheocratic oligarchy consisting mostly of United Nations-designated terrorists is going to hold the reins of power in Afghanistan. To oversee the formation of an 'interim' government, Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence chief Lt Gen. Faiz Hameed had flown to Kabul. The interim government had even been announced but the sudden cancellation of the swearing-in shows there are tussles in the upper echelons of the Taliban, which Pakistan must handle with care. Lack of experience in governance is another issue that Pakistan is trying to solve, with reports indicating that guidance will be provided by ISI-nominated Pakistani bureaucrats, technocrats, professional military, and police personnel. For sure, the Punjabi Musalman from Pakistan will, sooner rather than later, rub the wrong side of the Afghan Pathan. Pakistan and Afghanistan are now politically and strategically inseparable. They are both backed by China, which has announced a \$31 million financial assistance that can, at best, provide limited relief, unless followed by continuous and larger benevolence. The international institutions that are mostly under the United States' control are unlikely to be of help, except for providing humanitarian relief through the UN and other agencies. Pakistan's burden For the Taliban, the lack of economic support makes governance an uphill task. Having tasted material well-being and religious freedom of some sort or the other, the urban Afghan does not easily brook religious extremism - a factor that can upend the Taliban. Rural areas of Afghanistan may be relatively tolerant of the Taliban but if their livelihoods are hampered and repression is the style of governance, the Taliban will soon find themselves stretched to maintain control and stem the growth of resistance to their rule. Currently, the signs of resistance lie in the Panjshir valley, where the forces led by former vice-president Amrullah Saleh and former defence minister Ahmad Shah Massoud have staged a tactical withdrawal and taken to the hills. Protests that had a large women's representation have been met by brutal force. However, as repression increases over time, based on the complex mosaic of Afghanistan's ethnic, religious, and tribal identities, will come to the fore. Increased involvement of Pakistani forces operating covertly can be expected. This, in turn, can stoke the Afghans' fears of domination by Pakistan. There are reports of the widespread use of Pakistani drones for surveillance and armed attacks. To most Afghans, this could mean that Pakistan has replaced the US as their repressor, but one without the economic largesse that provided fuel for governance. China could replace the US and couple with Russia to provide some degree of economic succour.

Afghanistan shows US failed to address issues that went beyond military means

Beginning with China in 1949, then Cuba in 1959, and Iran in 1979, Americans have been arguing over who 'lost' these countries. It is time for another debate. Who lost America? At its heart, the loss is of democracy at home and hegemony abroad. For much of its history, American democracy has been led by elites. The system helped America's rise as a great power but worked only when the elites were committed to public service, and the United States led the world. But much has changed. Both the domestic and international orders have been under challenge. And America has been courting failure at home and abroad. There can be no more apt expression of this failure than the shame and infamy of the Jan 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, and the desperate scenes of chaos during evacuation at Kabul airport. To its credit, America had played a decisive role in international affairs in the 20th century maintaining some appearance of the balance of power and stability in the international order. It had done well in meeting challenges that were purely economic, or military, such as the two world wars, and in dealing with other big powers. But it failed to address issues that did not respond to military action or to military means alone. These were complex nation- and state-building challenges whose solution required a different kind of intervention, good partners and an understanding of the internal dynamics of a society. The historical experience of Americans had made them self-



centred and often overbearing war that it started, especially and thus unable to understand following the history-making the cultural and political changes that had taken place since the end of the Cold War, substance of other societies. No wonder America failed in every the rise of globalisation and 9/11.

COVID-19 cases in southeast China more than double as Delta spreads



(News Agencies)-New local COVID-19 infections more than doubled in China's southeastern province of Fujian, health authorities said on Tuesday, prompting officials to quickly roll out measures including travel restrictions to halt the spread of the virus. The National Health Commission said 59 new locally transmitted cases were reported for Sept. 13, up from 22 infections a day earlier. All

of them were in Fujian, a province bordered by Zhejiang to the north and Guangdong to the south. In just four days, a total of 102 community infections have been reported in three Fujian cities, including Xiamen, a tourist and transport hub with a population of 5 million.

The infections come ahead of the week-long National Day holiday starting on Oct. 1, a major tourist season. The last domestic outbreak in late July to August

disrupted travel, hitting the tourism, hospitality and transportation sectors.

China's air passenger traffic plunged 51.5% in August from a year earlier, data released on Tuesday showed, highlighting the vulnerability of Chinese airlines to repeated outbreaks even though COVID-19 is largely under control in the country.

Fujian's outbreak began in Putian, a city of 3.2 million, with the first case reported on Sept.

10. Preliminary tests on samples from some Putian cases showed patients had contracted the highly transmissible Delta variant.

The outbreak has since spread south to Xiamen, which reported 32 new cases of community transmission for Sept. 13 compared with just one infection a day earlier.

"The Putian government is a big client of ours," said a staff at a Xiamen building survey firm, declining to be named.

"About half of our company went to Putian last week. They are now isolated at home, while the rest have gone to do their Covid tests."

Lockdown

Like Putian, Xiamen has locked down some areas of higher virus risk, cut offline classes at kindergartens, primary schools and high schools, closed public venues such as cinemas, gyms and bars, and told residents not to leave the city for non-essential reasons.

The first patient in the Xiamen cluster was a close contact of a

case in Putian, Xiamen authorities said late on Monday.

Known for its mild weather and a laid-back lifestyle, Xiamen is a popular tourist destination domestically.

The Xiamen Gaoqi International Airport is also a key transportation hub linking the Yangtze and Pearl River Delta. About 60% of flights to and from Xiamen were cancelled on Tuesday, according to aviation data provider Variflight.

Both Putian and Xiamen began city-wide testing for the coronavirus on Tuesday. The cities, however, are yet to announce tough city-wide lockdowns as seen in early 2020 in China.

Three new cases of community transmission were also reported in nearby Quanzhou city, versus six infections a day earlier. Variflight data showed 70% of Quanzhou's flights were cancelled.

"One wave after another," said a bank manager in Xiamen. "It feels like the new normal now."

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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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China opens its first plant that turns radioactive waste into glass

reprocessing facility, the remaining spent fuel needs to be disposed of safely. Nuclear power is often viewed as a green source of energy due to nuclear power plants not producing greenhouse gasses. However, a major environmental concern related to nuclear power failure to dispose of radioactive wastes such as uranium mill tailings, reactor fuel, and other radioactive wastes. However, they do produce nuclear waste, because although spent nuclear fuel is no longer useful for generating power, it does still release heat and radiation for many, many years afterwards. China's disposal method was carried out by mixing liquid nuclear waste with glass materials at temperatures of around 1,100 degrees Celsius. Once cooled, the nuclear waste is then stored within the glass, which helps prevent dangerous radioactivity from leaking out. China is not the first country in the world to perform this technique, which is referred to as nuclear waste vitrification. A number of countries, including the US, France, Germany and others have disposed of nuclear waste in this way.

(News Agencies)- waste into glass. Expanding its effort to cut carbon emissions, China opened its first plant that will turn radioactive waste into glass. The disposal technique was carried out on Saturday at a facility in Guangyuan in southwest Sichuan province, Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defence. according to state news outlet The Global Times which cited the country's State Administration of

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One month after fall of Kabul, economic crisis stalks Taliban

After a month of returning to power in Afghanistan, the Taliban face daunting problems as the country's economy is in ruins despite hundreds of billions of dollars in development spending over the past 20 years.

A month after seizing Kabul, the Taliban face daunting problems as they seek to convert their lightning military victory into a durable peacetime government.

After four decades of war and the deaths of tens of thousands of people, security has largely improved, but Afghanistan's economy is in ruins despite hundreds of billions of dollars in development spending over the past 20 years.

Drought and famine are driving thousands from the country to the cities, and the World Food Programme fears food could run out by the end of the month, pushing up to 14 million people to the brink of starvation.

While much attention in the West has focused on whether the new Taliban government will keep its promises to protect women's rights or offer shelter to militant groups like al Qaeda, for many Afghans the main priority is simple survival.

"Every Afghan, kids, they are hungry, they don't have a single bag of flour or cooking oil," said Kabul resident Abdullah. Long lines still form outside banks, where weekly withdrawal limits of \$200 or 20,000 afghani have been imposed to protect the country's dwindling reserves. Impromptu markets where

people sell household goods for cash have sprung up across Kabul, although buyers are in short supply. Even with billions of dollars in foreign aid, Afghanistan's economy had been struggling, with growth failing to

situation."

AID FLIGHTS

Following the chaotic foreign evacuation of Kabul last month, the first aid flights have started to arrive as the airport reopens. International donors have



keep pace with the steady increase in population. Jobs are scarce and many government workers have been unpaid since at least July.

While most people appear to have welcomed the end of fighting, any relief has been tempered by the near-shutdown of the economy.

"Security is quite good at the moment but we aren't earning anything," said a butcher from the Bibi Mahro area of Kabul, who declined to give his name. "Every day, things get worse for us, more bitter. It's a really bad

pledged over \$1 billion to prevent what United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned could be "the collapse of an entire country." But world reaction to the government of Taliban veterans and hardliners announced last week has been cool, and there has been no sign of international recognition or moves to unblock more than \$9 billion in foreign reserves held outside Afghanistan.

Although Taliban officials have said they do not intend a repeat

of the harsh fundamentalist rule of the previous government, toppled by a US-led campaign following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, they have struggled to convince the outside world that they have really changed. Widespread reports of civilians being killed and journalists and others being beaten, and doubts about whether the rights of women really will be respected under the Taliban's interpretation of Islamic law, have undermined confidence. In addition, there has been deep mistrust of senior government figures like the new interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, designated by the United States as a global terrorist with a \$10 million bounty on his head.

To make matters worse for the Taliban, the movement has had to fight speculation over deep internal splits in its own ranks, denying rumours that Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghani Baradar had been killed in a shootout with Haqqani supporters.

Officials say the government is working to get services up and running again and that the streets are now safe, but as the war recedes, resolving the economic crisis is looming as a bigger problem.

Sri Lankan prison minister resigns after threatening to kill Tamil prisoners



(News Agencies)-Sri Lanka's minister of state for prisons management Lohan Ratwatte tendered his resignation on Wednesday, days after he allegedly threatened to kill Tamil prisoners during his visit to the Anuradhapura prison in the country's northern central region, a senior official said. Ratwatte's resignation came as pressure mounted on him after the Tamil political parties sought his resignation and arrest over the incident.

The resignation was accepted by the Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Kingsley Ratnayake, the presidential spokesman, said.

Ratwatte allegedly went to the Anuradhapura prison on September 12 and forced two prisoners to kneel and threatened to kill them.

His act prompted the Tamil parties to condemn his behavior and call for his resignation.

"We call on the government to immediately remove the state minister for prison management and have him arrested and charged after an immediate inquiry for allegedly threatening to kill prisoners in Anuradhapura on Sunday, September 12," the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) said in a tweet. Galen Ponnambalam, the leader of the Tamil National People's Front tweeted also confirmed the incident. "The TNP can confirm that on the evening of September, 12 the state minister for Prisons had gone to the Anuradhapura prisons, summoned the Tamil political prisoners and had got two of them to kneel in front of him," he said in a tweet. Ponnambalam said the minister had threatened to kill Tamil prisoners. The local media reports alleged that the minister had visited the main prison in Colombo to show the gallows to a group of his friends late at night before heading to the north-central town of Anuradhapura.

As climate talks near, pressure grows on Asia to cancel new coal projects



With six nations accounting for more than 80 per cent of planned new coal projects globally, winning commitments to cancel those projects could help November's COP26 United Nations climate summit "consign coal power to history", a key goal of organisers, researchers said. Proposed new coal power capacity globally has plunged 76 per cent since the Paris Agreement in 2015, with 44 countries agreeing to end new projects, according to a report by think-tank E3G released on Tuesday (Sept 14).

Asia, however, is still at the centre of the world's remaining pipeline, which means action by six countries alone - China, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Turkey and Bangladesh - could remove more than four-fifths of planned projects before construction.

Ending the use of coal - the most polluting fossil fuel - for power production has been a key focus for climate change activists, leading to funding and insurance for new projects rapidly drying up.

Swiftly ending coal use is seen as vital to global goals of capping global warming at "well

below" 2 deg C - and ideally 1.5 deg C - and avoiding swiftly worsening climate threats such as harsher storms, floods, wildfires and crop failures.

But coal remains a mainstay for power generation in Asia, which accounts for 75 per cent of global coal demand, according to the International Energy Agency.

Countries with significant coal deposits or energy systems reliant on the fuel have been slow to abandon it, tied down in part by the costs of abandoning still-functioning plants and mines or reluctant to break commitments to new plants.

China also remains a major funder of new coal energy, even as declining prices for solar and wind power make green energy more competitive than coal in most parts of the world.

"The economics of coal have become increasingly uncompetitive in comparison to renewable energy, while the risk of stranded assets has increased," said Mr Chris Littlecott, the report's author and an associate director at E3G.

China alone is home to about 53 per cent of the new coal power capacity under construction globally, the report noted.

That is despite a 74 per cent reduction in its project pipeline since the Paris climate accord, according to E3G.

The Asian giant, however, is not only under scrutiny for its coal projects at home but also for funding projects abroad, after two other major financiers - South Korea and Japan - said this year they would end overseas coal financing.

"China is the last man standing in supporting coal projects abroad," Mr Li Shuo, a Beijing-based policy adviser at Greenpeace East Asia, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"The Chinese government should get ahead of this trend by declaring an overseas coal moratorium. Doing so before COP26 will contribute momentum to the year-end global climate gathering," he said.

Getting countries to commit to more ambitious emission-cutting plans and providing the necessary finance to put them in place are key themes at the COP26 summit, billed as the last chance to galvanise the action needed to limit global warming to 1.5 deg C.

Mr Alok Sharma, the British official who will preside over the

talks, has said the summit, scheduled to take place in Scotland in November, needs to "consign coal power to history". Countries from Indonesia to the Philippines have been part of a new wave of commitments across Asia to not approve new coal power projects - but projects already planned or under construction will still go ahead in most cases.

With new plants needing to run for decades to pay back the costs of building them, failure to reverse those plans could doom climate goals, climate scientists and activists say.

"We have to talk about terminating 'under construction' projects, and cancelling the 'planned projects' when it comes to coal in Asia," said Mr Sejong Youn, a director at Solutions for Our Climate, a Seoul-based non-profit on climate change.

"That is the real target we need to be pushing in COP26."

Mr Youn said there is a high likelihood that China will "quietly, virtually" end overseas coal finance at some point, but he expects the country will not announce such a move to avoid being seen as caving in to outside pressure.

Indonesian campaigner Arti

Indallah Tjarkanegara said that any efforts to ditch coal should also take into account how that would impact impoverished communities and workers across Asia and potentially deepen inequalities.

Transitioning to cleaner energy in Indonesia could create millions of new green jobs in the country of 260 million but also lead to the unemployment of tens of thousands and threaten the economy of coal-producing regions.

Indonesia, the world's top exporter of coal for power generation, currently sources 60 per cent of its own energy from coal.

It plans to stop using coal, oil and gas by 2060 and aims to have 85 per cent of its energy needs from renewable sources then. "Energy transition is like two sides of the same coin. There are also risks to be mitigated," said Ms Tjarkanegara, a manager at Indonesian non-profit Yayasan Humanis dan Inovasi Sosial working on climate change issues.

"A just energy transition needs to address the main challenges of unemployment, environmental degradation and inequality," she said by phone from Jakarta.

Republicans continue withholding support to US debt ceiling increase



(News Agencies)- Leaders of the Republican Party in US Congress on Tuesday continued withholding support to increasing US debt ceiling. The efforts to raise the debt ceiling have been initiated by the Democratic Party.

Last week, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned that the government will run out of money next month unless lawmakers take action. Banking groups have urged Congress to act to

prevent "irreparable harm" to US economy.

Republican Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell said Democrats will have to resolve the issue on their own.

"The Democratic leaders have every tool and procedure they need to handle the debt limit on a partisan basis, just like they are choosing to handle everything else," McConnell said on the Senate floor.

Congress is currently

considering a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure plan that has the backing of Democrats and some Republicans.

Also on their agenda is a massive social spending plan costing \$3.5 trillion over 10 years, which has only garnered the support of Democrats who plan to pay for it with tax increases on corporations and the wealthiest Americans.

McConnell objects to what he called a "massive reckless tax

and spending spree."

Amazon CEO Andy Jassy called for raising the debt ceiling in an interview with CNBC.

"I think it's scary for consumer confidence and for confidence in US businesses and potential credit ratings if we don't make sure that we raise that debt ceiling," Jassy said.

The Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (SIFMA), American Bankers Association and other industry

groups said in a letter to congressional leaders that defaulting "on our existing obligations would be irresponsible and do irreparable harm to the US economy and taxpayers." Even "a short-term delay would cause serious harm at a time when our economy continues to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic," the letter read. USA's debt and deficit have increased during Covid-19 pandemic.

Former police plead not guilty to federal charges in George Floyd death

Four former Minneapolis police officers, involved in the arrest of George Floyd, have filed not guilty pleas to federal charges of violating Floyd's civil rights. The four were charged with depriving Floyd of medical attention.

(News Agencies)-Four former Minneapolis police officers involved in the deadly arrest of George Floyd entered not guilty pleas to federal charges of violating Floyd's civil rights at an arraignment on Tuesday. Former officers Derek Chauvin, Thomas Lane, J Alexander Kueng and Tou Thao were fired after Floyd's arrest on May 25, 2020.

Chauvin, who is white, was sentenced in state court in June to 22-1/2 years in prison following a jury verdict of guilty in the murder of Floyd, after a bystander's cellphone video showed the Black man was held face-down and not resisting in a restraint.



The verdict was widely seen as a landmark rebuke of the disproportionate use of police force against Black Americans.

The video of Chauvin kneeling on the neck of the handcuffed Floyd for more than nine minutes during the arrest caused outrage around

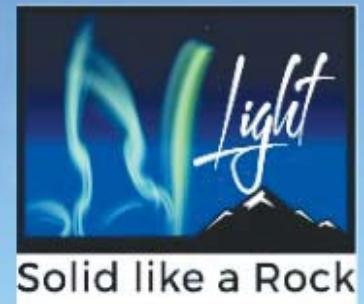
the world and the largest protest movement seen in the United States in decades.

Chauvin was helping arrest Floyd

on suspicion of using a fake \$20 bill. All four officers are federally charged with depriving Floyd of his rights by failing to provide him with medical attention.

Chauvin also is federally charged with violating Floyd's right to be free from unreasonable seizure and unreasonable force by a police officer. Thao and Kueng are federally charged with violating Floyd's right to be free from unreasonable seizure by not intervening to stop Chauvin from kneeling on Floyd's neck. Chauvin also faces a federal prosecution on charges of violating the civil rights of a 14-year-old boy he arrested in 2017.

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Al-Qaeda likely to reconstitute in Afghanistan, strike US in 1-2 years: Report



Senior officials in the US intelligence agencies have said that al-Qaeda may be able to reconstitute itself in Afghanistan and attack the US in one or two years, a report in Bloomberg said.

Even as the US claims that it achieved its objective in Afghanistan by eliminating prospective terror threats to the country, senior officials in the US intelligence agencies have said that terror group al-Qaeda may be able to reconstitute itself in Afghanistan and attack the US in one or two years.

"The current assessment probably, conservatively, is one to two years for al-Qaeda to build some capability to at least threaten the homeland," Bloomberg quoted Lieutenant General Scott Berrier, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency,

as saying.

Speaking at an intelligence conference on Tuesday, Lieutenant General Scott Berrier said they were looking for ways to gain access back into Afghanistan with "all kinds of sources and accesses".

"We are prioritising that effort. We'll continue to prioritise it. But we have to be careful to balance these very scarce resources," he said.

Facing much criticism over its hurried withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US has maintained that its purpose to invade Afghanistan after the

September 11, 2001 terror attacks was not to indulge in "nation-building exercise". US President Joe Biden has said that the US's primary objectives in Afghanistan were to disrupt al-Qaeda and kill Osama bin Laden, the mastermind of the 9/11 attacks who was shielded by the then Taliban government. CIA Deputy Director David Cohen agreed with the timeline of one to two years, saying intelligence agencies are already seeing activities by al-Qaeda recouping in Afghanistan. However, Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines says that Afghanistan is

down on the threat list after the two-decade American troop presence ended.

"We don't prioritise -- at the top of the list -- Afghanistan," Bloomberg quoted Haines as saying at the same conference. "What we're looking at is Yemen and Somalia, Syria and Iraq. That's where we see the greatest threat," he added.

Earlier in June, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told a Senate committee that it would take possibly two years for al-Qaeda to develop the capabilities to stage attacks in the US from Afghanistan.

US President Joe Biden nominates first LGBT woman to federal circuit court



President Joe Biden is nominating a Vermont judge who played a critical role in paving the way for the legalization of same-sex marriage to become the first openly LGBT woman to serve on any federal circuit court.

The White House announced Thursday that Biden has tapped Beth Robinson, an associate justice on the Vermont Supreme Court since 2011, to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit. The court's territory includes Connecticut, New York and Vermont.

In 1999, before she was appointed to the Vermont Supreme Court, Robinson helped argue the case that led to Vermont's civil unions law, the first legal recognition in the country of same-sex relationships - a forerunner of gay marriage.

Robinson served as counsel to Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin, a Democrat, from 2010 to 2011. From 1993 to 2010, Robinson was a civil litigator in private practice at Langrock Sperry & Wool where she focused on employment law, workers' compensation, contract disputes and family law. Robinson previously worked at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom in Washington, D.C., focusing on white-collar criminal defense. She was a law clerk for Judge David Sentelle on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia from 1989 to 1990.

The White House also announced that Biden is nominating employment law attorney Charlotte Sweeney for the U.S. District Court in Colorado. She would become the first openly LGBT woman to serve as a federal district court judge in any state west of the Mississippi. Biden thus far has announced 35 judicial nominees to serve on the federal bench.

For treating unvaccinated Covid patients, US spent \$5.7 bn in 3 months: Study

The United States government has spent \$5.7 billion in the last three months to treat the unvaccinated Covid patients in different hospitals of the country, said a new analysis published on Tuesday. This study has taken the most recent data into account as numerous people were hospitalised in August due to unprecedented rise in coronavirus cases. The authors of the study estimate it to be accounted for \$3.7 billion of preventable spending alone. The Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) made the data analysis on the basis of information



from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and studies on health care costs, that say each preventable hospitalisation due to Covid costs about

\$20,000. As per the analysis of data from the US Department of Health and Human Services and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the US saw 287,000 preventable Covid hospitalisations from June to August. The authors of the study used "preventable" hospitalisations to refer to such incidents where unvaccinated adults were provided

Covid treatment primarily, while also accounting for any post-vaccination infections that would have been expected if this population had been vaccinated.

Biden urges climate action



'We don't have much more than 10 years'

(News Agencies)- President Joe Biden warned on Tuesday that the United States had only a decade left to confront a global climate crisis, using his second day touring a wildfire-ravaged West to try to rally the public, and congressional Democrats, to support measures that his administration hopes will reduce the burning of fossil fuels.

Biden's stops this week in Colorado; Boise, Idaho; and Long Beach and the Sacramento area in California amounted to more than an opportunity to call attention to the severe destruction of wildfires and other natural disasters that have been exacerbated by climate change. The visits were a last-ditch opportunity to sell the importance of measures aimed at mitigating climate change, some of which appear increasingly at risk in his spending packages.

"A drought or a fire doesn't see a property line," Biden said during remarks at a federal renewable energy laboratory. "It doesn't give a damn for which party you belong to. Disasters aren't going to stop. That's the nature of the climate threat. But we know what we have to do. We just need to summon the

courage and the creativity to do it."

Underscoring the urgency, Biden added: "We don't have much more than 10 years." Democratic leaders drafting a \$3.5 trillion spending bill are struggling to match the urgency of Biden's pleas with pushback from energy lobbyists and some key Democrats, who want a far less expansive effort than what Biden has in mind.

On Monday, during a visit to California's Office of Emergency Services in the Sacramento area, Biden appeared to recognize that. Before he received a briefing on the wildfire damage, he reminded dozens of emergency workers in the conference room that he was not able to include all of his proposed investments to combat climate change in a bipartisan agreement that he reached this summer on infrastructure. He said he was focused on including them in the more sweeping \$3.5 trillion package but acknowledged that it could fall short of his ambitions.

"Whether that passes or not, exactly how much, I don't know. But we're going to get it passed," Biden said.

Tax writers in the House have already made a concession of sorts on climate. A bill released earlier this week omits any tax

on carbon emissions, even though such revenue could help pay for the giant package, which Democrats plan to pass along party lines and without Republican support.

Many Senate Democrats have pushed to include either a direct tax on emissions or an indirect one, like a tariff on goods imported from high-emission countries such as China. But the party is not aligned, and given the slim majorities in the House and Senate, such a plan would probably have trouble gaining the 50 votes needed in the Senate.

Centrist concerns over the size and scope of some proposed tax increases could force party leaders to pare back incentives for low-carbon energy deployment in the plan. So could influential Democrats who have resisted the party's previous climate legislation, like Sen. Joe Manchin III of West Virginia.

A coal-state moderate, Manchin is the committee chair charged with drafting the Senate version of the single largest effort to reduce emissions in the bill: a carrot-and-stick approach to push electric utilities to draw more power from low-carbon sources over the coming decade.

"The transition is happening,"

Manchin said, speaking on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday. "Now they're wanting to pay companies to do what they're already doing. Makes no sense to me at all for us to take billions of dollars and pay utilities for what they're going to do as the market transitions."

He declined to comment further on Tuesday, telling reporters he preferred to negotiate in private. Senate Democrats used a weekly caucus lunch to provide an update on efforts to cobble together pieces of the legislation during the annual summer break, though it was unclear how swiftly they would reconcile differences within and between both chambers.

Biden used his western swing to highlight what his aides hope will be a call to climate action for those who have not committed to a more aggressive plan.

Throughout the trip, Biden heard from emergency officials and governors - including those at odds with the administration on the pandemic and other issues - about the urgent need to address natural disasters. Biden told the emergency workers in California that he had recently spoken with Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas, a Republican, about emergency response. "Some of my more conservative -" Biden said before stopping himself and resuming,

"some of my less believing friends in this notion of global warming are all of a sudden having an altar call."

"They're seeing the Lord," Biden said.

When Biden received his fire briefing later from officials at the Office of Emergency Services, a woman presenting a map of wildfires to him could be heard saying, "That's why this is so important."

On Tuesday, Biden watched a wind turbine demonstration at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory Flatirons Campus in Arvada, Colorado, then recounted the damage from hurricanes and wildfires he had seen in trips across the United States this month. He called for tax credits to speed deployment of solar power and electric vehicles and for the creation of a Civilian Climate Corps to conserve public lands and help make them more resilient to climate change.

Biden's economic team has not clarified whether the president would embrace an emissions tax as part of the package. He refused to agree to a Republican proposal to raise the federal gasoline tax to help pay for infrastructure, citing his pledge not to raise income taxes on anyone earning less than \$400,000.

Major fight between Taliban leaders for credit over Afghanistan takeover: Report



(News Agencies)-Days after the Taliban announced its interim government in Afghanistan, a major row was reported between its top leaders at the Presidential Palace in Kabul.

Supporters of the two rival factions in the Taliban got into an altercation at the Presidential Palace, the BBC reported. However, the Taliban have denied such reports.

The dispute within the group came to light after Taliban co-founder and deputy prime minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar disappeared for days. Sources told BBC Pashto that Baradar and Khalil ur-Rahman Haqqani - a minister in the new cabinet and top leader of the Haqqani network, indulged in a heated exchange of words after the fight between their followers.

It has been reported that the fight stemmed from division over who should take credit for the victory in Afghanistan.

Sources told BBC Pashto that Baradar and Khalil ur-Rahman Haqqani - a minister in the new cabinet and top leader of the Haqqani network, indulged in a heated exchange of words after the fight between their followers.

It has been reported that the fight stemmed from division over who should take credit for the victory in Afghanistan.

While Baradar believes it is because of diplomacy by people like him, Haqqani is of the view that the victory was achieved through fighting.

Soon after the fallout, it speculated that Baradar has died, but Taliban sources refuted the claim.

Baradar released an audio statement on Monday saying he was alive and well after news of his supposed demise went viral on social media.

"There had been news in the media about my death. Over

the past few nights, I have been away on trips. Wherever I am at the moment, we are all fine, all my brothers and

friends," Baradar said in the clip.

"Media always publish fake propaganda. Therefore, bravely

reject all those lies, and I 100 percent confirm to you there is no issue and we have no problem."BBC reported that

Baradar was expected to return to Kabul and is expected to appear on camera to deny that any argument had happened.

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3 questions for those dreaming of beating Narendra Modi, but answer the third first

Sharad Pawar said the Congress is like an old feudal (zamindar) who's lost his lands but hangs on to his haveli and no longer has the wherewithal to maintain it. But he's seen decaying old parties, unlike the feudals, revived and rebuilt. It's happened in India and elsewhere in the democratic world. There was the new Labour, the new Republicans, the always renewable centrist Democrats. And why go so far? The new BJP under Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. Any resemblance with the old, please go and check with L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi.

As in the market of consumer goods, in the cut-throat competition of politics, the first thing a challenger needs is a clear product differentiation. Today, the Congress is confused about its ideology - hard secular, or Hindutva Lite? Hard Left, or calm centrist? Or slogan: A new garibi hatao or chowkidar chor hai? Who knows.

I know what I am saying will trigger its many supporters - it still collects 20 per cent of all votes in the country, which is more than the next six parties together. But if so, please do write in about 1,200 words, that is as many words as this column generally contains, how you think your product is different from Modi and his BJP. At ThePrint, we will be happy to publish it.

The Congress has to first accept

the deep crisis and how, increasingly, its committed voters are looking for alternatives. It isn't necessarily the BJP. Its 20 per cent national voter base has been impregnable even in the 2014 and 2019 debacles. But, its leaders know it was more earlier, and the erosion began way before Modi.



Some has gone to the BJP, especially some of the OBCs and Dalits in the heartland. But the rest is being salami-sliced by other, much smaller anti-BJP parties, particularly with more credible claims to being secular. Mamata Banerjee has vacuum-cleaned the voter base in West Bengal, and for practical purposes, is already the new Congress - in fact Congress-plus-Left - in Tripura. Its other bastion of old Andhra is now totally lost to those who used to be its own, like in Mamata's case. In Tamil Nadu, M.K. Stalin will be checking the use-by date on his alliance with the Congress on a weekly basis. Kejriwal is the Congress in Delhi, just a lot stronger, and is now eyeing its

Fortress Punjab. Patiently, AAP is infiltrating and building a foothold in its many surviving bastions, Uttarakhand and Goa included.

What about the rest? Stalin comes across as a nice enough guy. For a lot on the anti-Modi side, he passes the 'mera neta

aisa ho' test. Tamil Nadu is also among our five largest states, with Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Bihar, in its share of seats in the Lok Sabha. But, does he count outside his state?

None of the anti-BJP leaders in the heartland count today. Mayawati, we aren't even sure we can safely call anti-BJP. None of the Yadavs is a challenge. Nitish? Would he want to challenge Modi?

Temperamentally, there are two leaders with the strength, skill and will-to-power to fight Modi. Sharad Pawar isn't one of these. They are Mamata Banerjee and Kejriwal. It's a bit early in the evolution of Kejriwal's party to

back his formidable cult. But, being the youngest of the lot, he has time. In fact, he's younger than all other key leaders in the country except one. But that one, Yogi Adityanath, is in the BJP. Mamata Banerjee's defeat of Modi-Shah was of enormously greater significance than Kejriwal's repeat success in Delhi. She's still fighting them harder than any other leader in the country. She's also right when she mocks other opposition leaders for being quiet or guarded, probably in the fear of the agencies. She's building traction at a larger level. But her political reach is still geographically limited.

She isn't old by the standards of Indian politics - she's a few years younger than Modi - but she cannot easily scale up a purely Bengali party into a pan-national one. Unless, an opportunity for a leveraged buyout comes up. Will the shareholders of the largest opposition political party revolt and ask for a change of CEO? Forget it.

Where are we then, with an answer to the third question we had raised? There are many who can beat Modi, but only in their respective boroughs. Some might have the smarts to pool forces together to wrest power from the BJP, as in Maharashtra. But nationally, across states, nobody has the fuel to outrun Modi. None can, without the Congress party's 20 per cent vote as initial capital.

Can the Congress change? We don't know. Can it play the venture capitalist and invest its vote capital in someone more likely to challenge Modi credibly? It won't.

How do we answer the first two questions then?

First of all, anybody in a democracy is beatable. The history of democracy is dotted with the decline of those who believed - and for good reason - that they were unbeatable. Take Donald Trump as the most recent example, although America isn't the ideal comparison for India.

If we look back on our own politics, we find more relevant comparisons. Did Indira Gandhi believe she could be beaten in 1977? Did Rajiv Gandhi think he would sit in the opposition in 1989 after his incredible 1984 sweep? Did Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his people believe the 2004 poll would throw any result other than a larger majority for his NDA?

There is one thing common to these dramatic reversals. In each case, no challenger defeated them. It was instead the unbeatable leader who defeated themselves. Indira Gandhi with her Emergency arrogance, Rajiv with his many missteps, and Vajpayee with his party's callous loss of coalition partners.

Is the opposition now going to sit back hoping Modi will defeat himself? Bad news, but there are no signs yet. He and his party are constantly addressing and protecting their base, campaigning for every state as if a question of life and death. They are happy to fight the opposition one state at a time, never mind if they lose the odd one.

Anybody who talks of a third front, a non-Congress coalition, is giving Modi a walkover. A coalition under the Congress, who will lead it? For more than two years now Congress hasn't even found someone to lead itself. Here's a final thought. Does someone in the opposition have it in them to play electoral jujitsu with Modi, use his strengths against him, combine diverse forces and defeat, or at least greatly weaken him, in one state crucial to his party first? Say, Uttar Pradesh? That someone might have a different answer to our first two questions.

DOJ calls organized crime 'alive and well' after alleged mobsters arrested in New York, New Jersey

Carolina. DiMatteo, 66, remains at large.

Russo and Castellazzo are allegedly long-time members of the family, at 87 and 83 years old, respectively.

The charges describe what federal prosecutors in Brooklyn called "a long-standing, ruthless pattern" of exerting control over a labor union by threatening to harm its leaders unless they selected vendors for contracts who were on the take.

The defendants also tried to force the union and its affiliated health care fund to divert more than \$10,000 per month to the Colombo family, prosecutors said.

The indictment quoted Ricciardo threatening to kill someone labeled John Doe #1 if he did not comply.

In a June 21 recording, Ricciardo allegedly explained that John Doe #1 knows, "I'll put him in the ground right in front of his wife and kids, right in front of his f----- house, you laugh all you want pal, I'm not afraid to go to jail, let me tell you something, to prove a point? I would f----- shoot him right in front of his wife and kids, call the police, f--- it, let me go, how long you think I'm gonna last anyway?"

Ricciardo and his cousin had allegedly been collecting part of John Doe's salary since 2001 before broadening extortion efforts in 2019, according to the DOJ.

The 75-year-old Ricciardo, known as Vinny Unions, is already a convicted felon and was shot in the back in November 1992 when



masked men ambushed a car he was riding in on the way to a wake, according to The New York Times. One of the other people in the car was killed, and another survived after being shot eight times.

"Everything we allege in this investigation proves history does indeed repeat itself. The underbelly of the crime families in New York City is alive and well. These soldiers,

consiglieres, under bosses, and bosses are obviously not students of history, and don't seem to comprehend that we're going to catch them," FBI Assistant Director Michael Driscoll said in a statement. One of those arrested, Teddy Persico Jr., was on federal supervised release from a previous racketeering conviction, authorities said.

For Actor Sonu Sood, Raids At 6 Locations In Mumbai, Lucknow: Sources

a Lucknow-based real estate firm is under the scanner. The survey operation has been initiated on allegations of tax evasion on this deal," sources in the Income Tax department claimed.

This is not the first time Sonu Sood has been raided. He was among Bollywood personalities raided in 2012 over alleged tax evasion.

Opposition politicians linked Wednesday's raids to the actor's recent high-profile meeting with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who declared him the brand ambassador for his government's mentorship programme for school students in the capital.

The 48-year-old actor has been in films for the past two decades but it was his amazing philanthropy during the pandemic that made him a household name.

Sonu Sood won wide praise for his charity work during the pandemic. He organised buses, trains and even flights for migrants desperate to reach home after being stranded by last year's lockdown. During the second wave in April-May, he organised oxygen for Covid patients and ordered 18 oxygen plants from France, which were sent to various states.

He was dubbed the "messiah" for those who turned to him after the system failed them.



As he became a hero in real life, he was feted by politicians across the country. Though he has never shown any inclination towards politics, speculation ran wild after his meeting with Mr Kejriwal and rumours suggested the actor may contest next year's Punjab election as an Aam Aadmi

Party (AAP) candidate. The BJP rubbished the charge that the raids were driven by agenda. "There is no relation to that (the Kejriwal meeting). Any personality can meet anyone. It is just a search, not a raid. It's on a tipoff. It's not necessary that the person who heads the charity has done anything wrong... It must be something at the lower level. Income Tax is an independent department, which has its own protocol. It is doing its job," Asif Bhamla, BJP spokesman, said. Mr Kejriwal tweeted that there were millions of hurdles on the path of truth, but truth always prevailed. "Sonu Sood has the blessings of

lakhs of families, whom he had helped during their difficult times," he tweeted.

Another AAP leader, Raghav Chaddha, said: "An IT raid on a man as upright as Sonu Sood, somebody who has been called a messiah by lakhs of people, somebody who helped the downtrodden. If a man like him can be politically targeted in a well thought out witch-hunt shows that the current regime is insensitive and politically insecure." The BJP's former ally Shiv Sena was also critical of the tax searches. I am shocked. The way Sonu Sood has helped lakhs of people, for tax people to search his properties... I don't think he can do anything illegal," said Anand Dubey, Shiv Sena leader.

Tatas put in bid for loss-making Air India as disinvestment process enters final stage

(SAI Bureau)-

Tuhin Kanta Pandey, secretary of the department that is running the privatisation process, tweeted of financial "bids" being received but did not say how many companies were in fray.

A Tata Sons spokesperson confirmed to PTI that the group has put in a bid for the national carrier. SpiceJet Chairperson and Managing Director Ajay Singh has submitted a financial bid in his personal capacity, sources said. Another source said multiple financial bids have been received for the airline. Specific details about the bids could not be immediately ascertained.

The financial bids will be evaluated against an undisclosed reserve price and the bid offering the highest

price above that benchmark would be accepted.

The bid will be initially examined by the transaction advisor before the recommendation is sent to the Cabinet for approval.

If Tatas emerge successful, this will mark the return of Air India to the Tata fold after 67 years. The Tata Group founded Air India as Tata Airlines in October 1932. The government nationalised the airline in 1953. Tatas operate a premier full-service carrier, Vistara, in partnership with Singapore



Airlines. It was not immediately known if the group put in the bid on its own or through budget carrier AirAsia India.

Singapore Airlines was said to be not keen on participating in the privatisation programme as it would only add to Vistara's and its own financial troubles. "Financial bids for Air India disinvestment received by Transaction Adviser. Process now moves to concluding stage," Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey tweeted.

He neither identified the bidders nor said how many bids have been received.

In the past, when more than one bid was received, as was the case when the initial expressions of interest (EoIs) came in for Air India, he had tweeted of "multiple bids" coming in. The phrase 'multiple bids' was also used when three firms, including the Vedanta group, put in EoI for Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL).

The government is seeking to sell 100 per cent of its stake in the state-owned national airline, including Air India's 100 per cent shareholding in AI Express Ltd and 50 per cent in Air India SATS Airport Services Private Ltd.

The stake sale process, which began in January 2020, faced

delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2021, the government asked potential bidders to put in financial bids.

Kisan Mahapanchayat in UP heralds revived farmer movement across the nation

of BJP Kisan Morcha. He stated that the government will not withhold the legislation as it will even bring questions to the authority of the due parliamentary procedure. Still, he welcomed suggestions on the improvement of the proposed bill in the interest of the farmers.

The positive side of the farm bill will lessen the government

Wednesday (September 15) was the last day for putting in financial bids.

Tata Group was among the multiple entities that had put in an initial expression of interest in December 2020 for buying the Maharaja.

With previous attempts since 2017 failing to get any significant interest and after receiving feedback from potential investors, the government had in October last year sweetened the EoI clause relating to the transfer of Air India's debt to the new investor, giving bidders flexibility to decide on the quantum of humongous debt they want to absorb.

As per the Air India EoI floated by DIPAM in January 2020, of

regulations and will open a huge potential for the farmers to earn from the MNCs without any interference. Still, proper convenience of the facts and listening to the farmers' voice is the need of the hour, least the farmer agitation will continue on a nation-wide scale in the coming months.

By Susmita Ghosh



It's Time to Dismantle America's Residential Caste System

America is starkly divided between neighborhoods that benefit from overinvestment and those that suffer from disinvestment. But identifying the geography of racial inequality also offers a mechanism for change. In his repeated calls for "law and order" and his characterizations of places such as Baltimore as rat-infested havens for criminals, Donald Trump did more than any politician in recent memory to perpetuate myths about inner cities, pitting urban dwellers against suburbanites. "Our inner cities are a disaster. You get shot walking to the store. They have no education. They have no jobs," Trump declared in 2016. Four years later, in announcing that the federal government would no longer require localities to analyze their housing patterns and redress segregation, Trump tweeted: "I am happy to inform all of the people living their Suburban Lifestyle Dream that you will no longer be bothered or financially hurt by having low income housing built in your neighborhood." While his style was more blatant, Trump was only the latest among presidents and presidential aspirants across five decades to weaponize racialized "ghetto" stereotypes, beginning with the dog whistling George Wallace and Richard Nixon used in the wake of urban uprisings in the 1960s. The perennial message: High-opportunity suburban living is earned, and 'hood living is the

deserved result of individual behavior.

The physical lines that divide America into racialized spaces of high and low opportunity are real. But what Trump and many others have long ignored is the role that federal and state actors have played for decades in creating and perpetuating those divides, through past and present forms of racial segregation, and through the distribution of resources away from those who most need public goods and toward people and communities with more than enough.

These divides can literally be mapped, revealing the geography of racial inequality in America. While we don't always think about it in this way, geography is key to understanding where and why inequality persists - and key to redressing it.

Maps can illuminate both the origins and the persistence of neighborhood inequality. Rates of poverty in America are highest in segregated communities of color and lowest in segregated white neighborhoods. Only about 30 percent of Black and Latino families reside in middle-class neighborhoods where less than half the people are poor. But more than 60 percent of white and Asian families live in environs where most of their neighbors are not poor.

Neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, limited employment, underperforming schools,

distressed housing and violent crime depress life outcomes. Meanwhile, residents of exclusionary affluent spaces rise on the benefits of concentrated advantages, from excellent schools and infrastructure to job-rich social networks to easily accessible healthy food. Less understood is the fact that the government-created Black 'hood facilitates poverty-free affluent white space, by concentrating poverty elsewhere.

Majority-Black neighborhoods set apart from bastions of white affluence have a long and enduring history. They were constructed in the first half of the 20th century to contain millions of Great Migrants who moved North and

West to escape Jim Crow. Black Americans in the first great wave of migration to Chicago, for instance, were largely confined to an 8-square-mile area referred to as the Black Belt. Later generations called it the South Side, future home to Michelle Obama. Wherever migrants landed in large numbers they were intentionally, sometimes violently, contained. Their neighborhoods were redlined, cut off from public and private investment and preyed on by speculators for profit.

Anti-Black habits of disinvestment and plunder continue to this day. Government at all levels overinvests in affluent white space and disinvests in Black neighborhoods, with the

exception of excessive spending on policing and incarceration. Many current public policies and processes encourage rather than discourage racial segregation. And competition between communities of abundance and communities of need sets up a budgetary politics in which affluent spaces and people usually win out. The end result is more residential sorting: A recent comprehensive analysis by the Othering and Belonging Institute found that 81 percent of metropolitan regions with a population above 200,000 were more segregated in 2019 than they were in 1990.

These mean realities should be called what they are - a system



of residential caste that harms those who cannot buy their way into bastions of affluence, which is most Americans. Residential caste also contributes to the broken politics from which we all suffer: Racial segregation makes it easier for cynics to draw political boundaries that create ideological extremes, and for dog-whistling politicians to stoke fear and division.

At the same time, acknowledging and understanding the central role of geography in creating and maintaining American caste opens up new avenues for transformation, offering an inherently organized, spatial mechanism for identifying communities that most deserve new investment from the government and private sector, and those that need less - a necessary process of abolition and repair.

America's system of residential caste is ingenious in its ability to hide the truth of how and why we subordinate some and lift up others. But I have identified three primary processes through which the 'hood and affluent white space persist: boundary maintenance, opportunity hoarding and stereotype-driven surveillance. Boundary maintenance consists of intentional state action to create and maintain a racialized physical order. Over a century, it has included racially restrictive covenants, exclusionary zoning that limits where multi-family buildings can be built, urban "renewal" projects that removed Black residents, intentionally segregated public housing, an interstate highway program laid to create racial barriers, endemic redlining, as well as disinvestment in basic services such as schools and sewage in Black neighborhoods.

While not all of these practices continue now, the federal government still invests in segregation. To date, George Romney, Sen. Mitt Romney's father, is the only HUD secretary to have pressured and penalized communities for exclusionary zoning laws and for refusing to build affordable, nonsegregated housing. For his egalitarian deeds, President Nixon forced Romney to resign. Over ensuing decades, both HUD and local governments regularly violated the Fair Housing Act of 1968 requirement that communities "affirmatively further" fair housing. For decades, HUD has distributed about \$5.5 billion annually in grants for community development, parceled among



more than 1,000 local jurisdictions nationwide, with no meaningful accountability for promoting integration.

The federal government also funnels about \$10 billion annually through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program for affordable housing construction. But it mostly results in construction in poor communities that already have more than their fair share of affordable housing. Nationally, only about 17 percent of LIHTC projects are built in high-opportunity neighborhoods with high-performing schools, low crime and easy access to jobs. That keeps those Americans who need affordable housing concentrated in the same low-opportunity areas.

Another program, HUD's Housing Choice Vouchers, provides rental assistance to low-income tenants, but the program does not disrupt entrenched racial and economic segregation. Most Black and brown voucher holders land in low-opportunity areas, where more than 20 percent of residents are poor, while white voucher holders tend to find rentals in lower-poverty areas. Thankfully, the Biden administration recently restored the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule that Trump tweeted about suspending. A few conservatives or libertarians criticize the AFFH rule for not pressuring localities to deregulate exclusionary zoning codes that insulate single-family housing from more dense residences such as apartments. But vocal opposition to inclusive housing can be found in both Republican and Democratic territory. In blue California, the state legislature failed to pass a critical bill that

would have suspended local single-family zoning to help solve the state's massive affordable housing crisis, though California recently passed legislation to force localities to open single-family 'hoods to duplexes.

While the vast majority of white Americans reject segregation in public opinion surveys, in practice their willingness to enter or remain in a neighborhood declines sharply as the percentage of Black neighbors increases, studies have found. The average white person lives in a neighborhood that is 76 percent white. Although most Black Americans no longer live in high-poverty Black neighborhoods, those 'hoods persist, as does the architecture of segregation. About half of all Black metropolitan residents live in highly segregated neighborhoods.

In a comprehensive study of neighborhood change between 1990 and 2010 in America's 50 largest cities, geographer Elizabeth Delmelle found that neighborhoods of concentrated Black poverty remained the most persistent type, followed by those of concentrated white and Asian affluence. The boundaries of these neighborhoods at polar extremes hardened, while more moderate-income, multiethnic neighborhoods became more fragmented, showing more possibilities for racial and economic mixture.

Still, intentional segregation of Black people in the 20th century shaped development and living patterns for everyone and put in place an infrastructure for promoting and maintaining segregation that lives on. Racial steering by realtors who nudge homebuyers into segregated spaces, discrimination in

mortgage lending, exclusionary zoning, a government-subsidized affordable housing industrial complex that concentrates poverty, local school boundaries that encourage segregation, plus continued resistance to integration by many but not all white Americans - all are forms of racial boundary maintenance today.

The segregation of affluence facilitates opportunity hoarding, whereby wealthy neighborhoods enjoy the best public services, environmental quality and private, public and natural amenities, while other communities are left with fewer, poorer-quality resources. Worse, suburban-favored quarters are subsidized by the people they exclude: Through income and other taxes, people of all racial and class backgrounds who live elsewhere help pay for the roads, sewers and other infrastructure that make these low-poverty, resource-rich places possible.

This pattern of overinvestment in exclusionary, predominantly white space and disinvestment or neglect elsewhere is replicated within cities across the country. In her book *Segregation by Design*, Jessica Trounstein amasses empirical evidence to support her theory that segregation creates a city politics that reproduces inequality - a racial hierarchy of favored and disfavored residents. After local governments deployed land use, slum clearance and other policies to tightly compact Black Americans beginning in the early 20th century, those residents also were denied adequate sewers, roads, garbage collection and public health services. Segregation institutionalized the preferences of white property

owners, protecting their property values and giving them exclusive access to high-quality public amenities - a nefarious pattern that continues. Today, business elites bend local government to their will, ensuring that the luxury residential and commercial development they want gets built, regardless of competing community and housing needs.

In the first two decades of the new millennium, public and private investment rained down on favored parts of central cities. Black Americans, in contrast, continued to be denied. For example, a 2019 Urban Institute study found that majority-white neighborhoods in Chicago received about three times more public and private investment than majority-Black neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods on an upward trajectory, such as those in what's known as the "White L" in Baltimore, were shaped in part by investors' avoidance of Black and Latino people. In post-industrial cities that "revitalized" since 2000, areas targeted for development - usually downtown, near a university, a hospital or another key institution - became whiter. Yet in these same cities and era, Black neighborhoods, even some middle-class ones, often became poorer.

The city of Chicago demonstrates these stark divides all too well. Chicago's largest and most populous neighborhood, Austin, is overwhelmingly Black. About 40 percent of its residents earn less than \$25,000 annually. It was savaged by foreclosures after the financial crisis of the late 2000s, yet excluded from many of the city's key neighborhood development programs.

I call the Black people trapped in high-poverty neighborhoods "descendants," in recognition of an unbroken continuum from slavery. For descendants on the South and West sides of Chicago, watching booming downtown development while the city shuttered school after school in their neighborhoods added to the insult. Chicago had closed 70 public schools over eight years by 2012. Then, in 2013, Mayor Rahm Emanuel closed 50 additional public elementary schools - the largest one-time mass school closure in the country. The Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago found that schools with large numbers of Black students had a higher probability of closure than other schools with comparable test scores, locations and utilization



rates.

As school infrastructure evaporated in Black 'hoods, the city invested in new options elsewhere. An investigative report by a local public radio station in 2016 revealed that new school building expansions after the 2013 closures were "overwhelmingly granted" to specialized schools that serve relatively low percentages of low-income and Black students.

Private actors also favor whiteness and disfavor Blackness. The Center for Investigative Reporting released a study in 2018 that analyzed 31 million records revealed by the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act and found a disturbing pattern of denials by banks of Black and Latino applicants for traditional mortgages where white applicants with similar qualifications would be accepted. This modern-day redlining persisted in 61 metro areas, from Atlanta to Detroit, Philadelphia to

San Antonio. The greater the number of Black or Latino people in a neighborhood, the more likely a loan application would be denied. Borrowers from these neighborhoods are also more likely to be preyed on with subprime credit products. Large financial firms, backed by private equity investors, swarmed like vultures to pick through the carrion of the foreclosure crisis. They could purchase a foreclosed home at auction, say for \$5,000, and sell it immediately with no repairs through a land contract for \$30,000. The land contract is designed to produce failure by the buyer, who believes she is acquiring a home but in fact accumulates no equity unless and until the final installment is made. According to the National Consumer Law Center, Black and Latino people in marginal neighborhoods are disproportionately targeted for this plunder. Their dollars, earned through work we have come to

acknowledge as "essential," should gain them equity, but instead are transferred to financial titans.

Cities, too, engage in financial predation. A recent study by the Center for Municipal Finance found that cities are taxing owners of low-valued properties at higher rates than they should relative to actual land values, while taxing owners of high-valued properties at lower rates than they should.

Geography ultimately reifies power and opportunity for the few who live in rich neighborhoods and contributes to powerlessness and permanence of poverty for descendants.

Government does overinvest in Black neighborhoods in one area: punitive practices such as policing, law enforcement and incarceration. In many cities, Black people are disproportionately arrested for a range of offenses, including much non-violent behavior such as

driving without a permit that under-policed whites can engage in with impunity.

What explains separate and unequal policing? George Floyd's slow execution last year ushered a new national focus on racist policing. Less clear in that radical moment was the role of segregation. Floyd died in the racially mixed Powderhorn neighborhood of Minneapolis, due south of very poor Black neighborhoods on the south side and not far from a dividing line to affluent white space. Like every other segregated city, Minneapolis' stark segregation was constructed with great intention. According to recent geographically mapped data published by the New York Times, since 2015 Minneapolis police used force against Black people at seven times the rate of whites. Police wielded guns, chemical irritants, Tasers, chokeholds, body-pins, fists and other brute force in the very Black

'hoods of the Northwest and the Southside of Minneapolis. The white working-class Northeast quadrant, across the Mississippi River from Black areas, were spared such intense use of force, as was the affluent white Southwest area.

Another function of anti-Black policing is economic plunder. In 2014 alone, New York City received nearly \$32 million from fees, fines and surcharges paid to the criminal courts by people facing misdemeanors, summonses or other low-level violations. Researchers estimated that, over two decades, the city's take from its "zero tolerance" policing exceeded a half billion dollars. They concluded that most of these revenues were "extracted from relatively poor segments of the population, who live in heavily policed neighborhoods." Although aggressive policing produces some revenues for local governments while harming Black citizens, it also produces liabilities that harm all taxpayers.

A UCLA law professor looked at payouts by large cities to victims of police misconduct over five years and found they totaled nearly three-quarters of a trillion dollars. Perhaps the only beneficiaries of systemic anti-Black policing are owners and shareholders of corporations that profit from mass incarceration. In Chicago, there are 851 city blocks in which taxpayers spend more than \$1 million per block to incarcerate residents who live there. Those blocks are concentrated on the West and South sides, in the 'hoods that Chicago built to contain descendants.

Children, too, are swept into the carceral state. As with segregated neighborhoods, segregated schools facilitate an entirely different relationship between police and young citizens. One legal scholar found that a school's percentage of minority students and of poverty is a strong predictor of the use of strict security measures, even after controlling for actual levels of school crime and disorder. In New York City, 5,200 full-time police officers patrolled public schools as of 2017, while the schools employed only about 3,000 guidance counselors.

Then there are the ways in which the state encourages private surveillance of Black Americans by self-appointed citizen patrols. Barbecuing by a lake in Oakland. Entering one's own gourmet lemonade



business in San Francisco. A registered guest at a hotel in Portland, Oregon, taking a call from his mama in the lobby. A child mowing lawns for candy money in a Cleveland suburb. These and other acts of "living while Black" resulted in calls to the police. This is what living in white space can do to some people. Those used to being dominant, or unused to seeing dark bodies around, become suspicious of Black people doing utterly ordinary things.

As with slavery, as with Jim Crow, law and social practice continue to allow non-Blacks to monitor and police Black bodies. The worst of these social practices is violent vigilantism. Ahmaud Arbery. Trayvon Martin. Emmett Till. Arbery's killers were charged and prosecuted. But the state of Georgia enabled their vigilante behavior through permissive laws that make it easy to obtain a gun and encourage, rather than discourage, using it. Georgia, like nearly three-quarters of U.S. states, has a "stand your ground" law that eliminates any duty to retreat and entitles gun owners to use force when they "reasonably believe" it is necessary to defend themselves or others.

Other laws quietly enable surveillance of Black folk to protect white space. An estimated 2,000 localities in 48 states have adopted "crime-free housing" or chronic nuisance ordinances that make landlords responsible for the actions or nonactions of their tenants. Such ordinances often are adopted following an influx of racial diversity. They explode the range of activities that can cause an

eviction, and, according to law professor Deborah Archer, they are enforced disproportionately against Black tenants.

When a tenant tries to seek protection from the state, calling 911, say, to control a violent partner, in places with chronic nuisance ordinances, she can be evicted if she calls two or three times. Faribault, Minnesota, for example, adopted one of the harshest ordinances in the country. The ordinance prohibits disorderly conduct by tenants or their guests and gives Faribault police the power to order an eviction without an arrest or conviction of any crime.

Descendants cannot win. They are surveilled, overpoliced and under-protected.

Healing a nation that began with, and still suffers from, white supremacy requires abolition of the processes of residential caste and repair in poor Black neighborhoods. The state is obligated to repair what it put in motion and continues to reify.

But understanding and acknowledging the role of geographic lines in structuring racial inequality presents an opportunity - a targeted mechanism for transformation. My theory of repair is that those most traumatized by the processes of residential caste most deserve care, as well as the chance to be agents in their own liberation. That means government can and must prioritize those neighborhoods that are at the center of anti-Black residential caste in America.

To begin, the state should dismantle and reverse current anti-Black processes of residential caste - through investment in Black neighborhoods, rather than redlining and economic predation; inclusion, rather than boundary maintenance; equitable

public funding, rather than overinvestment and hoarding for high-opportunity places; humanization and care, rather than surveillance and stereotyping.

I suggest three critical pillars to guide government action. First, we must change the relationship of the state with descendants from punitive to caring. Second, the state should see descendants as potential assets and empower them to be change agents. Finally, government must invest resources and transfer assets to support descendants and respected community institutions in Black neighborhoods.

Among the new processes that might be implemented would be a regular neighborhood analysis that looks critically at all the money being spent by a state across neighborhoods, with a constant evaluation of racial equity. Seattle, Minneapolis and a few other cities formally require a racial equity analysis in budgeting. Baltimore recently amended its city charter - by ballot initiative - to establish a permanent fund to advance racial equity in housing, education and capital expenditures.

Applying a humane lens to descendants frees policymakers to innovate and focus on evidence-based strategies that might be cheaper and certainly more effective than punitive strategies borne of racial dogma. Researchers at the University of Chicago Crime Lab and the University of Pennsylvania found that a program that gave Black teens in high-violence neighborhoods a summer job and an adult mentor reduced arrests for violent crime by 43 percent. A peer-reviewed independent study found that a

"peacemaker fellowship" to support young men most vulnerable to violence in Richmond, California, was associated with a 55 percent annual reduction in gun-related deaths. The organization Advance Peace is helping other cities replicate the program. Other approaches, such as a universal basic income pilot program in Stockton, California, have had promising results. And several cities are responding to activists' demands for collective ownership strategies to combat displacement of communities of color and create sustainable affordable housing. Perhaps follow the lead of Lawrence, Massachusetts, which made bus lines from its poorest neighborhoods free, as have other cities. Invest in well-resourced, culturally competent education, with reduced class sizes, in high-poverty neighborhood schools. And allow descendants to be first in line in any lottery for accessing great, integrated schools and neighborhoods. Invest in parks and neighborhood centers that offer recreation and human services in poor Black neighborhoods - free services for the freedom and liberation of descendants who have been intentionally trapped in hyper-segregated poverty.

These are just a few of the possibilities. Descendants should be asked what they and their communities need to prosper, and they should play a role in charting community transformation. Ascending multiracial coalitions that believe Black Lives Matter should gather power to mandate inclusionary zoning and fight for school integration, racial equity and the transformation of policing from

predatory to humane.

The federal government also has a critical role to play, though national policy reforms admittedly come with significant political challenges. Because federal, redlined, mortgage-insurance programs invested hundreds of billions (in present dollars) in pro-white wealth-building, new investments should be allocated now to Black communities. Historically defunded 'hoods should receive priority for any new federal infrastructure funding. Congress also could atone for the federal legacy of promoting segregation by enacting a law that bans exclusionary zoning. And it could eliminate the \$23 billion gap between what America spends on white versus nonwhite school districts by tripling existing funding for the Title I program for high-poverty schools. Whatever proposals for repair win consensus, they could be paid for in part by reallocating funds from punitive strategies that exacerbate racial inequality and repealing recent excessive federal tax breaks for wealthy individuals and corporations.

All levels of government have a moral obligation to stop investing in segregation, to stop doubling down on practices born of a long, sinister, racist past. Paying attention to the role of geographic dividing lines in undermining citizens marks the way forward to a new reconstruction.

By Sheryll Cashin. Courtesy Politico.com Sheryll Cashin is a law professor at Georgetown University, a POLITICO Magazine contributing editor and the author of the new book White Space, Black Hood: Opportunity Hoarding and Segregation in the Age of Inequality, from which this article is adapted

Union Minister of Steel Faggan Singh Kulstey Celebrate Our Heroes - Our Doctors



Chairperson of Nisha Foundation Priyanka Kothari During the event.



Honorable Minister of Steel Faggan Singh Kulstey, Chairperson of Nisha Foundation Priyanka Kothari with Honor from Booklyn Borough President Eric Adam



An Awardees with Honorable Minister of Steel Faggan Singh Kulstey, Chairperson of Nisha Foundation Priyanka Kothari, H.E Dr Roger Naidu (Ambassador of Trinidad), Dr Sandeep Marwah (Noida Film city).



PADMASHRI Dr. Jitender Shunty Honored during the event.



Buddhist Monks honored during the event by Chairperson Priyanka Kothari.



Hon. Union Minister of Steel Shri Faggan Singh Kulstey, Brahmakumari Brother Ashok Ji, Chairperson Priyanka Kothari, Chairman of Bangla Saheb Paramjeet Singh Chandok, H.E.



AIMS-Delhi Covid Chairperson Dr. Sushma Bahtnagar Honored during the event by Priyanka Kothari and Sandeep Marwah CEO of Film City -Noida.

(By Our Staff Reporter) Nisha foundation organized a salutation evening in name "OUR HEROES IS OUR FRONTLINERS" in presence of Honorable Faggan Singh Kulstey Union Steel Minister of State and various monks from his holiness DALAI LAMA Organization, Sisters and brothers from Brahmakaris, H.E Dr Roger Gopalu (Ambassador of Trinidad), Dr. Sandeep Marwah CEO Film City Noida, Diplomats and 35 awardees doctors, nurses, managing staff and social workers. Hon. Governor of Sikkim Shri Ganga Prasad ji Praised foundation initiative and congratulated all the awardees, he launched the stickers "I Salute Doctors" in presence of all the dignitaries. He said Nisha foundation is working towards a wonderful mission for the betterment of society.

Hon. Minister Shri Faggan Singh Kulstey (Union Minister of state Ministry of Steel) said Nisha foundation initiative is great and he applaud this program and appreciated Nisha foundation for working in 173 countries in association of world Organization of peace for child education, sports and salutation evening in name of frontliners During his speech he said it's

important to do this kind of programs to uplift human consciousness and he expressed his concern for farmers. Nisha Foundation Chairperson Priyanka Kothari also an accomplished former Bollywood actress who worked in various movies in Indian film industry, few of her movies are with like Hindi Movie SARKAR, RGV KI AAG, DARNAROORI HAI with Amitabh Bachhan, Tamil Movie JAY JAY with South Indian Superstar R. Madhvan, KILLER with Emran Hashmi, RAJ THE SHOWMAN with Kannada Superstar Punet Rajkumr and many more. While travelling for her movie shoots to different rural areas, She felt that there is a huge need to support and uplift unprivileged people in many aspects, sports, women empowerment and she left the film industry and dedicated herself to the service of humanity. She is an actress turned philanthropist, Motivational speaker, and an accomplished yoga teacher. Her NGO supports other NGOs as well to uplift and support child education, woman empowerment, sports, and other activities. She is working in 173 countries with the association of OMPP. She is Secretary

General of the World Organization of peace (Asia). Also, Nisha Foundation was recently honored with a Citation from Eric Adam who is a President of the Borough of Brooklyn, New York USA, for work to support "BETI BACHAO BETI PADHAO" and spreading peace and compassion to humanity. She believes "our life's journey is all about uplifting human consciousness and help each other to reach our maximum potential indeed that's our destiny, Said we have learnt from this pandemic time that "life is too short and there is no time of hate" We must spread love compassion peace to humanity and expressed thanks for each and every frontline workers with standing ovation she said this award ceremony not only for awardee list rather it's for those unknown volunteers and helpers who served during pandemic. Kothari Started Her speech with Sanskrit shloka and welcome all the Guest and Audience, furthermore she explained about the foundation objections and goals & she also Remembered the President and Co-founder of Nisha foundation Late Shri Bhasker Prakash

Ji whom we lost in this Pandemic with having teary eyes Priyanka Ji bravely continued her speech. This program objective was to facilitate the awards to 20 Doctors and 10 Frontline Workers with utmost respect and presents Furthermore, the Sticker Launch of Nisha Foundation Has been taken Place from the hands of the Dignitaries presented there Shri Faggan Singh Kulaste Ji, Dr. Sandeep Marwah Ji, and Dr. Roger Gopalu, everyone gave tribute to lost warriors and huge salute to doctors and to our Frontline Workers. And appreciate Nisha Foundation for their good deeds and pure hearted intention behind the event and Wish All the best for the Future. Few of the honorees are Dr. Raja Marimuthu Chairperson of Covid in Chennai, Nurse Sita Ghimirey from AIMS, Dr. Vinay Bhasin - AIIMS, Padmashri Dr. Mosin Ali, Nurse Monika Dhankar Finally, a statement of gratitude was given by Ms. Priyanka where she said thanks to the Dignitaries and entire team behind who is working for Nisha foundation and like A pioneer for the fabulous accomplishment of the event.

Cryptocurrency prices today



Bitcoin up over 3%, Ether rebounds as virtual coins gain momentum

The cryptocurrency market witnessed a rebound on Tuesday even as remains on the higher side. Most cryptocurrencies have rebounded supported by higher trading volumes.

Bitcoin, the world's largest cryptocurrency, was trading at Rs 45,813.65 or 3.09 per cent higher compared to its value 24 hours ago at 2 pm. Bitcoin's market capitalisation has increased to \$861 billion and the 24-hour trading volume stands at \$1.18 billion.

Ether has also witnessed a rise in momentum as it is currently trading 4 per cent higher than its value 24 hours ago. The cryptocurrency's market capitalisation has increased to \$389.35 billion and the 24-hour trading volume has gone up to \$1.10 billion.

All other altcoins have rebounded decently as the sentiment and trading volume continues to improve.

Commenting on the rebound, Edul Patel, CEO and Co-founder of Mudrex, a global algorithm based crypto trading platform, said, "Markets saw some recovery as Bitcoin

surpassed the \$45,000 mark, and other altcoins replicated the momentum of the largest crypto."

"Solana made decent gains over the past 24 hours. The largest altcoin, Ether, struggled to break past the local resistance level as it continued to remain dominated by the bears for yet another day. Traded volumes shot up 21%, indicating that the market might soon make a directional move," he added. Here are the latest prices and trends of popular cryptocurrencies:

Cryptocurrency	Price (US Dollar)	24-hour change	Market cap (Billion)	Volume (24 Hours)
Bitcoin	45,886.80	3.07%	\$863.36	\$1.18 billion
Ether	3,339.98	4.62%	\$391.53	\$1.10 billion
Dogecoin	0.238651	1.93%	\$31.29	\$1.29 billion
Litecoin	180.95	5.08%	\$12.40	\$8.82 billion
XRP	1.08	3.65%	\$108.23	\$4.13 billion
Cardano	2.43	2.76%	\$78.48	\$4.32 billion

ITR filing: Disclose these incomes, assets in your tax return



To provide some relief to the taxpayers, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) recently extended the deadline for income tax return (ITR) filing for the year 2021-22 to December 31 from the earlier deadline of September 30.

This will provide taxpayers and tax professionals with enough time to accurately calculate tax liability, avoid interest charges and duly report income from other sources. This is especially important for taxpayers who file returns on their own.

They should be well aware of how income from various sources has to be reported and should know about the various deductions available for them. In addition to this, there are some incomes that are exempted from tax but are still required to be reported in the ITR.

Other income to be disclosed in ITR:

In order to be able to compute accurate tax liability, there are some tax rules that all taxpayers should know of. For instance, a lot of people do not report interest incomes in their returns even though it is fully taxable.

Here are some tax rules that one should be aware of while preparing his/her tax return.

New tax regime:

There are now two tax regimes to choose from. Taxpayers can select a tax regime based on their preferences. The new tax regime allows lower tax rates. However, deductions and tax benefits allowed in the old tax regime are not provided.

WPI inflation rises to 11.39% in August on costlier manufactured goods

The wholesale price-based inflation rose marginally to 11.39 per cent in August, mainly due to costlier manufactured goods, even as food prices softened.

Snapping the two-month easing trend, WPI inflation rose in August and remained in double digits for the fifth consecutive month. In July 2021, WPI inflation was 11.16 per cent, while in August 2020 it was 0.41 per cent. "The high rate of inflation in August 2021 is primarily due to rise in prices of non-food articles, mineral oils; crude petroleum and natural gas; manufactured products like basic metals; food products; textiles; chemicals and chemical products etc as compared the corresponding month of the previous year," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement. Inflation in food articles eased for the fourth straight month, recording (-) 1.29 per cent in August, against zero per cent in July, even as onion



and pulses prices spiked. Inflation in onions was high at 62.78 per cent, while that in pulses was 9.41 per cent. In vegetables, it was (-) 13.30 per cent in August. Inflation in crude petroleum and natural gas was 40.03 per cent in August. **MANUFACTURED GOODS PRICES RISE** - In manufactured products, inflation

stood at 11.39 per cent in August, against 11.20 per cent in July. The manufactured goods inflation has remained in double digits for the fourth month in a row. The RBI, which mainly takes into account retail inflation, in its monetary policy last month kept interest rates unchanged at record lows. It projected CPI or retail inflation at 5.7 per cent during 2021-22, up from its earlier projection of 5.1 per cent. Data released on Monday showed that retail inflation softened to a four-month low of 5.3 per cent in August, from 5.59 per cent in the previous month, helped by subdued prices of food articles. ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the core-WPI inflation has displayed an uninterrupted hardening for 15 consecutive months to a fresh all-time high of 11.1 per cent in August 2021, belying the anticipation that the July 2021 print would prove to be the peak.



Former US presidents Bush, Clinton & Obama band together to aid Afghan refugees

Former US presidents - George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama- have banded together behind a new group aimed at supporting Afghan refugees in the country.

Three former US presidents - Republican George W. Bush and Democrats Bill Clinton and Barack Obama - have banded together behind a new group aimed at supporting refugees from Afghanistan settling in the United States following the recent American withdrawal, ending 20 years of war.

The former leaders and their wives will serve as part of Welcome US, a coalition of advocacy groups, US businesses and other leaders.

It launched on Tuesday with a website that will be "a single point of entry," to make it easier for Americans to donate, host a refugee family through the home rental app Airbnb Inc or find other ways to help, John Bridgeland, an official in former President George W. Bush's administration and co-chair of the effort, said at a media event.

Tens of thousands of Afghans have already arrived in the United States as part of a US evacuation. Many of them would have been at risk had they remained under the Taliban after their

work with US and allied troops or with American and international agencies. "Thousands of Afghans stood with us on the front lines to push for a safer world, and now they need our help," Bush and his wife Laura said in a statement.

Organisers said there has been a bipartisan outpouring of support for Afghan refugees, including Republican and Democratic governors who have signed onto the effort. A number of US state and local leaders have said they would welcome refugees into their communities, although immigration remains a divisive issue in parts of the country.

Under former President Donald Trump, a Republican, refugee admissions from around the world were slashed to their lowest levels in decades, a policy President Joe Biden, a Democrat, has pledged to reverse.

Welcome.US also draws support from more than 280 people and entities, including US businesses such as Microsoft Corp, Starbucks Corp and

CVS Health Corp, as well as numerous nonprofit organizations, veterans' groups and resettlement agencies.

Biden's administration is working to accommodate as many as 50,000 refugees on military bases in the United States. Others remain in processing centers near US airports where they landed, and more evacuees are in US installations or stuck in third countries abroad.

Some refugee organizations have been pushing for the United States to adopt a program of private or community sponsorship for individual refugees, similar to a model used in Canada, and see this coordinated national volunteer effort as one way to jump-start that process.

"We want to take advantage of this moment and the great need to access all the capacity out there in the United States to support Afghan evacuees," Nazanin Ash of the International Rescue Committee said at Tuesday's launch.

Nobody knows the fate of our 'out-of-school' children. Enrolment data is insufficient



When school closed for Farhan in March 2020, he was thrilled at the prospect of ending sixth grade without final exams. For the first few days, he spent his time playing cricket in the many lanes of his neighbourhood in Bengaluru. The sun shone bright, the school was out, and summer was well in the air. However, things quickly changed. Almost immediately after the first Covid-induced lockdown, Farhan's father, a shopkeeper, was faced with a financial disaster. The business plummeted and his family found themselves living on meagre savings. Over the next few months, Farhan was made to work for a local mechanic shop, where he made about Rs 200 a day cleaning and oiling engines. In late March 2021, he returned to school for the first time after I found him running errands for a grocery store and persuaded him to come back. In the weeks that followed, Farhan struggled with adapting to school - words seemed unfamiliar and the classroom seemed hostile. Just as he began to feel comfortable with learning again, the second wave of Covid-19 surged, and schools closed again - leaving Farhan and 37 million children like him in the lurch.

I had seen Farhan's name on my class attendance register for months before I actually saw him. His parents had paid Rs 1,000 needed for admission, received books, and had gotten him enrolled in school in late December 2020. So while Farhan had effectively dropped out of school, his scholastic record did not reflect that. I was so confused; no one else seemed to be looking for Farhan. His three-month-long absence was treated with indifference and did not raise any red flags. How could this be? The issue of out-of-school children

State governments measure student dropout rates primarily by tracking student enrolment data, and schools are under pressure to ensure that students either get admitted or are issued a transfer certificate. When students don't do either, they are listed as "out-of-school children" and are considered dropouts - something that is reflected on the school's permanent record. The primacy on enrolment often means ensuring attendance takes a backseat; in the words of a low-income private school headmaster, "let them take admission first, whether they attend or not is up to them".



In the FX Series on the Clinton-Lewinsky Scandal, It's Not Just the President Who's Guilty

In the series, everyone plays a role in harassment and abuse - the president and his secretary alike. And is it harassment?

The chief sign of whether you're a winner or a loser - a victim or a victor - is whether you get to write your own history. By those terms, in the 1990s, Monica Lewinsky was a victim through and through. Her affair with President Bill Clinton, once exposed, made her a pawn to those who wanted to take Clinton down, a threat to those who wanted to keep him in power, a lurid fascination to the media, a joke that fed successive evenings of ugly entertainment. Everyone knew her name, and nearly everyone was implicated in her public shaming. The idea that she was human, with feelings and opinions, seldom made it into the narrative.

In 2021, Lewinsky is fully in charge of her story, thanks to a reputation rehab that began with a Vanity Fair essay in 2014 and

worked its way to the pinnacle of modern-day storytelling: a 10-part, star-studded miniseries on prestige TV. "Impeachment: American Crime Story," which premieres this week on FX, is a production of Ryan Murphy, the creator of "Glee" and "American Horror Story," who also retold the O.J. Simpson trial for an audience with a fresh perspective. This new series recalibrates an old political scandal for modern sensibilities, starting with the fact that it has Lewinsky's input and her blessing. ("All that matters to me is what she thinks," Beanie Feldstein, the actress who plays Lewinsky, told the Hollywood Reporter.)

Joanna Weiss is a writer in Boston and the editor of Experience magazine, published by Northeastern University.

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Revisiting the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal in the #MeToo era underscores how much has changed in our baseline view of sexual harassment, power dynamics and behavior that crosses the line. Over and over, characters

pass off as meaningless - a nonstory, a non-crime - the kind of workplace behavior that just toppled New York Governor Andrew Cuomo in record time. ("Having sex with an office girl is not a high crime or misdemeanor!" a young conservative operative named George Conway shouts at one point.) The series reminds us how much casual sexism was marbled into the culture at the time, from the white men making lewd jokes in Hollywood writers' rooms to the lawyers on Kenneth Starr's independent counsel staff who try to flip Lewinsky as a witness, and call the effort "Operation Prom Night" - because, as one of them explains, all it should take is a "half hour with a girl in a hotel room."

A new book exposes China's hidden corruption. Xi's family and CCP have a lot to answer

Chinese President Xi Jinping's common prosperity campaign wants to redistribute wealth, but the past of top party leadership is shrouded in layers of corrupt deals and massive personal fortunes.

In the world of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), there are winners and losers, and the roulette of corruption is endemic within the party.

Xi's sister Qi Qiaoqiao and her husband Deng Jiagui are the owners of Beijing Central People's Trust Real Estate Development Corporation Ltd. The couple's real estate business has grown by leaps and

bounds as they have been given best land by local government officials to seek favour from Xi Jinping. Deng Jiagui, Xi's brother-in-law, was mentioned in International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ)'s 2014 report on offshore accounts of Chinese elites.

According to real estate registration, Xi's family owns a million-dollar property at the Braemar Hill Garden in Hong Kong, registered under sister Qi's name.

In 2012, Bloomberg revealed that Xi's extended family had total assets worth \$376 million, which included 18% stake in the



provincial state-owned Jiangxi Rare Earth and Rare Metals Tungsten Group. But none of these assets were traced directly to Xi Jinping or his wife, Peng Liyuan.

In 2014, The New York Times reported, citing Chinese records,

that Xi Jinping had forced his extended family into selling their assets. Xi's sister and brother-in-law moved their assets into Qinchuan Dadi Investment Company but didn't sell most of their valuable assets.

The party is also waging a campaign against celebrities with foreign citizenship, but Xi's own family is said to have multiple foreign permanent residency and passport holders. Qi and Deng are said to hold Canadian permanent residencies. Xi Jinping's daughter Xi Mingzhe, who is reportedly pursuing a graduate degree at Harvard University, is

said to hold a US green card. New book throws light on party Xi's own murky business dealings are shrouded in mystery, even as other members of the Politburo Standing Committee have their fair share of a questionable past. Han Zheng was promoted as party secretary of Shanghai, after a scandal brought down Chen Liangyu. A few months into the office, the party discovered that Han Zheng had stashed \$20 million in an Australian bank, according to Desmond Shum's book, Red Roulette: An Insider's Story of Wealth, Power, Corruption, and Vengeance in Today's China.



All but erased from public life, he is making a mistake by announcing a presidential run so early.

Donald Trump Is Doing His Comeback All Wrong

Now Donald Trump knows what it feels like to be a one-hit wonder. Paralleling the career trajectories of Question Mark and the Mysterians, Norman Greenbaum, Soft Cell, Chumbawamba and Foster the People, Trump rose rapidly to the top, lingering there on the strength of one melody, before his fall and replacement.

This loss of mojo humiliated Trump, and he has finally settled on a comeback formula. And it's high time he has. After having lost his spot in the public eye, his visibility on cable news has crashed, Google searches of his name have melted away, and Facebook, YouTube and Twitter made him persona non grata. Meanwhile, that new social media operation his aide Jason Miller promised in March would "become the hottest ticket" has turned into vaporware. The Trump blog that did appear was so unpopular Trump shuttered it in less than a month.

The comeback plan Trump has teed up is nowhere as circuitous as the one Richard Nixon constructed in 1966, which had him going on the hustings for Republican candidates and collecting political debts. It's not even as subtle as deliberately disappearing and coming back with a new image, the way Nixon did. Instead, according

to POLITICO's Meridith McGraw and Marc Caputo, its about reanimating the original Trump for President and doubling the now-customary 18-month run for the presidency into a three-year footslog. He's running!

The campaign will make overt what's been covert for months. He's been hectoring supporters with easily lampooned fundraising emails that have oscillated between the threatening and the frantic. "You've received multiple emails from Team Trump, including my father, inviting you to join this brand new prestigious club, and you've ignored every single one of them," reads one purportedly written by Eric Trump. "I am calling on Joe Biden to resign" and "This is where we step up and show the Left-wing MOB that REAL Americans are REJECTING Joe Biden's corrupt agenda," read two more. "I emailed you. My son, Don, emailed you. Kimberly Guilfoyle emailed you. Team Trump emailed you. And now I'm emailing you. AGAIN," states the ultimate Trump email. Other attempts to regain his media primacy have failed. He has goaded Mitch McConnell, but those comments have passed unacknowledged. He has restarted his rallies, spoken at CPAC events and a state GOP conclave, exchanged inanities with Sean Hannity, and licked the sweet cream of easy questions

with Fox Business Network's Maria Bartiromo, to little avail. Outside of a few members of Congress who face tight races and want his endorsement - i.e., inside the Trump universe - he has made little headway. The day he became ex-president, the immutable laws of media made it inevitable that his public stock would fall and his voice would stop carrying. He was just another civilian, even if his camp continues to call him "President" Donald Trump. But an ex-president holds no real power and possesses no special portfolio. He is a bullet without powder.

A Ferrari with four flat tires. A noun without a verb. "At Once Diminished and Dominating," as a June New York Times headline put it.

But Trump could do much better in restoring himself to relevancy. Announcing his presidential candidacy this early will only dissipate the available political energy over three years and force comparisons to the laughable Harold Stassen, who ran for the White House 10 times. Plus, as the McGraw and Caputo article notes, Trump is aware that official candidacies impose financial reporting obligations on someone who has declared as well as other red-tape limitations, and Trump hates such scrutiny and limitations. Instead of spending his political

seed on the presidency this early out, Trump would be wiser to follow Steve Bannon's proposal and run for a safe House seat in 2022, with the objective of being elected Speaker by an incoming Republican majority. Crazy as it sounds, he wouldn't actually have to run to become Speaker because the Constitution doesn't stipulate that the Speaker must be a member of Congress. In this scenario, if Trump got the gavel, he could monkey-wrench the Biden presidency with impeachment hearings. If he got extremely lucky and took out Kamala Harris, too, the order of succession would mean he could return to the White House again. Creepy, huh? But by announcing a presidential run this far out, Trump won't be accorded any substantial journalistic ink for a long time. Posing as a potential new Speaker of the House, however, would force the press corps' hand. It would have to cover his every move between now and November 2022. Even if he lost, he would then be perfectly positioned for a presidential run. Instead of acting all regal like "President" Trump, the man from the dark tower should play the role of Citizen Trump, the outsider and political hand-to-hand combat fighter.

Gavin Newsom and the Revenge of California's 'Anger' Lobby

The political universe has been transfixed by what could happen to California's governor on Tuesday: A special election may throw Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom - who won his last election with a decisive 62 percent of the vote - out of office and replace him with a right-wing radio host supported by just a small fraction of Californians.

While late polls say it's unlikely, that possible outcome would be the result of a Rube Goldberg process where voters first decide whether to keep the governor or not (it's a simple yes-or-no question on the ballot); and then, if "yes" wins, choose his replacement from a list of 46 - that's forty-six - candidates to replace him. Whoever gets the most votes from that crowd becomes the new chief executive.

Right now, talk show host Larry Elder leads that group with around 20 percent.

The specifics are almost perverse. But there's a larger story to be told here, too, and one flush with irony. The recall was originally a progressive reform, part of a suite of tools given to the voters of California 110 years ago by a governor determined to wrench power out of the hands of wealthy railroad barons and deliver it directly to the people. Over the past century-plus, however, the deployment of those tools has been a stark illustration of the Law of Unintended Consequences. The ability of voters - or, more accurately, a collection of varied interests with significant money - to put laws, constitutional amendments and mid-term officeholders up for the judgment of the electorate has twisted the process of government beyond recognition.

And while the recall itself is stunningly anti-democratic - the way the math works, Newsom could take 49 percent of the vote and be kicked out, while Elder or another aspirant could then replace him with 20 percent - the broader picture of these "direct democracy" tools suggests something else:



Some young people fear having children due to climate crisis: Survey

The survey conducted among 10,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years, in 10 countries found that around 60 per cent are extremely worried and sad.

Young people consider climate change to be one of the biggest and most unprecedented threats to the world and some fear having children due to the unfolding crisis. These are the findings of a new survey that hints at a high level of anxiety among young people due to climate change. The survey was conducted among 10,000 people across 10 countries.

The research, published in preprint with The Lancet, states that climate anxiety is associated with perceptions of inadequate action by adults and governments, feelings of betrayal, abandonment, and moral injury. "The study offers the first large-scale investigation of climate anxiety in children and young people globally and its relationship to government response," the paper said.

The survey conducted among 10,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years, in 10 countries found that around 60 per cent are extremely worried, sad, anxious and feel

angry, powerless, helpless, and guilty over the state of climate affairs. "Over 45 per cent said their feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily life and functioning, and many reported a high number of negative thoughts about climate change," the research concluded.

The research conducted by the University of Bath in the UK found that young people rated the governmental response to climate change negatively and reported greater feelings of betrayal than of reassurance. "These psychological stressors threaten health and wellbeing, and could be construed as morally injurious and unjust," the researchers said.

YOUNG PEOPLE PREPARED TO LEAD AMID 'A LOT OF TALK AND NO ACTION'

Young people are willing to be politically active to become role models in the fight against the menace. Another research by the British Council found that young people are prepared to lead after witnessing 'a lot of talk

and no action' from the government and authorities.

The research conducted in 23 countries ahead of the Conference of Parties (CoP-26) summit in Glasgow next month saw that 75 per cent of participants had skills to deal with climate issues in their communities and 65 per cent have knowledge about the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The British Council has now produced a Global Youth Letter on Climate Action, and statements for each participating country, to engage young people, "inform discussions leading up to COP26 and, ultimately, to influence real action."

"One of the main criticisms made by young people is the perception of 'a lot of talk and no action'. Yet they are prepared to lead by example and act. They believe they understand the issues (for example, skills development, a need for action) and recognise that, although we are all interconnected, different approaches are required in different parts of the world," the

report said.

While most young people are willing to act and engage in global initiatives, they lack information about these initiatives, which hinders their participation and engagement. 69 per cent of participants maintained that they have never participated in any climate change mitigation, action activity.

The report recommends developing suitable forums for young people to express their views and sentiments towards the future of our planet, creating diverse consultation structures to ensure young people are heard, raise awareness about climate change in rural areas that have limited or no access to digital facilities, host mini or micro-CoP summits quarterly or bi-annually in rural and remote areas, integrate climate change into the school curriculum, develop clear, understandable measures to tackle climate change, so young people can see progress.

Venus is young:

New study finds Earth's mysterious twin to be younger than Mars



As interest around Venus peaks and missions head to Earth's mysterious twin in the coming years, the Russian space agency has said that the surface of Venus may be significantly younger than previously assumed. The study of the planet from orbit showed that the age of the Venusian surface may be only several tens of thousands of years.

Scientists focussed the study on an area known as the Imd region, a site for active volcanism on the planet, and stressed that it should be a target for future investigations. The researchers are exploring the region to understand how the planet is arranged inside, what happened to its surface in the recent past and what is happening right now, behind the dense curtain of Venusian clouds.

The study published in the journal Solar System Research, states that the recent studies of Imdr Regio, one of the young volcanic rises, have provided hints indicating that volcanic as well as the tectonic activity may be still ongoing in that area. They argue that the young volcanic rises are generated and supported by underlying active mantle plumes and can be considered as some of the youngest geologic terrains of Venus.

VENUS IS YOUNGER THAN MARS

The surface of Venus is relatively young and almost all of the planet was covered in volcanic lava just 500 million years ago, comparatively, Mars, which is at the centre of interplanetary exploration, is billions of years old. Researchers believe that these lavas had hidden earlier rocks, which only come to the surface in some areas.

Why China backs Taliban and how it poses a threat to India



The return of the Taliban has been perceived as a victory not only for Pakistan but also for China. While Pakistan has always supported the Taliban, China emerged as a sympathiser and friendly 'Big Brother' around 2019.

In 2019, a Taliban delegation visited Beijing to meet China's special representative for Afghanistan Deng Xijun. The Taliban and China discussed the outfit's peace talks with the United States.

CHINA MAINSTREAMING TALIBAN

Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen had then said on Twitter that the Chinese found the US-Taliban yet-to-be inked deal "a good framework for the peaceful solution of the Afghan issue". Shaheen also claimed that "they [China] support it".

That Mullah Baradar, who led the Taliban in negotiations with the US in Doha, Qatar, was part of the Taliban delegation that visited China was confirmed by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang.

Now, the fast-paced move that China has made in engaging with the Taliban in Afghanistan and virtually exhorting the world to mainstream the Taliban and the Taliban's invitation to China to their government inauguration indicates the degree of their engagement and mutual trust.

Both Pakistan and China seem to have played a crucial role in nuancing the Taliban's position in the US-Taliban deal and subsequent takeover of Afghanistan. Pakistan's track record in aiding terrorism was

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unlikely to win the Taliban international approval in the near future.

BUT WHY CHINA BACKS TALIBAN?

Some China observers have described its backing of the Taliban as a response arising out of political expediency. The Taliban and China need one another.

China is worried about the insurgency in Uyghur-dominated Xinjiang region. The East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) is a Uyghur Islamic fundamentalist outfit that operates from China-Afghanistan border areas.

To escape being caught by the Chinese forces, the ETIM insurgents flee to Afghanistan, whose Badakhshan province is still said to have around 400-700 fighters. In exchange for its support to the Taliban, China sought assurance from the group that they would not let ETIM operate from Afghanistan.

The Taliban have now told China

that ETIM operatives were pushed to China, where its security forces can tackle the insurgents.

RARE EARTH METALS

Chinese economic expansion across the under-developed but resource-rich nations has seen an unusual rush by China to capture the mines having reserves of rare earth metals and other mineral resources.

Afghanistan is estimated to have mineral reserves worth \$1 trillion. China has the technology to mine minerals from high-altitude rugged mountains. The Taliban aim to earn revenue from the Chinese exploits. The Taliban need revenue to run their government.

WHY ONLY CHINA?

China is possibly the major power in the world that puts principles on the backburner for expediency. China has a track record of blocking sanctions against terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar at the United Nations.

Keeping the Taliban in good faith, China can extend its pet project, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), through Afghanistan giving it deeper penetration and access to Central and West Asia.

EAGERNESS TO SEE THE BACK OF US

China had additional motivation to support the Taliban. It wanted to see its principal geopolitical rival, the US, withdraw from Afghanistan, a backyard country for China. The geopolitical space vacated by the US with its decision to withdraw from Afghanistan after 20 years is set to be taken by China.

The Roberts Court is Dying. Here's What Comes Next.



The obituaries are already being written. Steamrolled by five other conservatives, Chief Justice John Roberts was unable to shape the Supreme Court's decision to let Texas flagrantly ignore the court's abortion precedent. This is the end of the Roberts Court, we're told, as the Chief Justice's cautious approach to judging gives way to a more robustly conservative activism.

But obituaries can be premature: P.T. Barnum's, for example, appeared in the New York Evening Sun some two weeks before he died. Like Barnum, the chief justice's influence is ebbing, but it isn't moribund. How long it will last, however, may not be within his control. Rather, it depends on how aggressively state and national Republicans try to press their political advantage - especially at election time.

Aziz Huq teaches law at the University of Chicago and is the author of *The Collapse of Constitutional Remedies*, which is out later this year.

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And while the chief justice hasn't fully lost his hold on the court, what comes next is quickly coming into view. The post-Roberts Court is likely to be unfettered by legalistic norms and eager to advance changes to the law that both embed conservative policy goals and tilt the election system toward the GOP. It's a combination that poses a real threat to American democracy.

Signs of Roberts' waning influence abound. In the Supreme Court term that ended last July, the (more conservative) Justice Brett Kavanaugh was in the majority in 97 percent of all cases, and 95 percent of divided cases; the chief managed only 91 percent and 84 percent respectively. Kavanaugh also cast the decisive vote in the denial of a nationwide injunction against the Center for Disease Control's eviction moratorium in July. Robert's vote to let stand California's and New York's Covid regulations as applied to churches were in dissents. He was again outvoted by his five more conservative peers, including Kavanaugh.



Nuclear energy production to increase three times in 10 years: Govt

The Centre said that in the coming decade India would produce more than three times nuclear power from the current level of 6,780 MW.

The government aims to increase nuclear energy production three times from the current level, Minister of State for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh said on Tuesday. Jitendra Singh said the country was on the course to increase nuclear energy production capacity to 22,480 MW by 2031. The minister sat down with a high-level US delegation, led by Deputy Secretary of Energy David M Turk, and said that in the coming decade India would produce more than three times nuclear power from the current level of 6,780 MW.

He called for greater Indo-US cooperation in the field of clean

and green energy, and reiterated India's commitment to promoting its nuclear programme, not only as a major source of clean energy but also as a tool of application in areas like the healthcare and agriculture sector.

"India will produce more than three times nuclear power and it is expected to reach 22,480 MW by the year 2031, from the current 6780 MW as more nuclear power plants are also planned in future," Dr Jitendra Singh informed the delegation. He said India and the United States were revamping their strategic partnership to focus on clean energy sectors, such as biofuels and hydrogen.

"With the rapid introduction of biofuels, renewable energy and green Hydrogen, India is well poised to play an important role towards Carbon neutrality," the minister said.

He said the government was already encouraging the adaptation of hydrogen fuels and technology for the mobility sector and many industries like steel, cement, and glass manufacturing industries had already started using Hydrogen for heating requirements. Jitendra Singh said India had proposed to launch a Mission "Integrated Biorefineries" where it was collaborating with the US apart from a few potential areas

of collaboration identified in Advanced Biofuels and Renewable Chemicals and Materials.

Deputy Secretary of Energy, David M Turk assured that the USA would deepen its collaboration with India in nuclear energy and promised deeper engagement with India in the Green Hydrogen sector as recently announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day Speech.

The two countries have also signed up for the transformation of the US-India gas task force, which will put emphasis on the intersectionality between bio-energy, hydrogen, and

renewable fuels with natural gas. The meeting comes just a day after the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry said that India had demonstrated how economic development and clean energy can go hand-in-hand.

During his two-day visit to India, Kerry said, "You have already reached about 100 GW. I congratulate India for remarkable milestone. We are absolutely confident that the 450 gigawatts as a goal can and will be reached. We look forward to partnering with India." Kerry was on a two-day visit to India "to discuss efforts to raise global climate ambition and speed India's clean energy transition".

Scientists race to collect ice cores holding frozen records as glaciers melt

Scientists are racing to collect ice cores along with long-frozen records they hold of climate cycles as global warming melts glaciers and ice sheets. Some say they are running out of time. And, in some cases, it's already too late.

Late last year, German-born chemist Margit Schwikowski and a team of international scientists attempted to gather ice cores from the Grand Combin glacier, high on the Swiss-Italian border, for a United Nations-backed climate monitoring effort.

In 2018, they had scouted the site by helicopter and drilled a shallow test core. The core was in good shape, said Schwikowski: It had well-

preserved atmospheric gases and chemical evidence of past climates, and ground-penetrating radar showed a deep glacier. Not all glaciers in the Alps preserve both summer and winter snowfall; if all went as planned, these cores would have been the oldest to date that did, she said.

But in the two years it took for the scientists to return with a full drilling set-up, some of the information that had been trapped in the ice had vanished. Freeze-thaw cycles had created icy layers and meltwater pools throughout the glacier, what another team member described as a water-laden sponge, rendering the core useless for basic climate science.

The sudden deterioration "tells us

exactly how sensitive these glaciers are," said Schwikowski, head of the analytical chemistry group at the Paul Scherrer Institute in Villigen, Switzerland. "We were just two years too late." The mission on Grand Combin underscores the major challenge scientists face today in collecting ice cores: Some glaciers are disappearing faster than expected. The realization is prompting renewed urgency, causing those who specialize in harvesting ice cores to accelerate missions, rethink where to target next, and expand storage capacity. Almost all of the world's glaciers are shrinking, according to the United Nations. The UN concluded that "human influence is very likely the main



driver of the near-universal retreat of glaciers globally since the 1990s." The report also said that without immediate, large-scale action, the average global temperature will reach or exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius above the preindustrial temperature average within 20 years. The

pace at which glaciers are losing mass is also increasing. A study published in April in the science journal Nature found glaciers lost 227 gigatons of ice annually from 2000 to 2004, but that increased to an average of 298 gigatons a year after 2015.

Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon drops for the second month



Forest destruction in August reached 918 square kilometers, the lowest indicator for the month since 2018 and 32 per cent less than in 2020.

Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon dropped for the second consecutive month in August compared to the same period in 2020, according to preliminary data released Friday by the Brazilian National Institute for Space Research. Forest destruction in August reached 918 square kilometers (354 square miles), the lowest indicator for the month since

2018 and 32% less than in 2020, according to daily alerts compiled by the the institute's Deter monitoring system.

That data is considered a leading indicator for complete calculations released near yearend from the more accurate system, Prodes. Following four earlier months of increase, the accumulated deforestation in 2021 has now declined slightly

by 1.2% compared to last year, according to the preliminary data.

Márcio Astrini, executive secretary of the Climate Observatory, a network of environmental nonprofit groups, told The Associated Press that it's premature to know if there's a clear trend of decreased deforestation.

Before President Jair

Bolsonaro's took office in 2019, the Brazilian Amazon hadn't recorded a single year with more than 10,000 square kilometers of deforestation in over a decade. Between 2009 and 2018, the average per year was 6,500 square kilometers compared to the average of 10,500 square kilometers during Bolsonaro's term.

Bolsonaro has encouraged

development within the Amazon region and dismissed global complaints about its destruction as a plot to hold back the nation's agribusiness. His administration also has defanged environmental authorities and backed legislative measures to loosen land protections, emboldening land grabbers.

The government recently has tried to improve its environmental credibility. On Thursday, Bolsonaro told leaders of the BRICS group - which also includes Russia, India, China and South Africa - that he is committed to protecting the environment and complying with the Paris climate agreement. But Astrini of the Climate Observatory said he saw no change in government attitudes that might favor reduced deforestation.

"Environmental fines remain uncollected in Brazil and there are just few enforcement operations," he said, seeing no clear policy explanation for the improved numbers. "The government ignores the environmental issue. The deforestation numbers just depend on the will of the criminals."

Burning to clear land in the Amazon region has become a growing problem. According to the space agency, in August more than 28,000 fires were registered in the region, the third highest indicator for the month since 2010.

When and where to watch SpaceX first all-civilian Inspiration 4 launch in India



Nasa has said that it is targeting the launch during a window that will last for five hours and begin from 8.02 pm EDT.

SpaceX is all set to launch the first all-civilian crew on a three-day trip to space on September 15 as it enters the final leg of preparation following the full rehearsals and static fire test of Falcon 9. The launch will seal SpaceX's position in the up and coming sector of space tourism, which is largely dominated by millionaires and billionaires of

the world.

SpaceX will launch the four civilian crew members strapped on the Falcon-9 rocket from historic Launch Complex 39A at Nasa's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The three astronauts will navigate the Earth for three days observing the planet in its full glory from the first of its kind Cupola on the capsule.

SpaceX has introduced a three-

layer observation dome, which was extensively tested and qualified for flight in six months, by replacing the mechanism used on Dragon's previous flight to dock to the International Space Station.

Inspiration-4 is commanded by Jared Isaacman, founder and CEO of Shift4 Payments and an accomplished pilot, who will be joined by Medical Officer Hayley Arceneaux, a physician assistant at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and pediatric cancer survivor; Mission Specialist Chris Sembroski, an Air Force veteran and aerospace data engineer; and Mission Pilot Dr Sian Proctor, a geoscientist.

WHEN TO WATCH INSPIRATION 4 ALL CIVILIAN MISSION LAUNCH

Nasa has said that it is targeting the launch during a window that will last for five hours and begin from 8.02 pm EDT, which is 5.32 am Indian Standard Time (IST) Thursday morning. "If needed for any reason, a backup window is available opening at 8.05 pm EDT on Thursday, September 16," SpaceX said, which will be 5.32 am Indian Standard Time (IST) Friday.

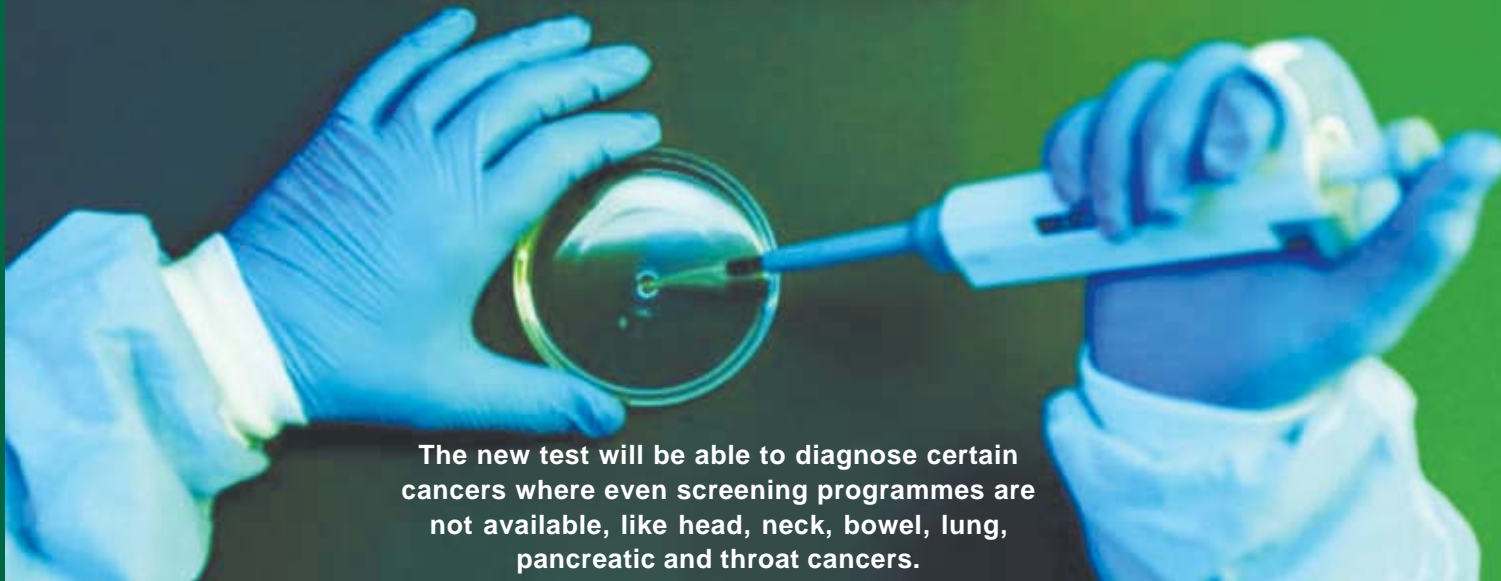
Approximately three days after liftoff, Dragon and the Inspiration-4 crew will return to Earth and splash down at one of several possible landing sites off the

Florida coast. SpaceX is aiming to fly the Dragon capsule at an orbit higher than the Hubble Space Telescope at 575 kilometres above Earth. **WHERE TO WATCH THE SPACEX INSPIRATION-4 MISSION LAUNCH**

You can watch the Inspiration 4 mission launch LIVE at the webcast that will begin 4 hours before liftoff. We at indiatoday.in will also bring you all the updates of the first all-civilian mission to space.

The four-member crew will fly into space with ambitious fundraising goals for kids suffering from cancer and other life-threatening diseases.

Cancer diagnosis



The new test will be able to diagnose certain cancers where even screening programmes are not available, like head, neck, bowel, lung, pancreatic and throat cancers.

treatment costs may reduce significantly if UK trial is successful

Cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for about 1 crore deaths in 2020, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). Many of those losing battles against cancer find the cost of diagnosis and treatment very high. Now, the health authorities in Britain have launched a trial that can help reduce the cost of cancer diagnosis and treatment significantly in several countries including India. The National Health Service (NHS), Britain's state-run organisation, has launched the world's biggest trial of Grail Inc's flagship Galleri blood test, which could detect over 50 cancers even before symptoms appear in a person. The trial, if successful, could substantially reduce the cost of cancer detection and treatment in countries

including India.

Carried out as a "quick and simple blood test," says NHS chief executive Amanda Pritchard, "This could mark the beginning of a revolution in cancer detection and treatment here and around the world."

"By finding cancer before signs and symptoms even appear, we have the best chance of treating it and we can give people the best possible chance of survival," Pritchard said.

"What it means to India and even to the rest of the world is that the investigations being performed will have a precursor to them, so their cost will come down considerably for investigations themselves," said Dr Mamta Rao, Consultant Radiologist in the UK, practising in the UK for over 20 years.

Dr Rao said, "Early detection of lesions will mean quicker

treatment bringing the costs further down." Harriet Buckingham, a photographer living in England who was first told about her breast cancer in 2013, said the trial would have made a world of difference for her had her cancer detected early. "By the time I found my lump, cancer had travelled to my lymph nodes. Had my cancer been detected earlier my treatment would have been less scary perhaps," said Harriet, who has now fully recovered. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) estimates that while in 2018 there were 17 million new cancer cases and 9.5 million cancer deaths worldwide. "By 2040, the global burden is expected to grow to 27.5 million new cancer cases and 16.3 million cancer deaths.

Meanwhile, the National Cancer Registry programme in India estimates that "one in 68 males to have lung cancer, 1 in 29 females to have breast cancer and [overall] 1 in 9 Indians will develop cancer during their lifetime". If we take an approximate cost of cancer detection and treatment, both have the potential of being positively impacted by this blood test. For instance oral cancer treatment starts at Rs 1.5 Lakh averaging up to Rs 3.5 lakhs. Treatment cost of Stomach cancer, which is the second most common cause of cancer related deaths among Indian men and woman between the age of 15 and 44, according to a paper published in the National Centre for Biotechnology Information, averages between Rs. 2.10 lakh to Rs 4.75 lakh.

Allot 50% beds in health hub hospitals to Aarogyasri patients: Andhra CM YS Reddy



Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to ensure that 50 per cent of the beds in the hospitals being set up in the health hubs are allotted to patients who are seeking treatment under the Aarogyasri scheme.

The chief minister was chairing a review meeting on the prevailing Covid-19 situation and vaccination status in the state.

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy said one of the members in every hospital board in the health hubs should be a government representative. He further added that constant availability of doctors should be made criteria for selection of hospitals for health hubs.

The chief minister also directed the officials to focus on setting up hospitals for organ transplantation in health hubs. Moreover, the chief minister gave nod to appointment of special officers in hospitals-from CHCs to teaching hospitals- for maintenance of premises, saying that they would be held responsible for building services, facility management services, and biomedical waste management services.

Covid will not disappear, virus of 2009 swine flu pandemic still circulating: WHO

The coronavirus will not disappear, Doctor Mike Ryan, Executive Director of WHO Health Emergencies Programme, has said, adding that the virus from the 2009 pandemic is still circulating.

He said with more vaccination herd immunity can be achieved and that will lead to lower levels of hospitalisation. For now, he said, Covid remains a public health emergency of international concern.

"The lower levels of transmission and the



more equitable distribution of vaccines will mean that herd immunity is achieved, and gradually we can look at lower levels of hospitalisation. But as of now, it continues to be a public health emergency of international concern," he said.

The swine flu pandemic of 2009 killed an estimated 2,84,500 people, some 15 times the number confirmed by laboratory tests at the time, according to a study by an international group of scientists published in 2012.

H1N1 had begun petering out by November 2009, and the WHO declared the epidemic at an end the following August.

Salman Khan's Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali not shelved, makers rubbish rumours

Salman Khan-starrer Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali is not being shelved, but instead is going on floors in the next two months. The producer of the film, Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment Movies, rubbished reports that claimed the film was shelved and shared fresh details about the film's development. Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali is written by Sajid Nadiadwala and directed by Farhad Samji. **SALMAN KHAN'S KABHI EID KABHI DIWALI NOT SHELVED**

After Salman Khan announced his new film Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali in 2020, several Bollywood stars congratulated the actor on social media. Recently, however, reports started doing the rounds that the film had been shelved because Salman's Radhe: Your Most Wanted Bhai wasn't a big hit.

The makers of the film, Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment Movies, issued

a clarification. Taking to the official Twitter handle, they wrote, "We would like to deny all the #FakeNews. The set is being constructed & songs have already been recorded. Shooting begins in 2 Months (sic)."

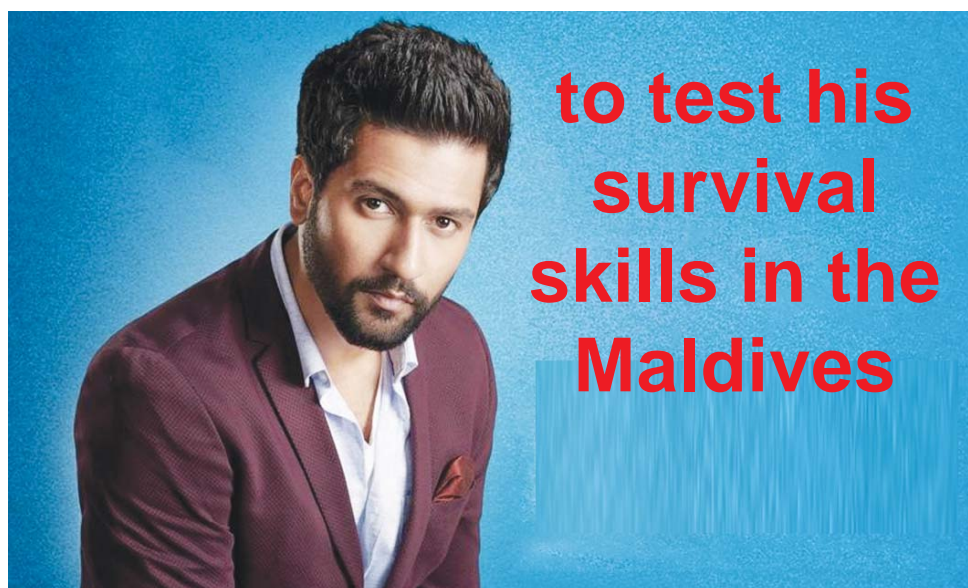
Salman Khan took to social media to announce his new film Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali in January

Salman Khan's film Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali has not been shelved. The makers of the film have rubbished all the rumours and talked about its development on social media.

2020. Back then he revealed the film will be written and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala, while Farhad Samji of Housefull 4-fame will be helming the project. He wrote, "Announcing My Next Film... Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali.... Story & Produced By Sajid Nadiadwala...Directed By Farhad Samji...Eid 2021 ... (sic)." Salman Khan is currently in Turkey, shooting the third film in his popular Tiger franchise, Tiger 3. The film stars Katrina Kaif as the female lead.



Vicky Kaushal to feature in Into The Wild with Bear Grylls



Actor Vicky Kaushal is all set to unleash his adventurous side in Into The Wild with Bear Grylls show. Vicky will explore the wild with British adventurer Bear Grylls in the Maldives. As per a statement, the two will soon head to an ocean paradise for the shoot. A few days ago, the makers of the Discovery's show roped in actor Ajay Devgn for one of the upcoming episodes of the new season of Into The Wild with Bear Grylls. Ajay is already in the Maldives.

The previous seasons of Into The Wild With Bear Grylls had featured Prime Minister Narendra Modi and superstars Rajinikanth and Akshay Kumar.

Vicky is quite a fitness enthusiast and keeps giving glimpses of his workout routine on Instagram.

On the work front, Vicky will be seen in Sardar Uddham Singh, Takht and Sam Bahadur.

Raame Aandalum Raavane Aandalum trailer out, film to release on Amazon Prime on Sep 24



On Wednesday, September 15, Suriya unveiled the trailer of Raame Aandalum Raavane Aandalum. Directed by Arisil Moorthy, the social drama will release on Amazon Prime Video on September 24. Starring Ramya Pandian, Vani Bhojan, Mithun Manickam and Vadivel Murugan in pivotal roles, the trailer gives a glimpse of Kunnimuthu and Veerayi's life in the village after losing their bulls.

RAAME AANDALUM RAAVANE AANDALUM TRAILER OUT

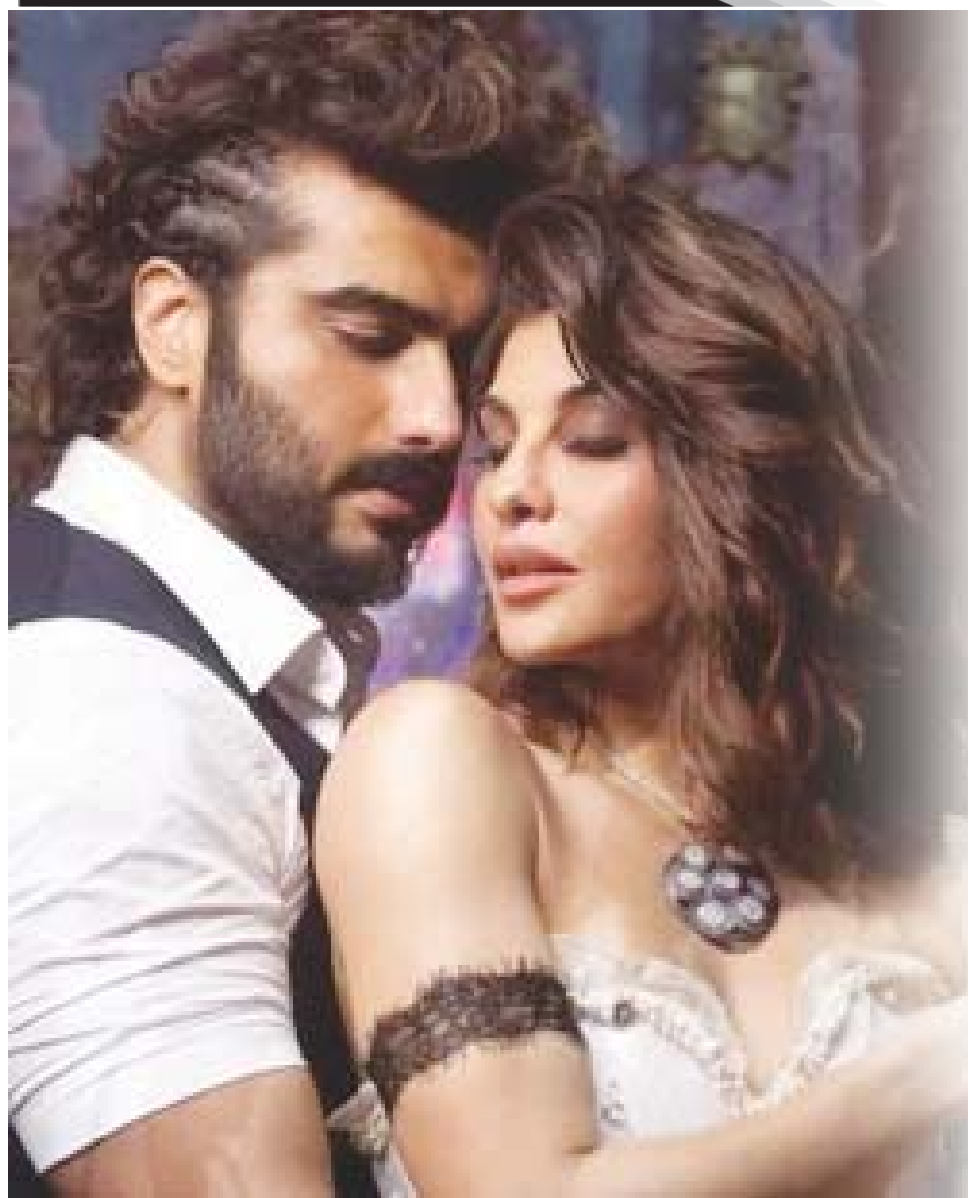
Suriya's production house 2D Entertainment recently collaborated with Amazon Prime Video for a four-film deal. As part of the collaboration, the first film, Raame Aandalum Raavane Aandalum, is all set to start streaming on the OTT platform from September 24. Suriya unveiled the film's trailer on Wednesday, September 15. In the

trailer, we come across a farmer and his wife, who love their two bulls like their children. What happens when they lose their bulls forms the crux of the story.

Sharing the trailer, Suriya wrote, "Every film should entertain & make an impact, I believe this new team has made a strong one. Hope you like it! #RaameAandalumRaavaneAandalum trailer (sic)."

Speaking about the film, director Arisil Moorthy said, "This film is very close to my heart and the cast and crew have worked tirelessly to bring to life a heartfelt story."

When asked about the message conveyed in the trailer of Raame Aandalum Raavane Aandalum, he said, "The trailer is a sneak-peek into the small yet chaotic universe of Kunnimuthu."



Offended Arjun Kapoor tells Jacqueline Fernandez **'please leave my van'** for this hilarious reason

Arjun Kapoor was joined by his Bhoot Police co-star Jacqueline Fernandez on the new episode of his chat show, Bak Bak With Baba. He was mock-offended when she said that she does not indulge in emotional eating and jokingly asked her to leave his vanity van. Arjun asked Jacqueline about her first crush. She said that there was a boy in school but did not reveal his name. "But I also had a huge crush on Leonardo DiCaprio after watching Romeo and Juliet and Titanic, and Nick Carter from the Backstreet Boys," she added.

Jacqueline was also asked to reveal the name of the last person she texted and it turned out to be Arjun, whom she sent a GIF. Other people on her list included her mother, the man who edits her videos and her siblings. Arjun, who was 'hoping for some gossip', told Jacqueline, "We get it, you are leading a very kosher life."

Arjun then asked Jacqueline to name a meal she turns to when she is happy and what she eats when she is sad. She said that eats only to

get energy. When he explained the concept of emotional eating to her, and asked if food meant anything to her in that way, she said no.

"Please leave my van," Arjun told Jacqueline, pretending to take offence at her answer. "It was fun while it lasted but toodles," he added. Jacqueline said that loves to 'celebrate' with food. On being asked if she ever sought solace in eating when she was low, she said, "There was a phase in my 20s when I did turn to food and that was late at night. I lived alone so it was like cake, ice cream, anything crispy. I actually did have a terrible relationship with food and then I went starving for a week which is really bad for you. So, now it's about knowing that I don't need to turn to it, tomorrow is another day and we will get through it." Jacqueline also talked about nasty things written about her online. "There are a lot of mean things. It's okay, we all get it. I read things about myself, how terrible I sound, how terrible my accent is and how I speak Hindi, bad criticism on how I look."

Demi Rose showcases her incredible curves in a sizzling brown bikini and patterned sarong as she soaks up the sun during Positano getaway

Her famous figure put her on the showbiz map.

And Demi Rose was again flaunting her frame as she took to Instagram on Wednesday to share a duo of red hot snaps with her followers.

The model, 26, wowed in a sexy brown swimsuit with a deeply plunging neckline and a complementary sarong as she posed on a Positano getaway.

Demi looked phenomenal in her latest snaps as she posed on a sunlounger and then in a mirror in the barely-there bikini top.

The plunging top struggled to contain her eye-popping assets while also leaving her tiny waist and taut stomach on full display.

As she lay on the lounge she pulled her ombre tresses to one side and wore a pair of aviator sunglasses with a metallic sheen.

She posed with an envy-inducing Louis Vuitton Petite Boite Chapeau handbag.

The Birmingham-born beauty has been modelling for eight years and credits her career for being a 'blessing' after being subjected to bullying when she was younger.

Speaking to Radio 1 Newsbeat, Demi previously revealed: 'I always wanted to get

into modelling and when I eventually got there I classed it as a blessing because I grew up being bullied and didn't have many friends at all.'

In 2019, both of Demi's parents died, just seven months apart and the star said going into lockdown straight after their deaths



was 'a time of reflection.'

'Having to deal with my parents' house and selling their stuff - it was a really sad place for me.'

'I wanted to go and travel but I had three months in London, which was a lot of facing what I had been through and was a time of reflection.'

Her latest shoot comes after she was seen teasing her OnlyFans page to her

Instagram followers, after signing up to the X-rated content-sharing platform.

Demi told fans she was ditching her profile's subscription fee for a limited period.

OnlyFans is an online platform, known for its X-rated content, that allows

public figure to charge fans a fee to their profile, where they often shares pictures and videos deemed too provocative for other social media sites.

Demi previously charged fans for access to her content - with

costs ranging from \$22.22 (£16) a month or \$119.99 (around £86) for six months.

She's not the only famous face who uses the platform, with celebrities including Bella Thorne, Cardi B and Danniella Westbrook signing up to the service.



3 questions for those dreaming of beating Narendra Modi

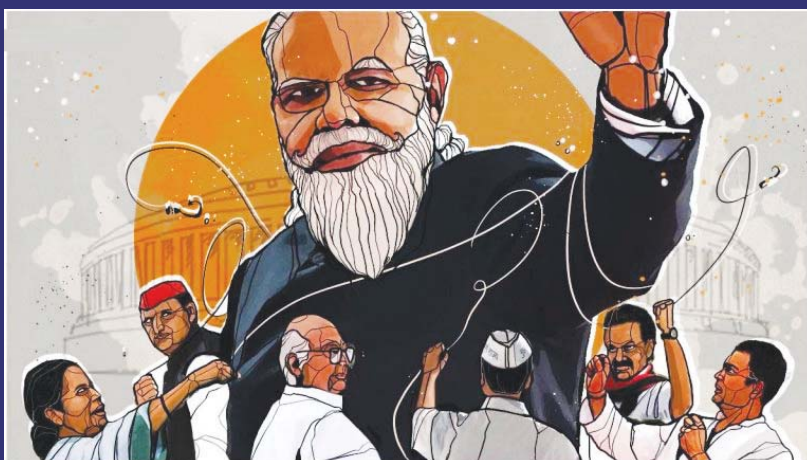
(SAI Bureau)- Returning to national politics after a sizeable 'Afghan-Taliban' break, we raise three questions. With the caution that the first two will be irrelevant unless we square up to the third first. Here we go:

o Is Narendra Modi beatable, or unbeatable, sort of cast-in-titanium as I might have described him sometimes, not merely Teflon-coated?

o If he's beatable, what will it take to defeat him? A face, a slogan, a manifesto, an ideology, or all of the above?

o Is anyone even trying to beat Narendra Modi? Hand on your heart, face up to the third first. Who among the opposition maharathis is working on defeating him nationally?

Rahul Gandhi has the party with the second largest vote-base in the country. And too many would jump instinctively to say but hey, Rahul himself doesn't seem



ready. That is ducking the larger question: Is the Congress party ready? Infighting, dissensions, weakening grip over the states are pains all parties endure in a long spell out of power. But does the party have a face, a slogan, a manifesto, or even an ideology to challenge Modi?

(Contd on page 34)

Actor Sonu Sood's offices raided by the Income Tax department



(SAI Bureau)- Actor Sonu Sood's offices in Mumbai and a company in Lucknow linked to him were raided by the Income Tax department on Wednesday, sources said.

Taxmen arrived on Wednesday afternoon at the premises of the actor, who receives crowds of people seeking help at his doorstep daily.

"A recent deal between Sonu Sood's company and

(Contd on page 35)

Organized crime 'alive and well' says US Department of Justice

Alleged mobsters arrested in New York, New Jersey



(SAI Bureau)- The arrests of more than a dozen purported mobsters Tuesday in New York and New Jersey show "the underbelly of the crime families in New York City is alive and well," according to the FBI. Colombo crime family boss Andrew "Mush" Russo, underboss Benji Castellazzo and consigliere Ralph DiMatteo were among 14 purported mobsters charged Tuesday with labor racketeering, extortion and money laundering. Ten members of the Colombo crime family and one member of the Bonanno crime family were arrested, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Most of the alleged mobsters were arrested in New York and New Jersey on Tuesday, while Colombo captain Vincent Ricciardo was arrested in North (Contd on page 34)

"Our Heroes - Our Doctors" Celebrated with Union Minister of Steel Faggan Singh Kulstey



(Contd on page 40)

Tatas put in bid for lossmaking Air India



(SAI Bureau)- Tata Sons, the holding company of India's largest conglomerate, and SpiceJet chief Ajay Singh are among those who submitted financial bids on Wednesday to acquire loss-making state airline Air India. (Contd on page 35)